

Changing rural-urban interactions in sub-Saharan Africa and their impact on livelihoods: a summary

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Executive summary

This paper draws on the findings from case studies conducted between 1997 and 2001 in Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania. Each case study is summarised in Briefing Papers 1 to 5 in this series, and full reports are available in the Working Papers Series on Rural-Urban Interactions and Livelihood Strategies.

Background

Population growth, urbanisation and declining returns from agriculture for small farmers mean that rural-urban interactions and linkages play an increasingly important role in local economies and in the livelihoods of large numbers of people. Trends in flows of people, goods, money and information, and patterns of occupational diversification reflect a dynamic process of economic, social and cultural transformation which needs to be better understood. This is especially important for the formulation of policies aiming to reduce poverty, and to support the positive role of urban centres in the development of their surrounding regions.

In the past two decades, economic crisis and reform have affected both rural and urban African populations. Small farmers' production has been negatively affected by the cost of agricultural inputs and consumer goods rising faster than the prices of agricultural produce. This cost-price squeeze has created a high risk environment which makes it difficult for small farmers to compete on domestic and international markets. Urban incomes have fallen following retrenchments of public sector workers and restrictions on wage levels, which have affected both formal sector workers and the informal sector activities which depend largely on their demand. Increases in food prices and service charges, cuts in public expenditure – especially health and education - and in infrastructure expenditure have been particularly felt by low-income groups. This has resulted in changes in livelihood strategies along two main lines: a widespread increase in mobility accompanied by strong social and economic links with home areas; and higher levels of multi-activity, especially among younger generations.

Variations in socio-economic, political, cultural, historical and geographical contexts both between and within nations affect the scope and nature of the linkages between towns and countryside. With this in mind, the paper does not attempt to give a conclusive account of rural-urban interactions in sub-Saharan Africa, but rather to point to the main factors underlying current transformations in this area, drawing from findings from the relatively different contexts of Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania. Key issues include:

- Access to land and land tenure systems: in many African nations, statutory and customary tenure coexist and often overlap, especially in peri-urban areas, where formal and informal land market transactions are increasingly important, often restricting access to low-income groups;
- Agricultural production systems and access to markets: farming is still the primary activity for the majority of Africa's rural population, but undergoing significant transformations following economic reform in the past two decades, including the decline and in some cases the disappearance of national marketing boards and the related subsidy systems;
- Income and occupational diversification: rural non-farm employment and agricultural activities among urban residents are an increasingly important

element of livelihood strategies. Multiactivity at the household or individual level helps decrease vulnerability to shocks and stresses and stabilise incomes which may otherwise vary widely on a seasonal basis. For better-off households, diversification as a cross-sectoral investment can be described as an accumulation strategy;

- Migration: intense population movement has long been a tradition in many parts of Africa. Important issues include changes in migration and mobility patterns and the role of remittances and networks spanning across rural and urban settlements;
- Decentralisation: in many African nations, this process is underway since the 1990s. Although it is far too early to assess its impact, local governments' role and responsibilities have increased considerably, and often encompass both urban and rural settlements.

A focus on rural-urban interactions involves attention to changes in livelihood strategies and to the reasons underlying these changes, which may vary depending on location, wealth, gender, generation and ethnicity. These in turn influence access to assets, which include natural resources such as land and water; labour and human capital (education, skills and health), important for both farm and non-farm activities; financial capital, including access to credit; and infrastructure, including roads, transport and markets. Social assets are especially important, since they often mediate access to material assets. In the context of rural-urban linkages, they include migrant networks and social relations between producers and traders. It is also important to understand intra-household dynamics and the relations between genders and between generations, since these often reveal a great deal about processes of social and cultural transformation.

Farming systems and urban expansion

Demand from urban consumers for high value horticultural produce can stimulate production by small farmers, but, at the same time, the expansion of urban centres often involves competition over the use of essential natural resources such as land and water. Other key elements of farming systems are labour availability, access to credit and other financial assets, and access to markets.

Constraints on access to agricultural land and water

- Demographic pressure is an important reason for land shortages. However, even where land is available, it is often at some distance from settlements and insufficient transport infrastructure can result in high opportunity costs such as crop transport and farmers' time, which can be an important constraint especially for low-income households and households with limited labour;
- Access to land is in many cases restricted by inheritance systems which exclude women and migrants. Secondary rights (sharecropping, tenancy, borrowing) are important for landless households and individuals, but are declining due to the increase in land value;
- Formal and informal land market transactions have increased opportunities for younger generations and women, but this is limited to wealthier and often urban-based groups who tend to displace under-capitalised small farmers;
- Competition between farming use and urban-related (domestic, industrial and waste dumping) use of natural resources is increasing and the source of latent conflict between rural and urban settlements. Low-income groups are most affected by loss of agricultural land and by limited access to drinking water in urban neighbourhoods, but responsibility for managing natural resources is

unclear, especially since the impact of urban use extends beyond municipal boundaries.

Labour availability

- Urban residents investing in commercial farming usually have no time nor family labour available, and demand for waged agricultural labour has increased, especially in peri-urban areas. While this expands the employment opportunities for small farmers, it is often at the expense of own farming;
- Intra-household tensions over farming decision-making and control over resources often results in younger generations moving out of unpaid family farm labour and into non-farm occupations. In the northern Tanzanian case study site, between 30 and 46 per cent of households now rely on waged labourers for family farming and livestock keeping;
- In central Mali, additional migrant labour is secured by under-capitalised horticultural producers in exchange for access to land under secondary rights. This is possible because of the relatively good access to urban markets and the high value of produce, which benefits both landholders and migrants. However, secondary rights offer no security of tenure and are likely to be eroded by urban expansion and the related increase in land value.

Credit and financial assets

- Access to formal credit systems has declined in all three countries due to a combination of mismanagement and liberalisation, which has reduced the capability of producers' cooperatives to offer subsidies and credit as their income is no longer secured. Lack of formal credit is identified by small farmers as a major constraint on production;
- Remittances from migrant household members are a key source of cash, but their investment in agriculture is limited because of increasing demands for cash for education and health expenditure and for the purchase of consumer goods;
- Some NGOs operate credit systems, but their impact is limited and localised. In many cases, local government is also underfunded and has limited access to credit: in southern Tanzania, the requirement to pay upfront for local government services such as tractor hire, makes them inaccessible for low-income farmers.

Access to markets

- Inadequate physical infrastructure is a major constraint in some areas, and affects mainly small farmers. In southern Tanzania, agricultural production for export markets is severely hampered by lack of roads and transport, and small producers can hardly afford transport costs to farmer cooperatives in designated locations, the only official purchasing points for exporters. Instead they must rely on agents coming to the villages, who offer lower prices;
- Information on market mechanisms, including price fixation and fluctuations, is still insufficient in most locations. In its absence, producers often tend to base their decisions on production costs. Since these tend to be lower when supply is high, it can result in overproduction or gluts in the market, and therefore low market prices;
- Social relations between producers and traders vary, and depend to a large extent on the nature of produce and the distance of markets from the production areas. Export and regional trade are dominated by large, well capitalised operators who usually prefer to deal with commercial farms. Small-scale traders, often women, operating within a limited area and dealing with small farmers who

have little access to formal credit, are key players in an informal credit system which involves producers and, in many cases, small urban-based retailers. This system can work for the benefit of all parties when it is embedded in social relations such as kin and ethnically-based networks, which prevent exploitation of the most vulnerable actors in the chain. The system is essentially related to limited networks where quantities traded are relatively small. As a result, financial liquidity is also limited, making the system vulnerable to external shocks and stresses, such as the loss of perishable produce due to insufficient or inefficient storage, processing and transformation facilities;

- Competition from imported goods does not affect horticulture and fresh food producers; however, it is a significant constraint for processors, such as vegetable oil producers in Tanzania and traditional cloth weavers in southeast Nigeria.

Occupational diversification and mobility

Occupational diversification levels are especially high among younger generations, reflecting its dynamic dimension. The increase in rural non-farm employment is usually seen in traditional regional development theory as the outcome of the 'virtuous circle' or rural-urban development, and triggered by agricultural growth. However, in all the case studies locations, smallholder farming is negatively affected by land shortages, limited access to credit and far from perfect markets. While these are all important 'push' factors, 'pull' factors include the increase in non-farm employment opportunities in a number of sectors, such as domestic trade liberalisation in Tanzania, the development or relocation of manufacturing industries in peri-urban areas in southeast Nigeria, and urban growth and the related demand for service workers in Mali. Diversification is often linked to mobility, and its patterns vary according to location, household wealth, gender and generation.

Household wealth and location

- A large number of rural residents engage in non-farm activities and, perhaps more surprisingly, agriculture is an important occupation for a relatively high proportion of urban dwellers. In both town and countryside, farming is the primary occupation for low-income households. However, when second and third occupations are taken into account, wealthier urban and rural groups alike show a significant interest in agriculture, either for household consumption and/or for commercial purposes. Farming as a component of income diversification strategies is thus important for all groups; this underlines the need to ensure low-income and vulnerable groups' continued access to the relevant assets, even where agriculture as an income source and a primary occupation is in decline;
- Transport is essential for low-income and often unskilled workers to gain access to employment such as domestic service and trade in areas where there is demand from wealthier consumers and employers. In remote locations, non-farm activities such as itinerant petty trade are limited by low incomes affecting demand;
- Non-farm employment opportunities in small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises and construction sites are concentrated in peri-urban areas; however, these activities often affect access to farming assets such as water and agricultural land, and reduce low-income groups' opportunities to diversify their income sources while retaining a foothold in farming.

Gender and generation

- Traditional divisions of labour along gender lines affect the impact of the opportunities and constraints derived from urban expansion in peri-urban areas. In Mali, men's economic activities are limited by declining access to agricultural land and the down-sizing of the operation of urban and peri-urban factories. Women, for whom access to farmland is traditionally restricted and who dominate small-scale trade, benefit from expanding demand for horticultural products and from their location between rural producers and urban markets;
- Younger generations show higher levels of multiactivity than older ones. This is due in part to emerging non-farm employment opportunities, and in part to the constraints in traditional family farming. These include low economic returns and the expectation to contribute unpaid labour with little participation in decision-making and, for young women, limited access to land through inheritance.

Migration, remittances and social networks across space

Historically, migration has been a key factor in shaping Africa's settlement patterns and households' livelihoods. It is also a central interaction between urban and rural settlements and between rural settlements. Main issues include the changing patterns in the direction, composition and types of movement, the role of remittances for households in home areas and of social networks linking migrants to their home place.

Direction, composition and types of movement

- Between 50 and 80 per cent of rural households have at least one migrant member, and this is not affected by wealth levels. This is because while economic motivations are the main reason for moving, they overlap with socio-cultural expectations of widening one's experience and the desire by younger generations to escape from obligations and control from their elders;
- Although young men remain the bulk of migrants, the independent movement of unmarried women has greatly increased in recent years. This is becoming more socially acceptable, as long as women contribute to their households' finances through remittances;
- For both men and women, migration increasingly involves distant destinations, due to more affordable transport, extensive migrant networks and demand in destination countries. For young women, employment in international tourist resorts and other occupations in the 'entertainment' industry can attract considerable social stigma, and distance is a way to safeguard their own and their families' reputation. More distant destinations usually mean that migrants are away for long periods of time, and are unable to return home for the farming season, adding to labour shortages in home areas.
- Return migration can inject financial resources and new skills in the local economy, but is generally limited and varies between locations, depending on a number of factors. The first is migrants' success in accumulating capital and skills, which in turn depends largely on educational levels and the income they can secure while away. The second is the infrastructure and opportunities in home areas, with settlements with good road and transport networks and which offer non-farm employment opportunities locally or within commuting distance attracting much larger numbers of return migrants than remote settlements. The third is continued access to local assets such as land, which encourages investment but also provides a safety net to migrants. This is important for both

men and women, but the latter are usually excluded from inheriting land, and purchase is only available to a minority.

