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# **Assessing the Influence of Land Grabbing on Urban Migration in Ghana**

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## DECLARATION

I, Jefferson Olarbi, thus declare that my research investigations and discoveries constitute the basis for this thesis. I have included a reference list and acknowledged the sources of material that I did not create. This work has never before been submitted to another university in hopes of receiving an academic degree.



.....  
14th May, 2024

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## ABSTRACT

Land grabbing in Ghana has gained much popularity over the years and its ripple effects on land owners cannot be over-emphasized. The phenomenon of land grabbing in Sub-Saharan Africa has been on the rise with Ghana not being an exception. Data from the land matrix indicate that a total of 46 land deals have been concluded in Ghana from the years 2000-2020. This land deal according to the data involves 403,907 hectares of land. The state, private individuals, and foreign entities are all involved in the phenomenon of land grabbing in Ghana. The current literature on land grabbing in Ghana focuses on the causes, effects, and its impacts on the livelihood of land owners with little or no attention given to the linkage between land grabbing and urban migration in Ghana. There is a myriad of reasons why people in Ghana decide to migrate from rural areas to urban areas. For instance, the work of Enu (2014) reveals that people mainly migrate because of better employment opportunities, while access to good social amenities and quality education are other factors that encourage urban migration in Ghana. Data on the 2021 population and housing conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service revealed that rural-urban migration was a major contributor to urbanization in Ghana. The study examines the influence of land grabbing on urban migration in Ghana using Asante Akyem North Municipality as a case study; an area where land grabbing is known to be rife. The study used primary data mainly the use of interviews to gather data from respondents. In all 40 victims of land grabbing were interviewed. The findings of the study reveal that local farmers perceive land grabbing to be a practice that involves the use of force, a deliberate plan to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, a practice that is carried out without the needed consultation and compensation and lastly a practice that causes pain. The research concludes that indeed land grabbing has a direct influence on urban migration, with almost all the victims indicating that they migrated to places like Agogo, Accra, Kumasi, and the Northern region after losing their land.

**Keywords:** Land grabbing, migration, Asante Akyem North Municipality

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| DCE  | District Chief Executive                                    |
| MCE  | Municipal Chief Executive                                   |
| MP   | Member of Parliament  |
| REDD | Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| MMDA | Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies            |
| GTA  | Ghana Timber Association                                    |



# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Background of the study

The world is experiencing an unprecedented land rush as national elites and international investors are acquiring vast amounts of land, particularly in poorer, “land-abundant” countries (Lanz, 2022). The issue of land grabbing in Ghana has gained much attention among stakeholders, media, scholars’ organizations, and researchers, this is because it has had dire consequences for individuals who are victims of land grabbing. Land grabbing has emerged as a major topic of academic research and the source of a heated debate. Over the last few years, local communities have been affected by land grabbing in various ways across Ghana (Verma, 2014). In Ghana, land is the main source of livelihood for rural people and the dispossession of these lands affects every aspect of their lives. According to Yelsang (2013), land in Ghana is not only a source of refuge for people it is also a source of income for rural people. In a similar vein, (Egemi, 2006; Komey, 2009; and El Hadary, 2010) state that in most developing nations, land ownership and use, particularly among traditional producers, is not just a source of sustenance but also a symbol of identity, dignity, solidarity, and peace. In Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa, land remains a critical resource as most rural people continue to subsist largely on farming (Reda, 2014; Kanianska, 2016; Nilsson 2018; Rondhi et al. 2018). The phenomenon of land grabbing has posed so many negative impacts on the livelihood of people than the benefits it seeks to achieve. Sub-Saharan Africa has been one of the main targets for land grabbing, with an estimated 24 million hectares taken for commercial agriculture in the last few decades (Schoneveld, 2014). This is emphasized by Anseeu (2013) who explains that land grabbing, while recognized as a global phenomenon, is more widespread in Africa than in other countries due to the continent's advantageous bio-physical resources and the importance of large-scale mechanized agriculture and plantations. According to Ansah and Mensah (2020), Ghana has become a destination for land grabbing as large tracts of land are being acquired for agricultural purposes. Similarly, Alhassan et al, (2018) also explain that Ghana has become one of the destinations for land deals in Africa attracting high foreign investment in the agricultural sector. The government of Ghana according to Alhassan (2020) over the past 10 years has leased out large tracts of land to foreign investors. Since the global high of oil prices in 2006, when foreign firms began acquiring huge swaths of land for plantation agriculture, Ghana has been a target for land grabbing. (Rafiee and Stenberg, 2018). According to the International Land Coalition in its 2011 report, the phenomenon of land grabbing can be said to have

occurred when it a) violates human rights, (b) does not seek free and prior informed consent, (c) disregards socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and/or (d) is not based on democratic planning and participation. Similarly, scholars such as German et al, (2013), Hasen et al (2016), and Schoneveld and German (2014) state that a crucial indicator of whether land grabbing has occurred is whether the regulatory procedures have been followed, enough consultation has been conducted, and fair restitution has been paid by the investors and correctly distributed throughout the community.

Land grabbing has caused many rural people in Ghana to be landless. Commenting on the consequences of land grabbing Adusei (2010) argues that it has resulted in the displacement of many smallholder farmers and pastoralists whose livelihoods are dependent on the land. This is emphasized by Mark et al (2015), who posits that land-grabbing has become bigger in scale and more systematized in recent years, and the number of people who have been evicted has skyrocketed. People in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam have become landless as a result of land grabbing. (Mark et al, 2015). This according to them happens because the victims of land grabbing do not have legal security over their land. The same can also be said in Ghana as land grabbing has caused several landowners to be landless. According to Obeng and El Hadary (2012), land grabbing in Ghana takes the classical shape of big corporations taking the land of peasant farmers. In Ghana, large hectares of land have been grabbed and handed over to either foreign or domestic investors. This is supported by data from the land matrix which indicates that a total of 46 land deals have been concluded in Ghana from the years 2000-2020 by many foreign countries. This land deal according to the data involves 403,907 hectares of land. Land grabbing in Ghana is carried out by both the state and custodians, mainly chiefs. The Ghanaian government, village chiefs, and family heads allocated between 89,000 and 1,07500 hectares of land for foreign-based investments in large-scale agriculture, mining, and biofuel production from 2004 to 2010. (Cotula et al, 2014; Cotula, 2013). In Ghana, the state has also been complicit in the incidence of land grabbing. In explaining this, Obeng and El Hadary (2012) argue that under the pretense of forcible acquisition of land for the public good, the state seizes land, sells it, and distributes it to the cronies of its agents. In addition to this, Onoma (2008) opines that the government sometimes hands over state land to people who voted for their preferred candidates whilst Yeboah and Obeng-Odom (2010) posit that the government at times dispossesses individuals who failed to vote for their favorite politicians. The government in the opinion of (Dheressah, 2013) can transfer any land they wish to investors with limited consultations with the occupants of such

lands. Between 1850 and 2004, the Ghanaian state executed 1,336 instruments to compulsorily acquire land. It did so in all the 10 regions of Ghana. The regions with the greatest share of compulsorily acquired lands are Greater Accra (34.1 percent), Western (26.7 percent), Ashanti (13.3 percent), and Brong Ahafo (10.1 percent) (Larbi et al, 2004, pp.121-122). In Nigeria for instance, agricultural lands are forcefully taken and redistributed by the state governments or transferred to their foreign collaborators under the guise of addressing food security and mechanization (Kelechukwu, 2022). There are regions in Ghana in which land grabbing is known to be pervasive. The problem of land grabbing according to Odom and El Hadary (2012) is particularly prevalent in the Western region of Ghana where there is a considerable mining sector. Rafiee and Stenberg (2018) also reveal that the same can be found in Agogo, Ashanti, where foreign-based corporations have made large-scale food crop investments. Another region highly affected by rising land grabbing is the Upper West region where foreign-based mining companies have acquired 416,400 hectares of land (Nyantakyi and Bezner, 2017). The Brong Ahafo region is also known for the incidence of land grabbing as about 54,000 hectares of land has been leased to investors (Anaafo 2015). Furthermore, in Northern Ghana, the taking over of farmland for the *Jatropha* plantation compelled farmers to relocate to far places where it was difficult to effectively monitor their farms (Alhassan et al. 2020).

Migration, whether internal or international, permanent or temporary, has distinct effects on land and territories, and land processes and systems also influence migration in different ways. (Shmook et al, 2023). Migration is a complex question that has piqued the interest of many government officials and policy specialists. (Badolo, 2020). Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration could be internal or external. In Ghana, there are so many reasons why people engage in internal migration specifically rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration refers to people moving from rural areas to urban areas in search of better living conditions (Min-Harris, 2010). Some are mainly for economic reasons, social reasons, security reasons, and among others. The work of Enu (2014) reveals that people mainly engage in migration because of better employment opportunities, while access to good social amenities and quality education are other factors that encourage migration in Ghana. Similarly, Alhassan (2017) posits that the primary motive for migration in Ghana is solely economic, and it is linked to unemployment, poor incomes, a lack of rural work prospects, climate change, and decreasing living conditions in rural areas. In the same vein, (Dako-Gyeke, 2016) is of the view that people decide to migrate from rural areas to urban areas due to

economic, political, environmental, and social factors. One interesting point to note is that of all the reasons for migration in Ghana, is land grabbing a motivating factor, do people necessarily migrate when they are dispossessed of their land? This research work seeks to find if there is any correlation between land grabbing and migration in Ghana.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

The increase in the demand for biofuel and other plantations according to Alhassan et al, (2018) is the main driver of land grabbing in Ghana. Similarly, Thernsjö (2015), indicates that the demand for biofuels and food are the two main triggers that have made land grabbing to be a widespread phenomenon. In recent times, Ghana has become one of the destinations for large-scale land deals in Africa, attracting high foreign investment in the agricultural sector. Over the past decade, the Government of Ghana has leased out large tracts of land to investors, mainly foreign-based (Alhassan et al, 2018). Land grabbing has gained much popularity globally and Ghana is not an exception. It is worthy of note that the incidence of land grabbing in Ghana is not a new phenomenon as it has existed for quite a long time. For instance, Ayitey and Kidido (2021) explain that during colonial times, land in the Gold Coast was mainly acquired for oil palm and cocoa plantation as well as mineral exploitation. Similarly, Agbosu, (2000) states that during the colonial era, European firms began to acquire mining and timber concessions from natives leading to massive land alienation and the development of land trade. Sub-Saharan Africa remains appealing to most land grabbers due to institutional inadequacies to defend the interests of its residents who rely on land for a living (Woodhouse, 2012). Africa in the view of Cotula (2013) is exposed to land grabbing because land rights and land legislation in Africa are often weak and lack transparency, which undermines local inhabitants' rights and livelihood. It is an indubitable fact that land grabbing in Ghana has displaced so many people of their land and had a ripple effect on their livelihood. There have been many works that have been carried out concerning land grabbing in Ghana. The work of Abubakari et al. (2021) studies the consequence of agricultural land grabbing on rural migrant women in Ghana, Essel's (2020) work focuses on understanding the implications of land grabbing for rural women in Northern Ghana. Land grabbing has also been studied concerning its impact on those who have lost their lands. For instance, Marks et al. (2015) research focuses on land grabbing and its impact on small-scale farmers in the Southeast Asia Sub-Region. A comparative study by Rafiee and Stenberg (2018) details the implications of land grabbing and its effects on rural livelihoods in Ghana and Ethiopia. The work of Alhassan et al, (2018) examines whether land grabbing in Ghana is an opportunity or a menace to development. In terms of land grabbing

and migration, much work has not been done to ascertain if there is any connection between land grabbing and people deciding to migrate. This is because most of the research work that has been done on migration has given attention to the social, economic, political, and security reasons influencing people to migrate. This research work seeks to fill this gap by examining if there is indeed any connection between land grabbing and migration.

## **1.2 Research objective**

The main objective of this study is to assess if there exists any connection between land grabbing in Ghana and urban migration. To this end, the study seeks:

1. To develop a typology of land grabbing in Ghana.
2. To examine perceptions of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing in Ghana.
3. To examine whether land grabbing leads to urban migration in Ghana.

## **1.3 Research questions**

The main research question for this study is to ascertain whether land grabbing in Ghana leads to urban migration. The sub-research questions for the study are:

1. What are the forms of land grabbing in Ghana?
2. What are the perceptions of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing in Ghana
3. To what extent does land grabbing lead to urban migration in Ghana?

## **1.4 Significance of Study**

This study contributes to the already existing literature on the phenomenon of land grabbing in Ghana, particularly the study provides answers as to whether land grabbing in Ghana has any correlation with urban migration. The study is of significance because most literature on land grabbing in Ghana has not given much attention to how it influences or has any correlation with urban migration. A major contribution of the study will also examine whether land grabbing has benefited or worsened the lives of rural people in Agogo in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Furthermore, this study can serve as future research for other research work on the phenomenon of land grabbing in Ghana.

## **1.5 Organization of Study**

This study is made up of three chapters. The literature review comprises the first chapter which entails the concept of land grabbing, the causes and effects of land grabbing, its history, and the land administration and land tenure system in Ghana. The research theory and methodology form chapter two of the study. It entails the theoretical framework adopted for the study. It also includes the research design, the data collection method, the sampling technique, the study area, and ethical considerations. Chapter three of this study involves the analysis of data gathered from study participants through interviews based on the typology of land grabbing, the perception of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing, and the linkage between land grabbing and urban migration. The study ends with a conclusion which summarises the findings of the study as well as some recommendations for policymakers.

# CHAPTER ONE

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the concept of land grabbing, and the causes, effects, and history of land grabbing. This section also takes a look at the land administration and land tenure system in Ghana.

### 2.1 Land

The United Nations has estimated that by the year 2030, the population will grow from 7 billion to 8.4 billion people worldwide (United Nations, 2015), which leads to an increased demand for food and biofuels and in turn leads to an increased demand for land. The pressure on land has increased due to factors such as the need for biofuels and food security and the ongoing debate on climate change (Thernsjo, 2015). Land in Africa according to Thernsjo (2015) is a resource related to power and it often becomes an inference of political and economic interest and social change. Land in Ghana plays an essential role in the lives of individuals, as it is a major source of income for people especially those who live in the rural areas and specifically engage in agricultural activities. Land according to Lenz (2013) is a draconian and complicated issue in Africa of which Ghana is not an exception. Land in Ghana does not only serve as a source of income but also has spiritual connotations, as argued by Lisk (2013) land is not only viewed as an economic asset for individuals but it is also related to identity and spirituality. Furthermore, Anafo (2014) discovered that the residents of Nkoranza South Municipality in Ghana's Bono East area see land as an ancestral heritage that must be sanctified periodically by the pouring of libation to ancestors. Globally so much value has been placed on land because as explained by Ding (2004), land is not only important to agrarian societies but in contemporary times it is considered the main foundation for assessing economic growth in terms of capital and wealth. There are so many controversies surrounding land in Ghana, some of these controversies include conflict over land between indigenes and Fulani herdsmen, land disputes between individuals, and land disputes among ethnic tribes. Wehrmann (2008:9) defined land conflict as a “social fact in which at least two parties are involved, the roots of which are different interests over the property rights to land; the right to use the land, to manage the land, to generate an income from the land, to exclude others from the land, to transfer it and the right to compensation for it”. This is emphasized by Ampadu (2013) who explains that the history of Ghana is rooted in issues of land struggles between states, ethnic groups, and

families. These disputes over land according to Anang et al (2021) have led to a plethora of tribal wars which have had a rippling effect on the socio-economic development of the country especially in the Northern region for many years. As a result of these land controversies, the court and traditional authorities have had to hear cases relating to land issues.

The court according to Kasanga and Kortey (2001) is one of the most essential actors in land management in Ghana and plays an important role in the determination of land disputes of all kinds. For instance, a study conducted by Rafiee and Stenberg (2018) revealed that courts in Ghana had to deal with 60,000 land disputes. Ghana's land demand has been influenced over the years by increased urbanization in cities and towns, as well as rapid population expansion (Adu-Gyamfi, 2012). General indiscipline in the land market characterized by the current spate of land encroachments, multiple sales of residential parcels, unapproved development schemes, lack of consultation, coordination, and cooperation among land development agencies, weak land administration system characterized by lack of comprehensive land policy framework and difficult accessibility to land for agricultural, industrial, commercial and residential development purposes due to conflicting claims to ownership, and varied outmoded land disposal procedures are some of the major challenges that beset Ghana's land sector according to the National Land Policy of 1999. Alhassan (2006), on the other hand, identifies the increasingly difficult access to land in both urban and rural areas as the two key impediments to Ghana's effective and efficient use of land. To overcome these challenges, there is a need to ensure land security in Ghana's land sector which according to Alhassan (2006) is a pivotal part of effective land management. According to Alhassan (2006), securing land rights in Ghana can help ameliorate the phenomenon of land disputes, increase land transactions, provide greater incentives for investment, and enhance the collateral value of land. According to Lund (2011), the growing pressure on land resources, land-related conflicts, and political mobilization make land rights a crucial political issue. Similarly, Peluso and Lund (2011) remark that a new class of land-controlling entities is emerging, such as those acquiring land for massive industrial crop production for export, which, according to the authors, has increased competitiveness for land. Flintan (2012) believes that competition has resulted in the commercialization, commodification, and privatization of land. In conclusion, it is important to note that land rights and ownership in Ghana have had a significant impact on the current state of land management in Ghana, and as revealed by Kasanga (2008), land ownership has been the source of much confusion, conflict, and protracted disputes within and between families and communities.



