

Evolution of Land Rental Arrangements in Rural Ghana: Evidence from Farming Communities in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts of Ghana

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Abstract

Land rental arrangements remain important means of accessing land by the landless, poor women and migrants, in most rural farming communities in Ghana. These arrangements have been in existence in parts of southern Ghana since the pre-colonial era. In recent times, land rental arrangements are expanding spatially, and assuming diverse forms, yet, neglected by land tenure literature in West Africa, where, emphasis has been on land ownership, titles and its associated security. This paper sought to unearth the variety of land rental arrangements existing in selected farming communities which lies within the Guinea Savannah, and Coastal Savannah ecological zones of Ghana, their varied characters, trends of evolution, and the driving forces behind these evolution. The paper used data collected from among indigenes and migrants farmers in selected communities which lies within Wa East and Gomoa East Districts of Ghana, using questionnaires, key informant study and focus group discussions, between 2009 and 2010. The results show that land rental arrangements in these zones differ in terms of terms of exchange, duration, and use rights, but not in transfer rights. Additionally, the arrangements are evolving from non-monetary and non-market based transactions, to a relatively more monetary and market based transaction, under the influence of demographic and economic forces. The growth of land rental arrangements in rural farming areas, provides a path through which non-and owners, may be become land owners. Policy design must recognize the contextual differences, and differential stages of evolution of land rental arrangements at various locations in Ghana.

Keywords: Land, Rental, Evolution, trend, Policy

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Introduction

Access to land is important for the livelihoods of the majority of African populations, and the social and economic development of the African society as a whole (Lund, 2011). In this regard, land appears to be one of the most important productive assets of rural residents in developing countries (Sietchiping, et al, 2012). Therefore, how land is accessed and used has far reaching implications for productivity, equity, and overall economic growth of rural communities in Africa. In most rural African communities, customary systems determine access, use and transfer of land. However, in modern capitalist and urban systems, land markets have become the commonly accepted mechanisms that allocate ownership and use rights in a manner that allows land and its associated assets to be used in the most economical way (Mahoney et al, 2007).

In rural farming communities in West Africa, under the tutelage of customary tenure systems, where land sale is prohibited, land rental arrangements constitute the most efficient mechanism for allocating land and improving its access by the poor, especially women and other marginalized groups (Ngaido, 2004), who are not members of the land owning group. Under these arrangements, land rights are usually exchanged temporary, usually for a contracted amount of money or other material things, and for an agreed duration. These arrangements fall under the generic term derived land rights arrangements, which describe the bundle of arrangements through which people gain access to land from others, usually non-family, and for a limited duration (Lavigne-Delville et al, 2002). Such arrangements usually take variety of forms, broadly described in terms such as leasing, tenancy, share contracts, and loans. In West Africa, these rental arrangements have a long-standing tradition and have evolved dynamically in response to increased land scarcity (Deininger and Mpula, 2003).

These temporary arrangements played significant roles when cash crops were introduced into the agricultural economy of Ghana. The discovery and expansion of the production of cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and oil palm, during the colonial era, in Ghana, did not only introduce capitalist and commercial agriculture to the largely subsistence and small holder farmers, but also sparked off changes in the manner in which land is accessed for farming. For instance, Amanor and Diderituah, (2001) traced the evolution of share contracts within the forest zone of Ghana using Mamanso, in the New Abirem District of Ghana's Eastern Region as a case study, and argue that share contracts have been transformed from a migrant labourer- land owner relationship, into a local citizen, land hungry youth-landowning family elders relationship, and further metamorphosis from landowning family elders and youth relationship into a relationship between close kin (Amanor and Diderituah, 2001). Additionally, increasing scarcity of land results in transformation of sharecropping in Ghana, where those seeking to sharecrop land must now put forward a significant fee in order to gain access (Amanor 2001, quoted in cotula et al, 2006)).

In spite of the pervasiveness and vitality of these arrangements in Ghana, debates about land tenure have often focused on questions of ownership and title, as well as tenure security and its

relationship with agricultural production (Arnot et al, and 2011), to the neglect of these temporary arrangements. As noted by Le Roy in respect of West Africa as a whole:

“Although they clearly play a very important role in real-life agrarian situations, the various forms of land use by people other than the owner seem to be very much underestimated in the debate on the land tenure question, which continues to focus on ownership and property rights” (Le Roy, 1998 : 87, quoted in Lavigne-Delville et al, 2001).

Secondly, the few literature on these arrangements tends to focus on sharecropping alone (see Amanor, 2001, Hill, 1963, Benneh, 1973), to the neglect of the other types of rental arrangements operating across many parts of Ghana, and focuses on efficiency and equity implications, as well as investment potentials (see Owusu et al, 2007; Markus & Udry, 2008), with limited interest in the dynamics of these arrangements, especially their future ramifications. Additionally, these arrangements have not been given the needed attention in policy, perhaps due to lack of information on the dynamics of land rental arrangements in Ghana. Thus with further expansion of cash crops to many parts of Ghana, including northern Ghana, where soya beans, cotton, mango plantation are becoming important commercial crops, couple with rural-rural migration in search of fertile land for specific crops, land rental transactions seem to be spreading across farming communities in Ghana, and are evolving into different forms. Therefore understanding the diverse forms these arrangements are assuming in their spread across the country, and in future, would provide space for their inclusion and emphasis in land policy making process in Ghana.

This paper thus unearths and explains the wide range of tenancy contracts that has been empirically observed in the guinea savannah and coastal savannah ecological zones of Ghana, using selected communities which lie within Wa east and Gomoa east districts. The paper also presents the trend of evolution of these arrangements, projects the direction of evolution and discusses the driving forces behind the evolution. Finally, the paper presents some policy implications of the dynamism of land rental arrangements in Ghana.

