

Socio-Cultural Practices That Impact Women Farmers' Land Ownership: A Case of Sukuma  
Women in Tanzania.

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## **Abstract**

In Tanzania, women farmers are the main producers of agricultural food products, yet they don't have legal ownership of land. Customary practices often require women to access land through their husbands, fathers, brothers, or other men who control the land. Men as the heads of household, control everything including the type of crops to cultivate and the price. The fact that women farmers do not have legal ownership of land makes them vulnerable and decreases agricultural productivity. When women lose their connection to this male relative, either through death, divorce or migration, they can lose their land, home, and means of supporting themselves and their families.

In the Sukuma tribe, the subject of this case study, many women do not have knowledge about their rights, instead they believe what they are told by their elders according to their culture. In the Sukuma society men are the heads of the household and women have no say in any decision about any family matter. The Sukuma tribe are still very conservative and continue to practice some traditions that affect agricultural production and their economy.

This study used qualitative interviews, observations, note-taking and artifacts method to determine how cultural practices impact Sukuma women farmers land ownership. The findings from this study show that a large proportion of both men and women in the Sukuma society still lacks formal education, and is ignorant about their rights. Many believe in their subjective norms which are derived from beliefs about what their elders, traditional leaders and ancestors (because these are the people they trust) say or think the person should do and the individual's motivation to comply with their wishes. Recommendations are made to put emphasis on education both formal and informal for both women and men so as to understand human rights and to change their behavior and perceptions about women farmers' rights to resources. The Sukuma tribe has many clans with

different cultural practices, therefore generalization should be made very carefully. More research should be conducted to identify the differences for easy planning and implementation of land programs and strategies in Sukuma communities and Tanzania as a whole.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my entire family; my husband Ommary Ally, our children, Kaysan and Kartmaya, my parents and siblings, my in-laws, to name few for their extraordinary support and love throughout my life as well as during the course of my study.

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Thank you very much to all who participated in this study. The usefulness of information and insights provided by you is a major success factor to the study and my understanding of the cultural perspective and women farmer's right to own land in Tanzania. Without your willingness to dedicate your precious time, this study would not have been accomplished.

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## **List of Abbreviations.**

### **Abbreviations**

URT- United Republic of Tanzania

TRA-Theory of reasoned action

TPB -Theory of planned behavior

FAO- Food and Agriculture Organization

IFAD-International Fund for Agricultural Development

PMO-RALG -Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government

REPOA- Research on Poverty Alleviation

HAKIARDHI/ LARRRI- Land Rights Research and Resources Institute

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In Tanzania, discrimination against women's access, use, and control over land is found in formal, informal, and customary land-tenure systems. The existence of patrilineal and matrilineal societies creates different cultural norms and beliefs across regions and tribes. Women are entitled to right and equal access to resources, food security education, decision making, and freedom from violence and from any form of discriminations, including cultural, political, economic, or social, in the society in which they live (Beijing Conference, 1995). However, paragraph 4:2:5 of the National Land Policy recognizes the existing problems that relate to women and land ownership. It states, "Under customary law, women generally have inferior land rights relative to men and their access to land is indirect and insecure" (URT, 1997, p.12). On the other hand, paragraph 4:2:6 acknowledges and guarantees women's access to land and security of tenure, and states that "women will be entitled to acquire land in their own right not only through purchase but also through allocation" (URT, 1997, p. 12).

Section 3(2) of both the Land Act and the Village Land Act of 1999 states that "The right of every woman to acquire, hold, use and deal with land shall, to the same extent and subject to the same restrictions be treated as a right of any man. . ." (URT, 1999, p. 26). On the subject of the rights of women in Africa, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states in Article 17 that "Women shall have the right to live in a positive cultural context and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies." (Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2006.p 4).

## **Problem Statement**

Tanzania's current legislation guarantees equal rights for both women and men to buy, own, use, control, and manage land. However, customary norms and beliefs in rural areas are still biased against women, as wives, widows, sisters, daughters, divorced and separated women, limiting their ownership of, and control over land. The Sukuma tribe is a case in point. Many of Tanzania's laws ensure women's equal rights on access of and control over land. Still, implementing mechanisms that would prove helpful in improving gender-related issues are missing. Additionally, traditions and practices that perpetuate gender inequalities are still in place and women farmers do not enjoy equal social status (Panda & Agarwal, 2005). Sukuma women farmers make significant contributions to the economy of their community and Tanzania in general. Their roles vary across regions, yet they consistently have less access and control than men to resources such as land and opportunities they need for agricultural practices (Bonye & Kpieta, 2012). Customs, culture, and certain religions (Christian, Muslim, traditional believers) combine to create a bias against women.

Over 80 percent of Tanzania's rural communities are patrilineal in which succession is valued down to male authority (Jagero & Onego, 2011). At the same time, women's access to, use of, and control over land and other productive resources are essential to ensuring their right to equality and to an adequate standard of living (UN-women, 2013).

## **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research project is to determine cultural beliefs and norms that impact Sukuma women farmers' access to, and control over, land in Mwanza District Tanzania. Research shows that, in general, women are limited in land use and/or input markets and face serious constraints in agricultural production support services. Also women are rarely the legal holders of

title to any land; however, women have access to land resources via the household unit in which males hold formal rights.

### **Project Objectives**

The overall objectives of this research are to (1) identify current legal and customary laws, regulations, and practices that have an impact upon women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe, (2) describe women and men farmers' perceptions of land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production, (3) describe the respondents' awareness and ability to protect their rights to land ownership (norms and customs that impact women access to land), and (4) describe the role of women farmers on land management (their participation in decision making on issues relating to land).

### **Research Questions**

1. What are women's and men's perceptions about women farmers' land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production?
2. How do women and men farmers acquire the knowledge, awareness, and ability to defend their rights to land ownership?
3. In what ways does the legal framework impact women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe?
4. What are women farmers' roles in land management (their power and level of decision making from family level to government level)?

## **Definition of Terms**

Matriarchal - is a social organizational form in which the mother or oldest female heads the family.

Patriarchal - is characteristic of a system of society or government controlled by men.

Bantu ethnic group- Bantu people is used as a general label for the 300–600 ethnic groups in Africa who speak Bantu languages. They inhabit a geographical area stretching east and southward from Central Africa across the African Great Lakes region down to Southern Africa.

## **Limitation of the Study**

This research was limited by the number of participants who were interviewed compared to the total population of the Sukuma tribe. The research was conducted immediately after the general elections, hence getting the participants on time was challenging. Additionally, many Sukuma speak their native language and not Swahili language as the national language, which necessitated using an interpreter.

## **Basic Assumptions**

Women farmers are the majority of the agricultural labor force in small-scale and subsistence farming in Tanzania. Sukuma women farmers can use land to grow food crops, fodder for animals, keeping livestock, practicing sericulture, growing trees, and vegetable gardening (Cousins & Claassens, 2006). Additionally, having legal access to land can facilitate women farmers to have access to credit and strengthen the support they receive from relatives (Adekola, Adereti, Koledoye & Owombo, 2013). Also, with title deeds, Sukuma women farmers are more secure with their land, can enter into legal agreements, can use their title deeds as collateral, and transfer their titles to third parties when they so wish (Myenzi, 2010).



## **Significance of the Study**

Improving cultural beliefs and norms as well as proper law enforcement to Sukuma women farmers' access of, ownership, and control over land will potentially contribute to greater investments in the land and increased productivity and family welfare. Gender norms and beliefs are context specific, varying across cultures and even within the same country, implying that there are no one-size-fits-all strategies for addressing the needs of poor rural women to have access to resources such as land (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010). Moreover, female landlord households with no legal land ownership are more tenure insecure and therefore less able and less likely to use the threat of eviction (especially to men) and contract renewal as an instrument to enhance productivity on rented-out land (Jagero & Onego, 2011). In addition, there has been insufficient attention paid to implementing land policies with a gender lens and realizing how they may impact women farmers differently. Less attention has been given to how that impact can be measured thoroughly to get solid evidence on gender dimensions in land interventions (Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu & Ezeano, 2014).

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Manuscript #1**

#### **Sukuma Women farmers' right to land ownership as stipulated in the legal framework. A literature review**

##### **Abstract**

Land has become a paramount resource in recent years due to increase in value around the globe. Due to massive land grabbing and resource acquisition, women farmers who are the primary agricultural producers do not have the privilege to enjoy the resources like men. Customary laws, cultural practices and inadequate mechanism of acquiring resources, undermine rural women's rights to access and control resources, including land, local knowledge, and economic practices. Women farmers' access to resources draws the attention of researchers, policymakers, international organizations and both men and women around the world, to find various means to bridge the gap that exists between men and women farmers to distribute resources equally.

In many countries the legal framework acknowledges and allows women farmers to own land; however women farmers are denied the right to own land due to inadequate mechanisms, poor knowledge of human rights, lack of education and cultural beliefs in the societies. The patriarchal system has a substantial impact on women farmers land ownership in Sukuma community. This study used the reasoned action theory to understand the cultural practices in Sukuma tribe, perception and attitudes towards women farmers land ownership, as well as the intention of an individual to perform a particular behavior. Further study is highly recommended to understand the resistance to change in Sukuma community despite the good work of government, international organizations and other actors to educate communities about women's rights. But also to

understand why the mechanism only favors men and not women farmers when it comes to resource acquisition and land ownership.

A literature review was narrated to place particular emphasis on the diversity of the information to support the study. Green, Johnson, and Adams (2006) stated that “narrative overviews are helpful in presenting a broad perspective on a topic and often describe the history or development of a problem or its management” (pg. 103). The reasoned action model was used to embrace the attitude toward a particular behavior that is measured by questioning people about their intentions to act, think, and perceive. Additionally, Individual attitude is profoundly influenced by the perception of closely affiliated peers and family (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2009). However, the perceived behavioral control refers to the formation of an intention and ability to perform a behavior which may be supported by social norms. Behavioral change is influenced by the need and desire to change. Also, several search engines such as google, google scholar, university library, Journals, and government database were used to obtain a variety of useful information.

## **Introduction**

Despite its contribution to the country's economy, the agricultural sector is still underperforming in many African countries. One of the reasons for this underperformance is the limits women farmers, the main agricultural producers, face to equal access to resources (FAO, 2011). Women have different responsibilities, such as wives, laborers, and entrepreneurs, and play an essential role in ensuring increase and sustainability in agricultural production (Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu and Ezeano, 2014). Yet they face more challenges in accessing resources compared to men (FAO, 2011). The role of women farmers is diverse and changes rapidly in many developing countries. Therefore, generalizations should be made carefully (FAO, 2010).

## **Methods**

A literature review was narrated to place particular emphasis on the diversity of the information to support the study. Green, Johnson, and Adams (2006) stated that “narrative overviews are helpful in presenting a broad perspective on a topic and often describe the history or development of a problem or its management” (pg. 103). The reasoned action model was used to embrace the attitude toward a particular behavior that is measured by questioning people about their intentions to act, think, and perceive. Additionally, Individual attitude is profoundly influenced by the perception of closely affiliated peers and family (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2009). However, the perceived behavioral control refers to the formation of an intention and ability to perform a behavior which may be supported by social norms. Behavioral change is influenced by the need and desire to change. Also, several search engines such as google, google scholar, university library, Journals, and government database were used to obtain a variety of useful information.

## **Power**

In many societies under the patriarchal system, men's relationships with other men and women are shaped and patterned by patriarchal norms and traditions. The cultural notion of "Masculinity" and "Femininity" creates the tendency of ignoring the inherent traits and the individuality that make women and men who they are and their capability. According to Kaufman (1999), "Men enjoy social power, many forms of privilege, and a sense of often-unconscious entitlement by virtue of being male. But the way we have set up that world of power causes immense pain, isolation, and alienation not only for women, but also for men". According to Niskanen (2011), there are positions which are male dominated like Municipal and Regional levels: also at Community level women are underrepresented in powerful positions due to cultural norms (Manji, 1996). Therefore women and men exercise different types of unlimited power; however, men enjoy and are more privileged than women because men occupy a greater number of positions in various sectors and therefore they have more ability to make decisions.

