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Multi-spatial livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rural farming by urban households - The case of Nakuru Town, Kenya

Dick Foeken & Samuel O. Owuor

Multi-spatial livelihoods refer to households with a livelihood foothold in both urban and rural areas. Although it is well known that multi-spatial households are common in Sub-Saharan Africa, the phenomenon has seldom been looked at from the urban household perspective. Studies so far indicate that rural food and/or income sources are important for urban dwellers. Data from a 1999 survey undertaken in the Kenyan town of Nakuru confirm that over 60% of Nakuru households can be considered as having a multi-spatial livelihood. Although one-adult households and low-income households are relatively under-represented in the survey, multi-spatial livelihoods may be particularly important for the latter group's food security situation. However, the results indicate that rural farming by urban dwellers should be seen mainly in terms of 'opportunity' and not, like urban farming, in terms of 'necessity'.

Introduction

The extent to which urban households in Sub-Saharan Africa depend on rural sources for their livelihood is considered in this chapter. Households in both rural and urban areas seek to diversify their livelihood sources to minimise risks and many have an economic foothold in both areas, which frequently leads to a (temporary but recurrent) splitting up of the household. So far, studies have largely focused on the *rural* perspective, i.e. the contribution of urban sources of income to the livelihood of rural households. The reverse perspective, i.e. of *urban* households, has hardly ever been investigated. This chapter attempts to remedy this situation by looking at the issue in two ways. First, the limited number of studies that have been done in Sub-Saharan Africa are reviewed and second, data are presented from a survey done in Nakuru, Kenya. Despite the incomplete and preliminary character of the data, they show that (rural) agriculture is playing an important role in the livelihoods of the Nakuru townspeople.

Recent changes in urban-rural relations

For urban and rural populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, recent and current global changes have resulted in deepening social differentiation and poverty. Small farmers have become increasingly marginalised due to structural adjustment programmes, trade liberalisation, a focus on export-oriented agriculture, higher costs of agricultural inputs and consumer goods and, at the same time, a relative decline in the price of agricultural produce (Tacoli 1998).

Life in urban areas has become more expensive while employment opportunities in the formal sector have decreased and real wages have not kept up with price increases or have even declined in absolute terms (UNCHS/Habitat 1996). In many Sub-Saharan countries, employment in the public sector has been seriously cut, particularly in the lower echelons. Women, who tend to be concentrated at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy, have been affected to a greater degree than men (ILO/JASPA 1992). The manufacturing sector was also badly hit due to the effects of structural adjustment such as shortages of imported materials, reduced investment, declining demand, etc. (Gilbert 1994). This has led to the 'informalisation' of the urban economy in Africa (Stren 1992). Nowadays, "the majority of the urban workforce are (...) engaged in a highly differentiated range of small-scale, micro-enterprise or informal activities" (Rogerson 1997: 346). For some time now, the informal sector has been the most rapidly expanding employment sector of African urban economies.

In the context of urban-rural linkages, these processes have caused two fundamental changes. First, the "dynamics of income distribution between urban and rural areas has changed" (Jamal & Weeks 1988: 274). The rural-urban income gap has, according to Jamal and Weeks, substantially narrowed or, in some cases, even closed. Second, there has been a relative shift over time in the locus of poverty, from rural towards urban areas (Kanji 1996). And although there is still far more rural poverty than urban poverty in tropical Africa, urban poverty is increasing at a faster rate (Baker 1997). In many ways, the harsh economic conditions of the 1980s and 1990s have been felt even more acutely in the cities than in the rural areas, as life is generally more expensive in urban areas (O'Connor 1991; Mougeot 1993). According to Potts (1995: 248), "the fall in real urban incomes has been devastating", particularly for what is sometimes referred to as the 'new urban poor', a group who, during the 1980s and 1990s, "have become much poorer in many countries" and whose lives "have become an almost incredible struggle" (p. 250).

