

Land Grabbing: Causes and Implications for Rural Development in the Global South— Evidence from the Benin Region

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Abstract

For decades, both national and multinational economic actors have sought access to land, often leading to widespread land acquisition. In recent years, the rapid acceleration of land grabbing has raised concerns, necessitating an investigation into its causes and implications in the Benin region. This study employed both primary and secondary data, utilizing purposive sampling to select three communities within the study area, while systematic random sampling was used to select household heads. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on a five-point Likert scale. The Friedman repeated measures method and the Kendall coefficient of concordance were applied to test and validate the study's null hypothesis. Findings indicate that land grabbing has been a persistent issue in the region for over a decade, with most respondents (99.9%) acknowledging its long-standing presence. Legislative efforts to curb land grabbing were perceived as weak, and awareness of land registration documents, particularly the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O), was notably low among respondents. The study identified rising land prices as a primary driver of land grabbing, exacerbated by speculative activities and external influences. Additionally, the implications of land grabbing were found to be significant, with respondents highlighting its hindrance to development as a major concern. The research further established that securing land ownership through Certificates of Occupancy is considered the most effective strategy to mitigate the issue. To address these challenges, the study recommends strengthening legal frameworks to protect land rights, increasing public awareness campaigns through media and billboards, and ensuring that citizens understand the importance of stability for sustainable development. Moreover, it advocates for empowering traditional institutions to utilize both customary and formal legal mechanisms to resolve land disputes through customary courts within their jurisdictions.

Key words: Land Grabbing, Causes and Implications, Global South, Benin Region.

INTRODUCTION

Land grabbing refers to land acquisitions, often involving national or multinational corporations, governments, or private investors, who take control of vast tracts of land, usually in developing countries. According to Borras et al. (2011), land grabbing is characterized by large-scale land transactions where land is leased or sold to foreign or domestic investors, often leading to displacement and loss of livelihoods for local communities. The International Land Coalition (ILC) defines land grabbing as land acquisitions that are in violation of human rights, lack free and informed consent of affected communities, and disregard social, economic, and environmental impacts (ILC, 2011). This phenomenon has garnered global attention, particularly in the Global South, as its implications

extend to food security, rural livelihoods, and socio-economic development (Alden Wily, 2012). The term Global South refers to a broad grouping of countries, primarily in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Oceania that are generally characterized by lower income levels, economic dependency, and histories of colonialism and exploitation. It is often used in contrast to the Global North. Since 2008, debates on land grabbing have intensified due to its rapid expansion and the growing involvement of financial institutions and corporate entities seeking "free and available" land for agriculture, fuel production, and industrial development (Borras et al., 2011). The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) estimates that between 2005 and 2009, approximately 20

million hectares of land changed hands due to land-grabbing activities (von Braun & Meinzen-Dick, 2009).

Land grabbing is a worldwide issue, sparking protests and advocacy from governments, civil society organizations, and affected communities. While some view it as an economic opportunity, many perceive it as a threat to rural development, indigenous rights, and sustainable land use. Critics argue that land grabs exacerbate poverty, displace populations, and hinder cultural and economic progress (Ashukem, 2022). The impact of these transactions is particularly severe in Africa, where land deals often involve corrupt practices, lack transparency, and disregard customary land rights (Cotula et al., 2009). Similar concerns have been raised in South America, Central America, and Southeast Asia, where large land acquisitions are predominantly for agricultural and biofuel production (Zoomers, 2010; Visser & Spoor, 2011).

Africa, particularly West Africa, has witnessed significant land acquisitions by foreign investors, often in collaboration with national elites and governments. The controversial land deal in Madagascar, which contributed to the downfall of the government, exemplifies the socio-political consequences of land grabbing (Cotula et al., 2009). Studies highlight the devastating impact of land grabs on rural livelihoods, particularly in Nigeria, where feudal lords and multinational investors have long engaged in such activities (Ojo & Effiong, 2018). If land acquisitions are not managed effectively, they can lead to environmental degradation, food insecurity, and loss of traditional farming knowledge (Andersen, 2010). Despite claims that land-lease agreements promote rural economic development, they are often unbalanced, favoring investors over local communities, ultimately threatening traditional economic activities such as farming, livestock rearing, and artisanal crafts (Holmen, 2015).

A report by Land Matrix (LM) identified 1,217 land deals covering 83.2 million hectares in developing countries, equivalent to nearly half of Europe's farmland (Anseeuw et al., 2012). In Africa, rural populations frequently lose customary land rights, exacerbating food insecurity and economic instability. If small-scale farmers, who constitute a significant portion of the agricultural workforce, lose access to land, their livelihoods are

destroyed, further increasing poverty levels (Daniel & Mittal, 2009).

