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Social institutions and norms in the developing world

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Social Institutions and Norms in the Developing World

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The aim of this research is to improve the understanding of theoretical mechanisms sustaining social institutions and norms as well as their economic consequences in the developing world.. To meet this research objective, two empirical studies using micro-level data are conducted.

Village Vigilante Groups in Northern Tanzania: Implications for Cooperation under Elite Control (Yuya Kudo)

Recent evidence suggests that indigenous institutions and traditional leaders play a significant role in explaining African economic development compared with state and democratic institutions (e.g., Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2014, 2015). This empirical regularity calls for more micro-level economic research on whether or not cultural institutions shape economic development, how they emerge, and their interplay with national policies (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013, p. 149). Accordingly, several recent studies have examined geographic and climate factors as a root cause of pre-colonial ethnic institutions (e.g., Alsan, 2015; Fenske, 2014). However, relevant research, particularly addressing how such nondemocratic foundations can long maintain their political and economic influence while keeping accountability to local communities, still remains scarce, with only a few exceptions (e.g., Acemoglu et al., 2014; Baldwin, 2015).

This study explores whether and how local elites organize native vigilante groups in northern Tanzania, called *sungusungu* (meaning a species of large black biting ant in Kiswahili), and provides suggestive evidence of the mechanism. In northern Tanzania, local elders established *sungusungu* in the early 1980s in response to rising rates of violent cattle rustling (e.g., Bukurura, 1994, 1995a) and these grassroots justice organizations spread fairly quickly across villages in areas inhabited by the Nyamwezi and Sukuma (NS) ethnic groups with a population of around four million. For about 40 years, *sungusungu* have actively dealt with property crimes and local disputes in a self-enforcing manner (Abrahams, 1987).¹ In *sungusungu*, all able-bodied villagers cooperate in mandatory activities, surprisingly, with little or no free riding. The wealth of information on *sungusungu* provided by anthropological and ethnographic studies as well as my field surveys in Tanzania facilitates the exploration of local elites' responsibilities (e.g., Abrahams, 1965, 1967; Bukurura, 1995b).

Sungusungu should also be given considerable attention from a policy perspective in the developing world because peace and security are indispensable to economic development. In response to

¹The Sukuma and the Nyamwezi are respectively the first and second largest ethnic groups in Tanzania and exhibit similarities in general culture and political organization (Abrahams, 1967; Cory, 1954).

local security issues, which are now globally shifting from conflict to nonconflict settings (Krause, 2016; OECD, 2016), researchers and policymakers have long debated the usefulness of local self-help security groups as a possible complement to state policing because of the region's political unrest (e.g., armed conflict, terrorism, and criminal violence) and weak state capacity (e.g., limited personnel and material resources, and corruption in the police force) (e.g., Baker, 2009, Francis, 2012; Hills, 2000; International Crisis Group, 2017; J-PAL, 2019). In Tanzania, the government promoted the formation of local security groups modeled on *sungusungu* throughout the country in the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g., Fleisher, 2000; Heald, 2006) although most groups established as a result of government orders were short-lived due to community members' limited commitment to cooperation and resultant intermember conflicts (Mwaikusa, 1995, p. 171). Since 2006, for the purposes of community policing (CP), the government has also encouraged local leaders to form and register self-help security groups that work closely with the police.² The current manner of facilitating and organizing CP is also presumed to be similar to that of the early *sungusungu* (Cross, 2013, 2016).

However, despite this significant political interest, there are few quantitative studies on local self-help security groups compared with numerous qualitative studies both within and outside economics.³ In economics, even the literature on vigilance in general is small and largely theoretical (see Vásquez, 2019 for a literature review). This knowledge gap exists because relevant quantitative research must cover extensive geographical areas to find appropriate comparison "communities" that do not organize CP. This study overcomes this barrier to prior research.

