

# MIGRATION, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND EMPLOYMENT IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA— THE CASE OF NEGRI SEMBILAN TIMUR

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**R**APID POPULATION growth and a consequent increase in the young working-age population in the last two decades is a common feature in most Third World countries. This has brought about the acceleration of large-scale employment-oriented migration by predominantly young and able-bodied unskilled and semiskilled workers in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is largely a dynamic movement from the "subsistence sectors," to basically market-oriented sectors, e.g., mines, or plantations, or in the majority of cases to an urban industrial work place: the "modern capitalist sector."

The migrant worker shifts his occupation from a subsistence economy to a situation where he must earn a wage income in order to procure the goods and services he requires from the market. This move from agriculture to a predominantly nonagricultural occupation has in many Third World countries reached endemic proportions, becoming an important and consistent feature in the social, economic, and cultural life of many countries. It has a far reaching impact on the rural and urban community. It is estimated that at any one time more than 60 per cent of the adult males between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine are absent from the subsistence economy of the villages, working outside the region [4]. At the same time, because of rapid population growth and internal migration, the cities and towns have grown in size much faster than their industrialization program would allow and hence the population of many has doubled in the last ten of fifteen years [16, p. 393].

Peninsular Malaysia and Negri Sembilan Timur are no exception to the rule. Since Peninsular Malaysia received its independence in 1957 there has been a shift of population from rural to urban areas. The largest proportion of inter-strata migration is away from the smaller settlements towards those with more than 50,000 population [14, p. 11]. In Negri Sembilan Timur, rural Malays,

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Chinese and Indian estate workers have been moving and still continue to move to the "modern capitalist sector" in search of work, where wages and standard of living are purportedly higher. This movement takes place in spite of the fact that in Malaysia as a whole, activities such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing are the dominant source of employment (48 per cent of the total in 1974).<sup>1</sup>

The "nexus of centrifugal tendencies," i.e., the factors which induce migrants to leave the rural home are varied and complex. They can be explained in terms of a combination of multi-causal "push" and "pull" factors: economic, demographic, sociological, psychological, and political. However, today the degree of economic motivation and the probability of the rural migrant obtaining an urban job seems to be the dominant factors inducing him to migrate [23, pp. 387-413].

In Peninsular Malaysia the economic features of unemployment, underemployment, poverty, disparities of income, and underdevelopment continue as chronic problems in rural areas [9, p. 2]. These factors have predominantly induced, and still continue to induce, migrants to leave their rural homes. They derive from a set of interrelated factors.

First, the disparities generated by colonial exploitation inherited from the "colonial situation": in Malaysia, European enterprise under colonial rule had a profound impact on the societies and economies of the rural areas. Together with the traditional low-productivity subsistence sector which was mainly Malay, these were in general denied any share of the amenities that went to the export-oriented predominantly European enterprises, mainly rubber and tin, and the sectors that were associated with it. Neither was the peasant population encouraged to share in the prosperity generated by Western enterprise which was sponsored and encouraged by the colonial polity. This contributed to the development of a "dual" economy, characterized by a depressed "subsistence sector" predominantly inhabited by Malays and an urban or "modern capitalist sector" in which development was concentrated and which was mainly populated by Chinese and Indians.

In this "colonial situation" peasant agriculture was consistently ignored in favor of European agricultural, industrial, and commercial enterprise. The main cause of Malay rural poverty was, and still is, the uneconomic farming units and the predominantly tenant cultivation of farms. In addition, there was, and still is, a continuing fragmentation and subdivision of rural farms due to the traditional inheritance laws. Aziz says that this "...created inequalities in the distribution of rural wealth *and* ...in turn increased the poverty in the rural areas" (*italics added*) [2, p. 81]. This has acted continuously against the hard-working Malay subsistence farmers and their economic deprivation became cumulative: it increased rural unemployment and underemployment.

Thus, poverty in the rural areas and a continuous widening of the relative income gap between town and country seems to have been the main factor which

<sup>1</sup> [15, p. 67]. However, it is worth noting that in 1967 about 11 per cent of the workers classified as employed in the subsistence sector were reported to be working less than twenty-five hours per week. See [9, p. 99].

gradually drove people out of the rural areas to sell their labor in the "modern capitalist sector." Except for the Malay elite and a fortunate few, the bulk of the Malays went into the lower range of the public occupations. This was largely because British colonial paternalism gave the bulk of rural Malays an education which placed them in a cul-de-sac.

Second, with independence in 1957, the government of Malaysia committed its predominantly dependent, export-oriented, and vulnerable economy to an industrialization program within the framework of a laissez-faire economic policy. This policy was formulated on the economic justification that it would inject dynamism into the economy by stimulating foreign investment and bringing entrepreneurs into the country. The object of this policy was not only to diversify the economy from its dependence on unstable, export-earning primary commodities, but more importantly to achieve economic growth and create employment opportunities for the rapidly growing population. It was also envisaged that this policy would reduce the then existing accumulated level of unemployment and underemployment.

However, up to now, the foreign and local industries which were largely import substituting have been concentrated in the major towns, particularly around Kuala Lumpur, Pelating Jaya, and Shah Alam, and more recently in the other major urban centers of Penang, Butterworth, Taiping, Ipoh, Seremban, Malacca, and Johore Bahru. The population of these areas has substantially increased as the number of people leaving the rural areas to seek employment in the modern industrial and urban sectors increased. The migrants came in the hope that they could escape from the drudgery of rural existence to a "potentially fuller life" in the towns.

