A Proposal to Investigate Trends in Chinese-owned Agricultural Land in Sub-Saharan Africa

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2-3 PM
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Land grabs are an increasingly hot topic in today’s globalized world. There is particular scrutiny on China, who has purchased large amounts of land in Southeast Asia, and is now accused of “land grabbing” in Africa to ensure its own food security. But is that what is really happening? Straight-to-PhD student Victoria Breeze draws on previous political science and economic studies to describe the reality of Chinese State behavior in sub-Saharan Africa agriculture and then makes the case for a geographic investigation to further understanding. Her proposed study will investigate how the major drivers of Chinese investment in agricultural land in sub-Saharan Africa influence the spatial extent of Chinese-owned land in the region. Once the relationships and relative influences of these drivers are understood, they can be used to predict the future spatial extent of Chinese-owned land in sub-Saharan Africa using agent-based modeling. Both the historical trend analysis and future predictions provide timely insights into China’s intentions on the African continent and respond to a call for a second phase of “land grab” research based on “specific, grounded, and transparent” methods (1).

To encourage undergraduate interest in the straight-to-PhD program, Victoria’s talk will include context for her decision to join MSU Geography as a straight-to-PhD student and how the program supported the development of her proposed project. Dr. Ashton Shortridge will also be on hand to answer questions about the straight-to-PhD program.