One of the consequences of these processes concerns the sectoral changes in both rural and urban areas (Tacoli 1997, 1998). Typical urban activities, like manufacturing, are increasingly taking place in rural areas as well. In general, non-agricultural rural activities have become a widespread feature of Sub-Saharan Africa (Tellegen 1993, 1997; Bryceson 1996). On the other hand, agriculture, an activity typically associated with the rural areas, has become common in urban areas (Obudho & Foeken 1999). Urban farming is now a permanent feature of the landscape in most African towns and cities. This is sometimes referred to as the 'ruralisation' of African cities (Rogerson 1997: 358; Bigsten & Kayizzi-Mugerwa 1992: 1430). Vennetier (1989) described the

process of 'rurbanisation', whereby urban dwellers are 'colonising' villages and agricultural land around the cities of Brazzaville (Congo) and Cotonou (Benin). The growth of urban agriculture since the late 1970s is largely understood as a response to escalating poverty and to rising food prices or shortages exacerbated by the implementation of structural adjustment policies in the 1980s (Drakakis-Smith 1992; Foeken 1998; Tacoli 1998).

What these changes in the two areas have in common is the element of risk spreading or risk management (Painter 1996): households perform a wide range of different activities in order to maintain a certain standard of living or even just to avoid starvation. This is what Jamal and Weeks (1988: 288) call the "trader-cum-wage earner-cum-*shamba* growing class". In Kampala, for example, households have a multiplicity of income sources from all kinds of activities in the informal sector to farming (both crop cultivation and livestock keeping) to remittances, mostly from relatives in the rural areas (Bigsten & Kayizzi-Mugerwa 1992).

These global changes have had an impact on rural-urban linkages in Sub-Saharan Africa. First, new forms of migration have emerged or old ones have slowed down or intensified (Tacoli 1997). There are indications that the rate of rural-urban migration has decreased, while return migration, i.e. from the city to the rural 'home', is emerging (see, for example, Tripp 1996; Baker 1997; Potts 1997) and circular migration between urban and rural areas is increasing (for example, Smit 1998).

Second, rural links have become "vital safety-valves and welfare options for urban people who are very vulnerable to economic fluctuations" (Potts 1997: 461). There is evidence of significant shifts in the nature of transfers of goods and cash between urban and rural households, with remittances from urban to rural areas on the decline while transfers of food from rural to urban areas are increasing.

Finally, risk spreading or income diversification often implies a permanent or temporary split within the household, with one or more household members living in town and the other(s) in the rural home. This is sometimes referred to as 'multi-spatial households' (e.g. Tacoli 1998: 149) or 'multiple-home households' (Smit 1998: 82). However, the term 'multi-spatial livelihood' seems more appropriate because to perform different income-generating activities in different geographical areas does not necessarily imply a residential split of the household. With 'multi-spatial livelihood', a household has both urban and rural sources of food and/or income. As such, this is not new, as many rural households have for a long time enjoyed an urban foothold from which an income supplement has been derived (see, for example, Foeken 1997). Less well known, and probably more recent, is the reverse situation, namely urban households partly dependent on rural sources for their livelihood, either with or without a physical foothold in the rural area.

Multi-spatial livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa: An overview of the literature

Multi-spatial livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa are not new. For instance, in the early 1940s, Read (1942) noticed that the majority of (temporarily) urbanised Africans maintained links with their village of origin. Yet, studies specifically focusing on *rural* livelihood sources of *urban* households in Sub-Saharan Africa have up to now not been effected. This is surprising because there are increasing indications that rural farming is an important livelihood element of urban dwellers. What is known about the topic is derived from mostly urban studies that were broader in scope and usually mention the aspect of rural livelihood sources but only in passing. These literature sources are few in number but continent-wide in coverage: Nigeria (Gugler 1971, 1991; Andr  1992), Congo-Kinshasa (Makwala 1972; Nicolai 1989), Tanzania (Baker 1996; Tripp 1996), Zimbabwe (Potts & Mutambirwa 1990; Drakakis-Smith 1992; Kamete 1998), Senegal (Fall 1998), South Africa (Smit 1998), Botswana (Kr ger 1998) and Kenya (Lee-Smith *et al.* 1987; Lee-Smith & Memon 1994; Mwangi 1995; Mwangi & Foeken 1996; Foeken & Mwangi 1998).