Third, through the government policy of "an educational programme for all Malaysians" [8, p. 61] to realize socioeconomic benefits, there was a dramatic expansion of education after independence, especially of Malay medium schools in the rural areas.<sup>2</sup> In addition, *bahasa Malaysia* ("Malay") replaced English as the official language and this worked to change the aspirations of rural youths. It has not only changed the educational profile of the young seeking employment but has made their job expectations sharply at variance with the type of jobs available. The rural young with a general education but without vocational skills are inclined to migrate and try to find the limited number of nonmanual and white-collar jobs which are highly ranked in modern society, than to remain in agricultural work. This is shown by the fact that between 1962 and 1967 the number of those seeking employment with more than ten years of education, nearly tripled [9, p. 100]. In Malaysia as in other Third World countries, there is little doubt that opportunities for the educated exist predominantly in the "modern capitalist sector."

The phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Third World countries was con-

<sup>2</sup> See *Times*, May 1, 1975. In 1963, universal and free primary education for six years was introduced and this was extended to nine years in 1966. In 1957 the enrolment in primary and secondary schools was 1,010,000 pupils. This figure had increased to 2,300,000 in 1975.

sidered to be healthy and logical by economic models postulated by development economists like Arthur Lewis [7]. The Lewis model was later refined by J.C.H. Fei and Gustav Ranis [3]. In the Lewis model the economies of Third World countries are conceived basically in terms of a two-sector model—namely, a “subsistence sector” and a “modern capitalist sector.”

The Lewis model postulates that there will be a gradual reallocation of labor from the low production “subsistence sector” with a surplus labor force and a supposed zero marginal product to a high productivity “modern capitalist sector,” which is short of labor, and where wages are marginally higher. The plentiful supply of undemanding young and hard-working labor will favor rapid economic development in the “modern capitalist sector.” This reallocation according to Lewis will not cause a fall in production in the “subsistence sector” because of the presence of “surplus labor” (disguised unemployment) and thus part of the labor can be withdrawn.

However, Lewis made certain reservations. He specified that the average productivity in the “subsistence sector” should not increase in a way that will push up conventional subsistence real income. This would act as a constraint to the expansion of the “modern capitalist sector” since it needs an “unlimited” supply of labor at stable and constant wages in order to boost productivity and profit for economic growth. It will help the per capita income of workers to remain constant and increase the investable surplus. Lewis argues that the entire surplus profit is invariably reinvested in such a way that the demand for labor increases. This process continues until surplus labor in the “subsistence sector” disappears.

However, what is interesting is that contemporary research and experience suggests that almost the opposite of the Lewis model is true [6, p. 13]. The unlimited supply of labor which was considered to be healthy and a structural necessity could not be absorbed by the “modern capitalist sector” in most developing countries, including Malaysia. This is because the “modern capitalist sector” employs capitalist-intensive methods of production which are structurally incapable of absorbing an unlimited supply of surplus rural labor. Therefore, serious open unemployment exists in the urban areas of Peninsular Malaysia, where the rate is around 10 per cent [9, p. 99], and perhaps more in some areas.

For example, the manufacturing sector in Malaysia has been boosted since independence and it has been growing rapidly. The net output of this sector rose annually by 9.9 per cent during 1961–65, by 10.4 per cent during 1966–70 [9, p. 15], and by 9 per cent during 1971–73 [10, p. 142]. As a consequence, the share of this sector in gross domestic product (GDP) rose from 8.5 per cent in 1960 to 10.5 per cent in 1965 and approximately 13 per cent in 1970 [9, p. 15]. In 1973 it contributed 18 per cent to GDP [15, p. 66]. Even at this fast rate of growth, it still employed 11 per cent of the country's total labor force in 1974 [15, p. 67], while in 1957 it employed 6.4 per cent of the total labor force.<sup>3</sup> In terms of absolute members, the manufacturing sector provided employ-

<sup>3</sup> See E. L. Wheelwright, *Industrialization in Malaysia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), p. 2. If unemployment is to reduce to 3 per cent by 1972, then 440,000

ment for an additional 355,000 workers, while the labor force as a whole increased during this period by more than a million, i.e., to 1,393,000. This indicates that the fast-growing capital-intensive manufacturing sector is not the dominant employer of labor in the urban sector. On the other hand, the proportion of the population living in cities and towns is far more than the working force engaged in manufacturing. Therefore, a large section of the labor force is forced into the service sector, thus rendering it relatively unproductive vis-à-vis the industrial or agricultural sector. It is also a sector which has a significant degree of under-employment [10, p. 31]. However, little systematic work has been done of a kind which tries to quantify the relationship between earning differentials, the demand for labor in the "modern capitalist sector" and the supply of surplus labor from the rural areas.

Even the contention by Lewis that stable and constant real wages are necessary to boost productivity and growth in the "modern capitalist sector" is sharply at variance with reality. In most Third World countries including Malaysia, there has been a rise in wages in the "modern capitalist sector" "both absolutely and relative to rural living standards even in the presence of open unemployment" [9, p. 13]. This has further helped to widen the relative income and standard of living gap between the "subsistence" and "modern capitalist" sectors and has aggravated the pull factor.

Another reason for the aggravation of unemployment and underemployment especially among the youth [9, pp. 49-50] is the high population growth rate in Malaysia in the postwar period. The population growth rate experienced in the ten years after independence has been 3.0 per cent annually, which is one of the highest rates of growth in Third World countries, and this increases the country's labor force by about 3.2 per cent annually [9, pp. 49-50].

This feature is expected to continue for another two years after which a downward trend is expected. As a result, not only is the country going to have an increasingly large young population but an expanding labor force. This will mean that the labor force of 3.1 million in 1973 will increase to 3.7 million by the end of 1975: i.e., an addition of 600,000 to the labor force in a matter of two years. This high rate of growth of the labor force and the continuous out-migration of rural workers to the urban centers has substantially increased the number of people seeking employment in the modern industrial and urban sectors. In 1965, in Malaysia's overall rate of 9.8 per cent unemployment for the metropolitan centers, the unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group was 21 per cent, and only 4.6 per cent for those above twenty-four years of age [24, pp. 47-50]. The figure for the young age group had increased to 31.8 per cent by 1967-68 (see [12, p. 109]); this group constituting 75.3 per cent of the country's unemployed [12, p. 120].