Background to the Growth of Land Rental Arrangements in Ghana

Land rental arrangements though appears to be in operations in Ghana long before colonial domination, the colonialist thought that land markets could not develop or operate in Africa, and under customary land tenure systems (Aryeetey, 2007). Following this position, the colonial authority in Ghana, in its efforts to stimulate the growth of land markets in Ghana, and to satisfy colonial interest, introduced the Crown Land Bill in 1894, granting the colonial government the exclusive right to grant concessions to international investors on unoccupied lands (Amanor 1999). In that Bill, chiefs were denied the right to grant lands to strangers particularly European capitalist investors. Met with fierce resistance, the colonial authority replaced the Crowns Land Bill with the Lands Bill which gave chiefs the power to grant lands to Africans but not to Europeans. The

lands Bill was subsequently withdrawn two years after, and was replaced with the Concessions Ordinance in 1900 which sought to regulate the granting of concessions and security of title.

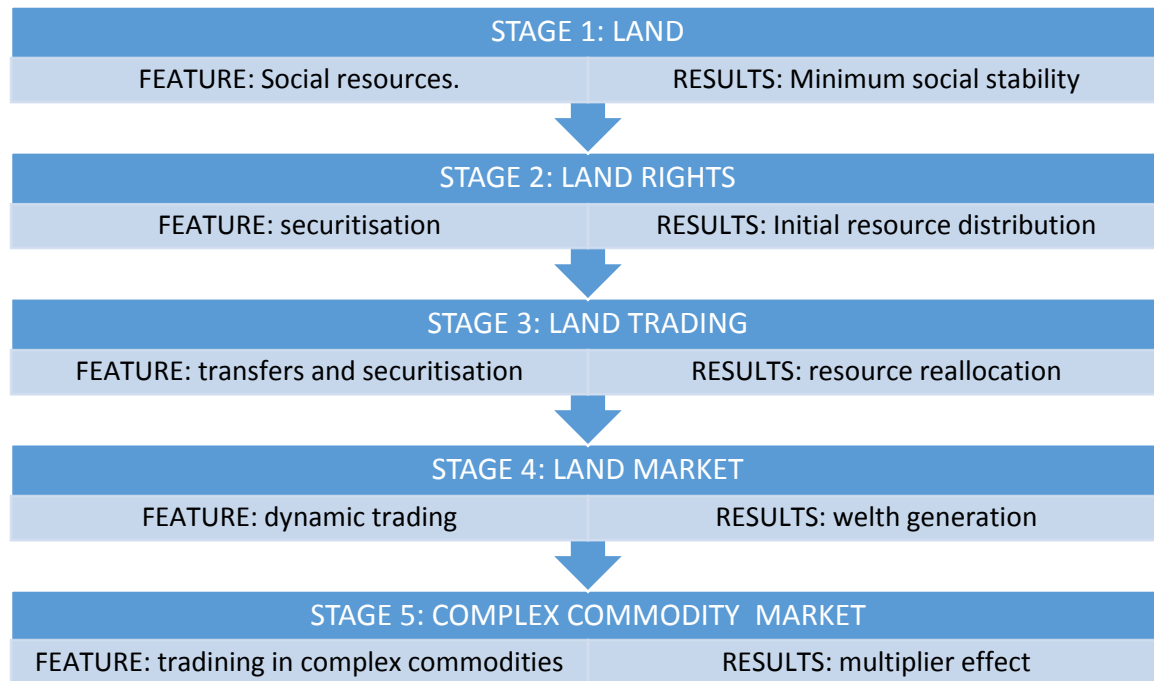
Prior to the colonisation of the Gold Coast, land rights were usually acquired through conquest, occupation or given orally as “gifts”, by merely offering a drink or kola (Kasanga, 1999) to the allodial owners, who were usually either the occupant of a stool/family head, in the southern part of Ghana, or the occupant of a skin/Tendamba, in the northern part of Ghana (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). Aryeetey et al (2007) in their review of literature on land markets in Africa showed that land rental markets evolve as non-market customary transfers as early as the pre-colonial era. However, with the discovery of gold and the introduction of cocoa and palm oil plantations, methods of land acquisition changed dramatically, because there was a spectacular increase in the demand for and the value of land. With these changes in demand for land, land was no longer offered for free but either for cash or in kind (Amanor, 1999). This is corroborated by Hill’s (1963) earlier study which provides evidence of growing transaction in land among the Krobo in the lower Volta in the early 19th Century, as a response to growing export market for palm oil as a raw material in industrial processing.

Northern Ghana was generally perceived as the area where such arrangements were either absent or limited in use (Kasanga and Kotey, 2001). However, recent events have attested to the emergence of a semblance of land rental arrangements in the area (Yaro and Zackaria, 2008). It was noted in respect of the Upper East Region in particular that due to growing land scarcity, loans of indefinite duration have now been shortened to 2-3 year transactions, whilst payments to land owners by non-land owners are now substantial and in some cases, as much as one-third of the harvest (Dittoh, 2000). This suggests that land rental arrangements are not only spreading to areas that they did not exist hitherto, but are also mutating.

A Five-Stage Evolution of Land Market

To understand and explain the evolution of land markets, a framework developed by Wallace and Williamson (2006), explains the stages of evolution of land markets. According to them, the development of land markets follows a five-stage trajectory, which can broadly be divided into two stages (Preliminary stages and Market stages). The transformation of people from being land occupiers to participants in complex land markets can be explained in the context of these five evolutionary stages (See Figure 1). These stages are like building blocks, where the development of each stage paved the way for the next stage, and all earlier stages must all operate successfully to support the most complex stage.

Figure 1: Evolution of Land Market



Source: Wallace & Williamson, 2006.