## **2.2 The concept of land-grabbing**

Land grabbing has become a major issue of concern in Ghana because its adverse effects far outweigh the benefits that it seeks to achieve. This is supported by (White and Dasgupta, 2010; Levien, 2011; Borras and Franco, 2012) who reveal that land grabbing has done more harm than good in the lives of people and environmental sustainability. The phenomenon of land grabbing has rendered many landowners in Ghana landless and subsequently robbed them of their source of income. Land grabbing continues to be an important issue for governments, development organizations, NGOs, and farmers' organizations all over the world (Nolte et al, 2016). The reported size of land that is up for grabs varies from about 71 million hectares up to about 227 million hectares worldwide because of different definitions and lack of transparency (Hermele, 2012). Ghana according to Nolte et al (2016) is the country with the most transnational land transactions in West Africa. There have been several justifications for the incidence of land grabbing in developing countries of which Ghana is not an exception. One such justification according to Nally (2014) is that land grabbing enhances food security. This justification is based on the premise that the world population is increasing and there would be a need to feed such a huge number of people in the future. This has resulted in foreign companies acquiring large lands in developing countries to engage in food production. Another justification in favor of land grabbing as posited by (Rutherford, 2017; Bellemare and Bloem, 2018) is the need to close the yield gap. Proponents in favor of this justification are of the view that there are large areas of land, especially in Africa which are not used to full capacity or underutilized. In a similar vein, Nally (2014) reveals that a World Bank report titled: *Rising Global Interest in Farmland* argues that most land in the Global South, notably in Africa, is not utilized to full capacity and should be targeted for foreign direct investment. The yield gap argument according to Li (2011) is justified because by 2050 world population will have plummeted to 9 billion people and there will be the need to meet the increasing demand for food for such a population, thus making it imperative to have land to produce more food. The logic of depeasantisation is another justification in favor of land grabbing. This argument is based on the need to ensure that peasants in the global South who are seen as unable to compete in the globalized food economy with large-scale farmers should abandon farming and take up wage labor (Li, 2011; Goldstein & Yates, 2017; Abebe, 2019). The last justification to be discussed in favor of land grabbing is the power of solitude as explained by Nally (2014) and McKay (2018). Under this logic, land grabbing is justified to look out for those who are neglected and stricken by privation. Proponents of this argument are of the view that Africa has

the largest number of individuals who are poor and hungry and thus there is the need for land deals to take place to feed starving Africans. Concerning this, Fisseha (2022) further explains that food shortages pose a serious threat to world prosperity and fully utilizing the underutilized land in Africa should be given the necessary priority. There has been an assumption that Africa has a lot of land that is simply idle. It is this assumption that has made Africa be target for cheap land deals, where land can be used as a hedge against crisis-ridden international financial markets; and investment in agricultural production for the export and production of agro-fuels to solve the energy problems of rich countries. (Attah, 2013). The most prominent investors of today, in terms of the amount of grabbed hectares, are companies and states from India, China, South Korea, Saudia Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (Hermele, 2012:14). In Ghana, some foreign companies identified to have been involved in land grabbing include: Smart Oil, Natural Africa Diesel Ghana Limited, Kimminic Corporation, ScanFarm, Azumah Resources Limited, Hazel Mercantile Ltd, Bionic Group, and Savannah Black Farming & Farm Management Limited,

Land grabbing just like many other concepts does not have a generally accepted definition as current literature on the phenomenon is replete with different conceptualizations by different scholars. According to Borras and Franco (2012), a 'land grab' is the power to control large quantities of land and landed resources for capital accumulation in response to food security crises, short or long-term climate change impacts, and financial exigencies. Batterbury and Ndi (2018) define land grabbing as the purchase or acquisition of use of rights to produce food, biofuel, or animal feed. Land Grabbing can be defined as the phenomenon of large-scale land acquisitions, the purchase or lease of large land areas in developed and especially developing countries by national and transnational companies, foreign governments, and individuals (Boruss et al, 2015). The definition of land grabbing by Marks et al (2015) is similar to that of Batterbury and Ndi (2018). They defined land grabbing, as a large-scale acquisition normally 200 hectares or more by corporate investors or government entities through buying, leasing, or accessing land to produce food or non-food crops or to use this land for extractive purposes, such as hydropower dams and logging. The Food and Agricultural Organization understands land grabs as large-scale land acquisitions, involving foreign governments, which hurt food security (FAO 2011), Zoomer (2010) defines land grabbing as large-scale, cross-border land deals or transactions that are carried out by transnational corporations or initiated by foreign governments. Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012) define land grabbing as the transfer of the right to own or use the land from local communities to foreign investors through large-scale

land acquisitions (more than 200 hectares per deal). The International Land Coalition in 2011 defined land grabbing as a phenomenon that (a) violates human rights, (b) does not seek free and prior informed consent, (c) disregards socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and/or (d) is not based on democratic planning and participation. Land grabbing according to Cotula et al (2009) occurs when there are large-scale land acquisitions that are above 1000 hectares. Prosper et al (2014) define land grabbing as the exploration, negotiations, acquisitions or leasing, settlement, and exploitation of the land resource, specifically to attain energy and food security through export to investors' countries and other markets. Finally, Yang and He (2021) view land grabbing as land acquisitions by private investors, public investors, or agricultural companies who lease or buy land areas to produce and export raw materials. What runs through all the definitions above is that land grabbing always involves more than one party. It can be either by a government, a private individual, or by a foreign institution.

In this study, land grabbing would mean the forceful acquisition of land from indigenous people who rightfully own land by governments, large multinational companies, and private individuals. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been a major destination for land grabbing with an estimated 24 million hectares acquired in the past decades for commercial agriculture (Schoneveld, 2014). Powerful transnational and national economic actors are angling for land often in distant countries, particularly in Africa, which can serve as sites for investments, fuel, and food production for their needs back at home (Attah, 2013). The same can be said of Ghana whereby foreign entities and private individuals are largely the main actors of land grabbing. These actors are often characterized as land grabbers as a result of perceived exploitative acts in host countries and the negative impact their activities have on livelihood and land tenure (Von Braun and Meinzen-Dick, 2009; Bull, 2010; Wisborg, 2012).

The global crises in 2008 particularly the financial, energy, and food crisis that engulfed the world is what has resulted in the high demand for land. According to Attah (2013), land acquisition is centered on three main pillars which are reflected in the term the 'triple-F crisis': food, fuel, and finance. De Schutter (2011) reveals that over the last few years, there have been massive land deals in Africa by foreign capital and governments to enhance the food and energy security of rich countries and solve environmental problems as well. For instance, Saudi Arabia, China, and South Korea which are all food-importing countries began to acquire lands from poor countries, especially in Africa to support their food security as a result of the global food crisis (Attah, 2013). Also, rich African companies and multinational institutions with

origins in the West, China, and the Middle East have increased their effort to acquire land for food and biofuel production, mining, timber extraction, and even for conservation purposes. (Borras and Franco, 2013; Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010). The increase in food prices between 2007 and 2008 is noted as the reason why investors clamoured to acquire agricultural land which led to 56 million hectares of land being acquired globally by the year 2010 (Cotula, 2012). In the case of Africa, it is estimated that 15.2 million hectares were leased or acquired in the year 2020 (Cochrane and Andrews, 2021). In Ghana, there have been instances where the government has used its constitutionally mandated powers to forcefully evict people from their land and use it for other projects or handing over these acquired lands to multinational corporations. A study conducted by Von Braun and Meinzen-Dick (2009) shows that data according to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) indicates that between 2006 and 2009 around 20 million hectares of land were leased out in the form of land grabbing in Africa, also Deininger et al, (2011) work reveals that a 2010 World Bank report showed that 45 million hectares of land accounted for land grabbing globally. Concerning Ghana, data from Land Matrix shows that a total of 46 land deals have been in operation covering 403,907 hectares. Out of this, 112, 675 hectares represent projects that have been abandoned, 88, 827 hectares for projects that are in operation, 35,070 hectares for projects that are yet to kick start, 29,975 hectares for projects with no production, and 137,360 hectares for projects with no information (Land Matrix, 2020). In addition to this, Schoneveld (2014) estimates that land grabbing in Ghana amounts to over 2 million hectares which has been used for agricultural and forestry plantations in which 89 percent of these projects were implemented by overseas investors. Private investors are the main drivers of land grabbing in Ghana. Out of the 46 land deals in Ghana, 33 have the involvement of a private investor of which 25 have a single private investor and 8 have another investment partner. The largest area under contract is controlled by investment funds and private companies, mostly based in the UK and USA, with only seven deals having shareholding by a Ghanaian partner (Land Matrix, 2020). The majority of land grabbing in Ghana according to data from Land Matrix is intended for food crops, with 19 of the 46 concluded deals growing only food crops, and 12 combining food crops with biofuel crops, forestry, or other intentions with biofuel being the second most essential intention (Land Matrix, 2020). This gives credence to the fact that land grabbing has been necessitated by the need to bolster food security worldwide. Similarly, Attah (2013) explains that the demand for land across the globe by rich nations was accelerated by the export control introduced by some big food-exporting nations as a result of the ominous global food crisis. Ghana has also become a major destination for land grabbing because crops such as oil palm, cassava, sugarcane,

maize, and jatropha which are in high demand for the use of agro-fuel globally are available in the country. This is corroborated by Rafiee and Stenberg (2018) who indicate that Ghana has been a hub for land grabbing since the global increase in oil prices during which foreign companies started acquiring land for plantation agriculture. Ghana since 2007 according to Albers and Anwar (2023) has witnessed the expansion of capital commitments to the large-scale commercial plantation sector with 36 companies purchasing land over 2000 hectares for agriculture and forest plantations, which has been estimated to cover an area of 2.05 million hectares of land. For instance, during the 2006-2008 period, Kobre a community in the Brong Ahafo region in Ghana was affected by land grabbing when Kimminic Estate Limited, a Canadian company acquired 13,000 hectares of land for jatropha which came along with several development consequences affecting various categories of rural members, especially migrant women (Abubakari et al, 2021). Also, the Agogo community in the Ashanti region had a total land area of 19,000 hectares leased to ScanFarm a Norwegian company from the period of 2004-2006 (Abubakari et al, 2021).

In the Western region, Adarkwah et al (2018) reveal that over 12,500 hectares of agricultural land have been lost to oil-related infrastructure development including quarries, and sand and gravel extraction for the construction industry due to land grabbing. They further state that at least about 2,000-2,500 acres of fertile agricultural land have been cleared for real estate or sand-winning purposes in Gomoa East and Awutu Senya district alone in the Central region. Concerning the Northern region, Agbley (2019) reveals that 63,060 hectares have been bought or allotted to foreign and domestic entrepreneurs in various land deals since the year 2007. The current phenomenon of land grabbing is distinct from the earlier waves of acquisition that took place specifically between the colonial and post-colonial periods in Ghana. Commenting on this Lanz et al (2018) explain that the majority of land currently in Ghana has been negotiated by foreign investors and traditional authorities. These land deals in the view of De Schutter (2015) involve corruption with an increased likelihood of negating the concerns of poor people. This means that individuals who are landowners are not consulted most often before these land deals are concluded. Scholars like Moreda (2018) avow that land deals of such nature do not protect the rights and livelihoods of local people and mostly fail to take into account their interests and welfare, additionally, Robertson and Pinstруп-Andersen (2010) reveal that these deals are conducted in a secretive way and lack the needed transparency which can undermine the right of indigenous people. Land grabbing in Ghana often takes place in remote areas with just a handful taking place in peri-urban areas, as a result of this majority of rural landowners

lose their land and their right to such land as well (Adu-Gyamfi, 2022). All these problems arise because of land rights and land legislation in Africa and to an extent Ghana is often weak and lacks transparency, which undermines local inhabitants' rights and livelihood (Cotula, 2013). Given this Thernsjo (2015) recommends that local communities that are affected by land grabbing should be included in negotiations and that governments should include and ensure a long-term perspective on the benefits and cost.

In Ghana, both the government and traditional authorities have always made the point that foreign companies investing in land would develop the agriculture sector and increase food security. But in most instances, it has not been the case as these foreign companies most often renege on their promises. Both the state and traditional authorities have played roles in the process of land grabbing in Ghana. Previously, land grabbing was initiated by powerful foreign actors and multinational institutions (Oya, 2013; Scoones et al, 2013) but now it is clear that national governments and local elites are actively involved as facilitators and beneficiaries (Baglioni and Gibbon, 2013; Kandel, 2015; Milliar, 2015). As an example, in Yeji the phenomenon of land grabbing was conspicuously facilitated by the community chief and the traditional council (Aha and Ayitey, 2017). Not only have the state and traditional authorities facilitated land grabbing in Ghana but financial institutions have also been identified as one of the actors that have enabled land grabbing in Ghana. Obeng-Odom (2014) reveals that Ghana Land Administration Project, the official project to unleash full marketization of Ghana's landed resources, is heavily financed by the World Bank along with the Canadian International Development Agency, the UK Department for International Development, the German Technical Assistance Corporation, Nordic Development Fund, and the Government of Ghana. As stressed by Tsikata and Yaro (2014), land grabbing in Ghana has had a cumulative effect on rural communities already grappling with extensive land commercialization, growing gender, and class inequalities coupled with livelihood stress. Land grabbing for natural resource extraction specifically mining constitutes a major component of land deals in Africa and Ghana in particular, As reported by Ayelazuno (2014), Hall (2011), and Kamlongera (2013) some of these deals include natural gas, diamond, silver, aluminum, copper and gold mining in Angola; platinum mining in South Africa; uranium exploration in Malawi; copper mining in Zambia; uranium mining in Namibia; and gold mining in Ghana. Land that is acquired in Ghana for mining purposes ends up leading to landlessness with little consultation with the rightful owners coupled with a small compensation paid to the victims (Garvin et al, 2009). Most often land owners in Ghana have no say in matters relating to land grabbing, as

the government can transfer any land it so wishes to foreign investors without any consultation with the rightful owners of such land (Dheressa, 2013). This according to Alhassan and Kuwornu (2018) happens when the government pays compensation before the investors arrive and do not have to go through the laid down procedures. When land grabbing occurs government and foreign entities promise the victims jobs and other developmental projects but, in most cases, these gains according to O'Brien (2011) and Anseeuw (2013) are fleeting or absent, and most often the victims do not feel the real impact of these promises. Land leased out to foreign investors in Ghana, especially by the government is larger than those that are given out to domestic investors, this is because it is believed that these foreign companies have more capital and possess technologies than local investors to be able to successfully implement large-scale investment (Scoones, 1998). In addition to this, it has been observed by Rhamato (2011) and Tamarat (2010) that governments in Ghana offer juicy packages for foreign investors which comprise lower capital requirements, guarantees against expropriation or nationalization, and generous financial incentives such as exemptions of income tax on exports (tax holidays) and free custom duties on imports. Land grabbing in Ghana, especially in the form of leasing of farmlands for foreign direct investment precludes farmers and landowners from their source of income (Alhassan et al, 2018). In Northern Ghana for instance, farmers have been compelled to relocate to far places due to the taking over of their farmlands for Jatropha plantation which makes it difficult for them to effectively monitor their farms (Alhassan et al, 2020). Land acquired in Ghana is mostly used for plantation activities and according to Adusei (2010), this has resulted in smallholder farmers and pastoralists being displaced from their land which they depend on for their livelihood.

In the Northern Region of Ghana for instance, it has been revealed that the acquisition of 23,700 hectares of land by Biofuel Africa Ltd had compelled the residents of seven villages that depend on land for their survival to migrate to Tamale in search of non-existing jobs (Adusei, 2010). Scholars like Li (2014) have a different view about land grabbing, he posits that not all land grabbers always evict people from their land because evictions may attract the attention of the media and also result in resistance. Contributing to this issue, Weldemichel (2022) explains that landowners are left within the land that is up for grabs to continue their lives in smaller spaces, and situations like these according to Li (2014) only delay the challenge of how land owners will survive on little or no land. For land grabbing to take place, Levien (2015) states that three main elements must exist; coercion, material compensation, and normative persuasion. According to Levien, when coercion becomes difficult to dispose of people of their

land due to opposition, the state resorts to using material compensation to convince land owners to give up their lands, the last option that exists for the state to dispose of people of their land when the use of material compensation proves futile is the use of normative persuasion. Concerning land grabbing evidence abounds that operational transactions are very different from negotiated deals (kuusaana, 2016). Similarly, Cotula et al (2014) also reveal that most land transactions in Africa for agricultural activities are operating less than 30% of the allocated land. Currently in Ghana out of the 444449.4 hectares of land which are currently under contract, only 46,672.7 (10.5%) hectares of land are under operation. (Land Matrix, 2020). Also in 2014, Kuusaana (2016) revealed that out of the signed contract of 904,016 hectares, 12,790 hectares which amounts to 1.5% was put into production. In Liberia, 1,340,777 hectares were contracted, while 26,397 hectares (2%) have been put into production. In Sierra Leone, only 6,365 hectares (representing less than 1 percent) of the contracted 1,183,274 hectares were put into cultivation. In Nigeria, 16% of the acquired land was put to use. Cote d'Ivoire recorded the highest percentage of 79% usage of contracted land and is by far the highest proportion in the whole of West Africa (Kuusaana, 2016). ScanFarm, a Norwegian company was found to have used only 10% of their concession of 13,058 hectares after four years of operation. In Ghana, the issue of land grabbing correlates with powerful actors most especially chiefs pre-existing motivation to re-establish authority over land for two reasons: firstly, to formalize the use of 'stool land' to create rural development opportunities; secondly, to formalize boundaries of 'stool land' to avert potential future land litigations (Boamah, 2014). Most recent land allocations in Ghana have been approved by chiefs who customarily hold land in trust for community members and have over the years given out large areas of land to investors mainly from Norway, Canada, Italy, and Israel specifically for biofuel and other agricultural projects in Ghana (Boamah, 2014). Contrary to the belief that land grabbing in Ghana is being perpetuated by foreign investors, Anku et al (2023) reveal that there is a significant role of Ghanaian investors involved in this menace. This is corroborated by Jayne et al, (2014) whose works confirm the involvement of both domestic and foreign investors in land deals but reveal that domestic actors control more lands than foreign actors in Africa. Deininger et al (2011) for instance explains that both domestic and foreign investors engage in land deals even though domestic investors constituted more than half of the land deals in Nigeria (97%), Sudan (78%), Cambodia (70%), Mozambique (53%), 49% in Ethiopia and 7% in Liberia. Abdallah et al (2022) have a different view, they argue that unlike other places where land grabbing by domestic entities is pervasive, Ghana is dominated by land grabbing by foreign entities. According to Civic Response an organization that specializes in natural resources and people



rights, out of a total of 1,024,403 hectares of land acquired in Ghana, 63% falls under land grabbing by foreign entities whilst 2% falls under land grabbing by domestic entities (Civic Response, 2017). In Ghana, the loss of rights over customary lands and how it adversely affects local livelihoods is a major concern for local communities (Acheampong and Campion, 2014). They further argue that in many areas across Ghana, there are tensions between private investors, traditional authorities, and local communities over the right to use and allocate land. From the above discussions, it is evident that in Ghana, chiefs, traditional leaders, and their allies are at the frontline of land grabbing because they possess much power over the communities over which they preside and as posited by Anku et al (2023) decision over the sale of lands within communities are done at the command of chiefs to the detriment of community members. The ramifications of these actions by chiefs are that they are facilitators of land grabbing.

### **2.3 Causes of land grabbing**

Land grabbing does not just occur, some conditions make it happen across Sub-Saharan Africa and most especially Ghana. The causes of land grabbing may vary from country to country but there are similar trends that cut across regions that have been affected by land grabbing. Research reveals that the global crises of food, energy, and finance during the year 2007/2008 were the main drivers that caused interest in arable land across the globe (McMichael, 2012). The increase in the price of food in particular between the years 2007/2008 according to Cotula (2012) was the main reason why investors were quick to obtain agricultural land which resulted in an estimated amount of 56 million hectares of land being acquired globally by the year 2010, while in Africa it was estimated that in the year 2020, a total of 15.2 million hectares of land were either leased or acquired (Cochrane and Andrews, 2021). Commenting on the same issue, Gilbert (2017) explains that agriculture most importantly agribusiness, animal feedstock, and agro-fuels seem to be the primary drivers of land rush. For instance, in Kenya, Gilbert (2017) argues that land grabbing is primarily caused by large-scale agribusiness development, the need for biofuels, geothermal production, wildlife conservation, tourism, mining, and infrastructure development. Currently, (Liversage 2010) reveals that 14 million hectares of world arable land are used for agro-fuels and it is expected to surge as the project gathers momentum around the world. In addition to this, scholars such as Atta (2013) explain that agribusiness from Germany, Israel, India, China, and the United States have acquired and signed investment agreements with some African countries with the sole aim of agro-fuels projects. In Tanzania, Gilbert

(2017) reveals that the tourism industry also accounts for land grabbing. This takes the form of acquiring land to provide more wildlife corridors and parks which in turn will be used for tourism. In the case of Ghana, Cotula et al (2014) revealed that a total of 1 million hectares of land had been obtained for agricultural purposes in 2010 and in the year 2020 data from Land Matrix showed that 1, 344, 588 hectares of land were also acquired for various agricultural activities (Land Matrix, 2020). In Ghana, data from Land Matrix showed that biofuel production constituted 15 % of the purpose for which land was acquired. (Land Matrix, 2020). This according to Anku et al (2023), deprived people in host communities of their lands and their ability to produce which in the end had ramifications on their source of livelihood.

