

RIVISTA INTERNAZIONALE
DI
SCIENZE ECONOMICHE
E
COMMERCIALI

Anno XXX

Marzo 1983

N. 3

ESTRATTO / REPRINT

GIORGIO FUA

PROBLEMS OF LAGGED DEVELOPMENT
IN OECD EUROPE:
A STUDY OF SIX COUNTRIES

SOTTO GLI AUSPICI DELLA
UNIVERSITÀ COMMERCIALE LUIGI BOCCONI - MILANO

CEDAM - CASA EDITRICE DOTT. A. MILANI - PADOVA

COMITATO DI DIREZIONE - EDITORIAL BOARD

HENRI BARTOLI (Université de Paris) - FEDERICO CAFFÈ (Università di Roma) - GIOVANNI DEMARIA (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei) - GIAMPIERO FRANCO (Università di Venezia) - ARNALDO MAURI (Università di Milano) - ARIBERTO MIGNOLI (Università Bocconi) - ANTONIO MONTANER (Universität Mainz) - HISAO ONOE (Kyoto University) - ALBERTO QUADRIO CURZIO (Università Cattolica, Milano) - ROBERTO RUOZI (Università Bocconi) - ALDO SCOTTO (Università di Genova) - SERGIO STEVE (Università di Roma) - SHIGETO TSURU (Hitotsubashi University) - BASIL S. YAMEY (London School of Economics and Political Science).

DIRETTORE RESPONSABILE - MANAGING EDITOR

dal 1954 al 1983 (from 1954 to 1983): TULLIO BAGIOTTI
dal 1983 (from 1983): ALDO MONTESANO (Università di Venezia)

Segretaria di Redazione (Editorial Secretary): ANNA BAGIOTTI CRAVERI

Direzione e redazione: Via P. Teulié 1, 20136 Milano, Tel. 8399031.
C.c. postale 47300207. Pubblicazione mensile; spedizione in abbonamento postale, gruppo III. Editrice Cedam, 35121 Padova, Cc. postale 205351

Abbonamento annuale per il 1983: Italia L. 60.000; estero L. 75.000.
Disponibili collezioni complete dall'origine (1954).

RIVISTA INTERNAZIONALE DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE E COMMERCIALI (INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS).
A monthly, published since 1954. Editorial Office: Via P. Teulié, 1 20136 Milano, Italy. Subscription rates 1983: U.S. \$ 50. Clothbound volumes, 1954-1982, available.

© Copyright 1983

by Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Economiche e Commerciali - Milano

Stampato in Italia — Printed in Italy

GIORGIO FUA

PROBLEMS OF LAGGED DEVELOPMENT
IN OECD EUROPE:
A STUDY OF SIX COUNTRIES

Estratto dalla *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Economiche e Commerciali*

Anno XXX - 1983 - n. 3



CEDAM - CASA EDITRICE DOTT. A. MILANI

PADOVA

1983

PROBLEMS OF LAGGED DEVELOPMENT
IN OECD EUROPE:
A STUDY OF SIX COUNTRIES

by
GIORGIO FUÀ (*)

A report having the same title as this note has been prepared by the author on the request of the Secretary-General of OECD ⁽¹⁾. It deals with those six countries of OECD Europe which started developing later than the other ones, i.e. (in alphabetic order) Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. The original English text of the report has not yet been published, but an Italian version is in print ⁽²⁾ and a Spanish translation is under way. What follows is an abridged account of some of the main ideas expressed in the report.