## **Gender and Power**

Since childhood girls and boys are treated differently either because of inherent biological differences or because of gendered socialization so deeply inbuilt as to be irreversible. It makes men start practicing power from childhood and believe that they have the authority, and girls feel submissive to boys. It is acknowledged that there are important personality differences between men and women which make, which make women different and unique. However, this should not be the reason for taking advantage of women, but rather meeting women's individual needs within the status quo.

Although recently there have been gains and advocacy on gender equality globally, gender inequality has been stubbornly persistent in several cultures (World Bank, 2014)). The basic

generalization of gender stereotype is due to gender differences, attributes, and roles of individuals/or groups. “The typical distinction is that women are perceived as more “communal” and men as more “agentic”” (Tzinerr & Barsheshet-Picke, 2014). These perceptions and explanations originated from cultural norms or practices whereby regardless of culture, men emerge as leaders more than women (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). “Childhood socialization by parents, school, peers, and/or the media encourages girls to be cooperative, expressive, and attuned to their interpersonal world, whereas boys are led to be openly competitive, independent, and instrumental” (Al Noor, Uddin & Shamaly, 2011).

### **Women in Agriculture**

Women are the backbone of the development of rural and national economies. It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of smallholder farmers around the world are women (FAO, 2010-2011), but they have unequal access to productive resources and opportunities compared to men (Quisumbing, Meinzen-Dick, Raney, Croppenstedt, Behrman & Peterman, 2014). Most resources are owned and controlled by men, leaving women with less access (FAO, 2010-2011). Women engage in more than one activity, such as food crops production and processing, animal husbandry, and household activities, yet often they are not recognized as farmers by their families, communities, and government (IFAD, 2011 ). The patriarchal systems in many societies are the result of the cultural beliefs and traditional values, current economic model, policies, and laws made by governments that do not recognize women’s contributions to food production (Purser, 2011).

### **Women Farmers in Africa**

In Sub-Saharan countries, agriculture is the main economic activity. Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies yet they are less advantageous



(FAO, 2011). In Sub-Saharan Africa, women contribute between 60 and 80 percent of the labor for food production, both for household consumption and for sale (IFAD, 2011). Women's activities include producing agricultural crops, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other entrepreneurial activities, caring for animals, collecting firewood and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members, and maintaining their homes (FAO, 2011).

Since the pre-colonial and post-colonial eras, Sub-Saharan African men have dominated and controlled resources, abiding by the customary and communal systems of their respective countries (Quansah, 2013). The traditional resource ownership and management systems have become the mindset of many due to the perception of men as having primary control of resources and women acquiring resources through men who are family members (Kptieta & Bonye, 2012). Despite laws and policies with regard to women's access to resources, legal and cultural practices still favor men and give men power to control resources in almost all African countries (FAO, 2010-2011).

### **Women Farmers and Access to Resources in Africa**

Compared to men, women are given fewer opportunities for education, decision making, extension services, land ownership, access to credit, technology, market, inputs (such as improved seeds and fertilizers), and agricultural training and information (IFAD 2012). In the State of Food and Agriculture Report (FAO, 2010-2011), FAO highlighted the need to close the gender gap and improve equal access to agricultural resources, education, extension, financial services, and labor markets. It also highlighted the need to free women's time by investing in labor-saving and productivity-enhancing technologies and improving the infrastructure for more productive activities, as well as facilitating women's participation in flexible, efficient, and fair rural labor

markets. Attaining gender equality can lead to productivity gains. Women farmers' increased access and control of household resources can improve outcomes for the next generation, and empowering women as economic, social, and political actors can result in more representative decision-making (World Development Report, 2012).

Land is highly valued and vital in all African countries, and it is governed by many rules that are set in societies. It symbolizes solidarity, culture, integrity, and the identity of any population (Quansah, 2013). Land is a key determinant of food production, and its control and access has an impact on the ability to access other factors such as credit (Carpano, 2011) "Land is therefore central to Africa's development; such development implies sustainable natural resource management (NRM), agricultural and economic development, poverty reduction, peace and security, equity and justice and food security. Such development is based on effective land management which is built on four elements: land policies, land administration, governance and partner support (Carpano, 2011).

According to Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu, and Ezeano (2014), women farmers' access to and control over land is vital to economic activity for the benefit of their families and nation and implies fair distribution, sustained utilization, and development of the economy. Women farmers participate in food production, processing, and distribution and associate with their traditional role of child bearing and protection and home management. Women require an enabling environment and resources to operate at maximum potential for higher production.

### **Women, Land, and Agriculture in Tanzania**

Almost half of the national income of Tanzania's economy is generated through agriculture. It is the main source of food and provides about 80 percent of employment

opportunities to its population (Tiernan and Nelson, 2013). Moreover half of the smallholder farmers in the country are women (Mmasa, 2013).

Women in Tanzania, like any other Sub-Saharan country, face the challenge of access to resources such as land, despite their participation in agricultural activities. Land is one of the most vital resources to women farmers' economic empowerment, shelter, and to some extent, their struggle for equity and equality. However, due to economic, legal, social, and cultural factors, their rights to access, control, and transfer land is limited compared to men's (Carpano, 2010). According to the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2003b), 98% of rural women defined as economically active are engaged in agriculture and produce a substantial share of the food crops for both household consumption and for export (Mmasa,2013).

Despite Tanzania's current legislation, which guarantees equal rights for both women and men to buy, own, use, control, and manage land, customary norms and beliefs in rural areas are still biased against women, as wives, widows, sisters, daughters, and divorced and separated women, limiting their ownership of and control over land (Myenzi, 2010). Customary laws and cultural practices are well respected by many communities and remain the primary influence by which the local people abide (CARE Tanzania, 2010). Moreover, the existing laws and policies pay insufficient attention to implementing land policies with a gender lens that may impact women farmers differently. Less attention has been paid to how that impact can be measured thoroughly to get solid evidence on gender dimensions in land interventions (Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu & Ezeano, 2014).

## **Legal Framework**

### **National Land Policy and Land Act framework in Tanzania**

Land policies and laws in Tanzania give rights to every citizen to own, access, and use land for different purposes. There remains a legal framework that categorizes land laws, which is broken into the Land Act Number 4, the Village Land Act Number 5 and The Land (Amendment) Act 2004, whereby The National Land Policy of 1997 was the foundation of the existing Acts.

### **The National Land Policy of 1997**

The National Land Policy of 1997 is the basis of the existing land laws and addresses four main areas, including land tenure and administration, survey and mapping, urban and rural land-use planning, and land-use management. The establishment of the National Land Policy in Tanzania was due to the increased population and the need for structure on access to land to reduce land conflicts, which have existed since colonialism (Ntabalizi, Kivumu, Rusigwa, David, Lupa & Shange, 2011). Caption 2.0 of the policy explains the aim and lists eight objectives of the Policy to citizens of the United Republic of Tanzania. The policy gives the government control of all land in Tanzania, whereby the government can take the land that citizens own to develop economic activities and compensate the owner if there is a need.

Section 4.2.5 of the policy acknowledges existing customary laws that hinder women farmers' access to and control over land. The section states that, "Under customary law, women generally have inferior land rights relative to men and their access to land is indirect and insecure" In allocating land, village councils have been guided by customs and have continued to discriminate against women by allocating land to heads of households who are usually men (National Land Policy, 1997). On the other hand, it guarantees women access and control over land

and security of tenure. Section 4.2.6 states that, “Women will be entitled to acquire land in their own right not only through purchase but also through allocation” (National Land Policy, 1997).

### **Customary Laws**

According to Manji (1996), the Customary Law (Declaration) Order 1963 is classified into three types, Self-acquired land, family land and clan land. Manji (1996) defined “‘Self-acquired land’ as property which has been obtained through the efforts of an individual or a family. Such property is usually acquired by clearing virgin lands. ‘Family land’ is land which in the past had been owned by individuals of the same family lineage. However, the Tanzanian program of villagization under which farming was to be carried out collectively by all members of a village, altered the concept of family land. ‘Family land’ may now be defined as small plots or homesteads retained by individual families within villages and farmed by them. ‘Clan land’ is land vested in the clan under traditional systems of land tenure. However, it should be noted that the Customary Law (Declaration) Order does not distinguish between family and clan land, and that the two terms may therefore be used interchangeably. The more important distinction, therefore, pertains to self-acquired land as opposed to family or clan land”. While the Order recognizes “family and clan land” ownership according to customary law, this customary law did not guarantee access to land for women. In Customary laws, women are excluded from land ownership.

### **The Land Act No. 4 of 1999**

The Land Act is divided into three categories of legal framework, including general, reserved, and village land (Land Act, 2009). As defined in section 6(1), reserved land is designated for special purposes, such as game reserve, forest reserve, national parks, town and country planning ordinance, public utilities and highways, hazardous land, and water source systems (Land

Act, 2009). The general land includes all land except reserved land and village land, which contradicts the definition of general land that appears in the land act (Sundet, 2005).

The Land Act describes the attributes of a granted right of occupancy to every citizen and provides the classification of land tenure and the legal procedures. The Commissioner of Land through the ministry responsible for land has the authority to grant a legal certificate of occupancy (Land Act, 2009). There are land committees and councils at the local level. Their role is to advise the Commissioner on the eligibility of the applicants so as to decide the applications for rights of occupancy (Sundet, 2005).

### **The Village Land Act, No. 5 of 1999**

The enactment of the Village Land Act was purposely aimed at the management and administration of village land mostly owned under customary right of occupancy. The Village Land Act was established to address land issues experienced during and after colonialism (Land Act, 1999). The Village Land Act is divided into three categories; communal village land for communal and not individual use, land used or occupied by an individual or family under customary law and vacant land, which may be allocated for communal or individual use. The Act declares the transfer of land to a village through customary rights, which can be by inheritance or willingly transferred to another person.

According to the Act, the power of administration is decentralized to the village where there are solid guarantees of tenure security (Mvula, 2008). The village council is responsible for maintaining the certificate of the village land and administers the land through the Village Assembly authority (Land Act, 1999).

Both Land Act No 4 and Village Land Act No 5 state the right of women to access, own and control land as stated in section 3(2) in both Acts that: “The right of every woman to acquire, hold, use and deal with land shall to the same extent and subject to the same restriction be treated as the right of any man” (The Land Act No 4 and The Village land Act No.5, 1999).

### **Local/Village Governance in Tanzania**

District authorities comprised of district councils, town authorities, and village councils. Within the councils, there are committees formed of local community members’ representatives. Local government establishes committees formed in accordance with the Local Government Act of 1992, which includes finance, administration and planning; education, health, and water; and economic affairs, works, and environment. Village councils have three standing committees: finance and planning; social services; and defense and security. Other statutory committees for both district and village councils include HIV/AIDS committee and ethics committee (PMO-RALG, 2008). The Act also emphasizes women’s participation at all levels of decision-making (Njunwa 2005).

### **The Sukuma Tribe**

Sukuma are a Bantu ethnic group inhabiting the Southeastern African Great Lakes region, and they are the largest ethnic group in Tanzania, with an estimated 5.5 million members, which is almost 16 percent of the country's total population. Sukuma means "north" and refers to "people of the north." The Sukuma refer to themselves as Basukuma (plural) and Nsukuma (singular). Additionally, they speak Sukuma, which belongs to the Bantu branch of the Niger-Congo family. Sukuma live in northwestern Tanzania on or near the southern shores of Lake Victoria, and various areas are administrative districts of the Mwanza, southwestern a part of Mara Region, Simiyu Region, Tabora and Shinyanga Region. The northern area of their residence is in the famous

Serengeti Plain. Sukuma families have migrated southward, into the Rukwa Region and Katavi Region, encroaching on the territory of the Pimbwe, also due to pastoralist activities, Sukuma are found in many parts of Tanzania.

