

# **De-agrarianization in Africa**

**Proceedings of the 'De-agrarianization and Rural Employment'  
Workshop held at the Afrika-Studiecentrum, Leiden, May 1994**

edited by

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## Foreword

Africa, and the world for that matter, are changing at an astonishing speed. Many of the policy prescriptions applied to Africa in the past decade have been based on the assumption that there exists an urban bias in African government; that city-dwellers are favoured at the expense of the countryside. The studies presented in this workshop proceedings suggest that this may no longer be the case, but that urban-rural relations have changed in unexpected and complex ways.

The evidence of the workshop points to the fact that many rural dwellers are pursuing non-agricultural activities but not switching their place of residence from the countryside. Conversely, many city-dwellers who moved from the countryside a generation or more ago are now rediscovering their agrarian roots. This leads to a set of economic and social relations between town and countryside rather different from the classic model of industrialisation, migration to the towns and economic development.

The workshop discussions were extremely stimulating due to the quality of the papers and their highly focussed nature. At the Afrika-Studiecentrum, thanks must go to Deborah Bryceson, the main architect of the workshop. She was supported by the untiring efforts of Corina van der Laan, who attended to all the administrative details connected with such a large workshop, and the logistical assistance of Rijk van Dijk. The entire proceedings of the workshop were minuted by Afrika-Studiecentrum staff members: Tjalling Dijkstra, Jan Kappon, Piet Konings, Laurens van der Laan, Henk Meilink, Marcel Rutten and Kees Schilder. Others who assisted the proceedings in their capacity as chairpersons were: Ton Dietz, Dick Foeken, Jan Hoorweg and Ben Naanen.

The Afrika-Studiecentrum is grateful to the International Labour Office (ILO) for making available the intellectual services of Vali Jamal as the co-coordinator of the workshop as well as for providing financial assistance. Special thanks goes to the Netherlands' Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) for the workshop's core funding.

The greatest importance of the workshop lies not in what was done or said, but in the prospects which this workshop opens for new policy-oriented research. The Afrika-Studiecentrum is embarking on a research programme on De-agrarianization and Rural Employment (DARE). This programme is aimed at investigating more fully the elusive nature of the processes presently taking place in Africa. Few researchers in Africa nowadays have the resources to undertake research which is not linked to a specific consultancy unless they receive funding from outside. It is our hope that the DARE Programme, which is so rich in implications for policy-makers, may succeed in sparking the interest and support of those organisations which can fund the work of the programme's African research associates.

Stephen Ellis  
Director, Afrika-Studiecentrum  
Leiden



## **Editors' Note**

This booklet is not intended as an exhaustive record of the proceedings of the De-agrarianization workshop. Rather it provides a brief summary of the papers and discussions which may serve as a handy reference to those dealing in day-to-day African policy matters as well as academics. The essence of arguments and policy issues appear in emboldened and italicized print throughout the text for those desiring a quick, succinct reading of the booklet.

In addition to all the people who helped us during the workshop, already mentioned by Stephen Ellis, we wish to extend our thanks to Afshaan Shafi. Her diligent copy editing work into the wee hours of the night during the summer holidays enabled this publication to remain on schedule. So too, Karl Dorrepaal's work as the ASC's publication officer, attending to all the last minute details of taking this publication to press, was deeply appreciated.

Deborah Bryceson and Corina van der Laan

Afrika-Studiecentrum, Leiden

August 1994



## Workshop Coordinators' Opening Comments

**Deborah Bryceson Afrika-Studiecentrum (ASC), Leiden**

On behalf of the Afrika-Studiecentrum, I wish to welcome everyone. It is delightful to no longer have any fax or telephone communication barriers to contend with. You are finally here!

In this short introduction, I would like to outline the aims, structure and anticipated output of the workshop. In fact, the short-term aims of the workshop have already been realised. As I said, you are here. As a gathering, we constitute a diverse group of researchers from an array of disciplines and representing a wide geographic spread. Almost all of you have been engaged in recent field research on rural areas or on the topic of labour or both. We are here with a specific purpose in mind: to discuss 'de-agrarianization' and rural employment.

No doubt, many of you have been querying the term 'de-agrarianization'. You will not find it in the dictionary. I confess I coined the word, but I feel I had sufficient justification for doing so. The term is useful to confront a fundamental fact and enigmatic feature of African development taking place over the last 50 years or more, namely sub-Saharan Africa has been urbanizing without industrializing. The absence of industrialization is striking when compared with the rest of developing countries. Only 3 per cent of total manufacturing value added of developing countries comes from Africa, and only 1.5 per cent of the world's total manufacturing exports comes from the African continent (Riddell 1990 citing World Bank figures). Yet, ***most labour study approaches which have been applied to Sub-Saharan Africa explicitly or implicitly assume the centrality of industrialization even when considering rural labour.***

This perception has prevailed for a very long time. The Marxist notion of a rural 'surplus population', 'latent' or 'floating' population generated by a process of primitive accumulation was first applied to Western Europe, but the concept has been applied to Africa as well. W.A. Lewis and the labour migration models of the 1960s also saw rural labour as 'surplus', to be absorbed in a more highly productive industrial sector. Informal sector debates of the 1970s and to the present have inferences about the less productive, but labour-absorbing features of the informal sector, i.e. 'less productive' relative to industrial employment. Last, but not least, the small-scale industries approach, by its very name and mention of scale, takes as its reference point the industrialization process.

We have to ask: ***does this over-riding assumption about the presence or advisability of industrialization have a blinding effect on our understanding of the current development of rural non-agricultural activities? In our eagerness to identify signs of industrialization along classic lines, are important intrinsic aspects of non-agricultural rural employment ignored?*** I would argue yes, but this is

my view, and we are here to debate. However, this view has to be mentioned by way of explaining what spurred the Afrika-Studiecentrum to initiate a conference on 'de-agrarianization'. ***Tracing de-agrarianization in various localities gets us back to basic empirical facts, forcing us to focus on what is actually happening rather than what we as social scientists project should be happening . In so doing, we might change our judgements on what labour is 'productive' or 'surplus'.***

So what is 'de-agrarianization'? I devised a working definition of 'de-ag' last year (Byrceson 1993) which is based on observable trends in Africa and aims at facilitating measurement and geographical and temporal comparisons.

***'De-agrarianization' is defined as a process of:***

- 1) economic activity reorientation (livelihood),***
- 2) occupational adjustment (work activity), and***
- 3) spatial realignment of human settlement (residence) away from strictly agrarian patterns.***

***Overt and measurable manifestations of the process are: a diminishing degree of rural household food and basic needs self-sufficiency; a decline in agricultural labour effort relative to non-agricultural labour in rural households and in total national labour expenditure; a decrease in agricultural output per capita in the national economy relative to non-agricultural output; and a shrinking proportion of the national population residing in rural areas. These are all tendencies observable throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.***

As a group, we are a repository of a large body of knowledge regarding African labour patterns. We are here not only to compare notes, in other words, exchange information, as is the function of most workshops. We are also here hopefully to generate some theoretical insights useful for understanding what is happening now and useful for policy makers to formulate relevant policies. There are some basic questions to pose: ***Does the concept of 'de-agrarianization' shed any new light on socio-economic phenomena in Sub-Saharan Africa? If not, what other concepts can provide us with the means of coming to grips with what is currently happening within rural areas and between rural and urban areas. If yes, does de-agrarianization represent an intrinsic growth process? When? Where? Or is it always contingent on external factors?***

Now, how are we going to achieve the aims of this workshop? This is, for better or worse, a real *workshop*. Every one is working, with one or another tasks to do. The workshop has a two-tiered structure, consisting of plenary paper presentations and committee work in smaller groups. As you can see from the programme, there are 29 papers, a lot for the amount



of time we have. Thus all paper-givers have to restrict their presentations to main points, forget the footnotes. You have 10 minutes, which we appreciate is very hard on authors who have put a great deal of time into writing their papers. But in fairness to all authors, chairpeople have to be firm in enforcing the time limit, so that there will be sufficient time for discussion. Papers will be clustered geographically to facilitate identification of regional issues and themes.

Interspersed with plenary sessions throughout the next three days, we will have thematic committee meetings. Please sign up for the committee which interests you most, but we request that no more than two people from each geographical cluster be on the same thematic committee. Committee themes have been chosen on the basis of issues we anticipated would be pivotal in our discussions, namely: 1) household causes and consequences of de-agrarianization; 2) spatial dynamics of de-agrarianization: urban/rural patterns; 3) patterns of occupational specialization and diversification; 4) public/private configuration of non-agricultural activities in rural areas and the effects of structural adjustment programmes; and 5) the organisational evolution of entrepreneurship.

The reason for having thematic committee meetings is that small groups of participants focussed on a specific theoretical concern could, in a more thorough fashion than is possible in plenary sessions, analyze the contents of papers and plenary discussions. The aim is to identify patterns and tendencies of de-agrarianization and rural employment which are generalizable to Sub-Saharan Africa. The final session of this workshop consists of the committees reporting their findings and plenary discussion about the findings.

As for the output of the workshop, the ASC will publish the proceedings of the workshop. There could also be an edited collection of some of the workshop papers in book form, if a suitable commercial publisher is found. But the most immediate and important 'output' is the research networking that a workshop such as this fosters. Perhaps I have been reading too much informal sector literature, but I feel it tends to be the *informal* discussions and contacts made at workshops and conferences which are the most lasting. They tend to persist long after conference formalities have been forgotten.

On behalf of the workshop organisers, I convey our hope that you enjoy your stay in Leiden and find formal and informal discussions useful to your research endeavours.

**Vali Jamal, International Labour Office, Geneva**

My comments are aimed at providing some contextual background for our discussions. The ILO, as many of you know, has been concerned with rural employment patterns in developing countries for over 30 years. There are several features which distinguish Sub-Saharan Africa from the rest of the developing world and indeed there are distinctive twists in the labour picture within the continent when compared with two decades ago.

***What is new about de-agrarianization in Africa is the fact that it is occurring in the context of falling incomes. Otherwise, de-agrarianization - the relative decline in the employment and production roles of agriculture - is almost a natural concomitant of growth.*** As incomes increase, less of it is devoted to food, and labour 'flows' out of agriculture into industry, and later, services. Economists hypothesize that all economies start from an agrarian base and move on to industrialization.

To give a recent example, South Korea, even 30 years ago, had over three-fifths of its population in agriculture, but by the start of the 1990s this ratio had been reduced to one-fifth. Correspondingly, agriculture's share in GDP declined from 26 per cent in 1970 to 8 per cent in 1991. Similarly, if we take a cross-section of countries, with percentage of the labour force in agriculture plotted against GDP per capita, most African countries at around \$200-\$300 income per capita would have 60-70 per cent of their labour force in agriculture and 25-40 per cent of their GDP coming from agriculture, whereas most OECD countries have less than 10 per cent of their population in agriculture and even less of the GDP.

In Africa, agriculture still dominates, but its relative share has been declining since the 1970s, without any prior increase in agricultural productivity or in urban employment. Hence, there is an increase on the one hand in food imports and, on the other, urban unemployment and 'informalization' of the labour force. Food imports now provide 10-20 per cent of total food supplies in many African countries, mostly to feed the urban population, often with wheat, an aspect of changing dietary patterns in the towns.

***Urban unemployment is already reaching double-digit levels, at the moment affecting the younger generation. However, in poor countries people 'do something' rather than stay openly unemployed: what they 'do' is go into the informal sector and thus we get an 'informalization' of urban economies.*** The speed of this is staggering. At the start of the 1960s, Tanzania's urban labour force was mostly engaged in waged jobs, with the 'informal sector' - then significantly as yet 'undiscovered' - accounting for less than 10 per cent. ***By the start of the 1990s, the informal sector accounted for at least 70 per cent of the urban labour force. In the meantime, urban wages have been decimated, with declines of 50-60 per cent since the mid-1970s being common. Thus, the informal sector has become the mainstay of family support. There is also the growing phenomenon of***

*'urban farming' , in other words 're-agrarianization' as another survival strategy.*

*There is a parallel process in the rural areas of an increase in non-farm and off-farm employment. In some case, such employment is still agriculture-oriented, as in the case of wage work on neighbouring farms, but more and more non-agricultural activities are being added to family employment portfolios. This process has both a negative as well as a positive side. On the negative side, cash incomes from export crop production have fallen drastically in most African countries due to declines in prices as well as output. At the same time, remittances from the urban areas too have fallen as a result of falling wages. Thus, the resort to non-agricultural activities has an aspect of survival strategies.*

*On the positive side, the recent liberalization of food products has created opportunities for trade in the rural areas. As compared to the urban informal sector, the rural non-farm activities have the advantages of having stronger linkages with the agricultural sector; location within the rural areas, hence not pressuring the urban labour markets; and seasonality, hence complementarity with farming.*

I am now veering into the issues that we have come here to discuss. Let me stop here since the papers will no doubt illustrate many of these points.

## Workshop Paper Summaries

### *The Sahel*

#### **De-agrarianization, Adjustment Programmes and the Creation of Rural Poverty in Sudan**

Ali Abdel Gadir Ali  
Khartoum, Sudan

This paper adopts as a definition of de-agrarianization ‘the shedding of the agricultural population to the rural non-farm sector’. Such a definition implies that perhaps the relevant issues are macroeconomic and societal in nature. It is conceded, however, that a much richer way of looking at the issues involved would be from a micro perspective of households. Such an approach would deal with de-agrarianization in the context of survival strategies followed by households whose older, more agrarian, ways of eking a living were perceived to have been threatened by an exogenous shock. Despite the above, this paper takes a more aggregated approach to the issue of how the rural sector as a whole has fared under structural adjustment. It is argued that the older, more agrarian ways of survival in the rural sector have been threatened by Sudan’s structural adjustment programme.

Assessing the performance of the rural sector under structural adjustment from a welfare perspective calls for an examination of the incidence of rural poverty. The paper argues that observed *de-agrarianization in Sudan can partly be explained by the expansion of rural poverty under the influence of Sudan’s structural adjustment programme during the period 1978-1985*. The shedding of the population in the agricultural sector to non-farm activities is measured in terms of the declining proportion of Sudan’s total labour force working in the agricultural sector. In addition to this aggregate indicator, the analysis also looks at changes that have taken place in the shares of the sub-sectors comprising the non-farm sector.

The behaviour of the indicators were considered for five points in time: 1973 (census data), 1983 (census data), 1990 (migration and labour force survey data), and 1978 and 1986 (projected values). Over the period between 1973 and 1990, the Sudan experienced de-agrarianization, with the share of the agricultural sector in the rural labour force declining by 7.2 per cent, while the share of the non-farm sector increased by the same magnitude. However, between 1973 and 1983 the rural labour force increased from 78.5 per cent to 83.1 per cent of Sudan’s total labour force, then plummeted to 71.3 per cent in 1990. Thus, the results show that the declining share of agriculture in the rural labour force is not continuous. Rather, the results show that the behaviour followed an inverted U-shape.

The services/non-services composition of the narrowly defined non-farm sector employment witnessed a change in favour of non-services over the period 1973-1983 from 3.5 per cent to 5.0 per cent of the total. By 1986, however, the employment composition of the non-farm sector changed substantially in favour of the service sector, whose share increased to 73.7 per cent, leaving the non-services sector with a share of only 26.3 per cent. More dramatic is the picture of the non-farm sector employment composition of 1990, where the share of the services sector increased to 86.8 per cent, while that of the non-services sector declined to only 13.2 per cent.

The employment composition of the rural services sector has undergone substantial changes. By 1990 the composition changed dramatically in favour of trade activities, with 8.1 per cent of the rural labour representing 36.2 per cent of the rural services employment, and services activities, with 10.9 per cent of rural labour force representing 48.7 per cent of the rural services employment.

The above noted shifts in the employment composition of the rural sector can be explained in terms of deepening rural poverty. Poverty in the rural areas of Sudan was fairly widespread in 1968 where 68.1 per cent of the rural population was below the poverty line at Ls.136 per household per year. The average annual income of a poor household is calculated as Ls.79 thus giving rise to a poverty gap ratio of 28.6 per cent.

***Over the period between 1968 and 1978, rural poverty increased only marginally. The percentage of rural population falling below the poverty line in 1978 was calculated at 69.0 per cent. Similarly, the poverty gap measure increased by 2.5 percentage points to reach 31.1 per cent in 1978. By contrast, in 1986, following implementation of structural adjustment policies, the poverty gap index shot up to 51.7 per cent. An estimated 83.1 per cent of the rural population were under the poverty line at that time.***

Using the food inflation rate, it is found that during the period 1968-78 the real income of the rural poor was increasing at an annual rate of 2.7 per cent while the real cost of survival, i.e. the poverty line, was increasing at an annual rate of 3.3 per cent. This implies that the command of the rural poor over food was slipping by an annual rate of only 0.7 per cent. It is this rather negligible slippage of entitlements of the poor that can explain the almost constant level of poverty as measured between 1968 and 1978. The observed increase in the share of agriculture in rural labour force between 1973 and 1978 suggests that the more agrarian ways of survival were perceived by the agricultural population as working in a satisfactory manner.

By contrast, during the period 1978-1986, the real income of the rural poor was declining at an annual rate of 3.8 per cent while the poverty line was increasing at an annual rate of 2.1 per cent. This implies that during the period 1978-1986 the command of the rural poor over food was slipping by an annual rate of 5.9 per cent. This is a substantial annual reduction in rural welfare which indicates that agrarian ways of survival were losing their

viability for a growing number of people. In this context, *the decline of the share of agriculture in rural labour force, i.e. de-agrarianization, is a negative outcome for the rural sector.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**Coping with Poverty and Famine:  
Implications for De-agrarianization and Non-Agricultural Employment in  
Darfur, Sudan**

Hamid El Bashir Ibrahim  
Department of Anthropology and Sociology,  
University of Khartoum, Sudan

This study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between environmental stress, famine, coping strategies and the process of de-agrarianization in rural Darfur during the period 1984-94. The central thesis of the paper is that *continuous droughts and famines in Darfur arising from the historical interplay of political and economic forces, have resulted in mass rural poverty. These conditions have engendered rural de-agrarianization, through farmers' adoption of diverse sets of coping strategies, mostly in the form of economic activity re-orientation.* De-agrarianization itself is viewed as a historical process with class, gender, ethnic and areal dimensions. The impact of famine on these factors within the de-agrarianization process tends to be contradictory and uneven as opposed to being linear and unidirectional.

Darfur state lies in the far western part of the Sudan covering a total area of 510,888 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. 20 per cent of Sudan's total area. The regional economy is predominantly agricultural and to a lesser degree pastoral, where both food, mostly sorghum and millet, and cash crops, especially groundnuts and sesame, are grown.

The area has a long history of cyclical droughts and famines, no less than 11 during this century. The Sahelian drought beginning in the late 1960s has been the most prolonged with far reaching implications in the economy and society of the region. It has been associated with a steadily growing process of de-agrarianization and the mushrooming of rural non-farm activities. De-agrarianization has been further promoted by the Sudan's structural adjustment programme since the mid-1980s.

*De-agrarianization has resulted largely from agriculture's collapse rather than any inherent positive attraction of non-agrarian forms of livelihood.* Over the last seven years, the regional food deficit in Darfur has averaged about 76 per cent of total

requirements. At the household level, it is estimated that farms provide only 27 per cent of annual grain needs. The gap is usually filled by external relief, inter-household food borrowing and wild food gathering.

Rural vulnerability has been further accentuated by the dramatic loss of livestock: camels 80 per cent; cattle 91 per cent; sheep 44 per cent; goats 75 per cent; donkeys 29 per cent; and poultry 51 per cent. These losses were in addition to households' sale of other assets in response to declining terms of trade between livestock and grain and between wages and grain. The ultimate result is two-sided: mass rural poverty and adoption of diverse coping strategies, which more or less implies either economic activity re-orientation (i.e. non-farm ventures), out-migration or both. Migration takes place as a result of considerable variation in rates of return to labour and capital between rural and urban economic activities.

Accumulating evidence supports the view that the shift into non-farm activities is not temporary. There is a deeply rooted process of de-agrarianization unfolding which is not easily reversible. Under conditions of rapid environmental collapse, the economic duress of structural adjustment, and household demographic growth, worsening poverty and famine in Darfur are a continuum dialectically linked with de-agrarianization.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **From Service Delivery to Business Development: Experiences of a Rice Milling Project for Women in Mali**

Annelies Zoomers  
Royal Tropical Institute,  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

There is a growing interest in the topic of non-farm activities located in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. Small-scale manufacturing and processing enterprises are viewed as important means to create sustainable wealth. They are important sources of income and employment. They supply local markets with low-cost consumer goods such as beverages, e.g. beer, textiles, soap, furniture and food. They add value to a region's produce, contributing to its economic growth and diversification. Furthermore, they may contribute to foreign exchange earnings, and increase the technical and management skills of the rural population.

Non-farm activities are considered to be particularly important to low-income groups, especially women, who in many countries constitute the majority of micro-entrepreneurs. 'Sustainable improvements in the productivity and competitiveness of micro-enterprises are

essential for their growth and for the creation of new wealth and opportunities for the people involved' (Jeans *et al.* 1990).

Insofar as governments and development agencies have aimed at supporting non-farm activities, the focus has often been on appropriate technology projects. According to adherents of the AT school, the key factors for successful projects lie in an approach which is adapted to local conditions and makes use of familiar labour patterns and equipment. Such projects must be relatively small-scale, posing few demands on local management and technical skills. They are advisably based on locally available raw materials, affordable and acceptable to local tastes. Technology projects should be premised on *simple* technology, i.e. cheap, easy to handle, to maintain, and to repair, and capable of being manufactured in the areas of demand.

