

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
(COBAMS)**

Center for Population and Applied Statistics (CPAS)

Land policies in East Africa:

Technological Innovations, Administration and Patrimonial stakes

International Conference

Kampala, Uganda

November 3rd and 4th 2011

This conference aims at promoting scientific exchanges involving researchers and stakeholders dealing with land issues. Participants will be invited to share their work and experiences in order to assess land strategies and policies within a comparative framework. This conference was initiated by Ugandan and French researchers from the Institute of Research for Development (IRD, France) and the University of Makerere (Kampala, Uganda). Many local and international researchers in East Africa have documented land-related issues and wider scientific exchanges are expected to stem from this meeting.

Description

In a region where the majority of the population is rural and where the agricultural sector remains the first sector of the economy in terms of the population involved, the secure management of land is ranked as an economic and social priority with policy implications. East Africa and Madagascar comprise highlands with the highest rural population densities in Africa. At a time when State policies are reformulated, patrimonial strategies at the individual, family, social, national and international levels might appear somewhat contradictory. Access to land is negotiated at these different scales leading in some cases to conflicting land securing strategies. Land titles were introduced in Uganda over a century ago. The systematisation of legal land privatisation in the entire East African region aims at globalising access to land. The World Bank is financing the computerisation of land registries and land titles (Desilisor programme in Uganda run by IGN-France International at the Ministry of Lands). If the rapid modernisation of land management tools at the national level responds to the expectations of some of its users today, it opposes varied and somewhat contradictory conceptions of land tenure strongly rooted in past and modern structures of power.

Introduced in Uganda and Tanzania during the last decades, the idea of the systematic registration of land ownership is under discussion. New developments need to be studied in the light of the Kenyan case, where land privatisation was introduced from the late 1950s onwards in the densely populated rural highland areas. The Malagasy experience is also an interesting case study for comparative reasons.

This conference will give us the opportunity to present research, to question different categories of social and economic actors and representations related to land. It will also be policy oriented, highlighting the specific role of the State in the control and formalisation of access to land and associated resources. Dealing with different countries in East Africa and the Indian Ocean (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Madagascar, etc.), a comparative perspective will enhance exchanges between researchers and open the discussion to other stakeholders and actors of the current changes.

The conference will explore the following themes:

Panel 1: The digitalization of land registries and legal land privatisation

In the entire region, the digitalization of land registries is carried out with the support of the World Bank. Such technological innovations introduced, in Uganda, with the participation of IGN-France international, is associated to the systematisation of legal forms of land ownership. In cases where land rights are not yet formalised, local communities might also be consulted through participatory mapping (with the idea of empowering them in the management of communal land or forests). Security of tenure might be de-linked from legal land privatisation, though it is spreading in a spectacular way in Tanzania and Uganda. Titling in each country has a specific historical background and within each country a local approach to the study of access to land is necessary. Land titling started with European colonisation in Kenya in the White Highlands and in the central region of Uganda where the Mailo system was set up. In Tanzania, in recent years, land titling and systematic registration of land ownership are linked with the underlying idea of locating land which central/local government might set aside for internationally financed investment projects.

Panel 2: Investments and pressure on land

Investments in bio-fuels have grown in importance in the entire region. Other projects linked to foreign as well as national investments exert pressure on land (agriculture, oil production...). What is the role of the State in sustaining such projects? Does he act as a mediator, a major actor or beneficiary of such investments? How do these investments cater for the local population?

Panel 3: Patrimonial strategies to secure access to land (two sessions)

Access to land is negotiated at the individual, family and community levels. Patrimonial strategies are defined locally and also nationally in relation to historical contexts where politico-economic stakes are often sources of conflict. Current changes are taking place within the scope of renewed land policies. Four aspects will be explored:

- a/ Mobility to gain access to land, individual strategies or strategies of accumulation;
- b/ Transmission of land rights, networks and management of family assets;
- c/ Land and identity claims at the community level;
- d/ Strategies to control access to land at the level of the State.

Panel 4: Public Policies

Despite a common goal, seemingly the unification of land-tenure at a national scale and insertion in market economy, land reforms are taking place at different paces in different locations. Specific hurdles in implementation are linked to local and historical contexts. The purpose of this panel is to question objectives and implementation through exchanges leading to a comparative perspective on land policies, drawing on participants' contributions to the previous panels.

Planning

Call for proposals posted 7th June 2011
 Submission of abstracts (150-300 words) 30th June 2011
 Selection of participants 20th July 2011
 Full paper submission (preferably 7000-10000 words) 15th October 2011
 Conference 3rd-4th November 2011

Please send your abstracts (Title of paper, Authors, Institutional affiliation, abstract 150-300 words) before the 30th June 2011 to: landpolicyconference@gmail.com

Scientific Committee

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