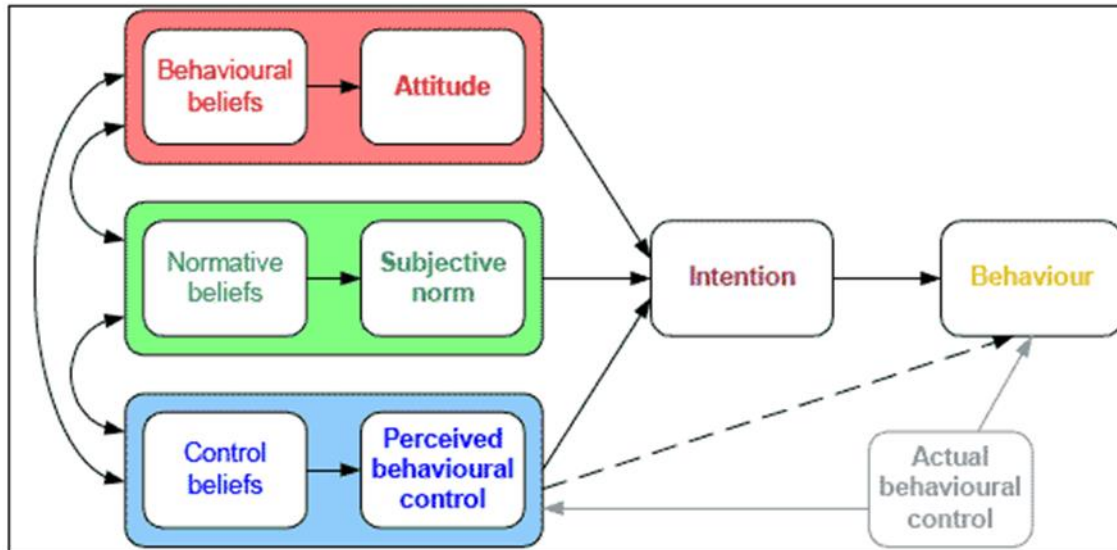
The Sukuma land is mostly a flat scrub less savannah plain between 910 and 1,220 meters (3,000 and 4,000 ft.) elevation. Twenty to 40 inches (51 to 102 cm) of rain fall from November to March. High temperatures range from 26 to 32 °C (79 to 90 °F) while lows at night seldom drop below 15 °C (59 °F). Population is very spread out among small farm plots and sparse vegetation (Retrieved from <http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com/2013/03/sukuma-people-tanzanias-largest-tribe.html>).

The main economic activities of the Sukuma are agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing. They grow crops, raise livestock, and gather a diminishing supply of firewood. The Sukuma are generally considered to be matriarchal in clan ancestry and naming system. It is common for the Sukuma women to do the majority of the family's work. They display strong cultural practices that are unlikely to be abandoned by native people. One of the customs they practice is limiting women's access to land (Bukurura. 1995).

### **The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)**

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (2010) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) proposed by Icek Ajzen (1985) guided this study by examining the influence of behavior and decision making. The theories suggest that it is an individual's intention to perform a certain behavior that predicts their actual behavior. These intentions can also be determined by the people's attitudes, cultural norms, and beliefs that influence existing behaviors and attitudes and are also critical in determining the cause of a particular behavioral effect in a society (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2009).





*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework used to investigate the Cultural Practices That Impact Sukuma Women's Farmers Land Ownership.*

An intention of Sukuma community to perform a certain behavior is influenced by attitudes toward the action, involving the individual's beliefs (positive or negative) and evaluations of the behavioral outcome. The Sukuma society subjective norms are derived from beliefs about what their traditional leaders and ancestors say or think (because these are the people they trust) the person should do and the individual's motivation to comply with their wishes. It also includes the concept of perceived behavioral control, which is determined by an individual's perception of their ability or feelings of self-efficacy to perform a behavior. Moreover, it takes into account knowledge of relevant skills, experience, emotions, past track record, and external circumstances. The model acknowledges that people differ in their cognitive readiness to change a behavior, and that changes occur in distinct steps over time; however, behavioral control is assumed to have a direct influence on intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2009). Similarly, external variables have an influence on an individual's existing behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2009).

Sukuma tribe has its cultural practices, which include traditions, norms, customs, and beliefs that govern the Sukuma society. Through the theory of reasoned action, the study will determine the behavioral control, perception, and attitudes toward cultural practices that exist in the Sukuma tribe that impact women farmers' access to and control over land, due to their significant participation in agricultural activities.

## **Summary**

Gender inequalities in society led to differences in people's well-being, and sometimes due to poor distribution of resources, conflicts may arise and bring a risk situation to the community such as war. Most societies such as Sukuma tribe, give superior status and power to men, and this has an adverse impact on the women farmers (FAO, 2010-2011). The difference in men and women's farmer's roles and behaviors in each culture is dictated by traditions, norms, values and customs that govern that society which results in gender differences (Ghodsee, 2004). Therefore the rise of inequalities between men and women in resource access is an outcome of gender differences and gender inequality. Gender differences in access to, control and use of resources available, result not only in inequalities between men and women but power, knowledge, making independent decisions relating the use of resources and violence of human rights (World Development Report, 2012).

The legal framework acknowledged the importance of Sukuma women farmers' access to land. Research shows that many laws have been established within independent countries, joint and international organizations, to make sure that they have the same goal to achieve gender equalities (Quansah, 2013). Nevertheless, many of these laws have inadequately implemented very well to ensure the equality in the resource distribution (Kptieta & Bonye, 2012). Despite the failure,

there is an improvement, some societies have started to practice and have the equal allocation of resources between men and women (FAO, 2011).

### **Recommendations**

Worldwide there have been movements to make sure that the gap of resource distribution between men and women is closed, but still more efforts are needed to reach the goal of equal access to resources to all (FAO, 2010). The cultural context is very complex and changing rapidly; more research should be conducted for further understanding of the cultural differences so as to avoid generalization (Quisumbing, et. al. 2014).

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## **Chapter 3**

### **Manuscript #2**

#### **Socio-Cultural Practices That Impact Sukuma Women Farmers' Land Ownership. A**

#### **Qualitative Study**

#### **Abstract**

Customary practices often require women to access land through their husbands, fathers, brothers, or other men who control the land. At some point, this study indicates that women are not recognized as farmers by their own families, communities, and definitely not by governments or donors. The Patriarchy, stereotypes about men and Sukuma women's farmers rights and roles, traditional values, and cultural practices, all come together to generate and emphasize why women are not recognized as equal human beings in society, never mind as farmers. The contradicting actual policies, legislation, and practices contribute to gender discrimination in Tanzania.

It is possible for the current situation to be improved for Sukuma women farmers to have access and control of land. Through undertaking modification of social, political, and cultural pattern in communities, Tanzania can achieve the elimination of biases and improper practices against women in general and Sukuma women farmers in particular. The participants provided information about their cultural practices and the beliefs they have about women farmers land ownership. The findings show the challenges and opportunities women farmers are facing in the Sukuma society. Recommendations from this study are made to continue with an ethnographic studies to learn more about different cultures and finally to have a model that fits each culture accordingly.

## Introduction

Land is one the most fundamental resources to women farmers' living conditions, economic empowerment and, to some extent, their struggle for equity and equality. However, due to economic, legal, political, social, and cultural factors, their rights to access, control, own, and transfer land are restricted compared to those of men.

In Tanzania, discrimination against women in the access, use, and control over land is found in formal, informal, and customary land tenure systems. Paragraph 4:2:5 of the National Land Policy recognizes the existing problems relating to land ownership to women. It states, "Under customary law, women generally have inferior land rights relative to men and their access to land is indirect and insecure" (URT, 1997, p.12). On the other hand, paragraph 4:2:6 acknowledges and guarantees women's access to land and security of tenure, and states that "women will be entitled to acquire land in their own right not only through purchase but also through allocation" (URT, 1997, p. 12).

Section 3(2) of both the Land Act and the Village Land Act of 1999 states that "The right of every woman to acquire, hold, use and deal with land shall, to the same extent and subject to the same restrictions be treated as a right of any man..." (URT, 1999, p. 26). On the subject of the rights of women in Africa, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states in Article 17 that "Women shall have the right to live in a positive cultural context and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies." (Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2006.p 4). Women are entitled to right and equal access to resources, food security education, decision making, and freedom from violence and from any form of discriminations such as cultural, political, economic, or social in the society in which they live (Beijing Conference, 1995).

## **Problem Statement**

Tanzania's current legislation guarantees equal rights for both women and men to buy, own, use, control, and manage land. However, customary norms and beliefs in rural areas are still biased against women, as wives, widows, sisters, daughters, divorced and separated women, limiting their ownership of, and control over land, the Sukuma tribe being a case in point. Many of Tanzania's laws ensure women's equal rights on access of and control over land. Still, implementing mechanisms that would prove helpful in improving gender-related issues are missing. Additionally, traditions and practices that perpetuate gender inequality are still in place, and women farmers do not enjoy equal social status (Panda & Agarwal, 2005). Sukuma women farmers make significant contributions to the economy of their community and Tanzania in general. Their roles differ across regions, yet they consistently have less access and control than men to resources such as land and opportunities they need for agricultural practices (Bonye & Kpieta, 2012). Customs, culture, and certain religions (Christian, Muslim, traditional believers) combine to create a bias against women.

Over 80 percent of Tanzania's rural communities are patrilineal in which succession is valued down to male authority (Jagero & Onego, 2011). Women's access to, use of, and control over land and other productive resources are essential to ensuring their right to equality and to an adequate standard of living (UN-Women, 2013).

## **Research Purpose**

The purpose of the research project is to determine cultural beliefs and norms that impact Sukuma women farmers' legal ownership of land in Mwanza District Tanzania. Research shows that, in general, women have limits in land use and/or input markets and face serious constraints in agricultural production support services. Also, women are rarely the legal holders of title to any

land; however, women have access to land resources via the household unit in which males hold formal rights.

### **Research Objectives**

The overall objectives of this research are to (1) identify current legal and customary laws, regulations and practices that have an impact upon women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe, (2) describe women and men farmers' perception of land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production, (3) describe the participants' awareness and ability to protect their rights to land ownership (norms and customs that impact women access to land), and (4) describe the role of women farmers' on land management (their participation in decision making on issues relating to land).

### **Research Questions**

1. What are women and men's perceptions about women farmers' land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production?
2. How do women and men farmers acquire the knowledge, awareness, and ability to defend their rights to land ownership?
3. In what ways does the legal framework impact women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe?
4. What are women farmers' roles in land management (their power and level of decision making from family level to government level)?

### **Definition of Terms**

Matriarchal - is a social organizational form in which the mother or oldest female heads the family.

Patriarchal - is characteristic of a system of society or government controlled by men.

Bantu ethnic group- Bantu people is used as a general label for the 300–600 ethnic groups in Africa who speak Bantu languages. They inhabit a geographical area stretching east and southward from Central Africa across the African Great Lakes region down to Southern Africa.

### **Limitation of the Study**

This research was limited by the number of participants who were interviewed compared to the size of the population of the Sukuma tribe. The research was conducted immediately after the general elections, hence getting the participants on time was challenging. Additionally, many Sukuma speak their native language and not Swahili language as the national language necessitating the use of an interpreter.

