

Land consolidation as Central Europe's panacea reassessed

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Foreign expertise in Central Europe

- TAMA pilot in four Hungarian villages
- Land Tenure Centre in Albania
- Bulgarian pilot by Dutch Kadaster

- Fall socialism coincided with fall Western workload

- Danger: 'Solution-oriented' instead of 'Problem-oriented'

Historical background

Land under socialism

- Pooling individual rights on land use into large units
- State farms: transfer of full ownership
- Cooperatives: transfer of right of use
- Private plots
- Various balances
(Bulgaria: 21/78/10 | Poland: 18/4/78)

Historical background:

Privatisation of land

- Restitution: reuniting original parcel and owner (BU)
- Distribution: offering comparable land (RO)
- Compensation: offering alternative assets (HU)
- Sale: selling to any buyer (PO)

Depending on:

- Ownership situation at outset of reforms
- Distribution over ethnic group resulting from reforms
- Nature of pre-collectivised land ownership

Situation at hand:

Central European land fragmentation

- Cause differs from Western Europe
- Bimodality in land use
- Poland: 76% of TAL private, on average 6.3 ha
Hungary: 17% of TAL private, on average 0.81 ha
Bulgaria: 53% of TAL private, on average 1.48 ha
Romania: 52% of TAL private, on average 1.94
(data of around 1995)

Is it a problem and to whom?

- Productivity versus employment
- Depending on political level

The pitfall

- Multiple meaning of 'fragmentation'
- Ownership fragmentation
- Fragmentation of land use (farm size)
- Internal fragmentation (number of parcels)
- Divide between ownership and use

Strategic choice

- Matching problem and target
- Matching prerequisites and local conditions
- Land banking is more important now

Complications to land consolidation

- Unfavourable macro-economic conditions
- Absentee ownership
- Emotional attachment to land
- Infrastructure unsuited to middle-size farming
- Unfinished privatisation

Conclusion

- Thorough testing of applicability of land consolidation, i.e. middle-sized farms with internal fragmentation
- Coping with specific local conditions
- Keep it community-driven and monofunctional