Appropriate technology is considered one of the keys to increasing the productivity of non-farm activities, enabling small, part-time producers to reduce costs through faster production, saving labour time, lowering fuel costs, and increasing processing efficiency. In addition, 'technological upgrading can also raise the marketing power of small enterprises by diversifying their raw-material base and increasing product shelf-life' (Jeans *et al.* 1990). It is believed that technical improvements lead to further innovation, while making current production more profitable, secure and sustainable.

***Assessing the role of appropriate technology projects in upgrading the process of de-agrarianization, the underlying theme is whether technological change is the key to increasing the productivity of non-farm activities, and pushing part-time farmers into a process of small enterprise development. This question can be answered on the basis of the experiences of Action Petite Décortiqueuse, a technology project carried out under the umbrella of the 'Amélioration de la Riziculture Paysanne dans l'Office du Niger (ARPON) programme in Mali. Action Petite Décortiqueuse aimed at providing women's groups with rice mills, contributing to income and employment generation for women, time savings and drudgery alleviation, increasing empowerment and local self-sufficiency.***

***In 1992, three years after the project was launched, 50 per cent of the small-scale milling machines were non-functional.*** It appears that this was mainly due to lack of business orientation, inappropriateness of organisation, and lack of flexibility and adaptability in project implementation. An important reason why Action Décortiqueuse did not contribute to non-farm development is that favourable business results, employment and income generation have never been primary goals. The focus tended to be on empowering women and drudgery alleviation, paying little attention to the question of how to adjust to changing factor prices and/or varying consumer demands. Insofar as Action Décortiqueuse has taken market considerations into account, attention was focused on local demand, leaving aside possibilities of reaching commercial market segments.



Insofar as 'Action Décortiqueuse' aimed at finding an *appropriate* organisational form, it was assumed that the project should preferably be devised in collaboration with women's groups who would benefit from them. Joint responsibility and collective ownership were considered sufficient conditions for a successful operation of the project. In practice, however, the majority of women were not reacting as 'collective producers', but rather as individual consumers who regard rice mills as 'domestic tools'. Action Décortiqueuse was appreciated because it contributed to a better 'service-level'. However, large numbers of women were not interested in being actively involved in project implementation, management and/or organisation, due to lack of time and lack of benefits. Women's groups, notably the Groupements d'Intérêt Economique Féminins (GIEFs) have been unable to compete with private millers, because, as collectives, they have been unable to react in a direct way. In practice, due to collective ownership, the manager is usually not allowed to take business decisions without consulting 'the group'. He or she was often forced to follow time-consuming decision-making procedures. Furthermore, where machines are owned by groups, experience shows that the collective owners will often not feel responsibility for maintenance and repair.

Finally, concerning the lack of *flexibility* and *adaptability*, in Action Décortiqueuse, too much attention has been paid to 'appropriateness of technology' and 'participation', while neglecting the changing business climate. Whereas the women's groups were to focus on running the mills according to the project objectives, private sector millers had already strengthened their position by optimizing pricing, and attuning the service level and product quality to consumer standards. GIEFs have not succeeded in strengthening their market position by exploiting their 'strong points', even though in most villages there is still room for expansion of the milling business. The project milling machines could have increased their market share by exploiting their relative advantage as more 'appropriate for door-to-door service' since they are smaller in size, more mobile and more suitable for milling smaller quantities. But no attention was paid to this business dimension. In addition, the project has not succeeded in adapting to the changing infrastructure for maintenance and repair, caused by new privatization policies. GIEFs have not been successful in convincing newly privatized technicians of their reliability and ability to pay for maintenance services. This has caused long waiting times for repairs when the machines breakdown.

In summary, one must conclude from this project review of Action Décortiqueuse that 'appropriate' technology projects aimed at generating income and employment opportunities can have disappointing results. This can be attributed to the fact that ***the project has been rather inward-looking, aimed at achieving the highest level of adjustment to resources, habits, needs and capacities of the 'local' environment. In addition to 'bringing technology in line with the local situation', there appears to be a need for bringing the project in line with the external business climate.*** Without

these considerations, technology projects for the transfer of 'simple, cheap and robust technology adapted to the local situation' will not contribute to income and employment generation for the target group. The objectives should be re-ordered with a focus instead on the transfer of technology that is compatible with 'external' market opportunities and 'outside' preferences.

*The 'local' and 'business' environment usually pose different constraints on a project. 'Appropriate' as defined in appropriate technology discussions is not sufficient to assure that a technology will also be appropriate for small enterprise development. Strategies for technology promotion must recognise the need for introducing a market-oriented approach, putting emphasis on 'soft ware aspects', notably improvement of product quality and presentation, flexibility of operation, management and organisation, in addition to technology development.*

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#### **De-pastoralization and Recent Employment Patterns in the Sahel**

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*Pastoralists contribute between 10 per cent to 25 per cent of the GDP, 24 per cent to 84 per cent of agricultural GDP, and 10 per cent to 65 per cent of animal protein intake in the Sahelian countries. This implies that pastoralists make a sizable contribution to rural employment and rural labour markets in the Sahel.* Moreover, pastoral production has several discernible linkages with other economic sectors such as agriculture and industry. Livestock provides manure and draft animals, and various raw material products including meat, milk, butter and hides. Animals are also kept as capital reserve in anticipation of economic, social and environmental crises. As a capital asset, livestock involves a complex exchange of goods and services which transcend the local communities into the realm of the national livestock trade and export markets.

However, Africa's economic and ecological crises have exerted immense pressure on the Sahelian population in general and pastoralists in particular. The linkage between ecological stress and economic pressure delineates two other factors pertaining to the structural relationship between resource depletion, accumulation and potential change of employment patterns in the pastoral context. First, the recognition that the national economic context within

which pastoralists operate has imposed externalities which have reshaped their relationship with the wider society. Such changes include the encapsulation of pastoralists into the market economy in which, as producers of primary products, they increasingly sell more and buy less. Second, the neglect of pastoralists, and the African state bias in favour of the wealthy and powerful farmers. Third, ecological fragility which has aggravated the detrimental impact of long as well as short-term droughts.

*The politics of resource management in the Sahel is demonstrated by the fact that over-grazing and over-cultivation of arid and semi-arid areas is often a result of pastoralists being pushed out of their traditional pastures and forcibly confined to marginal lands. This process increases the pressure on land and causes resource degradation. Pastoral societies have exhibited contradictory responses to the crisis. On the one hand, there is apparently large-scale displacement of peoples coupled with a staggering rate of animal loss, a process referred to in this paper as 'de-pastoralization'. On the other hand, livestock population estimates portray a sudden and sharp increase of animals a few years after drought.*

*Overall, de-pastoralization is a serious indicator of at least three tendencies. First, there is a decline of traditional forms of pastoralism, and possibly the emergence of new forms of pastoral adaptation. Second, a shift in pastoral employment patterns within the pastoral economy is often induced by differences in the objectives of production, i.e. subsistence or commercial sale. Third, the absorption of pastoralists in new economic activities, including employment outside the pastoral economy, is strongly in evidence.*

*De-pastoralization has led to at least four coping strategies, all of which are external to traditional pastoral production systems. These can be summarized as follows: 1) an increase in the number of poor pastoralists, especially Fulani, who against traditional norms and value systems, became hired herders or farm labourers; 2) charcoal and firewood-selling in large population concentrations in the rural areas or towns; 3) migration to wetter zones provided that these have not already been allocated to state farms or commercial privately-owned large-scale farms; and 4) migration to relief centres, large population concentrations in the rural areas or to towns.*

The evidence is drawn from fieldwork material about pastoralists' employment patterns in Sudan (Marzoug, 1984/1985), Nigeria (Okuta, Bergu District, Illorin State, 1987/1988) and Ethiopia (Jijiga, South-eastern Ethiopia, 1990/1991). The material is computed from a sample of 150 households in each locality. The data points to a number of facts and tendencies which are pertinent to the wider theme of de-agrarianization.

Pastoralists participate in rural and urban labour markets and the production of goods and services both in the formal and informal sector. Pastoral-based pastoralism is practiced by a large number of people, a fact which supports the idea that many pastoralists continue to contribute to the national economy whether they are settled or still on the move.

Settled pastoralists around towns, whether small rural towns, such as Okuta and Jijiga, or large urban centres such as Omdurman, exhibit similar employment patterns. Those fortunate enough to have not lost all their animals because of drought or war, continue to be involved in livestock-raising. The commercialization of dairy products represents an important source of income, an activity which in most cases is dominated by women. Unlike Omdurman, Sudan, where men dominate milk selling, Somali and Fulani women dominate milk selling and processing.

The majority of the pastoralists in the sample operate in the informal sector. They are mostly self-employed. Very few have access to wage in construction or the farming sector. Fewer yet get access to jobs in factories as skilled or unskilled labourers. This could be explained by the high illiteracy rate among pastoralists.

Displaced pastoralists tend to take up farming or continue with agro-pastoralism in large population concentrations, where rainfall is conducive to farming. This is practiced in the hope that savings from agriculture will be reinvested in restocking. Long before the onset of drought and civil wars, many pastoralists used to migrate in search of seasonal or permanent employment in large-scale, rain-fed and irrigated agricultural schemes throughout the Sahel. This pattern has been reported in other studies, but still requires a pastoralist-specific focus.

In short, *pastoral production systems are very dynamic and could possibly be adapted to new employment opportunities and patterns. What is missing in mainstream studies about employment in rural formal and informal sectors is their neglect of pastoralists' contribution to the local and national economies of the Sahelian states. This neglect affects drastically the manner in which job creation projects often overlook this important sector of the Sahelian populations and their economic pursuits.*

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## Discussion

minuted by Laurens van der Laan, ASC

Questions were raised about the use of standard statistics to document de-agrarianization. First of all, census data classifying people by main occupation, industry, main activity tend to overlook the informants' part-time activities, which is unfortunate for those who want to document the phenomenon of income diversification in the process of de-agrarianization. Secondly, household surveys provide information on 'money earned outside the household', which may include money earned in agriculture, i.e. on someone else's farm. This information is problematic for tracing de-agrarianization. Seasonal agricultural wage labour is not technically 'non-farm employment', but from the perspective of the rural household, because it is not agricultural work on their own farms, it functions very much like non-farm activities vis-a-vis household income-earning.

Apart from the problem of how to identify and measure the process of de-agrarianization, another issue is the evaluation of de-agrarianization. Do we welcome the process or see it as unfavourable for the rural population, and for the households on the micro-level? Judgement of this will vary from place to place.

Another aspect of such an evaluation of the process is the question of whether it is possible to distinguish between a structural process from changes that are temporary, transitory or seasonal. It is likely that exogenous events such as drought, famine and civil war speed up the process. Hamid el Bashir Ibrahim suggested that external events can sweep away cultural barriers against occupational change, as he has observed in Darfur. For example, entrepreneurs no longer have to be outsiders.

The intention of structural adjustment has been to favour and strengthen the agricultural sector. However, evidence from a number of countries suggests that the actual impact is uneven. The better-off farmers gain, but the poorer ones, notably the net-purchasers of food, lose. Ali Abdel Gadir Ali pointed out that those using an economic yardstick of success, especially the authors of many World Bank reports, tend to be more positive about the success of structural adjustment than those concerned with the social dimensions. There is a further problem in that the economies of many countries embarking on structural adjustment, have been shaken by external events such as drought, falling export prices, and civil war. In these cases it is theoretically impossible to evaluate the effect of structural adjustment on the performance of the agricultural sector. Hamid el Bashir Ibrahim indicated that structural adjustment, by withdrawing consumer subsidies, tends to increase the hardships caused by drought.

Participants raised some questions on the necessity of modifying a project in the light of experience gained during implementation. This issue was related to the project Action Décortiqueuse, described by Annelies Zoomers. If it turns out to be necessary to add a new

objective, in this case, business orientation, does this imply that some of the earlier objectives, such as helping women and introducing appropriate technology, have to be discarded? There is no general answer to this question.

With regard to de-pastoralization, some felt that the structural adjustment programmes have had a strong impact on pastoral activity, i.e. through withdrawal of subsidies. Mohamed Salih argued that the marketing policy was also affected by structural adjustment and has been of the greatest importance, since the exchange rate between service costs and livestock prices has deteriorated.

In addition, environmental degradation, especially in Darfur region, has had an impact on pastoralism. It was argued by one participant that de-pastoralization is not a new phenomena caused by anything in particular. In Ethiopia, it has been a process that was set in motion over a century ago. Encroachment of cultivation has always been there resulting in a push of the pastoralists from the high to the lowlands.

This set off a discussion about trends in de-pastoralization. One discussant maintained that besides factors like taxation and land encroachment, the absolute number of pastoralists has *increased*, while the land available to them has diminished. Referring to Table 3 of the paper, he pointed out that livestock numbers increased over the last decade. In Salih's paper, however, data showing the number of animals per capita were not included. This would have shown that pastoral wealth faces a downward trend which can be considered part and parcel of de-pastoralization and impoverishment.

Salih explained that this was a difficult issue. The decrease of livestock on a per capita basis was a mere 2 per cent to 3 per cent. This small decrease is explained by the fact that the pastoral population now also includes hired labourers, urban-based owners etc. which blurs the real level of livestock wealth of pastoral households. For this reason, animals per capita is not a good unit of measurement.

A more basic comment in the discussion was that losing animals is not the same as de-pastoralization which amounted to proletarianization. Another comment on the definitions used by Salih, was that jobs like livestock trading, milk-selling and wage labour herding should not be included in non-agricultural jobs. Further, how important are real non-agricultural activities? According to Salih's data, some 50 per cent of the job categories mentioned are outside the agricultural sector. It appears that rainfall is so extremely low that one is forced to engage in non-agricultural jobs.

One discussant agreed that de-pastoralization could be defined as a process of pastoralists leaving herd keeping, resulting in the ultimate collapse of the traditional livestock sector. However, in some countries (e.g. Mali), the livestock sector looks promising. As soon as this sector is made more attractive by suitable policies, a run for cattle farming might be expected. Nevertheless, in West Africa in general the chances for export of livestock and meat are not favourable. Middlemen grab the surplus, as do malfunctioning marketing boards.

Finally the differences between pastoralists and cultivators were listed by the participants to stress the specificity of pastoralism in the context of de-agrarianization, and its strong link with proletarianization. First, unemployment among pastoralists is more serious. When a pastoralist loses his livestock, other opportunities are not at hand. Second, migration to the city for a job is difficult because of a lack of education. Finally, at the household level the problems are again more distressing since other sources of income and remittances are more difficult to obtain.

## *Ethiopia*

### **Income Diversification Behaviour of Farm Households in an Ethiopian Village**

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The purpose of this paper is to empirically investigate *the income diversification behaviour of farm households using micro level data generated in an Ethiopian village survey. The evidence suggests that non-farm income is very crucial for farm households, constituting a substantial portion of their total cash income.*

Occupational diversification is a mechanism for rural households to cope in conditions of growing population pressure on the land, declining yields and an often hostile political and economic environment. A study was done in a village where the development of various activities have mirrored important changes in state policies. It appears that the system of compulsory deliveries of food grains which was operational during military rule, induced farm households to switch family labour towards the production of goods not covered by the quota system. The establishment of Debre Sina town, the construction of the Addis Ababa-Dessie highway, and recently, the attempt at market liberalization has probably contributed to the expansion of the non-farm sector.

A sample of 30 farm households was taken in Sina-Debre-Sina, a typical village in the highly degraded, mountainous and backwards areas of the central Highlands, 190 km north of Addis Ababa. Information on the households' cash incomes, acquired by weekly interviews over one year, revealed that there are basically six sources of cash income derived from the sale of: food crops, livestock and livestock products, forest products and grass, *araki* alcoholic drink, miscellaneous spices, drinks, etc., as well as the receipt of financial incomes from sources external to the household.

In terms of agricultural products, the bulk of household food grain production is used for household consumption. A part of it is sold, however, in spite of the poor yields, which are much below the national average of 12 quintals per hectare. The sales of food grains account for 28 per cent of household income. Livestock and livestock products include livestock itself and products like butter, eggs, hides and skins. The sample households derived 24 per cent of their cash income from this source.

Included in the forest products category are *gesho*, a kind of hop used for brewing mainly *tella*, the local beer, as well as firewood, timber and grass for animal feed. Most of the forest products and grasses are grown on individual farms, and some are collected from



communal land. The study considers this as a non-farm activity. Such economic endeavours are neglected in the national surveys and national income accounting exercise, although the evidence suggests that forest products can be substantial in supplementing rural incomes. The study showed that this source accounts for 23 per cent of cash income in Sina Debre Sina.

*Araki* is a local spirit distilled from malt of wheat, fermented sorghum and *gesho*. All inputs originate from the agricultural sector, except for the milling service. Women, who produce *araki*, are the major recipients of the income from its sale at the local level. About 11 per cent of household income is derived from *araki* sales.

Included in the financial incomes category are remittances, loans and incomes from the *iggub*, i.e. rotating savings and credit association, and *iddir*, the traditional institution providing financial and other types of assistance when households are in difficulties. These sources account for only 5 per cent of household income.

Miscellaneous income sources were very varied. A few people in Sina Debre Sina were selling *basobila* spice, green pepper, *inset* tuber used as food, *tella* local drink, tea, *dabbo* local bread, and second-hand clothes. Wage labour was also reported by a few people. Only 9 per cent of cash income originates from these sources.

The relative importance of these sources of income varies according to gender. Women earn more by selling grain, 53 per cent of their income as compared to 20 per cent for men. Men earn more from the sale of livestock and livestock products, 40 per cent of their cash income and only 8 per cent for women. The livestock trade, as well as the marketing of forest products are dominated by males. Income per member of household also varies according to gender. Men earn an average of Birr 847 (5.13 birr = \$1) and women earn 363 Birr on average.

Inter-household variation in annual cash income is associated with household size, ownership of draft oxen and age of the household head. Households having smaller family size, i.e. two to five members, earn an average of Birr 1798 while those having a larger family size, i.e. six to eleven, earn an average of Birr 2490. The income per head was, respectively, 349 and 411.

Younger families, with heads of household between 34 and 50 years old, earn less (Birr 2108) than families with a head of household older than 51 (Birr 2501). The latter often includes grown-up children who can generate cash incomes. In addition, older people may be more experienced and have more access to indigenous technical knowledge, which is important in a society heavily relying on traditional technology.

The ownership of draft oxen is the most significant factor determining household income. Households with 3 or 4 oxen earn Birr 3492 (and Birr 570 per person), while those owning 1 or 2 oxen earn only Birr 1873 (Birr 273 per person).

The study shows that the ***non-farm sector is important in generating cash income for the village inhabitants, approximately one-third of total cash***

*income. The non-farm sector is also essential in terms of linkages: In the study it was observed that non-farm activities are closely linked to the farming sector through an input-output relationship.* For example, farm products are used as inputs in the preparation of *araki* and the by-products of *araki* are used as animal feed.

Finally, the case study gives evidence that *income diversification strategies may have specific features. Off-farm employment in Sina Debre Sina was found to be unimportant since a labour market hardly exists in this area. Opportunities for migration to urban areas are highly limited. Under such conditions, the local people develop sideline activities to supplement household income.*

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### **Landlessness and Rural Labour Markets: A Study of Households in Northern Shewa Region of Ethiopia**

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This paper addresses the issue of land access in the context of rural Ethiopia. *The paper focuses on the case of landless households and examines their numbers, employment sources and other economic characteristics.* The study discusses various strategies for enhancing land access, i.e. cash rentals, sharecropping and labour marketing, and rural poverty alleviation in the light of their importance to the landless.

*The broad conclusions are that landless households face serious impediments blocking their receipt of benefits from the operation of the inter-locking land/labour markets. These impediments are manifested in the small market share of landless households in the sharecropping market segment, a mere 19 per cent of total sharecropped land, and an absolute absence from the cash rental market. This is due to a lack of comparative advantage in cash, capital and labour resources held by the landless in contrast to their older, better established landed competitors. Of the landless that manage to penetrate the inter-locking markets, the majority, i.e. 77 per cent of landless sharecroppers, do so with the subsidy of access to parental family resources.*

*Due to restricted indirect access to land, and in the absence of employment generating institutions or interventions, the landless are forced to*

*rely on rural labour markets for their livelihood. The absence of employment generating institutions restricts the demand for rural labour, and hence the market size, to that generated by the smallholder agricultural sector.* The limited capacity to hire labour in this already impoverished sector of the rural economy leads to a weak *effective* demand for labour which effects segmentation of the labour markets. This segmentation is manifested in the existence of a *fixed contractual and labour contracting/daily labour* markets. While labour supply on the former is a monopoly of the landless, offering considerable levels of occupational security, it is characterized by a low age of entry into the market and extremely low levels of remuneration. Despite these constraints and a low prevalence of marriage of employees in this market segment, the majority remain within the market with aspirations to seek a future in agriculture and to uphold to parental and/or kinship ties by remaining in close proximity to the areas of their birth and upbringing. *Labour contracting* arrangements, the majority of which were generated through employment on traditionally irrigated fields, were observed to be better rewarding to the landless but had limited levels of prevalence. In contrast, the daily labour markets, characterized by severe seasonality of demand, displayed high levels of spontaneity in employment concomitant with high levels of job insecurity.

