Résumé
Réflexions sur les tentatives de « développement intégré » qui visent à combler le fossé entre niveaux de vie urbains et ruraux.
L'échec généralisé des projets concrets s'explique par une analyse insuffisante de la structure des relations spatiales entre ville et campagne : la planification a été longtemps dominée par une sorte d'opposition dualiste, tendant à nier leurs liens. Par ailleurs, le caractère exclusivement agricole des expériences rurales en a limité l'impact : il semble qu'elles auraient dû associer activités agricoles et non agricoles. Elles étaient, en outre, trop ponctuelles pour avoir un effet en tache d'huile. L'auteur formule, in fine, quelques suggestions basées sur une approche régionalisée des problèmes.

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One of the cardinal problems confronting most of the Third World countries is how to spread the fruits of socio-economic growth and development which are usually concentrated in a few cities to the bulk of the population which is still rural. In realization of this need, rural development has received ample attention in recent years, in development literature, national plans and political platforms. Yet progress has been extremely slow, and the results of rural development programmes have in general been disappointing. Until deeper insights are gained of the best approach to rural development planning, a period of experimentation, debate and introspection will still prevail.

In Nigeria, more recent policy for regional planning is taking shape around the concept of integrated development. Recognized as, perhaps, a keystone of regional development policy, the strategy is aimed at bridging the gap between urban systems and rural sectors (Nigeria 1975: 121-362). However, disputed questions still concern the practical steps to be taken and, in particular, the methods to be followed in channelling the resources of the country to the more than eighty percent of the country's population which remain rural in ambience and way of life. A number of rural development projects have been tried but many customarily lack the spatial planning approach which recognizes the interaction among villages, market towns, small urban centres and metropolitan areas. As well, these projects did not see rural development as a holistic concept which therefore involves a comprehensive development of many variables influencing the quality of life. Consequently, failures have in Nigeria far exceeded successes.

This paper attempts to suggest that the chief fault lies not so much in the aim of the projects as in the whole concept of rural development planning. In trying to raise the level of rural economic development and satisfy the material needs and aspirations of the rural masses, adequate attention has not been paid to the structure of spatial relationships (Wood 1975). This therefore calls for a new strategy which not only improves the lot of those in rural areas but also involves a spatial logic that directs attention to areal integration. More specifically, the paper will give a brief background of rural Nigeria, assess the performance

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of some past rural planning endeavours, and focus on the importance of
the spatial component of integrated rural development planning.

1. Rural Nigeria: Background Information

A few words about rural Nigeria are appropriate to set the scene for
a discussion of rural development planning issues. Despite rapid urban
growth rates that can more than double a city’s population in ten years
(Mabogunje 1969), Nigeria is still predominantly a rural society. Like
the rest of Africa, Nigeria suffers from rural poverty, and rural areas lack
most basic human requirements such as pipe-borne water, electricity,
health and modern transport facilities.

Agriculture employs about seventy percent of the rural labour force
and, before the oil boom, was the highest earner of foreign exchange.
Yet government expenditures currently ear-marked for agricultural
improvement amount to about ten percent of the national total. Expect-
edly, to all but a handful of favoured producers, the only capital available
is their own labour. Agricultural production has consequently been
inching ahead at less than the rate of population growth, and demand
has outstripped supply. Reflecting growing scarcities, food prices to
urban and rural consumers have been rising faster than all other prices,
a fact that carries a sinister meaning when it is considered that, for most
people, food purchases account for about two thirds of all family expen-
ditures. As a result, people eat less and more poorly on the whole; a
slow hunger and famine situation is setting in; there is a low quality
diet for the ordinary man who finds that absolute essentials such as gari,
plantains, milk and meat are in short supply. As a recent study on
Nigeria’s food balances has observed, ‘the inescapable conclusion is that,
at the present compound rate of supplies, Nigeria will not be able to feed
the people in the decades ahead, beginning now’ (Olayide et al. 1972: 64).

The arduous task of farming is still done mainly by the rudimentary
hoe-and-cutlass method since production technology has seen little
change over the years. The appearance of the land is often untidy to
one used to Western systems of agriculture. It may appear to be
uncultivated with its complex mixture of high and low trees and plants.
Actually, the land is under cultivation or is resting. For good reasons
having to do with protection against natural and economic uncertainty,
the farmer hedges risks by interplanting several different crops. This
reduces maximum potential return but ensures survival in all but the
worst years, and also even outs labour input requirements (Norman
1973a).