At the first stage, the thinking of territoriality, as far as land for market purposes is concerned is paramount. This involves a group's political integrity and its relationship with particular piece of land. At this stage, land use is open to members of the group, and transfer rights such as renting out or selling land parcels is seriously restricted by the requirement that land ought to remain within the family or lineage (Bruce, 1993). Land as a resource at this stage can be seen as open access, and the rights to access and use of the resource is opened to everybody with limited exclusivity.

The second stage, referred to as the land rights stage, is characterized by defining the relationship between subjects in the form of rules and regulations, in terms of rights, restrictions and responsibilities, access, use and transfer of rights. However, these may be necessary but not sufficient to turn the rights into marketable commodities, until some legal recognition of rights, formalization or registration of rights, social and cognitive capacity of the people, as well as the management of the power component of land rights, are present. Land is thus communal resources, and the right to exclude non-members of the group signals the emergence of contractual arrangements.

The third stage in the evolution of land a market is the land trading stage, where a land owner can be replaced by another, through a simple transaction, evidenced usually through documentation. This is the stage where secondary, derivative and ownership rights to land become commodities

for trading. However, trading at this point, usually starts among the members of the group and is dependent on local knowledge of the land and the traders.

The fourth stage, known as the property market stage, is where land trading extends beyond an activity among group members and even stranger groups, to include larger scale where market management requires integrity and reliability beyond group's verification. This stage is characterized by use of land as a security, and a huge increase in the scale of land trading. Reliable land administration system in the sense of judicial, regulatory, fiscal, and information management; private regime management; broad opportunities for owners' decisions; and above all mature cognitive capacity are required at this stage (Wallace and Williamson, 2006).

The last stage of the market evolution is a complex property market which involves developing highly specialized commercial facilities, and requiring an additional set of capacities or functionalities in addition to the functionalities in the previous stage. The functionalities of a modern commercial economy inject dynamism into land markets by facilitating the development of trading in complex commodities. These commodities are securitization, corporatization and separation. Corporatization controls risks, pool capital, divorce ownership from management and increase opportunities for participation (Wallace and Williamson, 2006).

The study of the evolution of land rental arrangements in the two districts in Ghana is done within the framework of the stages of evolution of land markets as espoused by Wallace and Williamson, 2006).

Method and Source of Data for the Study

This study used a case study approach and a cross sectional research design for the data collection. Case studies because it compares the dynamics of land rental arrangements between the two ecological zones of Ghana, using experiences of selected communities in two districts. These districts belong to two different ecological zones, located at two extreme ends of Ghana (Southern and Northern). Secondly, they are both witnessing increasing influx of migrants because of the availability of opportunities for farming. Thirdly, though the cultural, natural, and social environments of these districts differ, the study communities are within agricultural activities-dominated areas with a high incidence of poverty, and finally, these areas have been integrated into the global economy at different scales and times.

The design is cross sectional because the study sought to obtain an overall picture of land rental arrangements across the study areas. It is both a qualitative and quantitative study as it employed both anthropological and statistical methods of investigations. Overall, this approach is adopted because of the different customary systems guiding land in these areas, and the fact that land issues are context dependent.

Sources of Data for the Paper

Primary data were collected through individual survey, using questionnaire, in-depth study, key informant interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The target group was allodial owners such as tendana, chiefs, clan and family heads, and derived land rights holders, both men and women, who are either migrants or indigenes. Using key informant, and in-depth study, I collected data from the allodial land owners. This data include types of contract arrangements, past rental arrangements, expected rental arrangement in future, reasons for changes in arrangements over time, characteristics of these arrangements, and the main actors involved. Among the non-land owners, information regarding ease of access to land, cost of land, duration of arrangements, perception of the cost of land rents, past rental arrangements, current arrangement, perception of changes in arrangements in future, and factors responsible for the changes were gathered through individual questionnaire.

Sampling Techniques

The communities were selected because they were identified, experiencing influx of migrants. As shown in Table 1, we sampled 420 respondents made up of 261 migrants and 159 indigenes for the study in all two districts. In Wa East District, 240 (195 migrants and 45 indigenes) were sampled for the study. In Gomoa East District, 180 (66 migrants and 114 indigenes) were sampled for the study. In each community, a multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Firstly, a cluster sampling technique was used to select 3 clusters in each community. Within each cluster, systematic sampling technique was employed to select households, where purposive sampling was applied to select individuals, as migrants or indigenes who were renting land. The sample sizes were influenced by the availability and willingness of the target respondents to be interviewed.

The Study Districts and Communities

The study was conducted in selected communities in Wa East District (Guinea Savannah Zone) and Gomoa East Districts (Coastal Savannah Zone). The selected communities are Chaggu, Tuasaa and Biisikang in East District, (Figure 2) and Akotsi, Ojobi and Akraman in the Gomoa East District (Figure 1). Agriculture, though rain fed is the dominant economic activity among Communities in Wa East District. Crops such as sorghum, millet, maize, cassava, cowpea, groundnuts et cetera are the dominant crops produced in the area. In recent times, soya beans and cashew nuts are becoming important commercial products in the area. Wa East district is the food basket of the Upper West Region because of the relatively high fertility of the land. It has thus become a destination zone of migrant farmers from neighboring districts as Jirapa, Nadowli West and Wa central.

Table 1: Selection of Respondents

Ecological Zone	District	Communities	No. of Questionnaires			Qualitative data		
			No. Migrants	No. Indigenes	Total	Key Informant	FGDs	In-depth interview
Guinea Savannah	Wa East	Chaggu,	92	10	102	2	2	3
		Tuasaa	38	0	38	2	2	3
		Biisikang	65	35	100	2	2	3
Sub-Total			195	45	240	6	6	9
Coastal Savannah	Gomoa East	Akosti,	30	30	60	2	2	3
		Ojobi	20	40	60	2	2	3
		Akraman	16	44	60	2	2	3
Sub-Total			66	114	180	6	6	9
Grand Total			261	159	420	12	12	18

Source: Author Constructed, 2014

In Gomoa East District, agriculture and its related works are the predominant economic activity of the people. Aside traditional crops such as maize, cassava, and plantain, nontraditional crops such as chilly and bird eye pepper, pineapples and mangoes are major export and cash crops produced by farmers in the district. The district is experiencing influx of migrants from Volta region, Accra and other rural areas nearby in search of land for residential, commercial and agricultural purposes. The communities are located along the Accra-Winneba road, and about 35 minutes' drive from Accra.