1. *Income level*

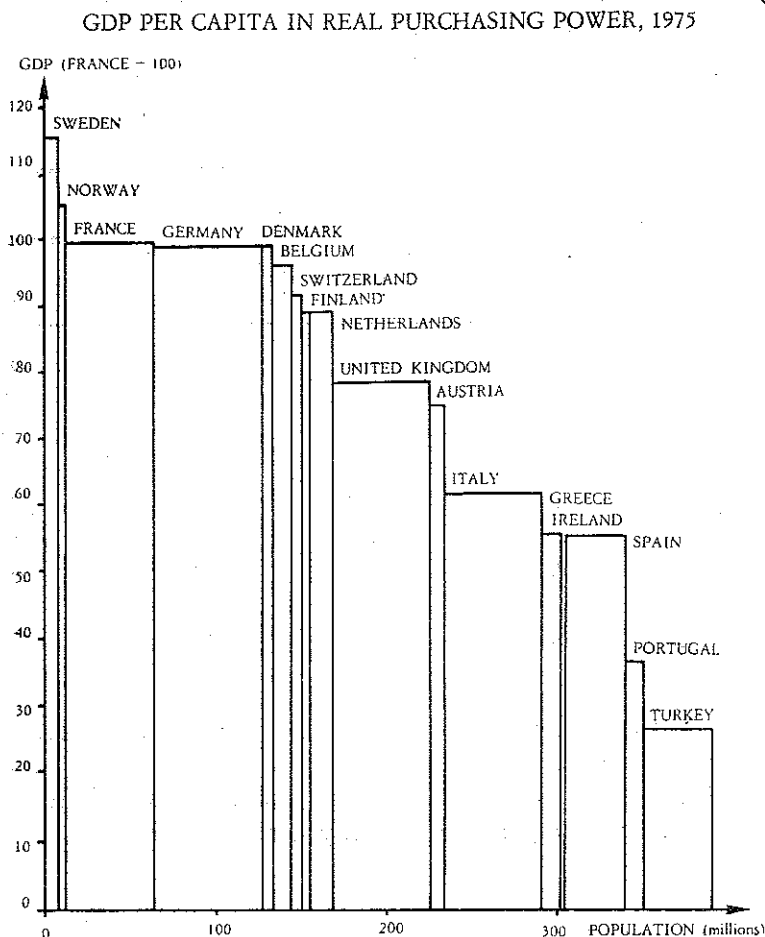
Chart 1 shows the level of GDP per capita in all the countries of OECD Europe, except those with less than 400.000 inhabitants. GDP is measured in real purchasing power equivalent units, which in present days are likely to provide a more significant indication than current exchange rates. Countries are ranked from left to right in decreasing order, according to their income level. Each country is represented by a rectangle, the basis of which is proportional to the population size.

(*) Università di Ancona.

(1) OECD document n. 2277, Paris, 1980 (de-restricted).

(2) G. FUÀ, *Problemi dello sviluppo tardivo in Europa*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1980.

CHART 1.



It appears that the Six form the bottom of the income scale. Italy is the least depressed, followed at short distance by Greece, Ireland and Spain, all three practically on an equal level. Turkey is by far the most depressed, Portugal comes mid-way.

Table 1 complements the picture above in two ways. First, it shows how different the comparative positions would look if income were measured at current prices and current exchange rates, instead of in real purchasing power. The income gap between each one of the Six, on one hand, and the aggregate Earlier D.C.'s of OECD Europe, on the other hand, would appear somewhat different (Turkish income per head is 33 per cent of the Italian

one at current exchange rates, while it is 42 per cent in real purchasing power), but the ranking of the countries would undergo no significant changes⁽³⁾.

TABLE 1.
GDP PER CAPITA (1976) AND LIFE EXPECTANCY (1975)

	GDP per capita, 1976			Life expectancy at birth, 1975
	Expressed in 000 U.S. \$ at current exchange rates	The same, other OECD Europe = 100	Expressed in real purchasing power, other OECD Europe = 100	
Greece	2.4	39	59	72
Ireland	2.5	40	59	71
Italy	3.0	49	66	72
Portugal	1.6	26	39	69
Spain	2.9	46	59	72
Turkey	1.0	16	28	61
Total of the above	2.4	38	53	69
Other countries of OECD Europe	6.2	100	100	72

Second, the table shows that the large differences found in income level are only partly reflected in life expectancy. In Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain, the life expectancy at birth is as high as in average Earlier D.C.'s. Portugal is slightly below, and only Turkey is much lower.

2. Past income growth

A series of GDP estimates stretching back to 1938 can be tentatively constructed, on the basis of OECD files, for all the countries here examined and is indeed shown in my report.

The margin of error involved in those estimates must be considered quite substantial, but some conclusions can nevertheless be cautiously drawn. Taking the 1938-1976 period as a whole, five of the Six (the exception being Ireland) appear to have had a higher rate of increase of total GDP than average Earlier D.C.'s. Four of the Six (the exceptions being

(3) There is only an exchange of ranks between those three countries — Greece, Ireland, Spain — which were said above to be practically on an equal level.