Despite a massive rural exodus to cities, population pressure on the
land is steadily increasing in various parts of Nigeria, to the extent that
some areas are too crowded in terms of the land supportive capacity.
In the Igbo area of southeastern Nigeria, half the farms already operate
on less than one hectare and, year by year, the area available for cultiva-
tion by the average family is shrinking (Okafor 1977a). This is equally true in most of western Nigeria (Nigeria 1973). Thus, problems of land shortage and ineffective use of available land are compounding to make it impossible for Nigeria to feed her growing population. It is not surprising then that Nigeria is a major importer of food, most of which might be produced at home. The Nigerian farmers are therefore simply not coping with the challenge presented by the drift towards cities, the new wealth and consumption standards of the urban workers and the needs of already established export markets.

Wasteful foreign exchange use is not the only consequence of ignoring the potential contribution of agriculture to national needs. Rockbottom poverty in a country whose population is predominantly rural in its composition places an effective limitation on the domestic market for manufactured products, thereby reducing possibilities for obtaining industrial economies of scale. Under these circumstances, domestic manufacturing tends to remain non-competitive with foreign imports.

On the whole, development problems of the rural sector of the Nigerian economy have had reverberative effects on the pace of development in the country as a whole. For example, a demographer visiting many Nigerian villages will note the relative absence of young persons. Driven by the lack of opportunities for remunerative work, despairing of the most minimal amenities, and dreading the prospect of a lifetime of backbreaking labour for pitifully small rewards, hundreds of thousands of young men and women are abandoning the villages for the cities. Witness the massive overemployment in service occupations in Nigerian cities and the overgrowth of concentrations of people beyond the provision of even minimal housing and public services. But despite continuing outmigration, and even occasional remittances to their home villages from those lucky enough to have found a job in the city, those remaining on the land are not better off. The population increase is relentless and the conditions of rural life are deteriorating. The terms of trade generally heavily disfavour the agricultural producer, and the income from farming is rising less rapidly than that of any other sector. Consequently, the tax burden weighs more heavily on farmers than on urban wage earners (Phillips 1972; Igbozurike 1976). One will only lament that agriculture was the economic base of Nigeria.

Succinctly put, the rural population in Nigeria, as in many parts of the Third World, has been greatly neglected. It is obvious from this brief description that, unless positive actions are taken, the neglect may worsen before it improves (Okafor 1976). If this is accepted as a critical premise for the argument of this paper, it is necessary to briefly comment on the nature and causes of rural-urban spatial inequality in Nigeria.
2. Spatial Dualism and Rural Planning in Nigeria

Over the years the tacit assumption for regional planning in Nigeria has been ‘plan the urban centre and the rural area will take care of itself’. In other words, the rural-urban dichotomy has been in vogue, and planning authorities do tend to treat urban and rural centres as separate socio-economic entities. Thus in several forms urban-rural inequality has been accentuated. Yet it is increasingly being demonstrated that the dichotomy of town and country is not real.