*Though the effectiveness of labour intensive public works schemes as a short run palliative to the problem is much appreciated, it is argued that the potential for public intervention, in the form of food for work or cash for food projects, to remedy the situation in full, is limited by the size of landless populations and hence the level of resource commitments needed. This is justified by the existence of a persistent level of unemployment running parallel to employment opportunities in public work schemes.*

*In conclusion, a case is made for greater investment in agriculture and rural employment generation schemes as the problem is more than one of land supply.*

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The major resources are labour and land. Family labour is the main source of labour and depends on the size and composition of the household. The average household size in the area is around 6.6 persons (Storck *et al.* 1991). Farm size is generally small. The average land size is roughly one hectare, and nearly all the land is cultivated, often quite intensively. This situation has clear implications on its utilization. There is very little fallowing with a high degree of inter-cropping. Livestock ownership is strongly correlated with size of land holding. According to recent estimates (Berhanu 1991), an area below 1.5 ha cannot be assumed to be sufficient to support an average-sized household. The implications are that a sizable number of households do not have enough land to meet their subsistence and cash requirements.

Farming families are completely dependent on the natural environment. Agriculture in the area is rain-fed. Only 3.7 per cent of arable land is under irrigation. Inadequate rainfall is a serious problem. In the face of intensive cultivation, soil fertility is not maintained due to lack of manure and chemical fertilizers.

In view of the uncertain and degrading natural environment, provisioning household requirements has proved to be a challenging task for farmers. The main source of income is agricultural activity. Farm outputs are very low. There is a direct relationship between land size, on the one hand, and net family income per manday and per person, on the other. However, there are indications that households in all size categories involve themselves in non-agricultural activities to supplement their farm incomes. These activities include: daily labour, sale of firewood, trading, children working off-farm, building houses, sale of grass fodder, working as a guard, *t'chat* agent, production of farm implements, and public food for work programmes. However, the dependence of households on non-agricultural occupations is higher the smaller the land size. Bezabih (1991) estimates that barely one-half of households' income comes from farming.

The relationship between land size and labour efficiency is quite revealing. Small peasants earn only 0.90 birr per manday, larger farms earn 2.16 birr per manday. This tendency indicates a low opportunity cost of labour; in fact, far lower than the daily labour wage rate. A lot of labour is disguised unemployment, unproductively absorbed in agriculture. Low incomes result in low savings and investment with little chance of improvements in agricultural productivity.

Poverty is endemic in the area. Only one-third of the peasants sampled in Storck's (1991) survey felt that they could produce sufficient food and earn sufficient cash to support their families. This problem is common throughout Ethiopia. The question is whether rural people have any alternatives. Since ***much of agricultural labour is disguised unemployment***, its withdrawal from agriculture, according to marginal productivity theories, would not cause agricultural output to decline. In view of the crisis of rural household livelihood, its productive absorption elsewhere is imperative.

Following the recent instatement of a new government, several changes have occurred in political orientation, in economic policies, and in institutional structures. The current structural adjustment programme, prompted by the well-known provisos of the IMF and World Bank, does not encourage migration of unskilled rural labour to urban areas. Finding an urban job is hardly feasible for the rural migrant. Maintaining a livelihood in the rural areas is the only option. Furthermore, large numbers of ex-soldiers have been sent back to the rural areas to farm. This exacerbates the land/labour ratio. In short, ***the new economic policies simply assume that the rural area can absorb more and more labour.***

It is in this overall context that ***rural non-agricultural economic activities have a great potential role to play. First, for rural people with insufficient land, they are a vital complement to their farm income. Second, rural non-agricultural economic activities serve as risk aversion strategies against rainfall unpredictability and general environmental uncertainty. Third, they have important potential linkages with farming. Non-agricultural activities do not necessarily entail consumption of own-produced items, i.e. the production turnover and degree of monetization is higher. This could increase incomes and savings, which could be used for capital formation in farming as well as in the non-agricultural activities themselves. Fourth, as has been experienced in the study area, rural non agricultural activities help reduce income disparities between asset-rich and asset-poor farmers, loosening the structural rigidities associated with the agricultural production process.***

Despite the inability of agriculture to provide the necessary means of subsistence and improve the livelihood of rural poor people, despite the difficulty to provide these people with employment opportunities in urban areas, and despite the enormous potential role that non-agricultural rural employment could play, these economic activities have been neglected by researchers and policy makers. Paradoxically, despite such neglect, it has become a reality that such activities are proliferating now more than ever before. Farmers have not waited for researchers or government officials to tell them that these are useful economic activities.

As far as the experience in Ethiopia's Hararghe Highlands goes, it is very difficult to view farming and non-agricultural activities in isolation from one another since they are inter-linked and complementary at the household level. Any effort to understand and explain the role, potential and limitations of rural non-agricultural activities and any intervention has to consider the whole household production system. Fortunately, ***farm and non-farm activities do not necessarily compete for scarce resources. On the contrary, if carefully planned, they can lead to proper utilization of labour as a relatively abundant resource, thus easing the pressure on the scarcest resource, land.***

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## **Discussion**

minuted by Tjalling Dijkstra, ASC

Some questions for clarification were raised: how is it possible that the average Ethiopian savings are approximately 200 US dollars, while the average per capita income for Ethiopia is on average 120 US dollars? Is there long-term accumulation? According to Dejene Aredo, the per capita income is underestimated. Long-term accumulation will be clear after his study has continued for some years, but a high level of accumulation is not expected.

In Abebe Gabriel's paper, it is stated that fear of the evil eye prevented people from embarking upon weaving and blacksmithing activities, which the participants found hard to understand. Abebe indicated that this belief goes back to historical views about blacksmithing and weaving as socially polluting activities that were ostracized. Only particular ethnic groups were blacksmiths and weavers. Nowadays, however, people from other ethnic groups are no longer prevented from going into these activities because many do not have a choice anymore.

The question was posed as to whether de-agrarianization is a long-term trend or a new phenomenon. On the one hand, de-agrarianization can be seen as part of a long historical process. For the past 50 years, there has been a structural tendency to abandon farming, due to increased monetization. Taxation and government economic policies have forced people out of subsistence farming in order to participate in the world economy. Currently de-agrarianization takes place because rural households' present needs are greater and more diversified than can be supplied by subsistence agriculture. De-agrarianization has become a coping strategy in view of the expansion of basic needs and contraction of returns from farming. What is especially interesting, however, is that now, in spite of this historical process of abandoning subsistence farming, people do not move away from farming as such. Rural households stay rural and remain committed to agriculture. This is supported by the fact that the removal of restrictions on the mobility of labour in Ethiopia did not lead to considerable migration to towns. Earning cash from non-agricultural activities can be seen as a way to bridge short-term catastrophes, or as a supplement to farming incomes.

Basically there are two reasons for farmers to take up non-agricultural activities: 1) necessity, through land pressure or famine or, 2) risk aversion, i.e. diversification of the household economic base. The expansion of wage employment can be interpreted as either a negative or a positive sign. Negative, because it may be a symptom of impoverishment, and positive because it can indicate that farms become more productive and create employment.

One important issue in the discussion on de-agrarianization is labour specialization. Labour specialization takes place at the household level (e.g. in Ethiopia, women market the food, men do the heavy farm work) and on an inter-household level, to a lesser extent.

According to Pramila Krishnan, there is little specialization in the group of high return farmers. However, it is notable that within the household, men rather than women are more specialized in non-farm activity in this group.

Dejene identified four contexts in which economic specialization in non-farm activities can be observed: 1) in areas with a relatively high level of technical progress. Additional labour is required for harvesting etc. People migrate seasonally to these areas to provide labour. 2) In response to relative prices, where agricultural prices are relatively high, such as in towns, people might invest in agriculture. In other words, they *agrarianize*, but they are otherwise engaged in non-farm activities. 3) In the rural areas, peasants accumulate capital and then diversify their economic base, e.g. petty trade, grain processing or starting a transport business. 4) Investment takes place in labour-intensive goods that are linked to agriculture on the demand side, e.g. road building and other infrastructure provisioning under public works schemes.

At the end of the discussion, it was felt that in analysing de-agrarianization there is a need for a dynamic picture and more historical data. In documenting the process of de-agrarianization in Ethiopia, the papers under discussion represented baseline studies requiring further monitoring.

## ***Ghana and Zaire***

### **Economic Activities of the Poor in Accra, Ghana\***

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***The poor in Accra, the capital of Ghana, are usually not born in that city, but in the rural areas. This paper summarizes the main results of a qualitative poverty assessment in Accra, briefly discussing the effects of structural adjustment, the extent of poverty in one neighbourhood, the functioning of labour markets and the economic activities of the urban poor.***

Special attention is given to the rural origin of the urban poor, the present relations between urban and rural areas and the policy conclusions drawn.

Poor households present themselves at the labour market, but only qualify for certain jobs. The poverty of the household, the functioning of urban labour markets and the importance of certain economic activities are related to each other. Structural adjustment changes the terms of trade between rural and urban areas. There are more opportunities now, however, associated with the fact that the urban poor rely largely on the urban informal sector to survive.

***Economic liberalization has brought about a very competitive environment for labour in the urban labour market and for the urban informal sector in the market for goods and services. Real wages are so low that one wage is usually not enough to support a family. Within the informal sector, a differentiation process is taking place, leading to some very rewarding activities and a large number of only marginally profitable enterprises. Differentiation is related to the technology used, the qualities of entrepreneurs and the new opportunities provided in a liberalized market.***

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\* The research for this paper was undertaken while working as consultants for the World Bank, financed by the Netherlands Trust fund. The results do not represent the point of view of the World Bank. The field work in Abeka was carried out jointly with Daniel Inkoom from the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. The choice of a qualitative, more in-depth study was made because several quantitative large-scale household surveys (Ghana Living Standards Survey or GLSS) had already been carried out. The analyses of these, however, are behind schedule such that a comparison with our results can only be made in the future.



***A classification of coping strategies, i.e. activities of poor households which enable them to cope with their resource poor conditions, was made. We distinguish between consumptive strategies, i.e. adjusting expenditures and falling back on the support of others, from productive strategies involving intensified and more diversified economic activity.*** Adjusting expenditures is a first reaction. However, spending less on food and delaying medical treatment may have substantial effects. Less nutritious foods are chosen and cold or cooked food is bought in the street instead of preparing it at home. Families also cut back on expenditure for their children's education. Children are taken from private schools and eventually, due to cutbacks and rising pupil intakes, the functional operation of public schools may be undermined.

Appealing to family members, to other households in the community, to friends and people from one's tribe or region are also fallback mechanisms. Besides getting money or food, some people ask their relatives to take care of their children. Similarly, people use their social network to find work. However, in an urban context, where everybody is facing the same problems and where traditional ties are becoming less important, it may no longer be possible for a number of poor to fall back on their family, friends, tribesmen or people from their region.

Poor households try to push more members into economic activities. However, starting from a disadvantaged position makes it more difficult to turn these into rewarding activities. Investments will be minimal, the location may not be optimal and the person concerned may not have the appropriate skill and experience when a new activity is started. Female traders often sell very small quantities with low margins. Often too many sell the same product, which makes it difficult for any one individual to earn a living from the trade. The tendency to use the working capital for necessary daily household expenditures may lead to what is called 'eating into profit.' At the end of the week one discovers that there is not enough money left to buy a new stock, to pay certain charges or the cost of transportation.

This coping strategy also leads to more child labour and to an increasing share of women participating in the labour force. Diversifying existing activities, the fourth type of coping strategy can be seen as a form of risk spreading. Female traders selling additional products or metal workers venturing into the production of new models or products. Participating in *susu*, a collective savings system, buying and selling on credit, selling very small quantities and using a different way of packaging can as well be considered a diversification strategy. Other examples are renting out rooms, suggesting children take up apprenticeships, investing in their education and training, gambling and lending money to others.

***Policies and programmes can help the poor in three ways: one, by creating a positive macroeconomic environment and hence by stimulating economic growth. Second, policies and projects may be designed specifically***

*to support the economic activities of the poor. Finally, safety net constructions are necessary for those poor who are not able to undertake rewarding economic activities. The challenge for formulating good policies is to alleviate poverty by building on the positive actions of the poor. Instead of just providing material support, we must find ways to facilitate the poor's own efforts to improve their situation.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Government Policy, Small Enterprises and the Process of De-agrarianization: Lessons from Ghana**

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Ghana's import substitution industrial strategy, adopted soon after independence in 1957, like many developing countries, failed in many respects to provide the needed steam for the growth and development of the national economy. The reasons are obvious: the industries were capital intensive, had no raw material base, no linkages to the national resource capacities and employment patterns. The government's agricultural policies focussed on the setting up of large-scale state farms, with an emphasis on mechanization as the most efficient means of production. This was despite the fact that even to date 85 per cent of the estimated 1.8 million land holders, i.e. independent farm operators, are small-scale operators usually with holdings of less than two hectares. With the use of traditional labour-intensive methods of cultivation, they produce 80 per cent of Ghana's total agricultural output. The pursuance of these policies for over a decade made the economy starved of foreign exchange and heavily dependent on foreign capital, and hence subject to the dictates of Western economies.

Various policies adopted from 1966 to 1981 sought to restore the economy but with little success. This necessitated the launching of a World Bank Supported Economic Recovery Programme by the government in 1983. Despite the application of a combination of financial, macro and micro-economic instruments as demanded by the donors, Ghana's economy still suffers severe bottlenecks. In 1990 for example, domestic savings were less than 12 per cent of Gross Domestic Product and over one quarter of investment depended of foreign finance. Currently, the real income per head is less than 90 per cent of the 1975 level. There is no clear growth trend in the agricultural sector. The financial system has not been able to mobilise savings for long-term investment.

*This paper examines findings from a 1991 survey of rural, non-formal mining and processing activities in the Dangme West District of Ghana focussed*

***on the oyster shell industry.*** The shells are mainly used in the building industry for finishing and as lime for painting. In the agricultural sector, the shells are utilized as a component in the preparation of poultry feed due to its calcium content.

Oyster shell processing involves the acquisition of a land plot or a concession, weeding the plot, digging for the shells and then direct sale or shell processing and bagging the lime for sale. A land concession can be obtained through the family, through friends, a local chief, or outright purchase. Family connections are highly instrumental. There is very little specialization in the mining of the shells, but processing requires skill in ensuring that the right proportion of wood and shells is maintained to get a high volume of lime. The technology for burning is quite simple but has obvious negative ecological consequences in terms of its high fuelwood requirements and indiscriminate digging.

Oyster shell extraction and processing is a private, non-farm activity, dominated by men, who account for about 92 per cent of all plot owners and concession holders. Starting capital comes for three main sources: entrepreneurs own resources (56%); friends and relatives (28%), and traditional money lenders (15%). Entrepreneurs are able to recoup their initial capital investment within a period of one year, which is an indicator of the profitability of the industry.

***Oyster shell processing takes place during eight months of the year. Wage labour, rather than use of household labour, dominates this rural-based activity. This phenomenon could be attributed to the labour market dynamics of the national capital Accra, which is only 30 km away. On the other hand, the rural influence is strong. Nearly all those involved in this activity also do some farming during the four-month break. Labour is, however, more attracted to this activity than agriculture due to its profitability and its less risky nature.*** Women normally do the collection and sieving of shells, while men do the processing. In terms of the age structure of those employed, a majority of the labour force are between the ages of 26 and 30, reflecting the heavy input of physical energy. Significant is the role of children who help in the transportation of the mined shells to the burning sites. Employees earned, at the time of the study, 38 per cent higher wages than the minimum daily wage approved by the government.

The findings suggest that private non-farm activities have the potential to trigger an endogenous development and growth of local and national economies. ***Oyster shell processing directly or indirectly employs one out of every 10 persons in the district, which has a population of almost 80,000 people, and it is estimated that it can generate 50 new jobs annually.*** Added to this is its potential to create linkages in agriculture, housing and the service sectors. The activity had the potential to generate at least 20% of the district's development budget through rents, taxes and levies.

Apart from the fact that government decentralization policy adopted since 1988 enabled the district authorities and subsequently the traditional owners of the land to regain access to their hitherto nationalized lands for the pursuit of this activity, past policies also help to explain

people's attraction to oyster shell processing. *As a peri-urban area of Accra, de-agrarianization came early to this district and has, in occupational terms at least, remained relatively stable. Between 1965 and 1989, the agricultural labour force of this area decreased only slightly from 23.2 per cent to 22.6 per cent.* Mention also has to be made of the fact that the provision of basic amenities, especially electricity, in many rural communities has at least in the short term shifted the spatial distribution of population in favour of the rural areas. The massive lay-offs and redeployment in public sector organisations situated primarily in urban areas has resulted in the movement of large numbers of people into informal sector activities and into activities exploiting the land and other natural resources.

The system of land ownership is a restraining factor for de-agrarianization. Due to the system of traditional land ownership, i.e. the strong moral belief that land belongs not only to the present generation but to the past as well as to the future generations, there is a tendency for people to engage in some farming activity to maintain ties with the land. This is in effect a form of social security. Despite the fact that wages in this activity are about 38 per cent higher than the national minimum wage, over 70 per cent of those employed also engage in farming activities at the same time. *Land ownership systems therefore appear to be key issues in understanding the nature and rate of de-agrarianization in Ghana.*

*In conclusion, until recently little or no attention has been given to the private sector's resource potential in Ghana. This case study of private oyster shell processing activities in a peri-urban district of Accra provides evidence of the potential for small-scale private and informal sector activities to generate the much needed motor force for overall national development. This potential is harboured within a somewhat curious combination of rural/urban factors which testify to the on-going process of de-agrarianization.*

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## **Rural Employment and Rural-Urban Differences in Employment in Zaire: A Comparative Perspective**

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*This paper uses data from two separate sources to examine the nature of rural employment and rural-urban differences in employment, and to look at non-agricultural activities of members in rural households.* We begin with data from Zaire's 1984 Census, for the province of Bandundu, located immediately to the east of the capital, Kinshasa, with a population in 1984 of nearly 3.8 million. Data are presented separately for rural Bandundu, urban Bandundu, and, for purposes of comparison, Kinshasa.

Examination of data on the composition of employment by industry documents the predominance of agriculture in Bandundu: 82 per cent of rural employment is in agriculture, as is 57 per cent of urban employment, representing 65 per cent of employment in the province's 19 smaller urban centres with an average population of about 15,000, and 37 per cent of employment in the province's two cities - Kikwit and Bandundu City - with a total population in excess of 210,000. By comparison, less than 10 per cent of Kinshasa's employment is in agriculture.

Non-agricultural employment is concentrated in three sectors: manufacturing, services, and commerce. These three sectors combined represent 17 per cent of total rural employment, 31% per cent of employment in the smaller urban centres, 54 per cent of employment in the two provincial cities, and 72 per cent of employment in Kinshasa. Hence, in moving from rural to progressively larger urban areas there is a clear decline in the importance of agriculture, and the degree of industrial diversification increases regularly. Agriculture, manufacturing, services and commerce account for 99 per cent of employment in rural Bandundu but only 83 per cent of employment in Kinshasa. It should be noted that the Census data do not allow for multiple activities. Hence, in particular, rural individuals involved in non-agricultural work who also participate in farming are likely to be classified as involved in non-agricultural employment. The data thus maximise reported non-agricultural employment but understate the full extent of agricultural work.

There are clear gender differences. *Women are considerably more heavily represented in agriculture than men in every location.* For example, fully 92 per cent of female workers in rural Bandundu are in agriculture, compared to only 68 per cent of male workers. The largest gender difference is in urban Bandundu, and especially in the province's two cities. In addition, the degree of concentration in the four principal industry groups is distinctly greater among women than among men in every location.

Census data for Bandundu and Kinshasa on schooling of workers by industry and location document that schooling is strongly linked to non-agricultural work, and most notably work in the service sector. Moving from lower to higher levels of educational attainment is associated with progressively lower likelihoods of individuals working in agriculture and progressively greater probabilities of individuals being employed in services. The relationships between schooling and employment in manufacturing and commerce vary somewhat, depending on the location.

It appears that the balance of employment as between the informal sector and the modern sector shifts progressively in each industry group as one moves from rural to urban areas in Bandundu and to Kinshasa. Regardless of location, service workers are predominantly salaried, and hence most likely to be in the modern sector, while those in agriculture and commerce are predominantly self-employed. The composition of manufacturing varies by location, with only 26 per cent of rural manufacturing workers being salaried compared to 42 per cent of manufacturing workers in urban Bandundu and 71 per cent in Kinshasa.

Data from a 1985-86 farm household survey carried out in relatively remote villages in Bandundu and four other regions in Zaire's Southern Band document that ***men are considerably more likely than women to be engaged in non-agricultural activities***. Among individuals aged 15 and over, there was no significant gender difference in participation in fishing, while men were significantly more likely than women to participate in hunting, handicraft work, and school. ***The only activity in which women participated more than men was commerce, typically, selling of agricultural output in local markets***. Age differences were also apparent for most activities, with the youngest individuals, those aged 15-24, being least likely to participate in every activity other than schooling.

The Southern Band survey also documented that household composition affected participation of household members in agriculture. That is, for example, ***greater numbers of female adults in a household were associated with a reduced likelihood of participation in agriculture for individual men and women in the household, and greater numbers of men tended to depress the likelihood of any individual male being involved in agriculture. In addition, men's participation in agriculture was positively influenced by the presence of children under age 15 in the household***.

