Land-Related Issues and Small Scale Private Forestry in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania

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Abstract:
This study aimed at exploring the land-related issues and small scale private forestry in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Specifically, the study determined management and conflicts over land. In methodology, the study applied a cross-section research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A sample size of 100 participants were involved in the description of 80 small-scale tree growers and 20 actors (local government, NGOs and investors). Besides, data collection was done by using questionnaire and in-depth interview. Analysis for quantitative data was done descriptively, additionally inferential analysis involved a Binary regression analysis with a chi-square (X²). The qualitative data were analyzed by using a content analysis. The results indicate that land-related issues is associated by; lack of transparency in land acquisition, inadequate security tenure, weak government administration and conflicting policies. All these factors causing conflicts over land. The study concludes that land-related issues affect small scale tree growers. The study recommends that the government and other actors should add efforts to avoid land-related issues at the community level.

Keywords: Land, land-related issues, management, and conflict.

Introduction
Globally, small-scale private forestry interest and option in tree growing has been increasing in the last decades and the small-scale private forestry is also promoted by the international and national actors as a response to the growing demand for wood and other non-timber wood products (Anne, 2020). This means, planted forest area has undergone an increase rapidly at annual rate of five million hectares worldwide from 2000 which also results to land related issues (Payn et al., 2015). The rate of increasing of tree growing is observed in countries such as Vietnam and Philippines which have shown a significant share of industrial wood (Tan, 2011).

Moreover, in most countries worldwide, there has been an introduction of at least a certain policies to deal with land-related issues such as problems or challenges on land use, ownership, management and conflict, but the extent of the policies, governance capacity, and financing to implement them vary between countries which also causes to different levels of land-related issues facing the small-scale private forestry (Forest Development Trust-FDT, 2018). Land tenure rules describe how property rights to land and trees, and rights to transfer those rights. Additionally, in all countries, including in the African countries, land tenure reforms have been implemented since 1990, and land allocation, and their implementation are similar to actual private ownership rights even in countries where state land ownership prevails (Lupala et al., 2017). However, the practice of the stated rights is not yet clear in most of the
countries, as land-related issues like problems or challenges on land use, ownership, management and conflicts over land use have been and still are common.

In Tanzania, there is an increasing and majority of individuals in rural areas (United Nations Population Fund-UNPF, 2017), this leads also to increasing of wood demand for domestic activities hence land issues (Mbyeley and Lusambo, 2018). Additionally, these has resulted into formal transaction of land as such customary regimes are fading (Muhando et al., 2022).

Theoretically, scholars show that that land related issues still exist among small scale private forestry in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania and other land users like pastoralists and agro-farmers (Mugabi, 2013). Besides, the scarcity theory is the theory to apply in this study because it highlights conflicts which are increased in the community due to scarcity or demand of natural resources. As the scholars indicate that due to the present economic forces, most of individuals in the Southern Highlands in Tanzania will continue to depend on land for wood production for a long time to come (Arvola et al., 2019).

Although different scholars have explained about the land-related issues (Anne, 2020; Arvola et al., 2019; Lupala et al., 2017; Payn et al., 2015), there is still little information concerning land-related issues specifically in Southern Highlands in Tanzania, as most of these studies have been conducted out of Tanzania. Therefore, in order to bridge this gap, this study intended to produce a lot of information on land-related issues specifically on management and conflicts over land small-scale private forestry in Southern Highlands of Tanzania.

Materials and Methods

Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in Njombe District Council. The area has been selected because Njombe is also found in the Southern Highlands where trees are mostly grown by individuals and other stakeholders. Moreover, due to increased number of small-scale forest growers, there have been conflicts over land, therefore it is easy for the research to explore the land-related issues such as management and conflict over land in this area. Geographically, Njombe district council is situated in the Southern highlands, its location lies between latitudes 8° 8’ and 9° 8’ south of the Equator and between longitudes 33° 5’ and 35° 8’ East of Greenwich.

Research Design and Sampling Procedure

This article employed a cross-sectional research design with both quantitative and qualitative approach during data collection. In cross-section research design which is also known as social survey design, data are needed to be collected at once (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Therefore, researcher saved time and fund, as data were collected only at once. Furthermore, in sampling procedure, the article employed both probability and non-probability sampling technique to obtain to involve in the study. For probability sampling technique, a simple random sampling in particular lottery method was used to obtain small-scale tree growers in the Southern Highlands. However, for non-probability sampling, a purposive sampling technique was employed to obtain the 20 key informants (actors of tree farming) who were also reached through convenience method depend on their accessibility and availability.