In Benin, land grabbing has led to forced evictions and loss of ancestral lands, particularly affecting rural communities. The Nigerian Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978 centralized land administration under state governors, sidelining customary land tenure systems (Ojo & Offiong, 2018). This has enabled elites and multinational corporations to acquire vast tracts of land, often without the consent of local communities, as seen in Edo State, where thousands of hectares have been forcibly taken from rural inhabitants (Enahoro, 2024). Protests have erupted in response, with rural dwellers accusing government officials of exploiting their authority for personal gain.

Furthermore, land grabbing in Benin threatens food security and economic stability. Smallholder farmers, who play a crucial role in domestic food production, face displacement without adequate compensation, leading to increased unemployment and declining living standards (GRAIN, 2015; Ghatak & Mookherjee, 2013). Large-scale land acquisitions prioritize export-oriented agriculture and biofuel production over local food needs, worsening hunger and poverty (Deininger, 2010). Additionally, these deals often involve violence and conflict due to inadequate compensation and lack of community involvement.

Land grabbing remains a contentious issue worldwide, particularly in Africa, where it undermines customary land rights and exacerbates socio-economic inequalities. While some argue that land acquisitions promote economic development, evidence suggests that they primarily benefit foreign investors and national elites at the expense of local communities. In Benin, the practice has led to forced evictions, loss of traditional livelihoods, and increased food insecurity. Addressing this issue requires transparent land governance, recognition of customary land rights, and inclusive policies that protect the interests of rural populations. Without such reforms, land grabbing will continue to threaten the socio-economic development of Benin and other affected regions.

This research will bridge important gaps literature by providing a detailed, localized analysis of the historical, legal, economic, and social dimensions of land grabbing in Benin. It emphasizes the urgent need for legal reforms, enhanced public

awareness, and stronger institutional mechanisms to protect land rights and prevent further socio-economic disruptions in the region. In order to bridge these gaps, the study's is to examine the historical evolution of land grabbing in the Benin region, highlighting its persistence and the factors contributing to its continued existence. It seeks to assess the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks in addressing land grabbing, identifying weaknesses in enforcement, governance failures, and gaps in public awareness regarding land governance policies. Additionally, the study evaluates the level of public awareness concerning land registration and legal ownership, particularly the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O), and its role in securing land

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

This study was conducted in three local government areas (LGAs) in the Benin region which included Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, and Ovia North-East—and focused on one community from each LGA: Umegbe, Ugbogiobo, and Ologbo. These communities were deliberately selected due to their significant experiences with land grabbing, making them critical for understanding the socio-economic and environmental impacts of large-scale land acquisitions in the region. The study employed the

rights. It also investigates the socio-economic factors driving land grabbing, such as rising land prices, speculative activities, youth unemployment, and urban expansion. Furthermore, the study analyzes the implications of land grabbing on development and social stability, focusing on its effects on infrastructure projects, economic stagnation, community crises, and financial burdens on affected individuals. Lastly, the research aims to propose policy recommendations for strengthening legal enforcement and institutional mechanisms, promoting public education on land rights, and ensuring more effective land governance in the region.

use of primary and secondary sources of data to elicit information that robustly address the fundamental issues concerning land grabbing and the implication on rural economy in Benin region. This research adopted purposive and systematic random sampling technique. First, purposive random sampling technique was used in the selection of the three Local Government Areas and three communities in the study areas. The reason was that, these LGAs and communities were the most dominant amongst other LGAs and communities in respect of land grabbing in Benin region.

