

EMERGING LAND ISSUES IN AFRICAN AGRICULTURE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Background and Motivation

International Food Policy Research Institute
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Motivation

1. Observation that Boserup theory may be wanting....

Motivation

2. Conflicting perceptions about land availability in SSA
3. Estimates to date on unutilized arable land are admittedly crude:
 - e.g., Fisher-Shah estimate 201 million ha (40% of world total) in SSA, though highly concentrated in 5 countries.
 - How accurate are those estimates?
 - Sensitive to assumptions?
 - Many important private / public decisions hinge on this estimate

Motivation

4. Recent advances in merging detailed information on 1 km² pixels with farm survey data
 - Opens up possibility of new analysis linking localized population density to
 - Input demand / land intensification
 - farm productivity
 - household welfare.

Proposal for special issue of *Food Policy*

1. *5 African case studies*
2. *2 Asian case studies*
3. *Cross-country analysis to assess the ways in which rural communities are responding to rising pop density*
4. *Assessment of unutilized land in SSA*
5. *Land and water issues*
6. *Mechanization and intensification*
7. *Rise of Emergent farmers*
8. *Land tenure issues in Africa – cross country review of 9 countries*

Salient research questions

1. How are rural communities and farming systems responding/adapting to rising population density and land constraints?
 - Land intensification
 - migration?
 - diversification into off-farm employment?
 - fertility rates?
 - Other routes?

Salient research questions

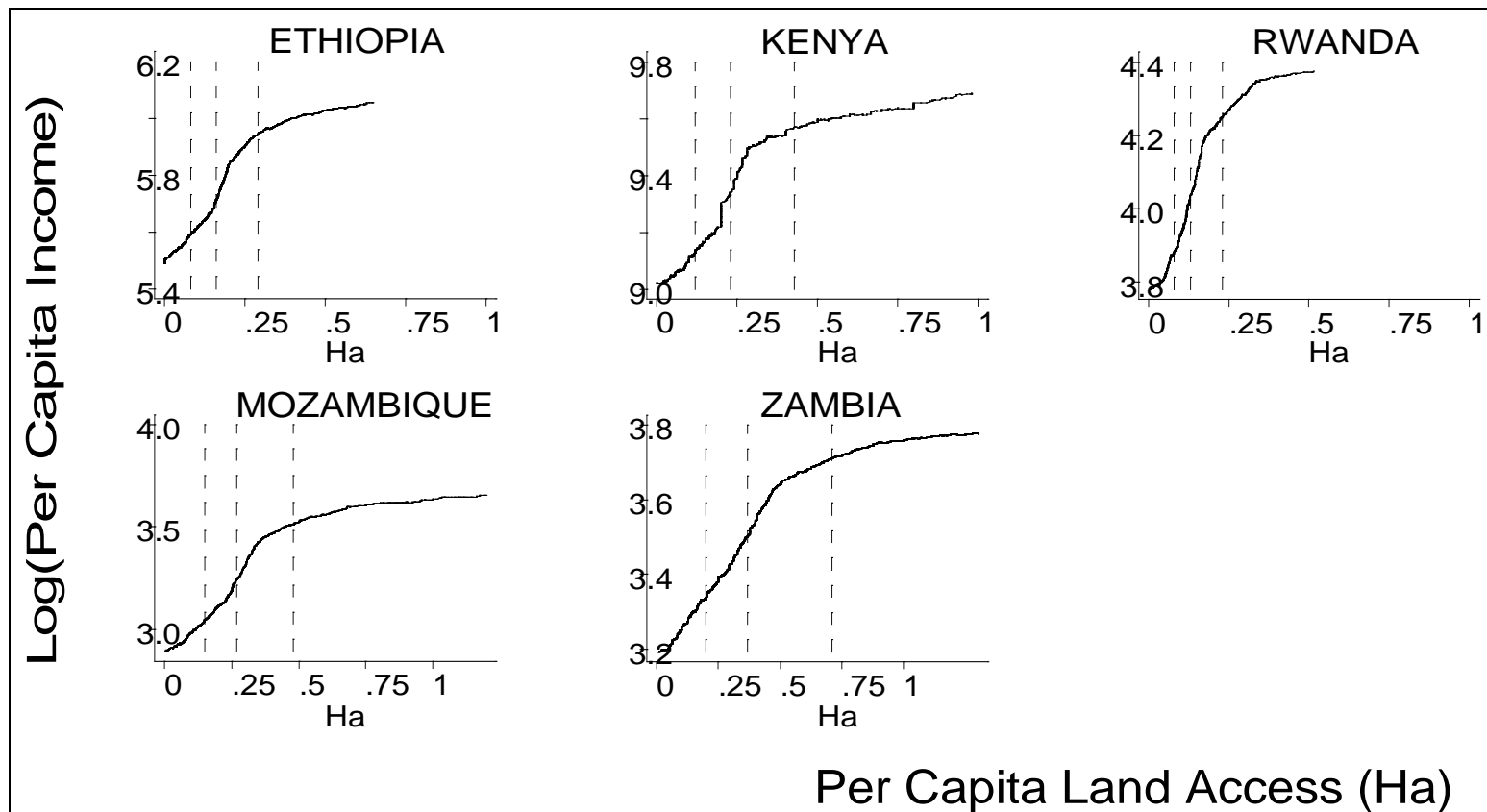
2. Unutilized vs. unclaimed land – policy significance?
3. Smallholder-led vs. large/commercial-led development? Synergies or trade-offs?