Another cause of land grabbing is weak land rights legislation. This is especially related to customary land ownership where the right of individuals to own land is not well documented making it easier for such individuals to lose their lands. The lack of documented titled deeds according to Albers and Anwar (2023) has resulted in the forceful acquisition of lands from individuals. Similarly, Gilbert (2017) opines that the recent practice of land grabbing is facilitated by weak land rights and legislation that does not give sufficient protection or recognition of indigenous land rights. Woodhouse (2012) also links the cause of land grabbing to the frail legislative and regulatory framework to protect the interest of existing land users or the general populace. In Ghana, there have been instances where people have lost their land due to weak land registration and documentation issues. In many African countries including Ghana, most of the land acquired or leased out to foreign investors is customarily owned land many of which have not been well documented and demarcated. The poor documentation and legislation of land have culminated in the multiple sale and lease of land to these foreign investors. Because of these loopholes, Amanor (2009) reveals that chiefs have abused the notions of their customary custodianship on land to promote narrow and selfish interests and accumulate wealth. This according to Amanor has led chiefs to expropriate existing land users without offering them compensation or different land making them engage in multiple sales of the same land to diverse parties. The need to provide public goods by the government is another cause of land grabbing. In developing countries, certain infrastructure projects need to be provided by the government. Infrastructure such as dams for water supply, schools, airports, railways, roads, and police stations all require the availability of land for them to be constructed hence sometimes governments use their power of eminent domain to acquire private lands for the construction of these facilities resulting in individuals losing their lands. For example, in Ghana, Bugri and Yeboah (2017) revealed that when the Ghanaian government decided to give

the Tamale Airport in the Northern Region a new facelift, the state compulsorily acquired 8,000 acres of land around Savelugu, Nanton, Kunbungu, Sagnarigu, and the Tamale metropolitan area. Additionally, when oil was discovered in Ghana, there was the need to establish a refinery, and as a result, the government of Ghana acquired approximately 1,200 acres of land in the Apowa, Punpune, and Egyam enclaves surrounding the Sekondi Takoradi area (Bugri and Yeboah 2017). Cernea and McDowell (2000) also revealed that the World Bank in 2000 stated that 10 million people were displaced in China, India, Thailand, and Cambodia when land in these countries was needed for economic development. Similarly, Zoomer (2010) asserts that the presence of globalization and the quest for increased international investment has necessitated governments to give out lands for the sole purpose of establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and their infrastructure, such as airfields and ring roads. The availability of vast areas of land is another reason why land grabbing is on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana in particular. According to Makutsa (2010), the perception that Africa has vast and suitable land for agricultural activities has made the region attractive to the incidence of land grabbing. Investing in land for reforestation purposes is another major cause of land grabbing. In the view of Zoomers (2010), private individuals and foreign companies have been consistently involved in investing in large areas of land for nature conservation. Furthermore, Gilbert (2017) explains that the forestry sector is also having a greater impact on the rapid expansion increase of large-scale land acquisition most importantly through fast-growing industrial tree plantation.

There has also been an influx in the acquisition of land for conservation purposes. This practice according to Gilbert (2017) can be termed as green grabbing; where land is acquired for the development of 'green' markets such as forestry for carbon offsetting, biofuels, and ecotourism. The quest to enhance development in rural areas is another cause of land grabbing that is worth discussing. Rural areas in Ghana fall short of proper infrastructural facilities, modernized agriculture, and the availability of employment. To solve all these deficiencies, foreign companies can rely on these shortfalls to acquire land with the promise of providing these essentials. Scholars such as Robertson and Pinstруп-Andersen (2010) believe that land grabbing is a perfect opportunity for the agricultural sector of developing countries to benefit from improved technology and capital that can lead to increased innovation and productivity in rural areas. Albers and Anwar (2023) also opined that land acquisition by foreigners can help advance rural communities by modernizing agriculture, building infrastructure, creating employment, and increasing productivity. Powerful actors such as chiefs, politicians, and state

governments have also been identified as those who cause land grabbing. In the case of the state, scholars such as Grajales (2013) and Huggins (2013) reveal that land grabbing most often comprises a state's involvement in land transactions by providing the enabling environment for land appropriation by foreign entities in ways that are legitimate but to the disadvantages of local land users. Concerning chiefs in Ghana, Boamah (2014) argues that Ghana's constitution identifying chiefs as allodial title owners has provided the leeway for chiefs to clothe themselves with the ultimate decision to own and sell land to the detriment of their subjects. Scholars such as (Beny 2017; Kleist 2011; Knierzinger 2011) all opine that mostly chiefs act in their interest rather than in the interest of the larger community. The influence of chiefs in the view of Kirst (2020) is seen during negotiation on compensation payments which most of the time benefit the chiefs at the expense of indigenes who use the land. During the last 10 years, the majority of Ghanaian chiefs have allocated many large land areas to agricultural investors from Norway, Italy, Canada, and Israel for biofuel and other agricultural projects in Ghana. Specifically, the paramount chiefs of Agogo and Kumawu have allocated land areas to investors without any form of mutual consent (Boamah, 2014). Anku et al (2023) further reveal that decisions over land sales in Ghanaian communities are carried out at the command of chiefs to the disadvantage of community members. This assertion is reiterated by Kirst (2020) who argues that chiefs do not abide by rules and regulations regarding the allocation of lands but rather operate within the authority vested in them in their communities. The outcome of all these by the chiefs implies that they have become enablers of land grabbing in Ghana. This led Kuusaana (2017) to conclude that chiefs are the main actors who benefit from land transactions which sharply contrasts the experiences of groups such as migrant farmers, women, poor community "commoners", and "title-less" smallholder farmers. However, Antwi-Bosiako has a different opinion. He contends that chiefs cannot be entirely blamed for the setbacks linked with land grabbing. He explains that the state's noninterference policy in land negotiations, the insecure nature of land ownership, and the seizure of brokers all create challenges for host communities (Antwi-Bosiako, 2018). In a bid to solve this issue, the Ghana Lands Commission in 2012 issued a report to contest the authority of chiefs to allocate large land areas. It later gave notice that land areas above 400 hectares must have the prior approval of the National Lands Commission (Ghana Lands Commission, 2012). Politicians are using their influence to also grab lands for their benefit at the expense of the people whom they are supposed to serve. This is emphasized by Peter (2013) who states that land grabbing goes beyond the role of foreign investors and that government officials, politicians, and private actors are all involved in the current land deals.

Land use compatibility is another factor that causes land grabbing. Generally, governments can compulsorily acquire lands from private individuals to ensure compatibility of land uses. In the view of Adu-Gyamfi (2012), this practice is particularly prevalent in developing countries like Ghana where land ownership and determination of its use is in the hands of private individuals. To preclude random developments Adu-Gyamfi (2012) states that governments may limit land use in terms of type and intensity to create harmony, safety, convenience, economy, and functionality in our towns and cities. Such powers by governments according to Larbi (2008) result in undesirable outcomes such as massive encroachments, unpaid compensations, change of use of acquired lands against the purpose of acquisition, and the divestiture of state enterprises to private entities. These acquisitions have reduced the availability of land in rural and peri-urban areas specifically for those who use such lands for farming and grazing purposes (Otu, 2022). The availability of large areas of land is another cause of land grabbing. Africa is seen to be blessed by an abundant large area of land and this has made it possible for foreign companies to make Africa their number one destination for land grabs. This is based on the notion that large areas of land in Africa are lying idle and have not fully been utilized, hence there is a need for these lands to be grabbed. In the view of Moyo et al (2019), international, transnational and other economic actors have made efforts to look for unoccupied land in foreign countries for the objective of food and fuel production. Similarly, Fisseha (2022) makes the argument that since large areas of land that are unused are available, those with money needed to ensure that the land produces what is needed should be given the land and invest in it. In Ghana, the same can be said of Asante Akyem Agogo as the area is blessed with so much land and that is causing the practice of land grabbing to be pervasive in the area.

Furthermore, the quest to decrease poverty and enhance development as argued by Cotula (2013) is a major reason why land grabbing has been on the rise, especially in Africa. Foreign and multinational companies have been engaged in the practice of land grabbing to ensure development and ameliorate poverty. As part of their lease agreement for land to carry out their activities, foreign companies often promise to provide essential services to enhance development, employ local indigenes, and also strive to decrease poverty in areas where they operate. Justifying why this happens Fisseha (2022) indicates that Jarch Management Group, a company that deals in land transactions in Africa thinks that investing in land deals in Africa is part of enabling citizens who own resources but cannot fully utilize them because others exploit them on their behalf. This according to (Nally, 2014; Goldstein and Yates, 2017) will

help ensure that citizens in African countries will secure their economic and political rights which are important for self-determination. On the contrary, using evidence from Indonesia Li (2011) opines that land grabbing instead of reducing poverty rather exacerbates poverty. Similarly, Alhassan et al (2018) also reveal that land grabbing in Ghana is to some extent a threat to development as the negatives outweigh the positive livelihood outcomes of the individuals that have been affected by these land transactions, although it may result in some development opportunities that would yield benefits to the individuals in the long term. Several factors contribute to land grabbing, including the possibility of speculating on future state aid and an increase in the value of agricultural land, as well as the actions of huge investors who sought to use the wealth released following the 2008 financial crisis to invest safely in agricultural land (Bianca et al, 2022). Lastly, land grabbing in the view of Holmes (2014) is occasioned by worldwide transitions to neoliberal modes of government in recent years. He states that new policies and legislation, such as those allowing investors to buy rights to forest resources through initiatives like the UN Collaborative Programme on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), have made it possible for new types of land grabs. Examples of these measures include carbon markets.

#### **2.4 Effects of land grabbing**

Research has shown that most countries impacted by land grabbing are countries that are poor and whose economies depend solely on agriculture and countries that are less engaged in world food exchanges (Anseeuw et al, 2012). Growing evidence indicates that land grabbing has done more harm than good in the lives of individuals who have been victims. (White and Dasgupta, 2010; Levien 2011). In the view of Thernsjo (2015), it is the smallholder farmers that get directly affected by investors from rich countries and multinational corporations. In addition to this, scholars such as Zoomers (2010) have cautioned that land grabbing if not properly managed can threaten the social and economic livelihood of rural agrarian populations. The ripple effects that land grabbing has had on the lives of individuals who have lost their lands cannot be over-emphasized and there is a need for governments and policy makers to give it the necessary attention it deserves. This is because Schoneveld et al (2020) explain that land grabbing could either make an important contribution to decreasing rural poverty or tend to worsen the socio-economic conditions and environment of project-based communities. One of the effects of land grabbing is that it leads to conflict over resources. As demonstrated by Levidow and Paul (2010) land grabbing for the production of jatropha in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Asia has led to a plethora of conflict over resources. According to these scholars,

this conflict occurs when the majority of projects lead to the loss or damage of the livelihood assets of the host communities. Adding to the point above Vermeulen and Cotula (2010) also make the point that due to land grabbing local indigenes could lose access to resources on which they survive which does not include only land but water resources, wood, and grazing areas. Social unrest, socio-economic inequalities, and local political turmoil are other effects that are associated with land grabbing. (Daniel and Mittal, 2009) This assertion by these authors was confirmed in Asante Akyem Agogo when residents in Abrewapong, which happens to be one of the study areas for this research were engaged in a conflict and a demonstration with Eco-Planet Bamboo, a foreign company which is into the plantation of bamboo. The demonstration occurred because the foreign company had dispossessed them of the land and also damaged their farm crops without giving them any form of compensation hence there was a need for them to demonstrate to express their displeasure over the situation. Similarly, Alhassan et al (2020) explain that land grabbing results in the loss of assets, that is farmland which is the only source of livelihood on which victims depend. Food insecurity is another effect that is caused by land grabbing. When large tracts of land are been grabbed by foreign companies be it for the production of jatropha and trees, food security is threatened. For instance, in their research to investigate the dilemma of food security and climate change, Finco and Doppler (2010) concluded that the food security situation among smallholders in Brazil was severe after their farms on which they cultivated maize, rice, and cassava was substituted with the production of jatropha. Similarly, research by Alhassan et al (2018) in seven regions of Ghana reveals that land grabbing has a negative relationship with food production income, social cohesion, health, and nutrition of farming households.

Land grabbing also poses serious financial, psychological, and health implications for individuals. Since the majority of individuals who own land are mainly engaged in farming, they become financially handicapped when they lose their lands because that is the only source of investment they have. Such individuals invest a huge amount of money into their farming business with the hope of making a huge financial return after having a bumper harvest. Some of the financial implications include; difficulty in paying back bank loans, struggling to cater for the needs of the family, and going bankrupt. Land grabbing also comes with psychological and health implications. Individuals who have lost their lands to foreign companies go through a lot of psychological and health issues which later result in death. Commenting on the same issue, the work of Alhassan et al (2020) indicated that in the Northern region of Ghana, 100% of the respondents reported that loss of life or the emergence of new diseases was a result of

land grabbing in the region. Land grabbing also leads to unemployment as individuals who have been dispossessed of their lands find it difficult to gain any meaningful job or decide to engage in menial jobs to earn a living after losing their lands. Even though the creation of employment is an essential possibility expected from land grabbing, Dheressa (2013) postulates that the type of job offered is often associated with low salaries and poor working conditions. This is further reiterated by Oviedo (2011) who also explains that in Mali when foreign investors promised indigenes whose land was grabbed employment, the employment in most cases was seasonal, lowly paid, and offered poor working conditions. For instance, in Okumaning in the Eastern region of Ghana, individuals who lost their farms to Vanderbeek, a Belgium investor only worked for the company for six months after which they had to reapply. Some of them were also employed temporarily and asked to go on leave without any remuneration. Their salary which was determined by their output ranged from GHC 10-GHC 23 (Akologo and Guri, 2016).

Another effect of land grabbing that is worth discussing is the relocation of farmers to areas that are far from their homes. In his research to ascertain the impact of jatropha plantations on the livelihood of individuals in Northern Ghana, Danso (2015) found that farmers had to relocate to another place for their farming activities. According to Danso, the accessibility of new land by the affected farmers created some difficulties and this meant that they had to travel long distances to be able to work on their farms. In the Brong Ahafo region for example, the findings of (Schoneveld and German, 2014; Aha and Ayitey, 2017) confirm that there has been the displacement of farmers as a result of the production of bio-fuels by foreign companies. For instance, Acheampong and Campion (2014) have established that the dispossession of land in Agogo by foreign companies resulted in local farmers relocating to much more marginal lands which are often unproductive or infertile. Commenting on the environmental impact of investing in large-scale oil palm and rubber plantations on grabbed land, Colchester et al (2011) explain that it leads to an increase in the rise of greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, the depletion of soil nutrients, drought, and desertification. Given this Araya (2013) argues that governments should ensure that land grabbing results in desired social benefits rather than leading to vulnerabilities such as affecting the food security of households. Land grabbing has different implications for men and women. For men, Daley and Pallas (2014) reveal that it has been the loss of commons for grazing cattle as well as hunting of game. But women are the hardest hit when communities lose their lands to land grabs. A World Bank report on land grabs in Africa (2014) estimates that 70% of smallholder farmers are women (Agbley, 2019).



The last effect of land grabbing to be discussed is that it results in the loss of land without any form of compensation. In most instances when foreign entities want to acquire land for their activities their first point of call is the chiefs who are the custodians of lands. The chiefs on the other hand do not consult their people before they lease out this land to foreign investors. In addition to this, individuals who are victims receive little or no form of compensation at all. A study by Aha and Ayitey (2017) showed that local farmers who are indigenous to their land and farms, in Yeji in the Brong Ahafo region were not engaged or consulted in the negotiation leading to the acquisition. According to Aha and Ayitey, the means of land acquisition and dispossession of land in Yeji was a process mainly led by the community chief, traditional council as well as bio-fuel companies. In Agogo, for instance, Acheampong and Campion (2014) indicated that land owners claimed that they were never engaged by the Chief/traditional authority or by the Jatropha Companies.

## **2.5 History of land grabbing**

During the colonial era, major European countries were active in land grabs in the regions they conquered (Peluso and Lund, 2011). The type of crop the colonizers hoped to cultivate determined the variety of land grabs. Differences were also determined by the type of the colony and the timing of colonization (Peluso and Lund, 2011). Historically, land grabbing was not limited to the Global South. British enclosure systems are well-known in history as examples of land grabs in the global South and Eastern Europe (White et al., 2012; Schoenberger, Hall, and Vandergeest, 2017). Following territorial warfare, local populations in most colonial regions were evicted from their land. Following the conflicts, colonial governments and foreign and domestic enterprises would speed up the dispossession of natives from their land. During the height of colonization, colonial governments became increasingly involved in the sale of enormous sections of indigenous land to large enterprises (White et al, 2012). The principal legal deception used was the concept of 'terres sans maître' or 'empty and uninhabited lands', which declared all unregistered assets to be public land and so given over to governments for administration (Wily, 2011). Western firms expropriated native populations in Southern, Eastern, and Northern Africa and established plantations to produce cotton, palm oil, rubber, and other export commodities needed by industrializing economies (Wallerstein, 1974; Cotula, 2013). In contrast, throughout much of Western Africa, where markets and trading routes were well established, Europeans chose to buy agricultural produce from local

farmers (Amanor, 2012). In many circumstances, no physical dispossession occurred, but farmers' access to land was conditioned on paying taxes to their chiefs (Cotula, 2013).

Land ownership patterns in Ghana saw significant changes throughout the colonial period, particularly under British authority. The British colonial administration implemented new land tenure arrangements, undermining traditional patterns of land ownership and management. This frequently resulted in disputes over land rights and the displacement of indigenous groups from their traditional grounds. Following its independence from Britain in 1957, Ghana implemented a series of land reforms aimed at redressing colonial injustices. The government intended to allocate land to local communities and small-scale producers. However, these initiatives were frequently greeted with opposition from vested interests and bureaucratic inefficiency. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Ghana, like many other African countries, adopted neoliberal economic policies such as privatization and deregulation. These regulations made it easier for foreign investors to purchase vast land parcels, frequently for infrastructure, mining, or commercial agriculture. Some who oppose these property deals contend that they frequently violate the rights of the surrounding communities, resulting in social instability, environmental damage, and displacement.

To control property transactions and safeguard the rights of local populations, the Ghanaian government has put in place several rules, however, enforcement has frequently been lax. The rights of impacted communities are being defended by civil society organizations and grassroots movements, that oppose land grabs. Still, problems like power disparities, weak legal systems, and corruption make things difficult. Globalization, neoliberal economic practices, and colonialism are all reflected in Ghana's history of land grabbing. It takes comprehensive changes that put local populations' rights and interests first while advancing sustainable development to address the root causes of land grabbing.

A second wave of land grabs occurred after the colonies declared independence in the late 1950s when a fresh crop of politicians rose to power and began the decolonization process (Cotula 2013). Many post-independence countries, however, inherited colonial-era legal systems rather than revising them to protect indigenous land rights (Randon, 2020). Randon (2020) claims that this wave of land grabs was carried out by independent local governments rather than colonial authorities. Between the 1980s and the 1990s, major political and economic developments occurred in the African continent, resulting in a growing reliance on the private sector in the promotion of economic development. As a result, many states tried and succeeded

in attracting foreign investment by modifying land laws, offering fiscal incentives, and enacting new legal protections for investors (Cotula, 2013). These measures proved to be effective, and since the mid-2000s, Africa has seen a fresh wave of land acquisitions driven mostly by socioeconomic dynamics (Anseeuw et al., 2012).