In this study, "local elites" are defined as those who can substantially influence any political decisions in a community, including elected political leaders (e.g., village chairpersons) and (likely wealthy) individuals of economic significance who influence these leaders' decisions (e.g., landlords). To demonstrate how local elites organize CP (hereinafter, I refer to any local self-help security groups as CP unless they are specifically noted in a different manner), this study first develops an extensive-form game wherein one local elite and numerous ordinary citizens in a community are at risk of losing property to crime. The elite has certain political power, as measured by the degree of citizens' (ideological) support for the elite's political influence. In this game, the elite first proposes to begin CP. When the citizens are poor, they hesitate to agree to the costly CP (e.g., night-time patrols); nevertheless, they may accept it if the elite provides positive economic rents (e.g., free access to land) to compensate for their efforts. Consequently, the elite can initiate CP to protect

²The concept of CP was first popularized in North America and Europe in the 1980s. CP has been disseminated to many African countries due to the efforts of foreign donor governments, international organizations, and non-government organizations (NGOs) as part of police reform processes. The organization of CP differs across regions; however, it typically involves citizens' contributing to the prevention, deterrence, investigation, and resolution of criminal cases while building mutual trust and cooperation between police forces and communities.

³Regarding CP in Africa, see case studies conducted in Ethiopia (Di Nunzio, 2014), Kenya (Skilling, 2016), Mozambique (Kyed, 2010), Nigeria (Hills, 2014), Sierra Leone (Baker, 2008), and South Africa (Brogden, 2002), for example. See also Kirsch and Grätz (2010) on vigilantism in Africa.

their own property by giving minimal rents to citizens. At equilibrium, all the citizens actively work for CP (CP equilibrium).

The model yields four predictions. First, the property loss rate is lower in communities with CP (CP communities) than those without CP (no-CP communities). Second, (as a source and result of CP) greater welfare inequality between the elite and the citizens exists in CP communities than in no-CP communities; welfare inequality (and a community's total welfare) increases in step with the formation of CP because only the elite gains from CP. Additionally, the initial welfare inequality also makes the CP equilibrium more likely. Third, (as a source and result of CP) the elite in CP communities has greater political support from the citizens than that in no-CP communities. Fourth, the elite in CP communities transfers a greater amount of rents to the citizens than that in no-CP communities.

The primary empirical goal of this study is to establish these “theoretical” correlations between the presence of CP and relevant outcomes within the NS area. Data utilized are sourced from a nationally representative household panel survey (Tanzania National Panel Survey, TZNPS) implemented as part of the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study-Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA). Specifically, data from the first wave of this survey (TZNPS 2008—2009) are used because no other waves include information concerning surveyed households' recent crime experiences (or lack thereof) or the existence of self-help security groups. Relevant outcomes between communities with (i.e., *sungusungu*) and without CP “within” the NS area are compared.

The above theoretical correlations were empirically supported in the NS area. First, the likelihood of losing property, particularly livestock (an important means of savings in rural settings), to theft was about 10 percentage points lower in CP communities compared with no-CP communities. Possible crime spillovers and differing intensities of police presence across communities (e.g., the number of police officers stationed in a community) are unlikely to influence this finding. Second, a positive correlation between CP and consumption existed and was limited to households belonging to the top 20% of the consumption distribution. Third, households in CP communities viewed political leaders' (particularly, a village chairperson's) performance more favorably compared with those in no-CP communities; local elites are likely to affect leaders' political decisions or to be leaders themselves. Then, citizens may support the political influence of elites if political leaders' communal management is satisfactory. Fourth, land-scarce households in CP communities more commonly had free access to land provided by land-abundant households than those in no-CP communities; local elites tend to use agrarian land as a means of social control in the NS area (e.g., Abrahams, 1967, 1981) and elsewhere (e.g., Baland and Robinson, 2008).