The most common finding in all these studies is the high percentage of urban households claiming to have access to rural land, i.e. a plot of land in their rural 'home village'. In general samples of urban households, these percentages range from 35% in Harare, Zimbabwe (Drakakis-Smith 1992) to 80% or more in Biharamulo, Tanzania (Baker 1996) and Enugu, Nigeria (Gugler 1971, 1991). Among the low-income households, percentages ranged from 24% in Harare (Drakakis-Smith 1992) to 64% in Nairobi, Kenya (Mwangi 1995). In the only general survey of urban agriculture on a national scale, that undertaken in Kenya in the mid-1980s, 52% of households claimed to have access to rural land (Lee-Smith *et al.* 1987). Moreover, at least one third of the households stated that they had livestock back in their rural area (Lee-Smith & Memon 1994). In Gaborone and Francistown (Botswana), 37% of the low-income households were cattle owners, with average herd sizes of more than 20 animals (Kr ger 1998).

From a number of studies it is clear that claiming access to a plot of rural land does not imply its actual use by the urban household. In fact, very few of the urban workers in Kano and Kaduna took full advantage of such land (Andr  1992). In Harare, various surveys revealed figures ranging from 50% to 75% (Potts & Mutambirwa 1990). Among poor households in Harare, Drakakis-Smith (1992) found that only 21% of the households with access to rural land cultivated it themselves. However, among the households in the slum of Korogocho in Nairobi, the figure reached about 50% (Mwangi 1995).

The importance of rural produce for urban households with access to rural land should not be underestimated. Many low-income households in Enugu, Nigeria "partly relied on food produced in the rural home", both in the 1960s and later in the 1980s (Gugler 1971, 1991). For textile workers in Kano and Kaduna, Nigeria, the claim to rural land was "important as a security mechanism" during adverse times (Andr  1992). In Harare, rural produce represented "a fairly significant addition" to household incomes (Potts & Mutambirwa 1992). According to Kr ger (1998: 128), the "long-lasting rural-urban linkages" in Botswana were more important for the food security situation of the

urban households than urban farming. In the slum of Korogocho, Nairobi, over a third of those with access to rural land stated that the plot was "a regular food and/or income source". Finally, in a study by Baker (1996) in the small town of Biharamulo in northern Tanzania, an attempt was made to calculate the contribution of the sale of rural agricultural produce to urban households' incomes, which resulted in the surprisingly high figure of 70%.

In addition to food from urban households' rural plots, donations of food and gifts from rural to urban households were invaluable. In Harare, 20% of respondents appeared to receive gifts of food, mainly traditional basic crops, from the rural areas, which led Drakakis-Smith (1992: 276) to conclude that "there is still a substantial subsidy from rural to urban households". Also in Dakar, Senegal, there was a considerable flow of cash and food supplies from rural homes to urban areas (Fall 1998).

A comparison was made in a few studies between households with an economic base in both urban and rural areas (multi-spatial livelihoods) and households with only one spatial-economic base. Baker (1996: 46) found that "the most economically successful and most secure group of households are those which combine crop production and marketing with a variety of non-farm and off-farm income-generating activities". These households had a foot in both economies and were not only found in Biharamulo but also in the surrounding villages. Among slum dwellers in Nairobi, those with access to both urban and rural land were somewhat better off in terms of welfare level, food intake and the nutritional condition of their children than those without such access (Foeken & Mwangi 1998). Likewise, Kr ger (1998: 134) found that a number of poor urban households in Botswana lacking a rural foothold were "living under severe risk".

