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Household Land Allocations and the Youth Land Access Nexus: Evidence from the Techiman Area of Ghana

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Abstract: Building inclusive societies that reflect the needs of all categories of people within the social spectrum is critical to achieving sustainable development. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which among things seek to ‘by 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex. This places enormous tasks on all governments especially in developing countries like Ghana to ensure that the youth are not left behind in access and control over land as a building block for economic empowerment. This task is particularly critical in view of the sheer numbers of the youth and yet economically marginalized underpinned by high levels of unemployment and underemployment. This case study investigates the youth land rights within the context of household landholdings and allocations dynamics. The study took place in the Techiman area in Ghana. The study sampled 455 youth and 138 household heads. The study revealed that household lands are important building block for majority of the youth in the Techiman area. It gives them a sense of security in the usage. However, the youth’s ability to depend on this source to kick start independence economic life is beset with land scarcity, non-allocation and accumulation by the lineage heads who have prerogative over household lands. The study underscores the need for social welfare scheme for the aged farmers so that they can timely release land to the younger ones without fearing for what to sustain them. There is also the need for government to create land banks to support the willing youth to engage in agriculture.

Keywords: youth; household; land; access; use; Techiman

1. Introduction

Leaving no one behind in the development process is critical to building inclusive societies and achieving sustainable development. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as set by the United Nations (UN) member’s countries in 2015. Goal 10 of the SDGs “Reduce inequalities within and among countries” among other targets seeks to ensure that “by 2030, to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, and sex” [1]. Again, Goal 1: “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”, targets poverty reduction at least by half the proportion of all persons including youth and children living in poverty. Furthermore, this goal also targets equal rights to economic resources as well as ownership and control over land by all. As noted by International Labour Organization (ILO), the 2030 agenda for sustainable development ‘emphasizes the catalytic power of youth employment in poverty alleviation, economic growth, and peace and prosperity for all’ [2]. Indeed, one of the targets under the Goal 8, for instance, envisions to by 2030

“... achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” [1].

This places enormous task on all governments especially in the developing countries like Ghana to ensure that the youth are not left behind in access and control over land as a building block to move out of poverty. This task is particularly critical in view of the sheer numbers of the youth and yet economically marginalized underpinned by high levels of unemployment and underemployment. The youth employment rate globally was estimated at 13.1% in 2016 [3]. This unfortunate situation is even more worrying in developing countries where the youth unemployment rate reached 13.7% in 2017 [2]. In the specific case of Ghana, the youth unemployment rate was estimated at 12.1% in 2015 [4]. Generally, the youth are three times as likely as adults to be unemployed [2]. Given this precarious unemployment situation of the youth, their poverty levels are also high. It was estimated in 2016 that there were about 156 million youth in developing countries who lived in extreme poverty of less than US\$1.90 per capita per day [3]. Perhaps the more worrying development is the high incidence of working poverty among the youth compared with the working adults. Incidence of working poverty among the youth in 2016 was estimated at 37.7% compared with 26% among the adults [3]. Clearly, the youth lag behind in almost all key economic and social indicators of development. Abink aptly opined that to be youth, especially in Africa, connotes been disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized [5].

The youth however, constitute an important human resource base for rapid economic transformation and the realization of the sustainable development goals. Their sheer numbers as well as their exuberance energies are needed to spearhead economic growth. The youth population is estimated at 1.9 billion and close to 90% are in developing countries [6]. The large youth numbers are a demographic dividend of resources [7] which can positively be exploited to drive development. The physical strength of youth is an essential driving force of development [8]. In the wake of an aging global population, the position of youth in the development process especially in the developing countries is immensely important. ILO reports that, in 2015 the youth between the ages of 15–24 constituted 16.2% of the total population, while adults aged 65 or older amounted to 8.3% [3]. In Ghana’s agricultural sector for instance, the farming population is already aging. According to the Ministry of Food Agriculture (MoFA), the average age of farmers in Ghana is about 55 years [9]. Youth are therefore indispensably required in the development process and are not to be passive participants. Given adequate resources, the youth have the potential to effectively transform the world and make it a better place [6].

Interest in youth economic welfare and, in particular, their access to productive resources such as land serves a number of purposes. Empowering the youth through creation of employment opportunities and access to resources help to alleviate poverty among the youth themselves as well as create the needed platform for them to deploy their energies and talents to the economic development process. This will ensure inclusive development and sustainable growth into the future. Many policy options exist to create channels for the youth to be empowered and uplifted from extreme poverty. Among these options include; skills development; macroeconomic policies, new technology to increase youth access to credit, creating a global alliance, creating diverse forms of employments, among others [2]. Ownership and control over land as captured by Goal 1 of the SDGs and is critical in creating diverse forms of employment opportunities especially employment pathways in the agricultural sector.

Land is a key productive resource [10] and in agrarian economies such as Ghana, access to land is critical towards building economic livelihoods from the agricultural sector. However, in Ghana land is a highly contested resource at all levels; household, family and even larger community level (see [11]). These contestations are deeply rooted in the tenure arrangement which vests authority and control over land in the older generations. This tends to be abused by the customary authorities who often solely benefits from the proceeds [12,13], allocate to the ‘outsiders’ to the detriment of the youth [14,15]. Rapid urbanization and large land acquisitions also undermine youth land access effort [14,16]. The youth are increasingly finding it difficult to access land for farming on their community-owned land [17]. There is the need to fully appreciate the nature of youth land problem within this highly contested

landholding environment. Some amount of evidence on youth land access and control under the customary land ownership regime in Ghana exist. For instance, early works by Kidido et al. in the Techiman Traditional of Ghana revealed that youth land sizes are generally small occasioned by a combination of factors including cost and socio-cultural issues [14,18]. They also noted that there is limited legislative support to the youth to assert claims to land under the customary tenure regime in Ghana [19]. Again, studies on changing family land relations and agriculture commodification in Ghana by Amanor have partly touched on the youth land rights. According to Amanor, agriculture commercialization and land contestation at the family level in south east and western parts of Ghana have undermined the youth access to land. Consequently, many of the local youth had abandoned farming to seek alternative livelihood opportunities in illegal mining activities, chainsaw operations and migration to the urban centers [15,20]. Boni's work in the Sefwi area of Ghana also focused on authoritarian interpretations by chiefs in land disputes and the local youth and migrants' farmers land rights [21]. She noted that the chiefs and elders' adjudication of land disputes and interpretation of customs worked against the land rights of the local youth and migrants.