At the risk of over-simplification it may be said that this viewpoint of spatial dualism has been largely influenced by two basic theoretical orientations. The first of these is best summarized by the Rostowian view that the Western model provided the less developed countries with the shortest road to economic progress (Rostow 1960). Although by now largely discarded as ahistorical, its impact on the developmental outlook of many developing countries is persistent. This has been reinforced by a second theoretical perspective, most actively disseminated by Albert Hirschman (1958) and Gunnar Myrdal (1957), that economic development is tantamount to urban-industrial growth. In the opinion of the two authors, spatial inequality is temporary and is an unavoidable result of or a precondition to growth, in the sense that the initial phase of accelerated economic development and growth will concentrate on specific locations as a result of locational advantages. Hirschman emphasized that the benefits of development would trickle down and, as the economy moved towards take-off stage, the rural sector would be carried on the back of the urban industrial sector. Myrdal, conversely, has argued that the concentrated development at the core would eventually affect the periphery through the spread effects. Implicit in the observation of both these writers is the point that, instead of inter-regional flows of people, ideas, capital and commodities acting in a deviation counteracting fashion, they tend to be deviation amplifying, that is, they accentuate inter-regional differences (Logan 1972). Hence there arises Myrdal’s principle of ‘circular and cumulative causation’, in which development makes an area attractive to further development. It is assumed that these flows can occur without requiring or producing any fundamental changes in the social structure. Thus, the strategy has in principle two major components: (1) central planning control and coordination of the economy as a top-down process, and (2) industrialization and expansion of the modern sector as a means of rapid economic growth and take off. But in practice, at least in Nigeria, the strategy has failed to produce an efficient urban-rural spatial system because the major centres of change, which are the urban centres, constitute the core region whose dominance is self-reinforcing. Contrary to Friedmann’s core-periphery interaction (Friedmann 1968), experience has shown that a smooth flow of innovations from the core to the periphery has not been
achieved because of the fundamental weakness of interaction in the communication field between urban and rural centres. In Nigeria, both the colonial and the post-colonial policies did not prepare the ground so as to erode the boundaries between the core and the peripheral regions (Okafor 1977b). One has been very late in realizing—as Adelman (1975) has rightly observed—that the trickle-down theory of economic development does not work effectively to improve the welfare of the rural poor. For one thing, the modern socio-economic system was not self-sustaining in most Third World countries. It was imposed from the outside, and in areas ill-prepared for its absorption. Subordinate to the needs of the dominating centres (colonial metropolises), it evolved on the basis of external capital and technology. It is this dependent position (colonial and post-colonial) that has prevented the Nigerian economy from developing its own productive forces in a manner which would gradually lead to the satisfaction of the various needs of her society. Consequently, the modernizing forces are extremely selective in their forms and effects. Reacting against disequilibrating effects of spatial dualism, rural development efforts of the mid 1950's and the early 1960's in Nigeria concentrated on single-project development schemes. Many of such schemes were merely grandiose central government agency plans lacking sufficient information about local needs. The implications of this approach will be illustrated by examining a few of such projects.


Although several ad hoc single rural development projects have been tried in various parts of Nigeria, it would suffice to illustrate mainly with agricultural development projects because of the amount of faith which has been placed on them. When rural development plans made some inroads into the planning proposals of central and regional governments, the main preoccupation was with agricultural development. It was perhaps believed that rural development is synonymous with agricultural development. Though the latter is obviously an essential part of rural development, experience in Nigeria has shown that exclusive concern with agricultural development from the point of view of growth and increased output can run counter to the basic spatial objectives of rural development. No systematic study of the locational implications has ever preceded the programme implementations.

Efforts to transform rural Nigeria through planned agricultural schemes started in early colonial days. For example, in the 1920's a cotton growing scheme at Daudawa in Katsina emirate was introduced to promote commercial small holdings (Taylor 1942); a sleeping-sickness control programme at Anchau in the 1940's had simultaneously sought to stimulate better agricultural and tenure systems (Nash 1948). Similarly, during the 1950's the Shendam settlement scheme attempted to formalize and redirect earlier spontaneous resettlement to achieve an
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agricultural purpose (Hunt 1951); and the Niger agricultural project at Mokwa (Baldwin 1959) was not too different in its objectives and conceptualization from the later farm settlement schemes, viz. to serve as a starting point for the adoption of modern agricultural techniques and to provide economic opportunities for young rural Nigerians who would otherwise migrate to the cities. What is bothersome about all the projects cited above is that they all had signal failures a few years after their inception.

Inspired by the famous Israeli moshav model of agricultural cooperatives, the then Eastern and Western Nigeria governments established the farm settlement schemes as an attempt to provide a sudden flowering of agricultural development. While established with good official intentions, the settlements encountered a number of difficulties such as problems of adapting settlers to new cultivation techniques, uneconomical use of farm machinery, heavy management overheads, and consequences of hurried innovation (Floyd & Adinde 1967; Olatunbosun 1971; Rogge 1977). They were typically over-capitalized and insufficiently planned in terms of the selection of crops, settlers, and equipment. The poor performance of the farm settlement schemes serves to illustrate that the planner should try to provide what the rural people believe they want, rather than what he, the planner, thinks they ought to have. Outside these single-centre schemes the impact was hardly felt and their innovative aims were defeated as they had very limited influence on rural life improvement. Running through much of the literature on farm settlement projects in Nigeria is the notion that they have not been an effective lever for rural development. For example, in a survey of forty villages within about three kilometres of eight farm settlements, it was found that only six percent of the local farmers had ever visited farm settlements. Many thought they were ‘off limits’ to all but government employees. Only about eight percent had learned about new methods from the farm settlements (Adegboye et al. 1969). Therefore, if farm settlements had so little interaction with villages closest to them, it is unlikely that they had any impact farther afield, and their role as innovation centres for surrounding areas must be marginal.