## **2.6 Land Administration and Tenure System in Ghana**

Some laws govern and regulate the usage of land in Ghana. These laws exist to ensure that lands belonging to individuals are protected and to a larger extent to prevent the incidence of land conflicts. Despite these laws which regulate the ownership and usage of land, the incidence of land grabbing has been on the rise in Ghana. In Ghana state law and customary law are what guide land administration. Land tenure represents in any community the system of rules and regulations that govern how land is acquired, held, and used by various categories of people in that community. These rules and regulations provide answers to the questions: who can acquire land, how long the person can hold the land, what use the person can or cannot put the land to and what ownership right can be exercised by the person (Yelsang, 2013).

## **2.7 Customary law**

In Ghana, customary law is an important source of law and is observed at all levels of society (Mantebea, 2006). 80% of the land in Ghana is administered and regulated by customary laws. The customary laws governing the use of land allows for separable and overlapping rights (Huges et al, 2019). Under customary law, traditional rulers have to oversee the land they supervise in trust for the benefit of their people. According to Huges et al (2019), the holder of an allodial title cannot reassign land that is already claimed by another party. Adarkwah (2006) and Aye et al (2008) also explain that under customary law, the rights of chiefs to sell or lease land and the extent to which they need to consult with the affected communities and individuals before doing so are unclear. Similarly, Huges et al (2019) postulate that it is also unclear whether or not chiefs must allocate cash from land sales to community development or compensate families that have lost their land. Customary law which regulates the usage of land in Ghana is largely unwritten and is based on local practices and norms. The ownership of land under the customary law starts with the paramount chief holding the allodial title followed by divisional and sub-chiefs who hold customary freehold whilst the indigenes hold usufruct interest in the land (Yiri, 2006). Under customary law, land in centralized states like Dagbon and Ashanti in Northern and Southern Ghana cannot be sold outright but can only be leased

with approval from the chief (Yiri, 2006). Chiefs and elders who constitute community leaders have the sole responsibility to govern land issues under the customary law because as explained by Danso (2015) chiefs in the communities are seen as political figures and make essential decisions concerning land allocation. Individuals under the customary law could possess land without any written documentation which eventually leads to so many land-related issues. In Ghana, land could be given to investors or foreign entities when such land is regulated by customary law. This is corroborated by Danso (2015) who opines that for land to be acquired for a developmental project, there must be a negotiation with the local chief and his council of elders provided the land in question is under the customary land system. Families in local communities are given lands under the supervision of family heads and chiefs through customary law. This according to Danso (2015) is to ensure that all members have a small portion of land for cultivation. Finally, Tonah (2002) explains that under the customary law, lands allocated to a particular lineage will be divided among the various families constituting the lineage and each family will have the right to pass the use of such land to the next generation. Asante Akyem Agogo is a stool land and every stool land is owned by the paramount chief, the Omahene, who is the allodial title owner. This means that he has the highest interest in land ownership.

## **2.8 State law**

Under state law, rules and regulations governing the ownership and usage of land are well documented. 20 % of Ghana's land area is administered under the state law. Lands under state laws are allocated and confirmed through the issuance of titles or other forms of registration of ownership. In Ghana, the management of land under the statutory law is under the supervision of the Lands Commission. The Land Commission is the state agency responsible for managing all public lands in Ghana. In Ghana, various laws and Acts exist to regulate the use and ownership of land. The Land Act of 2020, the 1999 National Land Policy, and the 2003 Land Administration project are all statutory laws that govern the usage of land in Ghana. As pointed out by Alhassan (2006), several legislation and policies have been made in the past to initiate, encourage, and improve registration of interest in land in Ghana. The National Land Policy of 1999 for instance was introduced to ensure the judicious use of the nation's land and all its natural resources. The policy was implemented to deal with land issues such as general indiscipline in the land sector characterized by land encroachment, multiple sales of land parcels, inadequate security of land tenure due to conflict between and within land-owning

groups and the state, compulsory acquisition by the government of large tracts of land and finally lack of consultation, coordination, and corporation among land development agencies. The 2003 Land Administration Project on the other hand was introduced to undertake land policy and institutional reforms and key land administration for laying the foundation for a sustainable land administration system that is fair, efficient, cost-effective, decentralized and that ensures land tenure security. Finally, the Land Act 2020 Act 1036 was enacted among other things to revise, harmonize, and consolidate the laws on land to ensure sustainable land administration and management, effective and efficient land tenure to provide for related matters. Specifically, the 2020 Land Act criminalizes land guards and their activities, it also prohibits discriminatory practices as well as allows a person who has an interest in land to apply to court for an interlocutory injunction against unknown trespassers on his/her land (National Land Act, 2020).

## **2.9 Types of Land Tenure System in Ghana**

State ownership of land and customary ownership of land are two main types of land tenure systems in Ghana.

### **2.9.1 Customary Land Ownership**

Customary land tenure is referred to as a system of land relation in which the ownership of the land is vested in a collective (whether a family lineage or clan) while the individual enjoys virtual unrestricted rights of usage (Mends, 2020). In relation to this Mabogunje (1992) explains that the head of such a collective is regarded as a symbol of the residuary, reversionary, and ultimate ownership of all land held by the collective. Land under the customary tenure system is communally owned and has its highest allodial interest traceable to a stool, skin, clan, or family (Mend, 2006). It is important to note that under customary land tenure, land cannot be transferred by a family member to another individual. This is because according to Mend (2006), the living must use the land so that the interest of the future generation is not affected. Under the customary ownership of land, each family member is entitled to have land and use part of the land for whatsoever activity, but he/she cannot sell the land to another individual. Customary land ownership according to Mend (2006) can be acquired through discovery and long uninterrupted settlement, through conquest and settlement as a right. The land is held by the head of a family, chief, and council of elders under the customary system of ownership and they have the mandate to allocate land on behalf of their

people. Family lands according to Fosu (2020) are however insulated from government land management regulations as compared to stool lands. In Ghana, family lands are commonly found in Volta, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, and sometimes Greater Accra and Eastern regions (Kasanga and Kotey, 2001; Amanor, 2010). The right to use land is assigned to individuals while the right to transfer is vested in the chief or family head (Anaafo and Guba, 2017; Bruce and Migot-Adholia, 2016). The major feature of the customary land tenure system is that the land is viewed as belonging to the whole social group and not an individual (Fisher, 1993), it is also characterized by its largely unwritten nature, based on local practices and norms (Yelsang, 2013). In Ghana, the customary land tenure system is woven into the very fabric of the traditional society and it provides the economic basis for politics and also has serious and religious implications (Mantebea, 2006). In Ghana, land is governed either by skin or stool lands. Lands in the Northern part of Ghana are based on the skin land. This is represented by the skin of a sheep or a cow. In the Southern part of Ghana, lands are symbolized by the stool land. Since Asante Akyem Agogo can be found in the Southern part of Ghana, land ownership is based on stool land. Under this type of ownership, all lands are vested in the hands of the Paramount chief who is the allodial title owner of the land. This according to Ofori (2020) represents the authority of the chief. A stool is the seat of a chief of an indigenous state (or occasionally the head of a family) in the southern part of Ghana. It symbolizes the chief's (or head of the family's) source of authority (Ofori, 2020).

The customary land tenure has its challenges. One major challenge is that most often chiefs who hold these lands in the trust of their people lease or sell these lands without the consent of the rightful owner. Huges et al (2019) explain that in Ghana chiefs have been involved in leasing lands under their jurisdiction to accommodate growth. They further state that the rising demand for land has led some chiefs to demand high payments from community members for land usage causing hardship for many rural people including women. According to Huges et al (2019), research in peri-urban Kumasi has shown that chiefs are allocating farmland currently in use by community members to foreign investors. Community members are forced off their land and lose their source of livelihood while chiefs appropriate the financial benefits of these transactions (Ubink, 2010; Ubink and Quan 2008).

### **2.9.2 State Ownership of Land**

State lands are lands that are under the control and supervision of the state. Unlike customary land ownership, state ownership of land is governed by statutory laws. State lands are lands that the government has compulsorily acquired for a specified public purpose or in the general public interest by the lawful exercise of its constitutional power. Under the state ownership of land, all lands are vested in the president and held in trust by the state for the people of Ghana. According to Azumah and Noah (2023), state lands in Ghana were compulsorily acquired by the government for their administrative and development functions and were in the absolute ownership of the state. The 1999 National Land Policy reveals that Ghana has formed a formal administrative framework consisting of several land sector agencies under the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to facilitate a rational and relatively orderly system of land administration. Backed by legislation these agencies perform various functions including public land, stool and vested land administration, settlement of boundaries of stool lands, protection of interest in land, and registration of titles throughout Ghana. (National Land Policy, 1999). Under the State Land Act 1962 (Act 125), the declaration through the publication of an instrument designating a piece of land as required in the public interest automatically vests ownership of the land in the state. Under the state ownership of land, land may be specifically expropriated under the constitution. Through the state ownership of land, the government has full authority to use the land for development projects or lease it out to private institutions and state institutions (Danso, 2015). In Ghana, customary land tenure makes up around 80% of the total land area. The remaining 20% is divided between various ownership types and the state (Salia 2020).

The 1992 constitution of Ghana specifically Article 20 makes the provision for the state to compulsorily acquire land under the following condition: (a) that the land acquired must be in the public interest. By public interest Stenberg and Rafiee (2018) explain that the land acquired must satisfy the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public health, public morality, town and country planning, or the improved condition of the poor. (b) there must be an explanation of what that interest is, (c) that compulsory acquisition is allowed only if it takes place under fair and prompt payment of adequate compensation (d) that the expropriate person shall have the opportunity and liberty to question the decision of acquisition in a high court in Ghana. However, the State Land Act of 1962 (Act 125) makes provision for the state to compensate individuals who have lost their land to the state. The compensation according to Danso (2015) is either in the form of open market value of the land or possible reallocation of

different land for the affected individuals. State land in Ghana falls under two main types: land which has been compulsorily acquired for a public purpose or in the interest under that state Land Act, 1962 (Act 125) and land which has been vested in the president in trust for a land holding community under the Administration of Lands Act, 1962 (Act 123). State land according to Adu-Gyamfi (2012) is acquired through proper legislation for public purposes and interests and is used for infrastructural projects and also provides government services. The decision by the state to acquire land compulsorily comes with its challenges. The challenges as explained by Larbi (2008) include the acquisition of lands far above actual requirements, unpaid compensation, encroachment<sup>1</sup> of acquired land, and change of use of compulsorily acquired land as against the purpose of the acquisition. The Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands, Lands Commission, Survey Department, Land Title Registry, Land Valuation Board, and the Town and Country Planning Department are the six public agencies that work together to manage all acquired land under that state ownership of land. The idea of state land is anchored on the fact that the state would be more diligent and efficient in the management of land for the collective interest of society (Amakye and Ameyibor, 2022).

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<sup>1</sup> The act of illegally trespassing or going beyond the boundaries of a land that does not belong to an individual. This can happen in diverse ways which include building a fence wall or using the land for a particular purpose with the permission of the rightful owner of the land.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theory and methodology used for the study. The accumulation by dispossession theory propounded by David Harvey was the theoretical framework that was chosen for the study. It also details the research approach and design, study area, sampling technique, and procedure, source of data collection, methods of data collection, and data analysis methods that were used for the study. The final part discusses the ethical considerations that guided the research study.

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framework: Accumulation by Dispossession Theory

Marx's idea of "primitive accumulation" serves as the foundation for the accumulation by dispossession theory (Harvey, 2003, 2005). Harvey provides examples of how the neoliberal economic policies that many Western countries adopted from the 1970s to the present have resulted in the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few elites, a process that happens when people are evicted from their land and riches (Harvey, 2003). Scholars like Levien (2012) opine that accumulation by dispossession refers to the process of obtaining the means of production for capital accumulation via non-market means or extra-economic coercion. In short, accumulation by dispossession is the process in which somebody is being dispossessed from their assets or rights (Harvey 2003). In this regard, the accumulation by dispossession theory helps in understanding the manner and nature in which local indigenes have been dispossessed of their land in Asante Akyem North Municipality by foreign companies like Miro Forestry, Eco-Planet Bamboo and ScanFarm. One example of dispossession could be the privatization of common property, a process in which the state usually plays a crucial part, either by promoting privatization or supporting it. It explains how the power of the state is being implemented to enforce such processes of dispossession, even if it goes against public opinion (Harvey 2003). The assertion postulated by Harvey is exactly what happens in Ghana as the government in many instances is involved in promoting or supporting the privatization of common property. For instance, in 2020 Electrochem Ghana Limited secured a lease from the government of Ghana and the traditional authorities of Ada in the Greater Accra region to mine salt. The Ada people held differing opinions about the project's potential benefits; some thought it would be beneficial, while others said that the privatization would rob them of their only source of income (GhanaWeb, 2023).

Accumulation by displacement is a similar concept that helps in understanding the theory of accumulation by dispossession. In the view of Hall (2013), it is the process in which self-reproducing peasantries are being dispossessed from their land. By looking at the concept of dispossession, Hall (2013) claims one can see how it relates to land grabbing, a process in which land and other valuable resources are enclosed, and previous users of these resources are dispossessed. According to Obuene et al. (2021), accumulation by dispossession typifies the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations. This theory explains that landowners tend to resist the decision of governments to transfer their land to private companies for so-called ‘‘development purposes’’. This theory in the view of Obuene et al. (2021) explains why there is a revolt by landowners when they are dispossessed of their land. According to this theory, when landowners protest after being evicted from their land, it causes a change that eventually leads to the takeover of their land being reversed. Accumulation by dispossession in the view of Gellert (2015) is a powerful and appropriate lens by which to understand land conversion and social displacement. Privatization, financialization, management of crises, and state redistributions are the four main pillars of the accumulation by dispossession theory. Privatization happens when public assets and services are transferred to private individuals, which usually disadvantages marginalized individuals who rely on such assets or resources. Privatization is the phenomenon most closely aligned with Harvey’s initial definition of accumulation by dispossession.

Financialization typically occurs when assets such as land are converted into financial instruments, allowing value to be extracted through financial markets. According to (Bluwstein et al. 2018) financialization allows people's land to be traded as a commodity between private investors for large sums of money, with no remuneration for landowners. With the management of crises, Miller (2022) elucidates that this is where state actors and private individuals target owners of land and dispossess them of their land. In the view of Miller (2022), this act is justified by invoking issues such as climate change, the need for biodiversity protection, the need to develop offsets to alleviate environmental damage, or the need to obtain vital medicinal components before environmental degradation. With state redistribution, Miller (2022) explains that the state captures private or communal land into the public domain, and then the redistribution of public land as the state sees fit. The issue of state redistribution is very common with the phenomenon of land grabbing because the state on many occasions tends to dispossess individuals of their land through various activities such as elite capture or the use of such land for development purposes which in many instances turn out not to be the exact case.

The Accumulation by Dispossession theory emphasizes the transformation of diverse property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights (Obuene et al. 2021). This theory helps to understand how elites and small groups of people can amass wealth and resources leading to economic differences and social inequalities. Simply put the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. The theory in the view of Harvey (2007) includes (a) the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations, (b) conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusively private property rights, (c) suppression of rights to the commons, (d) commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption, and finally (e) colonial, neocolonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources). This theory has been chosen for this study because it helps in understanding how the incidence of land grabbing takes place and the factors that drive it. Specifically, the four main pillars of the theory do this by explaining how state and private actors acquire wealth by dispossessing marginalized individuals of their assets, resources, and rights. The theory further depicts that dispossession happens mainly through the privatization of resources, land enclosures, forceful evictions, and other mechanisms that transfer wealth from common individuals to a small group of people.

The movement of wealth and resources from less developed to more developed places is explained by accumulation by dispossession, which also contributes to the explanation of global economic systems. It exposes the underlying inequalities and structural disparities in the world economy. For many reasons, including its crucial insight into how power and money are concentrated in the hands of a select few at the expense of many others, the idea of accumulation by dispossession is significant. The discussions above show how accumulation through dispossession is a common occurrence that has an impact on many facets of society and disproportionately affects marginalized people. It is critical to comprehend these mechanisms to criticize current power structures and promote more just arrangements.

In conclusion, the theory of accumulation by dispossession is significant because it offers a framework for comprehending the systemic inequities and deep-seated disparities that result from capitalism. It provides a foundation for criticism, advocacy, and legislative changes meant to make the world more equal.

## **3.2 Methodology**

The fieldwork was carried out between the 15<sup>th</sup> of January and to 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2024 in the Asante Akyem North Municipality.

### **3.2.1 Research Approach and Design**

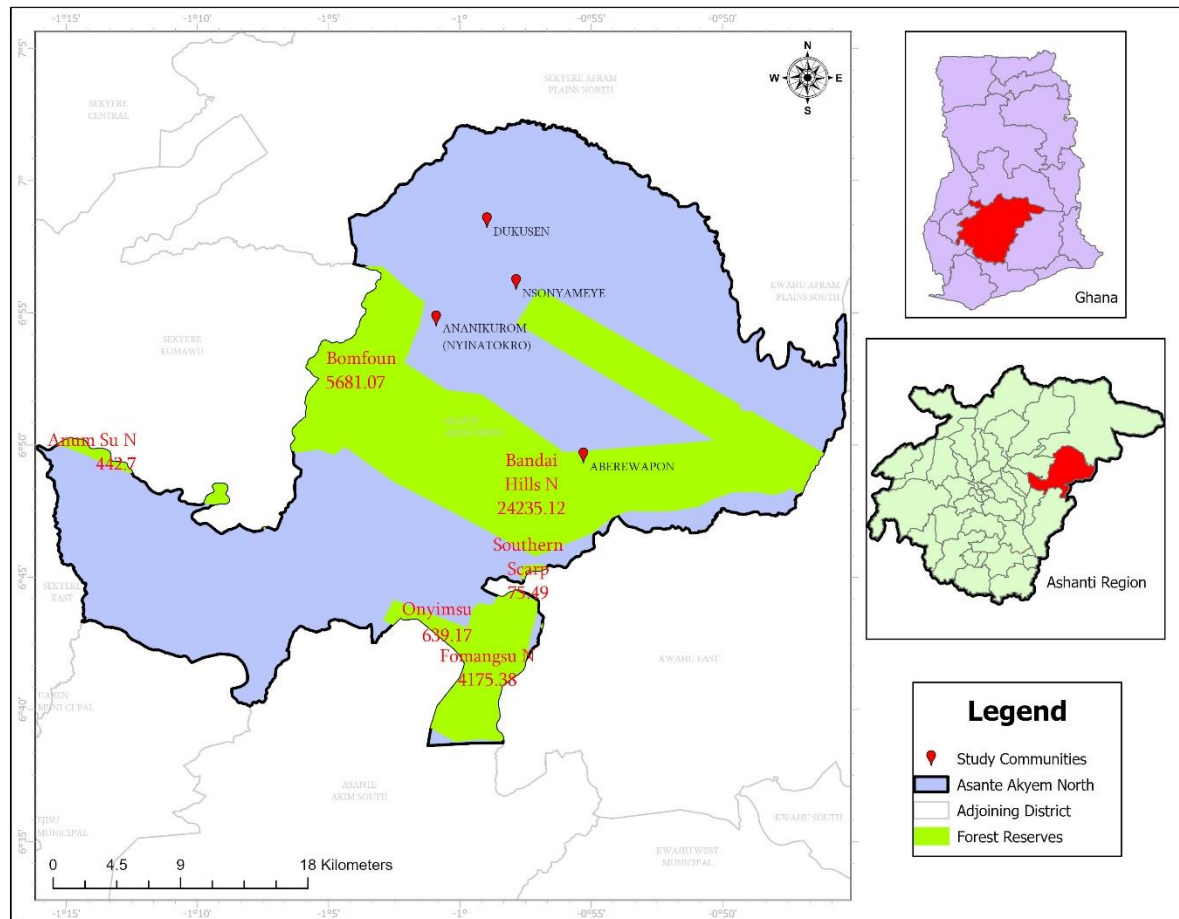
The study adopted a qualitative research approach to gather relevant data to help ascertain if land-grabbing influences urban migration in Ghana. The qualitative approach was used by the researcher because there was the need to have an in-depth understanding of the practice of land grabbing from the viewpoint of the respondents and place much emphasis on the experience these respondents have had with the incidence of land grabbing. As explained by Chinyere and Val (2023), the goal of qualitative research is to get an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in their natural settings. The qualitative research approach was chosen by the researcher because it allows for less codification of the research process (Bryman, 2016). The qualitative research enabled the researcher to understand the ideas, opinions, and experiences of respondents concerning the phenomenon of land grabbing and the effects it had on their livelihood. Qualitative research is interested in developing explanations of social phenomena and to this end, it aids in understanding the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are (Hancock et al, 2007). Similarly, the adoption of this research approach helped in understanding the reason why the practice of land grabbing has been pervasive in Asante Akyem Agogo and the current state of affairs.