Contemporary Land Rental Arrangements in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts

Four types of land rental arrangements currently operating in the two study sites are depicted in Table 1. “Open-ended loans” known as Kodi¹⁶, (70%) and “land begging” locally known as Tengbansohi¹⁷ (30%) are the contemporary land rental arrangements operating in the three communities in Wa East District.

Table 2: Contemporary Land Rental Arrangements in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts

District	Land Rental Arrangements in the Land Rental Market				Total
	Land lease	Land Begging	Fixed cash-Rents	Open ended Loans (Kodi)	
Wa East	0	71	0	169	240
	.0%	29.6%	.0%	70.4%	100.0%
Gomoa East	26	0	154	0	180
	14.4%	.0%	85.6%	.0%	100.0%
Total	26	71	154	169	420
	6.2%	16.9%	36.7%	40.2%	100.0%

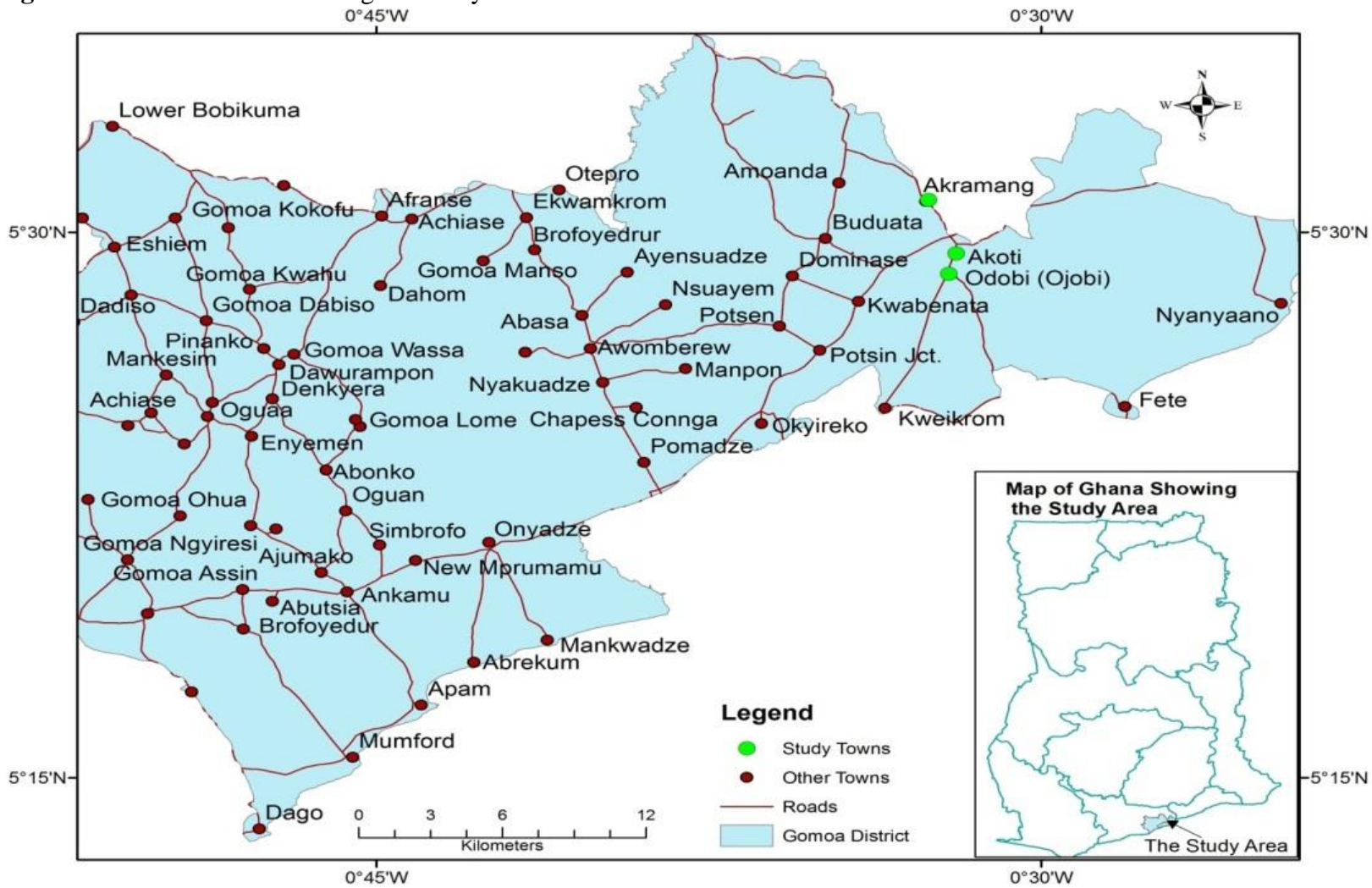
Source: Fieldwork October 2009/March 2010

In the case of communities in the Gomoa East District, fixed-cash land rentals (85%) and land lease (14%) constitute the dominant types of land rental arrangements (See Table 1). Generally, these arrangements vary from each other in terms of their character and actors involved.

