

INDIGENES HEGEMONIC POWER OVER MIGRANTS CITIZENSHIPS:
The Role of Large Scale Agri-Investment in Ghana in local citizen transformation

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ABSTRACT

Land access and utilization are bedrocks to successful rural livelihood sustainability and empowerment. This is based on the fact that the rural folks predominantly depend on land resources for their existence and wellbeing. Accessibility of rural dwellers to land and related resources is influenced by their rights to and security over land. Local citizenship influences land rights and tenure security, in a manner that the indigenous rural members have unrestricted access to land resources for their utilization. These privileged rural groups are able to re-establish connections to other land resources even in the phase of large scale investments which affect their lands. The rural migrants on the other hand are visualised as '*local foreigners*' by allodial title holders and indigenes, and their access to and use of lands are characterized by structural constraints such as complex local land-access contract and lack of local citizenship status. In most cases, these disadvantaged groups (migrants) have to establish connections to land and related resources through economic means; but are often times, alienated from their lands once investment opportunities come on board. In the case of Ghana, citizenship identity has featured prominently in land and job claims, especially, during the jatropha periods and its transformation. Both chiefs and indigenous residents have invoked the *citizenship concept* as the tenet to protect or undermine social identity in land claim-making processes and job-seeking for their benefits. Pre-emption of local citizenship identity has become potential motivations for undermining migrants' access and control over stool lands as well as job offerings from investments. This motivation is influenced by migrants' dominance and abilities to generate domestic wealth and national growth which threaten the long term hegemonic power possessed by indigenes over migrants. As a result, the land owning clans have used the emergence large scale investment like jatropha cultivation to invoke the concept of local citizenship on migrants to make way for land deals, and changing migrants' mobility and connectivity to social and geographical position. With evidence from five case studies during jatropha boom and bust in Ghana, this paper has used qualitative data which were solicited through administration of questionnaires, conduct of interviews, institutional consultation, initiation of focus group discussions and review of documents to provide an overview of the critical route to hegemonic dominance in Ghana and how property and traditional order reveal the existence of deep-rooted land insecurity of migrants. It has also showed the stories of migrants alienated from lands on their own motherland and denied investment jobs and as well, how the *local citizenships concept* played stigmatic role and uncertainties for future mobility and connectivity to land resources by the migrants. Based on the study's revelation, the paper generally recommends institutional support systems, especially for migrants, who are mostly the '*sufferers*' in large scale land deals through legal incorporation of economic and social benefits arrangements between land investors and the local content.

KEY WORDS: Local citizenship, Land, Rights, Investment, Jobs, Ghana

BACKGROUND: LOCAL CITIZENSHIP AND LAND PREROGATIVE IN GHANA

Local citizenship has featured prominently in defining land-use rights amongst rural dwellers, especially in the developing world, as Ghana (Sikor and Lund, 2009). This has often become very instrumental in cases where local communities feel threatened for land takeovers by external individuals, groups or entities. Accentuating the concept of local citizenship is social identity through the path of lineage, custom and tradition or origin (Berry, 2009); and this defines who should have either social or economic means to access land resources. As Boamah (2014) has previously captured, the concept of local citizenship does not contest individuals as national citizens, rather it deepened the term '*citizens*' to its very root by confining it to limited group of people who meet certain agreed local condition as the root-tracing individuals from first-settlers of a community with heritage to local resources. In this regard, citizens of a country could be tagged as '*local foreigners*' in the context of a particular community.

Local citizenship serves as the prerogative for easy access to land; and this, as opined by Neumann (2005) is defined by social construction of identity providing emblematic connotations to supremacy over land resources. The common terms used by the local citizens to separate themselves from their so-called regarded '*strangers*' are "*the things they possess*" and "*what they think defines them*", making them to have perceived uniqueness (see Lund, 2011a, pp.71) over migrants. Unlike the indigenes, migrants' access to land is governed by set of rules and regulations which need to be followed to the latter; failure to comply, is likely to lead to alienation. Boni (2006) confirmed that chiefs have, in several cases, exploited migrants by taking large amount of money as rent for their use of lands. Also, migrants are, in most cases, maltreated by the indigenes in land use, and since their protests will end up in chief's palace, they dare not to retaliate but to conform (see Boni, 2006). The difficulties faced by migrants became intense in the phase of large scale investments which involves the acquisition of large tracts of lands by investors. This paper has explored how the indigenes used the hegemonic power they possessed through local citizenship status to stigmatize migrants in land and job access before and after jatropha transformation in Ghana.

