
Master's Thesis by Fidelis Mburu (Kenya)

Introduction

Land is by nature a strategic resource and a source of livelihood for many of the rural based Kenyan population but is also fixed in supply. The steady growth in population has decreased the amount of land available to each person in Kenya from 9.6 ha in 1950 to 1.7 ha in 2005 and is projected to be 0.3 ha by 2050. Fragmentation of agricultural land is thus one of the main problems afflicting today’s Kenyan land sector in general and whose remedy is being sought in line with the national land policy of 2009. This study has delved into the main causes of land fragmentation, means of stopping it and acceptability of such means among them land consolidation.

Overall Objective

To investigate the role of existing partible inheritance regime in land fragmentation and explore opportunities to transform it to attain sustainable rural development in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

To analyze existing partible inheritance systems in Kenya and its contribution to land fragmentation.

To evaluate ways of reducing/stopping inheritance induced land fragmentation in Kenya.

To find out the applicability of land consolidation and its acceptance by property owners in Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

Succession/inheritance

Land Fragmentation

- Internal fragmentation
- Separation of ownership and use
- Fragmentation of land ownership.
- Fragmentation of land use

Land consolidation

Theory of installed base

Theory of cultivation

Sustainable rural development

Study Methodology

Adopted a case study method using both qualitative and quantitative data. Both primary and secondary data were collected; main primary data collection instruments:

- Physical Questionnaires
- Online questionnaire
- Unstructured interviews
- In-depth interviews
- Non participant observation

Secondary data from books, journals, reports, papers and authoritative websites

The Main Study Findings

- The primary reason for subdivision of agricultural lands is inheritance.
- More young people with good incomes are more willing to lease out land and forfeit inheritance than to subdivide it.
- User generated solutions to land fragmentation are a mix of outright home- grown solutions and expectations by the people of government initiated top-down measures.
- Political leaders recognize the threat posed by fragmentation and are willing to support measures to tackle the problem either through passing laws and policies in parliament or other forums.
- More people are currently in support of land defragmentation measures than land consolidation.

Conclusion

Partible systems in Kenya have led to land fragmentation and the opportunity to change this system lies with the young generation. The possibility to adopt land consolidation for sustainable rural development is a long term goal whose success is dependent on a holistic approach integrating other economy wide variables.