Remittances and social networks

- Sending remittances is perceived as a moral obligation, as well as a way to maintain claims on assets in home areas. However, the amounts sent have declined over the past fifteen years, despite at the same time becoming an increasingly important source of cash for rural households. A common reason is the increase in employment insecurity and cost of living in urban areas. Unskilled migrants with low educational qualifications often only find employment in the over-crowded urban informal sector, and their remittances are among the lowest;
- Despite the decline in financial support, social links are as strong as ever, and migrants are expected to return to their home areas for specific ceremonies and celebrations. Failure to do so is seen in some areas as a 'social crime';
- As part of these linkages, migrant networks perform important functions in facilitating migration and in channelling support to the wider home community. This includes raising funds for the construction of public facilities such as schools and water points. In southeast Nigeria, the contribution of migrant associations to infrastructural development in rural settlements and small towns has in some cases outstripped public investment, but their role in supporting local socio-economic development is rarely acknowledged, let alone supported by appropriate policies.

The role of urban centres in the development of their surrounding regions

Local governance systems and institutional set-up play an important role in defining the nature of the relationship between urban centres and their surrounding region, although this needs to be situated within the broader context of national and supra-national fundamental changes in social and economic structure. Decentralisation processes are currently underway in several African countries, following the desire to create a more accountable system with better capacities to respond to the needs and priorities of the local populations, and as a result of cutbacks in national governments' budgets and the shifting of some costs and responsibilities away from central government. Improved synergies between local governments, NGOs, local civil society and private sector actors can play a key role in supporting the positive aspects of rural-urban interactions while reducing their negative impacts.

Decentralisation processes

- Support from central government to local government needs to be better defined. Substantial efforts are necessary to improve the capacity of local institutions to carry out their new functions which in Tanzania include needs identification, planning, budgeting and joint implementation with other institutions. Even then, in under-resourced areas it is unrealistic to expect local government to take full responsibility for the provision and maintenance of essential infrastructure such as roads and transport, which constitute a major bottleneck to regional development;
- The relationship between elected local government and traditional authorities can be especially critical in peri-urban areas, where it overlaps with tensions between statutory and customary land tenure systems. The potential for conflict is much higher in areas with low levels of social and political cohesion, showing that in many cases the new unit's boundaries do not reflect social, economic and political realities;

- Mechanisms for negotiation and collaboration between urban, peri-urban and rural local government units need to be developed to deal appropriately with tensions related to competition over the use and management of natural resources, an increasingly potential cause for latent or open conflict.

Service provision

- Following economic reform in the 1980s, public funding to essential services such as health and education, and to infrastructure such as water has declined, while user fees have been introduced. In many African countries, international donor agencies, churches and NGOs have taken over service provision, often concentrating in rural areas on the assumption that this is where poverty is concentrated. The result is that residents of low-income urban neighbourhood often have less access to facilities than rural residents. A broader approach to encompass both rural and urban areas would be more effective in targeting low-income groups;
- Migrant associations can play an important role in funding community-level initiatives, as in southeast Nigeria. A better synergy between these often neglected civil society actors and the public sector can help improve infrastructural development;
- Transport is a key service undergoing change, with only Nigeria providing subsidies from state and local government. In Mali and Tanzania, high transport costs are identified as a major bottleneck by rural residents, together with insufficient processing and storage facilities. This in turn makes locally processed goods vulnerable to competition from cheaper exports. Local government can develop a regulatory framework and provide incentives to private sector investors in these areas, but this, again, requires improved capacity and legitimacy.

Key issues for policy

Whether as a result of increasing vulnerability or as a consequence of new opportunities – and more likely as the combination of both – the increasing spatial and occupational complexity of African livelihoods needs to be recognised. Policy interventions should concentrate on improving access to assets with the aim of expanding livelihood options, rather than assuming that households are spatially homogenous and that individuals engage in one type of activity only.

Moreover, the variations in the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions and livelihood patterns both between and within different locations underline the necessity to tailor policies to local circumstances and to the specific needs and priorities of different groups, especially poor and vulnerable ones.

Beyond this, some assets are especially important for low-income and vulnerable groups. They include natural resources, since farming is still a key component of a diversified basket of income sources. They also include education and skills, which are critical for access to non-farm employment, either local or involving migration. Credit is a significant bottleneck for farmers. Its provision by small traders operating within social networks needs to be supported by reducing the risks associated with poor transport, storage and processing facilities, which affect the whole supply chain including producers and consumers.

While local government will play an increasingly important role in regulation, planning and implementation, better synergy with other actors, from international donor

agencies to local associations, including migrant associations, and private sector actors, can only improve the positive links between urban centres and their surrounding regions. This is important for both service provision and for local economic development.

Changing rural-urban interactions in sub-Saharan Africa and their impact on livelihoods: a summary

1. Introduction

Background

Rural-urban interactions affect both rural and urban change, and influence resource use and management. Linkages between urban centres and their surrounding rural regions include flows of people, of goods, of money and of information, as well as other social transactions that are central to social, cultural and economic transformation. Within the economic sphere, many urban enterprises rely on demand from rural consumers, and access to urban markets is often crucial for agricultural producers. In addition, a large number of urban-based and rural-based households rely on the combination of agricultural and non-agricultural income sources for their livelihoods. This may involve straddling the rural-urban divide from a spatial point of view (moving between town and countryside) or from a 'sectoral' point of view (such as engaging in agriculture in urban centres or in non-farm activities in rural areas).

Population growth, urbanisation and the declining importance in absolute terms of the agricultural sector in the economic base of many regions mean that rural-urban linkages and interactions play an increasingly significant role in local economies and in the livelihoods of large numbers of people. A growing body of research documents this dynamic process of transformation; nevertheless, its impact on development theory and practice remains limited.

In part, this stems from the very wide scope of rural-urban interactions, and from the fact that different aspects of this process are often examined in isolation. For example, international organisations and donor agencies concerned with rural development tend to perceive some rural-urban linkages in negative terms, as in the case of migration which is still often seen primarily as rural to urban and the cause of uncontrolled urban growth, urban poverty and agricultural labour shortages. By contrast, other aspects of rural-urban linkages such as access to markets and to non-farm rural employment now figure increasingly prominently in policy discourse (HTS, 2001; IFAD, 2001). However, their spatial dimensions and functional relations with urban centres are often overlooked, as is their sometimes-close interrelation with migration and mobility.

In the urban sector, interest has focussed primarily on urban and peri-urban agriculture, but little attention has been given to wider spatial aspects of urban livelihoods, such as commitments and obligations towards relatives in home areas, and how these may affect urban residents. This is despite the empirical evidence showing how frequently livelihoods are constructed across rural and urban spaces (Kamete, 1998; Kruger, 1998; Smit, 1998).

This paper draws on the findings from case studies conducted in collaboration with local research teams between 1997 and 2001 in three sub-Saharan African countries: Mali (with the Groupe Recherche-Actions pour le Développement, based in Bamako), Nigeria (with the Nigerian Environmental Study/Actions Team, based in Ibadan) and Tanzania (with researchers from the University College for Land and Architectural Studies and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, both based

in Dar es Salaam). The individual reports from the case studies are published in this series as working papers numbers 1 to 6.

It should be stressed that the paper does not attempt to provide a conclusive account of rural-urban interactions in sub-Saharan Africa. This is because the scope and nature of rural-urban linkages can vary widely, both between and within countries, depending on differences in the geographical, social, cultural, economic, political, historical and ecological contexts. At the same time, the case studies' findings present sufficient similarities to allow the identification of the main factors underlying current transformations in rural-urban linkages within the relatively different contexts of the three study countries.

Livelihoods, assets and intra-household relations: a framework for analysis

Assets-based frameworks are a useful entry point to understand how rural-urban interactions affect different groups of people, as they focus on the dynamic dimension of livelihoods, which tend to vary over time depending on the external context and on the internal characteristics of households. They also point to the complexity of livelihoods, which are based on the management of a combination of capabilities, assets (including material and social resources) and activities. Most frameworks specifically address either rural livelihoods (Carney, 1998; Bebbington, 1999) or urban livelihoods (Moser, 1998), reflecting the importance of access to land and other assets for farming in rural areas, or the greater reliance on waged employment in urban contexts.

A focus on rural-urban interactions involves attention to changes in livelihood strategies, and to the reasons underlying these changes, which may vary depending on location, wealth, gender, generation and ethnicity. These influence access to a number of assets, which include natural resources such as land and water for farming purposes; labour and human capital (education, skills and health) important for both farm and non-farm activities; financial capital, including credit; and infrastructure, including roads, transport and markets.

Social assets are especially important, since they often mediate access to material assets. Social capital is a term commonly used, although it is difficult to define, and even more difficult to identify and assess. In the context of rural-urban interactions, social capital can include migrant networks and social relations between producers and traders. Overall, social and cultural capital give meaning to all the other assets by contributing to social cohesion and a sense of shared identity and knowledge which, in turn, are often essential to enable vulnerable groups to negotiate with institutions such as state and local government.

While assets-based frameworks usually take households as the unit of analysis, it is equally important to understand intra-household dynamics, since these often reveal a great deal more about processes of social and cultural transformation. A useful analytical framework is that developed by Sen (1990), where household members face two different types of problems simultaneously: one involving cooperation (adding to total availabilities) and the other conflict (dividing the total availabilities among the members of the household). While it is often in the interests of the different parties to cooperate, the final outcome, or the distribution of the product of such cooperation, is determined by the relative bargaining power of each member. Small-farming households require cooperation, such as unpaid family labour, to function; however, decision-making power and control over assets is often concentrated in the hands of older individuals, often men.

Four factors affect members' bargaining capacity: first, the respective well-being levels in case of break-down in cooperation – that is, the fall-back options available to each individual; second, the extent to which members identify their own well-being with that of the other members, or otherwise (and the extent to which they are prepared to subordinate their own to the others'); third, the perception of the contribution made by each member, and their significance to the household's well-being; and finally, the ability of some members to exercise coercion over the others, be this through the threat of violence or social pressure.

Changes in intrahousehold patterns of 'cooperative conflicts' are important because they affect household organisation, and because they are often closely interrelated with changes in economic activities. For example, increased access to non-farm employment can improve individual members' fall-back options, and encourage the members with least decision-making power (usually women and younger generations) to move out of activities such as family farming. This, in turn, has important implications for policies, since inter-generational differences make it easier to identify and better respond to possible long-term trends in patterns of activity.

Research process and key issues

Each country case study started with a planning workshop to identify research priorities linked to on-going and/or emerging national policy debates. Workshops participants included policy-makers and other researchers from academic institutions and NGOs, who were also invited to attend review workshops within each project, and the final workshops where the findings were presented and discussed.

This process enabled the national research teams to engage both national and local policy-makers and other stakeholders in a dialogue around the research themes. The repeated and structured exchanges between different actors have enriched and refined the case studies, and allowed the research teams to validate their findings at different stages of the project.

The overall objectives of the case studies were to explore:

- The relationship between small and intermediate urban centres and their surrounding regions, with particular attention to spatial and sectoral linkages and their role in local economies;
- The changing scale and nature of economic activities, land and labour markets in and around urban centres, and the implications for the livelihoods of rural-based and urban-based groups;
- The nature and role of rural-urban interactions, including migration and income diversification, as components of the livelihoods of different income groups in both rural and urban areas. This includes the analysis of processes of social differentiation and the function of gender and generation in the assignment of roles and responsibilities within households, and more generally in access to resources.

Each of these objectives can be further unpacked by looking at key issues which are closely related to macro-level and national-level policies, for example structural adjustment programmes, trade liberalisation, land legislation and decentralisation. Since each research project was developed on the basis of the discussions held in the planning workshops, while the specific policy-related issues are broadly similar, there are some differences in the priority assigned to them, reflecting variations in the on-going debates in the three countries.

The key issues included:

- Access to land and land tenure: Tanzania passed a Land Law in 1999, while Nigeria's Land Use Act dates from 1980, but in practical terms all three countries, including Mali, face potential conflicts between overlapping statutory and customary land rights. Under the combined pressure of urban expansion and growing formal and informal land markets, access to land and security of tenure for small farmers are increasingly precarious, and often result in their moving out of own farming;
- Agricultural production systems and access to markets: following economic reform and trade liberalisation in the mid-1980s, the role of state agencies in providing services (including credit) and subsidies to inputs has declined if not disappeared in the three countries. While access to markets is clearly key for producers, physical infrastructure and limited information on market mechanisms can be overwhelming obstacles, especially for small producers;
- Income and occupational diversification: rural residents, especially younger ones, are increasingly moving out of agriculture as their only and sometimes main activity. It is essential to better understand the nature of diversification, and the role that urban centres can play in the development of their region in providing non-farm employment opportunities and increasing the value of agricultural production;
- Decentralisation is a key issue in regional development. Both Mali and Tanzania are undergoing a process of decentralisation since the 1990s, and the case studies reflect this concern. In Nigeria, deconcentration started in the early 1960s and is guided by rather different objectives, as described in chapter 6 of this paper;
- Migration: intense population movement has long been a tradition in many parts of Africa, and the three countries are no exception. The studies aimed to identify changes in migration and mobility patterns, and in the role of remittances and networks spanning across rural and urban settlements.