### **Basic Assumptions**

Women farmers are the majority of the agricultural labor force in small-scale and subsistence farming in Tanzania. Sukuma women farmers can use land to grow food crops, fodder for animals, keeping livestock, practicing sericulture, growing trees, and vegetable gardening (Cousins & Claassens, 2006). Additionally, having legal access to land can facilitate women farmers to have access to credit and strengthen support they receive from relatives (Adekola, Adereti, Koledoye & Owombo, 2013). Also, with title deeds, Sukuma women farmers are more secure with their land, can enter into legal agreements, can use their title deeds as collateral, and transfer their titles to third parties when they so wish (Myenzi, 2010).

### **Significance of the Study**

Improving cultural beliefs and norms as well as proper law enforcement to Sukuma women farmers' access of, ownership, and control over land will potentially contribute to greater investments in the land and increased productivity and family welfare. Gender norms and beliefs are context specific, varying across cultures and even within the same country, implying that there

are no one-size-fits-all strategies for addressing the needs of poor rural women to have access to resources such as land (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010). Moreover, female landlord households with no legal land ownership are more tenure insecure and therefore less able and less likely to use the threat of eviction (especially to men) and contract renewal as an instrument to enhance productivity on rented-out land (Jagero & Onego, 2011). In addition, there has been insufficient attention paid to implementing land policies with a gender lens and realizing how they may impact women farmers differently. Less attention has been given to how that impact can be measured thoroughly to get solid evidence on gender dimensions in land interventions (Enwelu, Morah, Dimelu & Ezeano, 2014).

## **Methods**

The current threats to aggressive commercial control in agricultural lands and resources from systematic and massive land grabbing undermine rural women's rights to access and control resources, including land, local knowledge, and other economic practices. Due to cultural differences, women farmers' access to resources draws the attention of researchers, policy makers, international organizations, and women around the world to have the right models that can be used to make women farmers have equal access to resources (FAO, 2010). The Reasoned Action Theory, recognize the interrelatedness between women and men's perceptions, behavior, and attitudes toward cultural practices that impact women farmers' land ownership. The theory of Planned Behavior as others formed it helps the reader to understand the researcher's perspective and the study context.

## **Why Sukuma?**

### **A Researcher's Stand.**

Sukuma is the largest tribe in Tanzania. Many Sukuma live along the Victoria Lake; their main economic activities is fishing, agriculture and livestock keeping. Sukuma community is one of the communities in Tanzania which is still underdeveloped despite having many resources such as a lake, mining and suitable land for agricultural production. The Sukuma tribe is among the tribes in Tanzania that still have strong affinity to their traditional norms and beliefs. Both men and women abide and follow what they inherited from their ancestors. Due to their strong cultural beliefs and practices, Sukuma tribe is still not giving women farmers' equal rights to own resources such as land.

### **Research Design**

#### **In-depth interviews.**

The face to face interview methods was used, to collect qualitative data on participants' awareness about land ownership. The study findings created awareness and understanding of the respondents' attitudes, experiences, opinions, and values about the cultural practices of Sukuma tribe. Each interview lasted for 60- 90 minutes, and they were transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed.

#### **Face to face Interviews.**

Face to face is critical in a qualitative study as explained by Rossman & Rallis (2012), it worked well for this study because it allowed eye contact and interaction between members. The researcher wanted to observe and see the facial expression and participant's emotions when discussing cultural issues and Sukuma women's farmer's right to own land due to their complexity.

A researcher managed to see how the participants were disturbed and emotionally connected (some disconnected) to the topic and provided insightful information.

Face to face style also allows flexibility during the interview process and give room for adjustment when needed (Seidman, 2013). Occasionally, a researcher went to meet the participants at their farms to get the information. It allowed a researcher to see the type of land and how the farming activities were conducted to some participants.

### **Critical Reflection.**

It was important for the researcher to conduct a critical reflection after transcribing the data for member check and validity of the data (Seidman, 2013). The researcher wanted to know the validity, reliability and accuracy of the wording and the stories the participants' narration. Also to discuss if there were some other ideas came up and the participants wanted to share with the researcher. The critical reflection was successful, and some new stories emerged during the discussion which added value to the information they provided earlier. At some point, there was a conflict resolution about land issues in the community that the researcher was invited to participate as a guest.

### **The Purposive sample**

The researcher visited the Ilemela District Commissioner (DC) for a self-introduction but also to explain the purpose of the study so as to involve the government throughout the process. The District Commissioner introduced the researcher to the District Executive Director (DED) who handed the researcher to the District Agriculture Irrigation and Cooperative Officer (DAICO). The DAICO contacted the extension officer from the identified village. The researcher along with the DAICO and extension officer visited the village and met the Village Chairperson and the



Village Executive Officer. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the community leaders and research process. The DAICO handed the letter to Village Executive Officer that explained the criteria for the participants who were involved in the study.

Twelve participants were selected from Ilemela District in Mwanza Region for the study. The village chairperson identified the participants from the community according to the letter that explains the characteristics of the participants which was sent by the researcher through District Executive Director (DED). Data collection was through face to face interviews, which were audio recorded; participant's observation; field notes; and collection of artifacts (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The researcher visited each participants at their houses accompanied by a research assistant and one of the community leaders. The interview questions focused on Sukuma cultural norms, beliefs customs and traditions, individual behaviors, and cultural practices toward women land ownership, land laws, and policies and how they have been implemented. The researcher also sought to examine and understand how land reform, land management, and land development schemes may impact women farmers' access to land (socially, economically, and culturally). Furthermore the researcher examined men's perceptions about women's access to land. Additionally, there were questions on power distribution between men and women on land committees, and how women are involved in decision-making processes at the family level, village level, district level, and national level (Seidman, 2013).

The selected sample was because: (1). Women - are deprived the right to get/ own land due to the mechanism in the process of acquiring land and the cultural practices which are practiced in Sukuma tribe. They will be able to share first-hand information on the phenomenon to researchers' study. (2). Men - In most Tanzanian cultures, men are heads of the families and have all the power to make decisions on family matters. It will be interesting to ascertain their personal

views on why they embrace the cultural customs that discriminate against women over control and decision-making of land issues. (3). Traditional leaders - They have power and influence over all matters concerning their culture and traditional customs. The communities embrace all opinions from the traditional leaders; the researcher would like to get their views from the grassroots level and what role they can play to influence the community perception about women farmers land ownership. (4). Government leaders - They make all the policies and laws, and ensure they are all upheld, yet women do not have land control and land ownership rights. The researcher wants to understand what role they have played to make sure that Tanzanian citizens, especially women, understand their property (land) rights and why the mechanism still does not allow women farmers to have access and control over land despite the policy and law recognition.

The study was conducted in Kiswahili the national language. The researcher verbally translated the consent form to the potential participants in Kiswahili. Each participant was asked for a verbal consent and signed the consent form before the interview started. The purpose and the procedures of this study and role of the participants was thoroughly explained to each participant in Kiswahili. Each respondent was encouraged to ask questions for clarity and transparency after establishing understanding of the research process as well as verbally consenting to his/her participation in the study.

The researcher assured the participants privacy during and after the interview. The participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher maintained the participant's confidentiality and the identity in the participant consent form. A pseudonym was assigned to the participants.

## **Study Population**

Sukuma is the largest tribe in Tanzania. It covers about 16 percent of Tanzania's population and includes three main regions: Mwanza with a population of 2,772,509, Tabora 2,291,623, and Shinyanga 1,534,808, and a small population is found in the southern part of Mara Region (URT, 2012. p. 7). The Sukuma live in northwestern Tanzania on or near the Southern shores of Lake Victoria. Due to their pastoralist activities, Sukuma are also found in many parts of Tanzania. Their main economic activities are agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing. The Sukuma are considered to be patriarchal in clan ancestry and naming system. They grow crops, raise livestock, and gather a diminishing supply of firewood. It is common for Sukuma women to do the majority of the family's work primarily agricultural activities. They display strong cultural practices that are unlikely to be abandoned by native people. One of the customs they practice is limiting women's access to land (Bukurura, 1995).

## **Findings**

The transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed thoroughly. The researcher found six common themes that emerged from the interview data to support the study. These themes are:

1. Both men's and women's negative perceptions of land ownership by women discourages Sukuma women farmers from land ownership.
2. Traditional norms and beliefs influence men's and women's attitudes towards Sukuma women farmers land ownership. For example, the practice of paying for a wife makes the wife the property of the husband.
3. In Sukuma families men are the heads of the household and final decision makers. The inability to make decisions suppress the desire for women to acquire land.

4. In some cases men see giving women decision making power and ownership of land as advantageous.
5. Although national laws exist to enable land ownership by women, there are contradictions in the law that allows customary laws to be enforced to block land ownership by women.
6. Both men and women distrust government officials in matters of acquiring land.

## **Social-Cultural Context**

### **Theme # 1. Both men's and women's negative perceptions of land ownership by women discourages Sukuma women farmers from land ownership.**

Perception, whether positive or negative, may lead to a person's attitude toward a certain behavior. The influence of one's perception may be due to the environment they are exposed to, the historical background, or the current situation.

#### **Community Perception.**

The community plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing the community members' perceptions toward different things. Negative perceptions about women's land ownership created a community that believes women do not have the right to own land. As one man said:

*"It is difficult to find a woman owning property, in our custom and traditions a woman does not get any possessions from her parents, only her brothers can get possessions, for example, any female child is not allowed to own land or anything in her family, any possessions she will get from her husband when she gets married."*

The negative perception about women ownership of land also affects women's rights when they are divorced. One man explained, *"Previously when husband and wife divorced, the woman had no right to get a share of the land and could not complain about it, and even if she went back to*

*her parents' home no one will ask her why she did not ask for a portion of the land they acquired together with her husband, she will just be received and allowed to live with her parents.”.*

One man tried to influence the community by changing their perception about women land ownership by allowing his wife to own and manage land, but many community members did not agree with his decision and asked many questions. As the man explained:

*“They were surprised and asked me whether I want my wife to control me, and when I die for the wife's parents to control us; I then told them that my property will be under the control of my wife because my father, mother, sisters and brothers have no say in my household. I decided to give my wife ownership after my wife's brother died and the family members started to force his wife to take only cassava and leave everything behind. However her parents were not happy and the husbands family started to have wrong impression”*

Despite the challenges women face in Sukuma community, some are determined and stand in front of others and speak about land issues and overall women's rights. But some do not have that courage as one woman said:

*“If you stand in front of people and talk, as a woman they will say that you are a 'know it all' and boastful, so this discourages many women because they sometimes feel isolated in the community, so some women just decide to keep quiet in any public forum even if they know what to say.”*

## **Resistance to Change.**

Some men and women in the Sukuma communities are not ready to change for various reasons. As one female respondent said, *“There are some men here who attended training on domestic violence, but I don’t see any changes in their families. They still beat their children and their wives and violate their rights as if they have never attended any training.”*

One male respondent explained this concern by saying that *“For me I felt like if you give a woman property she tends to take advantage of it, she has been given by her husband for her future benefit but instead she becomes very troublesome.”* Another also felt that for him *“a woman is not allowed to own a large piece of land for rice and sweet potato production, she is not allowed to own a farm.”*

## **Polygamy.**

With the power that men have, they make all decisions by themselves about almost everything in their families. Land is one of them. And these decisions in one way or another affect the family members including wives and children; one woman said:

*“This place where I am living belongs to my husband, he just decided to leave me and our children and proceeded to marry another wife. We had so many farms but he sold them all, and abandoned me, so now I rent land or do casual work every year.”*

Some men do not support the polygamy system; however because it is traditional they don’t have the power to question their parents about their decisions. One man showed his concern when he saw his dad use the land he bought with his mother taken by his father who married a second wife:

*“In some places women are still mistreated, I remember the way my father mistreated my mother when he was about to marry the second wife, he took the land that they bought*

*together and gave it to his second wife, I was hurt but I couldn't do anything, I couldn't report him anywhere because he is my father, but it was an important lesson to me."*

In some cases women fight back when their husbands want to sell land, one female respondent said, "What made me fight for the land not to be sold is his habit of selling land without informing me and then marrying another woman."