LOCAL CITIZENSHIP AND THE DYNAMICS OF LAND RIGHTS

Citizenship identity plays prominent role in defining the land rights of the local dwellers. The dynamics is influenced by mobility pattern as to who were first and last to settle in a community. The time of mobility has been a major basis to define local citizenship (Lund, 2011; Kuba et al., 2003), and this underpins rights to land such as ownership right, user-right, transfer right and exclusion right (See Figure 1). The manifestation and contestation of land rights have become opaquely complex as countries, particularly the developing ones, have no legal underpinnings to define and protect the rights of local communities for their welfare and benefits (Cotula et al., 2009). The failure has led to complications of who has/have specific rights to land. The late-arrivals in most cases, establish land-rights relationship with some indigenes, who are unable to safeguard their rights in the phase of shocks, such as unexpected large scale land investments (Lund, 2011). In such situations, the investors involved get formal state support as governments affirm that such investments will promote economic development. Hence, state land-institutions provide supportive role to investors by guiding them to pass through the right channel recognized by the state. Whether the presumed '*right channel*' infringes on local rights and livelihood issues is treated out of scope by the state, mostly, not through deliberate means but failure to take the pain to consider and investigate the investment operations on the affected local members. Resultantly, the large tracts of land acquired by investors become land-enclosures (see Tilley, 2003). This often results in reconnection/redistribution of alternative stool lands of which citizenship identity plays hegemonic role in favor of the indigenous affected individuals (Ubink and Amanor, 2008).

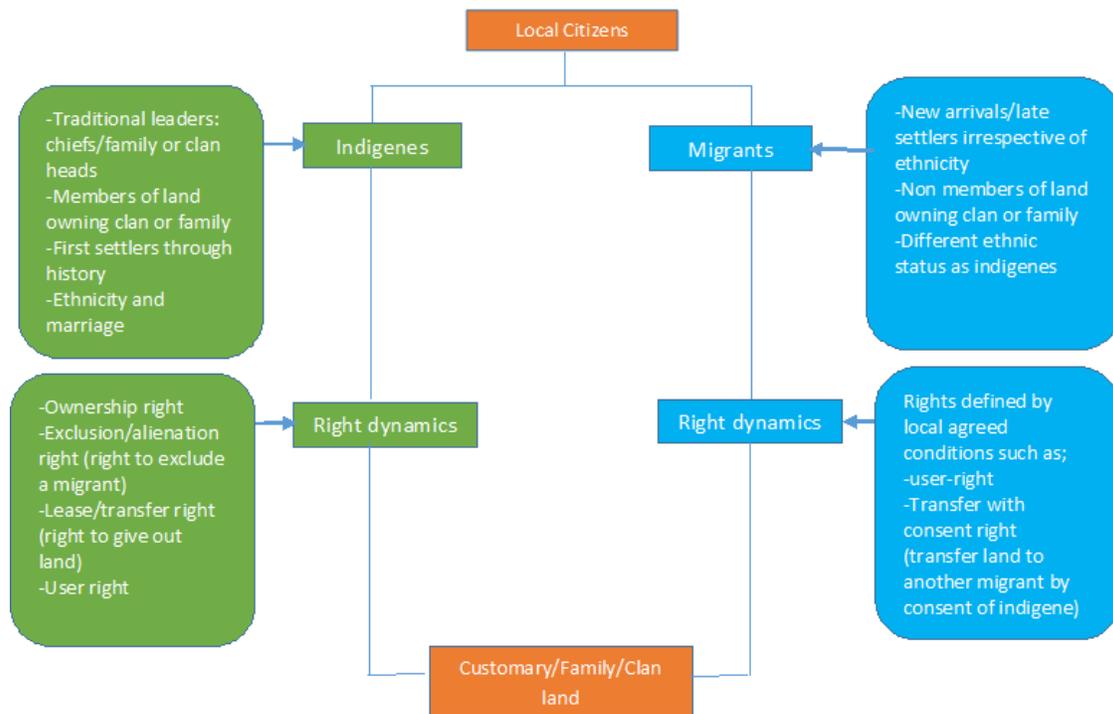


Figure 1: The influence of local citizenship status on land rights: Indigenes vs. migrants
Source: Authors' construct, 2017

