Securing tenure, Sustainable peace?

The challenges of localizing land registration in conflict-affected Burundi and eastern DR Congo

Project presentation

Mathijs van Leeuwen & Emery Mudinga
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Main questions

Ongoing efforts to enhance tenure security through localized land registration in Burundi and eastern DRC

• How do these new approaches work out and impact tenure security and local land-related disputes? How do they circumvent the challenges experienced in state-led, centrally organized land titling?

• How do different actors on the ground take up, interact with, renegotiate or resist these new approaches? How do reforms interact with wider dynamics of conflict?

• How can (inter)national development organizations, donors, and local governments better take account of these dynamics?
Theoretical orientations

• How programmes and policies or securing tenure interact with local patterns of **claim-making**
• **Legal anthropology** to explore how land claimants and land governing authorities make institutions and regulations work for them
• **Political ecology** to understand land conflict and distribution as part of larger historical/political changes; and explore the role of (local) elites in tenure (in)security and reform processes
• **Critical development studies** to situate the ideologies and developmental models promoted through discourses and practices of securing tenure
• **Anthropology of conflict**, to relate local patterns of land conflict to broader antagonisms and politics of belonging
Different work-packages

1. Blueprints for adaptation: discourses & practices of localized land registration
2. Dramatizing land registration: performing power, enacting acquisition
3. Localized registration & tenure security in eastern DR Congo
4. Localized registration & tenure security in Burundi
Some findings

Burundi case (WP 4):
- Fieldwork in Rutana: how to explain hesitance to engage in tenure certification?
- National reform process

Discourses on certification (WP 1):
- Expert interviews: certification as a label that hides different understandings of what transformations are necessary; ‘continuum of land rights’
- Exchange with Dutch interveners in collaboration with Royal Tropical Institute
Some findings

DR Congo case (WP 3):

• South Kivu: non-state actors’ initiatives have led to transformations in land tenure: early land-sharing in the family, women land claims recognized, written proof of property, traceability of land rights witnesses. Increase of competition between cadastre staff and customary land administration: delegitimation by intervention.

• North Kivu: various stakeholder initiatives deal with the way land claims are negotiated and registered. Security of tenure is valued more for legitimacy than for legality.

• National reform process: The national land policy (under development) envisages -on the basis of the legitimacy and legality of land ownership- new approaches of land allocation and tenure security based on the continuum of land rights.
The ‘transformative’ nature of our project

• Academic exploration of how claim-making practices and tenure security actually change; and the role of reform processes and intervention in these.

• Stakeholder engagement in various phases of the project:
  – Start-up workshop: providing space for sharing insights and networking
  – Involvement of the project team in the National Land Reform Process
  – Facilitation of encounters in the Netherlands between policy makers, practitioners and academics
Thank you!

Comments and further information:

m.vanleeuwen@fm.ru.nl
emery.mushagalusa@uclouvain.be