From the aforementioned examples, it emerges that access to *rural* food and/or income sources is a crucial element in the livelihood of many urban dwellers particularly in the present circumstances of urban unemployment and poverty. Without a foothold in the rural economy, poor urban households are likely to face severe hardships. A number of the studies indicated that households with access to both urban and rural economies (multi-spatial livelihoods) are relatively better off than those with one spatial-economic base only (mono-spatial livelihood). Most of the studies discussed did not focus on multi-spatial livelihoods, let alone specifically on the topic of rural sources in the livelihood of urban households. Although this applies to the Nakuru study as well, the data presented below are richer than those offered in most studies to date.¹

The Nakuru survey of 1999-2000

Introduction

Nakuru Town is located in Kenya's Rift Valley, 160 km north-west of Nairobi. It is the fourth largest town in Kenya (after Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu), with a population in 1999 of 239,000 (Kenya 2000). The town functions as an administrative centre and a major agricultural centre with many of its industries being agro-based (MCN 1999). Its location on the main highway between Mombasa/Nairobi and the highlands, Uganda

¹ A detailed study on the topic for which these data form the basis is planned for 2001-03.

and other East African regions makes it a key communications centre as well. Tourism is also significant thanks to Lake Nakuru National Park that lies within its boundaries.

In June-July 1999, a general survey was carried out among a representative sample of 594 households.² Of these, 366 (62%) could be classified as 'rural farmers', i.e. those who had indicated either cultivating crops or keeping livestock (or both) in the rural areas. A large majority (361 or 61% of the total sample) of these rural farmers cultivated crops, while 222 (37%) kept livestock. These figures indicate that five of the rural farmers did not grow crops but only kept livestock, while 144 cultivated crops only and the remaining 217 practiced mixed farming. Another 5% of the Nakuru households obtained some income from renting out rural land. Table 8.1 shows that rural farming is equally distributed between the various income categories. Nevertheless, it seems that the lowest income category is somewhat less rurally oriented than the three higher income classes.

Table 8.1: Rural farming by income class (%)

Income class (Ksh/month)*	N	Rural crop cultivation	Rural live- stock keeping	Rural land renting
Up to 5,000	310	55.5	31.3	5.2
5,001 - 10,000	167	65.9	42.5	4.8
10,001 - 20,000	74	67.6	44.6	4.1
More than 20,000	32	65.6	43.8	-. ^a

* 1,000 Kenyan shillings = US\$ 13.7 (on 31-12-1999)

Source: Kenya 2000

In September-October 2000, an in-depth survey was carried out among 29 randomly selected households. Although this survey focused again on *urban* farming, some more information on *rural* farming was obtained as well. Almost all (27) of the 29 appeared to have access to rural land. Two of these households had access to two rural plots and one household to three.

Rural plots: Size and location

Table 8.2 offers data on numbers and sizes of rural plots. On average, a rural farmer has access to 1.17 plots outside town, with an average plot size of 4.4 acres. This means that the average rural farmer in Nakuru Town has more than five acres of rural land at his/her disposal. This figure is much higher for the highest income group (15.4 acres). They have more plots on average per household (1.33) while the average size of the plots is bigger (11.6 acres) than those of other income groups.

When considering the figures in Table 8.2, the substantial variation between numbers and sizes should be recognised. For instance, 15% of the plots of the Nakuru rural farmers were less than one acre in size. The four income groups did not differ greatly in this respect except for the fact that the smaller plots were more common among the poorest

² The survey was restricted to the built-up area of Nakuru Town. The peri-urban zone between the built-up area and the town boundary, where farming is a predominant activity, was not included.

Table 8.2: Rural plots (%; N=467)

(1) Mean number of plots/household	1.17
(2) Mean plot size (acres)	4.4
(3) Mean acreage per household (1 x 2)	5.1

group (21% versus 9% - 13% in the other three groups). It is not surprising that the highest income group was over-represented in the 10+ acres category (30% versus 6% - 13%).

