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主 論 文 の 要 旨

論文題目

Local People's Strategies to Cope with Land Degradation: Understanding the Role of Traditional Leaders in Yassa-Munene Village in the Democratic Republic of Congo
(土地の劣化に対処する地元住民の戦略：コンゴ民主共和国ヤサ・ムネネ村の伝統的リーダーの役割)

氏 名

ONKEN Dady Ingwen

論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

This dissertation is entitled *Local People's Strategies to Cope with Land Degradation: Understanding the Role of Traditional Leaders in Yassa-Munene Village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. The aim of the study is to examine local farmers' strategies to cope with land degradation in Yassa-Munene village, and to analyze why farmers choose the strategies they adopt and apply to deal with the degradation issue in their village.

The present study observes that today more than ever, the interest in understanding local people's strategies to cope with land degradation has grown among scholars and policy-makers. However, it has been observed that most of the studies that investigated land degradation issue have only examined the degradation process and described farmers' strategies to deal with the degradation without placing attention on understanding the factors influencing farmers' decisions and reasons that cause them to choose innovative strategies they adopt.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters and an Appendix. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the dissertation. The chapter is constituted of the problem statement, the objectives of the study, significance of the study, the research question, the argument and the structure of the entire dissertation, scope and limitation of the study and the structure of the dissertation. Chapter 2 reviews the body of literature on local people's land management strategies and the role of traditional leaders' institutions. Various studies consulted in this respect have provided the information on what have been the common strategies adopted by farmers, national government, international and national NGOs, the local actors such as traditional leaders (also called traditional authorities), farmers and so on. The common strategies to deal with the degradation at the local community level have been the adoption of new varieties of crops, new practices, migration, out-farm activities, abandonment of activities or crops and destocking. The chapter has also provided insights on the major role played by traditional authorities (traditional leaders). Traditional leaders are seen simply as project coordinators, mediators between villagers and external actors, intermediaries between farmers, spiritual figure, and sacred, symbol of unity, norms and natural resources keepers and so on. Chapter 3 provides the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. The field work was conducted in Yassa-Munene village of the RD Congo from April 2014 and September 2014. To collect the data, the methodology that the study adopted has been the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). It is based on PRA techniques such as

interviews, transect walk, discussion, mapping and so on. For the analysis it adopted the framework for traditional local institution analysis in land management. The framework has been used in most of the studies concerning land management and strategies to cope with land degradation in Africa, especially in West and East Africa. Here emphasis has been put on the major role played by different actors in the village, and that of traditional leaders in the local communities. Chapter 4 provides the study findings in Yassa-Munene village. The findings of this study, as described in the chapter, revealed that farmers' major strategies are based on customary practices, adoptions and innovations in farming and non-farming activities. The strategies identified in the village are various. Among some of these strategies are: the building of furrows, the making of fences, the agroforestry, the local solidarity, the new crop adoptions, the livestock killing or destocking, the land size extension, the intensification, the crop rotation, and many others. These strategies are structured and guided by the traditional leaders. The major traditional institutions or actors that have always supported farmers' actions in this context are institutions called: traditional leaders, clans, families, diviners, witchcraft men etc. In order to explain the role of these institutions towards land use and activities, a body of literature had previously argued that farmers' decisions to choose strategies are often based on the land users' interest in direct and indirect cost and benefits of the undertaken strategies, in term of yield, time and cash. The factors to consider or to take into account in their decisions are included within the categories such as: the farmers' behavior, the tradition, the economy aspect, physical aspect and work load.

Chapter 5 is the analysis of the data. Using the framework for traditional local institution analysis in land management, this study argues that farmers' decisions to adopt or reject innovative strategies in Yassa-Munene village case are mostly based on the local traditional leaders' will and approach to implement land management strategies. The traditional leaders actually play a central role as custodians, resources controllers, mediators and advisors. But they are also exemplars, models, key actors, risk takers and 'servants' or helpers of the community in implementing innovations. They are considered as the 'well informed' and 'well educated' in resources management than ordinary farmers. This study reveals particularly that all the major past innovations have successfully been adopted in the village with and through local traditional leaders' involvement and decisions; neither they have been through the farmers' own and personal initiatives or through the initiative of the external actors.

Chapter 6 is a general conclusion. It attempts to summarize the study's findings and suggests recommendations for future research and future actions to be taken in the village or in the similar situations. Finally, the Appendix provides some the complementation information. Most of the information is on the village historical time line, the land situation, the undergoing land degradation issues (summary of degradation problem, causes, and consequences), the land management practices, the names of the informants and the list of some of the questionnaires used to investigated the situation in the villages in 2014. Some pictures of the villages were presented in order to understand the village condition, the ancient leaders' and the environment around the village. All the information presented help understand well the findings provided in Chapter 4 and the analysis of the data provided in Chapter 5. Without these descriptions the data would be incomplete.

In respect to the problems and findings identified, this study had made a number of recommendations for future research and for development work in the locality. Among these recommendations, are the needs to support local traditional institutions (particularly traditional leaders). Traditional leaders' power and authority should be acknowledged and respected. Their property right also needs to be acknowledged. They should be given the opportunity to learn new things, as their play important role in villagers' decisions. This study recommends then the need to strengthen local farmers' capacity and resilience at the community and individual level. Because

there have been identified many constraints and lack of capital assets that are necessary for any land management practice. This refers to financial, physical, human, social and natural capital assets. These assets can enable their access to information, education, actions and increase their capacity to play a positive role in the community. However, based on the study's limitations, this investigation suggests that further studies are needed in order to provide more information and quantitative data necessary for sustainable development and avoid more degradation of land at the local level. Still, while this study acknowledges that leaders' role can provide a vital social insurance during crisis and that it can encourage trust in the new attempts, it is also acknowledged here that in the future this role can become an obstacle or a constraint for peasants to voluntary take initiatives without depending on the local leaders. Besides that, this study observes also that the current weakening of traditional institutions, particularly the weakening of traditional leaders' authority in the country (and at the local community level), the changing socio-political and ecological situation or land degradation in the village, and farmers' inaccessibility to various assets, may not enable leaders to be up-dated and continue to play their historical role in the modern context. It can be predicted that this situation could unfortunately lead into more degradation of the land, can cause more poverty, famine or local conflicts at the family, locality or in the region level.