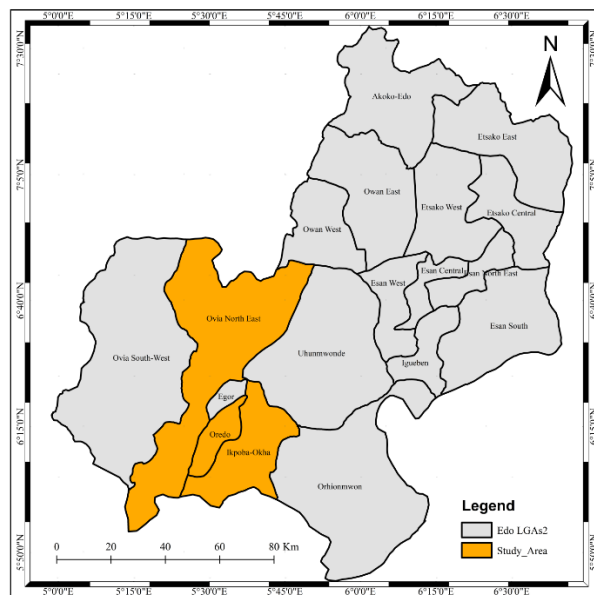


Figure 1. Edo State showing the Study Area

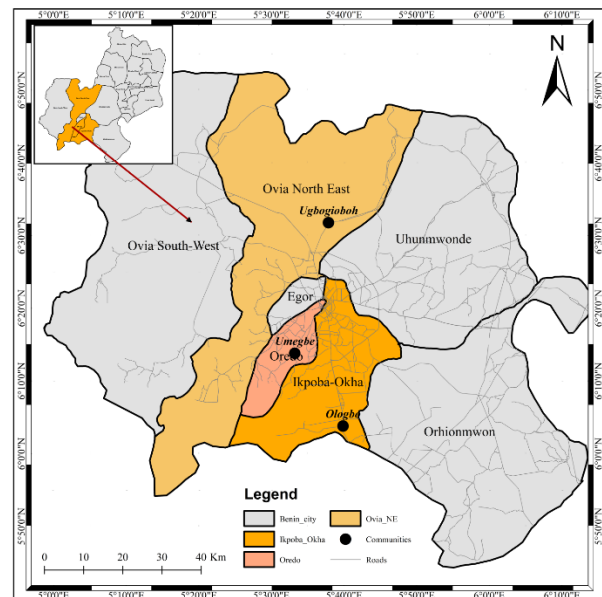


Fig. 2. Benin Region showing Study Communities

Benin City is located at latitude $06^{\circ}19' \text{ I E}$ to $6^{\circ}21' \text{ I E}$ and longitude $5^{\circ}34' \text{ I E}$ to $5^{\circ}44' \text{ I E}$ with an average

elevation of 77.8 m above sea-level. This study is conducted in three communities in three local

government areas in Benin region namely; Umegbe, Ologbo and Ugbogiobo community. These three

communities are individually located in three local government areas in Benin region.

Methods

Systematic random sampling technique was used in the selection of household heads to solicit information on land grabbing in the study area. The research population consisted of household heads who are residents of the selected communities. A rural household refers to a group of individuals, typically a family, who live together in a rural area and share resources such as income, food, and shelter. Rural households are primarily engaged in agriculture, livestock rearing, fishing, or other natural resource-based activities that sustain their livelihoods (Ellis, 2000). These households often depend on communal land, traditional farming methods, and local markets for subsistence and economic activities (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Their socio-economic well-being is influenced by factors such as land ownership, access to infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and government policies (FAO, 2015). The working of this was that in each area, the first residence was selected and thereafter every 5th household along the area, until the sample size was obtained. In a case where there are no household heads that are indigene, the next house will be selected. Furthermore, in order to obtain the sample size, the research population consisted of rural households in the three selected Local government areas and communities of the study area. They are Oredo (Umegbe), Ikpoba okha (Ugbogiobo) and Ovia

North East (Ologbo) LGAs. In order to obtain the sample size, the 2022 projected population of these three LGAs in the study areas was adopted. The population of Oredo LGA was 563, 923, Ikpoba Okha, 560,150 and Ovia North East LGA, 233,909. While the three communities projected population as at 2022 was Umegbe, 12,653, Ugbogiobo 22,284 and Ologbo, 16, 036 people see table 1 below. In view of the above population data and due to the cumbersome nature of the research and the security implications, hence, it is practically impossible to study the entire population sample. Therefore, the researchers employed Taro Yamane's (1967) formula cited in Agheyisi and Ebinum (2019), Edohen and Aigbovo (2023), Edohen and Egharevba (2024) for sample size calculation which is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n = sample size; N = Population size; e = level of precision (0.05). Therefore:

$$n = \frac{50973}{1+50973(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 400$$

Proportion for questionnaire distribution according to each sample communities

$$S = \frac{n}{N} \times P$$

Where: n = Population size of the community; N = Total population size of the communities; P = Total sample size

Table 1 Distribution of Questionnaires

LGA	Population size of the LGAs	Communities	Population size of the communities	Sample size	Number of Questionnaires retrieved
Oredo	563,923	Umegbe	12653	99	99
Ikpobaokha	560,150	Ologbo	22284	175	175
Ovia N-East	233,909	Ugbogioboh	16036	126	126
Total	1,357,982		50973	400	400

Source: Field work (2023)

Data Analysis:

The method of data analysis involves the use of statistical analysis. Descriptive and non-parametric statistical techniques were employed in the course of this study. Five-point Likert scales were employed

to investigate the causes and implications of land grabbing in Benin region using Kruskal Wallis statistical variation to know the mean rank. This involved the use of tables of percentages and mean and weight to provide understanding on the

relationship that exist among the categorical variables of the data.