STUDY AREAS AND RESEARCH METHODS

Study areas

The study was conducted in five previously large scale jatropha investment destinations in Ghana. These localities are Kobre and Bredie in the Brong Ahafo region, Agogo in Ashanti region, Lolito in Volta region and Kpachaa in the Northern region (See Figure 1).

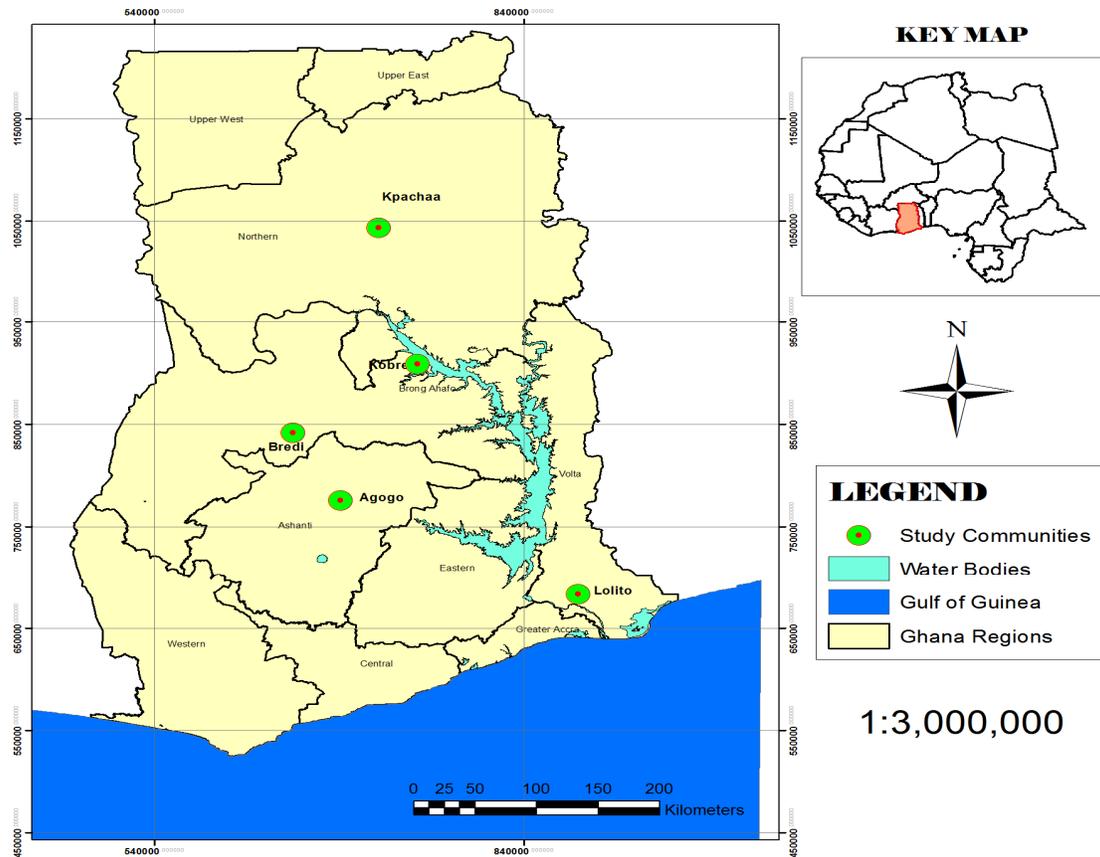


Figure 1: Study settings (Jatropha investment sites in Ghana)
Source: GIS centre of Department of Planning, KNUST, 2017

Research methods

The study uses descriptive approach to ascertain the existence of deep-rooted land insecurity of migrants underpinned by local citizenships concept, which defines claims, access and utilization of lands by indigenes and migrants. The respondents numbered 350 and were made up of local leaders, state officials, local indigenous residents and migrants, drawn through both purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Both secondary and primary data were obtained and analysed case-by-case. This was done through triangulation to enhance validity of findings and to establish the novel contributions of the study to existing literature.