Map 8.1 shows the geographical distribution of the rural plots. (To avoid confusion, the old districts, i.e. before the large-scale subdivision of districts started, have been used.) By province, three areas of concentration can be distinguished: Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza Provinces, together accounting for 90% of all plots. A closer look reveals that three districts in particular stand out as accounting for over half of the plots: Nakuru (31%), Kakamega (13%) and Siaya (11%). Nandi District is conspicuous by its absence as far as the location of rural plots is concerned.

In Kenya it is highly desirable for urban dwellers to have access to land in a rural area and even more advantageous if it is located in their home area. A strong relationship is to be expected between the location of the rural plots, on the one hand, and the district of origin of the Nakuru townspeople, on the other. Although data on both place of origin and location of rural plots *below* the district level are not available, it may be safely assumed that if the district is the same for the two variables, the plot is very likely to be located in the home area. The majority (71%) of rural farmers did indeed have at least one plot in their home district (Table 9.3), although some had plots in another district as well. However, almost 30% of rural farmers had his/her plot(s) in a district other than his/her district of origin. Of all the plots outside the home district, the majority (66%) appeared to be located in Nakuru District, i.e. at a relatively short distance from the person's place of residence.

Table 8.3: Location of rural plots and district of origin of rural farmers (%; N=327*)

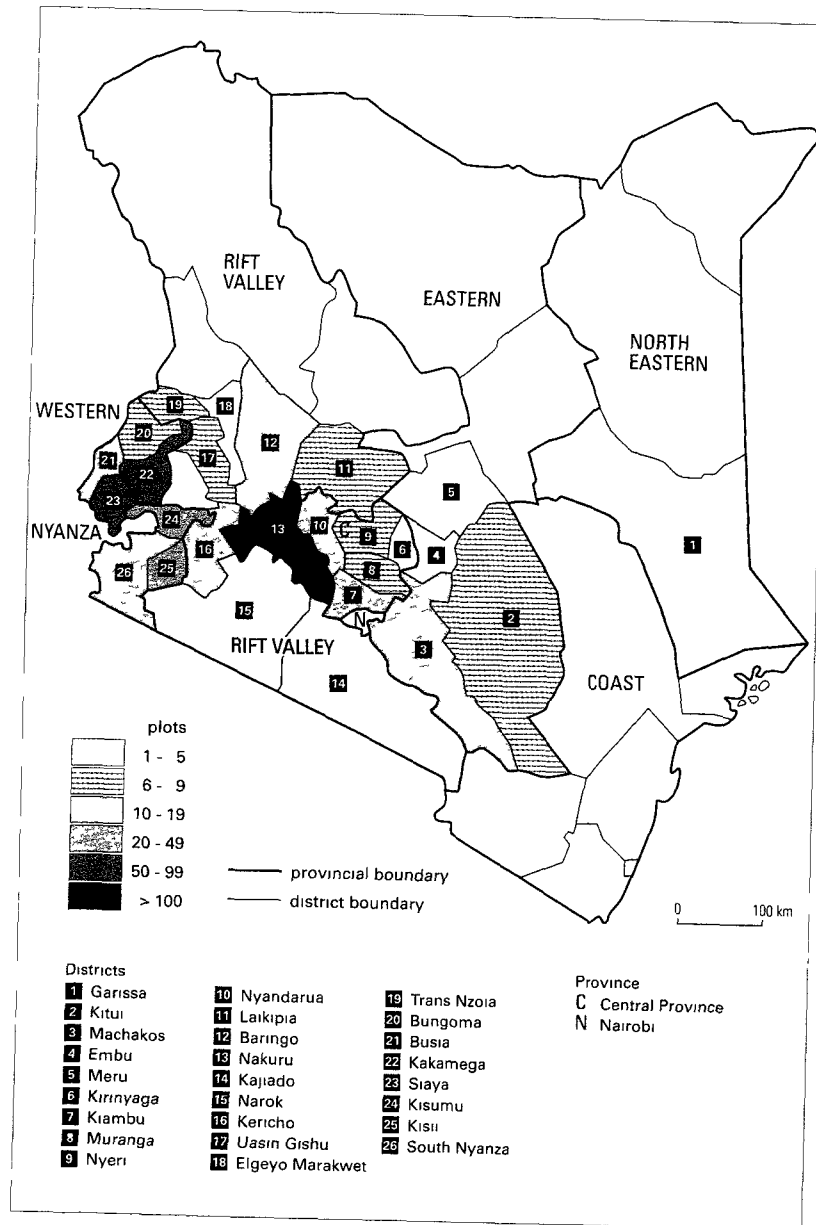
At least one plot in district of origin	66.7
At least one plot in district of origin <i>and</i> in another district	4.6
At least one plot in other district (outside district of origin)	28.7
Total	100