Using Putnam (2000)'s terminology, I also show that households in the within-NS CP communities generally had greater “bonding” social capital, which unites citizens of similar social status,

and “bridging” social capital, which links citizens with elites, than those in no-CP communities. Such extensive social capital may also stem from *sungusungu* activities because the elite-promoted collective action may enhance citizens’ generalized norms of cooperation according to prior studies (e.g., Gneezy et al., 2016).

This study, though exploratory, then examines a primary factor that enables local elites to successfully organize CP, thereby generating the socioeconomic differences between CP and no-CP communities in the NS area. According to the theoretical model, two such forces exist, both of which antedate the emergence of *sungusungu* in the early 1980s: (a) local elites’ “unobserved” and “sociopolitical” power and (b) local “observed” and “economic” conditions such as crime rate, communities’ wealth, and the cost of participating in CP (e.g., opportunity cost), among others. To examine the relative significance of these two forces, this study examines the sensitivity of the previous findings to the inclusion of several controls relevant to the latter force as regressors. To this end, I collect district-level crime information between 1975 and 1980 from Tanzania’s National Bureau of Statistics with the help of the Tanzania Police Force and apply this requisite control. Other controls include each community’s historical population density in 1900, 1950, and 1980 (Goldewijk et al., 2010) as well as communities’ distances from the 18th and 19th century travel routes of European explorers and railway lines in operation during the first decade of the 20th century (Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011). I also control for various geographic and climate conditions at the “household” level available from the TZNPS. As a factor affecting the distribution of livestock, each community’s tsetse suitability index (TSI) in 1977 was also estimated and included in the regressors. As seen from the estimation results, additionally controlling for these economic conditions only trivially affected the magnitude and statistical significance of the previous estimates, thereby (albeit only) suggesting that local elites’ original political power plays an important role in the formation and continuity of *sungusungu*.

Empirical findings are robust to nonlinear model specifications, propensity score matching (PSM) that better controls for selection on the observed economic conditions into CP, alternative statistical inferences, small sample bias, and multiple hypothesis testing. Alternative interpretations are arguably unlikely to explain all the yielded findings simultaneously.

This study contributes to eight strands of the extant economic literature. First, following seminal, more macro-level studies (e.g., Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013, 2014, 2015), it improves the general understanding of local elites’ political influence in Africa. Similar to the study by Acemoglu et al. (2014) on chiefs in Sierra Leone, it indicates that politically powerful local elites can achieve civic cooperation and social respect through their control of land and judicial systems. The analysis of “observable” CP may have a striking advantage in this exploration because local cooperation is typically unobserved in real-world settings (Dell et al., 2018, p. 2086).

The formalization of the elite control mechanism has two noteworthy characteristics. First, positive economic rents offered by the elite who has strong political power can prompt CP (even if the sum of the elite's and citizens' pecuniary marginal gain from CP is smaller than the relevant marginal cost). Second, unlike the elite, citizens reap no welfare gain from CP, but nevertheless no citizen shirks at the CP equilibrium. In the model, CP members are ex ante allowed to not exert effort, which is unobserved by the elite. In such a situation, the elite typically needs to offer positive information rents that encourage citizens' effort. However, since the accepted costly CP activities include peer monitoring and punishment of shirkers (e.g., ostracism), the risk of moral hazard is ex post absent without any information rents being provided to the citizens (while effectively solving the second-order free-riding problem). This perspective makes CP more attractive to the elite compared with employing external, professional security guards and incurring relevant costs (e.g., search and monitoring of those guards). The model's logic may apply to other public goods provided at the initiative of local elites in other, particularly rural, settings.

Second, this study analyzes crime deterrence tools (see Chalfin and McCrary, 2017 for a literature review). To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first relatively large-scale quantitative endeavor to explore the sources and consequences of local self-help security groups either within or outside the field of economics. Prior qualitative studies indicate that in many (semi-)urban areas and unless they decline, local self-help security groups assist the economic interests of only locally dominant elites (e.g., businesspeople) rather than those of the wider community, thereby increasing social inequalities; the elites essentially appropriate private security forces by providing the group with necessary resources such as transport facilities and arms (e.g., Brogden, 2004; Cross, 2016; Ruteere and Pommerolle, 2003).⁴ The analysis of rural *sungusungu* coincidentally yielded similar welfare consequences.