FINDINGS: THE USE OF HEGEMONIC POWER-THE INDIGENES VS. MIGRANTS BEFORE AND AFTER JATROPHA TRANSFORMATION

The findings of this study look at five cases in Ghana where local citizenship played hegemonic role in favor of indigenes to the disadvantage of migrants during and after jatropha investments.

Case I: Kobre

Kobre was an investment destination for the Canadian Kimminic Company Limited. The company acquired 13,000 hectares of land from the Konkoma paramountcy of the Pru District in Brong Ahafo region. The lease of the land led to a conflict, as the Kojobofour paramountcy; another indigenous traditional group, claimed entitlement to the land. The company's

operations came along with conflict between the two indigenous groups. Before the jatropha plantation, the acquired lands were used for farming purposes by migrants. These migrants were made up of individuals from northern Ghana. They obtained user right on the land from the paramount chief of Kojobofour. The Kojobofour paramountcy gave out the land to the migrants to establish its ownership, supremacy and entitlement over the land. The company acquired its 13,000 hectares of land from the Konkoma paramountcy instead of Kojobofuor paramountcy. The spontaneous investment without the knowledge of both migrants and their '*land-owners-Kojobofour group*' led to the destruction of migrants' crops as they were never notified. The Kojobofour group backed the migrants to obtain compensation as an indication to Kimminic Company Limited that the group is the true owners of the jatropha land. Alienated migrants approached the Kojobofour paramountcy to relocate them to alternative lands, but this was refused. The basis of the refusal was on the ground that migrants did not have ownership-right to the land, but received compensation whilst the paramountcy which has ownership-right never received compensation. Hence, for migrants to qualify for relocation, they need to re-enter into an economic agreement involving higher payment of rent. This finding concurs with Boni (2006) indication that some chiefs exploits migrants through unfavorable negotiations and exorbitant rents to establish user-rights. The investor allowed the Kojobofour paramountcy to get some locals as workers as an attempt to appease them and to resolve the conflict. Here, local citizenship became one prominent criteria for recruitment into the company, and this favored the indigenes. After the investment in 2008, jatropha lands lie adamant, but indigenes and migrants are still alienated as ownership is still a contested issue.

Case II: Bredi

Bredi was also a previously jatropha investment centre of the Canadian Kimminic Company Limited. The company acquired 13,000 hectares of land from the Nkoranza Traditional Council. The land was previously used by migrants with user-rights. These migrants were however, not consulted and compensated about the lease of the land for jatropha production. They were basically seen as '*aliens*' and had no power to challenge the traditional council. Migrants have rights (user-right and right-to-transfer-with consent) to lands in their host communities through economic means (Boni, 2006, p.177); and these rights need to be respected by local authorities. Unfortunately, this never happened in Bredi. As part of the lease conditions, Kimminic Company Limited was expected to employ locals in its operations. These locals were only indigenes, who had support from the traditional council to be granted jobs. The investor stopped investment in 2008, leaving its acquired jatropha land adamant. New migrant farmers have returned to the jatropha land without the knowledge of the traditional council. This implies that the migrants are yet to fulfil the economic condition which underpins their right to use the land. But the previous investment experience has indicated that whether or not the migrants fulfil the economic condition which give them rights to stool lands, they will still be alienated when investors come on board.

