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Land tenure systems and fertility changes in rural areas
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This study has investigated and identified influence of land systems on human fertility. Land availability and ownership modality were investigated in Kilimanjaro and their effect on child ever born and desired family size as measures of fertility. Land system variables covered were: size of the holding, acquisition of and land transfer to new generation. Demographic and socio-metric variables covered were husband's age when he acquired land, husband's and wife's age at first marriage; and wife's age at first birth, as well as number of children ever born. Other variables included are place of usual residence, education level and employment status for parents and children as well. Psycho-social factors regarding value of children were also examined. Data were collected through interviews, documentary reviews, discussions and field observation. Data presentation has been in the form of figures, tables, bar graphs and plates. Descriptive analysis was utilized to identify characteristics of the study population and identify significant variables influencing fertility. Regression and correlation analyses are used to explain household variables in relation to children ever born. Outcome of the study has advanced the argument that land ownership and size of the holding have effect on human fertility. The size of the holding to which a family has access influence fertility primarily through (economic) contributions of children. Land ownership also have negative effects on fertility by altering the dependency of parents on children for old-age security. Both factors may also influence fertility and the surviving children by increasing income. Availability, accessibility and timing of land ownership is hypothesized to influence fertility through proximate determinants. Marriage was found to be influenced by land acquisition. Individuals with high probability of acquiring land in rural areas marry earlier. Households with access to larger holdings have greater labour requirement are able to employ profitably more family labour and this incentive encourage continued high fertility in rural areas. Effects on the proximate determinants, the economic contribution of children, the intermediate variables and decision-making environment are important issues for further research. Improved knowledge on the connection between land and fertility will likely provide some solutions to difficult questions as to how nations might lower their fertility and hence slow population growth. Changes in basic institutional arrangements such as those governing access to land may provide the necessary data for social and economic planning.