Given the continuing process of rural-urban migration and the consequent

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new jobs must be created between 1962 and 1967, and 582,000 between 1967 and 1972. This is an annual average rate of 89,000 and 116,000 respectively, see Federation of Malaya, *Report on Employment, Unemployment and Under-Employment*, p. 24.

urban problems of high rate of unemployment and underemployment, housing, and increasing rural-urban disparities, the government of Malaysia has launched a program of regional development based on growth centers or poles in various parts of the country. The goal of these development strategies is not only to reduce economic disparity between urban and rural areas and in particular to eradicate rural poverty, but more importantly to create employment regionally and thus contain this continuous process of rural-urban net out-migration, consequently reducing open and latent unemployment and dispersing the concentration of unemployed to the various regions of the country. These regional growth centers, it is hoped, will have a linkage effect: i.e., running into and out of the region and ultimately cutting across the economy of the whole country. This, it is hoped, will further enhance and accelerate the restructuring of Malaysian society and thus correct economic imbalance between the Malays and non-Malays, as the determined by the country's New Economic Policy.

The development strategy to be pursued in the Negri Sembilan covers the four districts of Jelebu, Kuala Pilah, Tampin, and Rembau consisting of a gross area of 1,269,000 acres or 77 per cent of the land area of the state. Nearly half the state's population of 236,000 live in this corridor.

The project is conceived as one that will attract development projects to this region. It is an area which has had not only net out-migration of 2.6 per cent between 1957 and 1970 [13, p. 13] but economic stagnation. For example, at present only two-thirds of the once cultivated irrigated paddy land is in use [13, p. 66] and 15,000 acres of good agricultural land is lying idle [13, p. 72].

Predictions are that if this regional development project is successfully implemented, it will contribute considerably towards the creation of urban growth centers. Urbanization is conceived by many Western social scientists as the prime contributor to economic rationality, proper work orientation, and the development of entrepreneurial capacity, all essential for economic development. This is expected to improve distribution of income and wealth and provide full employment in the region. This will ultimately help to eradicate poverty and extend individual opportunity. It will further help to bring about balanced growth between and within community groups and between the present urban areas and the existing rural areas in the region. Finally, it is hoped that the uneven development pattern between the eastern corridor and the western part of the state will be corrected.

## II. THE CASE STUDY

One factor which will contribute to the success of the proposed projects in the region is the availability of labor; indeed, this is undoubtedly the most important consideration. Therefore, by request of the Negri Sembilan government, we carried out a specially designed survey on employment, income, and attitudes towards migration among youths in the project area. For the purpose of the survey, we divided the area into four sectors consisting of kampongs, small-sized towns, medium-sized towns, and estates. They covered the following areas:

| Sectors   | Sampling Location                    |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Kampongs (villages)                             | Batu Kikir, Pertang, Tg. Ipoh, Johol |
| Small-sized towns (less than 1,500 inhabitants) | Ladang Geddes, Rembau, Ayer Kuning   |
| Medium-sized towns (1,500-2,500 inhabitants)    | Kuala Pilah, Bahau                   |
| Estates   | Glendale, Juasseh, Regent            |

An overall sample of 909 households was covered in the above four sectors: kampongs 201, the small-sized towns 315, medium-sized towns 285, and estates 108. The respondents for this survey were drawn from two age groups, namely between 15-24 and 25-34 which were considered crucial to the objectives of the survey.

#### A. *Variables*

In a survey of this kind one has to determine what variables to include in the questionnaire, to obtain information on rural-urban migration. It may be important to include many variables one may rightly conceive as affecting rural-urban migration on an a priori basis. But it may not be plausible, or indeed feasible, to include all. Some variables are more difficult to quantify than others and even if satisfactory methods of quantification are found it may be difficult to obtain accurate information. On the other hand, inclusion of as many variables as one would wish would mean an unwieldy questionnaire which would be difficult and expensive to administrate in a rural setting. Therefore, the researcher has to decide on the optimum number of variables to be included in the survey.

In most studies of rural-urban migration in developing countries, certain key variables have been recognized as influencing the flow of labor. These are usually age and sex, level of education, current levels of income and wealth, wage differentials, state of employment, mobility, availability of kinship and friendship ties in urban areas, and level of general awareness and aspirations of the people. Some of these are easily ascertainable and quantitative data can be obtained, while others are difficult. After taking into account the prevailing local conditions, the questionnaire designed for the survey included the following variables: (i) location of the respondent; (ii) age and sex; (iii) community; (iv) employment status; (v) main economic activity; (vi) level of income; (vii) ownership of land and extent; (viii) availability of friends and relatives to sponsor urban employment; and (ix) motivation and attitude to migration.

The survey was conceived in terms of controlled variables such as location, age and sex, and community of the respondents. Variables (iv) to (ix) specified above were considered as "dependent variables." Due to a number of constraints, the level of education as a variable was left out. However, we have incorporated this variable with some published secondary data.

In this paper we attempt to focus only on the main findings of the survey as shown in these dependent variables. The information collected under the variables

will be presented in relative terms or percentages for each of the four sectors or locations covered in the survey.

For the purpose of this discussion we shall first take up the findings pertaining to employment status, income level, education level, landownership, and availability of friends and relatives to sponsor urban employment to respondents, and then discuss the findings related to the respondents' attitude and motivation to migration.

Employment status, education, income, landownership, and the availability of friends and relatives to help find jobs are, in our opinion, very important factors influencing rural-urban migration. The information collected on these variables is presented in Appendix Tables I to VI. We shall briefly highlight some of the main findings of these tables.

