

Summary of Dissertation and Report on Examination Result

Tetsushi Sonobe (Main advisor)

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Title of dissertation: An Inquiry into the Evolution of Land Institutions and its Implications for Land Tenure Security, Land Transactions and Agricultural Productivity: Evidence from Rural Uganda
『土地制度の進化とそれが土地保有権の保障と土地の貸借売買および農業生産性に及ぼした影響：ウガンダの農村における実証研究』

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Summary of the dissertation

In sub-Saharan African (SSA), communal land ownership and tenure insecurity are still prevalent. While it is believed that land institutions in SSA are continuously evolving from such customary ones towards private land ownership in response to population growth and economic dynamics, few empirical studies have been conducted to examine factors associated the evolution. While the weakening of the customary land institutions are said to be one of the major causes of the increasing incidence of land conflict, which poses a threat to food security in Africa, the causes and consequences of these conflicts have seldom been examined rigorously.

This study is an attempt to fill these gaps in knowledge by using community-, household-, and parcel-level data collected from rural Uganda in 2003 and 2012. Uganda presents an interesting case for this purpose because different communities within this country have exhibited varying degrees of land institution evolution. After developing testable hypotheses based on the literature on land institutions, agricultural productivity, and land conflicts, the dissertation explores the roles of rural-to-rural migration, ethnic diversity, and population pressure in shaping the evolution of land

institutions from communal to private land ownership in rural Uganda. It then examines how these changes in land institutions from communal to private land ownership have affected land transactions and production efficiency. The dissertation also analyzes the association between the land institution evolution and land conflicts and evaluates the impact of land conflicts on agriculture productivity in Uganda.

The dissertation finds, among other things, that there were a considerable increase in the number of privately-owned parcels and a considerable decrease in communally-owned parcels during the period of 2003 – 2012, and that the evolution of land institution was indirectly affected by the increasing population density through the increase in rural-to-rural migration. It is also found that while farm-size and productivity are inversely related in parcels under communal ownership, such a relationship does not exist under private land ownership, suggesting that private ownership promotes production efficiency. Another major finding is that land conflict, which reduces the yield by 20 percent, is more likely to take place in migrant-host communities and ethnically diverse communities. These findings suggest that while rural-to-rural migration and ethnic diversity have, through weakening customary institutions, increased private land ownership, land transactions, and production efficiency, the migration has also weakened the customary mechanisms of informal conflict resolution leading to the increase in land conflicts.

The earlier versions of the main chapters of the dissertation were presented at several workshops held by GRIPS and other organizations including the World Bank and got a favorable reception. Journal versions are expected to be submitted to journals before the applicant leaves Japan at the end of September 2015.

Examination result

The defense of the dissertation was presented on the early afternoon of June 10, which was followed by the thesis committee meeting consisting of Prof. Keijiro Otsuka, Prof. Chikako Yamauchi, Prof. Tomoya Matsumoto, Dr. Kazushi Takahashi (external reviewer from the Institute of Development Economics), Prof. Alistair Munro (on behalf of the chairperson of the PhD Programs committee), and Prof. Tetsushi Sonobe (main advisor). The committee members generally had a high opinion of the quality of the dissertation, especially its well-organized review of the vast literature and its solid

analysis of the data. They made the following comments and suggestions:

1. Some promising directions for extending the data analysis and for checking the robustness of the analysis were suggested. The first was to try other specifications of the regression equation explaining land transaction, such as the nested logit model and the multinomial probit model, so that the correlation of error terms is allowed among different land acquisition modes. The second was to include three explanatory variables of interest together rather than separately in the regression equation explaining private land ownership. The third was to use the probit or logit model where the linear probability model was used.
2. Two comments on the conceptual framework were made. One was to revise a flow chart so as to make it clear that the framework covers the impact of private ownership on land transaction. The other was to discuss the estimated coefficients that are not directly related to the hypotheses advanced by this study but may indicate that some other interpretations than the hypotheses are possible.
3. It was pointed out that some points raised by the concluding chapter as policy implications are not firmly based on the analysis and should be deleted.
4. More information on the sampling scheme of the data used should be provided.

The committee members agreed unanimously to accept the dissertation and to entrust the main advisor with the task of verifying that revisions are made appropriately based on the above comments and suggestions.

The revised dissertation, together with the point-by-point response to the suggestions, was submitted to me on August 8, 2014. I as the main advisor am pleased to confirm the completion of all the necessary revisions. Thus, the committee recommends Francis Mwesigye for the PhD degree.