A research project's research design is a detailed plan for gathering data. It serves as a "blueprint" for empirical research and must outline at least three procedures: (1) data collecting; (2) instrument construction; and (3) sampling. Its goals are to test certain hypotheses or provide answers to particular research questions (Bryman, 2016). The case study research design was chosen for the study. A case study design is an in-depth examination of a particular case (Bryman, 2016). Based on the explanation by Bryman, the case study design was used by the researcher to gain an in-depth analysis and understanding of the ramifications of land grabbing on study participants differentiated by age, the duration of stay in the community, marital status, and level of education. Since the case study design requires the need to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, the researcher employed the use of semi-structured interviews to gain first-hand information from study participants. Case study design in the view of Yin (2018) is chosen as a research strategy when “how”, “why”, and “what” are the interest of the researcher. Given this the researcher employed the case study design because

respondents were asked how they acquired their lands, why land grabbing continues to happen in their communities and what are the causes and effects of land grabbing.

### 3.2.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in the Asante Akyem North Municipality in the Ashanti region of Ghana (**figure 1**).



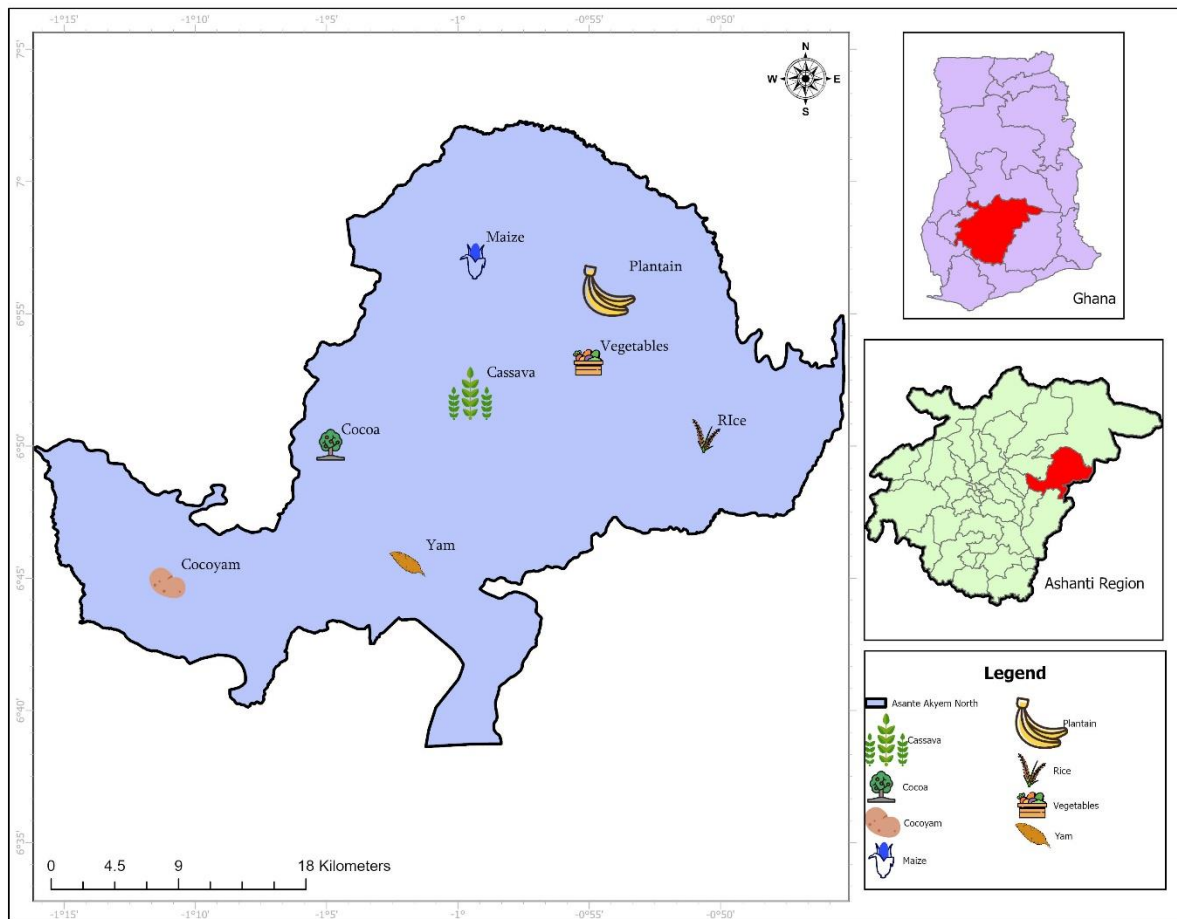
**Figure 1. Map of Asante Akyem North Municipality of Ghana, showing the study communities. Source: Map produced by the researcher.**

The Municipality is located in the Eastern part of the Ashanti Region and lies between latitude 6° 30' North and 7° 30' North and longitude 0° 15' West and 1° 20' West. It covers a land area of 1,126 square kilometers constituting 4.6 percent of the region's land area (Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). Four communities were selected for this research study, they were Anankurom, Abrewapong, Nsonyameye, and Dukusen. These communities were selected because of the prevalence of the incidence of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality coupled with the fact that the activity of land grabbing in these communities has had an adverse impact on the lives of people living there. These communities were also chosen

because plantation companies specifically Miro Forestry and Eco-Planet Bamboo carry out their operations in these communities. The Asante Akyem North Municipal Assembly is one of the forty-three (43) MMDAs<sup>2</sup> in the Ashanti Region, with Agogo as the capital. It was upgraded to a Municipality status (Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly) by a Local Government (Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly, 2023). The Assembly has a total membership of Thirty-Four (34) made up of Twenty-two (22) elected members, Ten (10) government appointees, (1) Municipal Chief Executive, and one (1) Member of Parliament (Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). According to the 2021 Housing and Population Census by the Ghana Statistical Service, the municipality has a total population of 85, 788 comprising 42,000 males (49%) and 43,788 (51%) females. The Municipality has an urban and rural population of 56, 792, and 28, 996 respectively. This means that the municipality is predominantly urban. Agriculture is the main economic activity in the Municipality and more than 80% of the active population are farmers. 8 out of 10 households (79.7%) are agricultural households (Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). The major crops cultivated are plantain, cassava, maize, rice, cocoa, rice, yam cocoyam, and vegetables (**figure 2**)

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<sup>2</sup> Is an abbreviation for Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies in Ghana



**Figure 2. Map showing the various crops cultivated in Asante Akyem North Municipality of Ghana. Source: Map produced by the researcher.**

In terms of climate, the Asante Akyem North Municipal experiences wet semi-equatorial climate and temperature and is found to be uniformly high all year round with a mean annual temperature of 26. The rainfall regime is double maxima with total annual rainfall between 125cm and 175cm with peaks occurring in July and November; the first rainy season is from May to July and the second from September to November (Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). The monthly average rainfall is between 120- and 150 mm. Combining temperature and rainfall regimes, four seasons are distinguishable from the municipal microclimate. They are the harmattan season December- April, the first rainy season May- July with the peak in June, the monsoon drought July– August, and the second rainy season September – November (Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). The municipality lies within the moist semi-deciduous forest belt. The major vegetation types are the open forest covering 576 square kilometers over the highland areas, the loosed Forest covering 230 square kilometers on the range on the range, and the Wooded Savannah 246 square kilometers. Tree species found in the forest are Wawa, Ofra, Oti, Sapele, Sanfina, and Onyina among others

(Asante Akyem North Municipal Report, 2023). To maintain the micro-climate, parts of the forest in the municipality have been reserved. There are four (4) forest reserves in the Municipality. These are the Bandai Hill reserves at Nyinatokrom, Abrewapon, Bebome, and Nyamebekyere. The forest reserves serve as an income to the Municipal Assembly and traditional authorities in terms of royalties (stool lands). The relationship between the two maps and this study is that **(figure 1)** highlights the key areas that have been used for this study and also indicates the main forest reserves that are located in the Asante Akyem North Municipality, whilst **(figure 2)** depicts the main food crops that are grown in the various communities chosen as the area of study.

### **3.3.3 Sample Size, Sampling Techniques, and Sampling Procedure**

The snowball sampling technique was chosen in selecting the study participants to assess the influence land grabbing has on urban migration. According to Bryman (2016), with this method of sampling, the researcher contacts a limited number of individuals who are pertinent to the study at first and then uses those contacts to build relationships with other individuals. In line with this, I was able to establish contact with a small number of individuals who were victims of land grabbing with the help of a research assistant. These individuals recommended and led the researcher and his research assistant to other people who were victims of land grabbing in the various study communities. Key study participants for this study comprised Forty (40) local farmers, one (1) court official, one (1) Assemblymember, one (1) representative of the government, one (1) member of the Agogo Traditional Council, the registrar to the Omanhene of Agogo, one (1) official from the Forestry Commission, one (1) official from the Lands Commission and one (1) representative of Eco-Planet Bamboo plantation and one Community Chief. The total sample size for the study was 49 study participants. The snowball sampling was adopted by the researcher because getting a sample frame for the population was difficult. This is explained by (Bhattacharjee, 2012) who states that while snowball sampling rarely produces representative samples, in certain situations it might be the only means of reaching groups that are difficult to reach or in situations where a sampling frame is not available.

The purposive sampling was also used for the study. A purposive sampling is normally used in a study when the researcher wants to get information from individuals who have expert knowledge in the subject matter that is being investigated. The benefits of this sampling technique according to Bhattacharjee (2012) is that opinions from a sample of experts are more



trustworthy than those from a sample that includes both experts and non-experts since experts often have greater subject-matter knowledge than non-experts. Given this, the Assemblyman, the government representative, the member of the Agogo Traditional Council, the court official, officials from the Forest and Lands Commission, and the representative from Eco-Planet Bamboo plantation were all purposively selected because of their expert opinion of the practice of land grabbing.

#### **3.3.4 Source of data**

The study relied on primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data consisted of first-hand information provided by study participants which provided access to the raw data that was used by the researcher to achieve the research objectives. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to determine the influence of land grabbing on urban migration and this was what comprised the primary data. In addition, secondary data was also used for the study. These included the use of journal articles, books, reports from the Asante Akyem North Municipal Assembly, relevant data from the Forestry and Lands Commission, and data from the Ghana Statistical Service.

#### **3.3.5 Data collection method**

Interviews were the method that were used to gather information from study participants for the primary data because as opined by Bryman (2016), an interview is the most widely adopted method in qualitative research. Specifically, the semi-structured face-to-face interview was used during the study to combine both elements of structured and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to seek clarification on issues raised by the respondents and also ask follow-up questions during the interview session. Similarly, Bryman (2016) explains that the semi-structured interview allows researchers to ask questions that may not be included in the interview guide as the researcher picks up on the study participant's replies. The face-to-face interview was conducted at the various homes of all the study participants at their convenience and time. This according to Essel (2019) is to ensure that participants are at ease and comfortable while being interviewed. The purpose of the research was explicitly explained to the study participants and their consent was sought before the interview was carried out. In preparing for the interview questions the researcher formulated the questions in a way that would help the researcher answer the research questions as stated by Bryman (2016). In selecting the communities used for the study, the research assistant was consulted due to his experience in fieldwork in the Asante Akyem North Municipality as well

as his close working relationship with the local farmers in all four communities. This was done so that the researcher would be familiar with the settings in which the study participants lived (Bryman, 2016). Open-ended questions were used during the interview process to allow the study participants to express themselves freely. Through open-ended questions, Bryman (2016) states that respondents are not directed toward any certain type of response by the questions thus, it is possible to access the respondents' knowledge and comprehension of the topics.

The interviews were conducted in the local language (Twi) because the study participants could not speak and understand English. The semi-structured face-to-face interviews with respondents lasted for an average time of 25 minutes whilst the longest interview lasted for 46 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with a mobile phone to enhance the clarity of the data obtained.

### **3.3.6 Data Analysis**

Interviews conducted with research participants were translated from the local language (Twi) to English and transcribed by the researcher. According to Halcomb and Davidson (2006, p:38), transcription refers to “the process of reproducing spoken words, such as those from an audio-taped interview, into written text”. In order not to misquote respondents, I listened to the audio recordings of every respondent on two occasions. The transcribed interview was then arranged under specific research questions guiding the study which were used as a thematic area. The research questions served as the basis for the qualitative data that was mainly gathered for the study using face-to-face interviews. The thematic analysis was used to analyze data gathered from the interview conducted. As highlighted by Bryman (2016), the goal of thematic data analysis is to identify emerging themes in data and subsequently engage in further analysis and presentation of results. In using the thematic analysis, the researcher looked for repetition that ran across the statements by study participants. As recommended by Ryan and Bernard (2003) looking out for repetition, that is searching for topics that recur again and again is the most common way in which themes are identified. Given this, I read the transcribed interviews meticulously to identify and highlight themes needed for data analysis. After this, recurrent themes were also identified and these were related to theoretical concepts adopted for the study. Finally, I expounded on the data concerning the research objectives, research questions, and relevant literature.

### **3.3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethics plays an important part in research and as such researchers are supposed to abide by it when conducting a study. The research was done in affiliation with the Center for Cultural and African Studies at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This helped the researcher gain the necessary assistance and guidance needed before going to the field to start the data collection process. Before the researcher started the interview with respondents, an introductory letter by the supervisor was sent to the Asante Akyem North Municipal Assembly to formally introduce the researcher to the Assembly and gain permission to be able to conduct the research in the Municipality. Before the interview was conducted with the respondents, they were well informed about the purpose of the interview so that they could get a better understanding of what they were getting into. Voluntary participation and harmlessness, confidentiality and anonymity, and informed consent are the three major research ethics that guided this study. Concerning voluntary participation and harmlessness, participants were duly informed that they had the right to either accept or decline to participate in the study and that the study would not in any way cause any harm to them. Specifically, one of the foreign companies, Miro Forestry declined to have an interview with the researcher. This is accentuated by Bhattacharjee (2012) who explains that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and are not harmed as a result of their participation or non-participation in the research process. Confidentiality and anonymity are other important aspects of research ethics that cannot be overlooked. To follow the principle of confidentiality and anonymity, participants were assured that their true identity would not be disclosed in any report, paper, or research findings. Given this, I adopted the use of numbers to ensure that the personal information of the study participants was kept anonymous and confidential. According to Bryman (2016), the issue of informed consent is in many respects the area within social research ethics that is most hotly debated. Informed consent in the view of Bhattacharjee (2012) describes the right of participants not to participate and their right to withdraw before their responses to the study can be recorded. Before the face-to-face interview was conducted with respondents, their informed consent was sought before the researcher could record the conversation that took place and in addition to this the researcher also asked for permission from the respondents for pictures to be taken with them. All these research ethical guidelines ensured that the research study met the ethical standards of social research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines and analyzes data gathered from respondents on the influence of land grabbing on urban migration in Ghana. This chapter is in two main parts. The first part describes the social and demographic characteristics of the victims of land grabbing. The second part presents and analyzes the typology of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem Municipality. It also discusses the perception of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing and assesses the linkage between land grabbing and urban migration.

#### 4.1 Social and demographic characteristics of victims of land grabbing

The victims of land grabbing formed the primary study participants in this research. A total of 40 victims of land grabbing were interviewed for the study. Their demographic characteristics are presented in the following sub-sections.

##### 4.1.2 Age group

The study also explored the age distribution of the study participants. Twenty-one (21) males and nineteen (19) females were interviewed for the study. The study explored the age distribution of respondents because the researcher wanted to know the various perceptions of the young, the middle-aged, and, the elderly on the practice of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality. This information is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 1 Age group of respondents

| Age            | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 18-27 years    | 0             | 0              |
| 28-37 years    | 1             | 2.5            |
| 38-47 years    | 14            | 35             |
| 48-57 years    | 7             | 17.5           |
| Above 58 years | 18            | 45             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>40</b>     | <b>100%</b>    |

Source: Field data, 2024

The outcome of the age respondents shows an elderly population in the study communities visited by the researcher; hence it can be argued that the victims of the land grabbing in these

study communities is an elderly population. Despite the elderly population, the middle age (35%) also constituted an important source of primary data for the study and also offered important insight into the incidence of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality.

#### 4.1.3 Marital status

Marriage plays an important role in Ghana and as such Adjah (2023) explains that the marriage and family institutions are held in high regard due to their role in carrying forward the norms and values of society through procreation and socialization, particularly in terms of shaping social interactions with others in society. The table below shows the marital status of the study participants.

Table 2 **Marriage status of respondents**

| <b>Marital status</b> | <b>Frequency (N)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Married               | 29                   | 72.5                  |
| Widow/widower         | 8                    | 20                    |
| Divorced              | 3                    | 7.5                   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>40</b>            | <b>100%</b>           |

**Source: Field data. 2024**

From the table, it can be seen that most study participants interviewed for the study were married with few being widows/widowers or divorced. In Ghana, marriage forms one of the bases on which an individual gains access to land. During the interview, some respondents alluded to the fact that they were able to get access to lands because they were married to natives who came from Asante Akyem Agogo. Marriage also constitutes the legally recognized and socially accepted institution to engage in procreation and thus have adequate household labor to engage in farming activities (Adjah, 20223).

#### 4.1.4 Level of education

The level of education of study participants was also taken into consideration by the researcher. The level of education of the study participants was of importance to the researcher because it helped to determine to what extent the respondents were well informed about land rights and ownership and the various land laws in Ghana. The outcome of the level of education of the study participants is presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 3 Level of education of respondents**

| <b>Level of education</b> | <b>Frequency (N)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| No formal education       | 14                   | 35                |
| Primary education         | 24                   | 60                |
| Secondary education       | 2                    | 5                 |
| Tertiary education        | 0                    | 0                 |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>40</b>            | <b>100%</b>       |

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The result above shows that there is a low level of formal education in the study communities used for this study. This means that based on the respondent’s level of education, they may not be well abreast with the legal frameworks that concern land as well as issues about land rights and ownership. This was clear when many of the respondents indicated that after losing their lands, they were not able to seek legal redress, whilst some also explained that they did not know how to seek legal aid after the loss of their land. Since there is a low level of formal education among the respondents, it is fair to conclude that agricultural activities constitute the main source of livelihood for respondents in the study communities.