The main objective of this paper is to examine households' landholdings and distribution and explore the nexus with youth land access. The study is guided by the following research questions: How are households' land held and allocated among the members? To what extent are the youth land access for agricultural purposes linked to their household land stock? What are the youth's perception on the security of their landholdings? It is important to appreciate the extent to which the youth rely on their households for land for farming purposes and their perception of security in the use of acquired lands. Households are the basic economic unit of communities and are mostly headed by the older generation who wield greater authority over productive assets including land under the customary tenure system. Thus, a clear appreciation of allocation authority, distribution pattern and the nexus with the youth land rights is imperative. As noted by White, research into the relations between the older generation and the young people (the youth) who desire to receive their share of land to set independent farms and households have been neglected [22]. The findings of this paper offer a further understanding of the youth land problem towards mapping out a holistic remedial intervention to make land accessible to the youth who are rightfully placed to take over from older lineage members.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Understanding the youth land rights and access at the household level needs to be viewed from the perspective of intergenerational relations in land. Generation is a social structure that is seen to distinguish the youth from other social groups and to constitute them as a social category [22]. The concept establishes 'relations of division, difference and inequality between categories' such as between youth and adults [22] (p. 2). Youth as a social category within the larger social structure lie within the households. Inequality or otherwise of their access to land at the household level can be appropriately analyzed from the perspective of social category discourse (i.e., adult and youth/children relations). Thus, relations in land between the older and younger generation provide the context of investigation and analysis of the issues to understand land rights allocations and access dynamics of youth at the household level.

Intergenerational relations encompass the transmission of resources including land across different generations. Whyte et al. described intergenerational relations as a 'reciprocity' (i.e., a sense of mutual dependence expressed in give and take over time) [23]. According to them, intergenerational relation has two main features; transmission of resources (material and immaterial) and the imbued assumption of morality. The morality aspect of the intergenerational relations, according to them, is borne out of 'intergenerational contract' "the implicit expectation that parents will care for their children until they can care for themselves, and that children will support their parents when they can no longer support themselves, is a moral obligation" [23] (p. 7). This 'intergeneration contract', is not a legal contract but rather based on the 'logic of debt' and includes the idea that parents raise their children as their creditors, the children later fulfilling this debt ... " [24] (p. 50). According to Boersch-Supan, intergeneration

contract functions at both private and public levels as well as micro and macro levels. She again noted that, the exchanges are anchored to varying degrees of cultural and historical distinctive customary norms and moral obligations [8]. Thus, intergeneration relation is also viewed as a moral obligation where the older generation is expected to support the younger generation who will intend to support the former at a later time when the tables of strength turns.

Focusing on the resource transmission aspect of the intergeneration relations, which is significant to the present discourse, it is usually viewed as an individual transaction where one bequeaths or gives something of value to an individual in the next generation [25]. In the context of land, it is the subsisting land relations between the senior generation and the younger generation. Ownership of customary land is intergenerational [26]. Customary relations in land transcend different temporal regimes of life. This was aptly captured in the words of a renowned Ghanaian Chief, Nana Ofori Atta, the paramount chief of Akyem Abuakwa; “I conceive that land belongs to a vast majority of whom many are dead, a few are living and a countless host are still unborn” [27] (p. 4). In this sense, land is held by a generation and transmitted onto the next generation and the process continuous. The flow of movement is from the elderly who are normally in possession of this asset (land) to the younger generation and subsequently to the unborn. Resources always flow from the elderly generation down to its descendants [28] cited in [29] (p. 268). Kohli called this process evolutionary or sociobiological theory.

In this intergenerational land relations arrangement, the older members of the lineage wield superior influence and control over younger members in the allocation of land rights. Access rights are allocated based on social identity and group or community membership [30,31] and seniority [32]. As age signifies effort invested in sustaining the younger members [33], it creates authority in favor of the older generation. The local structure of patriarchy society gives the older generation control of land resources and emphasis on respect for the elderly [34]. Land is often owned and controlled by the elderly especially men in traditional African societies [25,35] and by household heads on the assumption that the rights are held in trust for all in the household [36]. The management and decisional authority regarding land rest entirely in the hands of the elderly [25]. In Ghana, it is observed that elders often control youth access to land and redistribution of land from senior generation to the younger generation [15] and rather alienate land to migrant farmers [20,21]. Intergenerational relation and its associated solidarity are a global phenomenon. However, societies differ in the form and substance of their intergeneration contract [37]. Thus, intergenerational relations concept as employed in this study seeks to understand the power balance in terms of landholding between the older generation and the younger members within the Ghanaian social structure. The intergenerational land relation was considered by analyzing households land acquisitions, land stocks and distribution among members to understand connections with the youth landholdings. It further offered the platform to ascertain the extent to which the youth depend on their households for land and the underlying dynamics.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was based on a case study survey of youth and households in the Techiman area of Ghana. The approach made it possible to engage the youth and their household heads on matters relating to households' land access, holdings and rights allocation dynamics. It is noted by Casley and Lury, that studies requiring in-depth probing into systems governing behavior and interrelations between people and their institutions are best done using case design [38]. To fully appreciate the household landholdings and the youth land access nexus within limited time and budget constraints, it was imperative to proceed based on case study sample survey approach. As case studies focuses specific issues or unit of analysis [39], the primary units of analysis in this study were the households and the youth within the context of land rights allocations. The study was descriptive based on the quantitative data from both the youth and household heads respondents.