Research sites and methodology

Each research site includes at least two rural settlements and one urban centre as the initial geographical focus, although inevitably rural-urban linkages tend to extend well beyond the selected area to include a variety of locations within the country and, in the case of migration, an increasing number of international destinations.

In Tanzania, the selected locations are Himo, a dynamic township close to the border with Kenya, and two villages in the surrounding area; and Lindi, a declining town in the South of the country, and two local villages. In Mali, where policy priorities were identified in peri-urban areas, two such locations were selected around the capital city, Bamako, and the important secondary town of Mopti. The Nigerian research site includes Aba, an important commercial town in the relatively under-researched South-East of the country, and five settlements in the surrounding region. A more detailed description of the locations is given in Annex 1.

The three teams adopted a broadly similar methodology including a mix of tools and approaches. Working paper number 3 in this series, by the Tanzanian research team, presents a critical assessment of the methods and tools used.

All the case studies started with the use of participatory tools to map rural-urban interactions within each research site. This was then further refined by using more participatory and qualitative tools with different groups, identified on the basis of wealth, gender and generation (generation includes age, but also specific social

positions within both the household and the wider community).

The tools were complemented by semi-structured interviews with key informants and commodity chain analyses for selected commodities. Workshops were then held with the respondents and local government officials to validate the information gathered. In Mali and Tanzania, this phase was then followed by questionnaire surveys with purposively selected, stratified samples, for a total of 480 respondents. Final workshops were held in all the case studies locations to present and discuss the findings with local populations and policy-makers. A more detailed description of the methodology used by each country team can be found in Annex 2.

Structure of the paper

The next chapter provides a background to the case study findings through a summary of recent literature on rural-urban linkages in sub-Saharan Africa, with an emphasis on poverty and socio-economic change in both rural and urban Africa. Chapter 3 examines changes in farming systems in the case study locations, focusing on inter- and intra-household differences in access to assets, especially land, labour and credit, and the impact of urban expansion. Access to markets is discussed in physical terms (that is, infrastructure and the availability and affordability of transport) and as the outcome of complex social relations, focusing on the relationship between traders and producers. Chapter 4 describes patterns of occupational diversification and mobility in the study areas, again focusing on the main factors accounting for inter-household differences, and on the role of gender and generation as key elements of intra-household variations. Chapter 5 explores changing trends in migration direction and gender composition, and their implications for rural households' livelihoods, as remittances are an increasingly important component of their budgets. The often substantial contribution of migrant networks to home areas suggests that policy support could enhance their role in local development. Chapter 6 examines the role of urban centres in the development of their surrounding region, with specific reference to decentralisation processes. The final chapter summarises the key policy issues related to the main findings of the case studies.

2. Poverty, assets and space in sub-Saharan Africa

This section summarises recent work relevant to the study of rural-urban interactions. In doing so, it also situates the findings from the case studies, discussed in the following sections, within the current understanding of social and economic change in sub-Saharan Africa.

Poverty and socio-economic change in rural and urban Africa

Although available data on Africa need to be treated with considerable caution because of quality and variability, there is little question that there has been an Africanisation of global poverty. Data on income poverty show that, since the late 1980s, the absolute number of people living on less than a dollar a day in Africa has grown five times more than the figure for Latin America, and twice that for South Asia (World Bank, 2001). At the same time, social indicators have improved, but more slowly than elsewhere (ibid). Per capita GDP in the three study countries has declined since 1970 (in Nigeria and Tanzania) or stagnated (in Mali) (UNDP, 1998).

Structural adjustment policies have played a major role in sub-Saharan Africa since the mid-1980s, although countries experienced reforms to different degrees. The distributional impact of reforms is, at best, unclear, but there is consistent evidence that small farmers' production has been undermined by a cost-price squeeze, with the cost of agricultural inputs and consumer goods rising faster than the prices of agricultural produce. This has created a high risk, low return environment which makes it difficult for small-scale farmers to compete on domestic markets, and even more so on international ones (Bryceson, 1999a). Diversification into non-farm activities, sometimes involving migration of at least one family member, has therefore become an important livelihood strategy (Jamal and Weeks, 1993). However, making a living in the urban centres has also become increasingly difficult.

The impact of both economic crisis and economic reform under structural adjustment on urban centres has been well documented (Amis, 1995; Kanji, 1995; Wratten, 1995). Increases in food prices and in service charges, cuts in public expenditure, especially health and education, and in urban infrastructure expenditure have been particularly felt by low-income groups. Retrenchments of public sector workers and restrictions on wage levels have affected both formal sector workers and the informal sector activities, which depend on their demand. Moreover, the entry of retrenched formal sector workers in the informal sector has contributed to the imbalance between increasing supply and declining demand. As a result, urban incomes in most countries have fallen dramatically, and the relative position of the urban population compared to the rural ones has drastically changed (Jamal and Weeks, 1993).

A number of studies have examined the consequences of economic hardship on the linkages between urban residents and their kin and relatives in home areas. These linkages are traditionally very strong in most of sub-Saharan Africa, and can be interpreted as a strategy to spread resources in a risk-prone environment. In some cases (in Senegal and in Zimbabwe), economic hardship has forced urban residents to decrease their financial support to rural-based relatives (Fall, 1998; Potts with Mutambirwa, 1998). In other cases, however (in Botswana and in South Africa), urban dwellers' investment in home areas as a form of safety net, including assets such as livestock and housing, has continued if not increased because of growing uncertainty in the urban centres (Kruger, 1998; Smit, 1998).

It has also been suggested that economic crisis may have spurred urban to rural movement, especially among retrenched formal sector workers. The strength of rural-urban linkages, which often means that migrants can keep their claims on land in home areas, facilitates return migration (Potts, 1995). However, evidence on return migration is anecdotal and findings are not uniform, reflecting the wide variations of migration patterns within and between African countries, as well as the lack of reliable demographic data to support the generalisation of findings from small-scale studies (Tacoli, 2001).

Income diversification: accumulation and survival

Occupational and income diversification has become widespread in sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades. One important reason for this is population growth and increased pressure on natural resources. In addition, the difficulties for small-scale farmers to make a living out of agriculture in generally risk-prone environments have been exacerbated by economic reform and have become an important 'push' factor for diversification. However, diversification is not just a rural phenomenon: the reliance of urban residents on agriculture, either for consumption or as an income-generating opportunity, is well documented (Baker, 1995; Kamete, 1998).

The reasons and determinants for diversification are the subject of intense debate (see Ellis, 1998). A key question is whether diversification is the outcome of growth in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, or rather of decline and stagnation in the agricultural sector (Reardon et al, 2001). In the regional planning tradition of the 'virtuous circle' of rural-urban economic development, diversification is seen as the outcome of agricultural growth, as incomes rise and demand for manufactured non-farm output increases (IFAD, 2001). A more sombre view of diversification sees it as one dimension of a broader process of depeasantization. This overall sectoral change in sub-Saharan Africa involves a rapid shrinkage of the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture and residing in rural settlements; in this context, non-farm activities are not based on backward and forward linkages with agriculture (for example, food processing and transport, manufacturing of farm tools), but concentrate in over-competitive and poorly paid service activities such as petty trade (Bryceson, 1999a).

The nature of diversification can vary widely, according to who undertakes it - wealthy or low-income households, urban-based or rural-based, etc. Among low-income households, diversification is often a survival strategy for risk minimisation and income stabilisation. It also usually involves low-skilled, low-paid and often temporary employment. Among higher-income groups, by contrast, diversification is often an accumulation strategy aiming at maximising profits by investing across sectors. Better-educated workers are more likely to gain access to remunerative or secure employment. However, the opportunities and constraints affecting each group vary by location, and are closely intertwined with geographic, ecological, historical and economic characteristics. Hence the wide range of views on whether diversification increases or equalises social differentiation (Ellis, 1998).

Households and beyond: gender, generation and ethnicity

Opportunities and constraints are socially embedded and reflect roles ascribed to gender, age and ethnic positions, and to migrant status. Access to the main assets linked to farming (natural resources such as land and water; labour, either unpaid family or waged; credit; and markets) often depend on individuals' social position. In most West African countries, under customary tenure migrants can access land only through secondary rights, with limited security of tenure (IIED, 1999).

Constraints over access to farming assets, especially land, are an important reason for intergenerational conflict and for employment changes. Increasingly, financial dependence on household heads, linked to contributing unpaid labour on the family's farm, is resented by the younger generations. Shrinking natural resource availability and financial constraints on agricultural production strongly encourage young men's engagement in non-farm employment (Jambiya, 1998; Mung'ong'o, 1998). In some cases, social pressure forces young men to migrate to the urban centres, to avoid being derided as 'weak' and 'lazy' in their own village (Okali et al., 2001).

Access to non-farm employment is also mediated by social rules and regulations which often have a strong gender bias. In southern Tanzania, women heads of households and widows living alone are generally excluded from the patronage system controlling access to rural non-farm employment, and are forced into marginal activities such as harvesting of natural resources or even prostitution (Seppala, 1996). Young women do not have the same opportunities as young men to find employment in sectors such as construction and transport, where physical strength is necessary. On the other hand, demand in the entertainment industry, from local bars and restaurants to international tourist resorts, is heavily gender-specific. Due to the social stigma often attached to this type of jobs, it is not unusual for women to move as far away as possible from their home settlement to safeguard

their own and their family's reputation.

Despite these constraints, African women's independent migration and employment in non-farm activities has increased, partly because of growing opportunities, partly because of personal desire for independence, and partly because even the most traditionalist household and village elders now find that financial support from women is not only acceptable but desirable (Jambiya, 1998; Diyamett et al., 2001; Okali et al., 2001).

Balanced regional development and decentralisation

It is generally agreed that the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions, from the patterns of migration to income diversification trends, to the linkages between rural production and urban markets, is extremely diverse, owing to historical, political, socio-cultural and ecological, as well as economic, factors. This in turn calls for the need to avoid generalisations and tailor local policies to local circumstances (Ellis, 1998; Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1986).

National policies such as macro-economic and pricing policies, sectoral strategies and land reform programmes all have a direct impact on the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions. However, since the implementation of economic reform in the mid-1980s, the role and responsibilities ascribed to local governments in seeking to promote regional economic growth and poverty reduction have increased significantly, in line with on-going decentralisation processes in most sub-Saharan nations.

Decentralisation programmes have been implemented in a number of African nations since the 1990s, sometimes earlier. Several administrative, political and fiscal reasons underpin these reforms, including the drive towards good government and democratisation, whereby locally elected government is seen as more accountable and responsive to local needs and priorities; the desire from central governments to replace traditional power systems with new political structures along democratic principles; and finally, the cutbacks in national budgets which play an important role in the shifting of certain costs and responsibilities from central government to local authorities (Toulmin, 2001).

It is far too early to assess whether decentralisation will keep up to its promise. It will take more than a decade for the new structures to be fully functioning and to start showing some of the benefits of this policy shift. Several key issues will need to be addressed in the meanwhile. First, the relationship with central government needs to be clearly defined. This includes financial support, which is especially critical for poor areas where economic growth depends on radically improved infrastructure, such as the Lindi region in southern Tanzania (Lerise et al., 2001). It also includes decision-making power, for example with regard to managing the overlap between customary and statutory rights, which shows important variations depending on location.

Second, substantial efforts are necessary to develop the capacity of local government to fulfil its new functions. This ranges from planning and budgeting to revenue collection. Third, the jurisdiction of local authorities needs to be clarified within the wider context at the local level. This includes relationships with different levels of government (including national and regional authorities); it also includes relations between local governments: this is particularly important in peri-urban areas, where natural resources are used by both urban and rural residents and enterprises (GRAD, 2001a; 2001b). Access to land and water is often the reason for latent or even open conflict between different users, as use boundaries do not necessarily correspond to administrative ones. Better coordination between urban

municipalities and rural districts is indispensable to improve local resource management.