There have been further attempts at stimulating rural development in Nigeria through single project schemes but they are now involving rural populations more directly. Such efforts include the Uboma rural project which was developed and sponsored by the Shell Company of Nigeria in collaboration with the former Eastern Region government (Oluwasanmi et al. 1966; Anthonio & Ijere 1973). Also, there was an attempt to stimulate rural development by means of educational and medical facilities at the Ibarapa and Igbo-Ora rural development projects in Western Nigeria (Baber 1966).

In addition, distinct from previous agriculture-oriented projects, the Nigerian government with the United States Agency for International Development established in 1966 two rural industrial development
centres, one in Owerri and the other in Zaria. These projects were aimed at providing finance, investment guidance, training and other services for new and expanding rural small industries (Lele 1975). The most important problem of the industrial development centre was the shortage of competent personnel. This was characterized by poor management, scanty workshop facilities, and an inability to provide timely assistance when needed.

Overall, there was much variation in the performance of these single-project proposals reviewed above, but many have enjoyed limited success. The review sharply focuses on the dilemma of having external forces involved in the transformation of Nigeria’s rural sector. It is too easy to criticize, but much evidence suggests that the projects lack an essential ingredient in rural development planning because, viewed in spatial terms, the main impact of the schemes has been ‘implosive’ rather than the ultimately desirable ‘explosive’ growth (Siddle 1976). This has given rise to further intra-rural inequalities as the relatively advantaged benefitted first from access to limited inputs. Besides, the single projects are few in number altogether and scattered irrationally. In that sense, the goals of rural development could not be achieved because spatial and functional arrangements were insufficiently integrated into the overall plan. The occasion for more systematic treatment of rural development was never provided. The concern today with integrated rural development is thus an outgrowth of the realization that a multi-pronged approach is needed to achieve success in rural development programmes.

4. Integrated Rural Development: Concept and Practice

Integrated rural development has been variously defined. Practitioners are also diverse in their emphasis and approach to specific projects. The United Nations, for example, has adopted the phrase ‘unified approach’, which involves an attempt to re-examine the problem of development as a total societal process in the context of developing countries as they exist (General Assembly, Resolution 2681 (xxv), 1970). One essential concern of this approach is the means whereby a country or a region can determine its style or the development pattern most appropriate to its own values and circumstances and adopt a holistic approach to solving its development problems. Another is the assurance of wider participation of all major social groups in the process of development and in its benefits.

To others, integrated rural development embodies a coordinated team or inter-disciplinary approach. More specifically, integrated rural development has been defined as ‘a consciously formulated, systematic, multi-sectoral programme to attain the integration of the people in the mainstream of income groups in a country’ (Olatunbosun 1976). Thinking in the same vein, Floyd (1972) has referred to it as a ‘systems approach’
to solving rural development problems. These viewpoints are not mutually exclusive despite emphasizing either implicitly or explicitly different aspects of the development strategy. They are all agreed that, since rural development is a complex process involving environmental, economic, social, technical and spatial inter-relationships, any approach to it must of necessity involve a 'package' approach providing all the necessary inputs. One of the most crucial problems of integrated rural development planning is, however, how the spatial component can be given stimulus. This is where, in practice, most plans have fallen short of expectation. Though the comprehensive nature of rural development has been stressed, the integrated spatial character of the economy has been relegated to the background. A look at a few attempts towards integrated development will further amplify the point.

At one extreme, there are projects which focus on the development of a single community by diversifying its economic outlook and generally improving the lives of its inhabitants. For example, the Otta integrated rural development pilot project set up by the former Western Region with the International Labour Organization as the executing agency was basically concerned with simultaneously improving the infrastructural, agricultural and industrial sectors of a small rural community (Mueller & Zevering 1969; Austin 1976). Although the pilot area is centrally located in the former Western State, and people given vocational training were recruited from all parts of the State, the spatial impact of the project has been limited to its immediate environs.

At the other extreme, the Samaru integrated rural development project is emphasizing an interdisciplinary solution. The Samaru Institute for Agricultural Research, attached to the Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria), has consistently argued for and practised a team approach to rural development (Goddard et al. 1971; Mijindadi 1978). While it is here accepted that a rural community ought to be viewed in totality from cross-disciplinary perspectives, what is persistently lacking is an integrated approach inbuilt in a spatial framework.

