

Land Insecurity and its Implications on the Sustainable Social Development of The Populations of Greater Lomé and Atakpamé (Togo)

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Abstract

The spatial dynamics of greater Lomé and Atakpamé lead to land pressures marked by increased demands for building plots. These desires for land create land insecurity, the implications of which disrupt the social development of populations. The objective of this item is to explain how land insecurity and its implications influence the social evolution of the populations of greater Lomé and Atakpamé. To achieve this, this research used quantitative and qualitative approaches based respectively on questionnaire administration and individual interview techniques. In total, 97 people victims of land insecurity were interviewed in greater Lomé compared to 89 in Atakpamé. The results from field studies showed that in greater Lomé, land insecurity is caused by double sales of land, eviction and expropriation. In Atakpamé, they manifest themselves in the selling off of arable land and the clandestine sale of inheritance land. As a result of these insecurities, buyers, whether from greater Lomé or Atakpamé, have lost their land and are forced to return, for some, to rental properties and for others, to family homes. Also, the loss of property rights on land has caused, among the populations of Atakpamé, the cessation of income-generating activities based mainly on agriculture. These situations have made buyers vulnerable and destabilized their social and economic development. Which plunges them into long-term precariousness.

Keywords: Land Insecurity, Social Evolution, Vulnerability, Agr.

Introduction

After the periods of independence, the African land market has undergone profound changes. Land has become an object of desire, concern and a major challenge for socio-economic development (Oladokoun, 2013). “Land constitutes a major issue in urban spaces in Africa. It is the subject of speculation among city dwellers for the satisfaction of housing needs and for indigenous people, a means for primary and secondary needs” (Yacoubou, 2012). According to Mansilla-Quiñones & Uribe-Sierra (2024), land occupation responds to an overall power dynamic that makes social relations less fruitful. For Beuf (2012), the different issues that exist around land management give rise to several types of conflicts. There is no doubt in affirming that the 21st century is the time when the lands crystallize social tensions.

The recurrence of the encroachment of arable land for the construction of residential bases shows, collectively, that the system of use and access to land is increasingly complex in this new era (Liu, 2018). For Chen et al., (2024), land use forms have improved environmental, social and economic constraints. Definitely, there is no longer any question of talking about land stability (Ho, 2021).

African cities are in permanent land insecurity. For Ren et al. (2020), migratory flows have increased land crises because each city dweller wanted, by all means, to access a space capable of ensuring their right to the city. The power of the land and the prestige it gives to its buyer lead actors to appropriate it regardless of the constraints (Schatz, 2021). Land occupation strategies, often tainted with vagueness, create crises detrimental to the development of urban societies. As a spatial and social scale for an empirical analysis of the above-mentioned facts and practices, greater Lomé and Atakpamé are highlighted.

The issues and desires linked to land have immersed greater Lomé in land insecurity. In 2020 alone, out of 3,536 cases registered by the Court of First Instance of Lomé, 1,899 are related to land. 810 land files have

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been emptied and 1,089 are still undergoing procedures (www.courdappedelome.tg, 2021). These statistics demonstrate the recurrence of land problems in the daily lives of Lomé residents.

160 km from the capital, Atakpamé, a secondary town located in the plateaux region, is also under the influence of land rivalries. In this urban area, access to land has caused conflicts between families, clans and tribes (Fatodji, 2017). The recurrence of these forms of litigation had led Nyassogbo (2003) to classify Atakpamé among the cities most sensitive to land crises. In this environment, the author explains that several actors (internal and external) are in constant struggle to gain ownership rights over land. This consideration finds support from Kola (2017) who confirms that the cities of the plateau region, strongly anchored in plantation activities, are periodically confronted with land problems whose sources lie in globalizing urbanization.

In a context of a sustainable city where social remains one of the most visible (the most popular) aspects, it is important, given the rise in land crises, to question the future of urban buyers. In other words, what implications do land insecurities have on the social evolution of populations victims of this phenomenon in greater Lomé and Atakpamé? Faced with this question, we postulate that land insecurities maintain, in the short and long term, urban populations in a social fragility marked by conditions of vulnerability and precariousness.