2.1. The Study Area Location

The Techiman I area is located within the central part of Ghana (see Figure 1). It covers two administrative districts (i.e., Techiman Municipality and Techiman North district). The strategic location of the area and easy access to the bigger cities of the north and southern Ghana coupled with fertile arable land make the area a significant food producing and marketing center not only in the Brong Ahafo region but also in the entire country. As a contact zone and stopover point for traders from the North, the area exchanges products of two economic regions of northern and southern Ghana [40]. The vast agricultural opportunities in the area and the desire of youth in the areas to be involved in agriculture especially tomato cultivation (see [41]) informed the choice of the area for this study.

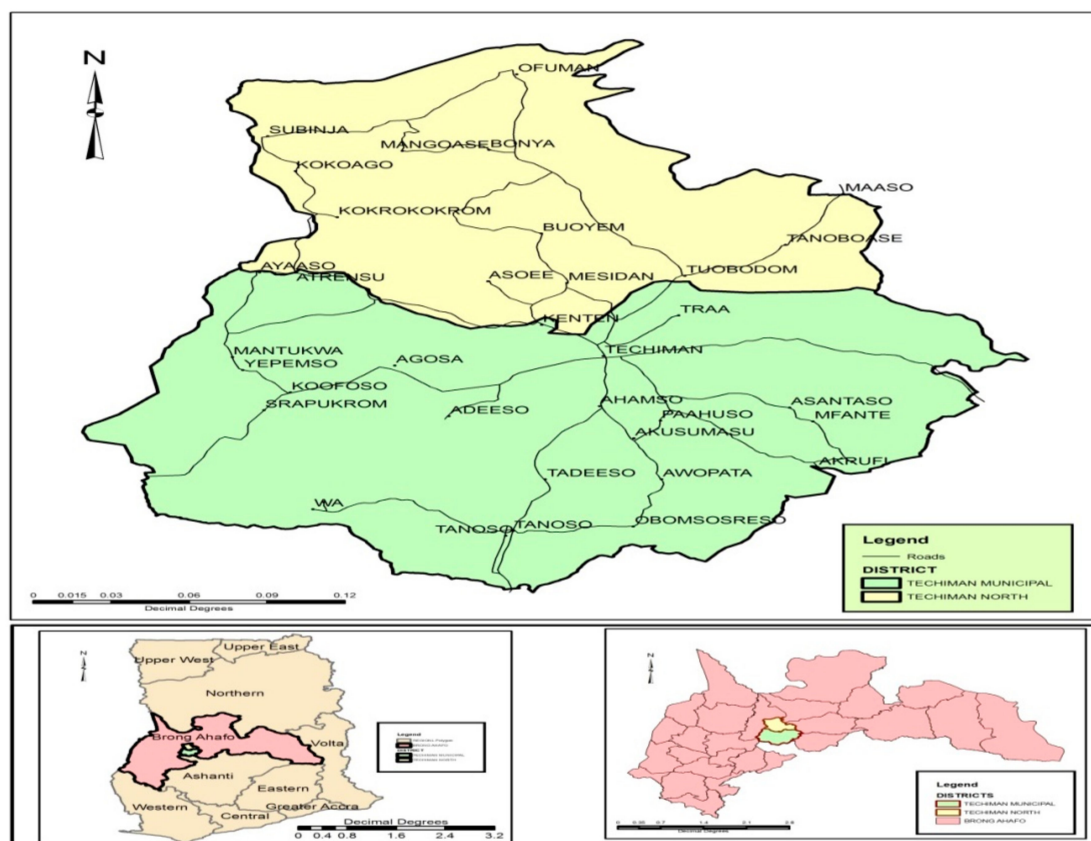


Figure 1. District map of Brong Ahafo Region highlighting the study area districts. Source: Modified from the Techiman North and South districts maps.

2.2. Defining Youth for the Study

It is important to first establish operational definition of the concept of youth. Youth as a concept is socially constructed with its meaning and boundaries vary over time and between societies [34]. It is imperative, therefore, to clearly define the concept for the purpose of this study.

This study defines youth as both male and female within the active workforce of 15 up to 34 years. Under section 89 of the Children's Act 1998 (Act, 560) the minimum age for admission of a child into employment in Ghana is 15 years. This study thus defined youth in line with the statutory prescription of when a young person is permitted to engage in productive economic activity in Ghana. The Ghana National Youth Policy, 2010, pegs the upper limit for youth at 35 years. However, it was impossible to determine the number of youth who were 35 years old from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) database. This is because, GSS categorizes people who are 35 years in the age band of 35–39 years. It was thus appropriate to align the upper age limit of youth with the GSS categorization to be able to use their census data to for sampling purposes.

2.3. Sampling of the Respondents

These youth respondents were first sampled based on the criteria of involvement in on-farm agricultural activities. The study targeted the youth involved in agriculture (on-farm) because involvement in on-farm agricultural activities whether as a primary or secondary occupation exposes them to land access issues and were thus considered as appropriate respondents to engage. The youth as a social group lie within the household structure. Thus, the household was the key reference point for the sampling of the youth. Households provide appropriate means of identifying and selecting subsets of the population to whom a research is addressed [38]. As noted by Chauveau et al., ‘household remains the basic unit of reference in terms of access to and use of productive resources’ [33] (p. 29). In locating the households, houses were used as the reference point and were randomly sampled based on the zones created by moving along the settlement patterns and streets.

A tracer survey was done on a sample of households from which the youth respondents were selected. The number of youth respondents interviewed in this study formed the sample frame from where 138 households were drawn. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the household heads for interview. The house numbers of the youth interviewed were taken during the interview process, so it was easy tracing back to their household heads. In the sampling process where a household head was picked and happened to be a youth already interviewed, that sample was dropped in favor of a non-youth household head. In all 455 youth, 138 household heads were covered in the survey (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of respondents in the various communities in the Techiman Area.

Community	Youth	Household Heads
Hansua	20	8
Krobo	27	8
Tuobodom	89	26
Nkwaeso	20	7
Bamiri	12	4
Twimia-Koase	21	6
Mesidan	8	4
Sansama	13	4
Kuntunso	12	5
Aworowa	39	12
Nsuta	18	6
Buoyem	14	5
Tanoso	53	14
Adieso	5	2
Tadieso	11	3
Amangoase	9	3
Tanoboase	6	3
Offuman	51	10
Kokroko	5	2
Fiaso	22	6
Total	455	138

Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2017.