***These effects of household composition on participation in agriculture led us to expect similar influences of household composition on non-agricultural activities. However, no such effects were observed. Our interpretation is that, in the rural environment studied, where opportunities for non-agricultural activities were generally limited, the key constraint on participation in non-agricultural activities is simply the opportunities offered***

*by the surrounding environment. Hence, when non-agricultural activities were available some household members would pursue them, and adjust the intensity of their participation in agriculture accordingly.*

*The concluding section of the paper attempts to assess the prospects for de-agrarianization in Zaire in the future. On the one hand, the rising levels of schooling that characterize successive cohorts of individuals in rural as well as urban areas of Zaire mean that there is likely to be an increasing supply of workers oriented toward and available for non-agricultural employment in the future. However, the acute economic crisis that has characterized Zaire since 1990, accompanied by hyperinflation and collapse of the modern sector of employment, means that the demand side is simply not there to support continued de-agrarianization. Indeed, there have been reports of people leaving Kinshasa due to the difficulties of survival there, and returning to rural areas where they can at least assure their food supply. This suggests that, for the time being at least, Zaire may be better characterized as undergoing a process of re-agrarianization, both spatially and within rural areas.*

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## **Discussion**

minuted by Piet Konings, ASC

The discussion on the Ghana papers focussed on the development impact of the structural adjustment programme in Ghana. The authors maintained that the structural adjustment programme in Ghana has brought about a significant shift of labour from the formal sector to the informal and agricultural sectors. They argued that 're-agrarianization' in particular was one of the striking consequences of the structural adjustment programme in Ghana, stressing that this shift should be evaluated positively, for the 'real' development potential in Ghana is not situated in the formal sector but rather in the informal and agricultural sectors. The formal sector, in fact, has always been marked by low productivity and could only survive thanks to persistent state protection. Moreover, the relatively low wages in this sector never stimulated the workers to raise productivity. Contrary to the South-East Asian model, that propagates development from above, development from below was the best option for Ghana. The continuous flexibility and dynamism of the informal and agricultural sectors constituted a solid foundation for development. The forced removal of million of Ghanaians from Nigeria in the beginning of the 1980s and their subsequently rapid integration into the informal and

agricultural sectors of Ghana seem to substantiate the enormous development potential of these sectors.

Nonetheless, questions remained. One participant asked whether the development model advocated by the authors served as a *long-term* development strategy? Second, had the authors studied the present migration patterns in Ghana? Only such a study could provide the necessary evidence for their hypothesis that 're-agrarianization' is becoming a dominant feature in the rural-urban divide. And finally, one discussant warned that the weaknesses inherent to employment in the agricultural and informal sectors should not be overlooked. Agricultural work tends to be highly seasonal and informal sector work tends often to be less secure than formal sector work.

The discussion on the Zairean paper was restricted to some criticism of the data presented in Table 4 (Participation rates for non-agricultural activities, by gender). It was remarked that fishing and hunting should not be categorized as non-agricultural activities. Similar to agricultural work, they are usually classified as primary sector employment. In addition, students are never considered to be members of the labour force. While accepting these remarks, the authors nevertheless pointed out that they did not fundamentally affect the gender differences spelled out in the table.



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*Nigeria*

**‘Winners and Losers’:  
Household Fortunes in the Urban Peripheries of Northwest Nigeria**

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Ken Swindell  
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***De-agrarianization needs to be understood in specific sets of conditions,  
in particular locations and for differentiated classes of African peoples.***

Therefore this paper is location specific inasmuch as it deals with urban hinterlands and rural-urban linkages within northwest and northcentral Nigeria.

Urban product and job markets have an important impact on surrounding villages, and many households ‘straddle’ different economies located within the town and countryside and embrace diverse production and exchange relations, which display a heterogeneity where none is fully interpretable without reference to the other. Individuals combine farm and non-farm jobs either contemporaneously or sequentially. Rural communities within urban hinterlands show both diversification and specialization, which may exhibit both secular and seasonal changes.

Northern Nigeria has a number of historic Muslim Hausa-Fulani towns, which have a long established social division of labour, that extended into the surrounding areas. Seasonal off-farm work either in crafts or services, or as part of long distance trading caravans were recorded in the nineteenth century. But by the 1970s, income derived from non-farm and off-farm incomes increased, and the rise and fall of the oil economy has been of profound significance in shaping this trend, together with the role of the state and the varying access to state resources by different groups and interests. The end of the oil-boom in the 1980s also caused significant shifts in employment. It is against this particular historic, cultural and political background that ***we examine two towns and their hinterlands, Gusau a town of some 80,000 and Sokoto, the state capital, a city of over 200,000 people.***

***The villages around Gusau were affected by the oil boom, principally as men left villages for off-farm work, either ‘permanently’, seasonally, or as daily commuters.*** For some off-farm jobs there was a trade-off between new incomes and

lost labour, thus non-farm jobs can be seen as both conjunctive and disjunctive categories.

*Households became increasingly differentiated and could be separated out into three groups according to their occupations and sources of income. The better-off households had sons and/or heads with jobs in the permanent modern government sector, while they were also involved in grain trading and land accumulation. Off-farm jobs accounted for between 48 per cent and 60 per cent of household income. Middle households were particularly dependent on cash transfers and non-farm jobs for the purchase of farming inputs and the hire of ox-plough in attempts to improve their farming. Poorer households had small amounts of land and they too relied heavily on non-farm jobs, between 33 per cent and 55 per cent of income. But in contrast to better-off households, their jobs were erratic, seasonal, and poorly paid; in order to survive, they were doing many different short-term jobs with very poor returns.*

By the late 1980s, the better-off and some middle households were taking full advantage of rising urban food prices precipitated by the initiation of the structural adjustment programme in 1986. *Thus there were winners and losers in terms of non- and off-farm employment and the opportunities it created.*

The investment in land, and the land issue in general is important, especially in urban hinterlands. The rapid expansion of Sokoto as a state capital in the 1970s saw expropriation of land by federal and local state governments for institutional uses, while private speculation along the edges of the city and main roads also absorbed land. In the oil boom many rural households took jobs in the burgeoning state and private sectors: some sold land and virtually left agriculture, while others used non-farm incomes to buy extra land to expand farming for the growing food market. When the oil boom came to an end in the 1980s, there was widespread job retrenchment and many who had bought land sold it to offset their declining circumstances, often at less than they had paid for it. Larger rural farmers were joined by urban-based bureaucrats and politicians who bought land cheaply and large mechanized farms appeared in the hinterland.

The 1990s have witnessed further economic stringencies and a polarization between poorer farmers and the bigger entrepreneurial farmers. *There now exists a significant floating labour force of the poor who seek casual employment on farms, which indicates a narrowing of employment opportunities for those in the rural periphery.* In the 1990s, the banning of wheat imports has caused a renewed interest in grain farming and a surge in irrigated wheat cultivation. Small residual household plots attract more attention, but as they are insufficient for household reproduction, household members hire themselves out to bigger farmers. In the absence of a completely deracinated rural populace, labour rates are comparatively high. *It would appear that agricultural jobs to some extent have replaced former employment within the modern sector. Given this*

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*development, the distinction in sources of household income is one between paid and non-paid farm work.*

*Changes in agriculture have been related to the waxing and waning of non-farm incomes among different groups, which is rather different from the posited agricultural-led creation of jobs in the non-agricultural sector which development theorists have hoped for.* There have been limited developments of backward and forward linkages as agriculture has changed. Primitive accumulation in agriculture does not necessarily lead to subsequent investment in the rural industrial sector. One of the best prospects for profits in rural areas in northern Nigeria is to engage in grain trading which manipulates seasonal peaks and troughs in prices. Also, the investment of money in status, education and politics is important as this allows access to a whole range of economic advantages.

In conclusion, *non-farm jobs and enterprises are highly differentiated according to different sets of people and some are in the process of accumulating money and land, while others are using it as a survival or risk minimization strategy. In the urban hinterlands of northern Nigeria, one may observe with respect to de-agrarianization an intersection of high population densities, environmental risks, land-grabbing, and the “roller-coaster” progression of the Nigerian political economy.*

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### **De-agrarianization in Rural Hausaland, Nigeria: Flexibility or Fragility?**

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In Nigerian Hausaland, existing patterns of de-agrarianization represent a conjunction of historical, economic and environmental factors. *This paper sets out to analyze the patterns of de-agrarianization in Nigerian Hausaland by considering the empirical processes at work and the theoretical perspectives appropriate to understanding the wider implications of these processes.* The paper begins with an analysis of the major theoretical issues, and proceeds to trace the historical evolution of non-farm activities from the pre-colonial era to the introduction of structural adjustment in 1986. The main focus of the paper is an analysis of the impact of structural adjustment on the process

of de-agrarianization, drawing on field studies carried out in the village of Rogo between 1974-75 and 1992-93, which are compared with similar studies carried out in two other Nigerian villages. The impact of ecological pressures on de-agrarianization are also considered. The differential impact of these various forces on class and gender are central to the analysis.

***The theoretical analysis focuses on three debates. The first relates to the role of non-farm activities in agrarian development, the second to the developmental potential of small-scale informal activities, and the third to the implications of de-agrarianization in the context of environmental stress. All three debates tend to be highly polarized. The positive pole of the debate emphasizes the virtues of occupational flexibility, while the negative pole presents de-agrarianization as a degenerative process that undermines agricultural productivity.***

The paper proceeds to trace the historical evolution of non-farm activities in rural Hausaland from the pre-colonial period to 1986. The historical, political and ecological factors that contributed to the importance of non-farm activities in pre-colonial Hausa society are highlighted. The destruction of many of these traditional activities under colonialism was accompanied by a growth and diversification in other areas of the non-farm sector. Under colonialism, however, the development of non-farm activities was set on a path of increased import dependence and an inability to contribute to the transformation of agriculture. The implications of these processes during the oil boom and subsequent crisis periods are discussed.

***An empirical analysis of trends in de-agrarianization is carried out on the basis of data from the village of Rogo in south-western Kano State in Nigeria. The data show a declining share of agriculture in total incomes among small-scale farmers, a rising share of agricultural incomes among large-scale farmers and a mixed trend among medium-scale farmers. These trends are seen to vary in villages from other ecological zones and farming systems within Nigerian Hausaland.***

The rest of the paper focuses on analyzing the role played by structural adjustment in the process of de-agrarianization, and attempts to discern whether it represents a positive or a negative process. This involves an analysis of the impact of the structural adjustment programme on production terms of trade in agriculture, on access to land and labour, on the profitability of non-farm activities and on the allocation of resources within the household.

***Among small-scale farmers, de-agrarianization generally represents a deterioration of livelihood patterns.*** Because of their low resource position and lack of access to high value markets, small-scale farmers face declining terms of trade in agricultural production as well as in their non-farm activities. Rising food prices and the escalating cost of living create further pressures on smallholder livelihoods, which are exacerbated by the high

import dependence of most non-farm activities, and the general situation of market saturation and depressed demand among both rural and urban consumers of informal sector goods and services. *This situation has perpetuated rather than reversed the trend toward rural-urban migration, and intensified the involvement of smallholders in non-farm activities in an attempt to make ends meet. Women, who are largely barred from participation in agriculture by the Muslim practice of seclusion, have also faced serious pressures on their incomes as a result of structural adjustment policies. Large-scale farmers, who are able to sell their crops later in the season and in high value urban, industrial and border markets have been able to benefit from current policies.*

The paper ends by drawing conclusions about the role of market forces and social networks in resource mobilization in rural Hausaland, and the implications of these processes for de-agrarianization. It relates these issues to the theoretical discussion at the beginning of the paper, and concludes that *the process of de-agrarianization in rural Hausaland represents an informalization of reproduction rather than the development of decentralized and more flexible production strategies.*

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## Discussion

minuted by Piet Konings, ASC

The issues that were raised during this session centred on the significance of the household and social networks. All the authors agreed that at present one may observe a serious weakening of household and other social ties, particularly among the rural poor, but also increasingly among the middle-class farmers. The rural poor experience great difficulties in reproducing themselves. In their continuous struggle for survival, they are forced to work extremely hard on the land during the rainy season and to engage in a surprisingly large variety of economic activities during the dry season. Remarkably, despite their precarious situation, they often lack support from their household members. As a matter of fact, there is a growing tendency among the rural poor to withdraw from household responsibilities and to fall back on their own resources.

The flow of money, goods, and food between the rural and urban areas seems to be declining as well. If any assistance is still given to members outside the household, it tends to be restricted to very close relatives. The decreasing flow from the urban areas may be related to the low rural-urban wage differentials. Unlike some East African countries, there is not a vast gap between rural and urban wages in Nigeria. Urban wages, however, seem to be more secure

and it seems to be relatively easier for urban workers than for rural workers to move in and out of the informal sector. Rural workers have another disadvantage; the urban informal sector is involved in the production and sale of relatively cheap goods, affecting rural employment. Markets in the urban centres are plagued by increasing saturation due to the excess supply of cheap goods.

The authors denied that there was a trend towards specialization. They have instead observed a trend towards diversification, particularly among the rural poor. Besides agriculture, the rural poor are inclined to accept any other employment that is offered to them. Middle-class farmers, too, use their close connections in the state apparatus to 'straddle' more than one economic activity.

Finally, the environmental issue was raised. It was affirmed that there was increasing desertification and decreasing capacity of the soil in the northern part of Nigerian Hausaland. The majority of the rural population in this area only produces enough food grain for six to seven months of the year and is thus compelled either to diversify in a variety of marginal non-farm activities or to migrate.

## ***Kenya and Uganda***

### **Livelihood Strategies and Rural Employment in Kenya's Coast Province**

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In this paper, an attempt is made to combine two approaches to the analysis of rural employment. In the household approach, rural employment activities by household members are viewed as contributions to the diversification of the household's income sources. By contrast, the entrepreneurial approach deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the persons who are engaged in non-farm activities. In amalgamating the two approaches, the central questions to address are: 1) what is the importance of non-farm activities for the household's income generation; 2) what are the basic characteristics of non-farm workers; and 3) to what extent can variation in the former be explained by differences concerning the latter?

***The data used in this paper are derived from a study on the impact of climatic seasonality on food consumption and nutrition in Coast Province, Kenya. The survey population consisted of 300 households in six villages. Non-agricultural activities formed an essential element of household livelihood. On average, more than 60 per cent of the households' income was derived from non-agricultural activities. The percentage differed according to household income categories. Amongst low-income households, i.e. below the 'food poverty line', only 30 per cent of their income derived from non-agricultural activities, whereas high-income households, with incomes of at least three times the 'food poverty line', received 71 per cent of their income from non-farm sources.***

Four categories of non-agricultural activities are distinguished. Three of these concern different types of wage employment, notably regular employment, temporary employment and rural casual labour. The fourth category is self-employment. The non-agricultural workers numbering 403 persons in total, i.e. 1.4 per household, consisting of 41 per cent with a regular job, 25 per cent who were self-employed, 20 per cent performing casual labour, and 14 per cent who had temporarily been employed during the year previous to the interview.

Fifty-five per cent of those with a regular or a temporary job were working in the urban area of Mombasa District. Not surprisingly, self-employment and rural casual labour was more bound to the vicinity of the workers' homestead. In terms of income from non-farming activities reaching the workers' households, self-employment appeared to be more rewarding

than regular employment. This has to do with the fact that many persons with a regular job work *and* live in Mombasa, so only part of what they earn was remitted to the rural household. The findings indicate that from the household's perspective, it is more rewarding that one of the household members is engaged in local self-employment rather than having a regular job in town.

The large majority, 85 per cent of the total workers, were men. Women workers were either self-employed or performed casual labour on nearby farms. Very few had a regular job and also very few worked in town. The average earnings from non-agricultural employment of the men were much higher than that of the women, even though about half of the men worked in Mombasa, while nearly all women worked in their own village. Obviously, this is related to the fact that men simply have more time available for these types of activities.

The youngest age group, under 30 years of age, showed a comparatively high percentage of workers who were temporarily employed and also a comparatively high percentage working in Mombasa. The reverse applied to the highest age group, over 40 years. This suggests that there is a category of persons who at a young age have a temporary job in Mombasa for a certain period and eventually return to their villages in order to establish a business. There is also a substantial difference in terms of earnings from non-agricultural employment between the youngest and the oldest age group. Older workers earned almost twice as much as the younger ones.

There is a clear relationship between education and type of work. With more education, there is a better chance of finding some kind of regular employment. On the other hand, self-employment is dominated by workers with less education. As a result, more of the less-educated can be found in their home place, while more of the better-educated are working at some distance from home.

Combining household and entrepreneurial approaches reveals an interesting relationship between the level of non-agricultural household income and workers' characteristics. The low-income households had a comparatively low number of non-agricultural workers per household (0.7). These workers were relatively young. Forty-seven per cent were younger than 30 years of age. They were also relatively less-educated. Only very few women, notably 6 in the 109 households of this category, were engaged in some type of non-agricultural activity, and each of them earned very little. The percentage of male workers doing casual labour on nearby farms was relatively high at 37 per cent. Finally, the percentage of workers who went to Mombasa was also relatively high at 51 per cent. These people did all kinds of work, including regular work, temporary work and also agricultural casual labour in the peri-urban zone. Although quite modest, the average earnings of those working in Mombasa, at KSh.2150 per worker/year, were considerably higher than the earnings of those working in the rural areas for an average KSh.1590 per worker. It must be stressed that only a portion of urban earnings reached the rural households.



The high-income households counted on average 2.0 non-agricultural workers per household, of which 0.3 were women. Compared with the low-income households, the workers were somewhat older. Thirty-seven per cent were under 30 years. They were better educated. Half of the male workers had a regular job, as well as 30 per cent of the women. Sixty-two per cent of the women did some type of self-employment, apparently quite successfully. Their average earnings were relatively high at KSh.6360 per capita, although this is lower than that of the men at KSh.8480. A significantly high percentage of the workers laboured at the homestead or in the near vicinity: 43 per cent of the men and 76 per cent of the women. On average, earnings from local employment were 30 per cent higher than from urban employment in Mombasa. This suggests that it is possible to realise a reasonable income from local, rural employment.

In conclusion, *personal characteristics like sex, age and educational level are co-determinants of the scope and success of diversification of household resources. Diversification of household resources means first of all an income from one or more non-agricultural activities. The idea that a regular job in town offers the best possibility for rural households to 'improve' its status is no longer valid. On average, rural employment is actually more rewarding than urban employment; however, there are age and class entry constraints in operation. Although there is some manoeuvring space for households to devise their livelihood, the possibilities for the poor households are much more restricted than that of the more well-to-do. The livelihood strategy of poor households is primarily aimed at 'recovery', or perhaps 'conservation', be it at a very low level. The more well-to-do households can exploit the socio-economic environment in such a way that structural improvements are realised. In any one village, different types of household livelihood strategies, aimed at 'recovery', 'conservation' or 'improvement', can be observed.*

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## **Small-Scale Manufacturing Enterprises and the De-agrarianization Process in Kenya**

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***Most of Kenya's population depend on land for their livelihood. However, due to the current agrarian crises being experienced in rural regions, there is a need for change. It is argued in this paper that, small and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas could accelerate sustainable agrarian change through the following: job creation, equitable regional development, achievement of parity between rural and urban areas and increased incomes.***

Before the colonial period many communities lived in dispersed settlements in the highlands. The main form of livelihood was farming and animal husbandry. Changes in land tenure occurred during the colonial period. Private freehold was introduced which led to the highland areas being monopolized by European settler farmers. Africans were reduced to tenant farming. This system led to land exhaustion and also a subdivision of land into uneconomical plots, where an increasing number of people relied on the land while the family expanded.

One of the strategies African households adopted in the face of the agrarian crises was migration from rural areas to urban centres or to other rural areas. Rural to rural migration involved a movement from highland regions to lowland areas, which were mainly occupied by minority communities such as the Masaai, Kipsigis, Kalenjins and the West Pokot. The problems associated with rural to rural migration were land conflicts and wars, whereas rural to urban migration resulted in housing problems and urban unemployment.

A number of rural reform programmes were initiated during and after the colonial period including: the Swynnerton plan of 1954, the Special Rural Development Programme, the District Focus Strategy and the Rural Trade and Production Centre. The broad aim of these programmes was a redistribution of resources, infrastructure and services to African rural farmers. However, these reform programmes lacked specific policies for non-agrarian activities and served to perpetuate subsistence agriculture to a large extent, although there was some development of commercial farming by the well-to-do.

Industrialization policies were also part of the reform programmes, but the new urban-based industries had a negligible effect on agrarian change, due to limited inter-sectoral and inter-regional linkages. As a result, industrialization encouraged wholesale migration and further impoverishment of the rural areas.

Modernizing agriculture has involved technological, institutional and management changes directed at raising productivity. The gains of 'modern' agriculture are still remote for most people dependent on the agrarian economy. The programmes have been expensive, poorly implemented and lacked supportive infrastructure and favourable trade regimes for agricultural commodity production. Kenya's agrarian economy has not been able to cope with the changing nature of the international economy, rapid population growth and environmental crises. Food shortages, deepening poverty, internal migrations, unemployment and land conflicts have resulted.

De-agrarianization in Kenya involves a series of social, economic and political changes. In these changes, city migrants play a vital role, as they provide a rural-urban link or network. This link involves regular visits, income transfer, and rural investment of urban wages in construction, farms and businesses. The development of small-scale enterprises in the rural areas is especially important since it provides employment and new sources of income for the rural people. Small firms are defined as those employing between one and 150 employees.