The objective of this research is to explain how, in an inclusive and just city context, land insecurities keep the populations of greater Lomé and Atakpamé in social fragility.

Physical Setting of The Study

Greater Lomé: Located in the southwest of Togo, in the Maritime Region, Greater Lomé is located between 1°4'50' and 1° 20' 40' East longitude and between 6° 12' 20" and 6 ° 9' 40" north latitude. It is limited to the northeast by the lower Zio valley, to the west by the Togo-Ghana border and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. As a beach town and border town, it runs along the coastline of the Gulf of Guinea and borders Ghana at Aflao. With the spatial dynamics, the city of Lomé has opened up to other areas to become "Grand Lomé". With the 2015 Urban Development Master Plan, greater Lomé is made up of the prefectures of Agoè-Nyivé and Gulf. The first is made up of 06 cantons while the second has 7. For this research, only the communes of Golfe 7 and Agoè-Nyivé 4 were favored due to the recurring land problems that these areas experience (Figure 1).

The city of Atakpamé: On a national scale, Atakpamé is a secondary city located at the crossroads: on the national road No. 1 linking Lomé, the Togolese capital and the interior of the country towards the North. The city has a strategic position, because it is located halfway between Lomé the capital (160 km), Kpalimé (100 km) and Sokodé (190 km) which is one of the major centers of the hinterland. Spatially, Atakpamé is the largest region in Togo. It covers an area of 16,800 km², or 30% of the entire Togolese national territory. This region, which is the greenest in the country, extends from 6°32' to 8°34' of North Latitude and from 0°30' to 1°38' of East Longitude. Following the decentralization carried out in 2019, the Ogou prefecture is restructured into 4 communes including Ogou 1, Ogou 2, Ogou 3 and Ogou 4. For this research, the commune of Ogou 1 with Atakpamé as capital was privileged due to the recurring land problems facing this urban area (Figure 2)

