

BOOK REVIEW

Fishing for Development: Small-Scale Fisheries in Africa

Edited by

Inge Tvedten and Bjorn Hersoug
The Scandinavian Institute of
African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden,
1992, 227 pp.

Reviewed by Ian Smith

Fishing for Development: Small-Scale Fisheries in Africa is a collection of papers by Nordic (with one exception) social scientists, edited by Tvedten and Hersoug. The book is a comprehensive review of small-scale or artisanal fishery development in Africa. Detailed case studies in Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Tanzania and West Africa are placed in the broader context of development in Africa. Although the contributors are largely traditional in their approach to rural development in Africa, there are innovative discussions of new directions for researchers, donor agencies and African governments to take when considering fisheries management.

The focus on small-scale fisheries reflects the general disenchantment of donors and African governments with the multitude of failed attempts to establish large-scale industrial fisheries in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The shift towards the rural producers and markets has become an attractive area of investment, despite its relatively low margin for profit and expansion. The artisanal fishery sector is characterized by simple technologies, low productivity and socially and geographically constrained systems of distribution. It is this last characteristic that most of the authors try to address—the constraints to distribution and the need for resource management.

It is rather ironic that the authors observe that small-scale fisheries have survived and indeed prospered "in spite of government intervention" and their failed attempts to modernize or increase productive capacity. Aid donors and many social scientists have this same

objective, which has produced equally unimpressive results. The authors conclude that fisheries development projects generally failed because of inadequate knowledge on the part of the intervenors of the fishing society and the importance of external factors like market accessibility, variability of fish populations and the impact of structural adjustment on equipment prices. In general there is a rather defensive tone in the essays and the editors ask whether they should be investigating "development research or development aid research." Most of the researchers consign themselves to the role of observers of the process of fisheries development and donor intervention.

Surely understanding the social and economic dynamics of a society prior to intervention and facilitating popular participation are obvious prerequisites for progressive "development." This book underlines this in almost every case, and yet the more fundamental question of the politics of development aid and the agendas of aid agencies and African governments is only briefly discussed. The broader implications of the shifting agendas of aid donors away from capital investment towards human development and institution building remains in the background of the discussion on development. Thus, while the book attempts to address the development aid process, it ends up as a review of the development of fisheries per se in Africa, adding to the plethora of literature detailing failed development initiatives in Africa.

Within this scope the book remains a comprehensive review of the challenges presented to those in the field of rural development in Africa today. The internal and external variables that make fisheries development difficult are explored from economic, sociological, historical, and political perspectives. Perhaps the book could have benefited from a further integration of these contributions to focus the reader on the constraints and opportunities for development in this sector. ■

Ian Smith is a graduate assistant at the Centre for Refugee Studies working on his graduate program at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University.

CONFERENCE

GENDER ISSUES AND REFUGEES: Development Implications

Sponsored by the Centre for
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MAY 9 - 11, 1993

The majority of the world's 17 million refugees are women and children. The working definition of the conference is that refugee experience is gendered. How women refugees are defined by the state is critical to their experience as refugees. Past work on refugees has usually failed to examine this process, and instead has focused attention on problems of refugee women. Refugee policy, research and programs have generally focused on two contradictory images of women refugees. The first view perceives women as vulnerable, at risk and in need of protection. The second view regards women as critically important resources and decisionmakers for development.

To redress these imbalances, the Centre for Refugee Studies and the Feminist Research Centre at York University will bring together a wide range of researchers, policymakers and practitioners with interest and experience in gender issues and refugees.

The design of conference plenaries and each workshop will create a forum for dialogue between researchers, lawyers, policymakers and practitioners.

For registration and further details, please contact:

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IN MEMORIAM

Professor Dan Mudhola

**Associate Dean
Makerere Institute of Social Research
Makerere University
and
Vice-Chairman, Uganda Constitutional Commission**

Professor Dan Mudhola was injured in a grenade attack in Wandegeya, Kampala, on the evening of February 20, 1993. He subsequently passed away on the evening of February 22, 1993.

Professor Dan Mudhola was an internationally respected scholar of and advocate for human rights and refugees. His outstanding research skills, analytical thinking, dedication to scholarship, hard work, organizational skills, vision and team spirit conferred significant credibility to Makerere University. As a teacher, Professor Dan Mudhola was quite engaging, wellorganized, skillful, caring and always interested in his students.

Professor Dan Mudhola will be missed by his family, Makerere University, Uganda, the Centre for Refugee Studies and his very many international friends. The Centre for Refugee Studies will continue to support research activities at the Makerere Institute of Social Research.