#### B. *Employment Status*

According to survey data (see Appendix Table I), a high rate of open unemployment (defined as those actively looking for employment) was recorded in all sectors: 12.38 per cent in kampongs, 13.41 per cent in small-sized towns, 14.66 per cent in medium-sized towns, and 8.73 per cent in estates. In the overall sample, the rate of open unemployment was 13.04 per cent. The estate sector appeared to have a lower rate of unemployment contrary to the national average where 11 per cent has been suggested for Indians [10, p. 77].

This distortion may be accounted for by the small-estate sample of only 108 households used in the survey. It should also be borne in mind that at the time of the survey there was a minor export boom resulting in favorable prices for rubber and oil palm, which perhaps could have had some favorable effect on employment and incomes of estate labor.

In addition to these high rates of open unemployment among the respondents, a further 10 to 14 per cent of the respondents, were reported as partly employed (see Appendix Table I). This shows the extent of underemployment in the rural sector.

The other important feature of unemployment recorded is its duration, and Appendix Table II presents the relevant data. It is clear from this table that a very high proportion of unemployed persons, 44 to 78 per cent, had remained unemployed for well over twelve months; a state of affairs which may be approaching chronic levels in this region.

Considering that the respondents of the survey were drawn from the young members of the labor force, i.e., between fifteen and thirty-four years of age, this high rate of open and persisting unemployment signifies on the one hand, a sheer waste of human resource, and on the other, personal frustration and disappointment for those affected. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that those over thirty-four, who were not covered by the survey, are fully employed. Hence, a high and persisting rate of unemployment can be regarded as the fundamental reason for the premature drift of labor to large urban centers, like Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. In the absence of well-conceived employment creating programs in the rural sector, this reservoir of unemployed labor will sooner or later



worsen the already existing steady migration of labor. The consequent problem of cumulative rural decay is lucidly expressed in the following statement by Jonathan Power:

Emigration began as an economic need in a moment of distress but it evolved to a point where the principal cause of emigration was—prior emigration. As the young people paid less attention to work on the land so the old people found the work increasingly difficult, became less able to take agrarian initiative and less receptive to new agricultural ideas. So there seemed more reason for the next generation of young to depart. [19, p. 13]

### C. *Level of Income*

The survey collected information on respondents' monthly cash and noncash incomes as well as that of the household to which he belonged. Therefore the concept of income adopted for the survey was a broad one consisting of cash and noncash receipts. This was done with the object of ascertaining the respondents' true economic status via income. As explained, there are a number of well-recognized difficulties in obtaining income data by a once-and-for-all survey method like this. The present survey was no exception in encountering difficulties in collecting information regarding respondents' cash and noncash income.

A very high proportion of respondents, 80 per cent in the overall sample, reported having no noncash income. Even in the kampong sector 75 per cent of the respondents reported this. Does this reflect the real situation or is it that most respondents are unable to conceive of a noncash income, even when explained by the interviewers? Our guess is that most respondents are unable to conceive this and are more concerned with cash income, which of course can be regarded as an index of modern economic life. Even in cases where respondents were aware of what noncash income was all about they were not keen to divulge the information for income tax reasons. In the absence of a specially devised set of questions or a detailed questionnaire, it is difficult to say whether the data on noncash income collected on a limited scale reflect reality. Generally in rural areas, persons as well as households, receive noncash incomes in the form of home-grown food, domestic services, and housing. An estimation of these in money terms is difficult and perhaps never made by the rural population. Therefore it is safe to regard the information collected on noncash income as incomplete and concentrate on cash income. However this to a considerable extent will distort the income picture of the various sectors.

Appendix Tables III and IV show the level and the pattern of cash income distribution of the respondents and that of the household within each sector and in the overall sample.

The data presented in Appendix Table III shows that 22 per cent of the respondents in the overall sample reported receiving no cash income. In the kampong sector the proportion in this category increased to 33 per cent.

The striking feature of the data presented in Appendix Tables III and IV is the high proportion of low income receivers. Among respondents with cash income, 30 per cent in the overall sample received less than M\$120 per month.

Only in the medium-sized towns is the position somewhat better. As all respondents in the sample had either their own household or belonged to a household, it would be pertinent to consider the total cash incomes of the household as well. Appendix Table IV shows the pattern of total cash income of the households in the various sectors. There is a marked difference in the levels of income in various sectors. In particular, the kampong sector has a higher proportion of low income receivers, while in the other sectors—small-sized towns, medium-sized towns, and estates—the proportion of low income receivers is somewhat less. As explained above, the picture is somewhat distorted due to the fact that non-cash income had not been taken into consideration. It should be noted that estate-sector households in particular depend only on wage income (cash income) and this must be taken into consideration when comparisons are made with other sectors.

Therefore, one cannot argue on the basis of these figures alone that the kampong sector has the lowest income status because there could be significant noncash incomes accruing to these households which may not be available to the same extent as the town and estate households. Michael Swift describes the peasant economy as an economy where rubber provides a steady stream of income, rice is used for food, and fruit sales provide seasonal income for lump sum expenditure (see [22, pp. 26–27]).

Even if the absence of noncash income makes the picture of income status among respondents incomplete, the data related to cash income is particularly relevant to the study of rural-urban migration. Expectations of regular cash income in urban jobs can be one of the basic considerations for making the decision to migrate. Given the low level of cash income in many households as well as the absence of any cash income for many respondents, it is not difficult to see why there is motivation for migration.

#### D. *Landownership*

The survey collected data on landownership from respondents as well as from households. Appendix Tables V (A and B) and VI (A and B) present the information in relative terms. The significant feature of this data is the low proportion of landownership among the respondents. Appendix Table V-A shows that in the overall sample only 12.39 per cent of the respondents held any land and even in the kampong sector the proportion is about 19 per cent. The low proportion of landownership among respondents in the kampong sector, though surprising, can be attributed to two factors. The sample was heavily weighted towards the younger age group (17–24) as well as towards males. The rate of landownership among these young respondents is relatively low because people generally come to hold land much later in life, when they get married and settle down. On the other hand, in Negri Sembilan, Matrilineal Customary Law (*Adat Perpatih*) restricts the inheritance of Customary Lands to females, and males can inherit such land only in exceptional circumstances, as when the only surviving issue is male. Generally, Customary Land is inherited through females and landownership is by inheritance. Under these circumstances, it is more relevant to

study the ownership of land by the household rather than by respondent.