* Immigrants only.

Rural plots: Ownership and use

Table 8.4 presents some basic data regarding ownership and use of rural plots. Over half (56%) of the rural plots were owned by the Nakuru households themselves. The rest was mainly land belonging to the family 'back home'. Some plots (5%) were rented from a landlord. Ownership of rural plots differs substantially in relation to income class: as

Map 8.1. Geographical distribution of rural plots, Kenya (by district)



household income is higher, the percentage of plots owned by the respondent him/herself is higher and the percentage of plots owned by the (rural) family is lower. For instance, the majority (87%) of the highest income group owned the plot, while for the poorest this applied to less than half (48%) of the plots, the other half (47%) being denoted as family land.

Table 8.4 Ownership and use of rural plots (%; N=467)

Ownership of plot	own land	56.2
	family land ^a	38.5
User of plot	myself ^b	57.2
	other family ^c	32.3
Usage of plot	crops only	42.1
	crops + livestock	49.2

Notes a) includes 'relative's land' (4 out of 179 cases)
 b) in 14 (out of the 267) cases the plot was partly used by 'other family' and in 3 cases was partly rented out
 c) in 1 case the land was partly rented out

Rural plots have been acquired either through inheritance or through purchase. Out of 27 plots in the in-depth survey, 16 had been inherited and the other 11 had been bought. Of the latter, seven had been purchased in Nakuru District within a reasonable distance of Nakuru Town, and the others were in the district of origin of the household head.

The same pattern can be seen with the person(s) actually cultivating the plot (Table 8.4). Not surprisingly, ownership on the one hand and the person using the plot are related. Two-thirds of those who stated that they were the owners of the plot used it themselves (and over half of the remaining plots were used by other family members). Of the plots indicated as being family land, 61% were used by other family members (and almost all the other plots were being used either by the Nakuru household or together with the family). However, there were also plots that were used by people other than the Nakuru townspeople or their families back home: 19 plots (4%) were rented out, 9 plots were used by somebody else, while another 21 were not used by anyone. This occurred in all income categories.

Of the 31 plots belonging to the 27 in-depth cases with access to rural land, 14 were in use by the Nakuru households themselves. In four cases, the spouse of the head of the urban household was responsible for crop cultivation. One of these ladies lived permanently in the rural area, the others were there for part of the time, for example 9-10 months per year. These are examples of not only multi-spatial livelihoods but at the same time (temporary) multi-spatial households. There were also examples of households where another family member was the one responsible for the rural plot, such as a sister of the household head (as in two cases), the mother of the household head (two cases), the daughter of the household head (one case) and the spouse's mother (one case). These are examples of multi-spatial livelihoods with no physical division of the household.

The large majority of the plots (over 90%) were used to grow crops and on just over half of these, livestock were kept as well (Table 8.4). Very few plots were solely used to keep livestock. Twenty-nine plots (6%) had been left idle. Although the percentage of plots left idle was higher in the highest income group (13%) than in the other three income groups (5% - 6%), half of the idle plots were owned by households from the lowest income category.