#### **4.1.5 Duration of stay in the community**

To determine how knowledgeable respondents are with matters related to land grabbing, the duration of their stay in their respective communities was considered. The outcomes are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 4 Duration of stay in the community**

| <b>Duration</b>    | <b>Frequency (N)</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than a year   | 0                    | 0                     |
| 1-5 years          | 1                    | 2.5                   |
| 6-10               | 3                    | 7.5                   |
| 11-15 years        | 1                    | 2.5                   |
| 16-20 years        | 1                    | 2.5                   |
| More than 20 years | 34                   | 85                    |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>40</b>            | <b>100%</b>           |

**Source: Field data, 2024**

The table above shows that the majority of the study participants had lived in the study communities for a very long time. This means that they had lived in these areas even before the practice of land grabbing had started. This implies that the majority of the respondents sampled for the study were in good standing to offer the researcher rich and knowledgeable information about the occurrence of land grabbing in their respective communities.

**Table 5 Type of land grabbing**

| <b>Type of land grabbing</b>        | <b>Frequency (N)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Large-scale agricultural investment | 39                   | 9.75              |
| Urban expansion                     | 0                    | 0                 |
| Mining activities                   | 0                    | 0                 |
| Infrastructure development          | 1                    | 2.5               |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>40</b>            | <b>100%</b>       |

**Source: Field data, 2024**

#### **4.2 Typology of Land Grabbing**

Land grabbing happens in many ways. It can be classified under **large-scale agricultural investment, resource extraction, urban expansion, and infrastructure development**, with each one of them serving a different purpose.

Large-scale agriculture investment has been very pervasive in Ghana due to the manner and way in which it is been carried out. Large-scale agricultural investment involves the acquisition of large tracts of land by governments, private individuals, and foreign entities mainly for agricultural purposes. Farmlands in Africa are being aggressively acquired by foreign governments, multinational firms, and domestic investors for the production of food and biofuel (Cotula 2013; Kaag and Zoomers 2014). There was an increase in the rise of large-scale agricultural investment in 2008 mainly as a result of the increase in the price of food, and the crisis of energy and finance. The reason why large-scale agriculture investment has gained ground is because proponents of this activity argue that there is so much land in Africa which are unused and is lying idle hence there is the need for such land to be put to effective use. For instance, Rahmato (2011) opines that in Ethiopia the government claims that the nation has a vast amount of "idle" or "unused" land that might be profitably managed by private investors

with good financial and technological backgrounds without negatively affecting the standard of living for the local population. Similarly in Ghana, certain lands have been classified as "unused" or "marginal" by both traditional and state authorities, but they have been successfully transferred to investors (Abdallah et al, 2023). For example, in Agogo, land that was considered to be “bush” or “marginal” by chiefs, and the Traditional Council was transferred to ScanFarm Ghana Ltd. In the Northern region as well, a report regarding unused land led to its acquisition by Biofuel Africa Ltd (Boamah, 2010). According to Abdallah (2023), state laws and policies now support large-scale agricultural investment, even though no known law or policy has ever been successful in doing so in the past. Particularly, the new wave of large-scale agricultural investment is largely influenced by agriculture policies (Abdallah, 2023). Opponents of large-scale agricultural investment on the other hand argue that that these investments have a negative impact on host nations and communities by destroying indigenous farming methods, abusing the environment, violating the legal rights of locals, and escalating food instability and conflict (Rahmato, 2011; Robertson and Pinstруп-Andersen, 2010). The arguments advanced by the authors accentuate the point made by local farmers in Asante Akyem North Municipality who indicated that the practice of large-scale agricultural investment has brought so much hardship on them. Large-scale agricultural investment has some features, these include, technology and inputs, investment, agricultural products, size, and oversight. In terms of technology and inputs, foreign and private investors often use modern equipment such as tractors, crop sprayers, bulldozers, truck cranes, and many others to carry out their activities. With investment, a huge amount of money is used by these foreign companies to acquire lands, register their lands, and also set up their operations. Investors who acquire land for large-scale agricultural investments mostly use the land for planting agricultural products such as oil palm, soya beans, Jatropha, trees, and other export-focused goods. With size, lands that are acquired for large-scale agricultural investment involve huge hectares. For instance, Nottle et al (2016) reveals that about 28 million hectares are covered with large-scale agricultural investment worldwide; in 2016, 30% of that area was in Africa. Lastly, on oversight, decisions about large-scale investment activities are and have always been at the behest of foreign entities. Decisions such as when and how to pay compensation packages, and how many local indigenes to employ are all determined by foreign investors. Resource extraction as another typology of land grabbing has gained ground in the literature on land grabbing. This is basically where large foreign investors or foreign governments gain access to large tracts of land solely to extract minerals, oil, and gas. According to Bryceson and MacKinnon (2014), natural resource investments boomed in Africa in 2001, first in the mining



and agribusiness sectors and then in the petroleum industry. In Ghana, sixteen (16) mining firms have gained large tracts of land to engage in resource extraction specifically mining (Minerals Commission Ghana, 2024). There are also foreign companies that are involved in resource extraction in Ghana. For instance, Warri (2012) reveals that 316,400 hectares (3164 km<sup>2</sup>) of land had been given to Azumah Resources Limited, a foreign-based mining company, to extract gold in North-Western Ghana. This has led Neef et al (2023) to describe the global land and resource rush as reaching new levels of absurdity and impunity. According to Larbi et al (2004), the Ghanaian government has fenced off farmlands to facilitate gold mining by exercising its right to eminent domain. The extractive industry in Ghana accounts for 67% of export earnings and 17% of government revenue as of 2020 (Besada and Golla, 2023). While resource extraction by foreign companies can bring economic development and income to a community, it at the same time can lead to a serious negative impact on the lives of people. For instance, the work of Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) found that the granting of a concession by the government of Ghana to Azumah Resources Limited, a foreign-based mining company, to extract gold in North-Western Ghana had dispossessed pre-existing usufruct rights held by local farmers in several villages. Under the resource extraction typology, Neef (2023) explains that land and resource grabbers take advantage of the environment through extractive practices like drilling and mining for fossil fuels, metals, and minerals, harvesting large amounts of freshwater, logging and clearing land for plantations to create forests, and exhausting delicate agro-landscapes through monocultures. In the view of Fig (2014) Africa in recent years has seen waves of new investment especially in mining and energy. Fig further opines that resources are usually extracted at great environmental cost and without improving people's standard of living. As a result of this Fig (2014) argues that affected communities and social groups have responded to the industry's breaches of their rights throughout Africa as the new rush for extractive resources has grown. Similarly, Buur et al (2017) state that by boosting economic growth, generating jobs, and fortifying ties between regional economies and the global economy at large, significant investments in natural resources can contribute to the transformation of African economies, but frequently, they wind up infringing upon rights of people, which can spark political unrest and social unrest. Because of its abundant mineral resources and welcoming investment environment, Ghana has drawn a sizable amount of foreign investment in the resource extraction industry (Yeboah and Nyarko, 2022).

Land grabbing can also be for urban expansion. This typology of land grabbing is solely for real estate development in urban areas. Under this typology of land grabbing, the main aim is

profit maximization at the expense of the needs of the local population. According to Steel et al (2017), since many parties are involved in urban land acquisitions, it is impossible to overlook the part that public policies play in facilitating or permitting changes in land use. They further argue that urban land grabs may not be as massive in scope. In general, urban land acquisitions are less obvious than most rural examples because they occur on a smaller scale and are more dispersed, gradual, and fragmented inside the city. African cities that are growing are likely the ones where urban land grabs are occurring most frequently (Steel et al, 2019). This is in relation to Msangi (2011) who also elucidates that in most Sub-Saharan African countries, governments have been acquiring land from the peri-urban areas to accommodate urban expansion processes. This is particularly true in Ghana as more and more urban land grabs are taking place in cities especially in Accra due to the increasing rate of urbanization. However, in the Asante Akyem North Municipality, not many urban land grabs have been on the rise because the area is known to be an agrarian society. The last typology of land grabbing to be discussed is infrastructure development. The acquisition of land for large-scale projects like roads, highways, dams, and other types of infrastructure facilities tends also to displace people and disrupt their way of living. Large-scale infrastructure is one of the main causes of forced displacement globally (Miine, 2011). The World Bank has indicated that roughly 10 million people are displaced annually as a result of infrastructure projects such as dam construction, urban development, transportation, and developmental programs (World Bank, 1996). In Ghana, this typology of land grabbing is evident in both rural and urban areas but is more frequent in the urban areas, especially in Accra. In Ghana, there have been instances where infrastructure development has led to the displacement of people. As a result of development projects, Ghana has implemented numerous resettlement programs, including the Weija, Asuofuah, TemaManhean, Akosombo, and Kpong programs (Miine, 2011). According to Miine, the Akosombo Dam which was built by the Volta River Authority in 1962 displaced about 80,000 people.

Even though all the four typologies of land grabbing discussed above exist in Ghana, large-scale agriculture investment is the type of land grabbing that exists in Asante Akyem North Municipality, the reason is that Asante Akyem North Municipality is an agrarian society coupled with the fact that the majority of the victims disclosed that they lost their lands to Eco-Planet Bamboo and Miro Forestry which are all foreign companies engaged in large-scale agricultural investment. This is corroborated by **(table 5)** above. Also, the findings from the table affirm what the registrar at the King's palace said during an interview. He disclosed that:

*“Here in this district, it is an agricultural town so they all lease for Agric-related activities like farming and plantations like planting of trees because you know we have some areas, like Miro where their plantation is, is a degraded forest area so Miro planted the tree to regenerate the forest. Recently they even applied to us that they want to do this carbon credit with their plantation because we have several plantation companies who are doing this thing here. Currently, we have a foreign company called the youth in agroforestry and their main target is to get plantations to harvest carbon credit so they are now working. So here in Asante, Akyem Agogo is either for plantation or crop planting. Agriculture plantations are popular in Agogo because it is a farming community. Here we don't do mining because the Omanhene<sup>3</sup> said his land is used for agriculture purposes, nothing more nothing less” (Respondent # 1, Registrar, Agogo 15/01/24).*

#### **4.3 Perception of urban migrants who have been dispossessed of their land**

The study considered the perception of urban migrants who were victims of land grabbing. This was done to understand how these victims perceive the practice of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality. Information gathered from the fieldwork showed that the perception of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing can be categorized into six sub-themes:

1. Their experience with land grabbing.
2. How land grabbing has impacted them
3. Why land grabbing occurs in the Asante Akyem North Municipality
4. Whether land grabbing is meant to ensure development.
5. Whether powerful actors facilitate land-grabbing
6. What preventive measures have been put in place to prevent land grabbing?

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<sup>3</sup> One of the most prominent ethnic groups in Ghana, the Akan people, utilize the term "Omanhene" in their ancient chieftaincy institutions. The Omanhene is the supreme leader or monarch of a traditional state or a sizable territory that includes several smaller towns or villages. In Ghana's traditional hierarchies and leadership structures, this title is important since it denotes power and accountability over a certain area.

### 4.3.1 Experience with land-grabbing

Individuals who had been dispossessed of their lands described their experience with land grabbing in so many ways. They described land grabbing as a practice that involved the use of force, a deliberate plan to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, a bad practice that causes pain, and a practice that was carried out without consultation and the needed compensation. Concerning the use of force, some of the victims explained that their lands were forcefully taken from them and there was nothing they could do about it. They saw this as a violation of their human rights to own land. This perception of the victims is similar to that of Cochrane and Scholar (2016) who explain that the use of force to compel people to give up their land illegally is a violation of their human rights. Similarly, in her research on land grabbing in Ethiopia, Fisseha (2022) found out that landowners were forced to leave their land at gun points. Commenting on how the use of force led to the dispossession of his land, a farmer revealed that:

*“Land grabbing in my view is just like having your property confiscated from you with force and you the victim don’t have any power to fight back for what belongs to you and when that happens you can’t do anything but just watch your land being taken away. They (the foreign company) even came with heavily built men to destroy everything on the farmland after which I was sacked” (Respondent # 11, farmer, Ananekrom, 20/01/24).*

Emphasizing the use of force, a trader who was once a farmer shared his experience by disclosing that:

*“In the year 2015, I lost my land to the Agric Minister of the Republic of Ghana; I was told she had acquired a concession to be the rightful owner of the land. But I believed she used her position as a Minister to forcefully take my land away from me because I don’t believe she used the rightful means to acquire the land” (Respondent # 9, trader, Agogo, 18/01/24).*

In explaining the use of force, Essel (2020) posits that land grabs involve the process of taking possession of land from others by evicting them from the land, with others using the lands they grab for various purposes. Some of the respondents corroborated the assertion made by Essel by indicating that:

*“Land grabbing in my opinion has to do with the forceful takeover of land from people just like what happened to me. The way and manner in which your land is taken from you make it a very bad practice. Just imagine that as a farmer you lose*

*all that you have in a single day so it is a bad practice” (Respondent # 23 farmer, Ananekrom, 25/01/24).*

The act of making the rich “richer“ and the poor “poorer” was another way in which some of the respondents perceived the practice of land grabbing. Some of the victims perceived land grabbing to be a practice that is perpetrated by rich private individuals or rich foreign companies. This is in line with Antonio et al (2022) who state that rich and emerging international companies are the protagonists who are involved in large-scale acquisition of land in developing countries. According to Shepard and Anuradha (2009), there is a dangerous disconnect between increasing investment in agriculture through rich countries taking over land in poor countries and the goal of securing food supplies for poor and vulnerable populations. The reason why some of the respondents perceived land grabbing in such a manner was that they believed that once their land was taken away from them, their main source of livelihood which was farming would be redundant, hence leading to hardship and poverty while those who have dispossessed them of their land will use their land for their activities to enrich themselves. This was how a farmer described her experience:

*“Land grabbing in my view is a practice that is bad and makes the rich richer and the poor poorer reason is that all that I had was taken from me and I am now suffering while the “land grabbers” are out there making their money and it was very painful and disturbing. After I lost my land I had to resort to doing menial jobs to survive and make a living” (Respondent # 39, farmer, Agogo, 09/02/24*

Another victim who had been a farmer all her life added her view on how she perceived land grabbing. She said “Another reason I can talk about is that those who come and dispossess us of our land here in Asante Akyem Agogo are richer than us. We the local people don’t have much money, so these people use their wealth to take our lands from us” (**Respondent # 6, farmer, Agogo, 17/01/24**). The views espoused by these victims are consistent with Graham et al (2009) who argue that the practice of land grabbing is producing high returns for rich investors.

Another way in which respondents viewed land grabbing was that it was a bad phenomenon that caused pain. Land grabbing robs people of their entire livelihood and as such causes so much pain and setbacks. Land grabbing in the view of the study participants causes pain because all that they had worked for in their entire lives turns out to be taken away from them within a twinkle of an eye and at a time they least expected it. Some of them revealed that they had to resort to bank loans to invest in their farming business and as such losing their land and the

huge investment they made caused them so much pain and grief. Some of the victims revealed during the interview that they considered land grabbing to be a painful experience because they could not get the opportunity to harvest their farm produce before their land was taken away from them. Some of them also indicated that they perceived land grabbing as a painful experience because their land was their only means of survival and when it was taken away from them, there was nothing they could do about it. Some of them disclosed that it even becomes worse especially when you are a widow because there is no one to fight on your behalf. Another reason why some of the respondents labeled land grabbing as a painful experience was because some of them had their farm produce mistakenly destroyed by some of the foreign companies. A farmer in Agogo had this to say concerning this issue

*“The most painful aspect of this was that after they destroyed my farmland, they later came to inform me that there was a portion of the land that wasn't part of their concession and so they were very sorry. This was how my wife and I lost our land”*  
**(Respondent # 21, farmer, Agogo, 24/01/24).**

In addition, land grabbing was described as a painful experience by some of the victims because it resulted in the death of some individuals. During the interview, some of the study participants revealed that they knew some of their colleagues who died or committed suicide because they lost their land. One of the victims narrated that:

*“I was not the only one who lost my land, there were other people who also lost their land and even died as a result of having their lands dispossessed from them because all their investment was gone in a single day”***(Respondent # 3 trader, Ananekrom, 17/01/24).**

This revelation is similar to the findings of Alhassan et al (2020) whose research found that 100% of respondents in the Northern region confirmed that land grabbing contributed to the loss of life. Lastly, land grabbing was also seen to be a painful act because some study participants indicated that these foreign companies were given large compartments of land to carry out their activities. This is in line with Rafiee and Stenberg (2018) who argue that foreign companies are taking over large tracts of agricultural lands intending to achieve higher financial returns. A community leader in Abrewapong explained that:

*“The most painful aspect of all this is that they (referring to Eco-Planet Bamboo) have taken over 88 land compartments, just think of it, this particular company has been given 88 compartments to plant trees. We even pleaded with them to give us a small portion of the compartment but to no avail”*  
**(Respondent # 33, Community elder, Abrewapong, 31/01/24).**

Land grabbing was also viewed by the respondents as a practice that did not involve the necessary consultation. Commenting on the issue of consultation, Akologo and Guri (2016) opine that communities or residents typically battle government representatives and investors to have their land rights recognized. Communities in the view of Akologo and Guri (2016) may not be consulted, asked for permission to proceed, or included in the investment negotiation process by investors or governments. Similarly, (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011 ) state that land grabs in the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo region led to the loss of land of many rural households coupled with the fact that these individuals were not part of any land negotiations. Also, the work of Acheampong and Campion (2014) indicated that the majority of farmers in Agogo were never consulted by either the traditional authorities or Jatropa companies before they were dispossessed of their lands. This assertion was corroborated by some of the respondents during the interview. The majority of the people interviewed stated that there was no prior consultation either between them and their traditional leaders or the foreign companies before their lands were taken from them. Most of them disclosed that while working on their farm they were just told to vacate the land because it no longer belonged to them and this according to them came as a surprise because they were never consulted. A community chief in Ananekrom had this to say concerning the issue of consultation

*“With the issue of consultation, the foreign companies hardly engage the farmers because they make the argument that they have been given the concession by the government and hence they do not see the need for them to engage in any form of consultation with the farmers before they carry out their activities or in most cases destroy the crops belonging to the farmers. But what we do as chiefs is that we try our possible best to negotiate with these foreign companies to give the farmers some period to enable them to harvest their farm produce before they can begin with the activities” (Respondent # 26, Community Chief, Ananekrom, 26/01/24).*

Explaining why she described land grabbing as a practice that involves no consultation a farmer in Agogo stated:

*“In summary, I would say the way and manner in which I was dispossessed of my land was wrong if, for nothing at all, we should have been consulted by the foreign company so that we could have known what we could with our food items before they were destroyed. Can you go to a foreign land and just all of a sudden use a grader to destroy people’s farmland and their food items, it is not possible, you can’t do that because it won’t be allowed but this can only happen in Ghana” (Respondent # 40, farmer, Agogo, 09/02/24).*

The government official at the Municipal Assembly also confirmed the lack of consultation that exists between foreign companies and local indigenes. For him, there is a lack of proper consultation and most often these consultations are done at the higher levels of decision making and this according to him does not trickle down to the communities or local people. He further revealed that:

*“As I said I don’t know the kind of consultation that went on before these foreign companies were given the permit to work here, so now the biggest challenge is that these foreign companies want to work because they have been given the land and the local residents are not allowing them to work, so we are in the middle and want to make sure that the local residents can work whilst the foreign company also carry out their activities” (Respondent # 44, District Coordinator, Agogo, 13/02/24).*

The last experience that the victims had about land grabbing was that it was an activity that was perpetrated without any form of compensation. On the issue of compensation, Ahmed et al (2018) elucidate that farmers who lose their land due to land acquisition typically receive inadequate compensation, and in certain situations, none at all, which has a detrimental impact on their ability to make a living. All the study participants who were interviewed confirmed that they never received any form of compensation for their food crops that were destroyed. Some of the respondents indicated that after they lost their land they asked for compensation and they never received any. Some of them also revealed that they even filed an official petition with the Paramount Chief to help them get compensated but all their efforts proved futile. The respondents indicated not getting compensated after they lost their land affected them because they would have been able to use the money to engage in a new venture to sustain themselves. During the interview, some of the study participants disclosed that:

*“In summary, I would say I just incurred a loss as a result of losing my 16 hectares of farmland. There was no prior notice even given to us before our farmland was taken from us, we even tried to have a dialogue with the company but they didn’t even accept our invitation to have a meeting with them. And after losing my land I didn’t even get GHC 1 as compensation” (Respondent # 5, farmer, Agogo, 17/01/24).*

As to whether measures are been put in place to ensure that victims of land grabbing get compensated the District Coordinator at the Municipal Assembly indicated that:

*“We want to make sure that we negotiate with the foreign companies and get something and if nothing at all get some compensation for them. So we are*



*currently pushing for compensation for the residents” (Respondent # 44, District Coordinator, Agogo, 13/02/24).*

Privatization which is one of the main pillars of accumulation by dispossession theory helps to understand the findings above. Capital accumulation through the production of goods and services does not only occur under privatization, but the dispossession of land, resources, and other assets also happens through privatization. This is consistent with the revelations made by study participants who indicated that they were dispossessed of their lands. Under privatization, the concentration of land in the hands of private entities tends to make these private entities richer since they accumulate so much wealth and on the other hand, leads to poverty and deprivation of local indigenes just as was the case of local farmers in the study area.