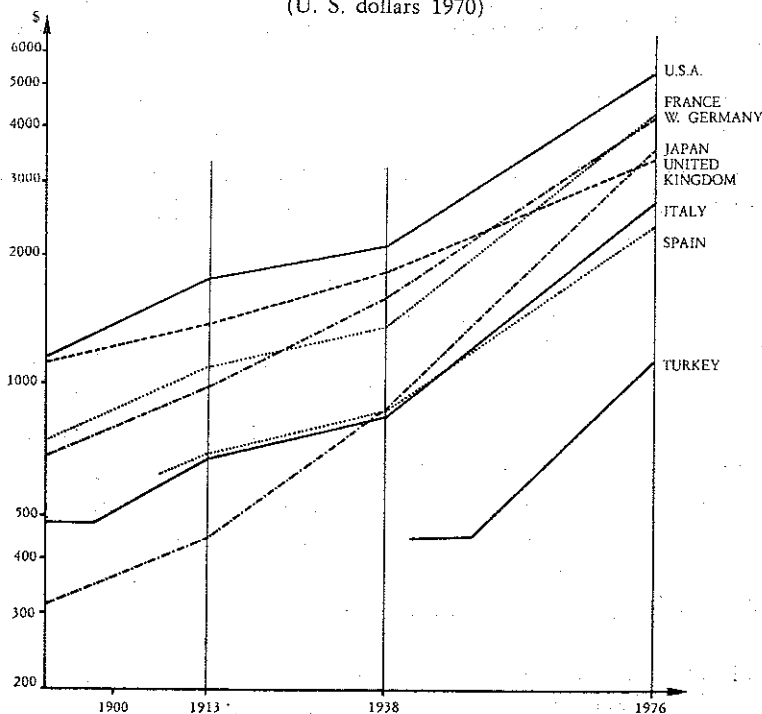
Ireland and Turkey) appear to have had a higher rate of increase of GDP per capita than average Earlier D.C.'s. Such an average is depressed by the inclusion of some slow-growing economies, notably the United Kingdom; if, instead of the average, a single country like France were taken as a term of comparison, only Portugal among the Six would be found to have a higher rate of increase.

It also appears that none of the Six was consistently a ground-gainer or a ground-loser, as concerns comparative income per head, through the whole period. Greece has been gaining much ground since 1950; but had previously lost a lot. Turkey lost continuously for a while, but became the largest gainer from 1973 to 1976. Italy was a large gainer from 1950 to 1970, but a loser before and after.

Statistical information available about the period before 1938 is, of course, even scantier and less reliable. However, in chart 2, I can offer a schematic view of changes in the relative position of some not exclusively European countries from the last decade of the 19th century. The segments

CHART 2.

GDP PER CAPITA IN REAL PURCHASING POWER, 1890-1976
(U. S. dollars 1970)



of straight lines are drawn so as to join a few benchmark years: the year in which the modern economic development of each country began, the years immediately before the two world wars, and 1976 (*). From the chart as a whole we can see that, over this long period of time, once their development has begun, the countries under consideration moved at a pace which did not differ much from country to country, with the exception of the United Kingdom, which developed at a slower pace and of Japan which developed much faster.

3. *Structural characteristics*

A comparative statistical analysis of the economic structure made in my report to OECD leads to the conclusion that on many points there is a systematic difference between the Six on one hand and earlier developed countries of OECD Europe on the other hand. Not only does the average position of the Six deviate from that of earlier developed countries, but deviations with the same sign are generally found (with minor exceptions) in everyone of the Six. Moreover such deviations tend (though with considerable exceptions) to be larger in those of the Six which started developing later.

The question arises whether the structure and trends presently found in Later D.C.'s just tend to replicate those which were observed at previous dates in Earlier D.C.'s, when they were passing through the corresponding development phases. The answer is negative, as explained in an earlier study: « There is a general reason for expecting that the structural evolution of the lagging economies will not be the exact replica of the evolution of the economies which have preceded them. Even if the endogenous forces of development were equal in both cases (a far-fetched hypothesis, indeed), the milieu with which these forces interact has been modified, if only because of the development which has taken place meanwhile in the advanced countries. Thus, to take the most obvious example, it is clear that we cannot expect a country, which is at present going through the initial phases of industrialization, to assume, in the international division of labour, a monopolistic role analogous to the one played by the early industrial countries in the corresponding phase of their evolution [...]. »

(*) As in 1938 Spain had civil war, it has been conventionally assumed here that Spanish (potential) GDP per head was the same in that year as actual GDP per head in 1935.

Hence, if it is thought useful (as I believe it is) to try and identify certain statistical laws of the growth and structural evolution of the economy, in the sense of functional relationships valid for several countries, we must admit that these functions are subject to shift over time (so that the further problem arises of identifying the laws governing such shifts) » ⁽⁵⁾.

Though all the common characteristics of the six countries result from the combination of a « phase of development » effect and of a « generation » effect, it may be practical to catalogue those characteristics in two separate groups, according whether the former or the latter effect prevails.