Appendix Table VI-A shows the number of lots owned by the respondents' households, while VI-B shows the total extent of these lots under various size classes. The striking feature of this data is that there is widespread landownership among all sectors except estates households. This landownership is in terms of one or two lots rather than in widely scattered holdings, and the area of holdings is relatively small. In the overall sample, over 62.8 per cent of households had less than three acres of land. Under present land use patterns, this can be considered too small an area to generate a reasonable income for the household. In the land settlement schemes, for example, 8–10 acres are allocated to each settler family, while in paid schemes 4–6 acres are allocated, to assure farm households of a reasonable income.

A spot check made during the survey also revealed that yields from paddy and rubber, which most households cultivated, were relatively low when compared to the national average. There was no evidence of intensive land use or the raising of high value crops such as vegetables in this area, indicating that income and employment generation is generally poor within existing village agriculture, outside foreign-owned and controlled estates.

#### E. *Level of Education*

As pointed out earlier the dramatic expansion of education since independence not only extended the base of education into the rural areas but changed the educational profile of the young. Wilson in his study [26] points out that private and public views in the country presume that the investment in education would make the younger generation with formal education more employable and productive. However in reality this is far from true because field surveys "... seem to show an enhanced disadvantage of formal general education for the attainment of employment" [26, p. 43]. These surveys, Wilson says, point out that the 15–24 year age group was the group most seriously plagued by unemployment. In addition, among this group 60.5 per cent of the 65,078 who had received primary education were actively seeking jobs, while 88.9 per cent of the 22,325 with lower secondary education were seeking jobs. The percentages for the 25–34 age group were lower [25, pp. 49–51]. This demonstrates that among the 15–24 group there is not only a strong correlation between more schooling and unemployment but the group contains the most active job seekers. As the rural milieu cannot provide the type of white-collar jobs being sought, they migrate to the urban sector in search of employment.

#### F. *Attitudes and Motivation to Migration*

An important part of the survey dealt with the respondents' attitude and motivation to migration, and aimed to measure as far as possible the extent to which they have committed themselves to a migratory process in the near future.

We collected information on respondents' intention to migrate, difficulty of migration, direction of and reasons for migration, the duration of stay after migration, and the availability of friends and kinsmen to sponsor the migrants.

For the purpose of the present discussion we shall focus on the main findings.

The percentage of respondents in the various sectors willing to migrate is shown in Table I. It is clear that a very high proportion of respondents in the sample intended to migrate to other areas.

TABLE I  
PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS INTENDING TO MIGRATE  
IN VARIOUS SECTORS (%)

| Have You Considered Moving to a Different Place ? | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|---|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Yes   | 74.31    | 83.58             | 71.48              | 40.98   | 72.83          |
| No  | 25.68    | 16.41             | 28.51              | 59.01   | 27.16          |

The relatively low proportion of would-be migrants in the estate sector may be due to lack of opportunity rather than lack of willingness. That many of the estate households are tied to plantations is a well-known fact. Their low level of education, their minimal contact with urban centers and their underdeveloped political position are factors that must be taken into account. The boom conditions that prevailed for rubber and oil palm exports at the time of the survey is another factor that one should bear in mind when interpreting the information pertaining to the estate sector.

Having obtained information from the respondents about their willingness to migrate, the survey asked how difficult they would find moving. Table II shows how the respondents reacted to this question.

TABLE II  
DIFFICULTY IN MOVING TO A NEW PLACE (%)

|                | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|----------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Very difficult | 5.66     | 6.73              | 12.55              | 20.93   | 9.98           |
| Difficult      | 30.18    | 38.34             | 33.47              | 30.23   | 34.25          |
| Not difficult  | 64.16    | 54.93             | 53.98              | 48.84   | 55.77          |

It is clear from this data that many respondents intending to migrate do not find moving difficult. However, the situation for respondents in the estate sector is somewhat different. There, relatively more respondents find moving very difficult, reflecting, perhaps, socioeconomic immobility due to the factors referred to above. On the other hand, for 64 per cent of the respondents in the kampong sector intending to migrate, moving is not difficult.

Therefore estates and kampongs reveal two different situations to would-be migrants. The way in which the respondents react to this question also reflects to some extent the cost of moving. The survey did not attempt to quantify the possible cost of moving for migrants. It can be argued however, that those who considered moving not difficult might also consider the cost to be low.

G. *Direction of Migration*

Information regarding the place to which the would-be migrants would move was collected and Table III shows the general pattern of preference.

TABLE III  
PLACE TO WHICH RESPONDENTS DESIRE TO MIGRATE (%)

| Destination  | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|--------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Seremban     | 13.66    | 15.27             | 15.59              | 15.38   | 15.06          |
| Kuala Lumpur | 18.03    | 18.96             | 18.96              | 8.97    | 17.80          |
| Nearest town | 12.02    | 6.25              | 10.09              | 19.23   | 10.04          |
| Kampong      | 2.73     | 2.08              | 1.52               | 1.28    | 1.82           |
| Other states | 8.74     | 11.45             | 8.86               | —       | 9.01           |
| Do not know  | 44.80    | 46.18             | 44.95              | 55.12   | 46.23          |

From these figures it is clearly evident that Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, and the nearest town, in that order, are the most preferred destinations. The fact that Kuala Lumpur emerges as the most preferred place is not surprising in view of its proximity, and availability of transport facilities. All indications are that the Kuala Lumpur–Petaling Jaya urban-industrial complex is going to be a magnet for many young migrants from Negri Sembilan. According to the *Regional Planning and Development Study of the Klang Valley*, net migration to the Kuala Lumpur District between 1965 and 1970 has been about 30,000 per year and it is estimated that the Klang Valley which includes Petaling Jaya and Shah Alam will have a net migration of 15,000–20,000 a year henceforth. The proportion of Malays among the migrants fluctuated between 1965 and 1970 but appeared to be increasing. The study points out that this is 40 per cent in the twelve months preceding the 1970 national census [11, p. 75].