#### **4.3.2 Impact of Land Grabbing on Victims**

The impact of land grabbing was another way to understand how the victims perceived the practice of land grabbing. Findings from the interview revealed that land grabbing had an adverse impact on individuals who had lost their lands. Most of the respondents stated that the impact the loss of their land had on them far outweighs the so-called benefits that come with land grabbing. Rafiee and Sternberg (2018) outline that reduced incomes, displacement of farmers, loss of land and access to resources, declined land access, and relocation of rural population by force are some of the impacts of land grabbing. Also, Acheampong and Campion (2014) explain that the reduction of arable land, increased cropping intensity, and loss of land all have a substantial effect on household incomes and food security. Some of the respondents explained that they had nothing to rely on after they lost their land and this made life very difficult for them. It was found that land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality brought a lot of financial, psychological, and health implications for individual victims. Concerning the financial implications most of the interviewees stated that they could not send their children to school, the men on the other hand explained that they found it difficult to cater for their families and struggled to give their wives “chop money”. Some of them also revealed that all the money they invested into their farming business went down the drain because they could not sell their farm produce simply because it was destroyed by the foreign companies who took over their lands. This disclosure made by interviewees confirms the findings of Dano (2015) whose findings reveal that the majority of the rural farmers who lost their land to the Jatropha project in Northern Ghana suffered setbacks in their farming endeavors and other

business ventures, which had an impact on their standard of living and revenue. Some of the respondents also revealed how the loss of their land affected their health. They explained that as a result of thinking about the way and manner they lost their land, they were diagnosed with various illnesses such as high blood pressure, and cancer. A particular women revealed that she even lost her pregnancy in the process:

*“So, I was hurt when we were dispossessed of the land because that was the only way we could survive as a family. I started thinking about the land and now I have been diagnosed with cancer, I also lost my pregnancy in 2019 because I still was thinking about the way and manner in which we lost our land and I was admitted to the hospital for one and half years” (Respondent # 14, trader, Ananekrom, 20/01/24).*

Even though both men and women were adversely impacted by the practice of land grabbing, women especially widows were mostly affected. They explained they had no form of support from anyone since their husbands were not there to give them the necessary support they needed after having their lands dispossessed from them. Throwing more light on this, Essel (2020) in her research found out that the impact land grabbing had on single and widowed women was different conversely, they were without support of any kind. thereby making land grabs more detrimental to them. Emphasizing the impact of land grabbing, an interviewee who had lost her husband narrated her ordeal by indicating that:

*“The impact of land grabbing was severe I say this because I could no longer sell my food items to make money simply because there were no food items for me to sell, in addition to this I found it difficult to send my children to school because my husband who would have supported me had died. I had no option than to resort to menial jobs to survive and make a living” (Respondent # 46, trader, Ananekrom, 19/02/24).*

The secretary of the Agogo Traditional Council also had this to say concerning the impact of land grabbing on the local people:

*“It has a serious impact, like I said generally the citizens here are farmers and they depend on these kinds of lands you know for their activities and if there are any impediments it would have an impact on their activities and it would have an impact on the general life of the citizens of this place” (Respondent # 45, Member of Agogo Traditional Council, Agogo, 15/02/24).*

### **4.3.3 Causes of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality**

Study participants were asked what in their opinion was causing land grabbing to happen in the Asante Akyem North Municipality. They gave similar reasons as to why the practice was very rife in the Municipality. Some of the study participants attributed the cause of land grabbing to the vast land area and land fertility available in the area, others explained that land grabbing could be attributed to the selfishness and greediness on the part of their traditional leaders. Some explained that land grabbing was occurring because their leaders did not give the practice the attention it deserved and because they did not care about their plight. Another reason given by some of the interviewees was that because they are poor, the rich always take advantage of their plight and convince their leaders to take over their lands. The government was also blamed for the occurrence of land grabbing in the Municipality, this is because some of the respondents believed that the government sometimes uses its power of eminent domain to dispossess them of their land and use it for their benefit or hand it over to private individuals or foreign companies. In the case of the state or the government, scholars such as Grajales (2013) and Huggins (2013) reveal that land grabbing most often comprises a state's involvement in land transactions by providing the enabling environment for land appropriation by foreign entities in ways that are legitimate but to the disadvantages of local land users. Concerning chiefs in Ghana, Boamah (2014) argues that Ghana's constitution identifying chiefs as allodial title owners has provided the leeway for chiefs to clothe themselves with the ultimate decision to own and sell land to the detriment of their subjects. The Assemblyman for one of the study areas also confirmed that indeed the chiefs were releasing land to foreign companies and it becomes very difficult for people like him to deal with the issue because the chiefs are powerful. Some of them who attributed the blame on the part of their chiefs indicated that:

*“For me, one of the causes of land grabbing here is that our chiefs are selling our lands. To my surprise, I once met some of one of our chiefs on my farmland with these foreign companies when my farmland was destroyed. And the saddest aspect is that they do not speak on our behalf, the only thing you do is that you just grieve about it and later forget about it” (Respondent # 10, food vendor, Agogo, 20/01/24).*

Those who blamed the government disclosed that:

*“Just as nothing happens without a cause, so also the phenomenon of land grabbing does not occur without a cause, and for me, one of the causes of land grabbing has to do with the fact government officials are behind it” (Respondent # 13, farmer, Ananekrom, 20/01/24).*

Concerning the allegation that chiefs are to be blamed for the practice of land grabbing, a community chief in Ananekrom had this to say:

*“With regards to the allegations that we the community chiefs are also involved in the activities of land grabbing; it is very widespread here but I can tell you on authority that we the chiefs here do not engage in it at all. Even recently I was accused of conniving with Miro Forestry to take over some lands but it was not true. So, with the allegations, we the chiefs are always accused of helping these plantation companies to grab lands” (Respondent # 26, Community Chief, Ananekrom, 25/01/24).*

#### **4.3.4 Potential linkage between land grabbing and development**

One of the justifications given in favor of land grabbing is that the practice ensures development, especially in jurisdictions where people lack the necessary development. As such the researcher sought to ascertain this claim from individuals who had been victims of land grabbing in Asante Akyem North Municipality. Most of the study participants who were interviewed disagreed that land grabbing leads to any form of development. They did not see the need why their lands will be taken away from them for any development projects. Some of them also revealed that the promise of development was just a means that was used by these foreign companies to lure their leaders to hand over lands to carry out their activities. Those who held this opinion believed that land grabbing leads to severe hardship instead of the so-called development. Some of them believed that the development does not necessarily benefit the locals because whatever these private individuals and foreign companies do is for their benefit and is never true that they engage in any developmental projects. The reason why land grabbing in the view of the respondents does not lead to development was because some of them revealed that they could not point to any particular developmental project in their community. Furthermore, some were of the view that the foreign companies just think about themselves and how to make a profit without having the locals in mind. Even if there were developmental projects, some of the respondents stated that it was mainly done for the benefit of foreign companies. These sentiments by the respondents are similar to the work of Marzocchi and Camara (2024) whose work reveals that notwithstanding a few economic advantages of land grabbing, the drawbacks such as food shortages and environmental degradation far exceed the advantages. Scholars such as Ashukem and Ngang (2022) also opine that the right to development and the capacity of local populations to progress socioeconomically and culturally are negatively impacted by land grabbing, which is not

limited to Africa but also occurs in other regions of the world. In most cases, they argue that it leads to the forceful eviction and displacement of local populations from their customarily owned and occupied lands in favor of extensive farming initiatives carried out by international conglomerates. For instance, a farmer explained that some of these foreign companies have constructed roads that only lead to where their plantations farms are located and not necessarily for the community to benefit. Lastly, some of the respondents revealed that some of the foreign companies promised them developmental projects but it never came to light because these foreign companies did not carry out their promise. An interviewee said the following when asked about the linkage between land grabbing and development:

*“For me, I don’t see the need for me to lose my land and afterward I will be told it would bring development to me, of what benefit will it be to me when I don’t have land but there exist developmental projects, I don’t see the need for that at all”*  
**(Respondent # 17, food vendor, Agogo, 23/01/24).**

On the contrary, some of the respondents admitted that they had seen some developmental projects carried out by some of the foreign companies but they believed that the benefit of having their land far outweighs the benefits of having developmental projects. One of such individuals explained that:

*“As to whether land grabbing is meant to ensure development, all that I can say is that some of the foreign companies have done some developmental projects but to me, all this does not make sense because of what essence would it be to the people of a community when they lose their land and there is development, people do not need development to survive but rather they need land to be able to work and survive”* **(Respondent # 28, farmer, Agogo, 28/01/24).**

The management of crisis under accumulation by dispossession theory helps explain the nexus of land grabbing and development. Crises be they political, economic, or social are most often used by powerful actors and at times “land grabbers” to acquire lands for their activities. This means that through the management of crisis, landowners are dispossessed of their lands. For instance, due to the economic challenges and lack of development in Ghana and Africa as a whole land grabbing has gained ground because the promise of development has been used as a decoy by foreign investors to gain large tracts of land.

#### **4.3.5 Facilitators of Land Grabbing in Asante Akyem North Municipality**

To understand the perception of individuals who had been victims of land grabbing, there was the need to inquire from them if they think powerful actors have a role to play in facilitating

land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality. Powerful actors here could mean chiefs, Members of Parliament, and an Assemblyman. Findings from the interview revealed that study participants believed that chiefs and the government were the ones mainly facilitating land grabbing in the Municipality. During the last 10 years, the majority of Ghanaian chiefs have allocated many large land areas to agricultural investors from Norway, Italy, Canada, and Israel for biofuel and other agricultural projects in Ghana (Boamah, 2014). Specifically, the paramount chiefs of Agogo and Kumawu have allocated land areas to investors without any form of mutual consent (Boamah, 2014). Similarly, scholars such as (Beny 2017; Kleist 2011; Knierzinger 2011) all opine that mostly chiefs act in their interest rather than in the interest of the larger community. One of the elders of Abrewapong solely blamed the paramount chief of Agogo by indicating that:

*“I lay the blame at the doorstep of our leaders that is the Overlord of Agogo. Even if these foreign companies have bought our forest reserve from the government, the Overlord of Agogo can protect us from losing our farmland and crop produce. For instance, this particular foreign company (Eco-Planet Bamboo) told me in the face that the government, the chiefs, and some leaders sold the land to them but they didn’t specify which leaders” (Respondent # 33, Community elder, Abrewapong, 31/01/24).*

While some of the respondents lay the blame squarely at the doorsteps of the chiefs and politicians alone, some also blamed the government and chiefs as well. Others too had a contrary view about chiefs being the powerful actors facilitating land grabbing. Some also found it difficult to specifically pinpoint who these powerful actors were. Some of the victims who blamed both the government and chiefs shared their opinion by saying that:

*“For me what causes land grabbing is that the government and the Agogo Traditional Council are the ones facilitating it. Even when the government gives a concession to a foreign company and our King, Nana Akuaoko Sarpong says he won’t agree to it, that will be the end of the matter. But this is not what happens, our chiefs and the government are rather causing us to lose our lands. So, for me I would lay the blame at the doorstep of our chiefs and the government” (Respondent # 36, farmer, Agogo, 01/02/24).*

A migrant who did know who these powerful actors were said the following:

*“I don’t know of any powerful actors specifically facilitating land grabbing in this community but all that I can say is that if these private individuals and foreign companies don’t have any backing they cannot just come and all of sudden dispossess us of our land. So, for me, they have some sort of backing but I can’t tell for sure who those actors are” (Respondent # 7, migrant, Agogo, 17/01/24).*

Since some of the victims blamed the government for the practice of land grabbing, state redistribution as a type of accumulation by dispossession explains the role of the government in land dispossession. This is basically where the state or government transfers the ownership of communal land into the hands of private entities in a manner that further escalates social and economic inequalities. When such incidents happen people lose their lands hence resulting in dispossession. For instance, in Asante Akyem Agogo local farmers revealed that the government normally grants concessions to foreign companies to carry out their plantation activities.

#### **4.3.6 Measures to Prevent Land Grabbing**

Since land grabbing has brought so much hardship on indigenes of Asante Akyem North Municipality, it was imperative to ask them if any preventive measures have been put in place to help curb the practice. According to Liversage (2010), developing transparent, accountable, and easily available land administration institutions that can acknowledge and protect the rights of rural communities, particularly the most vulnerable households, is a critical role that governments may play in dealing with land grabbing. He further states that civil society organizations and local leaders must mobilize the community to fight land grabbing in general and foreign investors in particular. During the various interviews conducted, it was revealed that not much has been done by leaders especially the traditional authorities to make sure that the phenomenon of land grabbing is halted. Study participants gave various reasons as to why no preventive measures have been implemented. Some of them stated that it is because their leaders especially the traditional authorities did not care about them coupled with the fact that their traditional leaders often benefited from these land deals. Some of them also explained that handling the issue of land grabbing in their various communities was beyond their traditional authorities and would need the involvement of the government and their Member of Parliament. Some of the respondents also alluded to the fact that in instances where measures were been implemented to halt the practice of land grabbing it never saw the light of the day. Some believe that there reason why there are no preventive measures is because their political leaders turn a blind eye to their plight and do not come to their aid. Others explained that if their leaders such as the Member of Parliament, and the chiefs stood up and resisted these practices the residents would not have to suffer so much as how they are suffering now. Some of the victims also stated that ever since the incidence of land grabbing occurred, they were yet to see any preventive measures put in place by their leaders. This was because at the time the interview was conducted they disclosed that the practice was still ongoing. The leaders were

also accused of just paying lip service and not taking any necessary action when people lost their lands. Others indicated that in as much as there were no preventive measures they could point to, they believed that the leaders were doing their best to deal with the situation. Similar to this point, some revealed that at times their leaders organize some meetings for those of them who have been victims and as such they believe that some measures are being put in place to stop the incidence of land grabbing. A farmer disclosed the following:

*“When these issues of land grabbing occur, we don’t see our Assemblymen, Unit committee chairman, and those in authority coming to our aid, hence I have not seen any measures put in place to see to that the incidence of land grabbing is halted. I say this because the grabbing of land is still happening here” (Respondent # 15, trader, Ananekrom, 21/01/24).*

The findings above have shown how study participants perceived the practice of land grabbing in Asante Akyem North Municipality. It also depicted how the phenomenon of land grabbing had impacted the residents. In understanding the perception of individuals who have been victims of land grabbing, it was found that not enough measures have been put in place to curtail the practice of land grabbing. Lastly from the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that indeed powerful actors especially chiefs in the Asante Akyem North Municipality are the ones facilitating land grabbing.

#### **4.4 Assessing the Influence of Land Grabbing on Urban Migration**

To be able to achieve the main objective of the study, it was imperative to ascertain whether land grabbing influenced urban migration. According to Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017), land is an important driver of migration. This is because study participants in their study indicated that people will migrate and will not return for a while, so long as there is no land. Respondents revealed how the loss of their land influenced their decision to migrate, and why they did not take any other step except to migrate. Scholars like Obeng-Odoom (2017) argue that a large portion of the migration crisis is caused by or made worse by the land crisis, namely the societal issues of poverty, inequality, and unequal access to land. He further claims that land has a changing role in the narrative of migration, and this temporal component affects the direction or spatial aspect of migration. Also, Radel et al (2019) state that migration can also be directly caused by displacement and dispossession. According to them changes in the land system that lead to broader land uses may cause migration when the need for labor in agriculture decreases. Findings from the work of Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) revealed that the loss of farmland in the Upper West region of Ghana gave rise to a new class of landless households. Study participants explained how their decision to migrate affected them. During the interview, it was



revealed that a lot of individuals who had lost their land had migrated to other regions. Most of the victims who lost their land migrated to Agogo, Accra, Kumasi, and the Northern region. Specifically with Accra and Kumasi some of the respondents migrated there because of jobs and other livelihood opportunities. The Assemblyman for Ananekrom indicated that for Ananekrom for instance, a lot of the individuals migrated to the Northern region because 70% of the population in Ananekrom hail from the Northern region. The Assemblyman also revealed that a lot of the youth have been going to Accra and Kumasi just to make sure they would go and engage in a petty trade simply because if they decide to stay in the rural areas after losing their farmland, they would not be able to get a land to farm. Some of the respondents indicated that they decided to migrate after they lost their land because they had nothing else to do in the rural areas where they had their farmlands. Also, some migrated because they wanted to start a new life all over again. In addition, others migrated so that they could engage in menial jobs in Agogo and especially Accra and Kumasi just to make a living. The work of Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) indicates that the majority of households in the Upper West region that had lost all their land saw migration as the only way out of their predicament due to land scarcity and detrimental effects on their means of subsistence. Almost all the victims of land grabbing in the Asante Akyem North Municipality migrated because they did not have any source of livelihood. The outcome of the study is consistent with the findings of Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) whose work confirmed that only 2 out of a dozen households remained in their communities after being dispossessed, the rest migrated to other parts of Ghana in search of earning an income. A trader in Ananekrom disclosed that:

*“Yes, I migrated from where I was to Agogo and some of my colleagues also migrated because we had no lands to farm since we had been deprived of the source of our livelihood and survival. Yeah, the loss of our land influenced our decision to migrate because we were left with nothing after we were dispossessed of our land”*  
**(Respondent # 3 trader, Ananekrom, 17/01/24).**