Finally, local governments must acquire legitimacy in the context of a variety of forms of governance, which often include traditional chiefs with considerable powers, especially in land allocation. Other civil society actors are equally important: in Nigeria, migrants' associations often contribute equal if not more funds than the public sector to the construction of schools, water supply systems and other public goods. In Tanzania, international NGOs, donor agencies, churches and private operators play an important role in service provision. Better coordination between local government and these actors is necessary to ensure that services respond to needs, that they are accessible to all income groups, and that they are planned in such a way as to avoid or minimise negative impacts on the environment.

3. Assets, farming systems and urban expansion

For much of Africa's rural population, farming is still the primary activity. Changes in the scale and nature of rural-urban interactions and their relevance for the livelihoods of different groups are therefore largely related to transformations in the agricultural sector. This section explores the ways in which access to different assets, such as natural resources (especially land and water), financial capital and information on market prices and fluctuations, affects farming in the case study locations. Access to assets is influenced by a combination of factors, ranging from national policies (for example, land tenure systems and agricultural policies) to village-level characteristics (for example, population density and natural resource features), inter-household differences (for example those between wealthier and vulnerable households, and those between migrants and indigenous residents), and intra-household differences (between genders and between generational groups).

An additional important determinant of access to assets is proximity to urban centres, which in some cases may lead to latent or open conflict over control of natural resources. In the majority of the case study locations, some tension exists between urban centres and the surrounding rural areas, although this interaction can also have positive aspects benefiting both rural and urban residents, for example demand from urban consumers and links with urban-owned farming and processing facilities.

Land tenure systems: multiple and evolving

All three countries have complex and evolving land tenure systems. The main characteristic is the co-existence of different types of rights. The state is the overall trustee of all land within the national boundaries with absolute authority over allocation and granting of land for a variety of projects (for example urban development and physical infrastructure) and commercial activities (such as plantations and large-scale irrigation schemes).

At the local level there is often a mixture of customary and statutory rights. In broad terms, customary rights (land management and allocation by traditional authorities such as village chiefs and village councils) are more likely to apply to rural areas, whereas statutory rights (formalised land titling and registration) are more likely to dominate in urban centres. However, formal and informal market transactions are increasingly important under both tenure systems (Toulmin and Quan, 2000), especially in peri-urban areas where the two systems often overlap.

Under customary tenure, non-land owners can access land through a variety of secondary rights arrangements, ranging from sharecropping to tenancy and borrowing of land. These arrangements are especially important for migrants and for low-income farmers, but are increasingly under strain as land becomes scarcer.

Land tenure systems have been and are evolving in the three countries. This can lead to some conflict of interest between different actors. In southern Tanzania, for instance, where land was reallocated under the villagisation resettlement programme in the 1970s, customary ownership and ownership dating from that period are often at odds, with different individuals claiming rights to the same land which, as a consequence, is left idle.

Land availability and access: differences between and within households

Land shortages are an increasingly important issue in the three countries. In part, this depends on the physical features of the landscape and on the pattern of settlements. The steep slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, for example, are one of the most densely populated areas in Tanzania. Southeast Nigeria also has one of the highest population densities in the country, and suffers from severe soil erosion which further decreases land availability. Land scarcity in these areas is linked to systems of access to land which are essentially exclusionary, in the sense that inheritance rights are limited to certain individuals or groups (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Land inheritance systems in Nigeria and Tanzania

In southeast Nigeria, land under customary tenure is owned by indigenous households which can claim descent from a common ancestor. Migrants are therefore excluded from permanent rights to land, a situation which is likely to worsen with demographic pressure and increased population movement between rural areas. This is a common problem in much of West Africa (IIED, 1999).

In northern Tanzania, the traditional inheritance system favours the eldest and the youngest sons, while other children, especially female, are encouraged to migrate. However, this system is under growing strain, as declines in farm incomes and land shortages give rise to conflicts between fathers and sons over control of the limited available farmland.

Intra-household conflict between generations over access to land is not limited to areas of high population density. Southern Tanzania is sparsely populated, but the extremely poor road and transport infrastructure means that while land is available, it is often only accessible with difficulty. Moreover, value is attached not so much to land as to the perennial crops grown on it. Cashew and coconuts are the main cash crops produced in the area, and since it takes up to seven years for trees to mature, inheritance traditionally does not involve land but productive trees. This also gives rise to inter-generational conflict, as younger generations which do not have the means to engage in such long-term investment attempt to increase their control over the family farms.

Access to land needs to be situated in the wider context: first, access to land related to farming should be understood as access to productive land (which will in turn depend on local perceptions of land and crop value); second, in sparsely populated areas with insufficient infrastructure, access includes a component of physical access, as this affects opportunity costs such as crops transport and farmers' time. Third, social relations within settlements and within households, formalised as

inheritance systems and rights to customary allocation, are crucial in determining access to land.

Finally, the increasing importance of land markets, especially in peri-urban areas, has opened up access to groups traditionally excluded or, at best, marginalised from land ownership, such as younger generations and women. However, it should be emphasised that this only applies to wealthier individuals and households. Land transactions in informal markets often include land under customary rights. As purchased land tends to be the most desirable, both in terms of farming quality and physical accessibility, what land remains available for allocation under customary tenure becomes increasingly marginal. In addition, increasing land value has a negative impact on secondary rights: for example, in southern Tanzania the traditional practice to allow low-income households to grow food crops on tree farms, provided the trees are not disturbed, is rapidly disappearing.

Access to natural resources, urban expansion and impacts on labour

Especially in peri-urban areas, access to agricultural land for small farmers is subject to a number of pressures. Outright purchase rather than allocation is increasingly frequent, and many of the buyers are often urban residents who invest in commercial farming. This is the case in southern Tanzania and in Mali, where middle and higher income urban residents tend to displace under-capitalised small farmers.

Changes in land use following urban expansion also tend to erode small-scale farming. As municipal authorities replace customary authorities, land is allocated to urban and peri-urban residents for both agricultural and residential purposes. While the expansion of built-up areas often eats away fertile agricultural land and forces small farmers to seek alternative livelihoods, the entry of urban residents in peri-urban agriculture has more mixed consequences (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. The constraints and benefits of urban proximity: peri-urban farming in Mali

In northern Mali, urban residents have introduced modern farming equipment such as tractors and mills which the villagers could not afford to purchase, and which were no longer provided by agricultural extension services. Demand for waged agricultural labour by urban farmers with no time nor family labour has also increased employment opportunities for small farmers, although this can be at the expense of own farm work. Hence, while there are certain benefits in urban residents' entry in peri-urban farming, there is also a strong tendency for small farmers with limited access to credit and labour to move out entirely of own farming to become waged labourers, or to migrate.

By contrast, in the village of Baguinéda in central Mali, secondary rights are still widely practised. This allows small-scale farmers to hire migrant labour in exchange of temporary rights to cultivate own plots. The system is highly structured, with specific days of the week allocated to work as labourers and others to work on the borrowed land. Two aspects are central to the functioning of the system: first, land tenure in the village is almost exclusively customary and controlled by the village council, allowing for secondary rights allocation. Second, the strong demand from the nearby capital, Bamako, for horticultural produce, in which the village specialises, makes cultivation of even a small plot relatively profitable and therefore attractive for migrants.

Other natural resources such as water are affected by urban expansion, but responsibility for managing natural resources is unclear, especially as the impact of urban use extends beyond the municipal boundaries. This is also the case for

extraction of building materials, and most crucially for feeder roads between the extraction sites and the urban centre.

Inadequate management of natural resources can have far-reaching consequences: for example in northern Tanzania, irrigation water is often available only at night. This is a serious problem for young women who have to give up farming because they do not feel safe working in the fields at night.

Access to financial capital: declining formal credit systems and increasing importance of family and informal systems

Under structural adjustment and economic reform, credit systems for small farmers have declined substantially. At the same time, the cost of inputs and farm implements has increased, leaving most farmers caught in a cost-price squeeze. Even once relatively successful institutions, such as northern Tanzania's coffee producers cooperative union (KNCU) have been affected by market competition. As coffee farmers can choose where to sell their produce, the union can no longer afford to subsidise inputs since it cannot rely on a secure income.

In both Mali and Nigeria, credit recovery problems and para-statal institutions mismanagement have severely restricted farmers' access to formal credit. Some NGOs operate credit systems, but their impact is limited and localised, and in many cases local government is also underfunded and with limited access to credit. Hence, the requirement to pay upfront for local government services such as tractor hire, as in the case of southern Tanzania, makes them inaccessible for low-income farmers.

In the three countries, limited access to credit is identified as a major constraint for small-scale agricultural production, including cash crops for which there is an international market, such as cashew nuts in southern Tanzania. It takes up to seven years for the trees to mature and start producing nuts, during which time farms must be attended fairly regularly. Low-income farmers cannot afford such a long waiting time without financial support, and as a result production has not picked up as expected in the 1990s, despite international demand.

The main sources of financial capital are remittances and lending from family and kin, and credit from traders. Most low-income households use migrant relatives' remittances for consumption purposes, or to pay for expenditure such as education and health, and little usually remains for investment in farming. It is mainly better-off households who can invest to improve agricultural productivity. In all the case studies locations, the use of remittances in either consumption or investment is a useful indicator of the distinction between households' survival strategies and accumulation strategies.

Access to markets and the role of traders

With the now almost complete disappearance of state controlled marketing boards in sub-Saharan Africa, access to markets is central for agricultural producers. Different elements can be identified as critical in farmers' access to markets: physical infrastructure (road networks and affordable transport; storage and processing facilities); market relations and especially power relations between different actors (producers, traders and consumers); and access to information on how markets operate (IFAD, 2001). In practice, there is a close interrelation between each element, which then cumulatively affect farmers' access to markets.

Poor physical infrastructure has far-reaching consequences on producers' prices. In

the long run, this affects production and activity patterns: for example, farmers growing cash crops may revert to subsistence crops for local trade. Small producers and poor farmers are often much more affected than large farmers, and may be forced to abandon own farming and turn to agricultural wage employment and migration (Box 3.3).

In locations where physical access to markets is not a problem, access to information can be equally important. However, state extension services are not able to fulfil this role any longer. Especially in Mali and Tanzania, agricultural officers are usually based in urban centres and rarely visit the rural areas, if at all. Moreover, it is unclear which ministerial department should provide market information. Informal networks spanning urban and rural settlements are the most effective information channels used by producers, but inevitably tend to exclude poorer farmers with little city connections.

Box 3.3. The impact of poor physical infrastructure on farming

In Tanzania, collection, transport and sale of previously controlled cash crops has been liberalised since the mid-1980s. Cashew nuts from the southern region are primarily for export, and a small number of private companies control their purchase, collection and transport to the main shipping port of Mtwara. Road infrastructure in the area, however, is extremely poor, making transport costs prohibitive. Although private companies are only allowed to buy the nuts from farmer cooperatives in designated locations, in practice these are out of reach for small farmers, who can hardly afford transport costs. Smallholders tend to sell directly to agents, an arrangement which puts buyers in a strong bargaining position and weakens producers' ability to negotiate prices. It also makes it difficult for local government to effectively control the quantities traded and collect taxes from traders, despite this being a major source of revenue.

In southeast Nigeria road and transport infrastructure is generally good, but some remote settlements can be cut off at certain times of the year, when soil erosion combined with heavy rains can wipe away feeder roads. Only large farmers have the means to hire tractors to transport produce to marketing nodes. Small farmers who cannot afford this expense often prefer to seek employment as waged labourers in large commercial farms, often belonging to urban-based landlords, or to abandon their own farms altogether and migrate to urban centres or to other rural settlements.

Box 3.4. How lack of market information affects producers in northern Tanzania

In the past few years, farmers in the plains surrounding the market town of Himo, itself a thriving commercial centre well integrated in the regional and national network, have increasingly invested in the production of tomatoes. Most farmers grow their crop after the rainy season, when production inputs are cheapest; however, this results in a glut in both the local and national markets, and prices can be as much as ten times lower than during the rainy season, when demand outstrips supply.

The few farmers who grow tomatoes during the rainy season rely on a network of social relations, from local traders to relatives and petty traders based in a number of urban centres in Tanzania. This allows them to gather information on ongoing prices around the country, which then enables them to negotiate prices with local traders. These producers also tend to establish close relationships with local traders, of which credit is an important aspect. This can work in two ways: traders provide credit to producers, who in turn can accept deferred payment for their tomatoes. Such a system is based on both parties' understanding of market fluctuations, and on producers' access to information. By contrast, farmers who grow tomatoes after the rainy season have difficulties in securing credit from traders, and even in establishing personal relationships with local traders, who are in a much stronger bargaining position when supply is higher than demand.