### **Fear.**

Both men and men participants explained their concerns about the fear they have for various reasons. One woman explained that *"a man may feel that he has been deprived of the headship of the household and may think if he gives control of land to his wife, the wife may kill him in order to take control of all the properties."*

*Another male respondent said: "I once witnessed one man who gave total control of the land to his wife, but after some time the wife started mistreating him, and even boasting that she did not care even if she was divorced since he already gave her everything, for me, it made me believe that if you give your wife control of property she is likely to misbehave."*

The fear that women face is explained by one woman who said that *"The patriarchal system in our culture make us fail to own land, because if you decide to acquire your own land the man will ask since when did a woman own land, where will you get the money to buy land? You end up quarrelling, so many rural women are inferior."*

### **Threats.**

The main reason for a person to threaten someone is to create fear in the other person. In many places, men have succeeded in making women fear them and abide by what they say. One the female respondent pointed out that:

*“A woman had nothing to say because she was told if she says anything she will be divorced, so she kept quiet when the female victim was asked about why the child was raped and she did not report to the local government officials. Also another female respondent said “we interrogated the mother of the child but she told us that her husband has threatened her that if she reveals anything to the public, he will kill her.”*

Participants felt that the reality of domestic violence resulted in women holding back their voice in asking about their right to own land. Men are taking advantage due to the patriarchal system that they have inherited from their ancestors. Some women fight back, but the challenge still is finding support from other family members as well as the community.

**Theme # 2. Traditional norms and beliefs influence men’s and women’s attitudes toward Sukuma women farmers land ownership. For example, the practice of paying for a wife makes the wife the property of the husband.**

**Bride Price.**

In many Tanzanian cultures, men pay a bride price to the woman they want to marry. Every tribe has its own system and principles on how the process is conducted. Sukuma is among the tribes in which men pay the bride price to women; however the process differs according to the clan. A female respondent said, *“Bride price is another reason why women are oppressed and mistreated.”* Paying the bride price is inherited from ancestors.

As one male respondent explained: *“Bride price used to have great value to the parents, when a bride price is paid for a girl the whole clan celebrates, and so even if the son-in-law misbehaves, the clan cannot do anything. Even if the daughter is mistreated you as a parent cannot do anything because of the property or livestock that you were paid. But these days things are a*



*bit different. In those days a father was proud to have wealth even if his daughter is being mistreated, he would ask her to be tolerant.”*

A female respondent also commented about the bride price saying that *“because paying a high bride price gave the man an excuse to mistreat the woman, and the father could not return the cattle, and therefore the woman continues to be mistreated by her husband and she won’t have anywhere to go.”*

Another female respondent believed that *“By not paying a bride price, women won’t be mistreated, even now you can see that there is a difference between women who were married without pride price, and the women for who pride price was paid. The ones for who pride price was paid tend to be mistreated because they are afraid of being divorced and this leads to adopting a certain behavior because they won’t get any assistance from their families because they already took the bride price.”*

Domestic violence is a violation of human rights, violence directed against intimates (spouses, girlfriend, or boyfriend). In many cases, women are the victims of domestic violence; however in a few cases, men are the victims. It is a devastating situation and has physical, emotional, financial, and social effects on the victims (men, women, and children), families and communities around the world. Sukuma is one of the tribes in Tanzania that still practices domestic violence in their communities, especially against women and children. During the interview some issues about violence emerged, such as:

**Women are intellectually inferior to men.**

Many Sukuma men think that their women are not smart enough to own or to be given an opportunity to do something useful like owning and controlling land. They believe that women do

not have the brain to think critically, hence giving them ownership of land will be disadvantageous. One male respondent pointed out that, *“I see the importance if she has the ability to think, she must have the ability to think.”* Another man said,

*“Our Sukuma women are not broad-minded, so men are reluctant to involve them in important issues. A woman was not given land by her father or her husband, when she gets married she will find this at her husband’s home, and if the husband divorces her they will only share any food items but will leave everything else behind and go back to her father’s house to start a new life, most likely to re-marry.”*

Women also feel bad about the responses from their spouses when they talk to them about buying land. Men tend to discourage women by using harsh words to make them feel inferior and to stop asking questions about their rights to own land. According to Sukuma culture, one woman pointed out that *“A woman is allowed, but she usually gets discouraging answers, like why is she asking; who is she to be asking about the expenditure of the money?”*

## **Power**

**Theme # 3: In Sukuma families. Men are the heads of the household and final decision makers. The inability to make decisions suppresses the desire for women to acquire land.**

### **Women’s Exclusion in Matters Relating to Family.**

Men are the decision makers of all the matters related to the families. One male respondent emphasized that *“A woman can only give advice on what crop to produce, but the man must agree with the advice first, if he does not agree the woman cannot force it. In Sukuma custom and tradition a woman is rarely listened to.”*

Some women have the courage to seek advice and ask their husband to involve them in developmental activities such as acquiring land. One female respondent said, *“I have tried several times to convince him that we should buy land, he agrees but later I come to learn from his friends that he has already bought a house or he has already constructed one without involving you and you know nothing about it.”*

*Another female respondent said, “But even when he goes to buy land, my husband does not involve me or our children, and even when he wants to sell he just sells without any information, you just see a truck arriving and you are told to pack your things, you carry them that means the place has been sold.”*

### **Pride, Desire to Control.**

Many men feel proud and have sense of ownership to all the family properties as well as the women. One male respondent stipulated that:

*“You know all property is generated by the man who then informs the woman what they have, and when we farm the crops belong to us, even when we buy a goat it belongs both of us, but previously, if you divorced, the woman had no right to get land and she could not complain, even when she went back to her parents with nothing no one would ask her why she left the land that they acquired with her husband, they would just accept her and she would just stay at her parents’ house.”*

Another male respondent said, *“What I can say is, by getting married a woman automatically loses her rights because it is the man who looked for her and brought her home, and also in those days men were given land by their parents and they never thought of giving it to their wives.”*

### **Lack of Education.**

Many women in Sukuma tribe do not know the procedure to acquire land. One female respondent said, *“I just heard about the legal process of getting the title deed but I have never tried to get one, the process is too long and it takes time, we make sure we sign the documents at the village government authority, I remain with my copy and he/she takes her/his copy.”* Another female respondent said, *“With my lack of education, I don’t know about legal processes of getting land, I don’t have even a piece of land to farm may be if you can tell me.”*

There is power of knowledge and awareness in everything. As one male respondent said, *“Men take advantage of the fact that women do not know the land laws and there is usually no documentary evidence to show that a woman has been given land, until some wise people intervene to resolve the situation especially for female children who were not given land.”*

Some beliefs also have powerful influence in Sukuma tribes and have great impact to society. One male respondent explained that *“In the olden days there was a perception that if you educate a female child she will become a prostitute and the parents will not get many cows as bride price because she will not get married.”*

One female respondent thinks that *“The most important thing that will help rural women to own land is training, most of the rural women have not been to school, and therefore training about our rights will be very helpful.”*

### **Acknowledgement of Bias.**

Women are aware of the bias in their communities as well as in their families, a female respondent said, *“According to Sukuma customs and traditions a woman cannot own land, only men can own land. For example, even if we bought this land together he will never allow me to*

*own it, it will be registered in his name, only men can be registered, for they say 'since when did a hen crow? Only a cork can crow'.*”

Sometimes upbringing or compliments from the people you trust may influence the attitude and individual self-esteem. One female participant reflected on her response, *“I have never thought of it, I did not even have the idea to think about it, because I don't even have the capacity to think”*.

Some men had their opinions about land ownership. One man responded that *“I am not dead yet, why should I bequeath land to my wife? As for children, for now I can't because I keep bearing children, I couldn't transfer land to them, and others could be born and find that I have transferred land to some, it would not be fair.”*

**Theme 4. In some cases men see giving women decision-making power and ownership of land as advantageous**

One man said, *“For me I thought giving ownership of the land to a woman is to place it in safe hands considering that she is the one responsible for ensuring that the family eats well, which is different from a man who if he gets any problem, it is easy for him to sell the land. Women are different it is very difficult for them to sell property. But also to prevent any misunderstandings with my family when I die.”*

One man said, *“When a woman takes care of the property, we achieve development faster, I also depend on my wife's opinion on what to invest, even when we take the loan she is the one who keeps the money.”*

One man said, *“It is important to give ownership of land to a woman because she will use it with the whole family, unlike a man who can marry another wife and take a share of the land or property, land which is owned by a woman is safer than that which is owned by a man.”*

Due to the demand for land in Mwanza Region, both Sukuma women and men acknowledge its importance. One female respondent explained why and how she got the land. *“All land belongs to me, I did casual labor and petty business, I got the money I thought land is a good investment, I decided to buy my own land, with my marriages I was no lucky with marriage, I thought I better acquire some property and save for my children, because I have six children now and they all depend on me, their fathers abandoned me.”*

### **The legal mechanisms**

**Theme # 5. Although national laws exist to enable land ownership by women, there are contradictions in the law that allow customary laws to be enforced to block land ownership by women.**

The majority of participants did not have knowledge about the land laws and land policy. Many were aware of the customary laws, which are more traditional and they have inherited from their ancestors.

### **Unfavorable Land Policy and Land Act.**

The legal framework in Tanzania allows women to have access to land. However, some of the land laws are contradictory, such as customary laws and government laws. The customary laws are not documented anywhere. These are laws were made by traditional leaders and they are known by every tribe. The statutory laws are documented and they clearly state the right of every citizen to own land.

*One female respondent said: “Still there is a contradiction between government laws and customary laws” and another said “We must harmonize the land laws and the customary laws in order to make it easier for women to legally own land.”*

### **Lack of Knowledge about Importance of land ownership and Value of Land in Agriculture.**

The majority of women knew that land is only for agricultural activities, but they did not know that the piece of land they have can be used for different economic activities. One woman explained and asked for the researcher’s advice on the use of land. She said:

*“I do not have any opinion, I just want to know, and what do you think I can do with the land I have more than what I am doing? Please tell me because I am not educated like you, you said you are working as an Agricultural Officer, please tell me what I can do to get more yield so as to satisfy the needs of my family.”*

Men know that by suppressing and depriving women of their right to land ownership, women fail to get so many important opportunities that will enable them to improve their financial status.

*One male respondent acknowledged that by saying: “They miss many opportunities by not having the legal ownership of their property, the community is used to own land locally and informally, but sometimes the government surveyors take the land without informing the community, and the community is afraid to report to the village authorities to get help.”*

### **Theme # 6. Both men and women distrust government officials in matters of acquiring land.**

The process of surveying, distributing, and assigning the title deeds is the work of the government. This process is conducted by the Ministry responsible for land.

### **Untrusted Government Officials.**

The majority of participants were not happy with the work of the land surveyors from the government who force the villagers to give them land without their consent or by threatening them.

*One female respondent said: "There are others who come and tell me that they will survey my land, if they get ten plots, then I give them four and I remain with six."*

Other participants felt that they are not safe with the police officers when reporting issues relating to land.

*One female respondent expressed this: "If you go to the police you will get help, however the officers are not faithful and do not keep a secret they will tell other people, and if people hear that you went to complain to the police they will start saying bad things about you, at the end of the day people are discouraged."*

Some participants were not aware of the presence of the village land committee, which solves all land issues in villages. The land committee plays a very important role to ensure every citizen in the village has the right to own land and whenever there is conflict they must resolve. However, many respondents were not satisfied with how the committee works and resolves conflicts.