¹⁶ Farm to eat, referring basically to subsistence farming

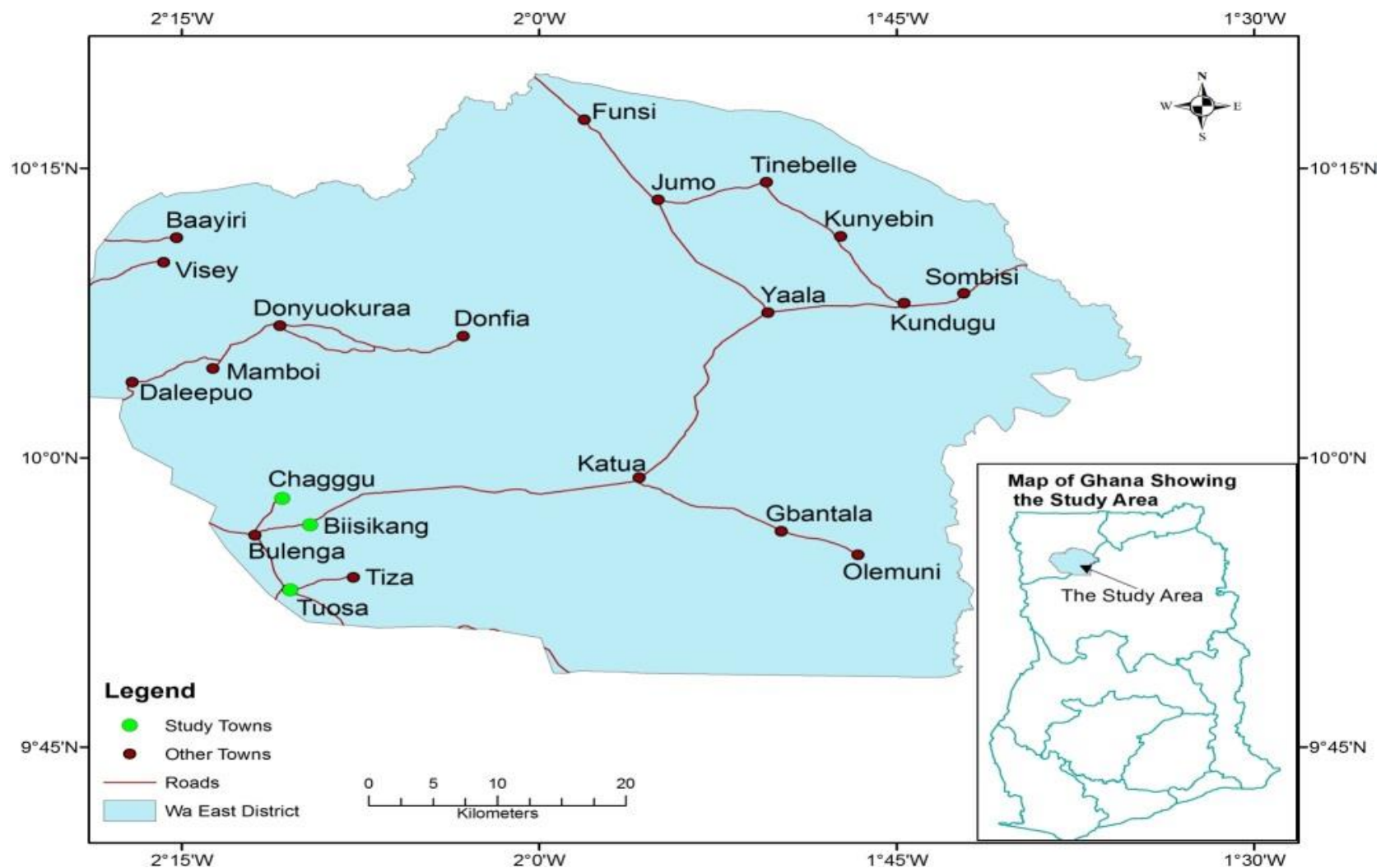
¹⁷ Literally means land begging

Figure 2: Gomoa District showing the Study Towns



CERGIS, 2010

Figure 3: Wa East District showing the Study Communities



CERGIS, 2010

Under Open-ended arrangement, land is accessed from Tendana or a clan head, who is the allodial land owner of the community or the family as the case may be, by non-land owners, who may be either migrants or indigenes, for agricultural purpose. As the name implies, the arrangement is open-ended, since there is no specific duration for the use of the land, though the land is not permanently transferred. It is characterized by its terms of exchange, where the land acquirer provides fowls, sheep and schnapps for the tendana, ostensibly to make sacrifices to the gods, before the land is released to the land acquirer for use. Subsequently, the land user is expected to provide specified quantities of grains to the tendana after every harvests, irrespective of the size of the land, types and quantum of crops produced. This was amply captured by the tendana of Chaggu during an interview, when he indicated that:

“Having given them the land after the initial sacrifices, the stranger then provides 15 bowls of grains (rice, maize, guinea corn and millet) annually after harvest to me for those engaged in subsistence farming. But for those engaged in commercial farming they provide one bag of grains annually. This is our order now. I the Tendana collect these items and divide them into two; I give one half to the chief and use the other half for our annual sacrifice”.

Land begging simply refers to a situation where a prospective land seeker asks for permission to temporarily use a land owner's land, which is not currently in use, until such time that the land owner would need it. It has a short duration, between three and five years, and sometimes non-specific period. There is much uncertainty associated with its duration, as continuous use of the land is at the discretion and mercy of the land owner. It has been associated with responding to urgent needs of land and in situations where land is increasingly becoming scarce, and where land owners fear losing their rights to their fallowed lands if given under long-term arrangements. This system was noted by Songsore (1976) when he observed in his study among the Dagaaba of Northern Ghana, that “.... with increased population densities..... a system of land pledging has developed whereby a land owner gives a person a piece of land for use but can stop him from cultivating the land at any time” (Songsore, 1976: p 44). Thus land begging is not associated with any terms of exchange. The duration of the use of the land under land begging is fuzzy and short because the land owner can take back the land as and when he wishes.

