

The People of the Great River: The Tonga Hoped the Water Would Follow Them By Fr Michael Tremmel and *The River Tonga People*. Silveira House Social Series No. 9. Gweru, Mambo Press in association with Silveira House, 1994, 76 pp., ISBN 0-86922-600-2.

Michael Tremmel worked as a priest among the Tonga in the Binga District of Zimbabwe for eight years, from 1986–1994. This book is his farewell gift to the people. The book gathers memories and reflections, and a few songs, from 17 elderly Tonga men and women. The author provides background information and some commentary, together with some concluding reflections about the plight of the Tonga people.

One would expect memories of life before the Kariba dam was built to be somewhat romanticised. There are no surprises on this score. Nevertheless, the memories point to good things that were taken away from the people. The pain of the move is well depicted. The people talk about their losses, and also about some gains in their life today. They talk about their problems, from wildlife (which they are no longer allowed to hunt but which destroy their crops) to government officials who look down on them and do not listen. They talk also about their beliefs and culture.

The book is attractively presented, well illustrated by Loes Roos. It has both charm and information.

University of Zimbabwe

M. F. C. BOURDILLON

Small Town Africa: Studies in Rural-urban Interaction Edited by Jonathan Baker. Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1990, 268 pp., ISBN 91-7106-305-6.

The book consists of 14 papers organized thematically into four sections: planning for small urban centres in the national context; economic networks, small enterprises and entrepreneurship; urban-rural linkages, opportunities and survival strategies; and the constraints and distortions imposed by state policies. The purposes of the volume are, firstly, to stimulate debate and further research interests on the topic 'urban development in rural context in Africa' and, secondly, to illustrate some of the complexity, range and intensity of the small towns and their relationships with the rural hinterland.

The first section on planning includes papers on Botswana (Silitshena), Kenya (Obudho and Aduwo) and Nigeria (Egunjobi). These illustrate the need for planners to look at the particular local circumstances, which can involve different kinds of rural-urban linkages.

On economic networks, Pedersen argues from the historical development of small towns in Denmark that it is important to tap the entrepreneurial spirit of small enterprises. In contrast, Rasmussen fails to understand the rationale of entrepreneurs in Gutu, Zimbabwe. Wekwete, writing on Zimbabwe, locates the growth of towns in the context of post-colonial policies of rural development.

The five case studies on rural-urban linkages comprise the most interesting part of the book. These graphically show how in different circumstances people adopt different but buoyant survival strategies. Ornas discusses how ethnicity functions as an important factor for pastoralists turned townsmen in East Africa, not only in terms of settlement patterns but also for resource access. Andreassen with reference to Kenya shows how splitting a household into rural and urban sections functions to reduce costs of living in an urban environment. The strategy also ensures benefits from ethnic networks. Vaa describes female migration to urban areas in Bamako, Mali, as a consciously adopted survival strategy. Schlyter focusses on survival strategies of female-headed households. Where primary access to land is vested in men, women have weaker ties with the rural areas. Consequently, they invest more in urban networks, where they hope to stay permanently. Finally in this section, Aina examines the fragmentation of land holdings in Lagos, and the leasing of small plots to the urban poor, giving them some access to land.

In the final section, Bake (Ethiopia), Gould and Michels (Zambia) and Ahmed and Sln (Sudan) examine the limitations created by the state policies on small urban centres. Such policies can reflect a high degree of centralization as in the case of Ethiopia; a progressive marginalization resulting in highly exploitative centre-periphery relationships as shown by the Zambian case study; or a process of political manipulation of settlement policies as in the Sudan.

The twin objectives of the volume have been achieved. The establishment of the programme on urban development in rural contexts in Africa at the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies is an attempt to stimulate empirical studies, rather than to provide a new theoretical approach. Some authors, like Wekwete, Gould and Macaws, find problematic the concept of urban development in rural contexts. None of the papers questions the notion of rural development. Although the introductory chapter attempts to show the shortcomings of strategies for development based on centres for growth, most of the papers simply accept such strategies. They stress the importance of local actors, mediators and local institutions, to the neglect of macro processes. There is no mention of how structural adjustment and stabilization programmes have affected the development and urban-rural linkages in particular.

A major shortcoming of most of the papers, with the exception of Vaa and Schlyter, is insensitivity to issues of gender in questions of development. The authors do not address the nature of gender relations in either the rural or urban contexts. The urban is masculine and the rural is feminine, to be exploited! More women's voices are needed.

This book nevertheless presents some interesting data on issues of practical concern to people involved in development planning and research. The papers fill a void by providing a data-base grounded on empirical research. The book will certainly be useful to both practitioners and academics interested in small urban centres and rural-urban interaction. The presentations are readable and at times stimulating.