Thus, the processes and power relation governing land ownership and access dynamics required engagement of key actors. The household heads and the youth engaged in on-farm agricultural activities household lands were identified as the right actors for this research. The household head plays a significant role in the ownership and transmission of land rights in line with customary practices and norms at the household level. They were thus an important source of households’ landholding information which was to be related to that of the youth.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Personal interviews were carried out with the youth and the household heads using two set of structured questionnaires each for the youth and their household heads. The questionnaires in this survey were closed ended. The major themes of the youth respondents' questionnaire included; demographic information, land access sources, and land holding size, among others. Similarly, the household heads questionnaires sought data on demographic characteristics, land acquisition, land allocation authority, size of holdings among household members. Indeed, the current paper emanates from a bigger study whose field works commenced in 2015 and formally ended in January 2017. The main respondent groups of the survey namely the youth and household heads were each covered at different time lines due to time and resource constraints. The survey covering the youth took place between May 2015 and January 2016. The tracer survey of the household heads started in May 2016 and ended in January, 2017. The data on the youth respondents especially land sizes, access dimensions and legislative issues have already been published elsewhere (see [14,18,19]). However, data on the households are published for the first time in this paper. It was analyzed in relation with the data on youth landholdings.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data from the youth and their household heads. The variables in the questionnaires (both the youth and household heads) were first coded and entered into the SPSS software. Results are presented in form of tables, graphs and charts as captured in the next section.

3. Results

The results of the study are presented in this section in two parts. The first part of the results relates to the demographic characteristics of the households interviewed as well as the youth respondents. The summary of the demographic characteristic is captured in Tables 2 and 3. The second part of the results focuses on household land ownership, allocation dynamics as well as youth land access and household landholding nexus. Details of the results are presented as follows.

3.1. Background of Household Heads Respondents

Since the youth respondents are members of the social structure and are located within the households, it is important to reflect on some key characteristics of the households of which they are members. The majority (58%) of the households were headed by males while female headed households constituted 42%. Majority of the household heads (34.8%) were between 51–60 years and those above 60 years were 31.2%. The data clearly shows that majority of the household heads were above 50 years. Farming constituted the primary occupation for 94.2% of the households. About a third of the households (32.6%) had between 6–8 members. Details of the demographic characteristics of the households are contained in Table 2.

Table 2. Selected demographic characteristics of household heads respondents.

Characteristic	Response	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	80	58
Female	58	42
Total	138	100
Age		
30–40 years	10	7.2
41–50 years	37	26.8
51–60 years	48	34.8
Above 60 years	43	31.2
Total	138	100
Community membership status		
Indigene	104	75.4
Migrant	34	24.6
Total	138	100
Household Size		
Below 3	3	2.2
3–5	31	22.5
6–8	45	32.6
9–12	29	21
13–15	12	8.7
Above 15	18	13
Total	138	100
Primary Occupation		
Farming	130	94.2
Running a business	3	2.2
Government work (public service)	3	2.2
Other	2	1.4
Total	138	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

3.2. Background of Youth Respondents

The youth respondents were made up of 299 (65.7%) males and 156 (34.3%) females. The wide disparity in terms of gender representation can be explained by the fact that there were more males involved in farming and thus qualified to participate in the survey than the females. In terms of age, the majority of the respondents—186 (40.9%) fell within the age range of 30–34 years which was the upper limit of the youth respondents. Those in the age category of 15–19 years which constituted the lower limit recorded the least number of respondents 24 (5.3%). People within this age group are normally in school and not in occupation of any agricultural land or actively involved in farming. Consequently, per the survey criteria, many of them were not qualified to participate in the survey, hence their low representation in the sample.

The majority of the respondents 268 (58.9%) were married. Those who were single constituted 176 (38.7%). In terms of occupation, the majority—410 (90.1%) were involved in farming as their primary occupation. The remaining respondents were involved in other professions such as running non-agricultural businesses, schooling, laborer work and the public service, and a few were involved in farming as their secondary occupation. The details are shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the youth respondents.

Characteristics	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	299	65.7
Female	156	34.3
Total	455	100
Age		
15–19 years	24	5.3
20–24 years	88	19.3
25–29 years	157	34.5
30–34 years	186	40.9
Total	455	100
Community membership status		
Indigene	278	63.1
Migrant	168	36.9
Total	455	100
Marital Status		
Married	268	58.9
Single	176	38.7
Divorced/separated	9	2
Widowed	2	0.4
Total	455	100
Primary Occupation		
Farmer	410	90.1
Agricultural wage laborer	4	0.9
Non-agricultural wage laborer	5	1.1
Self-employed outside farm work	23	5.1
Student	7	1.5
Public/civil servant	4	0.9
Others	2	0.4
Total	455	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016.

3.3. Households Land Ownership and Allocations Dynamics

Among the households covered by the study, the majority—100 (72.5%) out of the 138 owned land acquired through gift, inheritance and appropriation through community membership (Table 4). Close to a third of the households—38 (27.5%) did not own the lands they held. These were mainly the migrant households who rented, engaged in sharecropping and operated under customary licence. As shown in Table 4, the dominant land access modes through which the households accessed land were gift (31.9%) and inheritance (23.9%). Rentals and customary licence were unpopular among the households.

In terms of size of landholdings, as depicted in Figure 2, the majority of the households—29 (21%) held lands sizes above 15 acres, which, on the face of it does not suggest an extreme land scarcity. However, this may not be enough indicator of real land abundance until it is appreciated within the context of how much of the land available to the households has been appropriated or cropped. For instance, households with land area above 15 acres may well have all their land fully utilized by the household members and even tenants. It is thus essential to further ascertain the level of use and occupation of the lands available to the households in order to appreciate the dynamics of allocation and size of holdings by members especially the youth.

Table 4. Households land ownership and acquisition mechanisms.