4. *Typical features of early phases of development*

The following is a list of relevant points regarding which the *present* experience of the Six is similar to (though not being an exact replica of) the *past* experience of earlier D.C.'s:

- a) low GDP per capita and low average productivity of labour;
- b) low stock of capital per head;
- c) high share of agriculture and low share both of industry and of services in total employment and total production;
- d) low share of manufacturing and correspondingly high share of construction in industrial employment and production;
- e) low share of fabricated metal products in manufacturing employment and production;
- f) high share of self employment in total employment;
- g) high proportion of micro-firms in total employment;
- h) strong productivity ⁽⁶⁾ differentials between agriculture (lowest productivity), industry, services (highest);
- i) high share of private consumption in GDP;
- j) high share of food in total private consumption;
- k) strong movement of population from rural areas to towns;
- l) marked inequality in the distribution of incomes.

⁽⁵⁾ G. Fuà, *Lagged Development and Economic Dualism*, « Banca Nazionale del Lavoro Quarterly Review », June, 1978, section 4.

⁽⁶⁾ Average labour productivity, henceforward referred to as « productivity » for brevity's sake.

5. *Typical features of late-comers*

Some relevant points have now to be mentioned, regarding which the present experience of the Six is found markedly to diverge not only from the present, but also from the past experience of Earlier D.C.'s.

As will be shown in the following, the main differences found may be all — largely — traced back to three major factors which do affect late-comers while they did not, of course, affect to a comparable extent the first-comers in their early development phases: namely the technology gap, the demonstration effect, the exposure to competition from more developed countries on the international market.

The main differences found may be condensed in three points as follows.

First, the Six show very strong productivity differentials not only between industries and between regions (which is not without precedents in Earlier D.C.'s), but also between firms inside any given industry and region. In the following this feature will be conventionally indicated with the world «dualism».

Second, the Six have a poor performance in finding regular employment for their potential labour supply, in the sense that in all these countries participation rates — at least as reported in official statistics — are either very low, or rapidly declining or in most cases both. In the following these features of the labour market will be conventionally indicated with the term «employment slack»^(?).

It is remarkable that employment slack persisted in the Six even when, prior to 1974, these countries were having high rates of net emigration over protracted periods.

Third, the Six suffer from above-average proneness to price instability and to Government deficit, and from a special fragility of their balance of payments.

Typically, a Later D.C. meets large chronic deficits in commodity trade (a consequence of her having a weak competitive position), and mainly relies for offsetting them on surpluses from emigrant remittances (a consequence of her having a labour surplus) and from tourism (which some authors consider to be a distinctive feature of «peripheral» economies).

(?) Some kind of employment slack is presently threatening also the generality of Earlier D.C.'s, as a result of different orders of factors: the oil price rise and the adjustment crisis in the world economy; the changing pattern of world trade; the mismatch between the aspirations of the younger generations seeking jobs and the existing productive structure. In Later D.C.'s such difficulties are superimposed on preexisting ones, of a more fundamental nature; and the present paper concentrates on the latter.

6. *The destiny of a late developer: a) capacity-and-income gap and productivity-and-wage dualism*

It is necessary to understand not merely why Later D.C.'s began their development late and are still at a low income level, but also why they have today a series of common structural problems which the Earlier D.C.'s did not have (or at least not in such a serious form), when they were at a corresponding income level. That is, in practice, what determines the very marked productivity differentials and other characteristics mentioned above as typical of the generation.

I think that a large part of the explanation is contained in three elements: the size of the technological leap which has to be made by the late-comers; the force of the demonstration effect in the modern world; the fact that (not only in the Later D.C.'s and not only at the present time) an entrepreneurial system and an organisational network, both public and private, can grow and transform itself only at a moderate speed.

The rationale of the explanation can be summed up in a few words as follows: in a country which begins modernisation when others are already far ahead, firms capable of taking advantage of modern technology will not be wholly absent, but will be too few to employ the whole potentially available labour force. So room is left for firms which have lower levels of productivity and, therefore, lower levels of factor rewards. The co-existence of these markedly diverse levels and the operation of powerful demonstration effects create, however, a series of tensions which gradually result in jobs with lower productivity leaving the market more rapidly than jobs with high productivity can be created.

The remainder of this section and the following are dedicated to a more articulated and comprehensible exposition of the hints given above⁽⁸⁾.