Importance of rural plots

The importance in qualitative terms of the rural plots for the Nakuru townspeople is shown in Table 8.5. Almost three-quarters of the plots were a source of food, while almost half were a source of additional income. The income component was more important for the highest income group (63%) than for the others. Almost one fifth of the plots were considered as neither food nor income sources.

Table 8.5: Importance of rural plots (%; N=467)

Food source only	32.3
Both food and income source	39.7
Income source only	8.6
Neither food source nor income source	19.4
Total	100

Further information is available on the importance of rural land from 24 households visited during the in-depth survey. For 13 of them, the plot was a food source, mainly from the crops cultivated there. For eight households, it formed a regular income source, through sales of crop surpluses, animals and animal products, or through renting out the plot. An example was a plot in Murang'a District planted with tea and which was in the charge of a sister of the Nakuru household head. Three households intended to make money out of their rural plots in another way. For one, the plot was considered too far away (Migori District) to be able to use it productively for farming, so the owner wanted to build some residential houses there for letting purposes. Another household with no access to rural land hoped to obtain a rural plot for exactly the same purpose. The other two households intended to sell their rural plot(s) in order to buy land in Nakuru Town, also for commercial purposes.

For several households, the rural plot was not only a source of food and/or income but also a safety net in times of need (seven cases) and/or a place to go on retirement (nine cases). However, there was one respondent who specifically stated that he would not return to the rural area after retirement because "when one is used to town life, rural life is difficult due to lack of amenities". Finally, for six respondents, the rural land had a specific meaning because "it runs in the family". For one, the plot served as the burial place for the household head. (This is common among, for example, the Luo and the Kisii.) Two other observations can be made. Firstly, the three values attached to the rural land, namely as a safety net, for retirement and 'from the family lineage', were

usually mentioned in combination with each other. Secondly, family land has not only a material value but also a sentimental value for many people.

'Rural farmers' and 'non-farmers'

There are some marked differences between urban households having access to rural land ('rural farmers') and those who do not ('non-farmers'). Table 8.6 presents some household characteristics and characteristics of the household heads of the two groups. The three household characteristics refer to three possible reasons for urban households practicing rural farming: the number of mouths to fill (household size), the purchasing power of the household (income class) and the amount of space in the (urban) residential area (population density of estate). The figures indicate that none of these variables seems to be a determinant for engaging in rural farming. Poorer households do not practice rural farming more frequently than richer households and the lack of space for urban farming in the urban residential area seems not to be compensated for by a higher frequency of rural farming.

Table 8.6: Rural farmers and non-farmers: Household characteristics (%)

		Rural farmers (N=366)	Non-farmers (N=228)
Household size (members)	5 or more	35.2	34.6
Household income class (Ksh./month)	up to 5,000	47.8	61.8
	more than 10,000	20.1	15.1
Population density of estate	high	45.6	40.4
Sex of household head	female	14.8	27.6
Marital status of hh head	single/divorced/separated/widowed	18.6	36.0
Ethnic background of hh head	Kikuyu	36.2	56.6
	Luo	24.4	12.7
	Luhya	20.8	12.3

The question as to whether rural farming and urban farming are substitutes of each other can also be posed as follows: Do urban dwellers who practice rural farming refrain from urban farming and *vice versa*? This appeared not to be the case. The percentages of urban farmers among both 'rural farmers' and 'non-farmers' are exactly the same, namely 35%. This applies to crop cultivators (25% and 30% respectively) as well as to livestock keepers (20% and 21% respectively). In other words, those urban dwellers in Nakuru who do not have access to a rural plot are not more inclined to engage in urban farming than those who do have access to a rural plot.

As for the characteristics of the household heads of 'rural farmers' and 'non-farmers' respectively, only those variables are presented in Table 9.6 that show a difference between the two groups. Regarding such characteristics as age, type of residence, educational level and occupational status, the two groups appear to be very similar. However, as far as sex, marital status and ethnic group go, the situation is different. The percentage of male-headed households with access to rural land is almost twice as high

as among female-headed households. This is to some extent related to the fact that many of the one-adult households (single, divorced, separated or widowed) are female-headed households. For these households it is much more problematic logistically to farm outside town than for households with a head and a spouse. Another 'sex difference' concerns the distance to the plot. The rural plots of the female-headed households are generally nearer to Nakuru Town than those of male-headed households.