***This paper reports the findings of a 1990 sample of 56 small and medium-sized firms in central Kenya, which were part of a larger random survey of 190 firms. These enterprises were located in trade and/or market centres rather than in rural homesteads.***

***Rural manufacturing was taking place in relatively small and young firms. Start-ups were self-financed, although a few entrepreneurs derived some funds from banks and public agencies. Most firms served local markets only. The founders of the small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises were between 16 and 56 years of age. The modal age group was between 36 and 45 years, reflecting the fact that most founders established their manufacturing enterprise after they had gained experience and accumulated some resources. This is supported by the finding that the majority of founders had a previous occupation before establishing their enterprises. The firms in the sample showed some signs of employment growth. However, the rate of growth differed by size and sector.***

The lack of a legal and regulatory framework was a major constraint. As far as the entrepreneurs were concerned, the accessibility to sources of raw materials and other inputs was a serious bottleneck. The entrepreneurs also faced difficulty in recruiting labour and obtaining credit. Lastly there were problems in marketing the produce. Stable consumer demand was lacking and keen competition posed difficulties for the long-term viability of many firms.

In conclusion, ***small and medium-sized enterprises are important to the positive development of the de-agrarianization process. The success of rural industrialization hinges on expansion of markets to rural areas, diversification***

*of market strategies, infrastructural development, supply of adequate capital and provision of a supportive legal and regulatory framework and incentives.*

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## **Changing Urban Labour Markets and De-agrarianization in Uganda**

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There have been striking changes in the structure of the economy, in the structure of the urban labour market, and in the institutional and legal framework dealing with labour issues in Uganda recently, arising partly from the structural adjustment programme which has induced important shifts in the organisation of rural and urban economies. *This paper examines the changes in the urban labour market and its articulation with the rural employment situation.*

In assessing conditions of production in rural Uganda today, we examine rural wage rates, cost of farm inputs, yields, returns to family labour, purchasing power in terms of consumer goods and marketing and processing inputs, transport and storage costs, as well as trends in the urban economy. *The urban economy is significant in a study on de-agrarianization as it constitutes the largest consumer of agricultural and rural products. It also provides alternative non-farm employment and links up with the rural economy in many subtle ways.*

*Although conditions for de-agrarianization are beginning to form in rural Uganda, non-farm employment or out-migration remain marginal phenomena as access to land is nearly universal. Eighty-nine per cent of the Ugandan labour force are employed in the rural economy.* In reaction to a need for more and diversified income sources as well as direct control of channels of production, processing and marketing, cultivation of non-traditional exports like rice has become a major rural activity. These new agricultural activities are setting in motion new organisational forms, including new patterns of use of wage labour and an increased monetization of the rural economy. A pool of rural labourers appears to exist which is excluded, not because of lack of access to land, but because the household composition in terms of age, numbers, etc., does not allow them to participate in the rice activity. It is, therefore, not correct to assume universal accessibility to land leads to higher returns to labour in agricultural activity and discourages non-farm activity or outmigration from rural areas.

Other factors also give rise to labour detached from agrarian pursuits. *Unskilled wages in the public sector are significantly below the average return to labour in household farming. Nonetheless, access to other forms of income, which employment in urban areas provides, still attracts people from rural areas. The de-agrarianization process is, therefore, worthy of further study even in economies like Uganda which are basically agricultural.*

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### **Creating Rural Industrial Employment: The Need for Perspective**

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In the same way as opposite positions were taken in assessing the potential of the urban informal sector by 'optimists', who saw a dynamic sector composed of small-scale entrepreneurs and their enterprises, versus 'pessimists', who considered its development as involutory and as a sink for those unable to obtain formal sector jobs, a potential debate exists between optimistic and pessimistic camps in respect of the rural informal sector or non-farm economy. It is suggested here that the optimistic camp dubbed the 'Michigan School' (Kilby 1986, Liedholm 1990 and 1994, Leidholm and Mead 1986 and 1993) exaggerates the quantitative importance in Africa of rural manufacturing through a tendency to focus on numbers of establishments rather than numbers employed; to run together in discussion small-scale enterprises as a whole and small-scale industrial enterprises; and to make insufficient correction for what is only part-time employment. Within the very heterogeneous mix of rural manufacturing activities, moreover, many are of low, average or marginal productivity.

*With respect to the development potential for rural small-scale enterprises in Africa, three points need emphasis: the important limitations of demand in certain countries or regions, due to low rural purchasing power; the importance of the agricultural and natural resource base of the country in determining the potential; and the strong tendency for manufacturing activity, even agricultural processing, to gravitate towards urban centres and rural towns.*

The importance of demand linkages is demonstrated by Kenya data (Livingstone 1991) for rural microenterprises, revealing large differences between districts in value added per person. Other data, for rural households, on expenditure elasticities show high values for local

non-food expenditure, but for services, not manufacturing. Chuta and Liedholm's (1985) data for Sierra Leone revealed substantial excess capacity among small-scale industrial enterprises, increasing the smaller the size of the population centres in which they are located. *The generally low density of population in Africa compared with Asia further serves to dilute rural purchasing power.*

*Backward linkages from agriculture into rural manufacturing are particularly low in Africa compared with Asia, due to the fact that the agricultural 'production function' in Africa is quite different, with simple technology, very little irrigation and low use of the inputs associated with intensive agriculture.*

Recent data for Uganda (1993) brings out the importance of agricultural processing and other natural resource-based industry within the manufacturing sector but show that, nevertheless, much of this is located within urban areas. Two recent village studies (Bategeka 1993 and Ogar 1994) carried out in Uganda also suggest that manufacturing tends to be located in rural towns or rural trading centres rather than within the rural household itself, and thus contributes in a very different way to rural household viability.

*In conclusion, rather than expecting households to develop manufacturing activities, it may be more realistic to promote the development of a symbiotic relationship between rural towns and their agricultural hinterlands. There is scope for a wide range of initiatives in small-scale and rural industry development but rural industries and non-farm activities are quite heterogeneous in character and potential, and the scope for their development, particularly the agricultural and natural resource base, varies widely, geographically, from situation to situation. Effective programmes for their promotion call for energy, combined with close practical appraisal.*

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## **Discussion**

minuted by Tjalling Dijkstra, ASC

The discussion of the Kenyan and Ugandan papers focussed on several issues of regarding small-scale enterprises as a form of de-agrarianization. Small-scale industries are considered to be essential for the rural economy and some, notably Liedholm, claim that as much as 80 per cent of industrial outcome is produced in rural areas. Livingstone denied this forcefully by saying that one should not look at the number of establishment but at the number of employees, or the value added. Moreover, one should not classify every small enterprise as

an 'industry'. Sadly, many of these rural enterprises generate very low value added and do not have much potential for creating employment.

The success of rural small-scale industries depends mostly on demand. Figures suggest a large amount of excess capacity, due to lack of demand. The demand base is very small as a consequence of the low population density, i.e. number and demographic concentration of consumers, in rural areas. In addition, the purchasing power of the rural population is low, since it depends on the level of agricultural income. Backward and forward linkages are also of vital importance to small-scale industries. There was some optimism about possible backward linkages with the agricultural sector, although there is a limit to their scope because there are serious problems in expanding agricultural output, due to the low capital investment in agriculture, e.g. irrigated agriculture accounts for only 2 per cent of Africa's agriculture. Seasonality of farming activities can be convenient for embarking upon non-farm activities. On the other hand, it was argued that de-agrarianization goes hand in hand with de-industrialization, since de-agrarianization often implies a decline in the agricultural resource base. Therefore, the forward linkages between agriculture and industry are weak.

Finally, it was felt that it was misleading to say that small-scale industries are all located in rural areas, as the Michigan School argues. Small-scale industries are primarily concentrated in rural towns, not villages. Rural towns can be distinguished from urban centres, although there is always room for discussion on how to define 'rural' and 'urban'. In the last decade, smaller towns in African rural areas have experienced higher rates of growth compared to the capital cities or regional capitals. They sometimes recruit their skilled labour from larger urban centres rather than rural villages. Pedersen pointed out that one should not overstress the manufacturing element of enterprises in these rural towns. Many of the enterprises are an amalgamation of economic activities, which frequently lose money on manufacturing and earn on retailing.

It was observed that migration is often seasonal out-migration from one rural area to another. This is because seasonal activities are sometimes more lucrative than full-time activities. Apart from this phenomenon, there is other itinerant travel of retailers who try to earn money in different towns. As these two types of migrants are likely to eventually return to their own town or village, it was felt that the importance of migration from rural areas should not be overstressed.

One participant felt that the discussion had been too focussed on enterprises while not enough attention was paid to homestead activities, which constitute the bulk of rural production, providing basic needs to households. Non-farm, homestead activities directed at provisioning basic needs for housing, clothing, etc. forms one of the most important sources of rural *non-agricultural* production, which complements the homestead's commercial agricultural activities and subsistence food production.

## ***Tanzania***

### **The Rural Informal Sector in Tanzania**

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Tanzania has a population of about 27 million at present. It is one of the world's poorest countries with a per capita income of US \$100. Tanzania's economy is predominantly rural and land-based. Farming is the main occupation for over 70 per cent of all Tanzanians. While the labour force is growing rapidly at the rate of three per cent annually, formal employment opportunities are declining. At present, less than five per cent of new entrants are able to find job opportunities in the formal sector. The informal sector has become an important source for jobs and income and presently employs about 21 per cent of the nation's labour force compared to only 7 per cent employed in the formal sector.

Rural Tanzanians are poorer than their urban counterparts. The average rural per capita income is 63 per cent of incomes in urban areas. About 85 per cent of all poor people live in rural villages. *There is evidence that the process of de-agrarianization in rural Tanzania has been widening. Rural wage labour is increasingly assuming importance in both the agricultural and non-agricultural labour markets. The share of households hiring labour varies regionally between 20 per cent and 43 per cent and is increasing. The proportion of non-farm cash incomes in total cash incomes per household has been rising from 25 per cent in 1969 to 47 per cent in 1983.*

*The process of de-agrarianization has been spurred by declining real farm incomes, increasing pressure on good land, and opportunities created by the new economic liberalization policies which have increased the availability of inputs and goods, as well as causing a rise in income for some groups of people. As a result, the rural non-farm sector is expanding and now provides employment for 15.4 per cent of the total rural labour force and facilitates the supply of basic goods and services which account for 12.6 per cent of the formal economy's GDP. Furthermore, it helps to generate additional income in the form of wages and returns to proprietors. Finally, it is a major source of skills formation in the informal sector.*

Organisationally, rural informal sector enterprises are tiny, with over 85 per cent being single-person firms. The predominant activities are in trade and manufacturing which account for over 80 per cent of total employment and establishments. Access to infrastructure is limited.



Less than 20 per cent and 13 per cent of the firms have water and electricity, respectively. Working proprietors dominate the rural informal sector labour force, accounting for over 75 per cent of the total employment. Initial capital requirements are small, being less than US \$10 for most firms, and are funded mostly by own savings. Markets are highly localized with the surrounding areas accounting for 97 per cent of total sales. The major constraints of rural informal sector enterprises include lack of finance or credit for starting up and expansion capital. This affects between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of all firms. Shortages of inputs and lack of markets frequently pose problems as well.

The impact of the structural adjustment programme on the rural informal sector has been mixed. Structural adjustment has increased the availability of raw materials and other intermediate and capital components. This has enabled firms to increase output and improve quality of production but it has increased competition, forcing some less innovative firms to lose markets.

In summary, over the past decade there are a number of national economic trends and government policies which have served to indirectly expand and enhance the importance of the rural informal sector. The emerging and growing rural informal non-farm sector represents a number of potentials in the development of the Tanzanian economy in terms of employment creation and gains in national production.

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### **Rural Periodic Markets and Private Traders in Food Marketing: The Case of Lushoto and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

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*In trying to understand de-agrarianization, rural markets and traders need to be considered, given their role in stimulating local economies and linking rural and urban economies. This paper draws upon insights gained during a 1988 survey conducted in eight periodic markets in the northeast part of Tanzania, namely Lushoto District, demonstrating how fruit and vegetable traders link these local markets with the wholesale market in the city of Dar es Salaam some 500 kilometres away.*

Rural periodic markets serve not only as the primary-outlet for agricultural surpluses and rural-produced handicrafts, they also serve as sources of supply for consumer goods and

manufactured products badly needed by the majority of low income rural dwellers. The significance of rural periodic markets is exemplified by the fact that they account for an estimated two-thirds of local trading activity in some parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. As economic activity is reorientated away from agrarian patterns, more people are expected to participate in inter-regional transactions for which rural periodic markets serve as nodes.

Historical accounts of individual market centres obtained during the survey lend support to the hypothesis that periodic markets experience growth, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the first instance, periodic markets increase frequencies to become daily market centres. The second type of growth is qualitative in nature, leading to the evolution of daily markets into special wholesale markets and other types of specialized exchange mechanisms such as shops and stores.

In Tanzania, however, the growth of rural periodic markets has been influenced by larger marketing policies that operated in Tanzania at different historical periods. The paper looks at the evolution of marketing policies during the pre- and post-independence periods and notes that in periods of tight government control over inter-regional transactions, e.g. during W.W.II and during the period of socialist experimentation from 1967 to 1984, the development process of rural periodic markets may have been interrupted. However, during periods of relative liberal marketing policies, e.g. the pre-independence period 1957-1961 and the early post-independence period 1961-1966, activities of rural periodic markets and private traders have thrived.

The period after 1984 has been characterized by gradual relaxation of controls imposed upon the marketing system during the height of Tanzania's *ujamaa* and villagization policy from 1973 to 1983. The measures included the dismantling of crop parastatals, the re-establishment of cooperatives, decontrol of consumer goods prices, removal of pan-territorial prices for agricultural produce and removal of major restrictions that were previously imposed on import and export transactions. There is mounting evidence that the reforms introduced during the Economic Recovery Programme beginning in 1986 have contributed positively to a boom in market transactions, including the rural markets. Such an increase in rural market transactions was observed in China as well following the post-Mao reforms that began in 1978.

***Within the overall liberalized market environment, significant changes are being observed in the size, periodicity, density and specialization of the rural periodic market system in Lushoto district. Two markets, Lukozi and Mwangoi, increased their operating frequency from once-a-week to twice-a-week. Also the density of markets, i.e. number per unit area, has increased through the emergence of new periodic markets in areas that previously had no markets.*** At the time of the 1988 survey, the district as a whole was found to have 25 markets centres which had a total of 51 market days spread over the week. These varied in terms of

frequency and specialization such that markets in more remote sub-districts operated once-a-week in contrast to the more urbanized and accessible centres like Lushoto, Mlalo and Soni where markets operated daily. In-between these are the twice-a-week markets located in the fast growing intermediate settlements like Kwemakame, Lukozi and Mwangoi.

An interesting case is Soni, where a unique configuration of markets along a hypothesized development path can be observed. Here one observes a traditional periodic market which is held on Tuesdays and is the oldest. At the centre of the town is a daily market which has been housed in a market hall since 1967. The third market is specialized, serving wholesale transactions involving fruits and vegetables destined for consumption in Dar es Salaam. This market evolved in the mid-1970s as vegetable growing was intensified in this area and it is held twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. This configuration of markets observed represents three stages of market evolution and seems to confirm a model of periodic market transition developed by Hodder (1971) using data from Eastern Nigeria.

*The majority of market traders were local residents who brought in something to sell in order to obtain cash which is immediately spent to buy something else. The linkage to wholesale markets is provided by traders who, for practical purposes operate from the capital city, Dar es Salaam. A survey was therefore carried out at the wholesale market in Dar es Salaam in order to characterize the traders and how they coordinate vegetable and fruit transactions in Lushoto.*

*The average wholesale trader is likely to be middle-aged with a trading experience of about 16 years acquired as an apprentice. There are a few exceptions who entered trading after retiring from the civil service. The possession of critical assets like trading skills, contacts, working capital, transport, or ability to hire it, and business premises is positively associated with age and on-the-job experience. Initial capital is usually obtained from families, business friends and own savings, with the exception of former civil servants who obtained bank loans. Other assets of an intangible nature such as trust, mutual confidence and acceptance among a group of traders and other associates were considered to be indispensable for success. The capacity to purchase and transport agricultural products from Lushoto to Dar es Salaam depends on a network of trusted agents at different levels in the marketing chain. Business histories of sampled traders indicate a career path beginning as a farmer and progressing from a rural market trader to a wholesale trader with links to the capital city.*

*In summary, results from this 1988 survey in Lushoto indicate that in places where markets are held on a periodic basis, small towns develop rather*

*quickly or receive the impetus for growth from the frequent gatherings of buyers and sellers.*

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**De-agrarianization and Wealth Differentiation:  
Observations from Kondoa District, Tanzania**

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*This paper describes the processes of wealth differentiation and de-agrarianization in Kondoa District and assesses the importance of non-agricultural economic activities for the general welfare of people living in the highly eroded Kondoa Irangi hills, the core area of settlement, as well as the population who have migrated onto the semi-arid, climatically unpredictable, low-lying plains fanning out from the hills. Using data generated by various recent socio-ecological studies carried out in the district, the paper demonstrates that this rural society is conceptualized by the inhabitants themselves as socially differentiated into three income groups: the musungati/nkabaku, the watu wa wastani, and the watu wa hali duni.*

The first group, the *musungati/nkabaku*, is very small, comprising two per cent and seven per cent of the households in the hills and lower Irangi ecological zones, respectively. They are relatively richer than the other groups, owning much of the land, labour, livestock and other productive resources in the villages. They also have access to resources such as land, bank loans, political patronage, etc., from outside their villages. Although they accumulate most of their wealth within their village, they usually invest it in non-agricultural businesses in urban centres. Extreme climatic variations, land tenure insecurity and fear of the evil eye are the main reasons behind this behaviour.

The second group, the *watu wa wastani*, is an intermediate category. It comprises 81 per cent in the hills and 43 per cent of the households in the lowlands. It is a disparate group. However, the landholdings that they own form their main asset. Their land use is intensive. Their economic activities are diverse but locally based. Livestock is mainly for draught purposes rather than as a 'store of wealth and prestige'.

The third group, the *watu wa hali duni*, form the lowest rung of the social pyramid in the district represented by 17 per cent and 50 per cent of the population in the hills and

lowlands, respectively. Many of these are either female-headed or young couples with meagre resources. They own some land, but lack agricultural tools like ploughs, inputs such as quality seeds, fertilizer and sufficient labour on their holdings, which makes *kibarua* part-time casual employment their mainstay.

***The de-agrarianization process tends to vary according to these social and spatial differences. Wealthier musungati/nkabaku farmers who have access to resources far and wide move from being purely committed to agriculture to a mixture of agriculture and urban business and finally to pure business. On the other end of the spectrum, relatively poor watu wa hali duni peasants are in constant social and spatial retreat, from the farming of better-off landholdings to more marginal ones plus kibarua, and finally into full-time kibarua employment on the farms of the wealthier households. Kibarua employment is the most important activity involving as much as 26 per cent of the households and contributing as much as 85 per cent of these households' total incomes.***

Nevertheless, a majority of the *watu wa wastani* peasants remain dependent on agriculture, struggling to survive and innovate. Sometimes these peasants also participate in non-agricultural economic activities such as beer-brewing for sale which involves 20 per cent of the households and contributes more than 60 per cent of their total income, as well as large-scale bee-keeping, firewood selling and charcoal-making as part-time employment during the slack period after the harvests, or as a supplement to agriculture in times of bad weather and other rural calamities. However, agriculture remains their mainstay.

***While the musungati/nkabaku group de-agrarianize as a result of unpredictable weather, uncertain land tenure arrangements, and land degradation, the watu wa hali duni group do it because of socio-spatial marginalization.*** But however hard these low-income peasants work in *kibarua* employment, they are often unable to transform such incomes into capital for developing a viable business or farm for themselves. Although *kibarua* skills such as bricklaying, construction, carpentry, etc., are highly valued in the district, they are often not only seasonal but also highly underpaid. Much of this work is paid in kind rather than in cash. For example, while in a good year one can earn as much as a sack of maize of roughly 90 kg, worth an equivalent of US \$2 for weeding one acre, average daily payment for the same work during the drought years 1992 and 1993 was a kilogram of mealie flour. Thus none of the local people considered *kibarua* employment as an opportunity for capital accumulation.

In conclusion, it appears that ***in the ecologically harsh environment of Kondoa district, the centrifugal forces of de-agrarianization, have brought about a clear delineation of accumulators and dispossessed. The accumulators, as a small minority of the population, develop their non-agricultural activity***

*portfolio by seizing various business opportunities spanning the rural locality and nearby towns, whereas the proportionately larger group of increasingly impoverished farmers are flung onto the labour market to piece together a livelihood as best they can. It is significant to note that this process of wealth polarization is more marked in the frontier zone, the low-lying plains where settlers, emigrating from the more densely populated highlands, can obtain land of marginal value for agricultural production. Thus, for most, the frontier is a land of grim prospects, not opportunity.*

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### **Discussion**

minuted by Henk Meilink

One participant pointed out the need for a proper definition of the concept of 'rural informal employment'. In Bagachwa's paper, the workshop's key concept of 'de-agrarianization' is interpreted as 'increased participation in the rural labour market'. However, in a number of other papers, including the remaining two of this cluster, the category of non-farm income generating activities of the *self-employed* was central to the meaning of 'de-agrarianization'.

According to another participant, the term 'non-formal activities' originated and should be considered from a legal perspective. 'Non-formal' points to activities which are not officially recognised by the government. Transactions in this sector have no legal basis and thus are not subject to official taxing by the authorities. Yet, despite these rather negative connotations, the informal/non-formal sectors of African economies are clearly viable and growing in importance. In this respect, the concept of 'de-agrarianization' can play a meaningful role when it succeeds in drawing attention to: 1) the rapidly changing patterns of rural-urban links and inherent flows of people and commodities and 2) the relationship between informal activities and the way public life is ordered.

