

The effects of the land tenure reform programme on tenure security and agricultural development in Rwanda

The case of Musanze district, Northern Province

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Handelshögskolans fakultetsnämnd vid Göteborgs
Universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentlig
granskning fredagen den 12 november, 2021, kl. 13.15, sal B44, Handelshögskolan,
Vasagatan 1, Göteborg



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

ABSTRACT

Emmanuel Muyombano, 2021. *The effects of the land tenure reform programme on tenure security and agricultural development in Rwanda. The case of Musanze district, Northern Province* Publications edited by the Departments of Geography, University of Gothenburg. Series B, no. 130. Department of Economy and Society, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg. ISBN 978-91-8009-532-7

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate the effects of the land tenure reform programme on the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, focusing on two of the main components, the land registration and titling programme (LRT) and the land use consolidation (LUC) programme. The research questions focus on the effects of the implemented reform programmes on tenure security, as well as agricultural investment and development for increased food security in the studied communities.

The study is based on mainly qualitative field work conducted in Musanze district in Northern Rwanda, and interviews were conducted with small-scale farmers and key informants. In addition, farming and forest plots were mapped and measured with GPS equipment.

The findings indicate that the LRT programme has resulted in the reduction of land conflicts based on demarcation of boundaries after the completion of the LRT programme in 2013. Findings also show that the LRT resulted in a land rental market rather than in a land market of selling/buying. However, informal land transactions have been noticed after the LRT. Regarding the LUC programme, findings indicate that the programme has resulted in increased agricultural productivity due to the use of improved seeds and chemical fertilizers. However, there is also dissatisfaction linked to the introduction of sole cropping of selected crops, which has affected both food security and income earnings of poor small-scale farmers negatively. The LUC programme has benefitted the relatively better-off farmers with bigger land areas, who often are organized in farmer collectives, and thereby have better access to credits and agricultural inputs. These farmers are much better positioned to tap into the growing market chains, compared to poor farmers with limited land, and low or limited access to credit.

Key words: Land tenure systems, land administration, land management, land registration and titling, land use consolidation, land tenure security

ISSN 0346-6663
ISBN 978-91-8009-532-7 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-91-8009-533-4 (PDF)
© Emmanuel Muyombano
Printed by Stema Specialtryck AB

Distribution:
Department of Economy and Society
P.O. Box 625
SE 405 30 Gothenburg
<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/69740>