Data Collection

Questionnaire was involved to collect information from 80 small-scale tree growers in Njombe district council. The questionnaire consisted of only closed-ended questions for gathering quantitative information. The reason to involve only the closed-ended questions in a questionnaire was to limit respondents to specific answers in order to obtain information on the magnitude of issues understudy in quantitative manner.

The in-depth interviews were conducted to 20 key informants. In addition, the interview took 30 to 45 minutes. This was appropriate time
which could make a respondent encouraged to participate with no fear of being tired with time.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved descriptive analysis whereas frequency and percentages were used to generate findings. Additionally, inferential analysis employed a bivariate logistic analysis with a chi-square ($X^2$) to develop the association factor between management and conflicts over land (independent variables) and land-related issues (dependent variables). Moreover, the corrected value in the chi-square which starts from zero (0) was termed as less influence, while that starts with one (1) was termed as more influence. However the p-value was also involved for statistically significant between variables, the p-value of ≤0.05 was termed as statistically significant, while that of greater that 0.05 was termed as insignificant.

Analysis for qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The researcher thoroughly and repeatedly read and listen to the written and audio responses of each respondent from interview, underlined the main ideas and then extracts the core meaning. Then, data were transcribed, organized, and scrutinized into related patterns and themes for further interpretation.

Results

Socio Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics in this study includes: age of respondents, gender/sex, marital status, and education level. The results concerning age group indicate that amongst the 100 participants of this study 48(40.0%) their age ranged from 36-45, followed by 24(24.0%). Gender/sex indicates that more than half 67(67.0%) were men. Moreover, marital status indicates that more than half 62(62.0%) of respondents were married, followed by 22(22.0%) single. Lastly, education status indicates that 62(62.0%) had primary education, while 25% had secondary education, 11.0% college education, 2.0% had attended to university (Table 1).

Management and Conflicts over Land

This section of the article presents and discusses the results based on management and conflict as the variable for land-related issues in Njombe district council. The Likert scale with five options (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree) was used to collect information from 80 tree growers, while in-depth interviews were done to 20 key informants (actors for tree growing). The obtained views are illustrated in Table 2.

Lack of Transparency

The obtained results indicate that amongst the 80 respondents of this study, 57(71.3%) which is a great percent agreed that lack of transparency in land acquisition results to land-related issues in Njombe district council, followed by 10(12.5%) strongly agreed. The findings obtained through in-depth interview with key actors indicate that absence of transparency in land acquisition and investment process is the leading cause of land issues in particular land

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(n=100)</th>
<th>(100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;55 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender/sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow/widower</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conflicts. For example, one of the None-
Governmental Organizations (NGOs) leaders
confirmed:

“Though there are principles to follow in
management and during acquiring community
land for investments, but these principles are prone
to corruption and lack of transparency” (one of
NGOs Leaders).

When the researcher wanted to know more
about how land conflicts is caused by lack of
transparency in land acquisition, the participants
pointed out that most of the village leaders are
used to first communicate with the investors,
when they have reached to the decision and
provided land to investors, they prepare a village
meeting and clarify the already made decisions.
This always causes conflicts over land, because
investors always take a resourceful land which is
applicable for farming, they also take land which
is always along the rivers flow.

Inadequate Security Tenure

Results indicate that more than half 44(55.5%)
of respondents strongly agreed that inadequate
security tenure causes land issues in particular
conflicts over land, 18(22.5%) agreed, followed
by 7(8.8%) strongly disagreed, then 6(7.5%)
neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5(6.3%)
disagreed. In the interview session with key
actors who play their efforts for land conflicts
solutions, the researcher understands that land
tenure in Tanzania is taken as among land-
related issues to most of the farmers and tree
growers. There is inadequate security tenure as
all land is owned by the government so any time
the government may decide to take land and
provide it to any investor. One of the
participants quoted these key actors stated that:

“For example, PART III, section 1 of the Land
Act of 199 CAP 113, provides that all land in
Tanzania shall continue to be public land and
remain vested in the President as trustee for and
on behalf of the citizens of Tanzania”
(Extension Officer).