The above data also show that a high proportion of respondents intending to move are not sure where they would go. This may reflect uncertainty in the minds of these respondents with regard to destination or that they are in the process of making a selection. If one can make the assumption that this category of respondents would follow others (migrants tend to follow migrants), then Kuala Lumpur and Seremban are going to attract many of them. From the discussion we had with various persons in the region (not included in the sample), it was agreed that Kuala Lumpur and its suburb is the final destination for most migrants of the project area, and that Seremban tends to act as an intermediary step in the process. The survey findings do not allow us to test the validity of this claim except to show that Seremban comes second to Kuala Lumpur as the preferred place for most respondents. The pull factors of Kuala Lumpur–Petaling Jaya are obviously formidable, and only massive socioeconomic changes in Negri Sembilan Timur can reverse the process.

H. *Reasons for Migration*

The reasons which respondents gave for migrating out of the project area, in order of preference, are given below.

| Reasons for Moving                  | Per Cent |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. More jobs available              | 43.05    |
| 2. Higher salaries                  | 19.48    |
| 3. Have friends and relatives there | 16.91    |
| 4. Better life conditions           | 16.10    |
| 5. More opportunities for children  | 2.02     |
| 6. Others                           | 2.44     |

Source: Survey—overall sample.

This information perhaps, confirms the theory that most migrants move in pursuit of economic gains. In terms of the model which Todaro developed, migration is viewed as a function of “expected” gains and this gain is measured by the “differential” in real income between rural and urban work and “the probability of a migrant securing an urban job” [23, p. 393]. The fact that to many of the respondents the first important reason for migration is the belief that jobs are probably available, and secondly that higher salaries/wages are obtainable, reflects the grounds for this explanation. Finally, availability of friends/relatives to sponsor them in urban areas makes them feel more secure and perhaps reduces the risk in the venture. The role of friends and relatives in urban areas, though less understood, in our opinion increases the probability of migrants obtaining an urban job. Expectation of a better life in urban areas is also a factor influencing the motivation of the respondents to migration. The order of reasons given by respondents in various sectors is shown in Table IV and has the same basic pattern as in the overall sample.

TABLE IV  
REASONS FOR MIGRATION (%)

| Reasons for Migration            | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|
| More jobs available              | 38.79    | 46.22             | 39.62              | 52.94   |
| Higher salaries                  | 15.30    | 19.03             | 21.56              | 20.94   |
| Have friends and relatives there | 15.30    | 15.70             | 20.48              | 10.78   |
| Better life conditions           | 16.39    | 16.91             | 16.71              | 10.78   |
| More opportunities for children  | 3.30     | 2.14              | 1.63               | 0.98    |
| Others                           | 10.92    | —                 | —                  | 3.94    |

### I. Duration of Stay after Migration

Duration of stay at the point of destination is an important aspect of migration affecting the relative growth of certain urban areas at the expense of rural areas. In order to ascertain this aspect of migration, each respondent intending to migrate was asked to state how long he would be staying in the place he would be migrating to: Table V shows the response to the question.

For a significant proportion of respondents, the length of stay after migration is uncertain. This is a common feature in all unplanned migration, for much

TABLE V  
LENGTH OF STAY (%)

| Length of Stay   | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Permanently      | 24.35    | 14.78             | 23.41              | 46.47   | 22.86          |
| For many years   | 2.56     | 8.56              | 4.01               | —       | 4.85           |
| For a few years  | 16.02    | 15.95             | 10.70              | 7.13    | 13.15          |
| For a few months | 1.92     | 0.77              | 1.67               | —       | 1.27           |
| Do not know      | 55.15    | 59.92             | 60.20              | 46.40   | 57.85          |

depends on the availability and type of job, housing, and other facilities. Unlike many African countries where until very recently labor migration was circulatory in nature [20] [17] the experience of other Asian countries has been, and remains, that very few migrants return to settle down in their original home and most tend to stay permanently in the places to which they have migrated. In the above data the proportion of those desiring to stay permanently is also substantial. The estate sector shows the largest proportion of this category of respondents, and the reasons are not difficult to see. For most young persons, estates do not offer the type of economic opportunities and social life they look for. Not only are the wages low but there is crowded housing, limited education facilities and job opportunities, as well as absence of entertainment, factors which tend to inhibit moves away from the estates.

### III. CONCLUSION

Third World, including Malaysian, development strategies have shown that the urban-based "capital-intensive approach" in development has failed to absorb surplus labor as postulated by the Lewis model.<sup>4</sup> Instead, the "unlimited" flow of migrants to urban centers has created a new urban proletariat and a host of associated problems. The most serious is the perpetuation of an urban dualism—namely the increasing disparities of income within the rich and poor in the urban centers. These problems cannot be solved without having a development strategy which takes the total economy, and not a particular region or micro-sector, into independent consideration, without relating it to other regional development projects.