Third, the present study also relates to economic research on the origins and persistence of people's cooperative norms (e.g., Tabellini, 2008) or more generally, culture including information institutions (e.g., Alesina et al., 2013; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Giuliano and Nunn, 2019). According to the findings herein, local elites' individualized incentives to gain material resources can be a root cause of people's collective action and resultantly, generalized norms of cooperation. The developed cooperative norms may in turn reduce the cost of citizens' engagement in collective action (e.g., mitigate intermember conflicts). Similarly, local elites' better communal management may also maintain and/or strengthen citizens' ex post support for elite control, which reduces the required rent provided to citizens. Thus, such elite-induced collective action may persist once it is achieved in a self-enforcing manner, as indeed observed with *sungugusungu*.

⁴Conducting semi-structured interviews in three subwards in Mwanza, Tanzania's second largest city, Cross (2016) argues that CP imposes considerable costs on citizens while enabling distinct groups of local elites to achieve material gains. According to her, CP forces with incapable local leaders are likely to deteriorate (e.g., the size of patrols and geographical coverage are reduced).

Fourth, this research also aligns with several recent studies in indicating no significantly negative “average” influence of elite control pertaining to the provision of public goods and citizens’ welfare in the developing world (e.g., Alatas et al., 2012; Do et al., 2017; Preciado et al., 2018). However, in contrast to these works, it additionally suggests that elite-induced cooperation and resulting welfare improvement may arise in step with increased inequality. This form of tradeoff between efficiency and equity is contrary to prior studies (e.g., Alesina and Ferrara, 2000; Fehr and Schmidt, 1999), wherein substantial cooperation (or social capital more generally) was less likely to arise concomitantly with such inequality.⁵

Fifth, similar to research on programmatic politics (e.g., Dixit and Londregan, 1996), political clientelism (e.g., Anderson et al., 2015; Baland and Robinson, 2008; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2018; Robinson and Verdier, 2013), and social patron-client relationships (e.g., Platteau, 1995), this study highlights a contemporary exchange system between elites and citizens. Sixth, it also explores the welfare consequences of “community-driven development projects” or “self-help groups” (e.g., Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Seventh, it analyzes the private protection of property rights such as guard labor (e.g., Besley and Ghatak, 2010). Eighth and finally, it contributes to lines of research examining the private provision of public goods (e.g., Bergstrom et al., 1986).

Two issues are left for future research. First, local elites are likely to facilitate collective action, given their original political power and surrounding economic conditions. To rigorously demonstrate the influence of their political power, it is necessary to evaluate its reduced-form impacts on relevant outcomes. To this end, appropriate measures of elites’ political power, settings wherein it exogenously changes, and panel data that not only record resulting social changes but also cover extensive geographical areas of a community-wide cooperation would be required. Acemoglu et al. (2014) explored the intent-to-treat effects of constraints on chiefs’ political power (rather than the direct impacts of power itself). Anderson et al. (2015) studied clientelism in India, relying on an indirect caste-based measure for assessing relevant power. The present study only performed a horse-race exercise.

The second is the social precedents for elites’ original political power. This power may have several origins, ranging from pre-colonial ethnic institutions likely characterized by geographic and climate factors (e.g., Alsan, 2015; Fenske, 2014) to colonial administration (e.g., Acemoglu et al., 2014), as well as political competition in a multiparty system (e.g., Cross, 2013), among others. Related to this, local elites may also engage in inefficient investment to protect their political power (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Martinez-Bravo et al., 2017).⁶ Exploring these perspectives

⁵According to Fehr and Schmidt (1999, p. 846), “if the public good is more valuable to some of the players, there will in general be a conflict between efficiency and equality (...) if the game is sufficiently asymmetric, it is impossible to sustain cooperation even if a [a player’s marginal private return from a contribution to the public goods] is very large or if players can use punishments.”