Farmers' limited access to formal credit means that traders have an increasingly important role in this respect. However, with the exception of export crops, trade in agricultural produce is not controlled by large, well-capitalised traders. Especially for horticultural produce, the marketing system in much of sub-Saharan Africa is dominated by small-scale traders, even in the case of wholesale dealers. These actors provide a vital link to urban markets for small and diversified production flows which cannot be handled efficiently by large-scale trading organisations (Pedersen, 2000).

In West Africa, traders are usually women who tend to establish personal relationships with both producers and retailers. In this way, financial exchanges are embedded in wider social relations which provide the basic rules of trust needed for commercial transactions. The major problem confronting most of these traders is limited financial liquidity, which makes them (and, as a result, their creditors) vulnerable to market losses. This problem is compounded by poor physical infrastructure (see Box 3.5).

Box 3.5. The role of traders in central Mali

In central Mali, wholesale traders are an important source of credit for horticultural producers. However, despite strong demand from the nearby city of Bamako, this informal credit system is prone to a number of risks. The most important one, linked to the highly perishable nature of the produce, is the loss due to the almost complete lack of processing and conservation facilities. Since wholesale traders often also sell to retailers on credit, they tend to absorb losses at both the transport and retail levels. This in turn affects their financial liquidity, and their capacity to offer credit to producers. This vicious circle results in sharp decreases in horticultural production around the capital city of Bamako, despite strong urban demand and increasing producer prices. Physical infrastructure should therefore include processing and conservation facilities for perishable produce and not be limited to roads and transport.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the often severe constraints described in this chapter, farming is less and less popular among younger generations, who prefer to combine it with other activities and, in the longer term, often hope to be able to switch to non-farming occupations altogether.

4. Patterns of occupational diversification and mobility

Non-farm income sources are increasingly important for the livelihoods of rural African households. Survey data on the income proportion derived from these sources ranges from 30 to 40 percent averages, excluding southern Africa where it can be as high as 80 to 90 percent (Ellis, 1998) to more recent findings of between 60 and 80 percent (Bryceson, 1999b). Partly as a result of the mainly qualitative methodology used and partly because of the well-known difficulties in gathering reliable information on income through questionnaire surveys, the case studies have concentrated on the types and mix of activities and on how these may differ on the grounds of gender, generation, wealth and ethnicity.

Occupational diversification is defined here broadly as non-farm income-generating activities undertaken by rural residents, and farming by urban residents. There is a dynamic dimension to diversification - this was picked up in the Mali case studies, which show that in most cases respondents' levels of multiactivity are higher than their parents'. The Tanzania case studies also show a clear difference along the same lines between younger and older respondents.

The increase in non-farm rural employment can be triggered by agricultural growth and increasing demand for manufactured goods and services by wealthier rural populations. However, this does not fit the general picture emerging from the case study locations (with the possible exception of Banguinéda in central Mali) of a farming sector negatively affected by severely limited access to credit, where markets for agricultural produce show serious shortcomings and where land shortages are a growing concern. New opportunities are without doubt an important element of income diversification patterns: examples of this include domestic trade liberalisation in Tanzania; the development of manufacturing industries in peri-urban areas in southeast Nigeria; and urban growth and the related demand for service workers in northern Mali. But access to non-farm employment opportunities, as well as the type and nature of the constraints over access to the assets related to farm production, show great variations for different groups, both between and within households.

Occupation, wealth and location

In the rural settlements of the case studies, agriculture remains the primary activity and, to a large extent, social status is determined by success in farming. However, there is a significant increase in rural non-farm activities in all the case study locations. A relatively large proportion of urban residents also engage in agriculture, either for household consumption or for commercial purposes. In all cases, wealth and location are key in determining opportunities in terms of access to specific sectors of activity, constraints in terms of distance from such opportunities, and difficulties in making a living out of farming.

A declining agricultural sector is an important 'push' factor for rural residents. It is only in the Malian village of Banguinéda, at the periphery of Bamako, that horticulture provides employment for the majority of the population and levels of diversification in non-farm activities are low. The reasons for this include access to land (under customary tenure), to labour (through allocation of secondary rights to migrant workers), and to the nearby urban markets through a network of local traders and good road and transport infrastructure. In all the other rural settlements, multiactivity rates are high, although the nature of the activities varies.

Non-farm employment opportunities are closely related to the local context. Population density, sectoral and spatial patterns of industrialisation, access to affordable transport and demand for services by wealthier (and often urban-based) groups play a significant role in determining their nature and scale. At the same time, rural and peri-urban enterprises' use of land and water can negatively affect farming (Box 4.1).

Box 4.1. Occupational diversification in Southeast Nigeria

In densely populated southeast Nigeria, commuting to the regional urban centres of Aba and Port Harcourt is encouraged by the efficient and cheap, state-subsidised transport system. Low-income women commute to work as cleaners and gardeners, men as construction workers and in the oil industry. Peri-urban settlements have attracted small and medium-sized industries such as paper mills, creating opportunities for local salaried employment but also polluting the local river with industrial effluents and therefore increasing constraints on farming. As out-migrants invest heavily in building homes for retirement, new opportunities in the construction sector have emerged in some rural settlements, displacing agriculture as the main occupation and reducing the availability of farmland around the villages. At the same time, traditional non-farm activities within the rural settlements, such as women's cloth weaving, are declining as a result of competition from imported goods, lack of investment in technological innovation, lack of inter-sectoral linkages (such as yarn production) and of the inadequate infrastructure, such as electricity supply, which affects most rural settlements.

Most macro-level policies have an impact on non-farm employment, either because by significantly reducing subsidies to agricultural production they negatively affect incomes from small-scale farming, as described in Chapter 3, or because they open up new opportunities in traditionally state-controlled sectors, as in the case of domestic trade liberalisation in Tanzania. However, the local impact of national policies can vary quite widely, depending on infrastructure and other local characteristics (Box 4.2).

Box 4.2. Trade liberalisation and non-farm employment in Tanzania

In Tanzania, until 1984 trade was limited to cooperative shops or shops run by regional trading companies. As licensing procedures have become less strict and state control has been much reduced, private trade, including shops and itinerant petty trade, now provides an important alternative source of income in the villages. Occupational patterns by wealth have changed as a result of domestic trade liberalisation: in the case study locations, farming is now the first occupation for three-quarters of low-income respondents, against just over half of the better-off. By contrast, trade is the main occupation for over 30 per cent of the better off, and for 16 per cent of low-income respondents. However, farming is a secondary occupation for one-quarter of the better-off, suggesting that it still plays an important role in this group's accumulation strategies.

However, especially in southern Tanzania, low incomes in both rural and urban settlements affect demand, and revenues from trade are generally low. The region's inadequate road and transport infrastructure also means that goods are transported by bicycle, which limits the quantities traded. By contrast, in northern Tanzania, efficient transport systems encourage intensive petty trade linkages between the local urban centres and the villages. Proximity to the urban markets allows rural residents from the plains settlements to commute for their trading activities or, in the case of young men, for part-time employment as unskilled labourers such as porters, and to continue farming at the same time. Residents from the mountain villages, however, where land scarcity is a growing problem and transport links are not as efficient, are more likely to abandon farming altogether and migrate further away.

In the Mali case study locations, with the exception of the village of Baguinéda, diversification rates are also high in the rural settlements, where on average up to 70 per cent of respondents are multiactive. Among non-farm activities, trade is the most important one, followed by handicraft, carpentry and construction. Proximity to urban centres is central to trade, and also provides other types of employment in the service sector for low-income groups, from unskilled labour for men to jobs as housemaids and waitresses for young women. However, the most important secondary activity among better-off households is farming, which suggests that, as in Tanzania, while agriculture is not usually conducive to wealth creation, it is nevertheless considered as viable by those with the means to invest in it from other income sources.

Urban residents' involvement in farming is usually under-researched. Findings from the case studies show that it is an important activity. In Tanzania's southern town of Lindi, for example, farming is the first occupation for over half the urban residents, reaching three quarters when the second occupation is taken into account. In the northern and more dynamic town of Himo, farming is the first occupation for only 13.5 per cent of urban residents, but here the proportion also increases to over half once the second occupation is added. As in the rural settlements, it is mainly low-income groups who are primarily engaged in agriculture, usually on a subsistence or mixed

(subsistence and cash crops) basis or as wage labourers, whereas better-off urban residents usually concentrate on commercial production, often in peri-urban areas which benefit from proximity to urban markets. A similar picture emerges from the Malian case studies (Box 4.3).

Box 4.3. Wealthier urban residents and farming in Mali

In the past decades, retrenchments in the urban public sector have encouraged many *fonctionnaires* (civil servants) to turn to farming. Wealthier urban residents can secure access to land through market transactions and they often control means of production such as tractors and mills. In many ways, this has resulted in major upheavals in the traditional farming system. For example, demand for waged labour has significant impacts on family farming as labour costs become higher and unpaid family labour (usually the younger generation) often find it more attractive than working on the family plot. Moreover, limited access to credit and inputs encourages small farmers to sell their rights of access to desirable plots, such as state-owned irrigated land, to wealthier urban residents with the means to increase productivity.

These findings suggest that, especially in peri-urban areas, the agricultural sector is undergoing major transformations, including a switch from a mixed (subsistence and cash crops) to a predominantly commercial orientation and from small-scale family farms to larger farms relying on waged labour. This has important implications for the livelihoods of small peri-urban farmers, as limited skills and education often leave them with little alternatives but to engage in low-revenue occupations such as waged agricultural labour, petty trade and other urban informal sector activities.

Changing intra-household relations and income diversification: the relevance of gender and generation

At the household level, gender and generation differences in access to, and control over resources, can be an important reason for some groups to diversify their income-generating activities. This also involves significant transformations in farming households, where the family as the traditional unit of production and consumption is replaced by more individualised priorities and behaviours.

Young men's increasing reluctance to engage in full-time farming can be explained on one hand to limited access to land, either because of shortages (as in northern Tanzania and southeast Nigeria and in some of the Mali settlements) or because of control by older men over perennial cash crops (as in southern Tanzania). However, low incomes from family farming are a more important reason, as are the emerging opportunities in non-farm employment. For example, in northern Mali young men have found an occupational niche by offering transport services on motorbikes from the river banks where fishermen unload their boats to the main roads where traders purchase the fish. This is much more profitable than farming, and relatively less affected by climatic vagaries.

Non-farm employment and especially income-generating activities which are not controlled by the family are even more attractive for young women, who often have limited inheritance rights on land (Box 4.4).

Box 4.4. Age, gender and occupation in northern Tanzania

In the northern Tanzanian case study location, levels of multiactivity amongst younger generations are as high as 80 per cent, against 50 per cent for older respondents. Older women still shoulder much of the agricultural work as well as the domestic chores, but farming no longer provides employment opportunities or incentives to young people, who, in addition, no longer accept to provide unpaid family labour. As a result, almost 30 per cent of households rely on waged labour for family farming and other household chores. This proportion reaches 46 per cent in the plains settlement, Lotima, where houseworkers' main task is taking the cattle out to pasture, traditionally the sons' responsibility.

Young women are more likely than young men to engage in petty trading, either as a primary or as a secondary occupation. The main reason for this is that farming is usually in the form of unpaid family labour with little prospects, since daughters rarely inherit land from their parents who also control farming income and decision-making. By contrast, young women keep control of their earnings from trading, on which they also make independent decisions.

Traditional divisions of labour along gender lines also mean that there are differences, sometimes significant, in the ways in which women and men can benefit from new opportunities or, indeed, suffer from increased constraints (Box 4.5). This has important implications for policy, whose effectiveness relies on the appropriate identification of the needs and priorities of different groups.

Box 4.5. Women's and men's different perceptions of the impact of urban expansion in central Mali

Financial control and independent decision-making are typical of West African women's trade, which benefits from financial support from rotating credit groups (*tontines*). In one of the Malian peri-urban settlements studied, Dialakorodji, women's perceptions of the impact of urban expansion are significantly different from men's. Men complain about the loss of agricultural land to residential use, and see no benefit in the proximity to the city now that, under economic reform, many large employers such as peri-urban and urban factories have closed down or down-sized their operations. Women, however, for whom access to land is traditionally limited and who have a long tradition of small-scale trade, say they have benefited from the ever-expanding urban demand for horticultural products, and from their location between rural producers and urban markets.