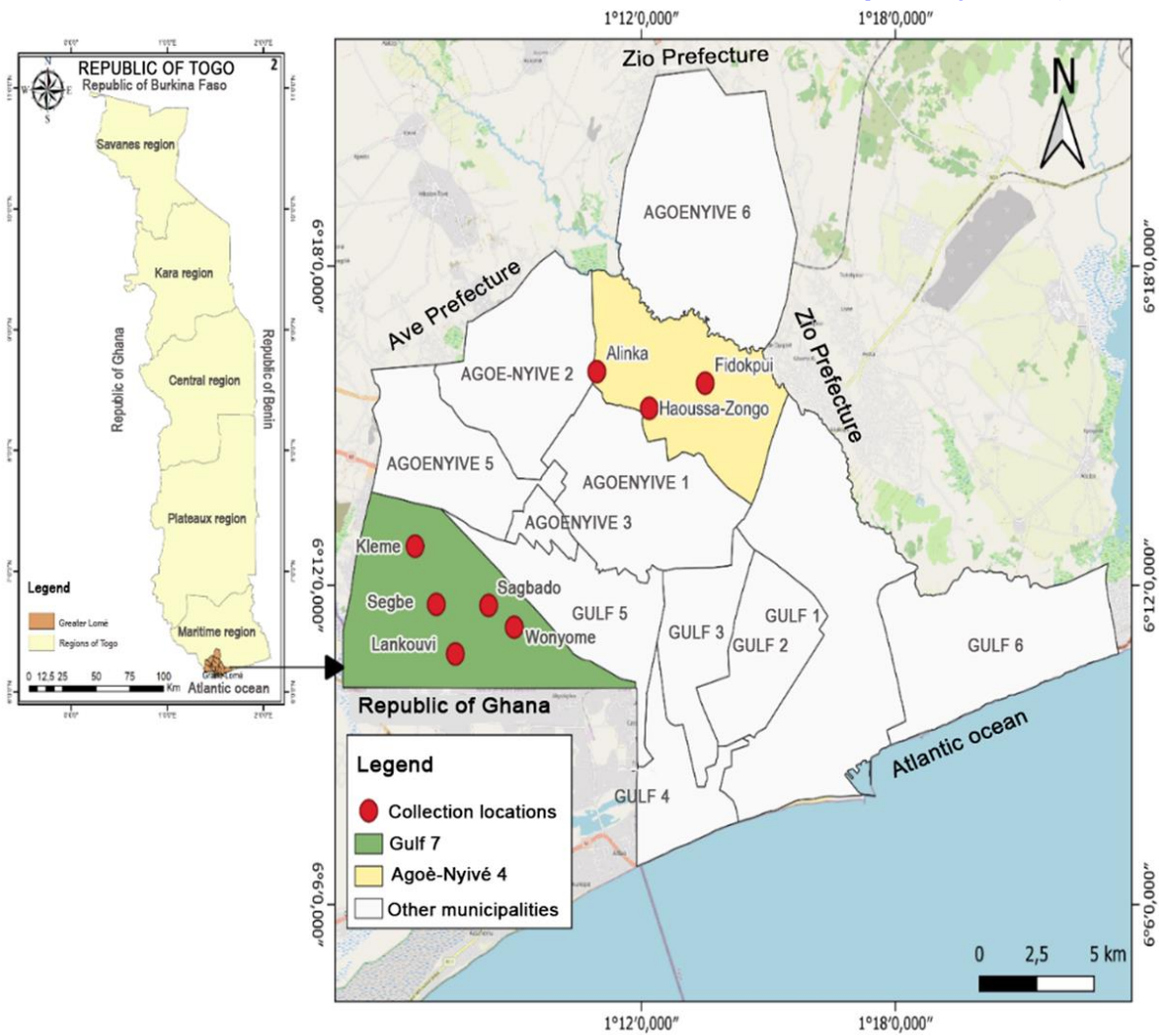


Figure 1: Geographical location of greater Lomé and the study communes

Source: fieldwork, July 2023

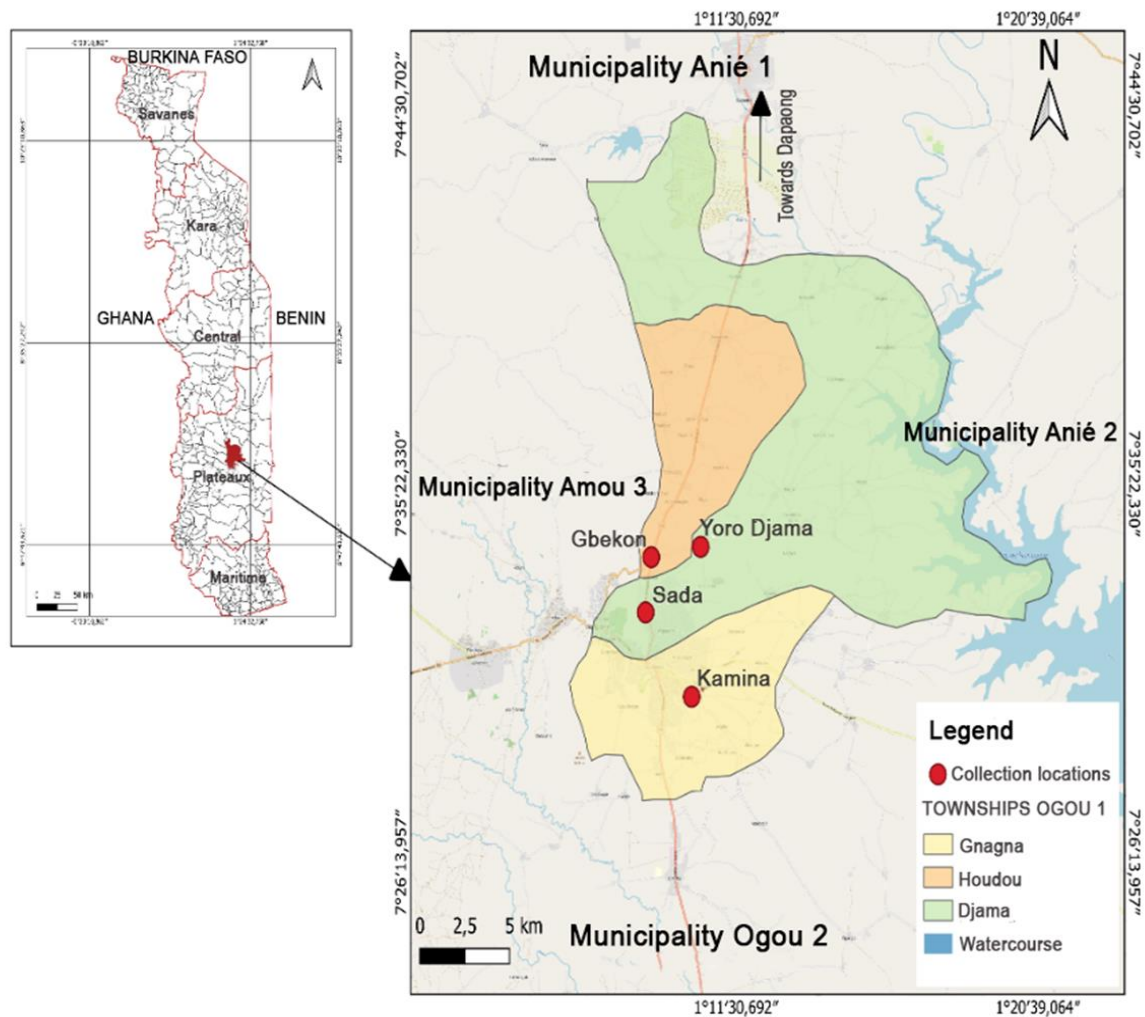


Figure 2: Geographical location of collection points in Atakpamé in the commune of Ogo 1

Source: fieldwork, July 2023

Materials And Methods

Materials

Study Population

This research, which deals with land insecurity and its implications on the evolution of urban populations, concerns, in the broad sense, several actors. However, for this work, the populations targeted by the quantitative survey are landowners victims of land insecurity in the communes of Gulf 7, Agoè -Nyivè 4 (greater Lomé) and Ogo 1 in Atakpamé. For the qualitative survey, the following resource people were targeted:

- Head of land security department of the Directorate of Cadastre, Land Conservation and Registration;
- Town planners;
- Judges, bailiffs, lawyers;

- President of the Order of Surveyors.

Table 1: Summary Of the Sample Size According to The Types of Survey

Type of survey	Survey Cities		
	Greater Lomé	Atakpame	Total
Qualitative	11	8	19
Quantitative	97	89	186

Source: field survey, July 2023

Collection Techniques and Tools

In accordance with the methodological approaches chosen, the information collection techniques and associated tools are presented in the following table:

Table 2: Summary Table of Data Collection Methods, Techniques and Tools

Methods	Collection techniques	Data collection tools
Qualitative	Literature search	Documentary content analysis grid
	Individual interview	Interview guide
Quantitative	Questionnaire administration	Quiz

Source: Authors, 2023