In those countries which started developing early, the productive structure had time to develop gradually, keeping pace with the accumulation of the world store of technical knowledge which was itself a gradual process. Moreover the adjustment between available knowledge and the capacity to make use of it was largely produced in these same countries, partly in response to the needs most felt there. Therefore, Earlier D.C.'s are found to have at all times plenty of « modern » firms, by which I mean firms able to make use of the whole range of material and social technologies offered by the world-wide store of knowledge in existence at any one time.

(8) What follows is based on *Lagged Development and Economic Dualism*, cit., pp. 123-124, to which those requiring additional explanation are referred.

A completely different picture is offered by those countries which began modernisation only after the world frontier of new technology had far out-distanced the old frontier of traditional technology. These countries began by having only a few firms capable of taking advantage of the whole range of modern technology. If conditions are favourable, these nuclei of modern productive organisation will gradually expand and multiply a little at a time until they cover the whole economy. But, in any case, such a process is subject to numerous constraints, including the fact that organisational structures need time to grow. In the meantime the spearhead of modern firms in the Later D.C.'s remains small and can only absorb a fraction of the local supply of labour and capital.

Ample room is, therefore, left in the Later D.C.'s for the operation of those firms which are not yet up to taking advantage of all the resources of modern technology (« pre-modern » firms). It may be noted that the limitations suffered by these firms (often due to family ownership, smallness of size and the weight of tradition) are likely to be more marked with regard to managerial than technical change.

It has now to be seen how all this is reflected in productivity and factor earnings.

In Earlier D.C.'s, as all firms have (or tend to have) an equal capacity to switch from one technology and one type of production to another, according to their convenience, and moreover, have to compete with each other for the supply of capital and manpower, the profit rates and wage rates of the various firms tend to level off, as a result, too, of adjustment of the prices of the products. This amounts to saying that total factor productivity (measured on a net basis and at current prices) tends to be equal in all firms⁽⁹⁾.

On the contrary, in the Later D.C.'s — where modern and pre-modern firms operate side by side, the latter can master only a fraction of the technological knowledge available to the former, and have, therefore, a narrower range of manoeuvre in choosing among productive opportunities — pre-modern firms are unlikely to be able to take advantage of the most favourable opportunities and, therefore, they will be unable to provide such high rates of reward to factors as modern firms. This amounts to saying that, in the Later D.C.'s total factor productivity among all firms does not tend to level off as in the Earlier D.C.'s, but modern firms tend to have a higher productivity level than pre-modern ones.

⁽⁹⁾ The above is a crudely simplified statement, requiring some qualification for which I refer to *Lagged Development and Economic Dualism*, cit.

The lower total productivity of the pre-modern firms means that in those firms either labour or capital or both will get a lower rate of reward than in modern firms, and it seems that in general the difference is born largely, if not wholly, by labour.

Of course the above is a highly simplified model of the real world. In the latter we do not find such a clear split between the two types of firms; but we find instead that, in both Earlier D.C.'s and Later D.C.'s, the majority of existing firms are distributed continuously over a wide range of productivity levels. However the curve showing the distribution of the firms according to their levels of productivity is systematically different in the two groups of countries, in the sense that the inequality among firms is much more marked in the Later D.C.'s.

7. Demonstration effects and employment slack

The earning level associated with the higher productivity typical of modern firms soon becomes a widespread aspiration in the later D.C.'s. The same holds for the related consumption levels and work and living conditions. The demonstration effect comes both from the modernised areas inside the Later D.C.'s and from the surrounding Earlier D.C.'s, and is quickly spread by pervasive mass media and by easy transport. Large scale migratory movements and tourism contribute, and so do world-wide selling campaigns aimed at consumers and possibly even some over-simplified expressions of European ideals (« we are all equal »).

The demonstration effect operates quicker in raising aspirations than in raising capacities. It becomes commonplace for young people to prefer to wait rather than to accept jobs that are not up to their aspirations, even if such waiting is likely to lead to disappointment. A trend sets in for employees to demand wages that pre-modern firms find it difficult to pay without causing their products to become uncompetitive with those of modern firms favoured by a higher level of productivity, and/or with those of less developed countries favoured by a lower wage level, with the result that the pre-modern firms leave the market. There is an increasing number of self-employed who leave unrewarding jobs without previously having found something better; others continue to work until retirement but, when that moment comes, they have no successors willing to run the shop or the farm. In some cases the disappearance of one job puts others in jeopardy, and the cumulative effect may lead to the depopulation of entire areas, specially rural ones.

The outcome of all this is emigration and/or an increase in the percentage of the population supported by the community.

