

– including various experiments with decentralization already in the colonial period (Wardell & Lund, 2006) – would help to better understand the shortcomings of current reforms. Forest governance also needs to be related more systematically to other government sectors, notably agriculture; as Jagger mentions, the demand for agricultural land in Uganda is much stronger than forest governance capabilities. At the same time, many contributions ignore existing, local traditions of conservation or governance. Yet these local traditions, often outside the formal reach of the state, not only significantly shape the decentralization process, as Diaw points out, they can also form the basis for true community forest conservation and more radical reform. Focusing on the decentralization of formal forest governance, most contributors here do not question established ideas of what actually constitutes democracy, sustainability or good management, even though, as Ribot points out, these are by no means given. Instead, several chapters stress how the transferral of ‘values’ is an essential part of successful decentralization. In this respect, they themselves reflect the incomplete nature of current reforms.

Whilst the present volume therefore does not present a radical critique that would question the assumptions behind, as well as the implementation of, conservation policies, it nevertheless provides an excellent overview of the main challenges in forest governance in contemporary Africa as they are perceived by those involved in seeking to improve it. It is particularly timely now that climate change has made tropical forest management once again a topic of international concern.

### References

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**The Obesity Culture: Strategies for Change. Public Health and University–Community Partnerships.** By Francis E. Johnston and Ira Harkavy. Pp. 164. (Smith-Gordon, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, UK, 2009.) ISBN 978-1-85463-225-8, paperback. doi: 10.1017/S0021932010000465.

The book presents another interesting view on the issue heavily discussed in modern society and intensively researched by modern biology and medicine: the obesity problem.

The authors, both connected with the University of Pennsylvania and distinguished in their fields of knowledge – Francis E. Johnston in biological anthropology and historian Ira Harkavy in building modern practice of co-operation between universities and communities – believe that the causes of obesity lie in society

itself. Not only do they investigate social and cultural roots of obesity, but they also suggest a strategy for changing the dangerous pattern of obesity epidemics by combining the efforts of universities and community organizations, and by sharing the knowledge of academics with those who need to learn and benefit from it.

The book is arranged into nine chapters with an Afterword and several appendices, in which different issues dealing with the main theme are addressed. Chapter 1 gives a brief introduction to the subject. A condensed but comprehensive overview of various aspects of the trend towards obesity epidemics in the 21st century is presented in Chapter 2. Other topics are discussed next: burdens of obesity – physical, psychosocial and economic (Chapter 3); obesity as an ill-defined and complex problem (Chapter 4); social and cultural aspects of obesity (Chapter 5). The ‘obesity culture’ is characterized by several sociocultural components, such as ‘the political economy of obesity, the sociology of health and health care disparity, and the culture of diet-related behavior,’ (p. 81). An important and powerful statement comes from this discussion: it is not individual behaviour, which most of the programmes are tackling, that needs to be changed in order to stop the trend. True, that ‘... a person’s eating behavior is the direct and immediate cause of overweight and obesity’ but social pressures ‘... are so persuasive and powerful that they prevent an increasing number of individuals from maintaining an healthy weight,’ (p. 63). Hence, the proposed strategy: to reverse the trend with special programmes and initiatives, such as partnerships between universities, schools and communities (Chapter 6).

Besides proposing of a strategy for stopping or reversing the trend, the authors also present examples of active partnerships: academically based community service that offers effective solutions by showing pathways for societal changes and at the same time influencing the behaviour of individuals. Chapters 7 and 8 describe two case studies: the Agatson Urban Nutrition Initiative (AUNI) and the Sayre High School–Penn University assisted community school initiative (Sayre programme). Both programmes are described in more details in the following appendices. The authors believe that these models have good perspectives for evolving, and can be used as an effective approach for solving the obesity problem. Re-quoting the quote by Kurt Lewin given at the very end of the book: ‘in order to understand something you need to change it’.

The final chapter looks at obesity as a ‘mirror’ on society (after a famous statement by James M. Tanner that the growth of children reflects the situation in society), and in the Afterword the authors once again pinpoint the most important themes that resulted from their research and appeared in the book.

The book is addressed to a broad range of readers from academics and policy-makers to community members. It is designated to help in decision-making and problem-solving when dealing with obesity issues.

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