There is therefore a need to evolve a new and different arrangement that will eliminate spatial imbalances and produce an ordered rural development pattern. The following discourse suggests such an approach.

5. Spatial Integration in Rural Planning: A Proposal

In the light of the above observations, the rural development strategy one may suggest is one that incorporates populations in the development of their own communities through a coordinated regional approach. The crucial elements of the chosen strategy include: place-oriented development (involving the available and potential resources of the community; retention of the rural population as much as possible in order to control excessive migration to the cities; encouragement of urbanization
in situ and general rural transformation; and functional and structural integration of the region into the national spatial system).

In Nigeria, increasing interest is being shown in and considerable resources are being committed to the promotion of rural non-farm economic activities. As various initiatives continue to gather momentum, it seems timely and appropriate to review the policies, supporting structures and action programmes directed to involving this important sector in rural development. Various Nigerian examples support the claim that non-agricultural activities are becoming part and parcel of the rural economy. In this context, the studies by Norman (1973b) in northern parts of Nigeria, by Okafor (1978) in southeastern parts of the country, and by Berry (1975) in the West are very illustrative of the important role they play in structuring the rural economy and as a development vehicle.

One may propose that, for the viability of rural communities, the integrated farm and non-farm sectors will serve to maximize their respective performance. Thus, a planned rural integrated region based on the above concept will involve both sectors in complementary roles within the development process. The farm sector's role is to maximize agricultural production through an intensive development of the existing small farms. The non-farm sector's role, on the other hand, is to make a maximum direct contribution to the support of agricultural development by providing capital, infrastructural and marketing services. Conceptually, the objective is for the two sectors to attain a symbiotic situation in which they will continuously assist each other so as to secure the best economic and social returns on the investments in both. The improvement of only one component of the sub-system can at best show benefits within the constraints imposed by the other component, and at worst throw the whole sub-system out of gear.

In carrying out this proposal, each of the nineteen States of Nigeria may, after a spatial inventory, be divided into regions which could be known as agro-service regions. These are spatial units designed to promote interdependency of farm and non-farm activities. Taking care of inter-rural inequalities, each region would have some degree of ecological unity revealed in its climate, soil conditions, topography, major marketable crops, farm size, land tenure arrangements, and so on. Each will have at least a market centre that will stimulate agricultural commercialization and provide other needed marketing and service facilities. The agro-service region will therefore be a component of the urban and rural sub-systems. It will retain people in rural areas by giving them a range of services, job opportunities, agricultural and other inputs through selected local growth centres. The principal markets, being a social and economic nexus for the surrounding village communities, can be regarded as rural service centres. They must be regularly spaced over the countryside to break the isolation of the rural dwellers from the national or regional market. These centres, if developed at the lowest, most local
level, could form the nuclei of small urban centres or service towns which Nigeria now badly needs to minimize the growth of its burgeoning cities. Around such market towns, a whole range of rural activities can be effectively oriented.

Each agro-service region as a basic planning unit would gradually build up its capacities in social, marketing and distribution services, and create opportunities for non-farm employment so as to bring into being what Mosher (1969) has called a 'progressive rural structure', or a multi-purpose community. For instance, planned regions with their rural markets will be invested with local administrative functions to take care of the surrounding villages and provide needed health facilities, postal services, banking operations and such means that will improve the living standard of the rural population. The spatial system that will emerge should be characterized by the expansion of a number of service centres satisfying the local population's demand for a relatively small range of wholesale and retail activities.

The suggested strategy is based on the notion that the relatively weak filtering-down process of growth impulsed from major core regions to peripheral rural areas must be strengthened through an orderly and nested hierarchy of spatial systems linking village communities to rural and regional growth centres and, in time, to the principal city and administrative headquarters of each State. This process will serve as a lever of development from below and give fresh economic strength to the villages. Most importantly, what is suggested in this form of integrated rural development is a process of analysis, planning and programming carried out in close consultation with the local population organized through its community councils, progressive unions, farmers' associations, youth clubs and the like. By sinking planning and development activities deep into rural communities, and by encouraging public participation in rural development programmes, the peoples' wishes and desires may be directly reflected in State or nation-wide plans for resource allocation, with rural self-help efforts joined in supportive public investments and incentive programmes.

Such an integrated rural planning approach has important research implications. Sufficient information needs to be amassed about local resources and their effective use. Planning based on nebulously identified resources has contributed in no small measure to repeated failures in Nigeria.
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