



AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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TITLE: NATIONAL LAND POLICY IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT:

Until recently, at the policy level, securing land rights in Africa was understood exclusively within the framework of the enhancement of private property through land registration. Yet many scholars have shown that there is no direct link between land commoditization, titling and economic development. Only recently, did the World Bank acknowledge that strengthening customary land rights might be a stimulus for economic development. This new paradigm of formalization of customary tenures has been adopted in several African countries. One particularly interesting case is the *National Land Policy* (NLP) approved in 2009. The NLP has far-reaching consequences because of the politicization of land policies in Kenya. More particularly, since Independence government leaders have used their powers to set up a system of distributive politics centered on land: land allocations were used strategically to build and consolidate political constituencies. The reintroduction of community ownership is controversial, on the one hand, because of the strong influence of private property tenure in certain regions; on the other hand, because the operation of extending land market seems to remain the overriding priority: formalizing customary land rights is supposed to allow communities to participate effectively in the land market. Therefore, this reform appears to be inherently politicized. I propose to delve into the policy formulation process, studying how actors negotiated the NLP provisions, starting focusing on the role of civil society organisations (and donors through them), also questioning how the confrontational dialogue between the state and donors affected the formulation process.

AUTHOR'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

FRANCESCA DI MATTEO, after completing her BA in International Relations at the University of Bologna, pursued her research interests in African Studies at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques of Bordeaux. She is currently undertaking a PhD research in socio-anthropology of public policy, within the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales of Marseille.



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