Issue	Response	Percent (%)
Own Land?		
No	38	27
Yes	100	73
Total	138	100
Access Mode		
Purchase	4	3
Gift	44	32
Sharecropping	22	16
Customary license	7	5
Inherited	33	24
Usufruct (through community membership)	18	13
Rented	10	7
Total	138	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

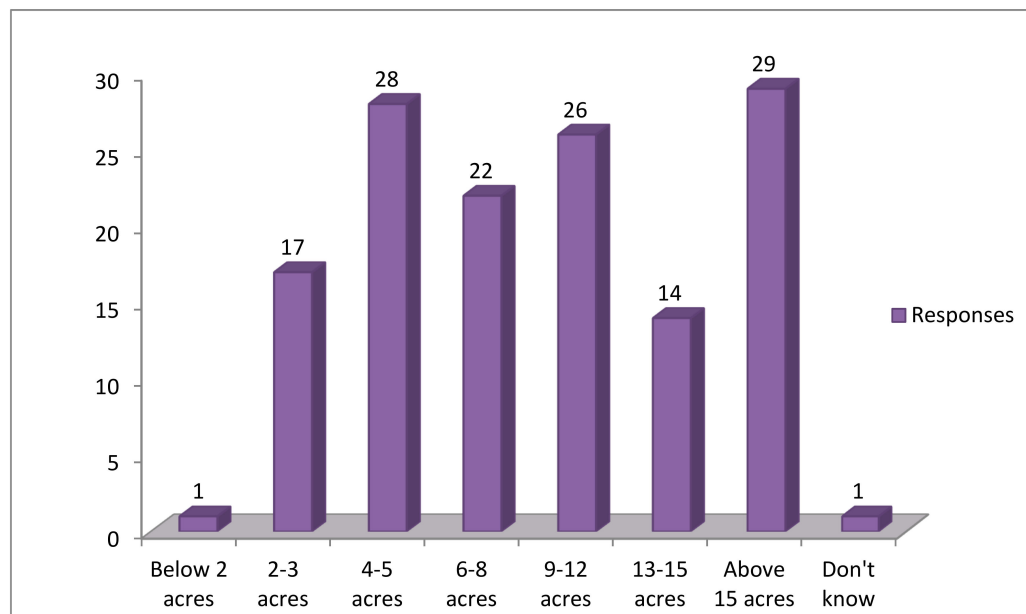
**Figure 2.** Landholding sizes of the households interviewed (n = 138). Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

Figure 3 depicts the level of utilization of lands the households held. A majority (45%) of the households interviewed described the size of their lands under cropping or occupied by other users as “more than half is occupied or under use”. These households have more than half of their land stock under occupation. Again, 24% of the households also indicated that only a “less than half” of their land stock was occupied or in use at the time of the survey. These households had excess land available for either rentals or expansion.

Furthermore, a close to a third of the households (31%) had all their land stock fully utilized (see Figure 3). For these households, any member who requires additional land to either expand or establish a new farm will have to look outside of the household for land. While the land available to these households may just be enough for their usage, it should be appreciated that, they are faced with plausible land shortage as no portions of their land stock were idle. The need to expand their farm sizes or make allocation to new members especially to their youth will be challenging. The youth desiring to set up their own independence farms will have to depend on external land market for land supply or wait to be bequeathed a portion when the older members pass away.

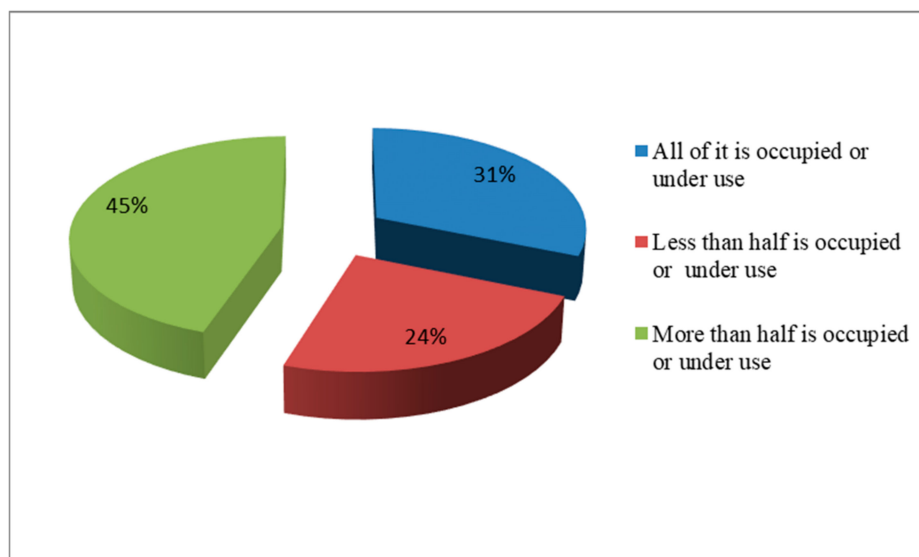


Figure 3. Amount of household lands cropped or utilized (n = 138). Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

It is instructive to indicate that, generally, among the majority of the households, there was some land excess which could be released to those in need especially the young members (the youth). This was possible among the households who had less than half (less than half is occupied or under use) and those with more than half (more than half is occupied or under use) of their lands under cultivation. The data as depicted in Table 5 further revealed that majority of the households (45.5%) with excess land (less than half is occupied or under use) were those whose heads were above 60 years. Land shortage was pronounced among households whose heads were active and between the age ranges. The majority of households whose heads were within the age range of 41–50 years (37.2%) and 51–60 years (39.5%) had all their land stock occupied or under use (see Table 5). These household heads are within the active labor age and perhaps in a position to fully utilize all their available stock compared with those above 60 years. It suffices to indicate that, the observation in the level of utilization of land among the various age categories of household heads was less significant (chi-square value = 11.520, df = 6, p -value = 0.056 at 95 per cent confidence level and a margin of error of 5 per cent). However, the data still points to the fact that older household heads were more likely to preside over relatively bigger land parcels that were not fully utilized compared to the household heads who are more active and below the age of 60 years. It shows land accumulation by the older members who are privileged to possess relatively more land. As depicted in Table 5, the majority of the households (51.7%) with land sizes exceeding 15 acres were those whose heads were above 60 years. Again, 42.9% of the households with land sizes (13–15 acres), (i.e., the next biggest land size category) had their heads above 60 years. Thus, households with older heads (above 60 years) held relatively bigger land parcels compared with those below the age of 60 years. This relationship between the age of household heads and the size of landholding was statistically significant with a p -value of 0.001 (see Table 5).