⁶Therefore, the private provision of public goods by local elites may not necessarily be socially optimal. Additionally, elite-induced collective action may also divert citizens’ labor from income-generating activities to less productive uses (e.g., Besley and Ghatak, 2010).

is another potentially fruitful line of future research.

Labor Market Information and Parental Attitudes toward Female Labor Force Participation: Experimental Evidence from Rural Pakistan (Momoe Makino)

Enhancement of female labor force participation (FLFP) is often argued to be pivotal for nations in achieving development and alleviating poverty (World Bank, 2011). FLFP is also considered crucial to enhancement of women’s empowerment (Duflo, 2012) in various situations including delay in marriage (Baird et al., 2011; Jensen, 2012; Heath and Mobarak, 2015) higher education (Luke and Munshi, 2011; Jensen, 2012), and higher bargaining position within the household (Qian, 2008; Anderson and Eswaran, 2009; Majlesi, 2016). The FLFP rate⁷ is low in South Asian countries, with the lowest rate in Pakistan and the rate having been in decline in India since 1990 (Andres et al., 2017; de Haan, 2018). Cultural and religious norms such as purdah (i.e., the practice of gender segregation and the seclusion of women in public, observed in South Asian countries), patriarchy, and Islam are often considered as reasons for the low rate of FLFP in these countries (Fletcher et al., 2017; Bernhardt et al., 2018). However, these cultural and religious norms cannot systematically explain the low rate of FLFP in these countries, considering regional variation noted within South Asia.⁸

The low rate of FLFP can be attributed to both supply and demand factors (de Haan, 2018). A demand-side factor may include the lack of income earning opportunities for women in rural areas.⁹ Demand-side factors cannot be ignored; however, this study focuses on supply-side factors. Attending to the supply-side is not irrelevant in the context of rural Pakistan because female labor supply is very inelastic. The situation is similar to the circumstances of the United States in the early 20th century where labor demand did not play an important role in FLFP (Goldin, 2006). Further, the previous qualitative interviews revealed that demand-side factors are not the main reasons preventing FLFP in a region with many garment factories, as further discussed in Section 2. This study considers it realistic to assume a situation in which job opportunities for women are abundant.

Among supply-side factors, analysis is further centered on barriers that prevent young unmarried women from working outside the home. Aside from the universal burden of household chores,

⁷The labor force participation rate in this study follows the definition given by the International Labour Organization, that is, a measure of the proportion of a country’s working-age population that engages actively in the labor market, either by working or looking for work. It may underestimate the number of persons who are (a) in the labor force for less than 30 days over the year preceding the survey, (b) in unpaid employment, or (c) working near or in their home, thus mixing work and personal activities during the day.

⁸For example, even though Bangladesh and Pakistan share similar cultural and religious norms, the majority of sewing operators in the garment industry in Pakistan are men whereas the majority in Bangladesh are women, as is typically observed in other parts of the world.

⁹For example, teaching is often regarded the only available and acceptable job for educated women in rural areas in developing countries. Young women in developing countries are increasingly educated in recent years; thus, there is often an oversupply of young qualified women for teaching jobs available in rural areas (Makino, 2018).

specific factors unique to South Asia that discourage FLFP can be extracted by concentrating attention on young unmarried women.¹⁰ One distinguishing South Asian feature is the stigma against women working outside the home. In rural Pakistan, young women stay within their natal household until marriage after completing their education without taking on primary responsibility for household chores. The average age of Pakistani women at marriage was 23 years in 2013, and girls of school entrance age were expected to obtain an average of 7 years of schooling in 2014.¹¹ Hence, young women aged above 13 years in Pakistan are neither students nor primary caretakers of household chores; instead, they are regarded as staying at home unproductively for an average of 10 years. I believe that it is important to encourage FLFP of such young women to financially assist their own households, and to make the best use of human capital at the national level. Furthermore, maintaining a narrow focus on unmarried women makes it simpler to analyze the decision-making process about whether women should work outside the home. Decisions concerning young unmarried women are almost always made by parents, especially fathers, in South Asian countries but those concerning married women are more complex because their husbands, in-laws, or parents may be involved.