Salient research questions

4. Appropriate rural development strategies for densely populated rural areas?
 - Is the Johnston/Mellor structural transformation process still the future for SSA?
 - If not, then how?

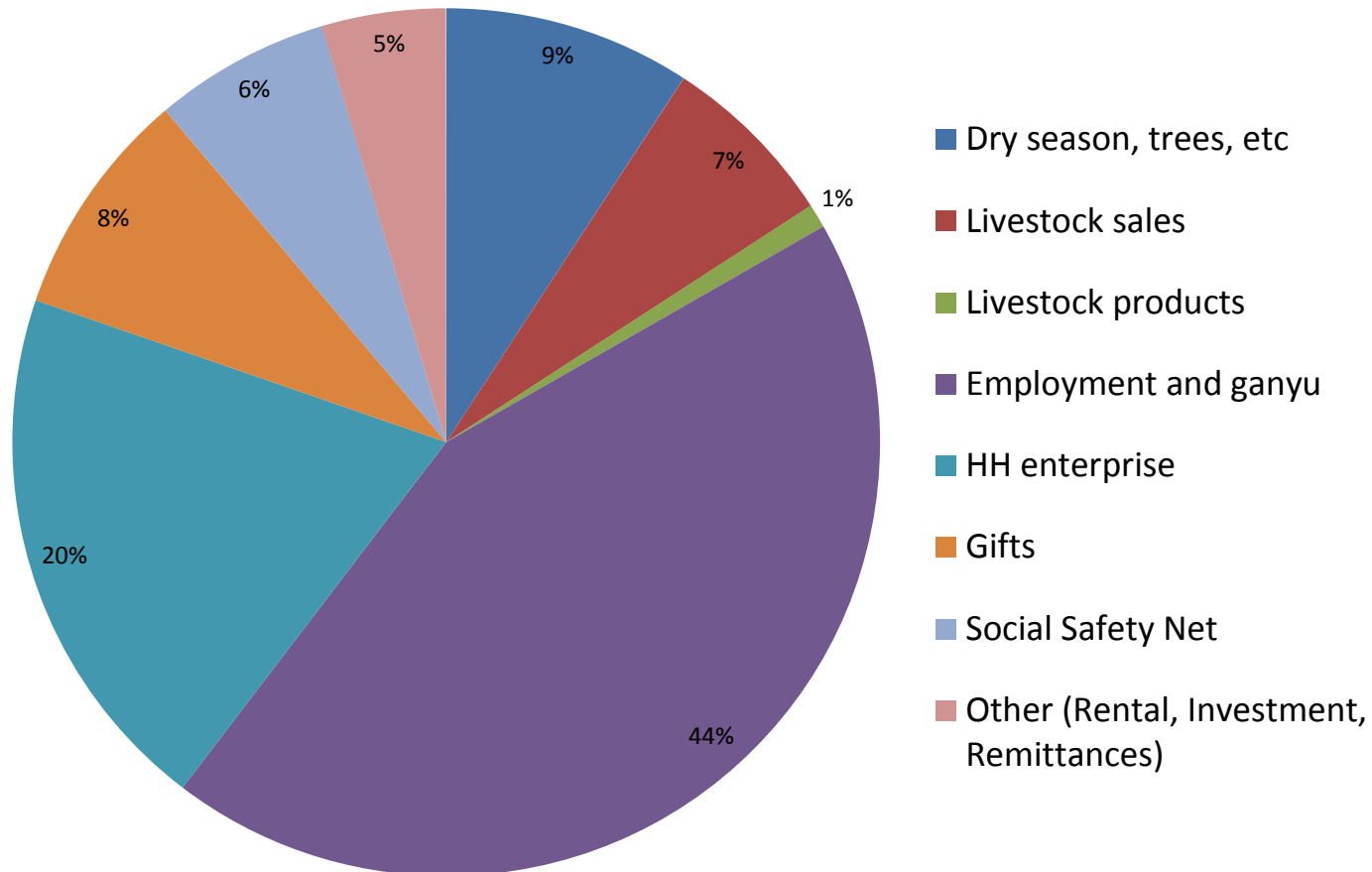
Let's be like Wayne Gretsky

Bivariate relationship between Farm Size and Total HH Income



Note: The vertical lines are drawn at 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles of per capita land owned for each country. The top 5 percent of observations are excluded from the graphs because lines are sensitive to a few extreme cases.

Share of Income from Sources Other Than Rainy-Season Crops during the 2008/09 season



Descriptive statistics suggest households being “pushed” into off-farm activities.