*One male respondent said: "But they are unjust to the villagers, if a person left the village in 1967 and came back 2000, and he/she had a piece of land in those days, when he/she reports to the ward land tribunal and wins the case it is not right. Because the Land Act says when a person works a piece of land for 12 years, he/she has the legal right to own that piece of land, but the community is discouraged due to injustice especially to women who are not courageous enough to report the matter to the committee."*



### **Poor Mechanism to Acquire Land (long and bureaucratic process)**

Almost all participants did not have title deeds to the land they own. They did not know what it is or how to get it. Some who had some idea of what the title deed is said the process takes too long to get the legal document.

Some participants complained that: *“The community must be made aware of the people coming to the village, they must report to the local government authority so that if there is a survey activity then the community must be involved.”*

Some villagers were afraid of the rumors they heard from another village about land grabbing,

*One female respondent shared that: “We heard in other villages the surveyors surveyed the area, they took some plots and left some to the villagers, there are some plots which are sold, and some are just taken without compensation, so some villagers decide to sell their land and to move to other areas to start a new life.”*

### **Community Fearing Government.**

Participants highlighted that some of the government officials told them that they must give the land to them. One female participant showed her concern and expressed her fear by saying:

*“How can you help us so that our plots are not taken by the government? We see the surveyors surveying the land and people say that the government wants to take the land, we are afraid because soon they may come to take our land.”*

The fear devastated the participants and made them feel destitute. One female respondent expressed this in particular:

*“How can you help us so that even if they come, we may have the knowledge of what to do, because they are now at the nearby villages, so we are worried they might come and take our land.”*

According to Land Act of 1999, the Commissioner has the authority to appoint officers with qualifications, skills and practical experience in land management or law in the public or private sector. Officers appointed by the Commissioner shall be allocated any functions and shall be located in any office in any areas as the Commissioner considers proper to contribute to the management of land.

Many villagers are afraid of the government because they don't want to go to the police. Many participants expressed the fear that sometimes they don't ask questions to the government officers when they visit to their villages because they think they will be taken to the police for questioning or be prosecuted.

## **Discussion.**

### **Research Question One: What are the women's and men's perceptions about women farmers' land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production?**

Participants described their perceptions about women farmers' land ownership. It appeared that some who got information about the importance of women land ownership changed their mind and started to allow female family members to own land. Some women thought it was not their right according to how they were raised. They had been told by their parents that they are not supposed to ask or argue with men because men are heads of the families. Therefore, when they are married, their right is only to cook and not ask about the decisions made by men. Women who were trained were able to understand their rights and asked their spouses about family issues.

Ultimately few of the women who attended the training showed they had the ability to reason with and question a man when they wanted to sell or buy land. Many men seemed not to like women who challenged them because they felt threatened.

Many men believe they hold power over women, and women should not ask them anything. If they do so, it means they are misbehaving and do not respect men. Many men believe that women are to be controlled and should not have any say about family issues, especially about land. They think that women are not intelligent - hence they do not have the intelligence to manage land.

According to FAO (2010), women make up to 60-80 percent of the population of the agricultural workforce. However, many times they are marginalized and do not have rights to land or agricultural products. It is no different in the Sukuma tribe. Many more women engage in agricultural production than men. Culturally, the men believe women should provide input on some of the crops such as cassava, legumes, and part of maize crops. Most men believe that including women in crop and land use decisions beyond these limited crops is not necessary.

**Research Question Two: How do women and men farmers acquire the knowledge, awareness, and ability to defend their rights to land ownership?**

Participants voiced their concerns on the knowledge of acquiring land. Most of them do not know proper procedures to protect their land. Both men and women worried that their land could be taken by the government but did not know where to go and which procedures to follow. They do not trust the government officials due to the rumors and what fellow farmers went through during the process of acquiring land.

Participants, especially, women were not aware of their rights to own land. They believe that land can only be controlled and owned by men and they only take care of food at home and

bearing children. Female participants explained their inability to defend their rights to acquire land from the family level to the community level. Some explained that when they want to buy land, if they go to the seller, the seller reports to their husbands and immediately the husband forces the seller not to sell to a wife. They end up quarreling and often, the husband takes the money by force.

Participants also explained that when a husband dies, everything belongs to the husbands' family. They will only give the wife some of the food that is at the farm. A widow will go back to her parents' home and live with them until she gets a husband. She is not supposed to ask for land, children, or any asset that she bought together with the husband. The participants also explained how widows are mistreated with the husband's family members after the husband dies. Many village women do not know where to report issues, and even if they report and struggle to get their rights, the government officials do not typically support women because of the patriarchal system.

However, there is some hope for men to change when they encounter the problem of women farmers being deprived their rights with their family members or from the community. Some men who understand their customs and taboos give ownership to the properties and resources to their wives to protect them from being mistreated by their family members. Some men believe that women are good in budgeting and planners, for them to succeed they have to give power to women to make decisions on family issues. The perception that if women are given/ own properties they may kill the man or leave him, is what makes many men fear and hesitate to give land ownership to women, hence education should be provided to both men and women so as the family to share resources especially land.

**Research Question Three: In what ways does the legal framework impact women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe?**

The question did not get detailed answers because many participants were not aware of the legal framework on land. Both men and women have limited knowledge about the land policy and land act. Some said they heard from people and village leaders, but they do not know their rights.

The two female participants who participated in a five-day training about domestic violence got some information about land. They at least had an idea of women's right when it comes to land. However, the participants said they did not share their knowledge with the community because they were afraid of being isolated by the community who might think they are showing off and displaying bad behavior.

**Research Question Four: What are women farmers' roles in land management (their power and level of decision making from the family level to government level)?**

It was clear that women do not have power at the family level, as was reported by almost all participants. Many participants considered women as property that can be owned because men pay a bride price. Many men act like they bought a woman and brought her home to follow his instructions. Many male respondents felt proud to control women and are happy that women obey them.

When it comes to land ownership, many participants were against women having control of land, thinking that they would overpower men or be richer than them. Some men participants were afraid of being killed by their wives if they owned land. Many knew that land has a value which is increasing every day. Therefore, if a woman owns land, she will be financially stable and might leave or mistreat her husband. Women participants thought they could not own land because

they are married. Those who were not married were concerned about how the community would perceive them if they own land.

### **Implications.**

### **Practice Recommendations.**

The proceeding analysis explored the gender stereotypes in the Sukuma tribe. Roles between men and women are well distributed; however, women farmers are limited in property ownership especially land, capacity to develop themselves, and to make choices about their lives, which violates human rights and fundamental freedom of women. The findings of this study highlighted that men are the leaders, strong and wise, while women are followers, who are less intelligent and weak. The cultural notion of “Masculinity” and “Femininity” creates the tendency of ignoring the potential traits and uniqueness that make them who they are and their capability. The study showed that women lacked the confidence to question men, and men used women’s feelings of inferiority to control and manipulate them. The study shows there is a need for education (formal and informal). Sukuma society has to free itself from harmful and discriminating cultural norms that hinder individual and community development.

According to Fishbein & Ajzen, (2009), an individual’s intention to perform a behavior is influenced by internal and external factors. The findings show the Sukuma people inherited the norms and customs from their ancestors (whom they trust and fear). They are executing the firm culture without knowing why the norms and customs were set the way they are presented. Moreover, the Sukuma women farmers’ behavior is controlled by their perception and ability to perform in the society. Some feel strong, and many feel weak and helpless when they are in the presence of men. Cultural change is complex and takes time to transform. During the process, people always learn a new culture and adopt. However, the ability of Sukuma women and men

farmers to change their behavior depends on their cognitive readiness and direct influence of such intention. The findings show many Sukuma women farmers are ready to change, but they face obstacles from elders, men, and the community itself. The extension should provide educational programming for men and women to bring communities together and discuss strengths of both genders in problem solving, decision making and management. To move forward, a change in men's perception of the intelligence and strength of women will be necessary. In addition, communities need men to act as champions in ensuring women farmers' rights are restored by ending the discrimination.

Lastly, the findings indicate the importance of knowledge about the Land Act of 1999, the Land Policy of 1997, and the procedure for acquiring a title deed. In many parts of Tanzania, knowledge about human rights and specifically the rights to own land for women farmers as stated in the Land Act of 1999 is low. Participants were very clear that they do not have an idea of what the land act stipulates about women's right to own land. There is an opportunity to provide informal training to the communities and explain the land rights and the importance in the development of an economy individually and nationally. There are contradictions in some government policies about land, which need to be clarified to avoid confusion, and loopholes need to be closed so that they do not infringe on people's rights. A clear mechanism should be developed and followed by government/private institutions which is computerized to allow many people to get their certificates of occupancy. The government officials who are not trustworthy and corrupt should be prosecuted and their contracts terminated to avoid perpetuation of the problem. Women should be given priority, and there must be high confidentiality when buying/selling/registering or transferring their land in order to encourage others to feel secure and go through the process of

acquiring land and getting the certificate of occupancy. Extension has a role to play in educating the public about land use and responsibilities associated with land for all people.

### **Research Recommendations.**

The study results reveal that culture is very complex and requires time to study and understand the nuances. Across Sukuma culture there are unique customs and norms that are practiced in the communities. The cultural differences make each clan different, they follow their own traditions and therefore generalizing cultural practices is not appropriate. Although changing people's behaviour can be challenging, using the Theory of Reasoned Action can be a useful tool to change people's attitude, their subjective norms and perceived behaviour control which is influenced by people's beliefs, also the behaviour control which have a direct impact on intention to act. The Theory recognizes the cognitive difference on the ability to change. Hence the changes will eventually occur in distinct steps over time.

One of the key aspects of culture is language, and within the Sukuma tribe, language differs from one tribe to another (there are small tribes within Sukuma tribe). Additionally, although Swahili is the national language, many Sukuma people do not speak Swahili, which created difficulties during data collection. The government should emphasize teaching children and adults Swahili so that they can communicate easily with non-Sukuma people.

The study findings indicate that many people, especially women farmers, are not aware of their rights. Therefore, the government should use the local legal personnel to train people of their rights as stipulated in the constitution. Understanding their rights (for both women and men) will reduce domestic violence and discrimination and violation of human rights. When the community is aware of their rights, it will be easy for them to question the government whenever they are



mistreated by government officials. They will be able to frame their arguments instead of just complaining about how they are mistreated.

The findings also show that there is a contradiction between government land laws and the customary land laws. The customary laws deny women land ownership while government Land Act of 1999 describes in detail the rights of women to land ownership. Based on the contradiction, it is very important for the government and traditional leaders to revise the two land laws in order for every citizen to have equal rights in land ownership. They have to reach an agreement as to which land law can be enforced across the government and customary law. The gap between the two laws gives the opportunity to lawyers and magistrates to misuse their powers and most of the time to deny the right of a woman when searching for her rights to land ownership when she is divorced or when a husband passes away. Therefore, the training will empower women farmers to participate in resource ownership like land and be involved in decision-making.

The mechanism of acquiring land is so bureaucratic and some government officials are not trustworthy. The government system has created fear in the societies that whenever they are asked, they use (police) force to arrest the person and charge them with offenses. This has created fear in the communities. As a result, when government officials steal land from farmers, the farmers do not report it because they are afraid of being jailed. As the findings show, government officials can cheat and manipulate farmers when surveying the land, telling them for example if they survey ten plots, the farmer will take six and the surveyor will get four. The government should create a transparent process of acquiring land. They should identify the government officials who work in the communities so that when rights are violated, farmers will be able to report with evidence of the name of the official. Furthermore, the process should not be long and corrupt, and women farmers should be given priority.