In detail, the documentary research consisted of collecting written data related to the study problem. These include: scientific articles, books, doctoral theses, master's theses, etc. For this work, the journals of MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute) and Elsevier indexed in the Scopus database were consulted. Specifically, the documentary research focused on the following themes:

Land Insecurity

Social Vulnerabilities

Sustainable Urban Development

Land Transactions

This inventory made it possible to build a solid documentary base on the different dimensions of research. The exploration of these writings informed the development of the conceptual, theoretical and methodological frameworks of the research.

Regarding the questionnaire, it is made up of closed questions whose answers are pre-coded in order to facilitate the processing of information. The questionnaire was administered indirectly to the respondents in order to avoid possible errors. It is subdivided into four sections namely:

Profiles Of Respondents

Factors Of Land Insecurity

Land Insecurity and Vulnerabilities of Buyers

Perspectives for sustainable urban land security.

The administration of the questionnaire made it possible to have numerical trends. This facilitated statistical analyzes of the results obtained in the field.

Finally, the individual interviews helped to collect life stories and to understand in depth the implications of land insecurity on the social evolution of buyers.

Methodological Approaches

For the methodological approach, the collection of information was based on quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Whatever the methodological approach considered (quantitative and qualitative), this research favored the non-probabilistic sampling technique, that is to say a technique based on the reasoned choice of the actors to be interviewed. This is a non-probability sampling method which is determined by the respondents.