In our view, development strategies for urban and regional growth centers to be pursued in the proposed Negri Sembilan Timur development project area may face a labor shortage, *even though*, as our case study has demonstrated, there is a considerable amount of unemployment, underemployment, and receivers of low incomes among the young in this area. This shortage in our view is created by a number of factors. In Negri Sembilan as a whole, the population growth is 2.35 per cent which is lower than the national growth rate of 2.8 per

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent appraisal of capital-intensive import-substitution development projects and their failure to create sufficient employment in West African countries, see Samir Amin, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa* (London: Penguin, 1973).

cent. Despite this, out-migration will continue, given the persisting drudgery of rural existence. Migration has become a pattern of life among the rural young whose economic aspirations have been highly motivated. This has been further enhanced by a perceived gap between economic opportunities in the village and elsewhere. In this respect a large and widening gap is appearing between the aspirations of the young and economic benefits which, if not bridged, can be very explosive in a multi-ethnic society like Peninsular Malaysia. In the survey, 68 per cent of the respondents intending to migrate indicated that they *would* migrate, even if employment opportunities were made available in the project area in the near future. In addition, the already existing development projects in the contiguous region of Jengka and Kuantan have been "pull" factors for the migrants in this area for some time, while the Pahang Tenggara regional growth center hopes to attract about 34 per cent of its settlers from adjacent regions, of which Negri Sembilan Timur is one [14, p. 12]. This clearly demonstrates that fragmented independent development projects can base their projections on false assumptions.

The containment of out-migration, therefore, is not something that can be done easily. In our view, rural people have to be mobilized on a cooperative basis and operate highly integrated and viable development projects. These should be placed in the social and environmental context and in relation to the national economy. Care must be taken to see that this economic relationship is not on a "frontier pattern." It should not make the proposed growth centers the "peripheries" of the existing urban centers like Kuala Lumpur, and thus perpetuate dualism and accentuate income inequalities. On the other hand, this is what is happening in many Third World countries, including Malaysia (see [21]).

To achieve this, a four-pronged development strategy needs to be pursued. First, there should be a comprehensive agricultural development policy to bring about substantial change in the agricultural sector. Second, suitable agro-based support industries should be integrated within the agricultural sector. This can provide subsidiary employment for agricultural wage earners. Third, social and economic infrastructures should be provided to bring about a substantial change in the life-style of the rural population vis-à-vis the urban population. Lastly and more importantly, planning of the region should begin at the grass roots level and not be initiated and determined solely by national policy-makers and bureaucratic planners at the top. The process of grass roots planning is used successfully in China and summed up in a single phrase: "From the bottom up and from top down." Its philosophy is "Grasp the policy of the Party and mobilize the masses" [1]. Given the merits and demerits of the political system, Jonathan Power says the Chinese model "...has successfully reorganized its land ownership system, increased its productivity and kept people on the land, all without subsidy from the industrial sector or from outside" [19, p. 13].

Agricultural development must aim at mobilizing the rural sector to intensify and diversify existing land use patterns within agriculture, and improve the crop and animal yield. In our view, mixed farming based on crop production and



animal husbandry offers a more viable farm economy for smallholders in this region, especially when one takes into consideration the project area's proximity to the market centers. On the other hand, a development strategy conceived merely to increase marginal output in agriculture and gradually absorb surplus labor into the regional urban growth pole will not materialize. This will ultimately transfer the problems of unemployment and other problems associated with the "modern capitalist sector" to these proposed growth centers, and net out-migration from the rural areas will continue.

This process of agricultural change and modernization can only be achieved within an improved framework of landownership, controls, and other supporting institutions.

The shift from tenancy to ownership status, the accompanying increased availability of reasonably priced, organized credit, the increased emphasis on expenditure for rural public infrastructure, the improved administrative organization of the rural areas, more adaptive research and extension will all work to make the small farmer more productive and to raise his income. Moreover, employment opportunities in rural industry and services should expand markedly and provide him with additional opportunities for investment and mobility. [5, p. 382]

If the experiences of Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea are relevant, then one may ask whether underemployment in agriculture is a result of "too many people on the land" or of a failure by planners and policy-makers to organize labor-intensive agricultural systems. For example, despite volcanic soil of poor quality, rice yields in Japan are higher than in any other Asian country. In Taiwan, yields are six times higher than in the Philippines or India. This massive increase in agricultural productivity has been achieved not by mechanization but by labor-intensive methods. Hence this is the reason that these countries have more people on cultivated land than any Third World country, thus arresting the tendency towards a premature rural drift at the source.

Proposing a rural-based labor-intensive strategy for Southeast Asia in the 1970s based on multiple cropping, Harry Oshima points out the tremendous advantages to be gained in terms of increase in income, employment generation, and improved distribution of income and personal expenditures among farmers as well as the indirect linkage effect it will have on the rest of the economy, especially on the development of an industrial sector [18]. The interdependence between agriculture and industry, often missed by the planners, is well illustrated by the economic histories of developed countries, where agricultural output rose even before industrialization and continued to increase throughout the industrialization period.

In pin-pointing the difficulty of adopting a labor-intensive project in Southeast Asia, Harry Oshima states:

The most formidable obstacle to labour-intensive projects in Southeast Asia is the lack of appropriate material, social and political technologies required for these projects to be effectively completed. And within this complex, specifically it is the administrative and managerial arrangements that are most troublesome. If corruption and financial leakages are so great that dams are not completed, or flimsily

constructed, if co-operatives are dominated by a handful of selfish landlords who build canals and feeder roads beneficial only to their own farms, if peasants fail to pay back most of the credit extended, if Western or Japanese-trained technocrats insist unreasonably on designs, technologies and managerial arrangements taken directly out of Western or Japanese textbooks, or if economists stick too rigidly to the results of benefit-cost analysis, the success of labour-intensive projects will be jeopardized. [18, p. 39]

Economic planning should be based on a wider perspective to achieve calculated ends. If the goal is to achieve higher standards of living in the region, then containing migration would be a major strategy. This can be feasible only through modernization of farm practices in the region thereby raising the per capita farm output. Only then will the rural population remain intact and further enhance regional development. The first step in this direction has been launched by the government in its *Green Book* strategy. However, the targets can only be achieved if they are accompanied by radical changes in rural agricultural institutions, and further complemented by vigorous, resolute, and persistent action by government working with the people.