By disaggregating income diversification patterns along gender and generation lines, a picture emerges of radical change in the structure and internal relations of rural households in the three countries. Migration trends, discussed in the next section, also suggest transformations in intra-household relations. The implications for policy formulation and implementation are significant, as much analysis and practice, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, still relies on the view of rural households as homogenous, relatively stable units of both production and consumption. The findings from the case studies show that in many instances this is no longer the case.

5. Migration, remittances and social networks across space

Historically, migration has been a key factor in shaping sub-Saharan Africa's settlement patterns and in contributing to households' livelihoods. The Igbos of southeast Nigeria have a long tradition of migration throughout the country and the region, although the civil war in the 1960s and recent civil strife have somewhat limited the scope of movement. In Mali, seasonal and long-term migration to the Atlantic coastal states of West Africa is also a long-standing tradition (Brock and Coulibaly, 1999).

Traditional approaches to migration focus on 'push' factors (economic hardship in areas of origin) and 'pull' factors (economic opportunities in destination areas) to explain the direction of movement. They usually fail to account for culturally- and socially-specific factors, which play an important role in determining not only direction, but also composition and type of movement. Access to resources in home areas is a critical factor which is likely to be influenced by gender and generation. Labour markets at destination are also segmented along lines of gender, age and ethnicity, with the latter usually reflecting migrant networks' control over specific sections of labour markets at destination. However, not all migrants leave because they have no access to resources in their home areas, and not all migrants end up in low-paid, low skilled jobs in urban areas.

Migration is a central interaction between urban and rural settlements, and between rural settlements, in all the case study locations. This section summarises the findings on the direction, composition and types of migration, with particular attention to the role of remittances in rural households' livelihoods and on the role of social networks linking migrants to their home place.

Changing trends in the direction and gender composition of migration flows

In all the case study locations there is intense population movement in the form of both out-migration and, in some settlements, of in-migration. In southern Tanzania, 60 per cent of respondents reported having at least one person in their household who had migrated; this figure was 50 per cent in northern Tanzania, and between 70 and 80 per cent in northern Mali. These proportions are not affected by household wealth, suggesting that poverty is not the main reason for moving: rural settlements are perceived by all groups as generally poor compared to other locations, regardless of the relative differences between the settlement's residents. While rural-rural movement is widely practised primarily by the poorest groups, often on a seasonal basis, urban centres (small and large) are important destinations.

In-migration is significant in the urban neighbourhoods and in peri-urban villages with easy access to the urban centres. This is the case of one peri-urban settlement in central Mali, Dialakorodji, which has gradually transformed into a satellite of the capital city, Bamako, from which it depends almost entirely for employment, and from which it receives low-income urban residents who cannot afford accommodation in the city. Baguinéda, the one village with a relatively prosperous agriculture, receives seasonal migrants from other rural areas, who respond to demand for waged farm labour. This is also the settlement with the lowest rates of out-migration.

While economic motivations are without exception the main reason for moving, they overlap with socio-cultural expectations. In southeast Nigeria, migration from the rural settlements to the urban centres is considered essential to achieve economic and social success, and young men who do not migrate or commute to town are often labelled as idle and shying away from hard labour, and may become the object of ridicule. At the same time, demands on young people's time under requirements for community works are perceived by the young men themselves as conflicting with their own pursuit of 'making money'. Migration is thus often a socially acceptable way to escape from obligations to, and control from their elders.

Young men are traditionally considered to be the bulk of migrants in sub-Saharan Africa. While overall this is still likely to be the case, there is evidence that the independent movement of women has increased in recent years (Gadio and Rakowski, 1995; Ouedraogo, 1995). In the three study countries, the migration of young women is seen as a relatively new but steadily growing phenomenon. In the northern Tanzanian study location, one-third of respondents reported that at least one young woman in their household had migrated. Socio-cultural expectations of gender and gender-specific constraints play a major role in migration decisions. For example, women are usually excluded from access to land, but at the same time are expected to contribute unpaid labour to the family farm. Unmarried daughters are also expected to support their parental household. Hence, as long as they can send remittances, migration provides the socially acceptable alternative for young women who try to escape from familial and community control.

Women's migration is closely related to 'new', often gender-specific employment opportunities. In Mali's urban centres, demand has grown for service sector jobs such as housemaids and waitresses in bars and hotels. In northern Tanzania, the most important flow of female migration is towards the international tourist resorts of Kenya's coast. It is therefore a longer-distance and often longer-term movement.

This reflects a general trend towards more distant destinations in the movement of both women and men. In southeast Nigeria, destinations include local urban centres such as Aba and Port Harcourt, but also Lagos and Cotonou, in neighbouring Bénin, while migrants from Mali can move as far away as the main coastal cities such as Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire as well as Libya and Saudi Arabia. More affordable transport, increasingly extensive migrant networks and demand in destination countries are some of the main factors for this expansion in the scope of movement. More distant destinations mean that migrants stay away over longer periods of time (in Mali, this is often between 5 and 20 years) and, crucially, are unable to return home for the farming season as is the case with intra-regional movement. Labour shortages in northern Mali are increasingly acute, and households' dependence on remittances is growing.

Remittances and social networks

Remittances are a crucial component of rural households' incomes, and a key element of the continued links between migrants and their home areas across all wealth groups. In northern Mali, migrants' remittances have become probably the most important source of family cash, and are used for consumption and for the purchase of consumer goods such as radios and bicycles, but also for the purchase of agricultural inputs or for investment in livestock. In southeast Nigeria, it would be socially unacceptable for migrants not to send remittances and gifts: financial support to their parental households has greatly contributed to making young women's migration socially acceptable. Most importantly, remittances and gifts ensure that migrants can maintain a foothold in the home area, and that they will be welcome

upon their return. In the mountain villages of northern Tanzania, remittances are an important part of households' incomes, and half the respondents receive financial support from migrant relatives. With the decline of the traditional inheritance system, providing financial support has become a way to gain parental favour and inherit the family land. However, the financial support provided by migrants varies, depending on their skills and their access to specific segments of the urban labour market (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. Differences in migrants' remittance amounts in northern and southern Tanzania

Within Tanzania, the amounts sent by migrants from households living in the Kilimanjaro mountain village are significantly higher than those sent by migrants from the northern plains settlement and from southern Tanzania. This is explained by the fact that the mountain population has long invested in its children education, partly as a strategy to diversify into non-farm employment given the area's severe land shortages, partly under the influence of Christian missionaries who started building schools for local residents as early as the 1800s. The local ethnic group, the Wachagga, dominate Tanzania's professional and managerial sectors, with incomes which allow them to send home substantial remittances.

By contrast, the less educated migrants from the northern plains are not able to contribute as much to households' incomes in home areas. This is exacerbated in the southern region, where educational levels are low, especially among low-income groups, and where migrants usually end up in Dar es Salaam's informal sector working as itinerant sellers on behalf of large traders. This group's income has declined sharply in the past decade due to overcrowding in the urban informal sector.

There is general consensus in all the case studies locations that remittances have declined in the last fifteen years or so, despite at the same time becoming increasingly important for rural households. A common reason for this is the increase in employment insecurity and cost of living in the urban centres. Despite the decline in financial exchanges, social links between migrants, kin and the wider communities are as strong as ever. Migrants are expected to return for specific celebrations, and to participate in the home settlement's affairs. In southern Tanzania, failure to attend children initiation ceremonies is considered a 'social crime', while most migrants from northern Tanzania join their relatives and kin for Christmas celebrations, and in southeast Nigeria funeral celebrations have a particular significance. These relationships build on traditional reciprocal obligations, and serve the purpose of providing a safety net for both migrants and non-migrants in periods of economic and social hardship.

Support networks are historically important among the Igbo of southeast Nigeria, and have been strengthened during the Nigerian civil war which exacerbated ethnic differences. Migrant networks help new migrants secure employment and accommodation. This function is well-known, and is reflected in the fact that all migrants from the case study locations tend to move to specific destinations and to work in occupational niches which are often dominated by migrants from the same area - for example, most welders and mechanics in Dar es Salaam come from the Kilimanjaro region. Another function of these networks is to enforce standards of morally and socially acceptable behaviour among migrants, especially young men and women, and to ensure that a sense of cultural identity is preserved through the organisation of celebrations and other traditional activities.

Another important function of the networks is that of channelling resources to the

wider community of origin. Town development unions, social clubs and 'age grades' (age-based associations) all serve the dual purpose of supporting migrants while away, and to raise funds for, and organise the construction of public facilities such as schools, town halls and water points. In southeast Nigeria, the contribution of migrant associations to infrastructural development in rural settlements and small towns has, in many instances, outstripped public investment.

Return migration: significant or marginal?

Since the mid-1990s, return migration has attracted renewed attention in sub-Saharan Africa. The changing balance between rural and urban incomes and large-scale retrenchments of public sector workers are believed to have contributed to this reversal in the direction of movement (Jamal and Weeks, 1993; Potts, 1995). The case studies show important variations in the proportion of return migrants in the different locations. A first explanation is economic success, or lack of it. Migration attracts heavy expectations, making it difficult for those who 'didn't make it' to return home, sometimes even for short visits. Migrants with little qualifications and skills are less likely to be successful, and therefore less likely to return.

Another factor, linked to the one above, is the use of remittances. In many cases, the main use is for consumption purposes and to cover health and education costs, as user fees have been introduced in all three countries. Investing in assets, for example in housing, land or livestock, is linked to higher incomes but also to intentions to return (de la Brière et al., 1997). This is certainly the case in many case study locations - for example in the town of Abiriba, in southeast Nigeria, where migrants' investment in housing for retirement has given rise to a building boom, with construction work becoming more important than farming as a source of employment. The transfer of resources involved in return migration (both in terms of money and skills acquired while away) can play a positive role for local economic growth; however, two factors affect decisions to return.

The first factor relates to the infrastructure and opportunities existing in home settlements. Of all the case study locations, the lowest numbers of return migrants (and sometimes their complete absence) are found in remote villages, with poor access to road networks and with little opportunities for non-farm employment. By contrast, settlements which offer work opportunities locally or which are within commuting distance to urban centres, have much higher rates of return migrants. Return migration is also encouraged by continued access to land, which allows return migrants to diversify their income sources and therefore to minimise risk. Return migration to well-connected settlements but with land shortages is more likely to be linked to retirement.

The second factor relates to specific groups' access to resources, and how this may affect decisions to return. For example, young women, who are usually excluded from land inheritance, are less likely to return to their home place. It is often assumed that women migrate to get married, or to follow their husband; however, the growing number of young women moving independently means that migration is increasingly linked to employment, and given the insecurity of many urban jobs (and their risks, especially in the 'entertainment' industry), a safety net in the home settlement is as important for women as it is for men. In some case study locations, for example in northern Tanzania, women use remittances strategically to gain access to inherited land; in Mali, land markets make it easier for wealthy women to secure access to land. However, these solutions are available to a minority of women.

For many migrants, strong linkages with home areas are not only an essential part of

their social identity, but also a way to spread their assets (and risk) across space. This safety net helps in times of economic and social insecurity in the cities; however, not all migrants have the possibility to develop their asset base in their home area, as gender is still critical in determining access to resources. Aside from providing security to migrants, investment and eventually return to home areas can also inject financial resources and new skills in the local economy. This said, cases of migrants returning to start their own business and in the process expanding local employment opportunities are relatively rare in the case study locations, and their success often depends not only on local infrastructure, but also on local institutions and governance contexts, which are discussed in the next chapter.

6. The role of urban centres in the development of their surrounding region

Decentralisation and deconcentration

Governance systems and institutional set-up are important aspects of local economic development and of physical and social infrastructure provision. To a large extent, they also define the nature of the relationships between urban centres and their surrounding regions - although this needs to be situated within the broader context of fundamental changes in Africa's social and economic structure. Like most countries throughout the region, Nigeria, Mali and Tanzania have been undertaking some form of decentralisation or deconcentration of administrative and other government functions. The differences between the three countries reflect the variety of models, as well as the rationale behind government reform (Box 6.1) .