In the absence of a database providing information on owners who are victims of land insecurity in the two cities, this technique consisted of gradually constructing a sample using references obtained from the first respondents. In each field, the number zero (0) designates the resource person and n represents the saturation of the sample. This respondent driven sampling (RDS) technique was used by Wilhelm (2014) for studies concerning so-called hard-to-reach populations.

Data Processing

Quantitative Data Processing

The quantitative data, which are collected using the KoboCollect software, were transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22) software on Windows for statistical analyses.

Concerning the statistical analysis, the variables were summarized by the proportions followed by the calculation of their prevalence and their confidence interval at the 95% level (95% CI) according to the following formula:

$$[f-1,96 \sqrt{(f(1-f)) / \sqrt{n}}, f+1,96 \sqrt{(f(1-f)) / \sqrt{n}}]$$

Furthermore, the calculation of the confidence interval was done according to the lower limit and the upper limit.

For the comparison between greater Lomé and Atakpamé, the Pearson chi-square (chi²) test for comparison was applied. This made it possible to deduce p-values. Formatting of tables and graphs is done with Excel software.

Qualitative Data Processing

As for the qualitative data, content analysis based on logico-semantic and structural methods was applied to identify the manifest and latent meaning of the information.

Emphasis was placed on the order of appearance and frequency/repetition of symbolic representations in speeches. Then, the attitudes and reactions of the interviewees were interpreted. In doing so, we were able to understand what we could fundamentally miss through the collection of data on the basis of a questionnaire.

In addition, the principles of the analysis are based on the argumentative logics that the interviewees develop. Therefore, we proceeded to study and compare the meanings of the speeches of the actors interviewed to highlight the systems of representation that they convey. Personal experiences were then translated into collective issues in order to understand the experiences of the interviewees.

Results

Rurbanization in Atakpamé and conurbation in greater Lomé: Togolese cities under the influence of urban changes

The development of cities has put the peripheries under pressure. In Atakpamé, the saturation of the urban center opened the doors to the occupation of the rural outskirts. This is illustrated by the figure below:

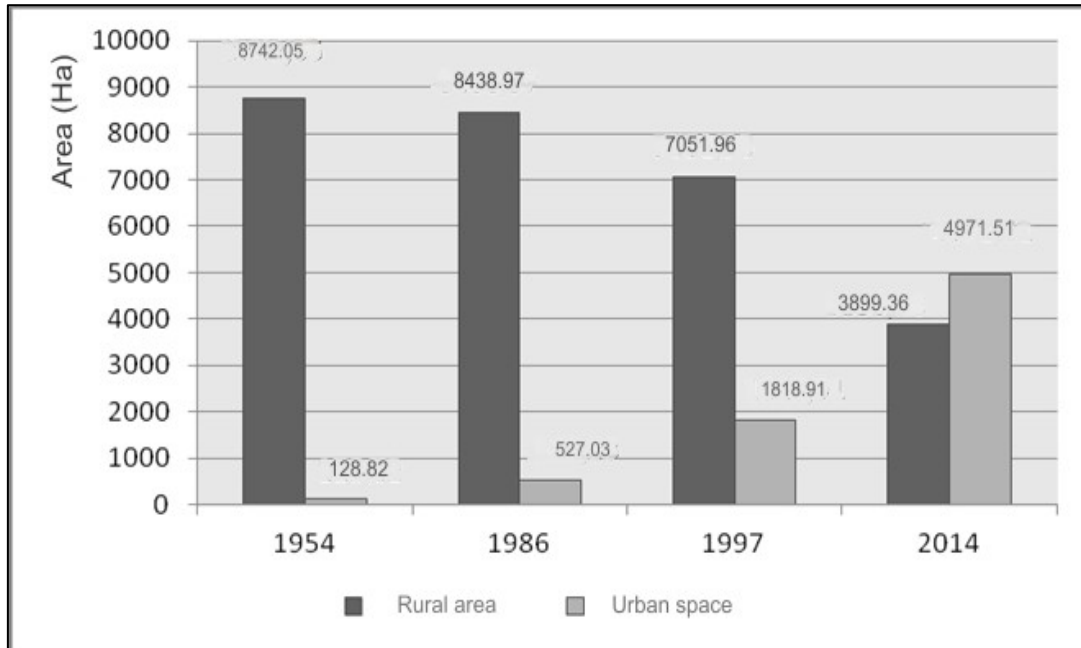


Figure 1: Continuous Regression of Arable Land in Favor of Urbanization in Atakpamé

