

The Rural-Urban Interface in Africa: Expansion and Adaptation Edited by J. Baker and P. O. Redersen. Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1992, 320 pp., ISBN 91-7106-329-3.

This book presents sixteen chapters based on empirical and African experiences of the relationships between small urban centres, their rural hinterland and the larger towns in the urban hierarchy. The book presents a refreshing, critical and thought-provoking account by authors who all emphasize the interdependence of the rural and urban sectors. The authors depict small urban centres as playing a positive role in the development process, without glossing over the negative sides of small urban centres. Simon points to the need to adopt a holistic approach in our understanding of the relationship between small urban centres and their rural hinterlands. Namibia offers an opportunity to apply new perspectives that emphasize the bottom-up mechanisms, but at the same time he recognizes some of the merits in top-down approaches. Aeroe uses the example of Makambako to illustrate a decisive role of small urban centres in regional development. The next four chapters focus on rural-urban linkages.

Abdel-Ati points out that although Sinkat, a small town in Sudan, is now mostly operating as a refugee centre and plays a minimal role in terms of fostering development in its hinterland, it holds potential in the range of services it can make available to the hinterland. Little examines the importance of climatic factors in shaping economic and social linkages between rural areas and small towns in Southern Somalia. Pedersen points out that although agricultural marketing and processing activities are controlled from the centre, the role of locally based branch managers could enhance productivity in local or rural economies. At the same time the role of branch managers in local development based in small towns could lead to closer and beneficial ties between the rural hinterland and the small town. Baker examines how historically local entrepreneurial spirit among the Garage of Ethiopia survived in spite of the vagaries of administrators.

Three chapters focus on the role of entrepreneurship in small town development. Jones-Dube shows how colonialism invariably thwarted local entrepreneurial activity in Botswana, largely explaining the absence of Tswanas in the manufacturing industry to this day. Rasmussen shows how in Masvingo, in Zimbabwe, entrepreneurial spirit flourishes at the local level: surprisingly, he finds that for successful entrepreneurship, 'long term, non-family, territorially based trust relations are more conducive for enterprise efficiency than heavy reliance on the family network' (184-185). Burrows discusses the role NGOs are playing in Ghana in stimulating and sustaining local-level entrepreneurial spirit, useful in the integration of small towns and the rural hinterlands. Burrows's study shows the need for more research into the role of NGOs in urbanization in the rural context.

Three studies examine the relationship between living conditions and labour markets. Andrea's study of urban workers in Nigeria shows that, faced with adverse socio-economic conditions, most of them maintained rural links which could be activated to ensure sustenance in the city. Troil and Holm describe urban migrants in Tanzania adopting strategies that

maximize economic benefits and hence survival chances. Migration is a survival strategy that strengthens rather than undermines rural-urban links, which are beneficial to both urban and rural inhabitants.

The volume ends with an interesting section on urban agriculture as a survival strategy for different groups of people. It is a part of the strategy for meeting basic food needs as shown by Drakakis-Smith in Harare. The same themes are repeated in Gutu (Nigeria), Mlozi, Luponga and Mvena (Tanzania). In spite of the many problems the poor face in urban contexts they are quite innovative and resourceful when it comes to meeting their food requirements. On the other hand, Binbangambah (Uganda) argues that the ruralization of urban centres through agriculture is a reflection of the extent of rural poverty and urban decay.

This book is a useful addition to the literature on the rural-urban interface in Africa.

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The Legal Situation of Women in Southern Africa Edited by Julie Stewart and Alice Armstrong. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1990, xiv, 241 pp., ISBN 0-908307-15-2, Z\$11.

This book comprises contributions by scholars from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe on the legal situation of women in their respective countries. These six countries are included in a Research Project on Women and Law in Southern Africa.

The book opens with an introduction by Maboreke on the concept of women's law. She points to the need to understand how the law has perceived women and responded to their lives and to uncover the extent to which the law itself is biased towards a particular view of life. She explains that the distinguishing feature of women's law is its insistence upon the factual knowledge of the effect of the reality of women's lives upon their access to formal rights.

In Botswana, Molokomme touches on laws relating to women's legal capacity, marriage, inheritance, maintenance, divorce, health and abortion. She argues that the legal situation of women should be studied within the context of socio-economic realities and recommends a multi-dimensional approach in which lawyers work with sociologists, economists and other social scientists in the study of women's law.

In Lesotho, Seeiso *et al.* state that although women are *de facto* heads of households due to labour migration, they nonetheless continue to be subject to legal disabilities. One such disability is the absolute authority given to the husband to act on behalf of his wife in marriages in community of property. In such marriages the legal capabilities of wives of migrants are severely restricted until the husband's return. The writers also present an overview of other laws affecting women in the area of health, employment, commerce, and education.

The Mozambican section by Casimiro *et al.* focuses in particular on the role of women within the judicial system. With regard to the overall