Fixed-cash land rental arrangements is an annual and short term arrangement but renewable at the will of the land owner. As a result of its short term nature, it is normally associated with crops with short gestation period, at least not exceeding one cropping season. It is also characterized by cash and up-front payment before land is released for use. The cost ranges from GHC 30 to GHC35¹ per acre, across all the three communities studied. Tree crops are usually prohibited under this arrangement. In the Gomoa East District, the fixed-cash land rental arrangement is patronized mainly by indigenes, and this is perhaps because, they usually engage in horticultural products and may not be allowed to use their family lands for the production of such crops.

¹ 1 USD = 2.5GHC

Land leasing was identified by few farmers as one of the main ways by which strangers acquire land in the communities. It is a long term arrangement, on the average, from 10 to 25 years, and involves large tracks of land ranging from five to 30 acres. Farmers under these arrangements usually engage in commercial crops such as pineapple and other tree crops as mangoes for export as well as horticultural crops such as chili pepper. Generally, this arrangement is not very common as it is just emerging in the area due to the influx of urban dwellers seeking land for industrial and commercial purposes. In spite of the existence of these four types of land rental arrangements, it is interesting to note that two types (Open-ended and fixed-cash land rentals) are the most dominant rental arrangements operating in the communities studied.

Previous Land Rental Arrangements in Communities in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts

The contemporary land rental arrangements did begin today in their current forms but have mutated over the years, from their original forms. Respondents recalled the mode of accessing land in the past 20 years and more by non-land owners, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mode of Accessing Land in the Past 20 years and beyond by non-land owners

In the past how was land acquired by non-land owners in this community

	share cropping	Free	open-ended loans	land begging	land pledging	customary freehold	Total
Wa East	0 .0%	131 54.6%	99 41.3%	5 2.1%	3 1.3%	2 .8%	240 100.0%
Gomoa East	163 90.6%	17 9.4%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	180 100.0%
Total	163 38.8%	148 35.2%	99 23.6%	5 1.2%	3 .7%	2 .5%	420 100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, October, 2009/March, 2010

According to Table 3, in Wa East District, land was virtually acquired by non-land owners free of charge (55%) and through open ended-loans (41%), two decades ago. In the case of Gomoa East District, an overwhelming majority (91%) indicated that sharecropping was the dominant mode of land rental arrangement.

Expected New Forms of Land rental Arrangements in Future

To predict future land rental arrangements, respondents were further asked, whether they were expecting any form of changes in the near future in respect of the nature of land rental arrangements, and what form these changes would take given the dynamics of current arrangements (see Table 4),.

Expectation of changes and new forms of Rental arrangements in Future

District	Expect change in Future?	Expected new forms of Rental Arrangements in Future					Total
		Share cropping	Fixed-cash rental	Formal short term leasing	Purchase of land outright	Formalising land transaction	
Wa East	Yes	136	61				197
		69.0%	31.0%				100.0%
	Total	136	61				197
		69.0%	31.0%				100.0%
Gomoa East	Yes	1		36	82	21	140
		.7%		25.7%	58.6%	15.0%	100.0%
	Total	1		36	82	21	140
		.7%		25.7%	58.6%	15.0%	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, October, 2009/March, 2010

As shown in Table 4, the new forms, land rental arrangements would assume in future, varies across the two districts. Share cropping (69%) and fixed-cash rental (31%), were seen as the future mode of land acquisition in Wa East district, While in Gomoa East District, outright purchase of land (59%), formal short term leasing (26%) were the new forms, land acquisition is expected to take in future (See Table 4).

Evolution of Land Rental Arrangements

Given the current, previous and future land rental arrangements in the study communities, there is no doubt that these arrangements, irrespective of location, are evolving. There is therefore a clear path through which land rental arrangements evolve, and this evolution is in stages. However, the arrangements are at different stages of evolution as shown in figure 4.

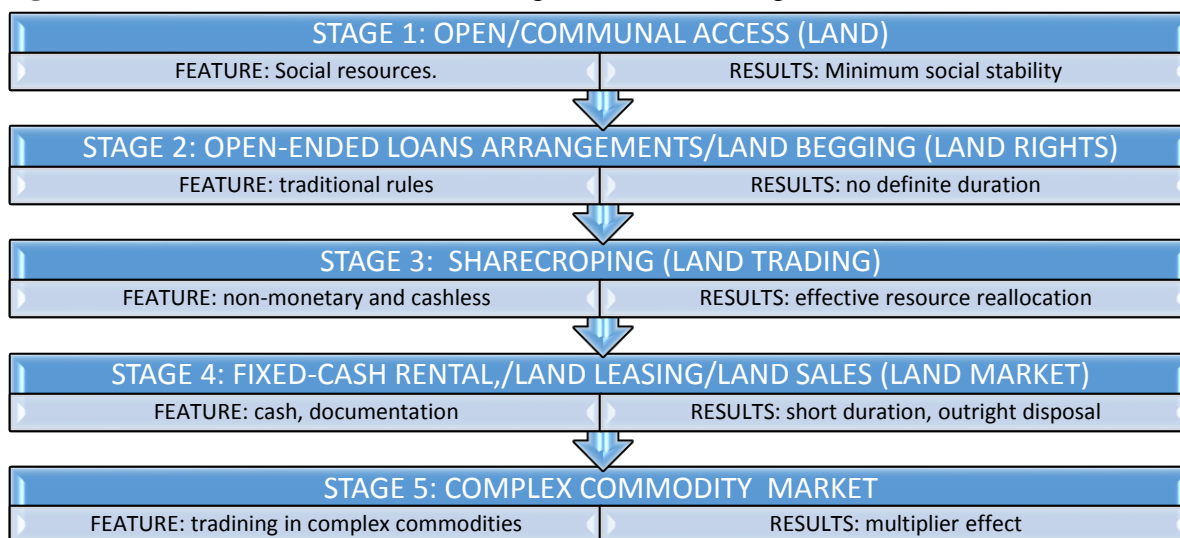
Stages of the Evolution of Land Rental Arrangements in Rural Farming Communities in Ghana

As shown in Figure 4, land markets evolve from the first stage where land is seen as open access and communal access, to the last stage where land becomes a commodity for trading, investments and sales. At the first stage, land is acquired by a group through conquest or early settlement. Access to land is free among members of the community, without any restriction and anybody outside that group is excluded from access and use of the land. Emerging out of the common access stage, and embedded in it are open-ended loans and land begging, (Stage 2 in Figure 4)), where non-community members may access land after having provided non-monetary materials to the allodial owner. It is at this stage that land rental market begins to take roots in the communities because terms of exchanges are being introduced into the land transactions at this stage.