The welfare State favours the process I have described by providing « parking facilities » for redundant labour potential — in particular by extending schooling, providing earlier pensions and other forms of transfer — and by increasing aspirations through unrealizable development plans and social programmes.

In reality, the picture is not as simple as in the scheme I have just described, but is subject to various complications. There is one, above all, which has a particularly marked effect in Italy. While official standards for wages, social security, labour legislation and so on, are fixed at a level which is beyond the capacity of the pre-modern sector, a parallel « black » labour market, in which these standards are evaded, is tacitly tolerated. To the extent to which this takes place, the result of the demonstration effect is not so much to reduce total employment as to render the working of the economy more confused by substituting irregular for regular jobs.

A second complication derives from migratory movements.

Certain jobs, which are considered too unattractive by the local population, are filled by immigrants coming from poorer countries. In this case, the fact that the demonstration effect raises the aspirations of the local population does not produce a reduction in total jobs, but a reduction of jobs for the local population, counterbalanced by an increase in jobs for the foreign immigrants.

There may be grounds for concern in this situation, particularly where the guest community ends by being fully identified with jobs which are considered inferior, as this cannot but create social tensions with the host community.

In all the considerations which I began making in section 6 and I have continued up to this point, I have limited myself to drawing the readers' attention to how productivity differentials and employment difficulties can be explained. Before concluding this section, I must, however, note that this reasoning helps us to understand the origins of the other features of the Later D.C.'s too. A combination of aspirations stimulated by the demonstration effect and limited productive capacity can easily lead us to an explanation of the tendency to Government deficit and inflation. Even the difficulties in the balance of trade, which are typical of Later D.C.'s, can be largely traced back to the above-mentioned unbalances, as well as to the technology gap, to productivity differentials and to competition on the international market from the more-developed countries.

8. *The outlook*

Up to now I have tried to explain what is happening. Now we must consider what prospects there are for the future. Will it be possible in a short time to eliminate productivity differentials and raise all firms to the highest world levels?

Things are not so easy. An increase in jobs with high productivity cannot be produced at will. There are many constraints, of which the most pressing is probably the fact, already emphasized, that organisational and entrepreneurial structures can only change gradually. Also productive capital, of which we have a lower stock per inhabitant than the Earlier D.C.'s, needs a long time to accumulate. It is true that an inflow of foreign savings and of foreign enterprise may loosen the constraints, but only to a limited degree, especially if applied to a country as large as Italy or Spain. Perhaps this is a timely moment to remind oneself of the historical experience, already illustrated in section 2, which shows that the reduction of income gaps between countries has always been a slow process.

All things considered, even in the most optimistic hypothesis it will be several decades before Later D.C.'s productive level comes into line with that of the Earlier D.C.'s for the *whole* labour force. Unless, in the meantime, the latter has been reduced by a further fall in the participation rate or by emigration.

With these prospects in mind, a development strategy wholly concentrated on the achievement of productivity levels and living conditions for the whole population on the model supplied by the Earlier D.C.'s (in line with the current slogan, «rattrapage», «catching up»), can only bring about two results: a) the target would be only apparently achieved, being effectively foiled by the growth of a «black economy»; b) the target could be achieved only at the cost of a reduction in employment and eventually in population.

As these cannot be considered desirable results, we must study an alternative strategy that will accept the co-existence of various levels of productivity and will manage this dualism or pluralism in the best possible way.

This is not the place to discuss the contents of such a strategy. But, so as to avoid remaining too much in the air, I will list below — in brief and general terms — some of the questions that will have to be faced.

1. Policy makers influence (e.g. through public investment projects, the encouragement of private investment, research and training programmes, etc.), the allocation of resources between two alternative tasks: (a) that

of accelerating the further progress of the most modern firms, which to a large extent coincide with those having higher capital intensity and a more complex organisation and (b) that of promoting the first steps to modernisation of the mass of other firms. The demonstration effect of the Earlier D.C.'s encourages the favouring of solution (a), that is the concentration of all resources on a minority of the employed rather than a more diffused allocation. The convenience of the present allocation must be re-examined in the light of the diagnosis I have presented above.