It suffices to state that, given that population has increased over the years which has consequently altered the African farming practices of land rotation and shifting cultivation, it is no more an issue of the households using their excess lands for fallowing purposes but rather to ensure equitable allocation to their members. Soil fertility is now sustained based on the application of fertilizer and other modern farming techniques and not based on land rotation. Therefore, the question of allowing a portion of one's farmland to fallow does not arise. The question to ask is; how is the land held by the households shared or allocated among the members, and in particular, how much is in the hands of the younger members who possess vitality and energy to effectively till the land? Since a household is composed of many members, this question can be answered by appreciating who within the household controls how much of the household land. As depicted in Table 6, an overwhelming number of the households,

108 (78.3%) had their heads holding the largest portion of their land stock. However, less than a quarter of the households, 15 (10.9%) have their youth holding the larger portions of the household land.

Table 5. Analysis of amount of household lands cropped or utilized, size and age of household heads.

Age of Household Heads	Land Utilization		
	All of It Is Occupied or Under Use (%)	More than Half Is Occupied or Under Use (%)	Less than Half Is Occupied or Under Use (%)
30–40 Years	1 (2.3)	7 (11.3)	2 (6.1)
41–50 Years	16 (37.2)	17 (27.4)	4 (12.1)
51–60 Years	17 (39.5)	19 (30.6)	12 (36.4)
Above 60 Years	9 (20.9)	19 (30.6)	15 (45.5)
Total	43 (100)	62 (100)	33 (100)

Age of Household Heads	Land Size							
	<2 acres	2–3 acres	4–5 acres	6–8 acres	9–12 acres	13–15 acres	>15 acres	Don't know
30–40 Years	1	0	2 (7.1)	1 (4.5)	2 (7.7)	0	4 (13.8)	0
41–50 Years	0	8 (47.1)	10 (35.7)	11 (50.0)	3 (11.5)	3 (21.4)	2 (6.9)	0
51–60 Years	0	5 (29.4)	12 (42.9)	4 (18.2)	13 (50.0)	5 (35.7)	8 (27.6)	1
Above 60 Years	0	4 (23.5)	4 (14.3)	6 (27.3)	8 (30.8)	6 (42.9)	15 (51.7)	0
Total	1	17 (100)	28 (100)	22 (100)	26 (100)	14 (100)	29 (100)	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017. Age and land size relationship significance: (chi-square value = 45.518, df = 21, p -value = 0.001 at 95 per cent confidence level and a margin of error of 5 per cent.)

Table 6. Landholding pattern at the households.

Issue	Response	Percentage (%)
Who Holds the Largest Portion of the land?		
Household head	108	78.3
Other senior members	8	5.8
Young family members (youth)	15	10.9
Tenants (outsiders)	5	3.6
None	2	1.4
Total	138	100
Land Size of the Person Holding the Largest		
< 1 acre	3	2.2
1–3 acres	25	18.1
4–6 acres	42	30.4
Above 6 acres	65	47.1
Don't know	3	2.2
Total	138	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

Again, the majority of the household members holding the largest portion of the household land stock, alone held above 6 acres (see Table 6). These members were mainly the household heads. It thus suggests that land concentration is in the hands of the household heads. There is some element of uneven allocation of land among all household members as the household heads alone control about half in most of the households. As indicated in Table 2, the majority (32.6%) of the households had between 6–8 members including the youth.

Land concentration in the hands of the household heads, as shown above, has to do with authority. This authority is derived from the fact the heads expended resources to acquire household land. As presented in Table 7, the household heads were mainly the ones providing consideration in the acquisition of the household lands. For instance, out of the 72 households which provided some form of consideration (either monetary or in-kind) in their land acquisition process, 57 (79.2%) had their consideration provided solely by their heads. Only in one household it was reported that the consideration was a contribution from the younger members. Clearly, investment in the acquisition of household land largely rests on the shoulders of the heads and this also gives them authority in

terms of control and allocation. As shown in Table 7, the authority to allocate household land is largely exercised by the household heads. This gives them the opportunity to appropriate and hold a greater portion.

Table 7. Consideration provision and land allocation authority at the household.

Issue	Response	Percentage (%)
Nature of consideration provided in acquiring land		
Monetary	23	16.7
In-kind/material	33	23.9
Monetary and in-kind	16	11.6
None	66	47.8
Total	138	100
Who provided the consideration?		
Household head	61	84.8
Contributions of other senior household members	6	8.3
Contributions by young household members	1	1.4
Others	4	5.6
Total	72	100
Who allocates household land?		
Household head	103	74.7
Other senior members	14	10.1
Collectively by all members	1	0.7
Self-allocation	20	14.5
Total	138	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2016–2017.

3.4. Youth Land Access and Household Land Holding Nexus

This section focuses on youth land access linkages with their households' land stock and perception of tenure security. It is instructive to indicate that data on the youth landholdings, ownership and access modes in the Techiman area are already published (see [14,18]). It is noted that majority of the youth in the Techiman area hold small land sizes less than 3 acres [14] and on a temporary basis through rental and customary license [18].

It must be noted that household lands remain important to the youth and primary source of access for majority of them. As depicted in Figure 4, the majority—246 (54%) of the youth respondents had all the lands they occupied from their households' land stock. A few respondents, 6% and 1% partially occupied portions of their households' lands described as 'more than half' and 'less than half' respectively. This still suggests that household land stock is crucial for youth agricultural activities.

