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DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS**

1. ProQuest Digital Dissertations

Essays on credit and savings in rural India

Publication Number AAT 3205674

Ravi, Shamika, Ph.D., New York University (U.S.A.), 2006, 123 pages, Advisor: Murdugh, Jonathan.

This thesis comprises of three essays on credit and savings in rural India. They are based on survey of 720 households conducted across 21 villages of Uttar Pradesh and Kerala, India. The first essay examines access to credit in rural India and how responses to risk are affected by a household's access to credit. To measure a household's access to credit, I develop an equilibrium model of sorting based on random utility approach. I consider all sources of credit within a rural community and include production as well as non-production credit such as medical and consumption loans. The early results reveal that traditional approach would lead to biased estimates of access to credit because the predominant sources of credit are community level mechanisms of cooperation, despite the presence of specialized rural banks and local moneylenders. This mechanism of mutual cooperation takes two forms, informal cooperation between family and friends in the community and institutional cooperation where community members form a cooperative society. I provide empirical support for the view that households with access to institutionalized cooperation are better able to deal with income shocks than households that rely on informal cooperation. I am able to do this by comparing data for 720 rural households that I collected from two Indian states, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. The results indicate that households that have access to institutionalized cooperation within the community are significantly less likely to cut consumption and production expenditure when they are faced with an income shock. The second essay provides support to the general premise that having better ways to save can lead to better ways to borrow. In a typical framework, households borrow, invest and then repay the loan with interest. If households can save without difficulty, they should be able

to follow any repayment frequency. In a standard economic model, there is no room for immediate pressures. However, in reality, it is likely that income gets diverted into miscellaneous expenses. If households realize this, then it is possible that they tie the repayment schedule of a loan to their income schedule. In this paper, I provide a simple model and empirical support to illustrate this point. The results indicate that a household which faces savings constraint is 32 percent more likely to tie a loan repayment schedule with its income schedule and pays 3.6 percent higher annual interest rate to do so. The third essay examines the effects of income shock on savings decision of a household. In particular, it analyzes how an idiosyncratic income shock affects the composition of asset portfolios held by a household. It shows that income volatility contributes to poverty of rural households by leading them to reduce stocks of productive assets in order to accumulate liquid assets. Health related income shocks are significantly likely to do so, in addition to the weather related income shocks. This suggests that policy interventions in health infrastructure might have a substantial impact on rural income and wellbeing.

The expansion of the concept of Fair Trade to increase the economic welfare of rural farmers in Ghana: A case study of the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Cooperative

Publication Number AAT 1428614

Addae, Charles, M.A., University of Massachusetts Lowell (U.S.A.), 2005, 106 pages, Advisor: Moss, Philip.

While the guaranteed and higher Fair Trade (FT) prices plus premiums that are paid to the primary producers of the Global South are by all indications the best deal these often poor rural producers could ever hope for, in their aspirations for better life, the world market share of FT and its affiliated producer-organizations in the South is limited. Using the fair-trade-based Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Cooperative (KKFC) in Ghana as the basis for this study, the research explores other means in which FT in general, and the cocoa-farmer's cooperative in particular, could additionally increase their world market shares. This would enable KKFC to positively influence the well-being of many more cocoa producers in Ghana, as the organization is currently only able to cater to a small percentage of cocoa producers. The study discusses pertinent issues in Ghana's cocoa production and FT, and makes recommendations to achieve the further expansion capabilities of KKFC and FT.

Confronting the coffee crisis: Nicaraguan farmers use of cooperative, Fair Trade and agroecological networks to negotiate livelihoods and sustainability

Publication Number AAT 3191875

Bacon, Christopher M., Ph.D., University of California, Santa Cruz (U.S.A.), 2005, 359 pages, Advisor: Gleissman, Stephen R.

