

Peil, Margaret, *THE GHANAIAN FACTORY WORKER: INDUSTRIAL MAN IN AFRICA*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1972. 254 p.
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Modernization in Africa has increasingly drawn the attention of many specialists over a wide variety of fields. Few surveys have been conclusive, largely because the concept has been so ill-defined. In the interim, continuing studies will be published, laying the foundation for a more comprehensive theory. Margaret Peil's study of Ghanaian factory workers stands above most empirical works on modernization and avoids the usual pitfalls of overtheorizing with too sketchy data. Instead, this study provides an excellent in-depth view of industrial workers in four Ghanaian towns, concluding only tentatively on aspects of the theory of modernization.

Peil's focus, stated at the outset, is to provide an increased understanding of the characteristics of an emerging social structure in developing countries, the urban labor force. With a view toward ultimate comparisons with early industrial society (comparative historical), with contemporary developed societies (comparative ahistorical) and as a unique case study, the Peil survey delineates the general and particular characteristics of 1432 workers, interviewed from 16 factories in the four towns of Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, and Tema, from 1965 through 1968. Following a preliminary survey in the summer of 1965, the principal survey was conducted in April, 1966 and April, 1967, with a follow-up in the summer of 1968.

Some of the data bear out comparisons with other historical and contemporary studies. As in Nigeria and Senegal, the coastal regions, in contrast to the interior, have a labor force that is better educated, higher skilled, higher paid, and possessing habits more comparable to urban labor in developed countries (Wells and Warmington, 1962, Hauser, 1968, Pfeffermann, 1968). Beyond such general characteristics, however, lie a series of factors that distinguish Ghanaian factory workers not only from urban labor in developed countries, but also from other African urban labor.

First, as with other African urban labor, a high percentage (around 50%) of the total interviewed are migrants, of whom only a few are non-Ghanaians. "Migrants" is not always clearly distinguished from "commuters", but it is clear that the overwhelming majority have come from rural areas to the large

cities for both residential and occupational location. This raises one aspect of the "modernization" issue, i.e. the dynamics of migration.

There is a growing consensus that modernization is associated strongly with migration, and that the dynamic quality is one in which the migratory pattern ceases to be seasonal and casual and becomes a permanent shift. It is a link in the economist's rural traditional sector of the "dual economy", the anthropologist's village society, and their mutual concern with the "modern sector." The Peil data show migrants having long transitions from rural agricultural society to urban conditions, measured by the length of initial unemployment, the educational gap between them and their urban counterparts, and the degree of occupational instability. Although a sociometric analysis using these and related variables would assist in the clarification of the degree of adjustment, and therefore "modernization", the Peil study does not go that far.

Second, along with other African urban labor, Ghanaian urban workers are relatively unskilled by developed urban labor standards. With the level and rate of change of technology in urban industries fairly elementary and changing slowly, technological unemployment is practically an unheard-of phenomenon. Given the relatively recent industrialization patterns in Ghana, particularly in the Nkrumah pilot program at Tema, most firms, whether state-run, mixed, or private, were still relatively small, and had had little experience with labor training. Consequently, most labor training, apart from the limited formal training at Takoradi Polytechnic, at the Kumasi University of Science and Technology and at similar institutions, takes place on an informal basis on the job. As technological change has not been as rapid as in the developed countries, the rural-urban gap has not yet created some of the more severe adjustment problems that may someday emerge. Whether such a process means "modernization" is less subject to consensus than the migration phenomenon. However, Peil's observations on the sociological aspects of urbanization in Tema suggest that had Nkrumah's policies been successful, the adjustment may have been more severe.

Apart from these common African characteristics, the Peil study suggests a few peculiarities of the Ghanaian situation. First, in contrast to other African countries, there seems to be little evidence of occupational specialization along class lines.

But there is an ambiguity here concerning the nature of "class." If it means intergenerational stability of personal income distribution, then the urbanization pattern could show some evidence of a breakdown of the pattern, and therefore an absence of a well-defined class pattern in occupational activity. But this is true in many African countries, and the persistence of family ties at the village level suggests that the migratory phenomenon may be misleading in this context. More important, particularly in Africa, is the degree of ethnic intermarriage. Peil cites intermarriage in 17% of those interviewed and married, a figure that seems high by urban African standards, and could be used as indirect evidence in clarifying the occupational-class issue.

Another peculiarity of the Ghanaian sample is suggested in the data on spending habits. Although Ghanaian workers are similar to other African workers in exhibiting a high propensity to save out of their incomes, the disposition of savings varies considerably. Contrasting with the evidence offered by Pfeffermann (1968), Ghanaian workers are more likely to send money home than their Dakar counterparts, indicating indirect evidence of stronger family ties in Ghana to the rural areas. Here again, a sociometric analysis could further indicate the degree of association of these variables in identifying aspects of the modernization experience and its unique qualities in Ghana.

The Peil study concludes with a few tentative remarks on the nature of modernization. Underlining the ambiguity of most treatments on the topic (Smith and Inkeles, 1966, Kahl, 1967, Doob, 1967), Peil has chosen to focus only on selective aspects that fit easily into more accepted categories. It is clear that both the subjectivity of "modernity", the inconsistency of use in contemporary studies, and the unique aspects of social change in Ghana all justify Peil's reluctance to build from her study a more general theory of modernization. However, this should not preclude a closer statistical examination of some of the wealth of data that she has brought to this growing field.

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