In explaining how their decision to migrate affected them, some of the victims opined that settling down in urban areas like Agogo and specifically Accra and Kumasi did not go on well as they planned, specifically the stated that they were not able to make more money as they used to when they were engaged in their farming business. This is similar to Eyebiyi and Allossoukpo (2019) who explain that migration has an economic cost and the mobility candidate incurs economic costs during movement. Some also indicated that they were affected because those they thought could have helped them after they migrated ended up disappointing them. The difficulty in getting a new piece of land to engage in farming was another way in

which the decision to migrate affected some of the victims of land grabbing, this was because there was already so much pressure on the already existing land in the urban areas and this means that getting a piece of land to farm on will be expensive. Others too revealed that living in places such as Accra was expensive. Concerning this, Eyebiyi and Allossoukpo (2019) posit that migrants have difficulties when they relocate specifically with the issue of finance, and also face difficulties to be able to reintegrate into the economic system of their new place of residence. Similarly, a study conducted by Abolga (2022) reveals that migrants from the rural areas to the urban areas in Kumasi disclosed that the high cost of living and difficulty in getting a job were the main challenges they faced when they migrated. Also, Owusu (2008) posits that as the most appealing center in Ghana in terms of jobs and other livelihood opportunities, Accra has attracted migrants from all parts of Ghana and beyond. This situation in the view of Owusu (2008) has resulted in intense pressure on land around Accra for residential, industrial, and agricultural purposes. The decision of some of the victims to migrate also affected them because some disclosed that when they were migrating they had nothing on them, meaning they migrated empty-handed hence they faced so many challenges Thus a farmer explained that:

*“The decision to migrate after losing my land affected me due to that fact, I had nothing on me when I was migrating, I migrated empty-handed and that meant settling down at my new place was going to be a difficult task for me so this made me decide to come back to Ananekrom to work on peoples’ farm” (Respondent # 12, trader, Ananekrom, 20/01/24).*

Another victim disclosed that:

*“So, I migrated here to Agogo to work in a chop bar to make ends meet I was hugely affected after migrating because every aspect of my life was disrupted and I had lost all that I had”. (Respondent # 10, food vendor, Agogo, 20/01/24).*

As to why the victims of land grabbing did not take any other steps except to migrate, they explained that migration was the only option that was left for them. Some decided to migrate because they had relatives in the urban areas who were willing to give them some form of support after they lost their land. A migrant who lost his farmland to Fulani nomadic men explained that the only reason why he decided to migrate and not to take any other step was because these Fulani herdsmen would have come and attacked him and killed him at the very end. Furthermore, some of the respondents stated that migrating was the only option for them because they realized staying at the place where they lost their land would have made life difficult for them. An interviewee opined that:

*“Migrating was the only thing left for me because I knew staying here in Ananekrom would be of no use to me since I had lost everything. But I later came back because my children were left all alone here” (Respondent # 25, trader, Ananekrom, 25/01/24).*

Another victim stated that:

*“I migrated from Abrewapong to Agogo simply because I lost my land and life became unbearable for me there. Migration was the only alternative left for me because there was no one I could rely on for support after I lost my land” (Respondent # 33, Community elder, 31/01/24).*

Some of the respondents confirmed that indeed they had the intention to migrate but could not do so for many reasons. The reason given by some of them was that they did not have anywhere to go because they did not want to move to a different place where they would become stranded. Others revealed that the GTA (Ghana Timber Association) helped them to get some land which they were able to use for farming. In addition, some disclosed that they could not migrate leaving their children behind so decided to stay even though they had the intention to migrate. In addition to this, others had the intention to migrate but could not migrate because they explained that migrating to another place involved a lot of money which they did not have hence their decision to put their migration plans on hold for some time. Furthermore, a respondent revealed that she had the intention to migrate to a different place but she later changed her mind because where she was migrating to had already been occupied by Fulani herders and she decided not to go there because she feared for her life. Lastly, some wanted to stay for some time to see how things would go on for them before they finally migrated. A victim of land grabbing in Dukusen whose husband had the intention of migrating had this to say:

*“Truly when we lost our land, my husband planned on migrating to the Northern Region to start a new life but I was the one who convinced him to let us stay here for some time. Even some three months ago he decided that we should still relocate to the Northern Region but I was the one who was opposed to it” (Respondent # 22, migrant, Dukusen, 25/01/24).*

Another victim who also did not migrate stated that:

*“I didn’t migrate after losing my land. This is because moving to another place would have been a different issue altogether. For me, as I informed you earlier on, I had some support from my friends. This made it possible for me to have some money to rent a new land which I now use for my farming business” (Respondent # 41, farmer Agogo, 10/02/24).*

Almost all of the respondents interviewed indicated that land grabbing is a contributing factor to urban migration. Some of them were of the view that since they had lost their land and had nothing to do in the rural areas where they were farming it would be better for them to migrate to the urban areas to make a better living to be able to survive and start a new life. Others explained that the reason why land grabbing leads to urban migration was that there were so many opportunities they could explore in the urban areas hence the need for them to move to the urban areas. Some also indicated that land grabbing is a contributing factor of urban migration because people would like to start a new chapter in their lives when they encounter difficult experiences, hence this will make them have the motive to relocate from the rural areas to an urban area. The study participants also revealed that the reason why land grabbing contributes to urban migration was because they knew some of the colleagues who migrated to the urban areas after they lost their lands because it was an easier decision for them to take. The respondents also showed so many empty houses to the researcher to corroborate all that they were saying, they explained that all those empty houses were once occupied by farmers, but they all migrated to the urban areas after they were all dispossessed of their farmlands. The Assemblyman man for Ananekrom also stated that land grabbing contributes to urban migration because the majority of the youth in the community are now in Accra and Kumasi and do not want to come back simply because they would not find anything to do. This what a native of Agogo had to say concerning land grabbing contributing to urban migration:

*“Yes so many people used to leave here but after Miro forestry came and took over the lands, many of them relocated to other places, specifically the cities to make ends meet simply because they no longer had land to farm and had nothing left. So with all these, I can confidently say that land grabbing is a contributing factor to urban migration”* (Respondent # 46, trader, Agogo, 19/02/24).

Another respondent made an interesting revelation by stating that:

*“Yes, I strongly believe land grabbing leads to urban migration, and even at times it leads to people traveling outside the country to seek greener pastures. I know a friend of mine who decided to migrate to Libya after he lost his land unfortunately for him, he died along the desert”* (Respondent # 28, farmer, Agogo, 28/01/24).

Based on the responses from various respondents above, a vivid indication of the linkage between land grabbing and urban migration has been given. It has shown that individuals who lose their lands tend to migrate since their major means of survival and livelihood have been taken away from them. The findings from this study correlate with the research of Gebeyehu (2014) whose findings reveal that the majority of migrants in Ethiopia left the rural areas to the

urban areas after they lost their lands coupled with the fact that there was a shortage or lack of land in the rural areas. Similarly, the work of Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) reveals that after losing their productive agricultural capital (farmlands), the majority of farmers have entirely abandoned rural areas.

## CONCLUSION

### 5.0 Conclusion

In Ghana, the practice of land grabbing has always stirred controversy and debate because of the repercussions that come along with it. The practice of land grabbing is still on the rise in Ghana with a plethora of factors causing it to happen. There have been 46 land transactions in Ghana between the years 2000 and 2020, according to data from the 2020 land matrix. 403,907 hectares of land are involved in this land purchase, according to the data. This includes a total of 112,675 hectares for abandoned projects, 88,827 hectares for operational projects, 35,070 hectares for projects that have not yet begun, 29,975 hectares for projects without production, and 137,360 hectares for projects without information. Figures from the Forestry Commission also indicate that Eco-Planet Bamboo has acquired a total of 10,496 hectares of land in the Asante Akyem North Municipality. This thesis examined the influence of land grabbing on urban migration in Ghana using Asante Akyem North Municipality as a case study. The study also examined the perception of urban migrants on land grabbing. Their perception of land grabbing was based on five factors. This included the use of force, a deliberate plan to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer, a bad practice that caused pain, and a practice that was carried out without consultation. In terms of the use of force, findings revealed that landowners were forcefully dispossessed of their lands and there was nothing they could do about it and they regarded this as a violation of their human rights. The respondents also perceived land grabbing to be a deliberate plan to make the rich richer and the poor poorer because it deprived them of the main source of livelihood hence making them poor whilst the foreign companies made a profit. Some of the victims perceived land grabbing to be a practice that caused pain because they did not have the opportunity to harvest their farm produce before they were destroyed since they spent a lot of money on their farming activity. Some depicted land grabbing as an activity that was carried out without prior consultation and the needed compensation. It was revealed that most of the local farmers were not involved in any form of consultation before they were dispossessed of their lands. Accordingly, land grabbing was found to be spearheaded by traditional authorities and sometimes the government, this was coupled with the fact not enough consultation is being done with local farmers before foreign companies are allowed to carry out their operations. In terms of compensation, almost all of

the local farmers indicated that they were never compensated, and in instances where they took it upon themselves to get compensation from these foreign companies all their efforts proved futile.

In terms of the typology of land grabbing, it was found that large-scale agriculture investment was the main type of land grabbing that was common in the area. This is because Asante Akyem North Municipality is an agrarian society coupled with the fact that local farmers lost all their lands to foreign companies that were into agricultural activities. Specifically, companies such as Eco-Planet Bamboo and Miro Forestry are companies that are involved in the planting of trees.

With regards to the linkage between land grabbing and urban migration, findings from the study indicated that land grabbing influences urban migration because landowners who were dispossessed of their lands were displaced, and when this happened it forced them to migrate to urban areas such as Agogo, Accra, Kumasi and the Northern region to search for land and other means of survival. Land grabbing also influences urban migration because when people lose their lands, it means that their main source of livelihood has been disrupted, this will leave them with no other option than to migrate to urban areas in search of employment and a better standard of living. Some of those who migrated explained that they relocated to places like Accra and Kumasi because they believed they could find better job opportunities there to improve their standard of living.

As depicted in the study, land grabbing has been pervasive in the Asante Akyem Agogo Municipality and is all taking place in the name of development. To achieve this, the study was guided by the accumulation by dispossession theory. The theory explains that land grabbing refers to the process of obtaining the means of production for capital accumulation via non-market means or extra-economic coercion Levien (2012). Land grabbing according to the theory is carried out mainly through privatization, state redistribution, management of crises, and financialization. Privatization is the process of transferring public resources and assets to private parties, which typically disadvantages marginalized people who depend on these resources or assets. In terms of state redistribution, the state can dispossess people of their lands without the rightful compensation and then redistribute this land to private investors for activities such as agriculture real estate, and infrastructure. Management of crises on the other hand is where state actors or powerful entities use the presence of emergencies or crises to dispossess people of their lands. Financialization in the view of (Bluwstein et al. 2018) allows

people's land to be traded as a commodity between private investors for large sums of money, with no remuneration for landowners.

The impact of land grabbing was examined to know how it had affected the victims. Evidence from the research indicated that all those who had their lands dispossessed from them faced financial, health, and psychological effects. In addition, the study found that the causes of land grabbing in Asante Akyem North Municipality were multifaceted, with chiefs being the main architects of land grabbing. However, some of the chiefs who were interviewed denied these allegations. In terms of preventive measures to help deal with land grabbing, findings from the study showed that not much had been done either by the traditional authorities or the political representatives of the people specifically the Member of Parliament and the assemblymen for the areas. In instances where measures were being taken, study participants explained that these measures never brought any positive solution to their concerns. In addition, because land grabbing sometimes leads to social conflict as evidenced in Abrewapong one of the study areas, it can influence people to migrate away from areas of tension to avoid violence and persecution. Public institutions such as the Lands Commission and the Forestry Commission provided insight into how they register and give concessions to foreign companies respectively. The Lands Commission explained that they conduct public forums to be able to solicit any feedback and complaints from locals before they go ahead to register lands acquired by foreign companies. The Forestry Commission on the other is responsible for granting concessions to foreign companies and making sure that these foreign companies work within the approved compartment that has been assigned to them.

In conclusion, findings from the research revealed that indeed land grabbing influences urban migration. This was evidenced by victims who indicated they indeed migrated to urban areas like Accra, Kumasi, Agogo, and the Northern region after losing their lands. Some of them also explained that they had the intention to migrate but certain factors such as money, and the absence of family members at their new place of settlement precluded them from relocating.



## 5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been outlined based on the findings of the study

1. The Agogo Traditional Council, the Municipal Assembly, and the political representatives of the people should ensure that enough consultations are made with local farmers before any foreign company can kick start their operations. This is because, from the interviews conducted so far, it was revealed that many consultations did not take place with local farmers before foreign companies began their activities within the Asante Akyem Noth Municipality.
2. Powerful actors such as chiefs, the Agogo Traditional Council, and the Members of Parliament should make sure that in the event farmers lose their lands to foreign companies, there should be a compensation policy that requires that farmers should be compensated before foreign companies kick start their activities. This is necessary because all the victims who were interviewed indicated that they never received any form of compensation after they lost their land or their farm produce.
3. The court should give priority to land cases that come to its attention. This is to ensure that land cases that are brought before the court do not take so much time for judgment to be delivered. This will go a long way to make sure that people will develop trust in the court system and see the need to seek legal redress when issues of land litigation arise. Also, this would help prevent violence and bring justice to landowners.
4. The researcher recommends that both the government and the traditional authorities should put in place measures such as strengthening land tenure rights, involving local farmers in decision-making, and creating a transparent and accountable land governance structure to help prevent or reduce the phenomenon of land grabbing.

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## **LIST OF INTERVIEWS**

- Respondent No. 10, Food vendor, Agogo, January 20, 2024.
- Respondent No. 11, Farmer, Ananekrom, January 20, 2024.
- Respondent No. 12, Trader Ananekrom, January 20, 2024.
- Respondent No. 13, Farmer, Ananekrom, January 20, 2024.
- Respondent No. 14, Trader, Ananekrom, January 20, 2024.
- Respondent No. 15, Trader, Ananekrom, January 21, 2024.
- Respondent No. 17, Food vendor, Agogo, January 23, 2024.
- Respondent No. 21, Farmer, Agogo, January 24, 2024.
- Respondent No. 22, Migrant, Dukusen, January 25, 2024.
- Respondent No. 23, Farmer, Ananekrom, January 25, 2024.
- Respondent No. 25, Trader, Ananekrom, January 25, 2024.
- Respondent No. 26, Community Chief, Ananekrom, January 26, 2024.
- Respondent No. 28, Farmer, Agogo, January 28, 2024.
- Respondent No. 28, Farmer, Agogo, January 28, 2024.
- Respondent No. 3, Ananekrom, January 17, 2024.
- Respondent No. 3, Trader, Ananekrom, 2024.
- Respondent No. 32, Court Official, Agogo, January 31, 2024.
- Respondent No. 33, Community elder, Abrewapong, January 31, 2024.
- Respondent No. 36, Farmer, Agogo, February 1, 2024.
- Respondent No. 39, Farmer, Agogo, February 9, 2024.
- Respondent No. 40 Farmer, Agogo, February 9, 2024.
- Respondent No. 41, Farmer, Agogo, February 10, 2024.

Respondent No. 44, District Coordinator, Agogo, February 13, 2024.

Respondent No. 45, Member of Agogo Traditional Council, Agogo, February 15, 2024.

Respondent No. 46, Trader, Agogo, February 19, 2024.

Respondent No. 47, Forestry Commission Official, Juaso, February 22, 2024.

Respondent No. 48, Land Commission Official, Kumasi, February 28, 2024.

Respondent No. 5, Farmer, Agogo, January 17, 2024.

Respondent No. 6, Farmer, Agogo, January 17, 2024.

Respondent No. 7, Migrant, Agogo, January 17, 2024.

Respondent No. 9, Trader, Agogo, January 18, 2024.

Respondent No.1, Registrar, Agogo, January 15, 2024.

## **APPENDICES**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIGRANTS' VICTIMS OF LAND-GRABBING**

This interview is conducted in partial fulfillment of a degree program in MSc. International Relations at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. This interview aims to get first-hand information from victims of land grabbing and how it influenced their decision to migrate. This interview is purely for academic purposes and it will not in any way cause any harm to you. This interview will be audio-recorded for the details of clarity and the purpose of transcribing. I assure you that all information revealed during this interview will be confidential. As an interviewee, you have the right to decide not to continue the interview when you wish without any consequences to you. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Sex of respondent (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
2. Age group of respondents (a) 18-27 years [ ] (b) 28-37 years [ ] (c) 38-47 years [ ] (d) 48-57 years [ ] (e) Above 58 years [ ]
3. Marital status (a) Never married [ ] (b) Married [ ] (c) Divorced [ ] (d) Separated [ ] (e) Widowed [ ]
4. Level of education (a) No formal education [ ] (b) Primary education [ ] (c) Secondary education [ ] (d) Tertiary education [ ]
5. Duration of stay in the community (a) Less than a year [ ] (b) 1-5 years [ ] (c) 6-10 years [ ] (d) 11-15 years [ ] (e) 16-20 years [ ] (f) More than 20 years [ ]

### **LAND OWNERSHIP AND LAND ISSUES OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Do you own land? (a) Yes (b) No.
2. If yes, how did you own the land? (a) I own land personally (b) My family owns land (c) I have owned land in the past (d) My family has owned land in the past.
3. If no, what is the reason for not having land (a) I sold my land because it was not profitable (b) I was forced to sell my land (c) My land was confiscated (d) I no longer felt safe in where I lived.

### **FORMS OF LAND GRABBING IN GHANA**

1. How did you acquire your land?
2. What did you use your land for?
3. How did you lose your land?

4. Which entity did you lose your land to? (a) the government, (b) a private individual, (c) a foreign company (d) others
5. What type of activity did you lose your land to? (a) Large-scale Agricultural investments (b) Urban expansion (c) Mining activities (d) Infrastructure development
6. Which other individuals do you know who have also lost their land?

#### **Perceptions of urban migrants who have experienced land grabbing in Ghana**

1. What do you think of land grabbing in Ghana?
2. How has it impacted you?
3. What has been your experience about land grabbing in Ghana so far?
4. What is your take on the view that land grabbing is meant to ensure development for locals in Ghana?
5. Why do you think land grabbing happens in Ghana?
6. In your view, do you think enough measures have been put in place to prevent it?
7. In your opinion, do you think powerful actors have a role to play in facilitating land grabbing in Ghana?

#### **Linkage between Land grabbing and urban migration in Ghana**

1. Why did you migrate after having lost your land?
2. How in your view did the loss of your land influence you to migrate?
3. Why did you decide not to take any other step except to migrate after having lost your land?
4. How has the decision to migrate after losing your land affected you?
5. Do you think land grabbing is a contributing factor to urban migration in Ghana, if yes why?



## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

This interview is conducted in partial fulfillment of a degree program in MSc. International Relations at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. This interview aims to get first-hand information from victims of land grabbing and how it influenced their decision to migrate. This interview is purely for academic purposes and it will not in any way cause any harm to you. This interview will be audio-recorded for the details of clarity and the purpose of transcribing. I assure you that all information revealed during this interview will be confidential. As an interviewee, you have the right to decide not to continue the interview when you wish without any consequences to you. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Forms of land grabbing in Ghana?**

1. How can you describe land grabbing?
2. How would you describe the occurrence of land grabbing in Ghana?
3. What form of land grabbing do you think is very common in Ghana and why?
4. Could you provide insight into the different forms of land grabbing in Ghana?
5. Why has land grabbing been on the rise in Ghana?
6. What role do public institutions such as the Lands Commission have to play to prevent the phenomenon of land grabbing?
7. How many cases of land grabbing have come to the attention of your outfit over the last 10-25 years?
8. Which type of land grabbing has been dominant among these cases?
9. How does your outfit handle cases of land grabbing?



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