This dissertation poses an interdisciplinary approach to assess smallholders' vulnerabilities and opportunities for sustainable rural development as the global coffee industry restructures. Prices crashed in commercial coffee commodity markets from 1999-2003. Simultaneous to the crisis in commodity prices, alternative trade and production networks, including both certified Fair Trade and organic coffees, have continued rapid growth. 'Confronting the coffee crisis' uses livelihood vulnerability, gendered empowerment processes and agro-biodiversity as three interrelated evaluative concepts. These concepts provide points of contact to advance dialogues among the fields of political ecology, agroecology, development studies and rural sociology. Three participatory action-research cycles involving more than 16 cooperatives and 300 Nicaraguan small-scale coffee farmers generated data from multiple sources and supported farmer cooperatives as they struggled to mitigate damage from the coffee crisis and towards achieving their self-defined goals. The findings show that farmers linked to cooperatives and alternative trade networks are less vulnerable to the coffee crisis than those connected only to conventional networks. They also reveal the hybridities within current coffee production and trade practices, including the fact that farmers and cooperatives linked to Fair Trade networks also sell into conventional coffee markets. A comparative analysis of the gendered empowerment process highlights the importance of land reform and collective struggles, demonstrates that certified organic coffee farmers do not necessarily provide more opportunities for women's empowerment, and illustrates the positive social development impacts following the combined efforts of women's grassroots organizing, participation in larger second-level cooperatives and links to international alternative trade and development networks. This study also documented the high levels of agro-biodiversity as measured by coffee shade tree species richness and the presence of orchids. Alternatives reveal their importance during crises in conventional systems. While most smallholders have suffered from the crisis, some have found that their farms, second level cooperatives and links to international alternative trade networks can help reduce vulnerability, conserve agro-biodiversity and support empowerment processes.

A case study of farmers joining together to create change: Perceptions and experiences of Agricultural Guild leaders and members

Publication Number AAT 3182265

Frerichs, Rita Lorene, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U.S.A.), 2005, 306 pages, Advisor: Sofranko, Andrew.

Current agricultural trends have revived discussions of the need for organized and cooperative action on the part of commercial Midwestern farmers. The prevailing belief is that without some form of organization and greater interest in “downstream” activities farmers will remain “price-takers” and, ultimately, end up losing out on opportunities for producing value-added grain. Alliances, guilds, and other forms of organization are thus seen as mechanisms for addressing a variety of farmers' needs. How these groups form, how successful they have been in achieving their stated goals, and the organizational structure that will ensure their continued success is not well understood. This dissertation uses a multi-method approach, consisting of in-depth face-to-face interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and survey data. It weaves together several theoretical perspectives and strands of community research to document the experience of a group of progressive farmers who have formed a ‘Guild’. It focuses specifically on their efforts at, and interest in, joining together to, in effect, produce “social capital.” The research examines, over a four-year period, the process through which farmers organized and cooperated in the production of a consumer-demanded, specialty grain. Considerable attention is given to the network structure that is put in place to successfully achieve a working community of committed members. The findings show that the Guild has been able to tap into and create community social capital. The leaders gained initial support for the Guild by building upon the strength of existing local social networks and institutional linkages that exist in rural communities. An examination of motives for joining the Guild indicate that in the face of an agricultural system increasingly defined by a new, differentiated market structure, members mainly joined the Guild to satisfy an overarching need for agricultural information and knowledge. Implications of the findings are discussed for two major areas of concern. The first is an understanding of how some of the farmers' basic problems were addressed in creating a network that would provide them with information and greater leverage in securing new market opportunities and higher income; and second, for sustaining Guild membership over the next decade or so. Express, overall concern is with gaining a clearer, more in-depth understanding of how contemporary farmers, from their embedded position in the local landscape, are working their way into global production chains.

Culture, history, and property rights in the emergence of groundwater irrigation: Cochabamba, Bolivia

Publication Number AAT 3198192

Stallings, Anne Marie, Ph.D., The Catholic University of America (U.S.A.), 2006, 256 pages, Advisor:Guillet, David W.