Finally, informal training is very important and must be emphasized in rural areas. Many women farmers do not have formal education, hence, they do not know how to read and write. Nevertheless, that does not impede them from getting informal education. They are very smart and articulate. The government in collaboration with other actors like NGOs should now focus its training in rural areas so that both men and women farmers benefit. The gender desks at police stations should be empowered to provide training on the elimination of gender-based violence in rural areas. Both men and women should be discouraged from practicing the cultural norms and taboos that discriminate women farmers and reduce the power differences in the patriarchal structure.

Lastly, more research should be pursued in other cultures to learn the differences in order to create a model that fits each culture accordingly. Many international organizations have generalized the cultural practices in all tribes and created some forward-thinking ideas on how to help women get their rights. Moreover, there is a huge difference across one tribe and across other tribes. As for Tanzania, there are almost 132 separate tribes. The modalities to change people's attitudes and perceptions is also different. Therefore, different studies should be conducted in all tribes in order to understand the differences and find the right modality to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination against women farmers.

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## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Study Summary.**

The majority of women in Tanzania are rural women, and agriculture remains their most important economic activity. Women are the primary part of the agricultural labor force and contribute to the local and national income. Despite their important role in agricultural production, Sukuma women farmers' ability to access and manage land remains highly restricted due to customary laws, cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions. The patriarchal ideology that dominates Tanzania's societies gives power to men on decision making on all matters related to their tribes. This qualitative study focused on examining the Sukuma cultural practices that impact women farmers' land ownership. The findings concluded that culture has a significant influence in Sukuma women's and men's attitude toward women farmers' land ownership.

The reasoned action model was used for this research because it embraces the attitude toward a specific behavior that can be measured by questioning people about their intentions to act, think, and perceive. Additionally, individual attitude is highly influenced by the perception of closely affiliated peers and family. However, perceived behavioral control refers to the formation of an intention and ability to perform a behavior, which may be supported by social norms. Behavioral change is influenced by the need and desire to change. The participants shared their experience and beliefs about Sukuma women farmers' power, capacity to own land, and their rights to land ownership in their own words through open-ended interviews and critical reflection.

The overall objectives of this research were to:

1. Identify current legal and customary laws, regulations, and practices that have an impact upon women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe.
2. Describe women and men farmers' perception of land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production.
3. Describe the participants' awareness and ability to protect their rights to land ownership (norms and customs that impact women access to land).
4. Describe the role of women farmers on land management (their participation in decision making on issues relating to land).

## **Findings**

The transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed thoroughly. The researcher came up with seven common themes that emerged from the interview data to support the study. These themes are:

1. Both men's and women's negative perception of land ownership by women discourages Sukuma women farmers from land ownership.
2. Traditional norms and beliefs influence men's and women's attitudes towards Sukuma women farmers land ownership. For example, the practice of paying for a wife makes the wife the property of the husband.
3. In Sukuma families men are the heads of the household and final decision makers. The inability to make decisions suppresses the desire for women to acquire land.
4. In some cases men see giving women decision making power and ownership of land as advantageous



5. Although national laws exist to enable land ownership by women, there are contradictions in the law that allows customary laws to be enforced to block land ownership by women.
6. Both men and women distrust government officials in matters of acquiring land

## **Discussion**

### **Research Question One: What are the women's and men's perceptions about women farmers' land ownership in the context of property ownership and agricultural production?**

Participants described their perceptions about women farmers' land ownership. It appeared that some who got information about the importance of women land ownership changed their mind and started to allow female family members to own land. Some women thought it was not their right according to how they were raised. They had been told by their parents that they are not supposed to ask or argue with men because men are heads of the families. Therefore, when they are married, their right is only to cook and not ask about the decisions made by men. Women who were trained were able to understand their rights and asked their spouses about family issues. Ultimately few of the women who attended the training showed they had the ability to reason with and question a man when they wanted to sell or buy land. Many men seemed not to like women who challenged them and felt threatened.

Many men believe they hold power over women, and women should not ask them anything. If they do so, it means they are misbehaving and do not respect men. Many men believe that women are to be controlled and should not have any say about family issues, especially about land. They think that women are not intelligent - hence they do not have the intelligence to manage land.

According to FAO (2010), women make up to 60-80 percent of the population of the agricultural workforce. However, many times they are marginalized and do not have rights to land or

agricultural products. It is no different in the Sukuma tribe. Many more women engage in agricultural production than men. Culturally, the men believe women should provide input on some of the crops such as cassava, legumes, and part of maize crops. Most men believe that including women in crop and land use decisions beyond these limited crops is not necessary.

**Research Question Two: How do women and men farmers acquire the knowledge, awareness, and ability to defend their rights to land ownership?**

Participants voiced their concerns on the knowledge of acquiring land. Most of them do not know proper procedures to protect their land. Both men and women worried that their land could be taken by the government but did not know where to go and which procedures to follow. They do not trust the government officials due to the rumors and what fellow farmers went through during the process of acquiring land.

Participants, especially, women were not aware of their rights to own land. They believe that land can only be controlled and owned by men and they only take care of food at home and bearing children. Female participants explained their inability to defend their rights to acquire land from the family level to the community level. Some explained that when they want to buy land, if they go to the seller, the seller reports to their husbands and immediately the husband forces the seller not to sell to a wife. They end up quarreling and often, the husband takes the money by force.

Participants also explained that when a husband dies, everything belongs to the husbands' family. They will only give the wife some of the food that is at the farm. A widow will go back to her parents' home and live with them until she gets a husband. She is not supposed to ask for land, children, or any asset that she bought together with the husband. The participants also explained how widows are mistreated with the husband's family members after the husband dies. Many

village women do not know where to report issues, and even if they report and struggle to get their rights, the government officials do not typically support women because of the patriarchal system.

**Research Question Three: In what ways does the legal framework impact women farmers' access to and control over land in Sukuma tribe?**

The question did not get detailed answers because many participants were not aware of the legal framework on land. Both men and women have limited knowledge about the land policy and land act. Some said they heard from people and village leaders, but they do not know their rights.

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**Research Question Four: What are women farmers' roles in land management (their power and level of decision making from the family level to government level)?**

It was clear that women do not have (have less) power at the family level, as was reported by almost all participants. Many participants considered women as property that can be owned because men pay a bride price. Many men act like they bought a woman and brought her home to follow his instructions. Many male respondents felt proud to control women and are happy that women obey them.

When it comes to land ownership, many participants were against women having control of land, thinking that they would overpower men or be richer than them. Some men participants were afraid of being killed by their wives if they owned land. Many knew that land has a value

which is increasing every day. Therefore, if a woman owns land, she will be financially stable and might leave or mistreat her husband. Women participants thought they could not own land because they are married. Those who were not married were concerned about how the community would perceive them if they own land.

## **Implications**

### **Practice Recommendations**

The proceeding analysis explored the gender stereotypes in the Sukuma tribe. Roles between men and women are well distributed; however, women farmers are limited in property ownership especially land, capacity to develop themselves, and to make choices about their lives, which violates human rights and fundamental freedom of women. The findings of this study highlighted that men are the leaders, strong and wise, while women are followers, who are less intelligent and weak. The cultural notion of “Masculinity” and “Femininity” creates the tendency of ignoring the potential traits and uniqueness that make them who they are and their capability. The study showed that women lacked confidence to question men, and men used women’s feelings of inferiority to control and manipulate them. The study shows there is a need for education (formal and informal). Sukuma society has to free itself from harmful and discriminating cultural norms that hinder individual and community development.

According to Fishbein & Ajzen, (2009), an individual’s intention to perform a behavior is influenced by internal and external factors. The findings show the Sukuma people inherited the norms and customs from their ancestors (whom they trust and fear). They are executing the strong culture without knowing why the norms and customs were set the way they are presented. Moreover, the Sukuma women farmers’ behavior is controlled by their perception and ability to perform in the society. Some feel strong and many feel weak and helpless when they are in the

presence of men. Cultural change is complex and takes time to transform. During the process, people always learn a new culture and adopt. However, the ability of Sukuma women and men farmers to change their behavior depends on their cognitive readiness and direct influence of such intention. The findings show many Sukuma women farmers are ready to change, but they face obstacles from elders, men, and the community itself. Extension should provide educational programming for men and women to bring communities together and discuss strengths of both genders in problem solving, decision making and management. To move forward, a change in men's perception about the intelligence and strength of women will be necessary. In addition, communities need men to act as champions in ensuring women farmers' rights are restored by ending the discrimination.

Lastly, the findings indicate the importance of knowledge about the Land Act of 1999, the Land Policy of 1997, and the procedure for acquiring a title deed. In many parts of Tanzania, knowledge about human rights and specifically the rights to own land for women farmers as stated in the Land Act of 1999 is low. Participants were very clear that they do not have an idea of what the land act stipulates about women's right to own land. There is an opportunity to provide informal training to the communities and explain the land rights and the importance in the development of an economy individually and nationally. There are contradictions in some government policies about land, which need to be clarified to avoid confusion, and loopholes need to be closed so that they do not infringe on people's rights. A clear mechanism should be developed and followed by government/private institutions which is computerized to allow many people to get their certificates of occupancy. The government officials who are not trustworthy and corrupt should be prosecuted and their contracts terminated to avoid perpetuation of the problem. Women should be given priority, and there must be high confidentiality when buying/selling/registering or

transferring their land in order to encourage others to feel secure and go through the process of acquiring land and getting the certificate of occupancy. Extension has a role to play in educating the public about land use and responsibilities associated with land for all people.

### **Research Recommendations**

The study results reveal that culture is very complex and requires time to study and understand the nuances. Across Sukuma culture there are unique customs and norms that are practiced in the communities. The cultural differences make each clan different, they follow their own traditions and therefore generalizing cultural practices is not appropriate.

One of the key aspects of culture is language, and within the Sukuma tribe, language differs from one tribe to another (there are small tribes within Sukuma tribe). Additionally, although Swahili is the national language, many Sukuma people do not speak Swahili, which created difficulties during data collection. The government should emphasize teaching children and adults Swahili so that they can communicate easily with non-Sukuma people.

The study findings indicate that many people, especially women farmers, are not aware of their rights. Therefore, the government should use the local legal personnel to train people of about their rights as stipulated in the constitution. Understanding their rights (for both women and men) will reduce domestic violence and discrimination and violation of human rights. When the community is aware of their rights, it will be easy for them to question the government whenever they are mistreated by government officials. They will be able to frame their arguments instead of complaining about how they are mistreated.

The findings also show that there is a contradiction between government land laws and the customary land laws. The customary laws deny women land ownership while government Land

Act of 1999 describes in detail the rights of women to land ownership. Based on the contradiction, it is very important for the government and traditional leaders to revise the two land laws in order for every citizen to have equal rights in land ownership. They have to reach an agreement as to which land law can be enforced across the government and customary law. The gap between the two laws gives the opportunity to lawyers and magistrates to misuse their powers and most of the time to deny the right of a woman when searching for her rights to land ownership when she is divorced or when a husband passes away. Therefore, the training will empower women farmers to participate in resource ownership like land and be involved in decision-making.

The mechanism of acquiring land is so bureaucratic and some government officials are not trustworthy. The government system has created fear in the societies that whenever they are asked, they use (police) force to arrest the person and charge them with offenses. This has created fear in the communities. As a result, when government officials steal land from farmers, the farmers do not report it because they are afraid of being jailed. As the findings show, government officials can cheat and manipulate farmers when surveying the land, telling them for example if they survey ten plots, the farmer will take six and the surveyor will get four. The government should create a transparent process of acquiring land. They should identify the government officials who work in the communities so that when rights are violated, farmers will be able to report with evidence of the name of the official. Furthermore, the process should not be long and corrupt, and women farmers should be given priority.

It is also important to pursue further research on why societies especially men prefer the use of customary laws than statutory laws. Customary laws are not documented as compared to the legal laws which stipulate the rights of every citizen. But it seems the customary laws are more popular and implemented in Sukuma tribe than the other statutes.