Finally, as far as ethnic background is concerned, it is conspicuous that, in relative terms, the Kikuyu (accounting for 44% of all household heads and by far the largest group in Nakuru Town) engage in much less rural farming than the other major ethnic groups. Of all the Kikuyu households in Nakuru, about half farmed in rural areas, compared with about two-thirds to over three-quarters of the Luo, Luhya, Kalenjin, Kisii and Kamba (this is also visible on Map 8.1).

Conclusions

The recent and current global changes (e.g. structural adjustment programmes) and their resultant consequences have had an impact on rural-urban linkages in Sub-Saharan Africa. One of these consequences concerns risk spreading or income diversification through multi-spatial sourcing of food and/or income.

From the 1999-2000 survey in Nakuru Town, it is evident that rural plots are an important livelihood source for the townspeople. Over 60% of households can be said to have multi-spatial livelihoods. In addition to their income-generating activities in the urban economy of Nakuru Town they also have a rural livelihood base, either in the form of cultivating one or more rural plots themselves or by sharing in the produce from plots cultivated by relatives. Multi-spatial livelihoods apply to households in all income classes, and contrary to general opinion and to what has been reported in the literature to date, a reasonable number (almost 30%) of those rural plots are not located in the home areas of the Nakuru townspeople. This may be due to the specific situation in this part of Kenya where many of the large farms that used to be owned by white settlers have been subdivided since independence, making many plots available in the town and its environs.

For most of the 'rural farmers' in Nakuru Town, their rural plots are a source of food and for many also a source of income. However, for quite a number (20%) it appeared to be neither a food nor an income source. This has also been found in several other studies elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Nakuru study reveals that for many households their rural land has a non-material value. In addition to being a resource on which to fall back in times of economic stress, it is a place to retire to and has an emotional attachment simply because it belongs to the family and always has. Only in the study by Andr   (1992), is the rural plot mentioned as a security mechanism.

Not all Nakuru households have equal access to rural land. For instance, low-income households are under-represented among the households with multi-spatial livelihoods. Moreover, their rural plots are usually smaller and they are less likely to be the owners of the plots. Female-headed households and one-adult households in general have less

access to rural land and their plots are generally closer to the town. As these households frequently belong to the lower income groups in town, the distance factor is crucial both in terms of cost (hiring labour is too expensive) and in terms of time (the single adult cannot leave the Nakuru house for too long). Finally, there is a difference between the ethnic groups in Nakuru Town. The largest group, the Kikuyu, is much less rurally oriented than the Luo and the Luhya (the second and third largest groups). This may partly be related to differences in urban occupations since the Kikuyu are more heavily involved in business, and partly due to the availability of space in the areas of origin.

Except for these differences, households with multi-spatial and with mono-spatial livelihoods appear to be very similar, implying that there are no clear determinants for engaging in rural farming. In this respect, rural farming by urban dwellers differs from urban farming because one of the main determinants of urban farming is household size, i.e. the number of mouths to be filled (or 'family life-cycle'). Hence, rural and urban farming are no substitutes for each other. In terms of 'necessity' and 'opportunity', urban farming can be considered as a necessity (i.e. to maintain a certain standard of living), while rural farming is more opportunistic and related to whether one happens to have access to a plot of land (through marriage, inheritance or purchase) in the rural areas or not. This does not mean that rural farming cannot be an important livelihood source for urban dwellers, a fact that applies especially to the lower income households, as the findings of the Nakuru study indicate. The study confirms what has been mentioned in other studies as well, notably that households with a foot in both the urban and rural economies, i.e. with multi-spatial livelihoods, are on average relatively better off than those with only one spatial-economic base.

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