In Bolivia's Cochabamba valley, many sectors have turned to groundwater to alleviate chronic water shortages. As such, small-scale farmers have formed cooperatives to install deep irrigation wells and electric pumps. Likewise, they have devised institutions to manage the wells and the distribution of groundwater. Despite descriptions in the popular media and development literature of a chaotic process, the farmers' groundwater exploitation has not emerged in a cultural vacuum. Instead, Andean surface water irrigation has a long history and a rich body of cultural principles that inform it, although these principles appear in variant forms in different contexts. This research analyzed the emergence of property rights and the institutional arrangements that order the use and management of groundwater by farmers in Cochabamba, with a focus on the manner in which Andean concepts of natural resource management, local history, and non-materialistic valuations of property affect the institutions. Research was conducted in a rural community over a one-year period, from August 2001 to September 2002. Participant observation, informal and formal interviewing, archival research, and a survey were the primary means of obtaining data. Economic, cultural, and historical factors were found to contribute to the creation and evolution of the institutions employed in Cochabamba's communal groundwater irrigation. The irrigators drew on their vast experience in surface water irrigation and applied, adapted, and shifted the principles that have informed their irrigation for centuries. While several institutions in Cochabamba's groundwater irrigation systems are common cross-culturally, many are uniquely Andean. In particular, groundwater irrigation's monetary context leads to differences in surface water and groundwater irrigation institutions. Moreover, groundwater carries different sentiments and expectations than surface water, leading to differences in how the two types of water are held, viewed, and managed, and the manner in which Andean concepts of natural resource management are manifested in each.

2. Dissertation Abstracts International

Process of Organized Action of a Group of Peasants of Fonds Jean-Noel, Jacmel, Haiti

Unique Identifier: DANQ96356

Dominique, Jerome. University of Montreal (Canada), 2005.

In the eighties, an organizational movement began to rise in Haiti. On account of "ONG Invasion" (Pierre-Etienne, 1997) as well as the alphabetization action done by the Catholic Church, numerous parts of the population were seized by a feverish urge for organization. The people's organization (Smarth, 1998) is responsible for the change. The peasants "cooperate" in agricultural organization for improving their social, economic and political conditions. The objective of this thesis is to study how the group of Fonds-Jean-Noel's peasants, located in a town named Marigot which is close to Jacmel, built their organization. This thesis is structured around two main ideas, organization and cooperation, since, from the beginning of the study, the peasants always mention the importance to have cooperation next to organization. Two hypotheses are then proposed: (1) the organization which is involved in economic, social and structural fields to show the concerns about improving life conditions, (2) the cooperation which is expressed according to the type of interaction (mechanic or organic solidarity). The organizational approach (Friedberg, 1997), particularly the interdependence and interactions between actors allow us to visualize the information under a "political" angle where the actor and the system contingency shape the rationale behind the way the peasants build their organization. The method used to collect the data was qualitative. A comprehensive approach was chosen which gives a lot of importance to peasant actions. The results show the following points: the system of action that the peasant want to build is structured by a dialectic movement starting from the organization of their agricultural action toward the cooperation among themselves; the organization for the peasants is a context of action where their behaviours are chosen and calculated (strategic); the economic dimension of their organized action has priority however, over their social (community) and structural preoccupations also play a role; coffee and food production constitute the economic pillar of the action organized by the peasants; from an organizational point of view, action organized by the peasants is in a structuring dialectic; cooperation between peasants among themselves is the core of the problem that peasants' collective action have to solve; they are three rationales on which the cooperation system between peasants is based: (1) their cultural interdependencies justified by their concrete vital experiences of "lakou"

and "koumbit," (2) their contingencies and strategic interactions that are inspired by the stabilization of their organization, (3) the implementation of the mechanisms for the construction of mechanic and organic solidarity; in an organization considered in its construction process, the comprehensive methodology can be viewed as a viable setting for an analytical treatment of observed facts.

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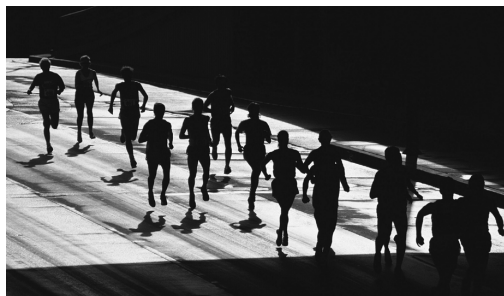
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