Beyond this stage, share cropping arrangements (Stage 3) sets in and take over from open-ended loans and land begging. At this stage, family ownerships becomes strengthened, and the

thinking of protecting future member's share is high, thus limiting the ability to dispose of land. To preserve the land for the future and to make maximum use of it now, land is thus sharecropped with others in diverse forms.

Figure 4: Evolution of Land Rental arrangements in Farming Communities in Ghana



Source: Adopted and Adapted from Wallace and Williamson, 2006

The fourth stage of the evolution is the fixed-cash, land leasing and sale, which have been discussed in the previous sections. At this stage, the use of the fixed-cash land rental and land leasing in the land rental market is likely to continue to exist alongside land sales, as the use of cash becomes common in land transactions. Figure 4 also indicates that the ultimate destination of this evolution is the complex commodity market when land would have finally acquired full property status, be sued for complex commodity investment.

Location of Communities in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts in the Stages

The Communities in Wa East District are operating at second stage (open-ended loans) currently, as shown in Figure 4. This stage heralds the beginning of land rental arrangements. Among the communities in Wa East District, free access to land have given way to open-ended loans arrangements, and 'land begging', and these are expected to give way to share cropping and fixed cash-land rental arrangements, in future.

This stage appears to correspond somehow with the second stage of the land market evolution as portrayed by Wallace and Williamson, (2006). This is because, traditional systems still determine the terms of exchange, and land transaction is largely informal. This lends support to the position held by Quisumbing and Otsuka (2002), in respect of the forest frontier areas of Ghana and Sumatra, that even when property rights remain informal, active land rental and land sales markets can exist (Quisumbing and Otsuka, 2002). Thus in Wa East District, in spite of the evidence that land transactions remain largely informal, land rental arrangement is evolving towards formal market system.

The route of the evolution of land rental arrangements in the communities in Gomoa East District is similar to that of Wa East District, though located at different stages. As shown in figure 4, communities in the Gomoa East District appear to be located at the fourth stage of the evolution (see Figure 4). Land rental arrangements started at the 3rd stage of the evolution where share cropping was the most patronised system rental arrangements. However, this system has been shown to be phasing out and is being replaced by fixed-cash and land leasing arrangements. The results in Gomoa East District show a shift from a complete share cropping arrangement in the past to a fixed-cash and land lease systems, and is expected to give way to complete land sales and land leasing arrangements in the future, indicating a sharp shift from non-monetary transactions in land transfer to monetary transaction system. This was confirmed by a family head at Odjobi, during a focus group discussion. “The mode of land acquisition in this community is by renting, share cropping, direct purchase, or inheritance of family land. However, the share cropping arrangement which used to dominate is phasing out. This is because it is now more profitable to rent your land than to sharecrop it, only to be cheated by migrants. It is difficult to monitor them under the share cropping arrangement”.

The trend of the evolution as shown in figure 4, predicts that land rental arrangements would in the near distant future evolves into share cropping in the communities in Wa East District, while the communities in Gomoa East District are expected to evolve further into the complex market stage, if the appropriate enabling conditions are created. A careful look at the behaviour of the land rental arrangements in each of the districts suggests that the growth and evolution of these arrangements constitute a path to the attainment of full property ownership. It also implies that customary tenure systems could evolve through land rental arrangements into full property ownership of land resources. This trend has been observed by Lord Lugard during the colonial era.

“In the earliest stages the land and its produce is shared by the community as a whole; later the produce is the property of the family or individuals by whose toil it is won, and the control of the land is vested in the head of the family. When the tribal stage is reached, the control passes to the chief, who allots unoccupied land at will but is not justified in dispossessing any person or family who is using the land. Later still, when the pressure of population has given the land an exchange value, the concept of proprietary rights emerges, and sale, mortgage and lease of land apart from its user is recognized. These processes of natural evolution, leading up to individual ownership, may be traced in every civilization known to history”¹(quoted in Krishan, 1967.)

This process is clearly evident in Figure 4, which represents the stages of evolution of land rental arrangements, from open access through non-monetary rental arrangements to individualize and monetary arrangements at the fifth stage where complex land market is expected to dominate the arrangements.

¹This statement is attributed to a renowned British colonial administrator in Africa, Lord Lugard. See **KRISHAN MAINI, LAND LAW IN EAST AFRICA 1 (1967)**.

