Contested Space: Commercial Driven Land Use Transition and Indigenous Adaptive Strategies

A Case Study of Yeji, Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana
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Presentation Outline

• Introduction
• Research Objectives
• Addition to Literature
• Methodology
• Findings
• Conclusions
• Recommendation
Introduction

• Post-2008 global financial and food crisis
• Large-scale acquisition of lands in Africa
• The Statistics
  - 60 million hectares of lands acquired in Africa (Land Matrix, 2014)
• The Debate
• **The Promoters**
  - Increased food and fuel production for the world market
  - Employment generation
  - Technological transfer
  - Taxation
  - FDIs
• **The Antagonists**
  - Distortions in customary land tenure
  - Landlessness
  - Meager or no compensation
  - No consultation of occupiers of the land
  - Economic hardship for the Local folks
Introduction (Contd.)

• Chiefs are ‘only’ custodians of communal lands and not owners
• Chiefs selling large tract of land for ‘huge’ amount of money (usually unspecified) (Yeboah, 2014)
• Resistance from the Indigenous people who consider the land as their only safety net
• The Contested Space
  - Foreign investors
  - The Indigenous people
  - The Chiefs
• This is the situation in Yeji
Research Objectives

• Examine the trend of large-scale land acquisition in Yeji
• Find out the adaptive strategies adopted by the expropriated farmers in Yeji
1+1

- Land based Investments
  - Kolnes (2009): job creation, new market, improvement in amenities etc
  - Polanyi (1944): dispossession caused by capitalist intrusion in the countryside provokes political reaction
- Livelihood strategies
  - Scoones (1998): 3 broad groups
    - Livelihood extensification/intensification
    - Livelihood diversification
    - Livelihood migration
  - Farrington et al. (2002): coping and adaptive strategies
- This study is a marriage of the two
Methodology

- Respondents
  - Traditional Authorities
  - Investors (Manager of Smart Oil)
  - 40 households (34 male-headed households and 6 female-headed households)
- Case study approach
- Sampling techniques
  - Purposive and snowball
- Data collection tool
  - Interview Guide
Findings

• Demographic Characteristics
  - More than half are beyond their optimum productivity age: 47% (30 – 45 years), 53% (>46 years)
  - Persons with formal education more likely to possess high level of adaptive capacity: 77.5% no formal education
  - Level of dependence on farming as a source of livelihood: 62.5% have farmed for >20 years
  - Nature of interest: 57.5% are tenants and 42.5% hold customary freehold
Findings (Contd.)

- Trend of privatisation
- 4 major grants of land concessions since 2008
  - 5,000 ha to Smart Oil to cultivate jatropha
  - 50,000 ha to Natural African Diesel Ghana Ltd
  - 6,699 ha to Agros Oil
  - 6,800 ha to Kiminic Ltd
- Lease of 50 years in all cases
- Traditional authorities entitled to 25% of company profit
- Only Smart Oil and Kiminic Ltd had began operation at the time of data collection
Findings (Contd.)

• No consultation

According to a 63 years old farmer who lost his 30 acres of land:

“We were not told anything about the acquisition. We woke up one morning only to see bulldozers being instructed by ‘Akwesi bron’ (Whiteman) to mill our cassava, yam, and rice farm we have toiled to cultivate to feed our families while we stand aside and look”.
Findings (Contd.)

- Meager or no compensation
- No professional was contracted to enumerate crops
- Payment is at the discretion of investor
- Findings contradict ‘restitutio in integrum’
### Findings (Contd.)

#### Annual income from farming before the acquisition * Compensation amounts received by respondents Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual income from farming before the acquisition</th>
<th>Compensation amounts received by respondents in US Dollars</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Less than 15</td>
<td>15-45</td>
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<td>150-450</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>451-750</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings (Contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of land Taken (in acres)</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Compensation amounts (USD$) received by respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 15</td>
<td>15-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of Land Privatisation of the Indigenous Livelihood

- Malnutrition
- Teenage pregnancy
- High cost of living
- Food shortage
- Migration for greener pastures
- School drop-outs
Adaptive Livelihood Strategies After Displacement

- Farming
- Farming on lands considered to be infertile for commercial cultivation
- Farming on distant lands
- Petty trading
- Formal work
- Tailoring
Conclusion

- Large scale acquisition of lands is deepening poverty in many parts of Africa
- Farming remains the main adaptive strategy because 77.5% of respondents do not have formal education or entrepreneurial skills
Recommendation

• Support for farmers – education and technical, entrepreneurial training
• Future acquisitions must be well managed because it could erupt into violence
• State and civil society organisations must play oversight roles in the acquisition process
• ‘We do not want land grabbing’ but ‘what we need is a sustainable land based investment’
References


Thank you