After quoted the Land Act, the participants
continued to affirm that, in a real sense there is
no land tenure in Tanzania, this is because in
most villages conflicts over land happen.

Villagers are found themselves to be pushed
away from their resourceful land because they
lack of land tenure.

Weak Governance Administration

Among 80 respondents, 57(71.3%) agreed that
weak governance administration causes land
issues in Njombe district, 7(8.8%) strongly
agreed, 6(7.5%) disagreed, 5(6.3%) strongly
disagreed, similarly 5(6.3%) neither agreed nor
disagreed (neutral). In the interview session, the
interviewees stated that weak governance in land
administration in particular at the Regional and
Local level leads to increased land-related issue
specifically conflicts in the study area and other
areas of Tanzania. The participants made clear
that weakness is shown in all levels but in the
local level the situation is very fearful. The weak
governance in land administration at local level
is due to limited financial and material resources,
weak human capacity, and complex procedures.
All these are linked reduction of effective
oversight and control, transparency and
accountability within institutions, and provides
space for corruption, which later causes conflicts
over land among individuals.

Conflicting Policies

The results show that 49(61.3%) agreed that
conflicting policies result to land issues in
particular conflicts over land, followed by
14(17.5%) disagreed, then 10(12.5%) strongly
agreed. Moreover, one of the interviewees stated
that the conflicts over land is partly attributed to
problems inherited in the land policies of the
happens to have both strengths and weaknesses
in handling land ownership matters in the
country. When the researcher probed for more
clarification on the weaknesses of the existed
identified policy, the interviewees stated that:

“Weakness of this policy is shown on the
experienced land conflicts among agriculturalists
(pastoralists and agro-farmers) especially in rural
areas” (NGO leader)

The interviewee continued to report that:

“Despite the policy objectives of settling such
problems, while land is still allocated to
individuals, private firms including foreign
investors regardless their proven ability to develop them, the policy does not have a specific statements which are for reversing this”.

Table 2. Management and conflicts predictors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(n=80)</th>
<th>(100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transparency in land acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate security tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak governance administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>6.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Land-related issues is sometimes associated by the factor of management and conflicts over land. Management of land issues is sometimes affected by lack of transparency in land acquisition. Leaders who are responsible for management of land issues decided sometimes not to follow the highlighted principles of land acquisition, most of them are prone to corruption hence lack of transparency. This means, there are principles guiding communities in either acquiring or supplying land to investors, unfortunately investors use corruption to perform lawless in land acquisition. This always causes land-related issues in particular conflicts. Besides, the findings concur with findings obtained by (Derkyi, 2022) that most of land-related issues in particular conflicts are caused by lack of transparency in land acquisition and application of corruption by investors to local staff.

Furthermore, it is also proven in the current study that in a real sense in Tanzania communities are affected in land issues due to absence of land tenure. This is observed through actions done by government, whenever the government needs land for investors, it may take from the village. In line with Vlassenroot (2012) in Congo for example, conflict over land among communities are increased due to inadequate land security tenure. On the other hand, weak governance administration is also among the factors for land-related issues in the southern highlands of Tanzania. However, sometimes this factor occurs due to limited financial and materials resources, week human capacity, and complex procedures.

In addition, the Tanzania policies for land are unable to come up with solutions to land conflicts which the country is currently facing. Moreover, the findings concur with the findings obtained by (Mugabi, 2013) who found that the current land policies in Tanzania do not affirm existing rights in landholding, especially customary rights of small-holders in rural areas.

Conclusion

The study concludes that in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, to a large extent tree growing activities are affected by land-related issues. Moreover, the land-related issues are associated by lack of transparency in land acquisition, inadequate security tenure, weak governance administration in land issues, conflicting policies and lack of farming land due to forestry activities. In addition, the study recommends that it is now high time for policy and legal reformist to pay attention to the voices of the small scale tree growers which are increasingly demanding inclusion in policy processes. Additionally, the government should...
engage seriously in policy dialogues and processes with stakeholders for a good land policy.

Acknowledgement
I wish to thank my committee members who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time. A special thanks to Dr. Tumaini Ulbadus, my supervisor for his countless hours of reflecting, reading, encouraging, and most of all patience throughout the entire process.

Conflict of Interests
No conflict of interest.

References


Derkyi, M. A. (2022). *Fighting over forest: interactive governance of conflicts over forest and tree resources in Ghana’s high forest zone*. University of Amsterdam.