Finally, informal training is very important and must be emphasized in rural areas. Many women farmers do not have formal education, hence, they do not know how to read and write. Nevertheless, that does not impede them from getting informal education. They are very smart and articulate. The government in collaboration with other actors like NGOs should now focus its training in rural areas so that both men and women farmers benefit. The gender desks at police stations should be empowered to provide training on the elimination of gender-based violence in rural areas. Both men and women should be discouraged from practicing the cultural norms and taboos that discriminate women farmers and reduce the power differences in the patriarchal structure.

Lastly, more research should be pursued in other cultures to learn the differences in order to create a model that fits the each culture accordingly. Many international organizations have generalized the cultural practices in all tribes and created some forward-thinking ideas on how to help women get their rights. Moreover, there is a huge difference across one tribe and across other tribes. As for Tanzania, there are almost 132 separate tribes. The modalities to change people's attitudes and perceptions also is different. Therefore, different studies should be conducted in all tribes in order to understand the differences and find the right modality to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination against women farmers.

### **Summary- Literature Review**

Gender inequalities in society led to differences in people's well-being, and sometimes due to poor distribution of resources, conflicts may arise and bring a risk situation to the community such as war. Most societies such as Sukuma tribe, give superior status and power to men, and this has an adverse impact on the women farmers (FAO, 2010-2011). The difference in men and women's farmer's roles and behaviors in each culture is dictated by traditions, norms, values and



customs that govern that society which results in gender differences (Ghodsee, 2004). Therefore the rise of inequalities between men and women in resource access is an outcome of gender differences and gender inequality. Gender differences in access to, control and use of resources available, result not only in inequalities between men and women but power, knowledge, making independent decisions relating the use of resources and violence of human rights (World Development Report, 2012)

The legal framework acknowledged the importance of Sukuma women farmers' access to land. Research shows that many laws have been established within independent countries, joint and international organizations, to make sure that they have the same goal to achieve gender equalities (Quansah, 2013). Nevertheless, many of these laws have not been adequately implemented to ensure equality in resource distribution (Kptieta & Bonye, 2012). Despite the failure, there is an improvement, some societies have started to practice and have equal allocation of resources between men and women (FAO, 2011).

### **Recommendations**

Worldwide there have been movements to make sure that the gap of resource distribution between men and women is closed, but still more efforts are needed to reach the goal of equal access to resources to all (FAO, 2010). The cultural context is very complex and changing rapidly; more research should be conducted for further understanding of the cultural differences so as to avoid generalization (Quisumbing, et. al. 2014).

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## Appendix A

### The approved research protocol



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959  
email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 17, 2015  
**TO:** Rick Rudd, Asha Habibu Shayo  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Cultural practices that impact Sukuma women farmers's; In Tanzania access and control over land  
**IRB NUMBER:** 15-687

Effective July 16, 2015, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **July 16, 2015**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **July 15, 2016**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **July 1, 2016**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office ([irbadmin@vt.edu](mailto:irbadmin@vt.edu)) immediately.

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Letter to the District Executive Director (DED)

District Executive Director (DED)

Date

Dear, Sir/Madam

My name is Asha. H. Shayo. I am a graduate student pursuing Masters in Agricultural Leadership and Community Education in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

I would like to inform you that, I intend to conduct a research for my thesis in Mwanza Municipal about Sukuma women farmers and their rights to land ownership. The purpose of this study is to determine cultural practices that impact women farmers' access to and control over land. The study is intended to last about 60-90 minutes of audio recorded interview. My research will take at least six months or more depending on the availability of the participants and their willingness to participate. The participation of the potential participants in this study is neither compulsory nor mandatory. Participants have the rights to withdraw from the study anytime they want. I will be visiting Bujole village whenever I get convenient time and appointment from the participants.

The criteria for the potential participants, they must be;

- The Sukuma by origin,
- Women and men farmers who are 18years and above.
- Women who own land and women who do not own land
- Men who allowed their daughters, wives, sisters to own land and men who do not allow their wives, daughters, sisters to own land

Please send the attached letter to the Bujole village officer for the participant's recruitment. There will be no any benefits to participants who will participate in the study. I will visit your office before the research starts so that we can share the timetable and how I will conduct my research.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me through my email.

Sincerely

Asha. H. Shayo

Master's Student – ALCE, Virginia Tech

Litton Reaves Hall (0343)

Blacksburg, VA 24061

Phone- (+1540-251-9250) or (+255-787-503517) or (+255-754-503517)



## Appendix C

### English Recruitment Letter for participants as approved by IRB

Date

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Asha. H. Shayo. I am a graduate student pursuing Masters in Agricultural Leadership and Community Education in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

The purpose of this study is to determine cultural practices that impact women farmers' access to and control over land. You are invited to participate to this study in order to get your fruitful information that will be helpful in Tanzanians societies to learn cultural beliefs that impact women farmers' access to resources especially land. The interview will be unstructured interview which is intended to last for 60-90. The lessons learned from this study will be documented, and hopefully published and presented in conference. This interview will be audio recorded to ensure that I accurately capture your thoughts. There are no financial benefits to participating in this interview.

Your participation in this interview is no way required or compulsory it is rather voluntarily; this is a face to face interview. You have the right to remain anonymous or keep your identity known in this interview. A consent form will be provided to you for review prior to a scheduled interview and you will consent your identity during interview session.

If you would like to participate in this interview, I ask that you please reply to your local leader or myself. I will be pleased to follow up to confirm a date and time that will be convenient to you. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me directly via email (hsasha8@vt.edu) or via phone by calling [+255-787-503517, +255-754-503517, +1-540-251-9250]

If you have complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the staff of Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB), (+ 1 540-231-4991). Thank you very much in advance for your interest in this research and outreach opportunity.

Sincerely

Asha. H. Shayo

Master's Student – ALCE, Virginia Tech

Litton Reaves Hall (0343)

Blacksburg, VA 24061

## Appendix D

### Swahili Recruitment Letter for Participants approved by IRB

Tarehe

Ndugu,

Jina langu ni Asha. H. Shayo. Mimi ni mwanafunzi wa chuo kikuu cha Virginia Tech kilichopo Marekani nasoma shahada ya uzamili ya Uongozi na Elimu ya Jamii.

Ninatarajia kufanya utafiti kuhusu wanawake wakulima na umiliki wa ardhi katika mkoa wa Mwanza na nikiangalia kwa undani mila na desturi za kabila la wasukuma. Tafadhali naomba ushiriki wako katika utafiti huu utakaowezesha kupata taarifa muhimu zinazohusu mila na desturi za kisukuma na umiliki wa ardhi kwa wanawake wakulima. Utafiti utahusisha majadiliano yatakayorekodiwa na yasiyo na mfumo maalum wa maswali utakaofanyika kati ya dakika 60-90. Baada ya mazungumzo nitaandika ripoti ambayo inaweza kuchapishwa au kuwasilishwa kwenye mikutano mbalimbali kadiri tutakavyokubaliana na walimu wangu. Hakuna faida yoyote ya kifedha utakayopata Zaidi ni kutumia maoni yako kuhakikisha yanasaidia serikali na mataifa makubwa kubadili mfumo wa umiliki ardhi kuwa rahisi ili wanawake wakulima waweze kumiliki ardhi na rasilimali kwa ujumla.

Ushiriki wako katika mahojiano haya ni wa hiyari, mahojiano ni ya uso kwa uso na yanatarajiwa kufanyika mahali salama. Una haki ya kutajwa jina au kuweka utambulisho wako kuwa wa siri katika mahojiano haya. Kabla ya kuanza mahojiano nitakusomea au utahakiki barua ya kuonyesha kukubali kwako kushiriki katika mahojiano na kutoa ridhaa ya kufanya mahojiano. Unaruhusiwa kujitoa wakati wowote wa mahojiano haya.

Kama utapenda kushiriki katika mahojiano haya, tafadhali wasiliana na mwenyekiti wa kijiji au mimi binafsi kwa kupiga simu yangu ya mkonon. Nitafika kijijini kuonana nawe ili kupanga siku, mahali na wakati wa kufanya mahojiano. Kama una maswali yoyote, tafadhali wasiliana na mimi moja kwa moja kupitia barua pepe (hsasha8@vt.edu) au kupitia simu kwa kupiga [+ 255-787-503517, + 255-754-503517, + 1-540-251-9250]

Kama una malalamiko, mapendekezo, au maswali kuhusu haki zako za kujitolea utafiti, tafadhali wasiliana na wafanyakazi wa Bodi ya uhakiki wa masuala ya utafiti ya Virginia Tech (IRB), (+ 1 540-231-4991).

Natanguliza shukrani

Asha. H. Shayo

Idara ya uongozi na elimu ya jamii (ALCE), Virginia Tech

Litton Reaves Hall (0343)

Blacksburg, VA 24061

## Appendix E

Participants consent form as approved by IRB

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Informed Consent for Participants  
In Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

**Title of Project: Cultural practices that impact Sukuma women farmers' In Tanzania access and control over land**

**Investigator(s)**

**Rick Rudd**

**rrudd@vt.edu**

**Asha Habibu Shayo**

**hsasha8@vt.edu**

**Donna Westfall- Rudd**

**mooredm@vt.edu**

**Thomas Archibald**

**tgarch@vt.edu**

### **I. Purpose of this Research Project**

The purpose of the research project is to determine cultural beliefs and norms that impact Sukuma women farmers' access and control over land in Mwanza District Tanzania. Research shows that in general women have limits in land use and/or input markets and face serious constraints in agricultural production support services. Also women are rarely the legal holders of title to any land; however, women have access to land resources via the household unit in which males hold formal rights.

### **II. Procedures**

You are being asked to participate in a 60-90 minutes audio-recorded interview in a quiet, safe and private place where you will feel comfortable to provide your information.

### **III. Risks**

The researcher anticipates little to no risks for the study participants.

### **IV. Benefits**

The benefits to society may include a better overall understanding of the cultural practices that impact women farmers' access and control over land. Additionally, investigating the phenomenon experienced by Sukuma tribe will help to further inform other tribes in Africa.

**V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

All personal identification will be separated from transcripts and field notes, to be replaced with pseudonyms. The key relating participants to their respective pseudonyms will be kept in a password protected folder on co-investigators office. Only the research investigators mentioned in the protocol will have access to the pseudonyms and key. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than the investigators without participants' written consent.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

**VI. Compensation**

There is no compensation for participants in this study

**VII. Freedom to Withdraw**

As a participant, it is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to refuse to answer any questions and respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a participant should not continue as a part of the study.

**VIII. Questions or Concerns**

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact Asha Habibu Shayo at hsasha8@vt.edu or Phone number: +1 (540) 251- 9250 or +255-787 503517, or +255-754 503517 or any other research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or +1 (540) 231-4991.

**IX. Subject's Consent**

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject signature**

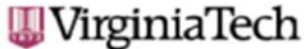
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject printed name**

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**(Note: each subject must be provided a copy of this form. In addition, the IRB office may stamp its approval on the consent document(s) you submit and return the stamped version to you for use in consenting subjects; therefore, ensure each consent document you submit is ready to be read and signed by subjects.)**

## Appendix F.

### Reviewed Research protocol as approved by IRB



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959  
email irb@vt.edu  
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 17, 2016  
**TO:** Rick Rudd, Asha Habibu Shayo  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Cultural practices that impact Sukuma women farmers' In Tanzania access and control over land  
**IRB NUMBER:** 15-687

Effective June 17, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**  
Protocol Approval Date: **July 16, 2016**  
Protocol Expiration Date: **July 15, 2017**  
Continuing Review Due Date\*: **July 1, 2017**

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

# Appendix G

## A Map of Tanzania