However, land accumulation by the household heads coupled with scarcity compelled a good number of their youth to access land from 'outside' through the land market. A considerable proportion of the youth, 177 (39%) did not occupy any portion of their households' lands (see Figure 4). This group of respondents acquired their lands outside their household land stock.

The dominant reason accounting for these respondents not accessing or using any part of their household lands was lack of land by their households. As presented in Table 8, 120 (68%) out of the 177 respondents who did not occupy any portion of their household/family land, indicated their household/family had no land from which they could acquire a portion. This was particularly so among the migrant youth whose households did not own any land. Out of the 120 who mentioned that their households had no land, 111 (93%) were migrants.

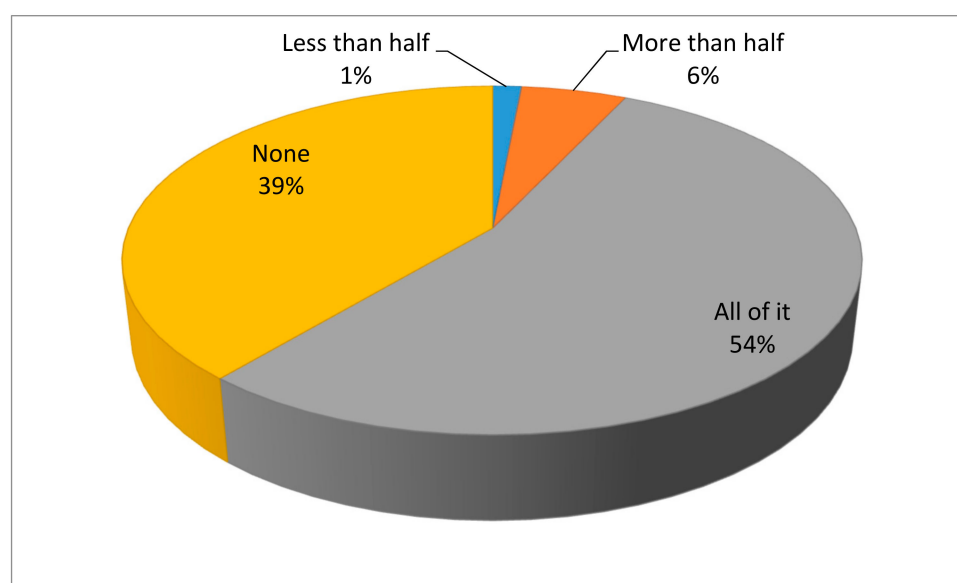


Figure 4. Proportion of youth landholding from their households' land stock (n = 455). Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016.

Table 8. Reasons for acquiring land outside the household or family land stock among some youth respondents.

Reasons for Acquiring Land Outside Household/Family	Responses	Percentages (%)
Household/family had no land	120	68
Not allocated any portion of household	6	3
Household land fully occupied by senior members	30	17
Household land not suitable/fertile	13	7
Others	8	5
Total	177	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016.

A considerable number of the youth respondents 30 (17%) also mentioned that 'their household lands were already occupied by their senior lineage members' which have deprived them the chance of accessing a portion. Other reasons included; 'not allocated any portion of their household/family lands'; 'household lands not suitable for the intended agricultural activities' (see Table 8). It can be concluded that the key reasons accounting for some youth respondents depending on external suppliers were landlessness and scarcity (Table 8).

It is important to note that the youth generally felt more secure on lands accessed from their households than from lands accessed from outside their households. For instance, 43.1% of the respondents who had all their land from their households felt 'very secure' and 48% of those who had "more than half" of their lands from their households also felt 'very secure' compared to 18.6% among those who accessed their lands entirely outside their households (Table 9).

Moreover, as depicted in Table 9, there is more insecurity among the youth who depend on land outside their household/family land stock compared to those who wholly or partially depend on their households. For instance, 18.6% of those not holding any portion of their household lands felt insecure compared to 11.4% among those who had their lands from their households. This difference is statistically significant with a *p*-value of 0.000 (see Table 9). It can be concluded that, households provide more secure landholding rights for the youth than lands they access outside of their households' land stock or from the land market.

Table 9. Youth tenure security and source of landholdings.

Perception of Security	How Much of Your Land Is from Your Household?				Total
	All of It (%)	More than Half (%)	Less than Half (%)	None (%)	
Very secure	106 (43.1)	12 (48)	1 (14.3)	33 (18.6)	152
Secure	93 (37.8)	11 (44)	5 (71.4)	75 (42.4)	184
Less secure	19 (7.7)	1 (4)	0	36 (20.3)	56
Insecure	28 (11.4)	1 (4)	1 (14.3)	33 (18.6)	63
Total	246 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)	177 (100)	455

Source: Fieldwork, 2015–2016. Notes: chi-square value = 44.650, df = 9, *p*-value = 0.000 at 95 per cent confidence level and a margin of error of 5 per cent.

4. Discussion

The key reasons accounting for the youth whose accessed land outside their household were lack of land by the households and appropriation by the senior lineage members. Those who accessed land outside their households due to the fact their households do not have lands were mainly migrant households. For this youth, their supply pathways through the land market mechanisms through rentals [18]. In the case of youth from households which owned land, appropriation by senior lineage members forced a good of number (17%) to depend on the outside suppliers or the land market. The results further revealed that, among the majority of the households the heads held more land relative to other members with their land sizes exceeding half of their households' land stock. Thus, there is some element of land concentration in the hands of the household heads and close to a third of these heads were already old above 60 years. This result reinforces the dominance of household heads in the land holding arrangement under the customary tenure regime in Africa. For instance, Hill earlier reported of a similar land concentration in the hands of the older household members in Ghana [42]. Similarly, a study by André and Platteau in the Gisenyi area of Northwest Rwanda showed land concentration in the hands of the older household heads while the younger members held small land areas [43]. Indeed, the results also reflect the superior influence and control the older lineage wield over the younger generation in the allocation of land rights. The elders have a myriad of prerogatives over land [25]. Control over land at the household level under the customary tenure system is about seniority [32] and age [21] as shown in this study where older household heads had relatively bigger parcels than the more active and younger household heads. Among the majority of the households surveyed, the heads exercised the power over land including land allocation among household members as well as to non-members. This authority vested in the household heads is derived from the fact that they principally lead in the acquisition and disposition of land. As shown in the results, the household heads were mainly the ones providing the consideration in the acquisition of the household lands. This clearly gives them power and leverage in the use of land at the household level. The youth by virtue of their weak financial standing who are unable to contribute much towards household's land acquisition wield very little influence and control over land.