Methods of statistical coverage of widely differing activities, e.g. hut-building, which get counted as non-farming output, may complicate the appreciation of non-farm activities. There are also inconsistencies. Sometimes the value of subsistence food cultivation is computed as household income, sometimes it is not. Such differing statistical methods can lead to misleading conclusions when examining the significance of non-farm employment. Nonetheless, it is significant to note that a lot of rural households' non-food basic needs are being commoditized and should be counted as value added production of the non-farm sector.

A participant observed that it was instructive to learn from Bagachwa's paper that no

less than 87 per cent of the informal sector enterprises were single person firms. Hence, in terms of employment-creation, this sector's potential contribution should not be overestimated.

In response to Shechambo's paper, it was noted that the attitude towards trading and non-farm activities was sometimes negative and hostile in Tanzania. Three possible explanations are: the association of non-farm labour with 'witchcraft' and the 'devils eye'; the dominant role played by Asians presumably exploiting African farming populations; and the influence of official Marxist and socialist-inspired theory and development strategies, in which traders and entrepreneurs were looked upon with suspicion. The lingering of such feelings in Tanzania still poses an obstacle to any public appreciation of traders and entrepreneurs' activities.

With regard to Claude Mung'ong'o's paper, discussants felt the need for a better understanding of the processes of resource accumulation in the hands of a few as a result of incomes earned in non-farm activities. The question was raised whether de-agrarianization was likely to contribute to social differentiation and increased marginalization of resource-poor groups.

Overall, in assessing the relevance of the de-agrarianization concept, some participants felt that, due to the great diversity of local conditions, historical backgrounds, ecological circumstances etc., generalizations regarding processes of de-agrarianization are extremely difficult.

## ***Malawi and Zimbabwe***

### **De-agrarianization in Malawi: Rural Entrepreneurs in Mchinji and Salima Districts**

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This paper on rural entrepreneurs in Malawi consists of an overview of the objectives, research questions and implementation of a research project titled *Rural Entrepreneurs and Economic Stagnation, the Development of Non-agricultural Activities in Mchinji and Salima District, Malawi*.<sup>\*</sup> An effort has been made to link the first results of the study to the concept of de-agrarianization.

***The districts in which my research is being carried out are located in the central region of Malawi. Mchinji borders Zambia and Salima is situated along Lake Malawi. Estimates for 1993 show a population density of 84 persons per sq. km in Mchinji and 103 persons per sq. km in Salima. These high population densities have caused considerable pressure on arable land. In both districts, more and more people have to find sources of income outside agriculture in order to satisfy their basic needs.***

Twenty four different types of non-agricultural activities have been enumerated in the districts included in this study. These can be divided into: first, productive activities requiring low capital investments, i.e. basket-making, mat-making, pottery, wood carving, mortar-making, boat-making, charcoal-making and beer brewing; second, productive activities requiring moderate capital investments like tailoring, sawing, carpentry, building, brick-making, blacksmithing, tinsmithing, bakery and photography; third, service activities requiring low to moderate capital investment, e.g. bicycle, radio, watch and shoe repair; and fourth, activities requiring high capital investments such as maize milling, running a garage, electrical contracting and welding.

***In Mchinji, beer brewing is the most common non-agricultural activity while mat makers form the biggest group in Salima. The involvement of women is restricted to activities requiring little capital investment like beer brewing and pottery and to a lesser extent basket making, mat making and the***

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<sup>\*</sup> A joint project of the department of Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam and the African Studies Centre, Leiden, funded by the Dutch Government through the Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research and the African Studies Centre. The project is one of the target case studies within the research programme on De-agrarianization and Rural Employment of the African Studies Centre in Leiden. This paper presents preliminary results of the first phase of the field work carried out from June until December 1993.



*baking of scones. Men are engaged in a wide range of activities from low-investment activities like wood carving to activities requiring high capital investments such as running a garage. Female entrepreneurs received less education than men and were more often widowed, separated or divorced, compared to male entrepreneurs. Older people are less educated than younger people and are therefore over-represented in the low-investment group of activities.*

Agriculture plays an important role in the lives of rural entrepreneurs. Almost all entrepreneurs are involved in agriculture and many of them only run their business during the dry season because during the wet season they and their customers are involved in farming and therefore, time and money is no longer spent on production or consumption of non-agricultural goods and services. Furthermore, for more than 40 per cent of the entrepreneurs farming is the most important source of household income.

The data collected on rural entrepreneurs in Mchinji and Salima districts so far, suggest that *de-agrarianization takes the form of economic activity reorientation of rural households. Due to the high pressure on arable land and the frequent droughts of the last decade, more and more rural households are involved in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities in order to spread risks. In some cases, these risk minimizing strategies take the form of the involvement in activities during different times of the year, i.e. agricultural activities during the wet season and non-agricultural activities during the dry season. In other cases, some household members are involved in a business throughout the year while others take care of the farm and finally some individuals are involved in their business full-time, but are at the same time involved in farming during the early hours of the day throughout the wet season.*

*This economic activity reorientation from farming towards a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, does not seem to take the form of realignment of human settlements away from rural areas.*

Almost all entrepreneurs have farm land at their disposal and the stage whereby land is no longer available at all does not seem to be reached yet. Therefore, *leaving the rural areas often implies losing one's farm, a prospect which is not very tempting unless expectations towards future employment within urban areas are bright. For most rural households these prospects do not exist at all.* The educational level of the entrepreneurs is strikingly low, which makes most employment within urban areas inaccessible for them. Furthermore, government policies on rural-urban migration have always been very strict, and quite successful. The enormous shanty towns, found in other parts of Africa, hardly exist in Malawi.

The data collected so far do not suggest that occupational specialization is taking place in rural Malawi. The risk-minimizing behaviour of rural households, their low purchasing power and the low level of education are all causes of the lack of specialization among rural entrepreneurs in Malawi.

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### **An Exploration of De-agrarianization in Zimbabwe after 1980**

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*This paper deals with the conceptual problems relating to de-agrarianization especially with reference to Southern Africa. De-agrarianization may be cyclical or seasonal such that once-off, permanent movements from agriculture to industrial or non-agricultural employment in both the towns and rural areas does not actually take place.* Instead, males have dominated the seasonal and cyclical migration in the first 30 years of colonial rule and by the era of the colonial era, there was almost equal out-migration by males and females below the age of 25. However, studies such as those by Schlyter (1991) show that more males than females tend to return to rural areas for permanent settlement after a long period of wage employment.

The paper also points out that *de-agrarianization is not necessarily linked to rural non-farm expansion but may reflect impoverishment, landlessness, and marginalization in the rural sector. What we might see as the phenomenon of de-agrarianization may actually reflect different types of changes in the rural and/or urban sectors. It is, therefore, quite important to recognise that the outcome that may be termed 'de-agrarianization', for lack of a more precise term, may be a result of people's differing experiences with land, markets, credit and other services.*

The paper goes into a brief discussion of Zimbabwe's social, economic and political history, providing background to the rest of the paper which analyzes survey findings on rural non-farm and off-farm activities. The paper links these survey findings to de-agrarianization. *Studies suggest that diversification and versatility have increasingly become characteristic of many rural households in Zimbabwe. In the high income rural households there was high participation in off-farm activities, while poorer*

***households tended to have a less diverse array of off-farm and non-farm activities that they were involved in.***

Longitudinal data indicates that there has been sustained growth in micro and small-scale enterprises since 1991 at the rates of 7.1 per cent in rural areas and 3.6 per cent in urban areas. The paper specifies the areas where growth took place as opposed to those in which decline was registered. However, the reasons for growth in micro and small-scale industries differed depending on sectors and actors.

The entry into the low growth segment of the rural non-farm sector is related to rural poverty. People found it easy to move into vending, retail etc., but the highest firm deaths were registered in this area. It was noted that micro and small-scale industries' life cycles were closely linked to agriculture, so it is important to re-examine and interrogate the concept of de-agrarianization, at least for Zimbabwe, given that off-farm rural activities were and still are closely tied to agrarian processes.

The paper also examines the legal and regulatory measures relating to rural off-farm enterprises in Zimbabwe. Large government schemes for provisioning housing, toilets, roads, clinics and other public infrastructure exist. This remedial activity has significant impact on employment in rural Zimbabwe, but it does not provide permanent employment and therefore cannot be relied upon to provide sustained livelihoods, except for very small numbers of skilled and educated functionaries who are responsible for maintaining the infrastructure in the long term.

The final issue that is discussed in the paper is the gendered and politicised nature of off-farm activities in rural Zimbabwe. ***Gender is an important determinant of access to the services and resources needed for sustainable activity in the rural business centres. Gender also had an impact on the outward appearance, the direction and trajectory of growth of the enterprise. Women try to minimise their reported incomes and avoid diversification, or they over-diversify in order to dilute the appearance of success of their businesses.***

The paper concludes by pointing out some of the definitional and conceptual deficiencies that the review of existing data indicate with respect to employment, economic activity and 'de-agrarianization'. ***Women tended to invest in local areas and to avoid moving from their localities if they could, in contrast to men who opted to move out of agriculture and off-farm rural activities if they could. However, Schyster's (1991) research indicates that when women do move out, as a result of divorce or other social breakdown, they are less likely to return to rural areas.*** Thus, the direction and population of migrants has changed to include both men and women below 30. In terms of rural off-farm investment, farmer migrants, mostly male, now invest increasingly in rural enterprises outside agriculture. Poorer households involved in unsustainable agriculture also enter the rural non-farm sector, especially in times of economic

discrimination in their previous work environments. Their resentment of such discrimination had a marked effect on both their initial frame of reference to co-operation and their definition of Montagu Carpentry Co-op. Contrasting present with previous work experiences was important in the growth of a critical consciousness - a rejection of 'baasskap'.

The dynamic relationship between the Montagu Carpentry Co-op and MAG made room for democratisation in the enterprise. Its supportive role in financial, managerial and institutional terms was important in the establishment of Montagu Carpentry Co-op as an economic development project. Due to limited popular mobilisation and organisation in South Africa's rural areas and a history of limited and ideologically biased government involvement in rural development, the role of non-governmental development agencies such as MAG is significant. Experiences of such organisations can be important guides for rural restructuring in the current political climate of transformation.

*In the context of uncertain and declining agricultural livelihoods and highly paternalist and racist social relationships, the MCC provided relatively stable employment, and an environment where racism was being challenged. This case study does not suggest that cooperatives and/or small enterprises and small-scale commercial farming are the panacea for unemployment and poverty in rural areas. Instead, the story of MCC is an example of attempts to challenge the power relationships at play in this particular rural context. Land redistribution and the provision of non-farm employment are two crucial aspects of rural restructuring. Neither process can be a merely technocratic one. Both will inevitably involve political contests around the meaning of democracy.*

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### **De-agrarianization, Culture and Entrepreneurship: A South African Case Study**

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*In African settings, entrepreneurship has always been associated with the process of modernization.* It has been assumed that the development of African capitalism represents the acquisition of 'enlightenment values', especially an instrumentalist economic rationality. In South Africa, this has meant that commentators on the process of rural class formation and capital accumulation in the former bantustans have either doubted the

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abilities of 'tradition-bound Africans' to grasp economic opportunities and, as a result, have usually attributed growth in entrepreneurship in these areas to *extrinsic factors*, such as state funding, training programmes and other outside influences.

***The paper takes issue with this type of analysis by exploring the local-level economic and socio-cultural roots of entrepreneurship in a South African bantustan. Local-level entrepreneurial initiatives in the Qwaqwa bantustan of the north-eastern Orange Free State have been closely connected to processes of de-agrarianization in this region. More specifically, the simultaneous collapse of reserve agriculture and the mechanization of production processes of white-owned farms during the 1950s, pressurized African peasant-entrepreneurs to shift their resources out of agriculture and into commerce. The paper refers to this shift as a move from livestock to deadstock, the shelf stock of rural stores.***

This shift from one economic sphere to another was induced by the changing opportunity structure in farming for African producers in the 1950s. The implementation of 'agricultural betterment' schemes in Qwaqwa limited individual stock and land holdings, resulting in better-off peasant households moving their assets out of agriculture. On white-owned farms outside the reserve, African peasants who had prospered during the post-war period due to large-scale absenteeism among the white land-owning class, were also put under pressure by new state policies.

To prevent the '*beswaring van die platteland*', the Apartheid state demanded that the local white farmers either use their land as 'proper capitalists' or sell it to whites who would. To assist in this process of capitalization the state offered white farmers access to cheap loans to upgrade their machinery. This gave white farmers the economic muscle to finally dispossess their labour tenants of their livestock. To survive these pressures, many labour tenants looked to Qwaqwa as a safe haven, a place where they could keep their herds and maintain a measure of social and economic autonomy and self-sufficiency. What many of these tenants did not realise was that Qwaqwa was already overcrowded and could not accommodate new farmers. The result was that some labour tenant families tried to diversify their economic interests by transforming their livestock into 'deadstock'.

The point of this discussion is to show that ***local processes of de-agrarianization in the northern Orange Free State during the 1950s and 1960s, rather than any extrinsic factors, spawned a new wave of entrepreneurship in Qwaqwa in the 1970s and 1980s.*** There were strong continuities in both the nature and form of entrepreneurship before and after relocation to Qwaqwa. The argument of the paper, however, goes much further than this because it is postulated that ***by reconstituting livestock as 'deadstock', rural entrepreneurs in Qwaqwa were engaged in a process which was at once material and cultural. They were inclined to conceptualize their***

*stores as imaginary herds, as truly social commodities which served simultaneously as markers of wealth, status and identity.* While the medium of exchange might have changed, the socio-cultural field within which these transactions occurred remained the same.

*By extending analysis along cultural lines, there is an explanation for many of the unique features of entrepreneurship in Qwaqwa such as the maintenance of family labour in small enterprises, the reluctance of owners to form partnerships, and the ubiquitous use of idioms of clientelism in everyday business transactions. In conclusion, only by viewing entrepreneurship as a process of material and cultural exchange can we begin to come to terms with endogenous forms of capitalism in Africa.*

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#### **De-agrarianization, Rural Employment and the Quality of Life: The Eastern Cape Region in South Africa**

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*This paper considers rural employment and the quality of life of people living in the Eastern Cape Region of South Africa. This is with special reference to two large areas which up to the general elections in South Africa were 'independent homelands' created in conformity with the apartheid policy. These former 'homelands' are distinct from white-owned farms which also form part of the region. Presently about 50 per cent of the people of this region live in rural areas. One of the salient features of South African rural areas is a shortage of land which is largely the result of the colonial conquest of the past century and forced removals occurring in this century. It would appear that rural people in South Africa have lost much more land than is the case in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.*

The state of agriculture in virtually all the villages of the region is plagued by land shortage. Even in the early 1950s, it was reported in one district that the increasing pressure of population had given rise to a situation in which it was impossible to supply every family with land to cultivate, a situation made starker by the fact that the people were not cultivating the land in order to sell their crops but for subsistence. With the introduction of a new system of

land tenure known as the South African Trust in 1950s, arable holdings given to the people became smaller over time. A 1977 study showed that 82 per cent of the village fields were less than five acres in size and that only 58 per cent of the households in the village had access to arable land. There was no more arable land available for new families who were allocated residential land. Presently, the serious shortage of land has led to such small individual arable holdings that it is difficult for the people to farm efficiently.

***In view of the land constraint, people see wage earning as the main means of making a living. The rural areas in the region have heavily depended on sources of income from the urban areas as there were very few employment opportunities in these areas. This dependency still exists although it has been slightly modified by changes that have arisen as a direct result of the implementation of South Africa's 'homeland' policy beginning in the 1970s. This policy was specially intended to slow down the massive emigration of the people from the country to town, by making available a number of new job opportunities. This resulted in the gradual expansion of the civil service into these rural areas. This trend was fostered by the creation of industrial centres which were located close to the rural areas in line with a new industrial decentralization policy. The net result was an increasing number of people who were based in the rural areas but who no longer farmed, a form of de-agrarianization.***

Industrial decentralization enabled many people to retain their rural homes while having access to jobs in small industrial centres close by. This was made possible by the improvement of the people's means of travelling as a result of the phenomenal growth of the private taxi business from about 1980. Many rural dwellers now commute daily to work and others return to their homes at weekends or at the end of the month.

***Migration to the large urban areas still occurs, but there are now many rural settlements which are cropping up in places which are close to urban centres, especially near small towns. These settlements are inhabited by people who like a rural life while recognising the importance of easy access to urban employment. They prefer to remain outside the confines and costs of organised municipal living.*** Many are not employed locally and those who cannot find urban jobs in places which are close to their homes, nonetheless, try various means of maintaining themselves in the country. The rate of unemployment is high, hence people resort to casual work and are involved in a wide range of informal economic activities. For the most part the latter are small ventures which are devised mainly for survival. Much has to be done to improve infrastructure so that small entrepreneurial endeavours can be promoted and sustained.

***The present concern with non-farm pursuits has drastically changed the lifestyle of people in rural areas. On this account, the population of these***

*communities is both diverse and stratified socially and economically. One major change that has occurred is an increasing consumer orientation, resulting from the fact that the potential of the land in terms of agriculture is now under-utilized. People depend largely on purchased food, not on what they can produce.*

*The current change in lifestyle is also evident in the increasing desire for skills and education generally.* Even though some of the older people did not attend school at all, people generally have some understanding of the possibilities of education and virtually all children are sent to school, even though some drop out after some time. As education is now considered a household's most important investment, many families have to meet high educational expenses, particularly if their children do well academically and pursue a higher education. In the past many of those who succeeded at school left their homes and tried to make a better living in the urban centres. But at present the towns and cities are overflowing and employment opportunities are extremely scarce. Thus, many young people have to remain in the countryside and devise their own non-agricultural livelihood, given that formal employment opportunities are lacking.

*In conclusion, a distinctive set of processes have put a premium on access to rural land in the Eastern Cape, primarily for residential purposes. In this context, de-agrarianization takes a peculiar form. Livelihood prospects, occupational and lifestyle aspirations no longer centre on farming the land. People prefer living in rural areas, but do not endeavour to follow agricultural pursuits whose economic viability has long been undermined.*

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## **Discussion**

minuted by Kees Schilder, ASC

It was observed that Karaan's paper was very policy oriented but it was not clear whether the national or provincial government was expected to take up the policy recommendations outlined in the paper. Mohammed Karaan answered that it was not possible to generalize the situation in the Western Cape to the rest of the country. The policy approach outline is quite general, but the Western Cape actually needs a specific approach in both national and provincial development policies.

As for national politics, the Western Cape is also different from the rest of the country. In spite of the position of the labourers on the farms, the National Party won the elections in the Western Cape. Most classified coloured people have been privileged in their access to work



and many of them have the feeling that the ANC is for black people only.

Zimitri Erasmus elaborated on the functioning of co-operatives and the motive of people joining them in response to the question regarding why people tend to work together in co-operatives if there is no clear economic advantage. She explained that formal employment in the Western Cape is highly seasonal because of its agricultural character. People prefer to work throughout the year instead of taking on seasonal agricultural or industrial jobs.

The way co-operatives function depends on the way authority is delegated. While it is true that working according to democratic procedures may take time and can make it difficult to respond quickly to continuously changing market situations, there are cases of managers who have the authority and responsibility to act, but are then required to discuss decisions afterwards with other members of the co-operative. Therefore, a co-operative can be efficient and democratic at the same time.

Leslie Bank answered a question regarding the nature of entrepreneurship generally in South Africa, explaining that the rise of rural entrepreneurship had occurred much earlier in many other parts of South Africa outside of his case study area. This fact may explain why the form of entrepreneurship in Qwaqwa lingered on. Conditions in Qwaqwa were one of relative conservatism with no development of wage labour, a resistance to diversification, and an unwillingness to engage in economic partnerships.

The discussion then turned to more general themes centering on the issue of the role of land in the Western Cape and then the specific character of de-agrarianization and agriculture in South Africa.

One participant observed the emergence of three types of households in the rural parts of the Cape Province: 1) households alienated from the land, 2) households having a hold in both rural and urban areas, and 3) households which enter into commerce. There seems to be an important two-directional migratory flow between the towns and the countryside. In reply, it was pointed out that it is not strictly true that households have one foot in the rural and one foot in the urban areas. There exists a continuous change between the three household types, depending on the life cycle of the households; at one time people have two feet in rural areas and at another time two feet in town. People have extreme levels of mobility, but invest very little in town. This mobility is not a case of simple circular migration. The reasons that people migrate to towns are not only economic, but also non-economic.

In South Africa in general, apartheid did not involve non-white people in a productive use of the land. Serious attempts encouraging people to produce productively have been lacking. Thus, many people do not have land, as in the Western Cape, and when they have it they do not relate to it as farmers. Land has an emotional value of security, but no productive value. At the elections, the PDC campaigned for land reform, and only got 1 per cent of the votes. This is a shocking indication that rural people are oriented to urban employment. In addition, the educational system orients children away from agriculture.

It was observed that the concept of de-agrarianization applied to South Africa has some drawbacks if it is used to over-generalize and mask relevant economic differences. In the South African papers two trends are discussed with regard to the emergence of a rural middle-class: 1) the poor have no access to urban jobs, and 2) the land is so scarce and poor that it is impossible to make its cultivation profitable. The formation of a rural middle-class is just one aspect of a general process of de-agrarianization. The dominant process, however, refers to proletarianization and labour migration. A labour aristocracy of mine laborers has emerged, with minimal salaries, which feeds cash into the rural economy. Therefore, an informal sector of small-scale commerce, petty transporters and traders bringing in goods from the towns to the villages, could arise based on the accumulated savings of ex-mineworkers.

