

**Power of Coincidence:
Agrarian Change in Mamire Village - Tanzania (1992-2012)**

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The paper is based on interviews with key informants during a brief field visit in August 2012. The researcher returned to the area in Tanzania where he wrote his PhD thesis, starting 20 years ago. The thesis (presented 1996), with the title “Society and Environment Eroded” painted a gloomy picture of decreasing soil fertility, soil erosion, overgrazing, and increasing social stratification. Recent brief visits (in 2008, 2009 and 2011) pictured an area that had become remarkably greener, with more diversified cropping, improvements in the infrastructure, more shops and business, etc.

The central theory is Henry Bernstein’s “simple reproduction squeeze” pointing out declining terms of trade for agricultural products as the driving force of agricultural change, requiring intensified production. The squeeze hence often results in overuse and degradation of both natural and human resources. The situation in most of the 1990s could definitely be explained by the “squeeze”.

The study has three central questions; is the perceived picture of social and ecological improvements confirmed when properly investigated? What are the social structures behind this seemingly positive development? Is Henry Bernstein’s simple reproduction squeeze still a valid theory to explain the agrarian change in the two villages?

The study confirms the picture of progress both in the agrarian economy and in ecological sustainability. When it comes to the reasons behind this change, the results indicates that no single factor could be pointed out but that rather a combination of factors such as growth of the national economy, the work of extension and aid and demographic changes coincide and thereby facilitate the change.

Key words: Tanzania, Agrarian change, Deagrarianisation