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- 1 The urbanisation process in Africa has in recent years attracted an increasing amount of attention amongst scholars both outside and in Africa - with the only difference that the latter continue to remain largely "invisible" in the literature. Urbanisation is a subject which has been tackled by scholars from various disciplines - geography, demography, anthropology, sociology, history and development economics to mention just a few. However, development economics has only recently recognised the importance of cities for economic development (Harris, 1992, World Bank, 2000). And since the mid-1980s, there has been an increasing interest among researchers from a variety of disciplines, in urbanisation as an aspect of development, and a concomitant concern with urban management or government, and more recently, what is labelled problems of urban governance (Stren, 1994, Swilling, 1997). This reflects the increasing awareness of the linkage between urbanisation and development including the positive and negative externalities.
- 2 Pail and Pall's work entitled "Cités horticoles en sursis ? L'agriculture urbaine dans les grandes Niayes au Sénégal" is particularly interesting since in addition to making the linkage between urbanisation and development, it addresses a number of issues which affect the livelihoods of people. The multidisciplinary perspective adopted to analyse agriculture in the Niayes of Senegal in the context of increasing urbanisation only adds richness to the analysis. The work draws from the expertise of an agronomist,

zootechnician, socio-anthropologist as well as a geographer. The researchers' ideas, findings and style blend in very well to produce a quick, clear and easy read but which at the same time successfully highlights the complexities associated with the development of agriculture in an urban zone. Through its holistic approach, the book makes a clear articulation between the urbanisation process and the diversity of the problems that the former poses to agricultural space and food security. This latter theme is very pertinent to the continent, particularly to this region since being part of the Sahel, Senegal is exposed to the desertification process and therefore very vulnerable. The title is very well chosen since it captures the idea of the potential death of agriculture in this urban zone and one can immediately appreciate the implications that this would have on the lives of some segments of Senegalese society.

- 3 This book arises out of a piece of research whose main aim was to provide an overall view of how different agricultural forms are practiced, explore the interactions between agriculture and animal rearing, examine the agricultural agglomerations which house more than 20% of the Senegalese population and finally make some recommendations on the evolution of urban agriculture in the Niayes zone. The first couple of chapters chart us through a rather detailed geographo/ecological journey to introduce the "Niayes zone". This is particularly useful to the non Senegalese reader.
- 4 The latter thus obtains a full picture of the locality in question thus allowing for a better understanding of the issues being examined. The next couple of chapters discuss the potentials that peri-urban and urban agriculture holds for development purposes, particularly in terms of employment creation and enhancing livelihoods as well as food security but the constraints to any further expansion are also examined. These are landownership/tenure, ecological disasters, salinisation of land and the question of environmental waste. Natural resource and the environment are very poorly managed thus calling for an urgent need to educate and to conscientise citizens on these but unfortunately this aspect remains inadequately discussed in the book.
- 5 Although the book provides us with some very interesting insights about the complexities associated with making a living in the urban and peri-urban agricultural sector, and makes a number of useful recommendations, it also has some limitations.
- 6 One example of these limitations is the rather weak integration of gender analysis. Given the importance of gender dynamics that revolve around African agriculture, it would have been more useful for gender to be centrally located in the discourse rather than be tangential as is the case. The socio anthropological component of the book is also useful and pertinent since it brings in the "agency" of the actors- something that is often lacking in works of this kind. The biographies that have been included are particularly interesting but the reader would have gained more if the articulation between the biographies and the issues being addressed was strengthened.
- 7 These few minor weaknesses however should not stop the potential audience from reading the book. Instead the weaknesses simply highlight the complexity of carrying out multidisciplinary work and provides avenues for further research. Moreover, the authors make a number of very useful recommendations such as the need to recycle waste material for usage in an integrated system of horticulture and animal rearing, the use of appropriate technologies to enhance productivity and to address some of the ecological problems as well as the difficulties with the present irrigation system.

- 8 Attention is also drawn to the urgent need to provide training to all relevant stakeholders on the above.
- 9 Finally, one can argue that the book is very timely since Africa is trying very hard to shape its own destiny. There is an emerging consciousness about Africa and concerted efforts are made to address the problems of the continent as exemplified by the very recent G8 summit meeting of Genoa. On the one hand, the richest leaders of the world argue that globalisation needs to work for the poor and on the other hand, the Africans themselves are determined to take their future in their own hands as indicated by the Omega plan and the Millennium Action Plan. This book therefore contributes effectively to the various development debates and succeeds in giving a voice to African scholarship. In addition to this, it has a very pragmatic side to it and if it catches the ears of the policy makers, the lives of a large segment of society can be transformed positively. The book would then have made its contribution towards mitigating the number one problem - that of poverty.
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