Case III: Agogo

Stool lands in Agogo are owned by families, traditionally known as '*abusua*'. The family head, traditionally called '*odikro*' is responsible for the management and administration of family lands through the power vested in the paramount chief. The indigenes belong to their respective '*abusua*', and they trace their land ownership from matrilineal inheritance (Awanyo, 1998). The paramount chief belongs to the royal family, which also boost of large tracts of land. During the jatropha boom, the Norwegian Scanfarm company limited acquired about 400,000 hectares of land from the Agogo paramount chief for jatropha plantation. Though, huge portion of the jatropha land belonged to the royal family from which the paramount chief belong to, other families had some ownership shares in the land. Members of these families were either

using their portions of the land for farming activities by-self or gave out their lands to migrants through agreed terms as share-cropping and/or monthly ground rent payment. The land was leased out for 50 years subject to 25-year renewal by the investor. The lease of the land for jatropha meant that affected farmers (both indigenes and migrants) were to be alienated. Indigenes confronted their family heads and were relocated to alternative lands for farming. Again, the indigenes were able to confront the company to: (a) force management to pay for compensations for the use of their lands for jatropha; and (b) obtain jobs from the company. The migrants, with no land-claiming power, first confronted their land owners (indigenous families) for possible relocation and compensation package for their alienations, but these proved futile. Currently, the non-enticing outcomes of jatropha has made Scanfarm Company Limited to transform from jatropha to food crop (maize, soyabeans), hence, access to jatropha lands by both indigenes and migrants are still restricted.

Case IV: Lolito

The Norwegian Biofuel Africa Company Limited acquired 2,300 hectares of land in 2007 from the Tsiala clan through a land broker. The Tsiala clan (indigenes) owns and manages lands in Lolito and adjoining communities through the clan head. The head is responsible for land lease, but this should be done through consultation of other clan members as custom demands. The jatropha land was leased out by the clan head through a broker without consultation of clan members. This led to in-tra conflict. The migrants, also 'Ewes' like the indigenes obtained rights on land through negotiation which took a form of presenting a bottle of gin and payment of a yearly rent to the Tsiala clan. The indigenes have automatic rights to the land through inheritance. Both indigenes and migrants were using the jatropha land for their diverse economic activities until Biofuel Africa Company came in to engage in jatropha production. The investor's approach to investment was premised on initial cultivation of about 17% of the hectares acquired land for the start of the project. The investor allowed the remaining land (83%) to be utilized by the locals for their farming activities, as an attempt to express its good intention to operate in the community. Members of the Tsiala clan (the indigenous farmers) had the first-user right on the '*left-aside lands*' through local citizenship identity. As jatropha disappointed, Biofuel Africa Limited had to stop its investment. The investor left and the land was taken-over by a new entity; the Brazilian Agro-Business Group. With jatropha lands been transformed to large scale rice of more than 1,500 hectares, indigenes and migrants with permission to use '*left-aside jatropha lands*' by previous investor, had to be alienated and denied access to any portion of acquired land. The denial made the quest for employment in the company very intense. However, clan head and members invoked the concept of local citizenship as a mechanism to ensure that the indigenes were favored and employed by the company.

Case V: Kpachaa

Kpachaa was also a previous jatropha site for Biofuel Africa Company Limited. The company acquired the jatropha land (1,400 hectares) from the chief of Tijo traditionally known as 'Tijo-naa', who is a sub-chief of the paramount chief, 'Yaa-naa'. The 'Tijo-naa' is responsible for the management of the land in Kpachaa and other adjoining communities including Jimle. Chiefs of smaller communities such as Kpachaa and Jimle cannot by tradition, question the 'Tijo-naa' for any lease-agreements on lands. Based on the power traditionally vested in the Chief of Tijo, he leased the land to Biofuel Africa Company Limited at an undisclosed amount, though he informed the communities before the project started. Migrants had stayed in the project affected communities for over 30 years, and as well, have successfully integrated with the indigenes making it difficult to identify who they really are. As migrants have stayed in the communities over a long period of time, they are able to speak the local dialect 'Dagbani'.