Box 6.1. Deconcentration in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the process of deconcentration started in the early 1960s and was accompanied by the creation of new States and new Local Government Authorities (LGAs). Between 1967 and 1996, the number of states in southeast Nigeria trebled from 3 to 9. As more states were created out of the previous ones, more LGAs were set up, often with take-off grants from the federal government aiming to attract private investment (Onyeonoru, 1994). The creation of new states and local government authorities was largely the result of demands by different ethnic groups for increased administrative autonomy. However, the federal government retains decision-making power on most matters, while State governments and LGAs are responsible for developing strategies for policy implementation.

In Mali and Tanzania, the decentralisation process started in the 1990s and more closely reflects the broader, global shift towards local participation. This is the result of the desire to create a more accountable system with a better capacity to respond to the needs and priorities of the local population. It is also the consequence of cutbacks in national governments' budgets, and the shifting of certain costs and responsibilities away from central government. While in both countries it is far too early to assess the consequences of decentralisation, some of the major challenges include the support provided by central government; the capacity of local government to carry out their responsibilities; the relationship between the new elected local administrations and traditional authorities (Box 6.2); and the relations between urban and peri-urban administrations and urban municipalities.

Tensions between peri-urban communes and urban municipalities concern changes

in land use, the management of waste from the urban centre and that of water resources; since these issues are likely to become increasingly central, mechanisms for inter-local government negotiation need to be developed. For example, the inhabitants of the Malian peri-urban settlement of Dialakorodji, close to Bamako, depend almost entirely on the city for their economic activities and for health and education services. However, living conditions in the settlement do not benefit from proximity to the city, rather the opposite. Water availability is extremely limited, and most residents buy it from vendors; and land under the commune's jurisdiction is used as a dumpsite for Bamako's domestic and industrial waste. Tensions over the management of natural resources, especially land and water, are also emerging around the town of Himo in northern Tanzania, where there is increased competition between agricultural and residential use.

Box 6.2. Challenges of decentralisation in Tanzania and Mali

In Tanzania, the 1997 Regional Administration Act provides a mandate for district councils to carry out needs identification, planning, budgeting and implementation jointly with other local institutions. Substantial efforts are necessary to improve the capacity of local councils for their new functions. Even then, in under-resourced areas such as southern Tanzania, it is unrealistic to expect local government to take full charge of the provision and maintenance of essential infrastructure - in this case, roads and transport which constitute a major bottleneck to the economic development of the region.

The relationship between elected local government and traditional authorities is especially critical in Mali, where it overlaps with tensions between the statutory rights system of land tenure and the customary system. As might be expected, these tensions are more acute in peri-urban areas, where they are underpinned by informal land markets and the resulting conflict of interests between traditional chiefs, who attempt to retain control, including that over private sales of land under customary tenure, and elected governments whose responsibilities include providing road, housing and sanitation infrastructure for which access to land is essential. The potential for conflict is much higher in communes with low levels of social and political cohesion among the population, showing that in many cases the boundaries of the new units do not reflect social, economic and political realities (Toulmin, 2001).

While these on-going processes are clearly relevant to the livelihoods and well-being of local populations, in practice other institutions such as NGOs, local associations and private sector actors play major roles in the social, economic and political characteristics of rural and urban areas. They often contribute to the provision of physical and social infrastructure and influence the role of urban centres as market nodes for rural producers. A broader view of governance extends beyond government institutions to take into account the roles and contributions of this often wide array of actors.

Service provision

The provision of services such as education and health is often assumed to be more efficient if concentrated in urban centres, especially small towns serving a wider rural region. This was the rationale behind the villagisation programme in Tanzania in the 1970s, when widely scattered rural populations were resettled in *ujamaa* villages. But the current situation in both northern and southern Tanzania is rather different. Given the government's budgetary constraints, services are underfunded and user fees have been introduced for both education and health. In the process, international donor agencies, churches and NGOs have taken over service provision. Historically, these actors have concentrated in the rural areas on the assumption that this is where poverty is concentrated; the result is that, in the case study locations, urban

residents and especially low-income ones have less access to educational and health facilities than rural residents.

Similar disparities affect infrastructure: water availability is lower in the urban centres, where residents often rely only on vendors. In southern Tanzania, a long-standing, internationally-funded integrated rural development programme plays a major role in the provision of basic services such as wells and water pumps. While this clearly benefits rural residents, the needs of low-income urban neighbourhoods seem to have been somehow forgotten. This is not to say that funds should be diverted from rural to urban settlements; but as local government is being reorganised within districts to encompass both rural and urban areas, donor-funded projects would be more effective by adopting a similar broad approach.

In southeast Nigeria, the contribution of Town Development Unions, age grades and other home-based migrant associations to the funding and construction of public facilities such as schools, town halls and water points can be considerable. A better synergy between these civil society actors and the public sector is key to improving infrastructural development in both rural and urban settlements.

Transport is another key service undergoing transformation. While in Nigeria minibuses are subsidised by states and local government, in Tanzania and in Mali services are predominantly privatised, and their price is affected by operating costs. These include the state of the roads; the distance between settlements and whether this allows for alternative forms of transport, from bicycles to buses; and the existence of competition between service providers. High transport costs are identified as bottlenecks in farmers' access to markets in both southern Tanzania and in Mali.

Urban centres and regional economic growth

Urban centres can play a key role in the economic growth of their surrounding regions by providing markets for agricultural produce, and manufactured goods for rural settlements. Two urban centres among the case study locations, Aba, in Nigeria, and Himo, in northern Tanzania, seem to fulfil this role. Both are important regional market nodes and, perhaps crucially, both are well integrated in national and international networks. Both serve as markets for goods produced in the rural areas and as destinations for migrants and commuters engaged in non-agricultural employment. However, this is not sufficient to overcome constraints on agricultural production, and to make farming attractive to the younger generations who are generally moving out of it. While these constraints stem to a large extent from economic reform and from land and other natural resources shortages, a wide range of services to producers, from market information, access to credit and transport, are just as important for small farmers.

In Himo and in the Mali study sites, lack of processing facilities is a severe constraint on the production of high value horticultural produce, despite strong demand from urban residents. The inability of the settlements to attract private investment in this area stems largely from lack of incentives and limited infrastructure. With decentralisation, local governments will become increasingly responsible for creating enabling environments for private sector investment, but the capacity to do so will have to be developed.

A different situation is that of Lindi, in southern Tanzania, which, despite its potential role as link between cashew nut producers and international markets, is completely bypassed by flows of both goods and people. The extremely poor transport

infrastructure in the district is clearly an important obstacle, but one which cannot be resolved by the local government.

In the 'virtuous circle' of regional development, it is often assumed that urban centres, through the provision of markets and services, can impart the impetus for agricultural growth in their surrounding region. This will then translate in the expansion of non-farm employment and in increased demand for both agricultural and manufactured goods and services. However, in all the case studies' locations, the reasons for the expansion of non-farm employment are generally more complex.

In all the rural settlements, with the exception of the one village with a relatively vibrant horticultural sector, Baguinéda in Mali, incomes from own farming (usually small scale) have been declining in the past two decades. At the same time, there seems to be a significant trend in most case study locations among wealthier and often urban-based individuals and households to invest in commercial farming, especially on peri-urban land. Small farmers move out of own farming and into non-farm employment, wage agricultural labour – and often both -, while at the same time, and closely related to it, farming becomes increasingly mechanised and controlled by better capitalised operators.

This trend towards growing polarisation in the farming sector needs further empirical investigation, since its implications for the livelihoods of low-income groups, which in Africa are often associated with own farming, and for local economic development will be significant.

Finally, macro-level policies such as international trade liberalisation can have a considerable impact on local economies. This is the case of processing and manufacturing activities such as vegetable oil production in northern Tanzania and cloth weaving in southeast Nigeria, which are undermined by cheap imports. The potentials and limitations of regional economic growth, and the capability of local governments to provide an enabling environment for it, need to be understood within the wider context of changing international trade and production patterns.

7. Conclusions: multi-spatial households, multi-active individuals and policy options

The findings from the case studies in the three countries point to significant livelihood transformations in all the research locations, and to the intensification of rural-urban linkages. They also underline important differences, depending on location, wealth, gender, generation and ethnicity. Two main trends are central to this process of change: first, the high levels of multi-activity, especially among younger generations, with potentially long-term impacts on the production patterns of rural households. Second, the widespread increase in mobility accompanied by strong social and economic links to relatives and kin in home areas, in what can be described as multi-spatial household organisation.

Whether as a result of increasing vulnerability or as a consequence of new opportunities – and more likely as the combination of both – the increasing spatial and occupational complexity of African livelihoods needs to be recognised. The implication is that policy interventions should concentrate on improving access to a wide range of assets with the aim of expanding livelihood options, rather than assume that agriculture is the best, or indeed the preferred activity for rural residents, and that urban residents reliance on rural resources is limited to backyard farming for

household consumption.

At the same time, the variations in the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions and livelihoods patterns both between and within the different locations clearly underline the necessity to tailor policies to local circumstances and to the specific needs and priorities of different groups, especially poor and vulnerable ones. Beyond this, some common factors affecting access to assets emerge from the case studies.

Farming, poverty reduction and social differentiation

Smallholder farming systems are undergoing changes with implications for poverty reduction and social differentiation. In terms of livelihoods, it is largely poorer groups who rely on farming as a primary occupation, reflecting its low cash returns. However, better-off groups do engage in farming as a secondary activity in which they invest financial assets from non-agricultural occupations. Hence, while farming on its own is not generally sufficient to cover households' increasing demands for cash, it remains nevertheless an important resource within a diversified basket of income sources. Continued access to farming assets is therefore key for poor and vulnerable groups.

Access to productive land and to water is crucial but limited by a number of constraints. These include shortages due to population growth and, especially in the proximity of urban centres, to urban expansion, as well as physical access to distant land. Although national governments are responsible for land legislation, local governments can play a key role in its implementation, in the regulation of local land markets and more widely in the management of natural resources. While national legislation must take into account the rights of groups traditionally marginalised, such as migrants and women, local implementation will need to recognise and reconcile urban and rural natural resource use as well as statutory and customary tenure systems.

Local marketing systems and international competition

Access to international markets for smallholder African producers is limited, while local, national and, to some extent, regional marketing networks are the main outlet for small flows of diversified production. Local traders, often dealing with limited quantities of produce, frequently provide access to credit which is otherwise severely restricted for small farmers. However, investment in post-production infrastructure, information and roads and transport networks is essential for the survival of these local marketing systems. In many cases, the costs are beyond the capacity of local government and require external support.

There is also a need to better understand the impact of international trade liberalisation on local markets, since this is where local production, processing and transformation activities can be negatively affected by international competition. This has implications for local food systems, including producers' incomes and consumers' food security.

Occupational diversification and mobility

Diversification is a key element of the livelihood strategies of most groups. Despite the general contraction of the formal sector in sub-Saharan Africa, access to education is the most important single factor determining whether diversification can start an accumulation process, or whether it is part of a survival strategy. Access to

education and health services is increasingly difficult for low-income groups, but remains the sector in which investment is most necessary. Access to affordable transport is the other major factor which allows rural and urban residents alike to diversify their activities without necessarily having to migrate.

High levels of migration, especially among younger generations and, increasingly, among young women, have both positive and negative aspects. Better access to local assets may reduce the need to migrate, but non-economic aspects will remain an important 'push' factor. Migrants' contributions to home areas need to be better recognised and supported, as does their need for a safety net given the often high levels of insecurity in urban labour markets. This is especially the case for young women, whose urban employment opportunities are in many cases in the 'entertainment' industry (often a euphemism for prostitution) and who have limited access to assets in rural settlements.

The role of migrants' associations and of remittances to household in local socio-economic development is rarely acknowledged, let alone supported by appropriate policies. Better coordination between these civil society actors and local government can increase options for the productive use of remittances by pooling resources – for example, providing agricultural services such as tractor hire, which individual households alone cannot afford.

Finally, alternative employment opportunities for younger generations outside family farming are likely to have considerable consequences on the organisation of rural African households and on their production patterns. It is difficult to say which trajectory these transformations will follow, but one constant feature in Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania is that migration or occupational diversification go hand in hand with strong links with family and kin in home areas and with access to land as an important element of social identity and status. This aspect of rural-urban linkages is often neglected, but its contribution to exchanges of both material and social resources deserves to be better understood and supported.