2. As long as labour tends to be over-abundant and capital scarce, we must re-consider all those measures, both fiscal and otherwise, which lower the relative cost of capital and so put a premium on more capital intensive production.
3. Considering the limited speed with which new organisational and entrepreneurial capacities and new capital can be created, Later D.C.'s must try to turn to account that part of the existing capacity which operates at comparatively low productivity levels, such as is found in large sections of small business and of agriculture, and in peripheral regions. If such capacity were left to get wasted as a result of the interplay of spontaneous forces, instead of being made viable through appropriate policies, it is most unlikely that employment lost there could be offset by new employment elsewhere.
4. Even if the present bias in favour of concentration can be inverted and productivity differentials can be attenuated, the latter are unlikely to be wholly eliminated. In this situation wage inequality is probably unavoidable and a refusal to acknowledge this would only make matters worse. A realistic policy must be devised to manage this inequality and compensate for disadvantages.
5. Under the pressure of the demonstration effect coming from the Earlier D.C.'s, policy makers are often led to overlook the limitations inherent in the available government machinery and in local conditions, and to set overambitious policy targets. Various aspects of the present policy, such as the attempt to copy from Earlier D.C.'s certain sophisticated formulas of personal income taxation and value added taxation, must be carefully reconsidered from this point of view

The work of systematically designing a set of concrete policy suggestions on the lines indicated above is under way, and those interested can find a few hints in the already mentioned OECD report.

PROBLEMI DI SVILUPPO RITARDATO NELL'EUROPA OECD: STUDIO DI SEI PAESI

Il diagramma n. 1 mostra il prodotto interno lordo pro capite di tutti i paesi dell'Europa OECD, fatta eccezione per quelli con meno di 400 mila abitanti. Il prodotto interno lordo è misurato in unità di potere d'acquisto equivalenti. I paesi sono disposti da sinistra a destra in ordine decrescente di reddito. Ogni paese è rappresentato da un rettangolo con base proporzionale alla dimensione demografica.

I Sei si trovano al fondo della scala del reddito, con l'Italia un po' sopra, seguita da Grecia, Irlanda e Spagna, tutte e tre praticamente sullo stesso livello. La Turchia è di gran lunga la più bassa, col Portogallo in posizione intermedia. La tabella 1 complementa il grafico in due modi. Anzitutto mostra come sarebbero diverse le posizioni comparative, se il reddito fosse misurato a prezzi e cambi correnti anziché in termini di potere d'acquisto reali. Il divario di reddito tra ognuno dei sei da un lato e l'aggregato dei paesi dell'Europa OECD a più maturo sviluppo d'altro lato apparirebbe molto maggiore. Le distanze tra i sei singoli paesi risulterebbero pure alquanto differenti (il reddito turco pro capite è il 33 per cento di quello italiano ai tassi di cambio correnti, mentre è il 42 per cento in termini di potere d'acquisto reale), ma l'ordine dei paesi non subirebbe cambiamenti significativi.

La tabella mostra inoltre che le grandi differenze trovate nel livello di reddito si riflettono solo parzialmente sulla durata della vita media. In Grecia, Irlanda, Italia e Spagna la probabilità di vita alla nascita è altrettanto elevata che nei paesi più sviluppati. Nel Portogallo essa è leggermente inferiore e solo in Turchia è molto più bassa.

Un'analisi statistica comparativa della struttura economica porta a concludere che su molti punti vi è una differenza sistematica tra i Sei da un lato e i paesi OECD d'Europa più avanzati dall'altro. Non soltanto la posizione media dei Sei si scosta da quella dei paesi più avanzati, ma in generale si trovano deviazioni con lo stesso segno (con irrilevanti eccezioni) in ognuno dei Sei. Queste deviazioni tendono inoltre (sebbene con notevoli eccezioni) a essere maggiori nei paesi che sono entrati più tardi nel processo di sviluppo.

Alcuni punti meritano di essere menzionati in cui l'attuale esperienza dei Sei differisce notevolmente non solo dalle circostanze attuali ma anche dall'esperienza passata dei paesi di più antico sviluppo.

Anzitutto i Sei presentano differenziali di produttività molto elevati non solo tra industrie e regioni, ma anche tra imprese all'interno di una stessa industria o regione. In secondo luogo i Sei incontrano difficoltà nel trovare impiego regolare alla loro offerta di lavoro potenziale, e questo nel senso che in tutti questi paesi i tassi di partecipazione — almeno come dati dalle statistiche ufficiali, sono o molto bassi o rapidamente decrescenti o spesso l'una e l'altra cosa. E' notevole

che nei Sei paesi l'occupazione fosse in stanca anche prima del 1974, quando essi accusavano elevati saggi di emigrazione netta per lunghi periodi.

I Sei hanno inoltre in comune la tendenza ad avere un'instabilità dei prezzi e un disavanzo pubblico superiore alla media e a soffrire di una speciale fragilità nella bilancia dei pagamenti.