Source: Fatodji, 2017

The incursion of the urban into the rural peripheries has modified the daily experiences and land practices of the populations. This rurbanization observed in the outskirts of Atakpamé is increasing and the field work carried out has made it possible to identify some elements of its manifestation.

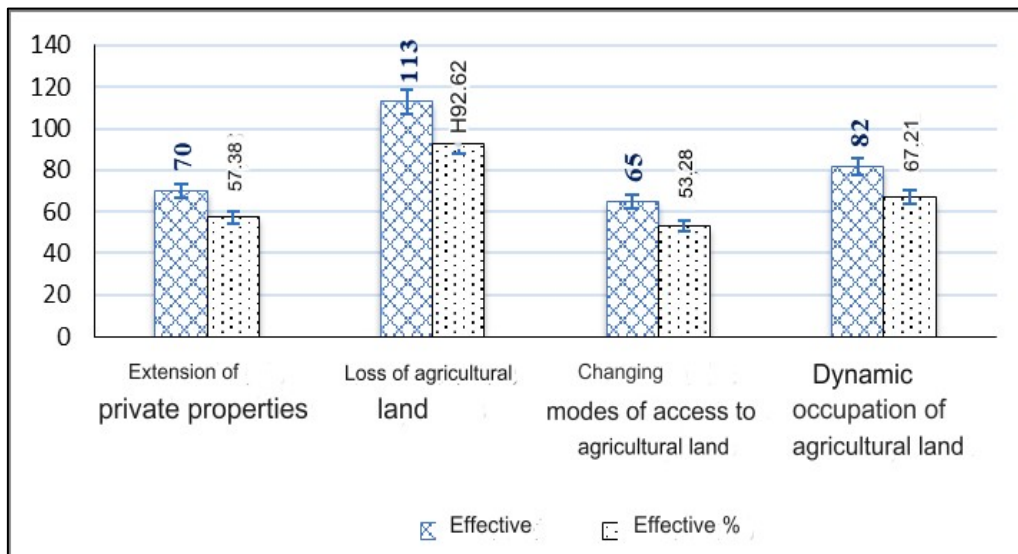


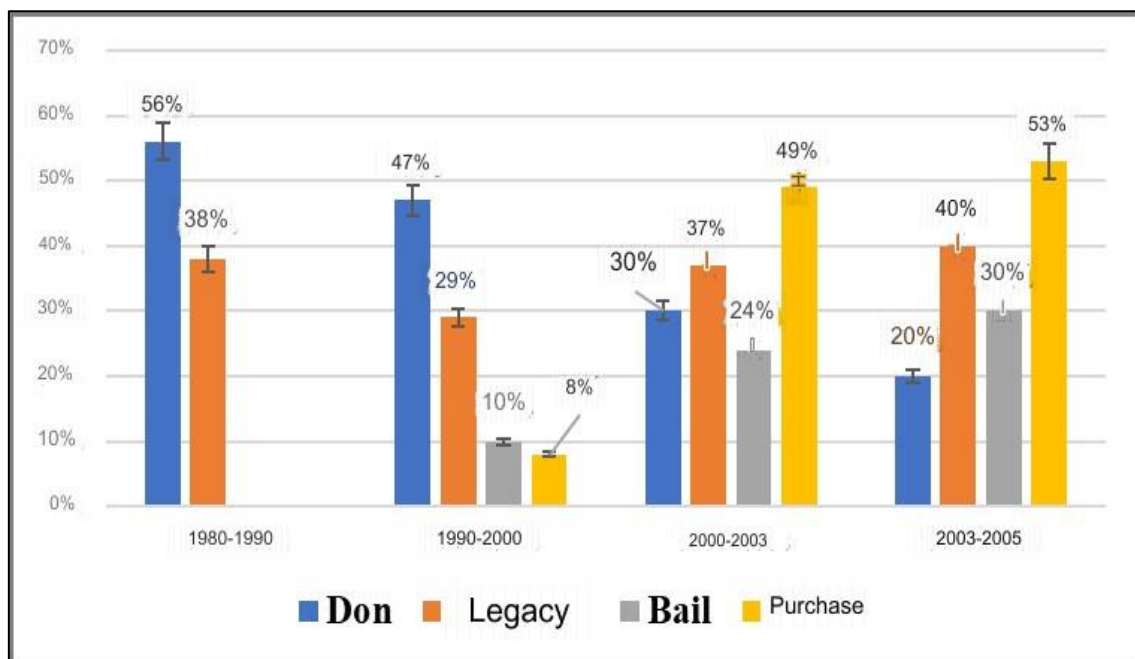
Figure 2: Manifestation Of Rurbanization According to The Respondents