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APPENDIX TABLE I  
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

|                            | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Fully employed             | 61.90    | 56.85             | 54.92              | 83.49   | 60.03          |
| Partly employed            | 9.99     | 10.22             | 14.06              | 0.97    | 10.70          |
| Unemployed:                |          |                   |                    |         |                |
| (a) looking for employment | 12.38    | 13.41             | 14.66              | 8.73    | 13.04          |
| (b) not looking for work   | 8.09     | 8.30              | 4.50               | 1.94    | 6.25           |
| Student                    | 7.04     | 11.22             | 11.86              | 4.87    | 9.98           |

APPENDIX TABLE II  
DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

| Number of Months Unemployed | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| 1-3                         | 12.19    | 16.17             | 19.29              | 18.26   | 16.38          |
| 4-6                         | —        | 5.88              | 10.52              | 18.10   | 6.77           |
| 7-12                        | 9.75     | 13.23             | 7.09               | 9.09    | 10.19          |
| Over 12                     | 78.06    | 64.72             | 63.10              | 54.55   | 66.66          |

APPENDIX TABLE III  
MONTHLY CASH INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

| Income Class<br>(M\$) |          |                          |                           |         |                   | (%) |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----|
|                       | Kampongs | Small-<br>sized<br>Towns | Medium-<br>sized<br>Towns | Estates | Overall<br>Sample |     |
| None                  | 32.19    | 15.56                    | 27.95                     | 6.43    | 22.48             |     |
| Up to 40              | 5.02     | 2.88                     | 4.24                      | 2.12    | 3.76              |     |
| 41-120                | 20.10    | 38.98                    | 16.09                     | 34.06   | 26.58             |     |
| 121-200               | 25.12    | 23.10                    | 22.22                     | 44.68   | 25.57             |     |
| 201-400               | 11.55    | 13.71                    | 18.95                     | 10.63   | 14.72             |     |
| 401-800               | 5.02     | 5.41                     | 6.86                      | 2.12    | 5.47              |     |
| 801 and above         | 1.00     | 0.36                     | 3.66                      | —       | 1.42              |     |

APPENDIX TABLE IV  
MONTHLY CASH INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD

| Income Class<br>(M\$) |          |                          |                           |         |                   | (%) |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----|
|                       | Kampongs | Small-<br>sized<br>Towns | Medium-<br>sized<br>Towns | Estates | Overall<br>Sample |     |
| Up to 40              | 8.49     | 0.31                     | 0.28                      | —       | 1.63              |     |
| 41-120                | 22.87    | 6.07                     | 3.74                      | 1.96    | 7.54              |     |
| 121-200               | 33.33    | 19.80                    | 12.68                     | 16.66   | 19.01             |     |
| 201-400               | 14.37    | 36.10                    | 26.51                     | 62.74   | 31.80             |     |
| 401-800               | 7.18     | 23.64                    | 24.78                     | 16.66   | 20.54             |     |
| 801 and above         | 1.30     | 7.02                     | 21.03                     | 1.98    | 10.81             |     |
| Cannot estimate       | 12.46    | 7.06                     | 10.98                     | —       | 8.67              |     |

APPENDIX TABLE V  
A. LAND OWNERSHIP AMONG RESPONDENTS

|                 |          |                          |                           |         |                   | (%) |
|-----------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----|
|                 | Kampongs | Small-<br>sized<br>Towns | Medium-<br>sized<br>Towns | Estates | Overall<br>Sample |     |
| Owning land     | 18.69    | 12.90                    | 11.68                     | 0.97    | 12.39             |     |
| Not owning land | 81.31    | 87.10                    | 88.32                     | 99.03   | 87.61             |     |
| Total           | 100.00   | 100.00                   | 100.00                    | 100.00  | 100.00            |     |

B. EXTENT OF LAND CLASSIFIED BY SIZE

| Size Class<br>(Acres) |          |                          |                           |         |                   | (%) |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----|
|                       | Kampongs | Small-<br>sized<br>Towns | Medium-<br>sized<br>Towns | Estates | Overall<br>Sample |     |
| Less than 1           | 13.51    | 5.00                     | 28.20                     | —       | 15.38             |     |
| 1-3                   | 43.24    | 42.00                    | 35.90                     | —       | 40.17             |     |
| 3-5                   | 27.02    | 12.50                    | 12.82                     | —       | 17.09             |     |
| 5-10                  | 13.51    | 15.00                    | 12.82                     | —       | 14.53             |     |
| 10 and above          | 2.70     | 25.50                    | 10.26                     | —       | 12.83             |     |

APPENDIX TABLE VI  
HOUSEHOLDS OWNING LAND

## A. Households Classified by Number of Lots Owned

| (%)             |          |                   |                    |         |                |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Number of Lots* | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
| 1               | 58.51    | 62.58             | 57.39              | 85.33   | 60.22          |
| 2               | 30.85    | 22.44             | 27.82              | —       | 25.96          |
| 3               | 6.38     | 9.52              | 9.56               | 14.67   | 8.83           |
| 4               | 2.12     | 5.46              | 1.73               | —       | 3.31           |
| 5 or more       | 2.14     | —                 | 3.50               | —       | 1.68           |

\* Excludes homesteads.

## B. Total Extent of Lots Owned by Households Classified by Size

| (%)                |          |                   |                    |         |                |
|--------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|
| Size Class (Acres) | Kampongs | Small-sized Towns | Medium-sized Towns | Estates | Overall Sample |
| Less than 1        | 20.18    | 23.92             | 24.56              | 14.66   | 22.61          |
| 1-3                | 49.54    | 37.42             | 35.08              | 85.34   | 40.20          |
| 3-5                | 15.59    | 15.53             | 15.78              | —       | 15.32          |
| 5-10               | 11.92    | 9.84              | 13.15              | —       | 12.06          |
| 10 and above*      | 2.77     | 13.29             | 11.43              | —       | 9.81           |

\* All holdings fell below twenty acres, and most of them were ten to fifteen acres.