Annex 1. The research sites

The five research locations (two each in Mali and Tanzania, one in Nigeria) were selected during the planning workshops. In Tanzania, they include two secondary urban centres where decentralisation is likely to play an important role in the near future. The sites however are not representative of Tanzania's secondary towns, but are rather two ends of a continuum. In Mali, research priorities were identified in peri-urban areas, and the two locations selected include the capital city and an important secondary town in the North of the country. Finally, the location selected in Nigeria covers a wider region and a part of the country, the South-East, which is relatively under-researched.

Himo, in northern Tanzania

Northern Tanzania is one of the most densely populated areas in the country. The slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and the fertile plains are well connected by a road and public and private transport network to several important towns such as Moshi and Arusha, to the primate city, Dar es Salaam, and across the border to Kenya. Coffee production is the main cash crop.

The area has seen several transformations in the past three decades. The allocation of land from the nationalised and dismantled sisal plantations to mountain village residents is at the origin of new settlements in the plain, along the main road. These have grown steadily into one of the most important markets in the Kilimanjaro area. The growth of one of these villages, Himo, was boosted in the 1980s when it became the centre of a thriving smuggling trade across the border, exchanging agricultural produce from Tanzania for manufactured goods from Kenya. Despite a recent crackdown on smuggling, the status of Himo as a major market had already been consolidated, and in administrative terms, it has been declared a township. The case study examines the role Himo plays in the development of its surrounding region, and the opportunities it offers to the residents of two nearby villages: Marawe Kyura and Lotima.

Marawe Kyura lies on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro about 8 kilometres above Himo. It is a typical Chaga village with very few outsiders. Every household has a plot of land on which bananas and coffee are grown. For other staple food crops, households depend on farms in the valley near Himo town. The main road from Himo to Kilema (a major centre of the Roman Catholic church) passes through the village and all the shops are clustered on the road near the village office. One of the first things that strikes a visitor to Marawe Kyura is the age of most of the inhabitants. It is an aged population, consisting of retirees or old farmers, many of whom have large, block houses which they built themselves or were built for them by their successful migrant children.

Lotima is situated about six kilometres below Himo town in the plains between Mount Kilimanjaro and the Upare mountains. It is a sprawling village which spreads throughout the plain right up to the border with Kenya. Many of the inhabitants are Kamba who originally came from Kenya. Lotima was originally a very fertile area, benefiting from the topsoil washed down from the mountain. However as a result of large scale felling of trees, especially in the 1960s when cotton was a major cash crop, it is now losing its own topsoil to settlements still further into the valley.

Agriculture in Lotima depends heavily on irrigation, but access to water is threatened by the increasing population upstream, on the mountain and in Himo. The houses

are, in general, fairly small and very few of them are made of cement blocks. Livestock are much in evidence as they roam through the village. The possession of cement block houses and livestock were two of the important indicators of wealth. Given the flatness of the land, bicycles are also very important in transporting agricultural produce and in cross-border trade. Originally the main road to Dar es Salaam passed through Lotima, adding to its prosperity, but this is no longer the case. Lotima inhabitants are therefore dependent on Himo for all their basic necessities and as a market for their crops.

Lindi, in southern Tanzania

Lindi district in southern Tanzania is a sparsely populated area linked to international markets through the production of cashew nuts for export. Other potentially favourable factors for the development of the area are administrative independence, with Lindi town serving as headquarters for the regional government, and the long-term support provided by an internationally-funded, integrated rural development programme in the last twenty years. Despite this, since the 1950s the district has been declining in economic and population terms. Transport infrastructure is a major problem, as the area is cut off from the rest of the country during most of the six-month rainy season. The limited local employment opportunities are reflected in significant migration to Dar es Salaam and other centres. The case study was conducted with residents of three different locations: Nachingwea, Mitwero and Narunyu.

Nachingwea is one of the urbanising neighbourhoods of Lindi town, with migrants from rural parts of the district and neighbouring regions. Agriculture within and outside Lindi town boundaries is the main economic activity, supplemented by small-scale trade. Few of the predominantly low-income households depend on salaried employment in the public or private sector.

Mitwero is one of the villages within the administrative boundaries of Lindi town. It is along the Lindi-Dar es Salaam road at a distance of about 15 km from Lindi main market. The main productive activities of its 340 households include crop cultivation and fishing. Few people keep livestock, particularly the recently introduced dairy cattle. Trading activities with Lindi Town and some of the nearby villages are also increasing.

With around 600 households, the village of Narunyu is located 35 km from Lindi town - about an hour and a half by public transport. The main crops produced are rice, millet, coconuts and cashew nuts. Compared with Mitwero, Narunyu villagers interact more with rural trading centres than with Lindi town.

Aba, in south-eastern Nigeria

South-east Nigeria is one of the most densely inhabited regions in the country, supporting about 25 per cent of its population on 8.5 per cent of its total area. Close to 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas. Urban settlements were virtually absent in the region until the advent of colonial rule during the second half of the 19th century, when a number of urban nodes were developed along the evolving rail and road-river networks. The study area is in Abia State, which in 1996 had an estimated population of just under three million, made up largely of Igbo people living in the forest zone.

Linkages and interactions between rural and urban areas, in the form of movements of people, goods, information and money, are an increasingly important component

of livelihoods in the region. The case study explores these processes between the city of Aba, a major trading centre for the region and the country as a whole, with one of the widest migration fields in the region and a population of over half a million in 1991, and two peri-urban settlements (Akwete and Owerrinta) and three rural settlements (Ndi Ebe, Abiriba and Uzuakoli).

Akwete, with a population of about 5,600, is an important destination for migrants from other Nigerian states because of its proximity to Aba. It is well-known for its traditionally woven cloth, which is exported throughout West Africa. However, this cottage industry is currently in decline, and Akwete residents increasingly engage in non-agricultural activities in Aba, usually commuting between the city and the village.

Owerrinta, with a population of about 2,500, is also a destination for migrants who find employment in industrial enterprises such as paper mills. The relocation of these factories from Aba was encouraged by the good road network linking the village to the two major regional cities of Aba and Owerri, both of which are within commuting distance. One of the consequences of this is that out-migration is relatively low among the indigenous population, as they can find non-farm employment locally.

Ndi Ebe, with a population of around 3,500, specialises in rice production. However, while this attracts migrants from the rest of the region, there is also significant out-migration of younger generations from the village. This is due partly to the attraction of Aba, and partly to the constraints on agricultural production, mainly linked to poor infrastructure, especially the only access road which is regularly washed away during the rainy season.

Abiriba is a rural town with a population of over 45,000. Out-migration is significant, and the contribution of migrants to the construction of schools and other services outstrips public investment. Migrants' construction of houses for retirement has contributed to the decline of farming as residents' main activity, partly because it provides new employment opportunities, and partly because it encroaches on farmland.

Uzuakoli is a small village of less than 2,000 inhabitants situated on the single rail line which connects northern and southern Nigeria. Despite a period of expansion in colonial times, industries soon relocated on the main road as the rail system lost its importance for regional trade. Uzuakoli can be described as a village in decline, with significant out-migration.

Bamako, in central Mali

Bamako, the capital of Mali, is also its main urban centre. Its population almost doubled between 1987 and 1998, rising from around 660,000 to more than a million inhabitants. This rapid growth has had two important consequences: a) a strong demand for food products, especially vegetables; and b) urban sprawl which is increasingly encroaching on peri-urban farmland.

The case study describes the main features of the interaction between the city of Bamako and two peri-urban centres. Dialakorodji, to the north of Bamako District, has some 12,000 inhabitants, including a substantial proportion of migrants from the surrounding region and, to a lesser extent, former residents of Bamako looking for low cost accommodation. Although it has recently gained the status of a rural *commune*, its dense population and close ties of economic dependency with Bamako mean that it is more a dormitory suburb of the capital. Baguinéda is a rural *commune* along the road between Bamako and Ségou. Its agricultural focus is underlined by

the presence of several support and extension agencies and an irrigated rice-growing scheme. The village is an important source of horticultural products for the markets in Bamako.

Mopti, in northern Mali

The town of Mopti has expanded dramatically since the colonial era, when it became a major administrative centre. Its geographical location has fostered the development of trade with the hinterland and neighbouring countries. The region's economy is basically agro-pastoral and centred on rice production in the inner Niger delta. However, the region has practically no industrial fabric, with processing and preserving of produce still done traditionally on a small scale.

It is often in peri-urban areas that interaction between town and countryside is most visible, as the proximity of markets and urban consumers may stimulate agricultural production. At the same time, as the city grows, city-dwellers, often from the middle classes, see opportunities for investment in land and farming in these areas, and this often occurs to the detriment of the inhabitants of villages who are gradually absorbed into the towns and cities. Overlap between customary and statutory law, especially as regards land tenure, may give rise to conflict between different groups and lead to growing marginalization of the least well-off.

The case study explores the main features of interaction between the town of Mopti and two peri-urban villages. Barbé, located some 14km from the town with a population of some 1,600, is part of the rural *commune* of Sokoura. Bargondaga, situated at about 4 km from Mopti centre, is a fishing village of some 510 inhabitants, which comes under the urban *commune* of Mopti.

Annex 2. Case study methodology

The case studies followed a broadly similar methodology, although with some variations. This annex summarises the process followed by the three teams. More details are given in the relevant reports in this series (Working Papers 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6), and in the critical review of the methodology used by the Tanzanian team (Working Paper 3).

For each case study, the country team designed the appropriate methodology during the initial planning workshop, drawing on the existing expertise and, where necessary, on additional external support. At the outset, specific efforts were made by all teams to adopt a holistic approach, and to account as much as possible not only for the interactions between rural and urban settlements but also for the ways in which each type of interaction influences the others.

With this in mind, the first phase of the fieldwork consisted essentially of qualitative data collection using participatory tools to map out the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions in each case study site. A variety of tools were used, including mapping, wealth ranking, seasonality and Venn diagrams. In the Tanzanian case studies, the team also used intra-household matrixes and mobility/migration matrixes. After the initial general meetings, some tools were used with homogenous focus groups based on the combination of gender, age and wealth. In general terms, it was initially easier to use the tools in rural settlements than in the urban neighbourhoods, due to the lower levels of cohesion in the latter.

This first phase was completed by a review workshop with each country's reference group (including local and national policy-makers, NGOs and academic researchers) to validate the findings and develop the key questions for the next phase of the fieldwork. In Mali and Nigeria, a second round of qualitative data collection with key informants was deemed necessary to clarify some issues, for example perceptions of poverty and quality of life, and the sites' historical transformations from the point of view of social structures and economic activities.

For all the case studies, the second phase of the fieldwork investigated the interactions identified in phase 1 from a more quantitative angle. This included commodity chain analyses for selected commodities, and in Mali and Tanzania a questionnaire survey.

Commodity chain analyses aimed to map out the trade linkages between rural settlements and urban markets, and to identify bottlenecks and potentials in access to markets. The commodities were identified on the basis of fieldwork in phase 1, and included:

- For Himo (northern Tanzania), bananas and tomatoes;
- For Lindi (southern Tanzania), fish and coconuts;
- For Aba (southeast Nigeria), a total of 27 commodities were identified to account for the variations between the five rural settlements studies. The commodities range from palm produce, to cassava, plantain and woven cloth produced in the villages;
- For Mopti (northern Mali), the selected commodity was fish;
- For Bamako (central Mali), it was horticultural produce.

In Tanzania and Mali this phase included a questionnaire survey. A purposive sample was determined on the basis of the information collected in phase 1. In Mali, 120 interviews were conducted in each site, for a total of 240, with an equal number

of respondents (60) in each of the 4 peri-urban settlements. The sample was stratified to represent different groups on the basis of gender, three levels of wealth (wealthy, comfortable and poor), and two social categories: household heads/spouses of household heads and 'social juniors' (sons/brothers of the household head, and young women, usually unmarried).

In Tanzania, 240 interviews were conducted in total, or 40 for each settlement (4 rural settlements and 2 urban neighbourhoods). The sample was also stratified to account for age, gender and wealth. Drawing on the findings from phase 1, the team decided to define as 'older' all individuals above the age of 40, while younger respondents were further subdivided in two categories: those living with their parents, and those living on their own. This was deemed necessary since marital status does not necessarily reflect different levels of independence, especially in areas where family farming is an important activity.

Preliminary analyses of the findings from the second phase of the fieldwork were again presented to the reference groups for validation, and to discuss the outline of the final reports.

Finally, while all the case study reports are available in this series as working papers 1 to 6, location reports were prepared in the local languages and disseminated locally and nationally to the village authorities and local government officials in the research sites.

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