Again, as 'early comers' the elders (household heads) had the privilege of appropriating portions of unoccupied community land for farming purposes as much as their resources and effort would permit. For instance, a considerable number of households acquired their lands through appropriation of community land in the previous decades when more vacant lands were available. This also gives the heads who were actually the ones acquiring and expending the necessary resources prerogatives over those land. In the Sefwi area of Ghana, Boni also found that the elders through forest clearing in the previous decades accumulated prerogatives over large tracks of land while the youth faced land shortages [21]. As 'late comers', the youth have limited say over their households' lands. This is because they missed the privilege of also directly accessing land through appropriation of vacant community lands as there is no more vacant community lands. Virtually all the community arable lands have been reduced to private ownership by the various families and households. Thus, the youth principally access land in the secondary context through the medium of customary access modes

such as gift, inheritance and customary licence from their households or through the market mode of rental, sharecropping and purchase (see [14,18]). The youth who depend on their households tend to get small parcels while those who participate in the land market as young people lack financial wherewithal to access viable land parcels for agricultural purposes [14]. Thus, the combined effects of land concentration in the hands of older generation, general land scarcity and lack of finance undermine youth land access effort.

Customary land is regarded as intergenerational property [26,27]. The period of transition from the current older generation to the younger generation should be driven on the wheels of fairness and moral obligation. As noted by Whyte et al., land relation between older and younger generations is borne out of an 'intergenerational contract' [23]. This 'intergenerational contract' is based on the 'logic of debt' where older generation help raise up the young ones who will later assist them in their old age. Thus, the elders who are currently in possession of land have the intergenerational contract with their youth to support them with land and perhaps resources to become fully-fledged community members. Where land is overly concentrated in their hands and the youth are rather offered small parcels or faced to look for their own land elsewhere, then the intergenerational contract is breached. As such, if the youth succeed on their own without the express support from their elders, the imbued expectation that the youth will support the elders when they become weak is unlikely to occur. This often creates intergenerational tension. As noted by Kidido et al., youth are normally tagged as 'irresponsible' people who do not care about the welfare of their older family members or the welfare of the family [14]. Of course, if the 'old man' refuses to give his son land to farm but rather grants the land to tenants for money, why would the young man respond to his needs? This tension in land transmission and sharing between generations is a common feature in agrarian societies [22,44].

Household lands remain an important building block for majority of the youth in the Techiman area. It gives them a sense of security in the usage. However, the youth's ability to depend on this source to kick start independence economic life is beset with land scarcity, accumulation by the lineage heads who have prerogative of the land. In the past, it was the case that "each headman saw to it that all members of his lineage [had] portions to farm" [45] (p.102). Land was largely efficiently distributed among the people [46]. As opined by Kasanga, "no man was 'big' or 'small' in his own village or town" with regard to land in Ghana [47] (p. 14). This situation no longer holds because of land scarcity occasioned by the increase in population. It is also seen in this study by way of land accumulation by the elders. The moral economy of the family under the customary system which in past was egalitarian is crumbling.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has revealed that about a third of households surveyed had all their available lands fully occupied, an indication of potential land shortage. These households do not have sufficient land for further expansions or make allocations to their youth. However, there was excess land in some households with some even lying idle. The study also revealed an element of power imbalance heavily tilted towards the older folks in the matter of land rights within the households. For instance, among the majority of the households, heads held greater proportions of the lands while other members including the youth held relatively small parcels. The authority of household heads to hold much land is derived from the fact that they expended resources in the acquisition of the household lands. The results showed that among the majority of the households, the heads provided the needed consideration during the acquisition of land.

There is the need for fair and equitable access to land to ensure inclusive economic prosperity. States are also required to take measures aimed at preventing land concentration and abuse of customary forms of tenure which impacts negatively on the vulnerable groups such as the youth [48]. Ending poverty and reducing inequalities at the micro level of households and families very much call for fair land rights distribution and deconcentration of holdings. In the rural and agrarian economics, land is central to economic empowerment of people. Consequently, where access regime and customary

arrangement do not operate to ensure equitable distribution of rights and holdings it creates conditions for the promotion of inequalities and entrenchment of economic impoverishment of certain groups.

There is the need for support system for the aged farmers in Ghana. Farmers do not retire from their lands and even at an old age of sixty years and above they still till land to earn a livelihood as revealed by the evidence from the Techiman area. This phenomenon is not unique to the Techiman area. A report by Ministry of Agriculture also showed that the farming population in Ghana is aging with an average age of 55 years [9]. This situation creates a long period of waiting for the youth and thus amount to a sheer waste of their energies. The period of transition where control and use of land pass onto the younger generation should not occur at death of the older folks. In view of this, the study underscores the need for social welfare scheme for the aged farmers so that they can timely release land to the younger ones without fearing for what to sustain them. In the public sector arena in Ghana, people retire from active service at age sixty. Why do farmers whose work demands physical strength and energy retire at death? A social welfare scheme arrangement was successfully implemented in Mexico which encouraged older landowners to transfer their lands to the youth [49] (p. 27). Additionally, given that a considerable proportion of households do not own any land from which their youth can depend on, the Government should consider creating land banks to support the willing youth to engage in agriculture in the Techiman area which is regarded as the food production corridor of the country. Finally, further research on the youth land problem across the different customary areas in Ghana is needed towards a future review of the current national land policy to incorporate youth land matters. The current national land policy has no specific provision on youth (see [50]). It is important to make land accessible to the youth through a multifaceted approach. As opined by the [6], given adequate resources, the youth have the potential to effectively transform the world and make it a better place.

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