De-agrarianization under apartheid more or less boils down to proletarianization, which means that the majority of the rural population still have no land. Only two per cent are full-time farmers. Most households depend on salaried employment outside agriculture. There is massive hidden unemployment in the rural areas, connected with the homeland policy which discouraged rural-urban migration. The policy's most direct economic accomplishment was the creation of low-level government jobs in the homelands.

A discussion arose over the possibilities of the post-apartheid land policies. The participants agreed that there is a future for a black peasantry, now that a more conducive political environment can be created. The removal of state support for commercial farmers might lead to a revitalization of black farming. Hence, land redistribution might be very useful. Therefore there is no reason of being pessimistic about black farmers agriculture. A restructuring of the existing labour relations to land will probably take place. If it does, it might be possible that share-croppers and tenants might become smallholder farmers. Agriculture in South Africa is now highly industrialized, but smallholder farming can certainly become more viable.

Although de-agrarianization in South Africa has several peculiar features, it is not really unique due to Apartheid. The South African case resembles de-agrarianization processes in north of its borders in several respects. Hence, comparisons to other African countries are very relevant. Peculiar to South Africa is the presence of a large dominating white farmer sector, which has crushed the black peasantry. That is the reason that land distribution is necessary, but also very difficult. What are the costs? What land is to be redistributed? To whom must it be allocated? Who works the land, who is entitled to it? These questions are extremely hard to answer since there are many regional variations within the country.

## ***Pan-Territorial Policy Issues***

### **Education/Training for an Invisible Reality**

Anders Narman

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In this paper, it is argued that ***education should not be regarded as a means of achieving formal wage employment, but rather as a way of mobilising people and training them to make their own living, in order to enhance rural (self) employment.***

Discussions on African development are often determined by what is going on in the cities and in the formal sector. Due to the urban bias, it is difficult to fully comprehend and normally assess the realities among the poorest and most vulnerable regions in Africa. In addition to this, mainstream economic models are not able to fully comprehend activities outside the formal market economy. Investment in education and health, as well as in any development project, is normally assessed by measuring the immediate economic benefits. As retrenchment of the civil service and efficient capital intensive industrial investments limit the opportunities for school leavers, an evaluation of formal education on the basis of the direct relation to the labour market, can hardly be very positive.

Formal education cannot guarantee employment and it rather divorces school leavers from their rural setting, without preparing them for urban living, to which they often aspire. In many African countries, therefore, numerous experiments with a more relevant education have been introduced. ***In Kenya, some practical subjects such as Agriculture, Commerce, Home Economics, Industrial Education( IE) are part of the formal education at secondary school. A tracer study by the author showed that there is enormous difficulty in entering the formal labour market, since the middle of the 1980s.*** There is no way to detect any substantial advantage for students with IE, compared to other secondary school leavers. However, the students who took IE were successful in keeping themselves busy, as well as earning cash. Some started a carpentry workshop and employed other people. ***The result of this tracer study was that even if IE did not give any direct advantage in a seriously depressed labour market, many were still making a living from the practical skills acquired.***

***In Tanzania, there is a system of vocational training centres and one of the national centres is in Moshi. For the first few groups of trainees at the Moshi National Vocational Training Centre, only a small proportion were not able to secure jobs in the formal labour market after the training.*** A low number of trainees were found to be self-employed, especially as Motor Vehicle Mechanics,

electricians, workshop owners and *fundis* who do small repairs. In the future, self employment might be gaining importance for many of the trainees because vacancies in fairly specialized trades are filled up. A criticism of the Moshi National Vocational Training Centre was the lack of flexibility. Trainees from less advanced centres were much better in adapting to a harsher working environment.

***Another vocational centre in Tanzania is located in Leguruki, near Moshi. This centre has a much stronger stress on potential self employment in the rural areas, training mainly carpenters and masons. A tracer study has shown that the majority of trainees were actually self-employed, most of them in rural areas.***

***In Botswana, the concept of 'Education with Production' involves production as part of the education in a system of brigades, initiated both as a way to meet a part of the financial costs of education and as a pedagogical tool.*** Key elements are self-reliance and the active participation of the trainees themselves and the local community. However, the ideological aspect of the brigades is gradually changing and the brigades are getting more integrated into the formal government training structure. ***A follow-up study on brigade leavers showed that many of them have been able to secure employment in the formal sector and within the trade they trained for.*** Of those working, only five per cent were self-employed, either in building or general carpentry. Somehow it can be claimed that the brigades are successful, but on the other hand the objectives of creating skills for self-reliance and rural development have been over-taken by events. The trainees move into the cities, where it is easier to find a job and where they get better pay.

***In Zimbabwe, the same concept of 'Education with Production' was tried out by the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP). The ZIMFEP schools are all located at farms, but are unable to carry out experiments in practical education due to the fact that they are part of the formal school structure. In spite of their objective of self-reliance, ZIMFEP schools receive a substantial portion of donor assistance.***

It is clear from the case studies that ***education and training are crucial in employment generation in the rural areas.*** This fact has been neglected by policy makers and individuals who regard education as a means to reach wage employment outside the rural home.

***Not only can education help an individual to move out of the general hardship encountered by the rural people, it can also function as a way for collective mobilisation for a common empowerment. Therefore, 'Education with Production' and 'Education for Self-Reliance' can both constitute a basis for an alternative development, as well as a potential for mobilisation.***

## **Implications for the Design of Employment Programmes**

Tesfaye Teklu

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*A key assumption implicit in the design of labour-intensive public works programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa is that employment in rural areas is strictly demand driven. This paper attempts to examine if such an assumption is consistent with labour supply conditions in rural Africa. Specifically, it examines the sources of labour supply which cause shifts in labour demand. It highlights the need to improve the understanding of rural labour markets in relation to employment generating programmes.*

*Various labour force surveys indicate tight aggregate labour supply, as measured by low rates of unemployment and visible underemployment in rural Africa. In such a tight labour supply situation, the availability of labour is the main determinant of rural employment.*

On the other hand, *micro-level studies in rural Africa have shown that there are sizeable variations in employment due to shifts in labour demand induced by a variety of factors including technological change, commercialization of agriculture and seasonality of activities.* These demand-induced labour responses within households are consistent with near full employment if the additional demand for labour is met through increases in non-family labour and/or switching of family labour between activities, i.e. the scale effect. However, *these surveys show that the sources of family labour supply come from both labour switching and scale factors. That is, labour supply in rural Africa is neither perfectly elastic nor inelastic. Or, demand and supply factors co-determine the net employment outcome in rural areas.*

*Recent evidence from a sample of employment programmes in various African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, and Botswana in particular) shows that eligibility for employment is open to all adults who are able to work. Most of these programmes do not account explicitly for seasonality of farm work. Wages are fixed by the government. And these wages are uniform regardless of the type of work, season, and inter-personal variations of workers. These programmes thus implicitly assume that there is sufficient unutilized labour in rural areas that can be transferred between activities with little displacement effect across seasons. Furthermore, these schemes assume that the subject*

*price of labour is the same for all rural households. Accordingly, it is the creation of labour demand, and not labour supply which is instrumental to employment creation.*

*It follows from the evidence of the rural labour markets that these assumptions are not correct.* First, rural labour markets are active and strongly linked to agricultural seasons. Wage rates, therefore, vary across space and time. Because of the non-uniformity of real wages, the extent of labour supply varies across regions, seasons and household groups. Labour supply falls short of prescribed employment quotas when programmes operate during peak farm seasons. And *the fact that the programmes hire more workers from low-income families indicate that reservation wages are unequal among rural workers.*

*It is crucial that the employment programmes adjust their employment and wage designs in line with labour supply conditions of households. The assumption of unlimited labour supply is unwarranted. There is a segment of labour supply where additional labour demand through public works has little net employment effect. And where the wage is considered a viable targeting mechanism, it is necessary to determine wages rates that are likely to trigger the poor to participate in the programmes. Setting such wage rates requires an understanding of the rural labour markets. One has to take into consideration the factors that explain variations in rural wages and employment across household groups, seasons and locations over time.*

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## **Discussion**

minuted by Jan Kappon, ASC

It was noted in relation to Narman's paper that industrial enterprises in small towns recruit people from larger urban centres, although now in Zambia for example some of the recruits are urban returnees who are originally from rural areas. Generally under-employed people in the rural areas lack sufficient training to do skilled industrial jobs.

One participant observed that training and education has generally encouraged rural out-migration.. Ian Livingstone remarked that not enough tracer studies have been done on students from technical training centres to find out where they are ending up.

The argument in Tesfaye Teklu's paper, that due to full rural employment there is no labour supply for implementation of public works of the food-for-work (FFW) type, was criticised in terms of: 1) the possibility that labour supply is increasing due to de-agrarianization; 2) there could be an excess of farm labour due to a decline in export crop

production; and 3) during certain seasons there is usually an excess supply of farm labour.

The discussants agreed with Teklu that wages of public work programmes are unattractive but that these programmes do provide a safety net, especially for women, notably female heads of households with problematic access to land. The public sector programmes are an important source of income during difficult times. If wages were raised, the danger exists that women would lose this source of income to men who compete for the more remunerative jobs.

As for the wage level, it was argued that it is important to have the right wages at the right time, i.e. wage flexibility in recognition of fluctuations in supply and demand for labour. Too often the wage is fixed at subsistence level. Labour is still a severe constraint in agricultural production, as can be seen from the Nigerian example, where the oil boom siphoned labour away from agriculture, causing Nigeria to become a major importer of food.

At present, it was stressed that the labour supply situation is dynamic and the rural population is increasingly forced to diversify their sources of income, since it cannot support itself from agriculture alone. Public works programmes are one option.

## **Thematic Committee Reports**

Thematic committees were asked to address the following questions:

- 1) What is generally believed/known about the topic?
- 2) What trends and tendencies do the papers/discussions indicate regarding the topic?
- 3) What is not known about the topic that we should know, i.e. research questions?
- 4) What are the policy implications of what we now know? How does it differ from prevailing policies? What are the institutional consequences?
- 5) Mention the pitfalls in research and policy formulation that you foresee.

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## **Household Causes and Consequences of De-agrarianization**

presented by Hamid el Bashir Ibrahim, University of Khartoum

### **Causes and Consequences**

It is believed that de-agrarianization implies male out-migration from rural areas which in turn may have the following impacts on the family: an increased work burden on women, social upheaval in the form of family breakdown, changes in household division of labour and in some cases women gaining more decision-making control, and economic marginalization and proletarianization of some rural households.

It is clear from the papers and discussions, that the de-agrarianization process has gender, age, ethnic and class implications. Generally, de-agrarianization mirrors the region's or community's social structure. Therefore, it is neither linear nor unidirectional, but uneven. De-agrarianization is a historical process.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

De-agrarianization is generally looked at through its consequences rather than its root historical causes. We have not so far identified the endogenous causes of de-agrarianization. This raises some questions as to whether the whole process is of a temporal nature rather than a genuine evolutionary one stemming from the internal dynamics within the economy and society of Sub-Saharan African countries. Research on the history of de-agrarianization in different regions could provide an answer to this question.



Some aspects of the internal economic dynamics of de-agrarianization need attention, especially rural-urban wage and income differentials and their impact on the process. More research is also needed on the relationship between education, rural employment and de-agrarianization.

At the household level, as well as on the macro level, one needs to look at whether the effects of de-agrarianization are positive or negative. The household perspective to de-agrarianization offers great methodological advantages, for it allows researchers to weigh and evaluate the impact of the following factors on the process: the environmental factor, policy-induced factors, the demographic factor, namely the household developmental cycle, the institutional factor, e.g. land tenure systems, and the influence of education.

A re-definition of de-agrarianization is needed with more precision in terms of denoting its manifestations and symptoms. For example, if we measured the extent of de-agrarianization in terms of the shortfall in household food self sufficiency, this is problematic. This manifestation is often over a century old, dating back to the introduction of cash crops and the first penetration of capitalism in rural Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Policy Implications**

Finally, there is a need for policy-related research especially with respect to de-agrarianization and rural and urban poverty. Policy formulation should recognise the tendency towards de-agrarianization and try to curb any destructive effects it might have on households. In other words, de-agrarianization can be a positive development and might even be sought as a policy aim, but not at the expense of rural household welfare. Programmes have to be initiated to increase the absorptive capacity of the non-farm sector in the rural areas in order to enable the rural population to make a soft landing in the transition from agricultural to non-agricultural forms of livelihood and occupations.

### **Discussion**

The discussants agreed that de-agrarianization increases the economic responsibility and workload of certain groups of people, especially women who risk being marginalized. It was pointed out that older people in rural areas also tend to get heavier responsibilities. It appears in many cases that their working lives are being extended under the influence of de-agrarianization, notably due to the out-migration or alternative non-agricultural pursuits of younger members of the household.

Discussion arose on the definition of 'de-agrarianized' households. The spatial aspect of households was confusing to some. The spatial aspect of de-agrarianization involves typically the breaking up of a household when some members travel to remote places. This does not match the usual definition of a household, i.e. eating from the same pot, because people are physically separated. It was also not clear to the participants when a household

achieves the status of being 'de-agrarianized'. It was pointed out that there is no one standard state of de-agrarianization since the process refers to residential location, livelihood pursuits and occupational patterns. A household can be fully de-agrarianized in one sense, and hardly so in another, e.g. South African non-farming rural households. Thus, the household perspective is expected to give a large number of localized manifestations of de-agrarianization.

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## **Spatial Dynamics of De-agrarianization: Urban/Rural Patterns**

presented by David Shapiro, Pennsylvania State University

### **Spatial Realignment**

From the de-agrarianization perspective, the focus is on spatial realignment away from agrarian patterns. Prevailing beliefs on spatial realignment emphasize a rural-urban dichotomy. The urban modern, formal sector and the informal sector are seen as poles of attraction for rural residents, with stability of employment as an important aspect of the attractiveness of the formal sector. The rural-urban dichotomy, however, is too simplified. There is a considerable heterogeneity, both within the urban and within the rural sectors. There are rural-rural linkages, involving more remote and more accessible rural areas, as well as rural-urban linkages.

### **Rural-Urban Migration**

While some migration from rural to urban areas is permanent, and thus contributes to the process of de-agrarianization, there are also seasonal and circular aspects of migration. These latter elements emphasize the ongoing linkages that exist between urban and rural areas. Included in these linkages are remittances, both transfers of money and goods that flow from migrants in urban areas back to rural areas. Life cycle aspects of rural-urban migration are an especially relevant part of circular migration. Individuals may migrate to urban areas where they will engage in non-agricultural, and perhaps also agricultural, activities for a period of their lives before returning to the rural areas.

In this regard, the economic difficulties associated with the introduction of structural adjustment programmes are perceived as encouraging migration from urban to rural areas and hence, perhaps, 're-agrarianization'.

### **Formal and Informal Sectors**

Education is seen as a means of upward mobility which enhances access to the modern sector. It is typically assumed that those who do not have access to the urban modern sector

will have easy access to the urban informal sector. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, we are not convinced that there is easy access to the informal sector. Often there are skill and/or capital requirements for entry. These barriers to entry apply as well in rural towns.

There is no indication of a movement of larger-scale or formal urban industry to rural places. This may reflect the absence of skilled labour in rural areas, a situation linked to structural adjustment programmes. By the same token, growth of small towns and middle-sized urban centres may be heavily influenced by public policy, e.g. creation of local administrative centres and structural adjustment policies. More broadly, government investment is a key influence in the development of small towns.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Research on the spatial aspects of de-agrarianization should deal with the growth of urban centres. Key questions are: what levels within the hierarchy of urban areas are growing most rapidly? To what extent does this growth reflect government policies and political decisions, cf. 'derived urbanization' (Bryceson 1993)? In the same way, one needs to investigate to what extent de-agrarianization is a consequence of political decisions promoting growth of certain urban centres, and to what extent does it have an independent cause of growth such as higher returns to non-agricultural as opposed to agricultural employment?

Concerning the household perspective of de-agrarianization, research is needed on the spatial aspect: to what extent are families split geographically? In what way do households straddle rural and urban activities, i.e. portfolio diversification by families?

Finally, research is needed to see how structural adjustment programmes influence rural-urban linkages with respect to remittances, opportunities for seasonal/circular migration, as well as 'permanent' relocation from urban to rural areas. Against the background of a possible incidence of return migration and/or reductions in high urban migration rates, there is a need to investigate the best approach to decentralizing urban functions, making urban amenities and infrastructure accessible to rural dwellers rather than having return migrants simply 're-agrarianize'.

### **Policy Implications**

Given that the rural-urban dichotomy is too simplified, it is recommended that development should not be seen in terms of a rural-urban split. For example, depressing urban wages to encourage rural development ignores the linkages that exist between rural and urban areas as reflected in many of the workshop papers.

One of the issues in national development policies should be a reallocation of resources, i.e. infrastructure development. Local governments should, where possible, become more actively involved in development. In the meantime, patron-client relations provide clients with

security. Improved economic and political organisation in rural areas would presumably reduce the need for such relationships.

One should not overlook the politicization of decision-making pertaining to rural and urban areas. Not just technical policy issues are involved. The political context within which decisions are implemented will have a major impact on how policies are arrived at.

## **Discussion**

One participant argued that education is not necessarily a way towards the formal sector, as the committee presentation suggested. The informal sector is not the domain of illiterates!

Another discussant questioned the relevance of policies, i.e. to induce urbanization or non-agricultural activities, since they are implemented within a political framework and can be hijacked by those in power for their own ends.

The topic in of the rural-urban dichotomy came up in the discussion. The discussants agreed that this dichotomy masks a very complex, varied situation in which some rural towns have urban characteristics and urban farming does takes place in cities. Furthermore, this great variety of locational circumstances is also ignored by policy makers, who have focussed mainly on infrastructural needs of big cities. Little attention is paid to small towns in policy formulation.

As for urban farming, it was argued that a distinction should be made between farming for cash and subsistence. The background to urban farming is clear. Urban wages have fallen and people have been forced to engage in various alternative activities. It is interesting to note that this diversification into alternative activities is taken for granted by urban dwellers, who in most cases no longer attempt to claim higher wages. The remaining question is whether this trend should be reinforced by policies?

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## **Income Diversification**

presented by Ian Livingstone, University of East Anglia

### **Reasons for Diversification**

Income diversification is not atypical for African households, who usually have multiple sources of income. Diversification may represent either coping mechanisms in response to poverty, loss of income sources and risk *or* movement into high return activities. However, diversification as a means of relieving poverty is the predominant situation, although in some cases, e.g. Zimbabwe, poor households are undiversified. The adoption of non-farm

activities may follow a U-shape, showing a high degree of non-farm activities among those with very low farm incomes and among those with high farm incomes.

The immediate reason for diversification can partly be a response to the lack of outside markets for output. Producing for limited local markets results in the production of small quantities of several different things, often involving low productivity. Thus, thin markets produce diversification. Another reason may be 'missing markets', due to a general lack of credit, which prevents specialization in single high-return activities. Diversification, can in fact, take the form of investment in social networks, which at first glance may seem unproductive, but in the long run may provide an enabling environment for economic diversification.

### **Returns on Diversification**

Within the smallholder sector, diversification of economic activity into agricultural wage labour is particularly lowly paid. As for non-farm incomes, their levels vary widely between countries and between districts within a country. Genderwise, female headed households are more likely to diversify into low return activities. Pastoralists have special difficulties in diversifying for a number of reasons. Settled pastoralists are generally worse off.

The content and array of income-generating activities is often unimpressive, at least in low-income economies. e.g. beer brewing, mat-making, etc. Manufacturing generally accounts for a minority share of non-farm or informal sector income. The importance of the element of manufacturing in the non-farm sector depends directly on the quality and depth of the agricultural and national resource base.

### **Diversification and Urban-Rural Links**

In some countries diversification may be related to a 'ladder' of migration involving the following tiers: movement into rural work, seasonal or short-term movement into urban areas or plantations, movement into the urban informal sector, and movement into foreign countries with economic opportunities, e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Libya.

Movement into urban employment may create 'divided' households, with income deriving from farm *and* urban employment performed by different household members, e.g. Kwale/Kilifi workshop case study and Kenya generally. Remittances flowing back from urban-based members of the household vary widely and can produce large differences between one area and another, and between households in the same area. Generally, remittances from employment are of major importance in maintaining household viability and producing secondary incomes in a number of countries.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

More knowledge is needed of trends in diversification over time. One of the key questions is to find out whether the degree of diversification is actually changing, in order to

see if de-agrarianization is really taking place. Diversification may have changed over the years, and may have specific dynamics. Furthermore, households and people will be affected in different ways by de-agrarianization.

Another question is to what extent processes of diversification have been associated with increased productivity and income and/or with decreased income and welfare? Research is also desired in the area of time profiles of individual households' activities, covering motivations for and constraints of diversification. As changes in household circumstances may be related to rural land markets and entitlements, studies in this field are also needed, as well as more information on the relationship between urban and rural households, i.e. remittances, migration.

Research should be carved out to determine the level of earnings and return to labour in the full range of informal sector and rural non-farm activities. How far are the various non-farm activities associated with asset accumulation? To what extent do micro-enterprises grow and develop? Which types develop? What constraints exist on their development?

Finally, comparative studies of different regions would be useful, identifying regional differences in diversification and new opportunities and markets, which could offer scope for diversification. In this respect, it is useful to do tracer studies of pupils who have vocational training to determine their subsequent employment and productivity.

### **Policy Implications**

Several discussants addressed the question of what policies further the creation of employment opportunities and rural development. There is a need to increase the labour absorptive capacity of the economy by promoting the urban and rural informal sectors. Policies aimed at labour absorption should include the abolition of legal restrictions, the establishment of 'enabling environments', adjustment of taxes and tariffs, and removal of racially or socially defined barriers to employment. Negative effects of structural adjustment should be corrected.