Driving Forces behind the evolution of Land rental Arrangements in Ghana

The evolution of land rental arrangements in farming communities in the two districts is not in dispute. However, knowledge of the main factors responsible for these shifts is critical for policy change in Ghana. The factors responsible for evolution of land rental arrangements in the study communities vary across these communities. These factors are shown in Table 6.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Evolution of land rental arrangements in Wa East District

	Factors Driving Evolution of Land Rental in Communities in Rural Ghana						Total
	Migration	Population Increase	Urbanisation	Export Crops	Education	Religion	
Wa East	138	131	6	39	43	23	380
	36.3%	34.5%	1.6%	10.3%	11.3%	6.1%	
Gomoa East	55	6	57	102	32	0	252
	21.8%	2.4%	22.6%	40.5%	12.7%	.0%	
Total	193	137	63	141	75	23	632

Source: Fieldwork, October, 2009/March, 2010

Table 6 presents the various factors that are behind the evolution of land rental arrangements in the selected farming communities in Ghana, as perceived by the respondents. Among communities in Wa East District for instance, migration (36%) is the most prominent factor and this is followed by population increases (34%) (See Table 6). This makes demographic factors solely responsible for evolution of land rental arrangements in Communities in Wa East District. This runs counter to the situation in Southern Ghana, where the introduction of cash crops in the past fuelled the emergence of land markets, rather than demographic factors.

Among communities in Gomoa East District, the emergence of export crops (40%) appeared the most dominant factor followed by urbanisation (23%) and migration (22%). The influence of cash crops on the growth of land rental markets was supported by a Focus Group Discussion in Akraman, where it was indicated that “indigenes use family land if they are producing food crops, but can only produce cash crops on rented land”. With the increased interest in cash crops such as pineapple, chili pepper, mangoes et cetera, in Gomoa East District, the search for additional farm land outside family lands, among indigenes for the purpose of producing export cash crops, appears to be on the increase. Thus, cash crops continue to play critical role in the dynamics of land markets in southern Ghana as it did in the past, as argued in the literature.

The role of demography and cash crops in the evolution of land rental arrangements in Ghana is consistent with studies in parts of Africa. In selected farming communities in Ethiopia, a study established that migrants relied more often on land markets because they had less access to other modes of land especially inheritance (Holden et al, 2008). In West and Southern

Africa, immigration was found to be responsible for changes in modes of land acquisition (Chauveau and Colin, 2010.). Similarly, a study by Quisumbing and Ostuka, (2002) in Sumatra and Ghana confirms population pressure as a major factor accounting for the privatization of land rights, the clearing of forest areas, and the erosion of traditional land acquisition methods (Quisumbing and Ostuka, 2002). Finally, a recent study by Koussoubé (2013) on the condition of emergence of agricultural land markets in the cotton zone of Burkina Faso shows a significant and positive impact of migration and urban proximity, both on the probability of sales and of rentals of agricultural land at the village level.

Similarly, the role of urbanization in the development of land markets was supported by studies in West Africa, which suggest that the expansion of urban centres and/or infrastructural development in rural areas may increase the competition for agricultural land especially in peri-urban zones, (Cotula, 2007), and this would in tend lead to mutation of mode of land transaction.

Theoretical Implications of Evolving Land Rental Arrangements

The trend of evolution of land rental arrangements appears to be consistent with the evolutionary theory of the evolution of land rights (Plateau, 1996). Under demographic and economic pressures, as observed in the study communities, customary modes of land transfer through gifts, exchanges, loans, renting, begging are being transformed and gradually given way to fixed-cash rental, land leasing and possibly land sales, in the land exchange systems. This trend appears to be running counter to one of the most deeply rooted customary limitations on land transfers. However, with the various stages reached by the communities, the evolution of land rental arrangements seems to be in agreement with the stages of evolution of land market described by Wallace and Williams (2006). While land rental arrangements in Wa East District is clearly located at the land rights stage (2nd Stage), they appear to be located on the land market stage (4th stage), in Gomoa East District.

Implications of the Evolving Land Rental Arrangements for Policy in Ghana

Given the diverse, uneven and unidirectional trend of evolving land rental arrangements in rural Ghana, the implications on land policy directions cannot be discounted. In the first place, the fact that land rental arrangements vary across the country, and at different stages of evolution, requires land policy to be flexible and recognise the contextual differences of land rental arrangements, accommodate these variations and provide context specific solutions to address its associated problems in Ghana. This means that land policy must recognise the customary mode of arrangements, while providing legal cover to rental contracts, so as to imbibe the flexibility and equity of the customary systems as well as the benefits of statutory arrangements such as efficiency, certainty and reliability, into the land administration process in Ghana. To complement the legal framework, there is the need for appropriate rule enforcement procedures at all levels to provide support for the implementation of the rules and regulations binding the functioning of the market. In addition to the above, there should be established institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution within and between land users,

through negotiation, mediation or arbitration at the local level, to address the concomitant land disputes and conflicts that might arise during transactions.

Conclusion

There is evidence to conclude that land rental markets are evolving in rural farming communities in parts of Guinea Savannah and coastal Savannah Zones of Ghana under the influence of demographic and economic factors. Demographic and economic factors such as the emergence of commercial crops have always been important drivers of the evolution of customary land tenure systems in Africa. These factors continue to play key roles in the evolution of land rental arrangements from non-monetary and non-market based transactions to monetary and market-based transactions in communities in Wa East and Gomoa East Districts of Ghana. While demographic factors such as migration and population increase play critical roles in shaping land rental arrangements where customary systems determine access to land, economic factors take over where commercial crops, and access to modern markets appear on the scene. The evolution of land rental arrangements could be a safer route to the attainment of property ownership in agricultural land, as customary tenure arrangements are gradually being transformed through temporary arrangements and would eventually become a full blown property for trading in the capital market. The paper thus contributes to the existing literature that presumes land rental arrangements as a 'ladder' to land ownership, among non-land owners. Rural farming communities are experiencing a gradual shift from customary-dominated rental arrangements to formalized systems involving cash transactions and documentation of arrangements, thus transforming land renters into land owners. This trend appears to be consistent with the evolutionary thesis of evolution of land rights, while the different levels of the evolution attained by the districts seem to be in agreement with the stages of evolution of land markets espoused by Wallace and Williams (2006). Land policy making must therefore consider this dynamism of land rental arrangements and ensure that contextual and local particularism associated with land issues in Ghana are reflected in the policy.

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