Some have married the indigenes, which according to Berry (1989), qualifies them as indigenes. Since Tijo-naa informed the locals, farmers both indigenes and migrants vacated their lands for jatropha. The company started its production on only 400 hectares of its 1,400 hectares of land, leaving farmers to cultivate on the remaining 1,000 hectares. The display of hegemonic power of indigenes, notably, the chiefs happened when the traditional leaders influenced the investor to employ some indigenes, specifically, family relatives, at the disadvantage of migrants. Currently, no company operates after Biofuel Africa left in late 2008, and jatropha lands have been taken over by indigenes and migrants.

Table 1: Local citizenship status, land rights and display of hegemonic power in land and job access before and after jatropa transformation

<i>Case</i>	<i>Types of land rights: indigenes vrs migrants</i>	<i>Before jatropa transformation: The hegemonic influences on land and job access</i>		<i>After jatropa transformation: The hegemonic influences on land</i>
		<i>Land</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Mobility and connectivity to land resources</i>
Kobre	Indigenes: contested ownership right between Kojobofour and Konkoma communities; contested lease-right leading to conflict; user right Migrants: user right	Migrants refused automatic user-right to alternative lands as user-right was to be validated by meeting hegemonic conditions set thereof.	Indigenes granted jobs through the support by their chiefs; migrants employed directly by company as low grade workers	Both indigenes and migrants are restricted from using the investor's acquired land due to ownership contestation.
Bredi	Indigenes: ownership right; exclusion right; transfer right; user-right Migrants: user-right; transfer right but with consent from chief	Migrants alienated from their lands without prior notification and compensation.	Indigenes granted jobs through the support of the traditional council; migrants moved to adjoining communities	Land re-occupied and in use by new migrants without meeting local conditions which define user-rights of migrants
Agogo	Indigenes: ownership right; exclusion right; transfer right; user-right Migrants: user-right; transfer right but with consent from an indigene/family head/chief	Migrants alienated from their farming lands without formal notification and compensation; indigenes given compensation as owners of the land	Migrants moved to reconnect themselves to other livelihood sources elsewhere; indigenes obtained jobs from the company.	Investor transformed from jatropa to food crop, hence, land is still occupied by the investor; indigenes and migrants have lost their rights to the land
Lolito	Indigenes: ownership right; user right; exclusion right; lease right is held by clan head in consultation with members Migrants: user right	Some indigenes and migrants were alienated; whilst others were allowed to operate on the remaining land unused by investor. However, indigenes were of top priority.	Both indigenes and migrants were employed but indigenes were the first to be considered.	New investor has come on board and has evicted all locals, indigenes favored in job offerings ahead of migrants
Kpachaa	Indigenes: ownership right; user-right; lease right; exclusion right Migrants: user right; transfer right but with consent from chief	Indigenes and migrants officially notified for land takeover; both indigenes and migrants were allowed to operate on unused lands by the investor.	Preferential treatment given to deep rooted indigenes (blood relation to chiefs) at the expense of others, particularly migrants	Land taken over by indigene and migrant farmers

Source: Field Visits, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study has revealed how indigenes have depended on power possessed by their local traditional leaders to somehow repel the negative attributions, and to gain from the positive components, associated with agri-investment. The migrants, as '*helpless citizens*', are the most exposed local actors to the shocks and hits of operational investments. Indigenous residents have used local citizenship criterion to undermine the social identity of the migrants in land claims as well as job offerings generated through investments. The study has not rejected the negative outcomes of land investments on local indigenes but make a stance that the migrants are the most affected actors of such situation. Moving forward, migrants should be granted special recognition in relation to their land-rights with or without investments. This could be done through legal incorporation of measures which allow user-rights to land to be respected. When this happens, the locals, particularly, migrants will not be severely affected when large scale land acquisition happens on their farming lands. Again, the legal incorporation should consider economic and social benefits arrangements between land investors and local content. These economic and social benefits arrangements should include the provision of physical infrastructure and compulsory job offerings to local members irrespective of local citizen status. Admittedly, it will be cumbersome for migrants to have equal access to investment offerings such as job for the locals, particularly, the indigenes; but, equitable access to investment gains by the two groups will ensure fairness. This should be of particular attention to concerned stakeholders, especially, the government who recognises both indigenes and migrants as common citizens of Ghana irrespective of their geographical identity recognised by local communities.

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