The major focus should be on agricultural development and the development of agriculture-industry linkages. There should also be promotion of symbiotic relationships and interdependencies between rural towns and their agricultural hinterlands. Conservation and development of the national resource bases is essential to safeguard and expand non-farm activities. Institutional changes, e.g. land reform, may be called for and contribute to integrated rural development, combining farm and non-farm activity by increasing rural purchasing power. Lastly, research on appropriate technology (and the possibility for their practical introduction) is urgent.

### **Discussion**

The discussion focussed on research methodology and the need for further research. On the one hand, it was felt that a lot of research has already been done, and that the presented

will have easy access to the urban informal sector. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, we are not convinced that there is easy access to the informal sector. Often there are skill and/or capital requirements for entry. These barriers to entry apply as well in rural towns.

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activities may follow a U-shape, showing a high degree of non-farm activities among those with very low farm incomes and among those with high farm incomes.

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### **Suggestions for Further Research**

More knowledge is needed of trends in diversification over time. One of the key questions is to find out whether the degree of diversification is actually changing, in order to

see if de-agrarianization is really taking place. Diversification may have changed over the years, and may have specific dynamics. Furthermore, households and people will be affected in different ways by de-agrarianization.

Another question is to what extent processes of diversification have been associated with increased productivity and income and/or with decreased income and welfare? Research is also desired in the area of time profiles of individual households' activities, covering motivations for and constraints of diversification. As changes in household circumstances may be related to rural land markets and entitlements, studies in this field are also needed, as well as more information on the relationship between urban and rural households, i.e. remittances, migration.

Research should be carved out to determine the level of earnings and return to labour in the full range of informal sector and rural non-farm activities. How far are the various non-farm activities associated with asset accumulation? To what extent do micro-enterprises grow and develop? Which types develop? What constraints exist on their development?

Finally, comparative studies of different regions would be useful, identifying regional differences in diversification and new opportunities and markets, which could offer scope for diversification. In this respect, it is useful to do tracer studies of pupils who have vocational training to determine their subsequent employment and productivity.

### **Policy Implications**

Several discussants addressed the question of what policies further the creation of employment opportunities and rural development. There is a need to increase the labour absorptive capacity of the economy by promoting the urban and rural informal sectors. Policies aimed at labour absorption should include the abolition of legal restrictions, the establishment of 'enabling environments', adjustment of taxes and tariffs, and removal of racially or socially defined barriers to employment. Negative effects of structural adjustment should be corrected.

The major focus should be on agricultural development and the development of agriculture-industry linkages. There should also be promotion of symbiotic relationships and interdependencies between rural towns and their agricultural hinterlands. Conservation and development of the national resource bases is essential to safeguard and expand non-farm activities. Institutional changes, e.g. land reform, may be called for and contribute to integrated rural development, combining farm and non-farm activity by increasing rural purchasing power. Lastly, research on appropriate technology (and the possibility for their practical introduction) is urgent.

### **Discussion**

The discussion focussed on research methodology and the need for further research. On the one hand, it was felt that a lot of research has already been done, and that the presented

list of suggestions for further research is perhaps too long. Literature on migration, specialization, etc., exist and therefore one should not pretend not to know what is happening. On the other hand, it was argued that knowledge is still insufficient, e.g. on applied technology and on tracer studies, and existing research is often outdated.

It was recognised, however, that the quantity of research is less important than the quality. De-agrarianization is a holistic concept and it is important to cross-fertilize some of the issues, instead of going on with the same research categories. Moreover, it is useful to think about the more fundamental debate on the concept of de-agrarianization before deciding on which type of research is needed.

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### **Evolution of Entrepreneurship**

presented by Zimitri Erasmus, Katholieke Universiteit, Nijmegen

#### **Entrepreneurship in Rural Africa**

The term entrepreneurship has its roots in classical economics. It is generally rigidly defined as the *process* of combining factors of production towards a particular economic goal. However, people do not only maximise economic goals. Instead, goals to be maximised through entrepreneurship include patronage, prestige, status. There are thus multiple goals to be maximised. Entrepreneurs do not simply maximise their goals, they have to take into account risks. These risks vary from one context to another and include both economic and non-economic risks.

There are both positive and negative motivations for entrepreneurship. One needs to distinguish between these conceptually. For example, in some cases entrepreneurial activity is determined by need rather than opportunity. There are several factors influencing entrepreneurship. First of all, the process of entrepreneurship is positively related to people's access to resources. More resources means more options for diversification. Second, government policy is often a factor which constrains entrepreneurship. The case of the Tanzanian government's anti-economic sabotage campaign is illustrative. The key question in government policy is making more credit available to prospective entrepreneurs. Third, entrepreneurship is influenced by rural-urban linkages. Entrepreneurial strategies might straddle these locations. Finally, among the issues influencing kinds of entrepreneurial activities are: education, gender, seasonality, sustainability, economic crisis, and individual choice.

The case studies presented at the workshop suggest that occupational specialization, an anticipated outcome of de-agrarianization, rarely occurs at present. Instead, occupational

reorientation, diversification and possibly fragmentation seem to be among the more dominant processes of change.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

On the methodology of the research, the participants concluded that the study of entrepreneurship as a process requires longitudinal studies rather than the snapshots provided by samples. When dealing with entrepreneurial activities, it is important to distinguish methodologically between extra-household activities and intra-household activities. Methodologically, intra-household relations should be approached with care. The household is not an homogeneous entity. It is an arena of negotiation and conflict.

### **Discussion**

In the discussion it was stressed that both household and enterprise should be units of analysis. The definitions of household and enterprise may vary depending on the situation. In this respect, the discussants considered it useful to bring in the notion of social networks when studying entrepreneurship instead of the inflexible concept of the household.

The concept of household has another drawback given: that it is not a homogeneous entity. Revenue from household enterprises is, or may be, diverted from the household and reinvested in individual enterprises. Furthermore, the household as a coherent unit is changing and, in some cases, is experiencing a degree of disintegration. Individualisation is taking place. This pattern is similar to that mentioned 30 or 40 years ago in relation to labour migration.

Other comments were made on the development of enterprises: First of all, there is no reason to assume that people operating in the informal sector go on to be some part of the formal sector, when they are successful. Secondly, longitudinal studies are essential to find out what becomes of entrepreneurs, say 10 years down the road.

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## Workshop Coordinators' Closing Comments

*Deborah Bryceson, ASC*

It is very difficult to even begin to summarize the theoretical content of our discussions over the past three days. We have been examining various facets of de-agrarianization. Many of these facets are far from being new phenomena. This can be illustrated by taking the three components of de-agrarianization in turn. In terms of changing settlement patterns, the incidence of urbanization has had very early origins in Northern Nigeria, as was pointed out by the authors of the two Nigerian papers. In East and Central Africa, urbanization became significant during World War II. Thus, there is nothing very new about non-agrarian settlement *per se*. As regards work activity, African peasant agriculture has rarely been pure agriculture. Indeed if one traces way back to the origins of agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, we find that the spread of agriculture southwards from the area of the Sahel 1500 to 2000 years ago was a matter of introducing not only cultivation practices, but also iron working. In other words, some degree of non-agricultural activities were part and parcel of the spread of agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, with respect to livelihood, as several papers have mentioned, non-agricultural occupations have formed an element of people's livelihood strategies in several parts of Africa. Notably, the circular migration of large segments of the male population in Southern and Eastern Africa to mines is a prime example of this.

So why have we introduced the term 'de-agrarianization', if we have been referring to age-old phenomena? Is there a qualitative difference now which necessitates a new term? I would argue, yes. If one scans tendencies and events over the past 15 years, one is struck with the speed of changes taking place. It seems that the rate of change has accelerated considerably. This acceleration of social and economic change has led to the appearance of certain inadequacies in the existing conceptual repertoire of the social sciences. Many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa may now be approaching critical thresholds with respect to income diversification, composite occupational portfolios and urban-rural residential patterns which result in very different national economies and societies from what has prevailed up to the beginning of the 1980s. For example, in some countries, over the last decade or so, 'secondary cities' have supplanted the primate capital city as service centres, as well as magnets for rural out-migration.

We have identified various reasons for the acceleration of change in the direction of de-agrarianization. Some are positive, but most are negative. The papers have in effect enabled us to do a quick areal survey of the African continent. It is clear that in the north, desertification has been an essential force in hastening de-agrarianization. It is interesting and ironic to note that according to historians, northern desertification of the continent had been a motivating force for the spread of agriculture southwards throughout Africa 2000 years before. Now,

desertification seems to be spelling doom for the agrarian and pastoral societies of the Sahel.

Elsewhere, structural adjustment policies and economic crises more generally have been important forces underlying the process of de-agrarianization. Structural adjustment represents institutional re-alignment with the market taking precedence over the state. Like it or not, structural adjustment is now a fact of life in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. We are beyond the stage of arguing 'should it or should it not be implemented'. Now the debate centres on what remedial measures can be taken to mitigate the adverse consequences of structural adjustment. For too long, we have been debating the pros and cons of the state versus the market. Meanwhile, all sorts of things have been going on within the household. The impact of de-agrarianization on individual household members by gender and age needs to be documented. But in embarking on such a task, we know the household is a problematic term, i.e. it is a Western notion which does not fit comfortably in many African settings. Consumption, production, reproduction and distributional relations do not always neatly converge with the boundaries of household membership. Thus, we must document the causes and consequences of de-agrarianization on the household with sensitivity to how local people perceive their residential units and associational ties. It is important to bring in the notion of clientage. The duress of structural adjustment brings the operation of clientage networks more to the fore. In summary, there are many aspects of structural adjustment that can be related to both the rate and form of de-agrarianization.

All in all, how far has this enquiry into 'de-agrarianization' over the past three days taken us? You are the judge, but before you answer, let me just say that 'de-agrarianization' is largely a descriptive term at present and perhaps it should stay that way. It is not a grand theory with pre-ordained stages of growth, such as theories of industrialization. It has never been intended as a theory of linear development. As El Bashir has pointed out, de-agrarianization is a contradictory process. Nor, as a concept, should it be used to mask socio-economic differences. Studying de-agrarianization will draw attention to the economic bifurcation process that so many papers referred to, and hopefully will more clearly reveal mechanisms of class formation in different African settings. But de-agrarianization should steer clear of imposing any one theory of class formation. Typologies of de-agrarianization can and should be devised for different localities, but they should always be just that; typologies that can be compared, contrasted and abandoned as and when conditions change.

Let me stop on this note of guarded optimism about the validity of the concept of de-agrarianization in the present African context.

*Vali Jamal, ILO*

Two ‘headlines’ could be used to sum up the workshop proceedings: 1) the need to focus on the household as a unit of research; and 2) the implied development strategy for Africa. Obviously African households, by increasing their outreach in both rural as well as urban areas, have changed beyond recognition. It is possible that this was always so and was not hitherto sufficiently recognised in the literature. Geographical diversity also had to be acknowledged.

In West Africa, wages had never been pushed up as much as in East Africa and the informal sector was also a long-standing phenomenon. Hence, families always straddled the urban and rural sectors, the formal as well as the informal sectors. Ignorance of this was clearly a mis-specification of African households in West Africa. In East Africa, the raising of minimum wages after independence had been deliberately engineered to encourage urban specialization and a break from the rural areas. The informal sector, up to the start of the 1970s, was also negligible, so one could with some justification talk about the rural-urban dichotomy and its attendant ‘urban bias’. Yet even for this period, we had ignored the familial obligations of African households which required that the high-earning wage workers not only remit cash to their rural kin, but also accommodate family members from the farms. Intra-familial redistributions helped to reduce the urban bias.

When we come to the 1990s, drastic changes have happened to African households, particularly in East African-type economies because of the economic crisis. Now it is no longer possible to identify occupationally-distinct households in either urban or rural areas. We need a lot more information on the survival strategies of these households and their inter-relationships. But we also need to reflect on what all this implies for development strategy in Africa.

Were the urban and rural informal sectors going to provide the basis for long-term growth and development in Africa? Did they have independent dynamos for growth? There is a clear need to understand the dynamics of the informal activities. Even then, clearly the need remains to use the agricultural sector as the generator of growth and diversification of African economies. The present context for this is liberalization and structural adjustment programmes. We have to be constantly vigilant about the impact of these programmes on food security (food versus export crop nexus) and equity.

## **Final Discussion**

recorded by Marcel Rutten

**Dejene:** I would like to raise some questions about what we have spoken about over these three days of paper presentations and discussions. As regards the concept of 'de-agrarianization', we must ask:

- 1) Why do we need this term? What is wrong with old terms like occupational specialization and income diversification? Does de-agrarianization exist?
- 2) What factors determine de-agrarianization? What are its causes? Are these structural factors? Is it a change in technology, or market forces or institutional factors or structural adjustment?
- 3) How does de-agrarianization process take place? What are its internal operations and mechanisms?
- 4) What are the consequences of de-agrarianization on household food security, employment, income distribution, etc.?
- 5) Are there problems of measurement concerning de-agrarianization? If de-agrarianization is measurable, what techniques do we use?
- 6) Regarding policy implication and implications for theory: which theories are relevant? On this basis we can formulate our research hypotheses.

**Livingstone:** We have been provided with a definition of de-agrarianization and its three dimensions. The question is whether the causes are the same as the three dimensions of de-agrarianization? Are the people affected and involved the same? If the people and the causes are not the same, then there is a problem with the concept. If not, the definition falls apart.

**Inkoom:** Normally when we try to define something we can see it and describe it. For example, a bird. It has wings, feathers, a beak, etc. By describing it, we define it. Now, in the case of de-agrarianization, it is not so easy. We know the context. We have an agrarian crisis in Africa. During the workshop proceedings, we have heard about so many diverse things in relation to de-agrarianization. There are so many variables. It appears to me that we cannot continue to use a single term for something that is so broad and difficult to define. So I suggest that we think about the concept and narrow it down.

**Manona:** I don't think the scope of the concept is a problem. It allows for greater specificity in individual rural areas.



**Yohannes:** I would like to make a defence for the concept of de-agrarianization. I think everyone agrees that there is a flow out of agriculture and I think what is causing the ambiguity is the question of a flow to where? But it is clear that there is mobility out of agriculture.

**Jamal:** Why is it important to conceptualize this process? It is important to give a name to it because it is an important aspect of current African development. We see in Africa nowadays declining incomes, declining food production, etc. De-agrarianization refers to the fact that many people are moving away from agriculture. It is currently a process that is distress-induced as a result of falling incomes, as well as being associated with the liberalization of markets. While there are always diversities and complications that we have to take care of, we are presently talking about economic development and nothing less. I think we should retain the concept as such.

**Bryceson:** What I detect here is a sort of disciplinary divide and it is nice it happens at the very end instead of at the beginning of this workshop. As far as I am concerned, a concept like de-agrarianization, which at the very least, allows people from three or four different social science disciplines to communicate with each other, is a good thing in and of itself. In scientific taxonomic work, there is this continuous tug-of-war between ‘lumpers’ and ‘splitters’. De-agrarianization is a lumping category. Some people by nature will not like it. They prefer more exclusive concepts. There is a sense of security in having just the right pigeon hole to slot observed phenomena into. I can quite understand this feeling. At the moment, the de-agrarianization concept does not allow such precision. I think Dan Inkoom’s analogy with a bird is appropriate. Leonardo da Vinci wanted to fly and had in his mind how a bird flies. So he copied a bird, with wings and feathers, but he nonetheless failed to fly. But the sequel to the story is that we are flying, using aero-dynamic principles derived in part from an understanding of bird flight. So I hope the concept of de-agrarianization will finally work in the end, although at the moment it has some functional problems!

**Bank:** I don’t like the concept of de-agrarianization that much. I don’t believe de-agrarianization is able to describe what is happening in Southern Africa right now. De-agrarianization is assuming that there is a movement from agrarianization, whatever that means. Over time people have left and picked up agriculture again. There is fluctuation according to economic cycles that hit South Africa, especially in relation to different policies. On the one hand, we have an idea of processes that are taking place over a long period of time, e.g. economies that have been affected by migration. I am not sure that de-agrarianization is the right term to describe the contemporary shift in African economies.

**Swindell:** At first, I thought de-agrarianization was dispossession of people of their land. Now, I see that de-agrarianization means a partial shift from agriculture to something else while still residing somehow in agriculture. This is a much longer story and could be hard to follow.

**Bryceson:** Yes, that is what the concept is trying to get at, but it is still wide open. Each of the workshop case studies underline one or another facet of this. If we agree that sometime during the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, there was a turning point in most African economies, we must think of how to come to terms with this change. There are methodological implications. Too much policy-oriented research these days hinges on short-term consultancy work. Such consultancy reports have a very short-time frame, and are rarely capable of grasping long-term processes and significant turning points. We need concepts that draw attention to long-term tendencies, and which provide a stimulant to in-depth case study research which translates into better policy formulation. We need this in place of the sloganeering that goes on in the name of development efforts so often at present.

**Abebe:** The concept of de-agrarianization means a shift of emphasis from agriculture, which is a way of life and a mode of livelihood. De-agrarianization takes different shapes in different regions, so that is why it is different in West Africa, in East and Southern Africa. Also the shape is different through time. So it is a dynamic process, but it simply implies a shift of emphasis from agriculture.

**Bagachwa:** In practical terms, as we are all aware, the concept of the informal sector was controversial when it was introduced in the 1970s. Processes are important that are reflected in the terminology. The policy implications of these processes also raise other questions that have to be answered. There are certain processes happening in African economies. The question is: is the process of de-agrarianization really happening? Do these processes benefit the society? Are these processes efficient? The concept can vary per analysis, but the focus on processes is very important.

**Jamal:** De-agrarianization is not always a forced shift. We need to show it in terms of movement and the proportion of people in agriculture. We need to quantify the process (i.e. the number of people involved, food produced etc.) and to value it (is it beneficial, yes or no?). You raise the point of what it implies in terms of development strategies. Is it efficient? Our initial objective was not to quantify this new concept that we are observing. But such quantification is important for our future work. What kind of development strategies are needed in the context of labour in agriculture, in the context of liberalization, etc.?

**Mustapha:** De-agrarianization is linked to accumulation. In much of West Africa (e.g. Senegal and Nigeria), there has been a shift in the resource base in favour of the state. In the '40s and '50s there was a certain model of accumulation, which included agriculture. Over time, there has been an increasing shift of population into urban centres, making it increasingly difficult for the rural population. In Nigeria, this has coincided with a shift towards resource management by the state. In Nigeria, the economic base has shifted from agriculture to petrol. In Ghana the resource base simply disintegrated. Rapid urbanization followed. The state was not able to handle such massive flows of people to towns. There is now a shift in the patterns of accumulation. The concept of de-agrarianization draws attention to these shifts. In that way, it is useful. So as long as we do not use de-agrarianization in a static way, it is a useful concept. It forces us to look at the changing configuration of African society and the decreasing emphasis on agrarian life.

Over the last three days, we have been discussing a different model of development. De-agrarianization is already taking place and can be a positive process leading to increased productivity. It is also a way of loosening the hold of agrarian life by clan or other interests, and could be a way out of the African crisis. I appreciate its dynamics. We are looking beyond the proliferation of an urban informal sector which some say is a way out of the crisis, which I don't think it is. No, it's better if you can diversify rural society in such a way that both agriculture and non-agricultural incomes are raised, providing something dynamic and positive for the future.

**Inkoom:** The world-market is not open for Africans. There are so many constraints. Our chances are limited if you continue to look outside. Then you come to a point where you cannot go further in terms of national development. We should look at our own resources and start our own indigenous kind of development, our own process of development. We must see how best we can develop our resource base, and after that, call in our friends to see how they can help. There is potential in the informal sector. You can come to Kumasi and see if there is any spare parts left unused. We stand a chance, even if it takes 100 years, we have to start somewhere.

**Mustapha:** As regards the urban informal sector, I am not saying we should discourage it. In fact, it should be another part of the general strategy, but I don't think that on its own, it will lead us out of crisis.

**Gaidzanwa:** You can demonstrate to policy-makers that the informal sector is positive for the economy. But you should do it from an empirical starting point instead of saying beforehand that it is good.

**Kinyanjui:** De-agrarianization is another term I have to struggle with. I have already had problems with past terminology, e.g. the informal sector. Applying this in Kenya gave me great methodological problems. Then there was 'Jua Kali', i.e. small-scale enterprises in informal sector. I prefer the term 'small-middle scale enterprises'. When using de-agrarianization as a mode of analysis, you have to get it right from the beginning. De-agrarianization is a strong term, but does not take sufficient account of time and place. De-agrarianization is a term which suggests it is taking place now, but it has been going on before.

**Erasmus:** De-agrarianization is presented as an open concept. We have already experienced concepts like the informal sector, and the practical situation of taking concepts into the field and saying I must find this in the field. Is it not possible to try to be objective about our own responses to de-agrarianization? Do we have to get this concept perfect right now at these desks forever more? Or do we allow the openness offered to us to provide us with some parameters for going into the field and working out the intricacies of the process and its inter-relationships in the field before arriving at any set concept? What I sense is a tension between an *open* concept and a *loaded* concept and maybe we should say: "Hey, we have an open concept. Let's use it."

**Tellegen:** The concept of de-agrarianization does take time into account because it is described as a process and not a static situation.

**Meagher:** It is not just a concept of a long continuing process. It is taking place whether we are coming to terms with it or not. There is an immediacy here. The whole process of rural restructuring is happening right now as a result of structural adjustment and large-scale trading blocks. Do not stand still too long merely debating this concept.

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