The Friedman repeated measure method statistical technique was used to validate the stated null hypothesis. This is a non-parametric equivalent of one-factor repeated measure ANOVA. This was used to test the difference between the causes of land-grabbing in the study area. The formula is:

$$X^2 = 12 / nk(k+1) \cdot \sum T^2 - 3n(k+1) \dots\dots\dots 3.0$$

Where: X^2 =Friedman chi square on ranks; T=Rank Total; n= subject scores rank separately; k-1=degree of freedom.

The Kendall coefficient of concordance was used to validate the stated hypothesis of strategy to curb land grabbing in the study area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the study population's demographics, data on age, gender, occupation, income, and indigene status were collected. Age is a significant factor in analyzing land grabbing, as it influences both awareness and involvement in such activities. The respondents' ages ranged from below 20 years to above 50 years (see Fig. 2), with a substantial portion falling within the economically active age group. This suggests that individuals within this category are more likely to be involved in land-related transactions, either directly or indirectly. In some instances, younger, more energetic individuals may collaborate with external investors, local elites, or government

officials to facilitate land acquisitions, often at the expense of rightful landowners.

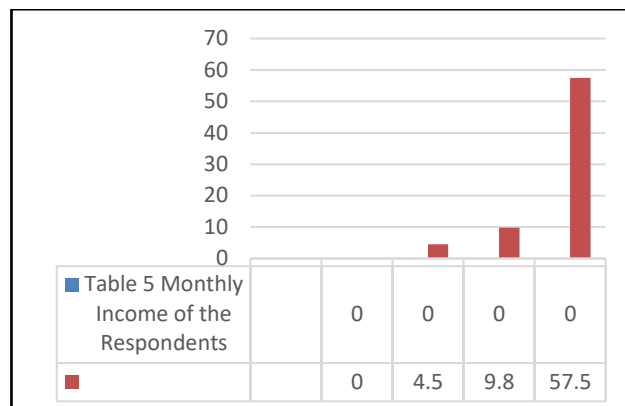


Figure 2: Age Composition of the Respondents

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Gender characteristics of the Respondents

The findings indicate a notable disparity between male and female participants across the selected communities (see Table 2). In each location, a higher proportion of respondents were male, suggesting that land-related matters are predominantly within the male domain. This imbalance may be attributed to the traditional role of men in land ownership, decision-making, and disputes, making them more actively involved in land transactions, including land grabbing. The selected areas also appear to be among the most affected by land grabbing, highlighting the influence of both gender dynamics and the active population in driving this phenomenon in rural communities.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents by Community

Local Government Area	Community	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Ovia North East	Ugbogioboh	98	28	126
		77.80%	22.20%	100.00%
Oredo	Umegbe	84	15	99
		84.80%	15.20%	100.00%
Ikpoba-Okha	Ologbo	115	60	175
		65.70%	34.30%	100.00%
Total		297	103	400
		74.30%	25.80%	100.00%

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

Occupation of the Sampled Respondents

The occupation refers to the primary means of livelihood of respondents. The findings indicate that a significant number of respondents are self-

employed in the informal sector, with fewer individuals engaged in farming or formal professions. This suggests that farming is becoming less attractive, leading many to pursue alternative

economic activities. Those involved in business may also be engaged in land transactions, contributing to the growing trend of speculative land dealings. The pursuit of quick financial gains among the active

population has likely fueled the unauthorized sale of land to multiple buyers, making informal land grabbing a common practice in many communities.

Table 3. Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Farming	53	13.3	13.3	13.3
Teaching	5	1.3	1.3	14.5
Business	166	41.5	41.5	56
Artisan	176	44	44	100
Total	400	100	100	

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly income was an essential variable in this study, as it provides insight into the economic status of respondents (see Figure 3). The findings indicate that a significant proportion of the population earns a relatively higher income, while a smaller segment falls within the lower income range.