Il livello di guadagno unito alla più elevata produttività tipica delle imprese moderne diventa presto aspirazione diffusa nei paesi giunti tardi allo sviluppo. Lo stesso vale per i livelli di consumo, di lavoro e delle condizioni di vita. L'effetto di dimostrazione proviene sia dalle aree modernizzate all'interno dei paesi di recente sviluppo sia dai circostanti paesi a sviluppo più maturo, e viene rapidamente diffuso dai mezzi di comunicazione di massa e dai trasporti. I movimenti migratori su larga scala e il turismo contribuiscono insieme con campagne di vendita su base mondiale dirette al consumatore e fors'anche qualche semplificata espressione degli ideali europei (« siamo tutti uguali »).

Tutto considerato, anche nell'ipotesi più ottimistica, occorreranno decenni prima che il livello produttivo dei paesi di recente sviluppo raggiunga quello dei paesi più avanzati per l'intera forza lavoro. A meno che, nel contempo, questa ultima si sia ridotta a causa di un'ulteriore caduta del saggio di partecipazione o a causa dell'emigrazione.

Con queste prospettive una strategia di sviluppo interamente concentrata sul raggiungimento di livelli di produttività e condizioni di vita per tutta la popolazione sul modello dei paesi più avanzati (in linea con lo slogan corrente « rattrappage », « catching up ») può portare soltanto a due risultati:

- 1) si registra un successo, che però è soltanto apparente perché è dovuto al fatto che la parte emersa dell'economia va restringendosi e la parte sommersa va allargandosi;
- 2) si raggiungono i livelli medi voluti, ma a prezzo di una riduzione del volume di occupazione e, in definitiva, di uno spopolamento.

Occorre dunque puntare su una strategia diversa, che accetti il dualismo e cerchi di amministrarlo nel migliore dei modi.

Non è qui il luogo di discutere questa strategia. Ma per evitare eccessiva astrattezza vengono indicate brevemente e in termini generali alcune questioni che si dovranno affrontare:

1. I programmatori influenzano (ad es. con programmi di investimento pubblico, l'incoraggiamento dell'investimento privato, programmi di addestramento e ricerca ecc.) l'allocazione delle risorse tra compiti alternativi: a) quello di accelerare il progresso ulteriore delle imprese più moderne, che in larga misura coincidono con quelle ad elevata intensità di capitale e con organizzazione più complessa e b) quello di promuovere i primi passi verso la modernizzazione della massa delle altre imprese. L'effetto di dimostrazione dei paesi più avanzati incoraggia a favorire la soluzione a), cioè la concentrazione delle risorse su una

minoranza di occupati invece che un'allocazione più diffusa. La convenienza di questa scelta deve essere riesaminata alla luce della diagnosi fatta nel testo.

2. Fintanto che il lavoro tende a essere sovrabbondante e il capitale scarso, bisogna riconsiderare tutte quelle misure, fiscali e d'altro genere, che riducono il costo relativo del capitale e favoriscono una produzione a elevata intensità di capitale.

3. Considerando la velocità limitata con la quale le capacità organizzative e imprenditoriali e il nuovo capitale possono essere create, i paesi meno avanzati devono tentare di mettere a profitto quella parte della capacità esistente che lavora a livelli comparativamente bassi, come si verifica in buona parte delle piccole imprese e dell'agricoltura e nelle regioni periferiche. Se queste capacità andassero sprecate a causa del gioco delle forze spontanee invece di essere attivate con politiche opportune, è molto improbabile che l'occupazione perduta in quella sede possa venire compensata da nuova occupazione altrove.

4. Anche se la tendenza attuale a favorire la concentrazione potesse essere invertita e i differenziali di produttività attenuati, è improbabile che gli ultimi vengano completamente eliminati. In questa situazione la diseguaglianza salariale è probabilmente inevitabile e il rifiuto di tenerne conto peggiorerebbe soltanto le cose. Una politica realistica deve essere tale da gestire questa diseguaglianza e compensarne gli svantaggi.

5. Sotto la pressione dell'effetto di dimostrazione dei paesi più avanzati, i programmatori sono spesso portati a trascurare le limitazioni inerenti alla macchina governativa disponibile e alle condizioni locali, e a porsi traguardi troppo ambiziosi. Vari aspetti della politica attuale, come il tentativo di copiare dai paesi più avanzati certe formule sofisticate di tassazione del reddito personale e del valore aggiunto, devono essere attentamente riconsiderate da questo punto di vista.