Qualitative interviews in the present study further reveal that many people are not aware of working opportunities for young women within commuting distance; the stigma against women working outside the home may discourage these people from obtaining proper information (see Section 2). This study aims to investigate whether providing parents with information on income earning opportunities for young women is effective in changing parental attitudes toward FLFP. The income earning opportunity is specified as working in formal export-oriented garment factories. Thus, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) was conducted within commuting distance of formal export-oriented garment factories in rural Pakistan. An intervention was implemented to provide parents of young women with the same information that is given by the garment factories when they recruit female workers.

Estimation results demonstrate that provision of information is effective in changing parental attitudes toward FLFP in garment factories in rural Pakistan. Parents of unmarried daughters were more likely to positively alter their opinion about FLFP—in general and in relation to garment factories—when they were made aware of the available working conditions and environment. Hence, parents who received information were more likely to be prepared to send their daughters to work in garment factories compared with the control group. The observed change was still effective 1 year after the information was provided. The effects did not seem to differ whether the information was disseminated in sessions to groups of people or provided individually. There was also no notable

¹⁰Married women are universally considered primary caretakers of households, and especially of children. In developing countries where formal institutions such as child care centers are not widely available, the burden of household chores is likely to be greater for married women with children.

¹¹Data sources for the age of marriage and years of schooling are the United Nations Marriage Data 2017, and the Human Development Report 2015, respectively.

gender difference in the attitude changes, that is, whether the information was provided via the father or mother. However, when the attitude toward FLFP in garment factories was measured by negative changes in reservation wage (i.e., the minimum wage at which the parents would be willing to send their daughters to work in factories), the positive effects (i.e., negative change in reservation wages) were only observed when the person provided the information was the mother.

These results are consistent with those of Jensen (2012) who demonstrates that provision of information pertaining to new income earning opportunities encourages young women to work outside the home for pay. However, my findings are different from those in Jensen (2012) in three ways. First, the present study does not expect the outcome of actual change in FLFP in garment factories because 1 year is not a realistic time frame within which genuine change in conservative areas such as rural Pakistan can be observed. Second, my intervention target is not young women themselves, but their parents. This is in line with the motivation behind Dean and Jayachandran (2018), trying to change family attitudes toward FLFP as teachers in India. Most existing interventions aimed at empowering young women, such as encouraging their labor force participation and delaying their marriage, tend to address young women themselves rather than their parents, even if parents do decision making. In the Pakistani context, young women's labor force participation is usually decided by their parents, especially their fathers. This practice is confirmed in qualitative interviews (see Section 2). Third, sewing operator jobs in export-oriented garment factories are considered the new income earning opportunity for young women in the present study, whereas Jensen (2012)'s research concerns white-collar work in the business processing outsourcing sector. Traditionally, social stigma is attached to women who work outside the home in jobs that require manual labor, not to white-collar jobs (Boserup, 2007; Costa, 2000; Mammen and Paxson, 2000; Goldin, 2006). The business processing outsourcing sector provides office-based job opportunities for educated young women, and much less shame or dishonor is attached to women working in this sector. This study focuses on working opportunities in factories that are available for young women of poor households in rural Pakistan.

It must be noted that the results of the present study do not necessarily imply that disseminating information will be effective in actually enhancing FLFP in rural Punjab. In particular, the extent to which social pressure prevents parents from permitting their daughters to work outside the home remains unclear. However, given the strong stigma that exists against FLFP, especially in factories, the positive change in attitudes toward women working in factories is encouraging. This change is a prerequisite and encouraging first step to achieving actual enhancement of FLFP.

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