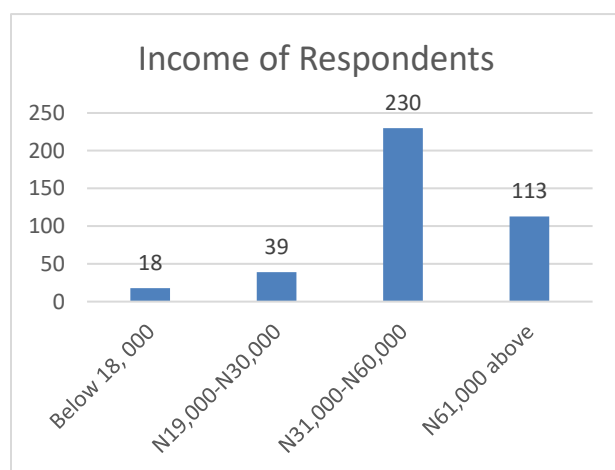


Figure 3: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

This distribution suggests that most respondents have a stable financial standing, which could influence their involvement in land transactions. Income levels in the locality reflect the varying economic capacities of individuals, shaping their engagement in land-related activities.

Indigenes of the Community

The study examined the proportion of respondents who were residents of the communities to gain firsthand insights into land grabbing (see Table 4). The findings indicate that a significant number of respondents were native to the area, while a smaller portion consisted of non-indigenes residing in the communities. This distribution is likely due to the deep-rooted connection indigenes have with ancestral land, making them more aware of land ownership disputes and acquisitions. Their long-standing presence in the area enables them to provide valuable perspectives on land grabbing, as they have directly experienced or observed changes in land tenure over time. Non-indigenous residents, though present in considerable numbers, may have a different level of awareness and involvement in land-related conflicts due to their outsider status.

Table 4: Indigene by Community

Indigene	Community			Total
	Ologbo	Ugbogioboh	Umegbe	
Yes	131	96	70	297
	44.10%	32.30%	23.60%	100.00%
No	44	30	29	103
	42.70%	29.10%	28.20%	100.00%
Total	175	126	99	400
	43.80%	31.50%	24.80%	100.00%

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

Respondents' Perceived Years on the Existence of Land Grabbing by Community

Understanding the duration of land grabbing in the locality was essential for this study. The findings in Table 5 revealed that most respondents have been aware of land grabbing activities for more than a decade, with many tracing the issue back two decades or more. This long-standing presence of land grabbing suggests that it is not a recent phenomenon but rather a deep-rooted issue that has persisted over time. The variations in responses

across different communities indicate that land grabbing has evolved gradually, becoming more pronounced as population growth, urbanization, and economic activities increased. The extended duration of the problem highlighted systemic issues in land governance, weak enforcement of land rights, and the growing pressure on land resources. Many respondents' awareness of land grabbing over a long period suggests that it has significantly impacted community livelihoods, traditional land tenure systems, and local socio-economic structures.

Table 5: Perceived Years on the Existence of Land Grabbing by Community

Community						Total
	5 years	10 years	15 years	20 years	Over 31 years	
Ologbo	3	108	24	14	0	149
	2.00%	72.50%	16.10%	9.40%	0.00%	100.00%
Ugbogioboh	0	13	25	47	25	110
	0.00%	11.80%	22.70%	42.70%	22.70%	100.00%
Umegbe	0	14	11	43	14	82
	0.00%	17.10%	13.40%	52.40%	17.10%	100.00%
Total	3	135	60	104	39	341
	0.90%	39.60%	17.60%	30.50%	11.40%	100.00%

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2023)

Respondents' Assessment of Legislative Law in Curbing Land Grabbing problem

The study sought to understand respondents' views on the effectiveness of laws prohibiting land grabbing in the Benin region. The findings in Table 6 indicated that most respondents perceive these laws as largely ineffective in addressing the issue. A significant number of individuals either expressed skepticism about the impact of existing legislation or refrained from providing an opinion, likely due to a lack

of awareness about land governance policies. The widespread belief in the ineffectiveness of these laws suggests weak enforcement by government agencies, inadequate monitoring, and possible loopholes that allow land grabbing to persist. The continued prevalence of land grabbing in the region highlights the failure of regulatory frameworks to deter illegal land acquisitions, underscoring the need for stricter enforcement and increased public awareness of land rights and legal protections.

