

FORMAL URBAN LAND  
SUPPLY IN KENYA:  
THEORY AND PRACTICE



By

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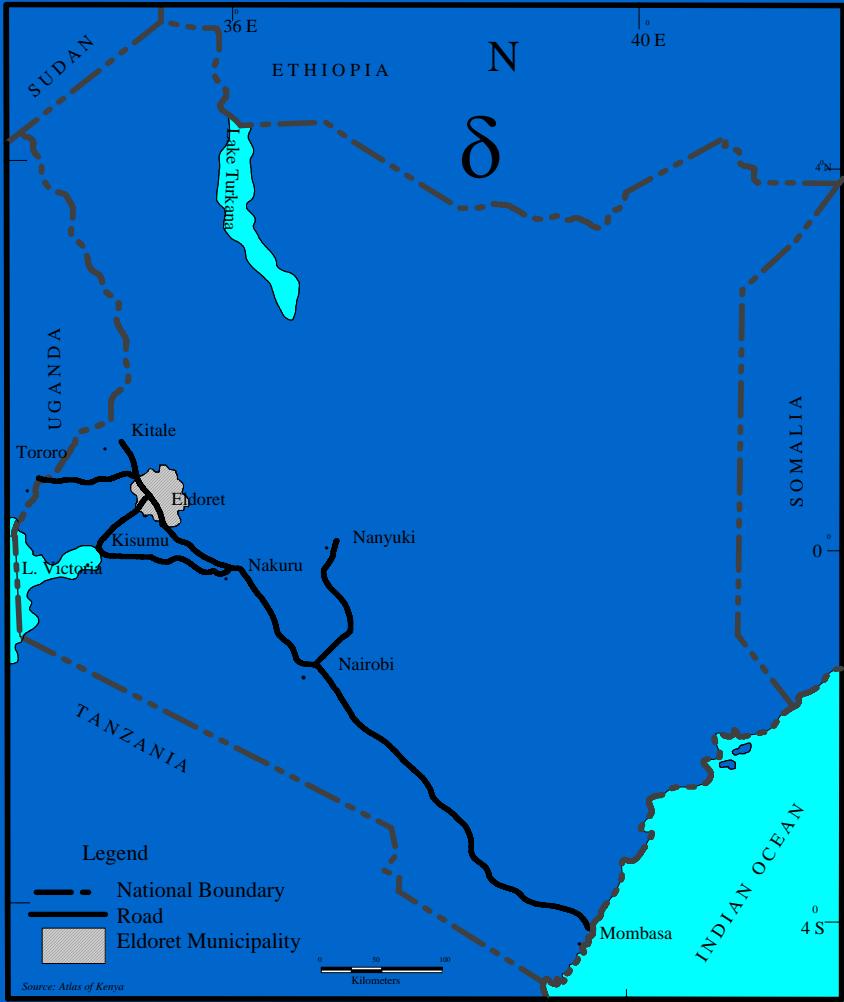
# CONTEXT

- Kenya's colonial history has influenced land access and ownership.
- Land transfer programmes to transfer land to indigenous Kenyans rendered landless through creation of white settlement were in form of settlement schemes, sale of large farms to individuals or land-buying groups.

## CONTEXT CONT'D

- A large farm often informally sub-divided amongst the shareholders.
- Such subdivisions initially took place in the rural areas and were later imported into urban centres.
- These land-buying groups have become important vehicles of delivering land for urban development in Kenya
- Study done in Eldoret, 5th largest city of Kenya and covers 147 sq.km with a current estimated about 214,818 pple. 312kms, NW of Nairobi.

# LOCATION OF ELDORET CITY IN KENYA



## QUESTION EXPLORED

- Do formal land delivery channels meet land needs of the urban poor? If no, why?
- What alternative land supply channels do the poor turn to access land for urban development and what are the policy implications?



# METHODOLOGY

- Study carried out in 2004 and focused on informal urban land delivery processes and access to land for the poor in three informal settlements.
- Study sites selection criteria: age, tenure status, motivation of the land buying group and accessibility.
- Probability and non-probability sampling techniques used - simple random and snowballing.



## METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- Total sample size for hsehld survey 280; 6 FGDs; Several key informant interviews.
- Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques permitted triangulation of the data.
- **Study sites:** *Langas*- 1,050 acres (425 ha.), over 3,360 plots, over 36,000 people.
- *Kamukunji*-585 acres (236 ha), over 600 plots, over 9000 people
- *Munyaka-northeastern*,100 acres (40ha), 969 plots, about 5000 people.

# FORMAL LAND SUPPLY PROCESSES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

- Formal urban land supplied by the government (throu' allocations, special schemes ) and private landowners (formal subdivisions).
- At least 15 steps involved, actions by numerous depts attracting both official and unofficial costs
- Shrouded in secrecy as majority of informal land sector actors don't know. Only 3% of 280 knew
- Benefits those with socio-political and economic networks.



## SPECIAL SCHEMES

- Supply consistently surpassed by demand e.g. in 1972 only 52 low-cost residential plots, 1978 only 96 low-cost units, 1986 one scheme had 571 plots and 1,980 applications, the other had 653 plots and 2,207 applications
- Although this data is Eldoret city-specific, it gives the general picture in urban Kenya
- There is thus a huge deficit between formally produced residential land and the demand.

# LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT LAND SUPPLY CHANNELS

- Publicity about available public land for allocation inadequate: done in Kenya gazette and newspapers
- High poverty and illiteracy levels in Kenya, exclude many people from being reached,
- In practice often plots for allocation not advertised, therefore, not transparent: **“who knows me? Where do I start? How do I know the plots are there in the first place?”**
- These remarks underscore the obscurity of government land allocation process.

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## FORMAL CONVERSION OF PRIVATE LAND FOR URBAN USE

- A 9 step process with each attracting costs
- In practice many circumvent the process and subdivide their land informally
- Also, formally produced land too expensive for the poor

# ALTERNATIVE URBAN LAND SUPPLY PROCESSES

- Majority of those seeking housing plots acquire them through informal land delivery process.
- Faster, cheaper, flexible, attractive terms of payment, innovative.
- Thus majority of those seeking housing plots acquire them through buying (93%).
- The scale of informal land subdivisions attests to their importance as depicted in slide 7.

## WHO ACCESSES LAND INFORMALLY?

- **SE charstics: employed (83%), unemployed (17%), educated and uneducated had accessed land informally but a higher % with low education.**
- **Study used possessions as proxy for wealth. Ownership of certain possessions in Kenya generally associated with not being poor: Two or more of : television, telephone (fixed line not cell phone), large gas cooker, electric cooker, vehicle or urban house.**
- **Non-poor were (39%), and the poor (61%)**
- **Informal land transactions attract land seekers from all socio-economic classes.**

## CONCLUSIONS, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Formal urban land delivery channels unable to cope with demand due to their limitations.**
- **Informal urban land delivery channels have emerged to meet the unmet demand and should be officially recognized. In Eldoret, well accommodated by formal.**
- **Formal policy of accessing land is for the most part circumvented.**
- **Future research: Need to investigate the effect of the innovative land documents used in informal land transactions on the land market.**