Table 6: The Effectiveness of the Law and Legislation in Land-Grabbing

Legislative Effectiveness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very low extent	62	15.5	18.5	18.5
low extent	247	61.8	73.5	92
high extent	20	5	6	97.9
very high extent	7	1.8	2.1	100
Total	336	84	100	

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Respondents' Awareness on Land Registration Right

The study examined respondents' awareness of land registration rights, specifically the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O), which grants legal ownership of land. The findings in Table 7 indicated that a considerable number of individuals are unaware of the existence or importance of this document. Limited awareness of land registration may contribute to the widespread issue of land grabbing and related disputes in the region. The Certificate of

Occupancy, issued by the state government through the Edo State Geographical Information Service (EDOGIS), serves as a crucial legal instrument for land ownership. However, the lack of knowledge about this document among many residents suggests inadequate dissemination of information on land governance and legal protections. This knowledge gap leaves landowners vulnerable to illegal acquisitions, underscoring the need for increased public education and policy interventions to promote land registration and security of tenure.

Table 7: Awareness on Land Registration Right by Community

Respondents' Awareness	Community			Total
	Ologbo	Ugbogiobo	Omegbe	
Yes	31	33	17	81
	38.30%	40.70%	21.00%	100.00%
No	144	93	82	319
	45.10%	29.20%	25.70%	100.00%
	175	126	99	400
	43.80%	31.50%	24.80%	100.00%

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

Respondents' Perception on Causes of Land Grabbing in the Study Area

The study examined the primary causes of land grabbing in the Benin region, revealing multiple contributing factors (see Table 8). A key driver is the continuous increase in land prices, which has created a strong incentive for individuals and groups to encroach on land that does not belong to them. The high demand for land, particularly from estate developers, has intensified this issue, as they often pay significant sums to elites and community leaders to acquire land, sometimes through illegal means.

Youth unemployment is another significant factor, as jobless individuals may resort to illicit land deals as a means of survival. The desire for wealth accumulation has also played a role, with some individuals engaging in land speculation to generate quick financial gains. Additionally, the lack of a well-enforced legal framework has made it easier for powerful actors to manipulate land ownership processes, often at the expense of local communities.

Urban expansion has further contributed to land grabbing, as rural lands become increasingly attractive for development projects. In many cases,

original landowners lose their inherited farmland due to speculative activities by land agents and community elites. Furthermore, the weak enforcement of land regulations by government agencies has allowed illegal land acquisitions to persist without significant consequences.

Overall, the findings indicate that land grabbing in the Benin region is driven by economic pressures, weak governance structures, and increasing land value. Without stronger legal enforcement and protective measures for indigenous landowners, the problem is likely to continue, leading to further displacement and conflicts.

Hypothesis: This study tested the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference among the major causes of land grabbing. To validate this hypothesis, the Friedman Repeated Measures test, a non-parametric statistical method, was applied to analyze variations in the identified causes across different communities. The test aimed to determine which factor was most frequently identified by respondents as the primary cause of land grabbing. The results, presented in Table 9, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

Table 8: Causes of Land Grabbing

Causes		Extent of Land Grabbing					Total	Mean rank weight
		SA	A	UD	DA	SD		
Youth unemployment	Count (%)	1 (0.3)	351 (87.8)	0.2(0.5)	36 (9.0)	10 (2.5)	400	3.73
	Weighted count	5	1404	0.6	72	10	1491.6	2nd
No legal Framework	Count	18(4.5)	120(30)	74(18)	46(11.5)	142(35.5)	400	2.57
	Weighted count	90	480	222	92	142	1026	5th
CDA Recognition	Count	0(0.0)	19(4.8)	74(18.5)	135(33.8)	172(43.0)	400	1.85
	Weighted count	0	76	222	270	172	740	7th
Quest for land ownership	Count	1(0.3)	194(48.5)	91(22.8)	46(11.5)	68(17.0)	400	3.04
	Weighted count	5	776	273	92	68	1214	3rd
Price of land increase	count	260(65)	140(35.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	400	4.65
	Weighted count	1300	560	0	0	0	1860	1st
Urban expansion	Count	10(2.5)	3(0.8)	297(74.3)	85(21.3)	5 (1.3)	400	2.82
	Weighted count	50	12	891	170	5	1128	4th
Quest for wealth	Count	80(20.0)	0(0.0)	18(4.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	400	1.14
	Weighted count	400	0	54	0	0	454	8th
Non formal registration of property	Count	23(5.8)	4(1.0)	16(4.0)	248(62.0)	109(27.3)	400	1.96
	Weighted count	115	16	48	496	109	784	6th

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2023)

The Friedman chi-square test yielded a significant result ($\chi^2 = 394.034$, $DF = 7$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that perceptions of causes of land grabbing vary among respondents. Notably, the rising price of land emerged as the most significant contributing factor.

Table 9: Chi-Squared Test Result

Test Statistics	
N	400
Chi-Square	394.034
df	7
Asymp. Sig.	0

Source: Author's Fieldwork, (2023)

Assessment on the Implications of Land Grabbing

The study examined the implications of land grabbing in the Benin region, using a structured assessment to identify its most significant consequences (see Table 10). The findings revealed that the primary impact of land grabbing is its obstruction of development. Unregulated land acquisition disrupts planned infrastructure projects, discourages investment, and stalls economic growth at both national and regional levels.

Table 10: Assessment on the Implications of Land Grabbing

Impact of Land Grabbing		Extent of Land Grabbing					Total	Mean rank weight
		SA	A	UD	DA	SD		
Community crisis	Count	146 (36.5)	108 (27)	0(0.0)	130 (32.5)	16 (4)	400	3.59
	Weighted count	730	432	0	260	16	1438	2nd
Hindrance to development	Count	235 (58.8)	115 (28.8)	30 (7.5)	20 (5)	0 (0)	400	4.41
	Weighted count	1175	460	90	40	0	1765	1st
Fear of uncertainty	Count	0	30(7.5)	78(19.5)	202(50.5)	90 (22.5)	400	2.12
	Weighted count	0	120	234	404	90	848	5th
Social unrest	Count	57 (14.3)	183 (45.3)	48 (12)	80 (20)	34 (8.5)	400	3.39
	Weighted count	285	732	144	160	34	1355	3rd
Economic backwardness	count	61 (15.3)	130 (32.5)	119 (29.8)	68 (17)	22 (5.5)	400	3.35
	Weighted count	305	520	357	136	22	1340	4th
Loss of lives	Count	28 (7)	53 (13.3)	149 (37.3)	124 (31)	46 (11.5)	400	2.73
	Weighted count	140	212	447	248	46	1093	6th
Indebtedness	Count	1 (0.3)	41 (10.3)	41 (10.3)	250 (62.5)	108 (27)	400	2.25
	Weighted count	5	164	123	500	108	900	7th
Displacement of people	Count	0 (0)	83 (20.8)	0 (0)	134 (33.5)	180 (45)	400	1.95
	Weighted count	0	332	0	268	180	780	8th

Source: Field work (2023)

This aligns with previous studies highlighting the adverse economic effects of land dispossession, particularly in developing regions. Another major implication identified is community crises. Disputes over land ownership often led to conflicts among families, communities, and local authorities, further destabilizing the affected areas. Additionally, land grabbing contributes to social unrest, as those who lose their land may resort to protests or retaliatory actions, increasing tensions within society. Economic stagnation is another consequence, as unlawful land acquisition discourages investment and business expansion. Without secure land ownership, individuals and businesses are hesitant to invest in agriculture, housing, or commercial ventures, leading to financial uncertainty and economic setbacks.

Fear of uncertainty also emerges as a significant issue, as prospective land buyers and developers become wary of purchasing land due to the risks associated with disputes and potential dispossession. This uncertainty further hinders development, as people are reluctant to commit resources to land acquisition and construction projects. Loss of lives is another critical impact, as violent conflicts over land ownership have resulted in casualties. This problem is particularly severe in areas where land disputes escalate into armed confrontations.

Indebtedness is also a notable consequence, particularly for individuals who secure loans to purchase land for farming or development. When their land is forcefully taken, they are left with financial burdens without any means of recovering their investments. Finally, displacement of people was identified as an implication of land grabbing, although it was considered less significant than the other factors. Forced evictions result in loss of shelter and livelihoods, further exacerbating socio-economic challenges in affected communities.

Respondents' Perceived Strategies on Curbing the Problem of Land Grabbing

The analysis of the findings indicates that the most effective strategy for addressing land grabbing is the formal registration of land and obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O). Respondents identified this as the most reliable method for preventing illegal land acquisition, as it provides legal proof of ownership and enables government authorities to regulate land transactions effectively.

Another significant strategy is the disbandment of Community Development Associations (CDAs), which have been linked to unauthorized land sales and disputes. Eliminating these groups is seen as a necessary step in reducing land-related conflicts and ensuring that land allocation follows legal procedures. The timely development of acquired land also emerged as an important preventive measure. Constructing buildings or using the land immediately after purchase helps deter encroachment and illegal claims by land speculators.

Additionally, the establishment and enforcement of a strong legal framework were identified as crucial in addressing land grabbing. Clear laws, strict penalties for violators, and efficient judicial processes would enhance land security and discourage unlawful land acquisition. Public enlightenment was also recognized as a vital approach to curbing land grabbing. Educating the public on land rights, legal acquisition processes, and the consequences of illegal land transactions can reduce fraudulent activities and promote responsible land ownership.

Overall, while all these strategies play an essential role in combating land grabbing, the formal registration of land and issuance of Certificates of Occupancy was considered the most effective solution by respondents.

Table 11: Respondents Mean Ranks on Strategies in Curbing Land-Grabbing

Strategy In Curbing Land Grabbing	Mean Rank
Registration for certificate of occupancy (C of O)	1.9
Disband CDA	2.14
Effective legal framework	3.51
Public enlightenment	4.09
Quick development of land	3.35

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

The Kendall coefficient of concordance was applied to evaluate the hypothesis, which posited that there is no agreement among respondents on the most effective strategies for addressing land grabbing in the study area. The analysis included responses from 352 participants.

The ranking system used The Kendall coefficient of concordance was applied to evaluate the hypothesis, which posited that there is no

agreement among respondents on the most effective strategies for addressing land grabbing in the study area. The ranking system used in the study assigned the highest preference a rank of 1, while the least preferred strategy was ranked 5. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents identified obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) as the most effective approach to mitigating land grabbing. However, there was some variation in responses, as reflected in the standard deviation values.

Despite differing opinions on the best strategy, the responses regarding the effectiveness of a strong legal framework were notably consistent, with a lower standard deviation of 0.725 (see Table 11), indicating greater agreement among respondents on

the necessity of legal reforms in tackling land grabbing. In the study assigned the highest preference a rank of 1, while the least preferred strategy was ranked 5. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents identified obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) as the most effective approach to mitigating land grabbing. However, there was some variation in responses, as reflected in the standard deviation values.

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Table 11: Descriptive Statistics

Strategy In Curbing Land-Grabbing	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Registration of certificate of occupancy	352	1.84	1.306	1	5
Disbanded CDA	352	2.13	1.065	1	5
Effective legal framework	352	3.37	0.725	1	5
Public enlightenment	352	3.96	1.23	1	5
Quick land development	352	3.19	1.183	1	5

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

The test statistics in Table 12 indicate that the computed Kendall coefficient of concordance (W) yielded a p-value below the established significance threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. This confirms that there is a significant level of agreement among respondents regarding the five proposed strategies for addressing the issue of land grabbing in the study area.

Table 12. Kendall coefficient of concordance (W)

Test Statistics	
N	352
Kendall's Wa	0.367
Chi-Square	516.279
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the critical causes and implications of land grabbing in the Benin region, providing valuable insights for policymakers,

traditional institutions, and landowners. The findings emphasize that land grabbing is driven primarily by rising land prices, the activities of estate developers, and weak enforcement of legislative frameworks. The study also reveals a significant lack of awareness regarding legal land ownership documentation, particularly Certificates of Occupancy (C of O), which could serve as a safeguard against illegal land acquisition. Furthermore, land grabbing has been identified as a major obstacle to development, leading to community crises, economic stagnation, and social unrest. By addressing these challenges, the research offers practical solutions to mitigate land conflicts, promote sustainable development, and strengthen land governance in the region. The study is beneficial to government agencies, legal practitioners, community leaders, and researchers seeking to understand and resolve land-related disputes effectively.

To effectively address land grabbing, both traditional and formal legal frameworks must be strengthened. The government should enforce stricter land tenure policies that clearly define

ownership rights and provide adequate legal protections. Simplifying the process of obtaining Certificates of Occupancy will encourage more landowners to secure legal documentation, reducing the risk of illegal acquisition. Additionally, traditional institutions should be empowered to mediate land disputes through customary courts, ensuring fair resolutions that align with both local customs and national laws. Their role in land administration should be formally recognized to curb unauthorized transactions and encroachments.

Public awareness and education are also crucial in addressing this issue. Government agencies, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders should collaborate on campaigns to educate citizens about their land rights, the consequences of land grabbing, and the benefits of legal land registration. These messages should be widely disseminated through media channels, billboards, and community forums. Moreover, land transactions must be more transparent, with strict regulations placed on estate developers and foreign investors to prevent exploitation and unauthorized land acquisitions. In addition, communities should be actively involved in land governance. Establishing community-based land monitoring committees will help detect and prevent illegal land transactions before they escalate into conflicts. Strengthening law enforcement is equally important, as government agencies responsible for land matters must be more proactive in enforcing existing laws. Setting up specialized land tribunals or task forces will ensure that cases of illegal land acquisition are swiftly investigated and prosecuted.

Thus, by implementing these measures, land governance in the Benin region can be significantly improved, minimizing conflicts and promoting sustainable development.

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