The answers proposed at this level are multiple choice.

Source: field survey, June 2023

The data provided in Figure 2 show that the loss of agricultural land, the extension of private property and the change in the means of access to land constitute the factors which manifest the presence of rurbanization in the rural peripheries of Atakpamé.

Strongly anchored in plantation activities, the populations, under the influence of money, sold their arable land which served as housing support. Which constitutes typically urban ways of doing things. Two decades ago, monetary land transactions in these outskirts of the city were rare and therefore little visible. These figures below show the evolution of the means of access to land in Atakpamé.

**Figure 3: Means Of Access to Land in Atakpamé From 1980 To 2005**

Source: Fatodji, 2017

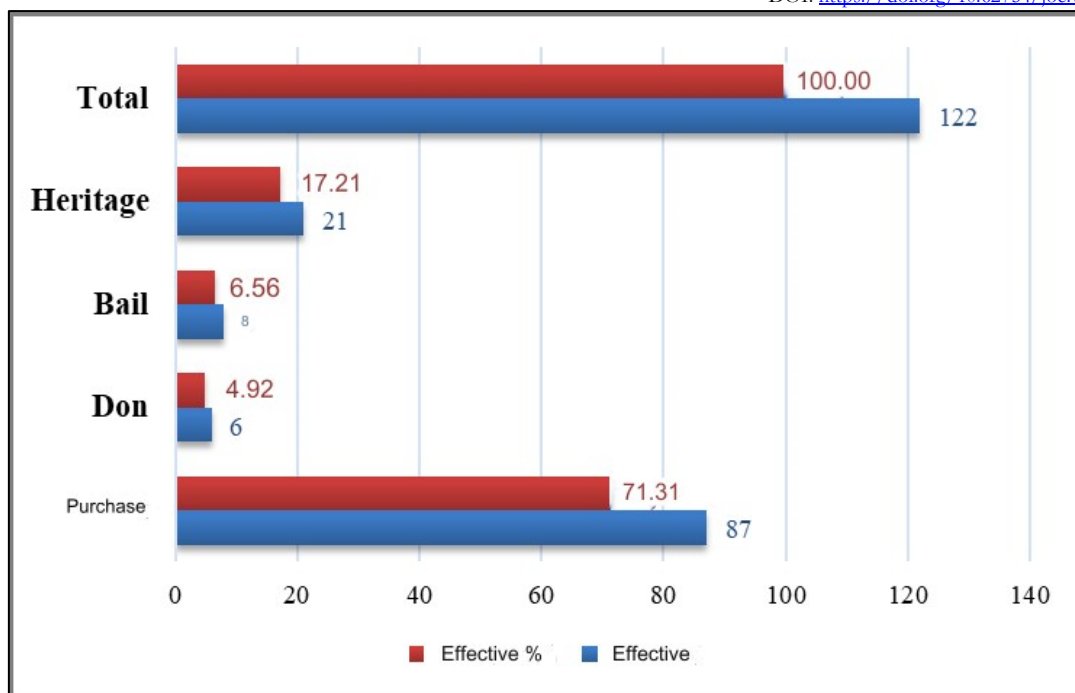


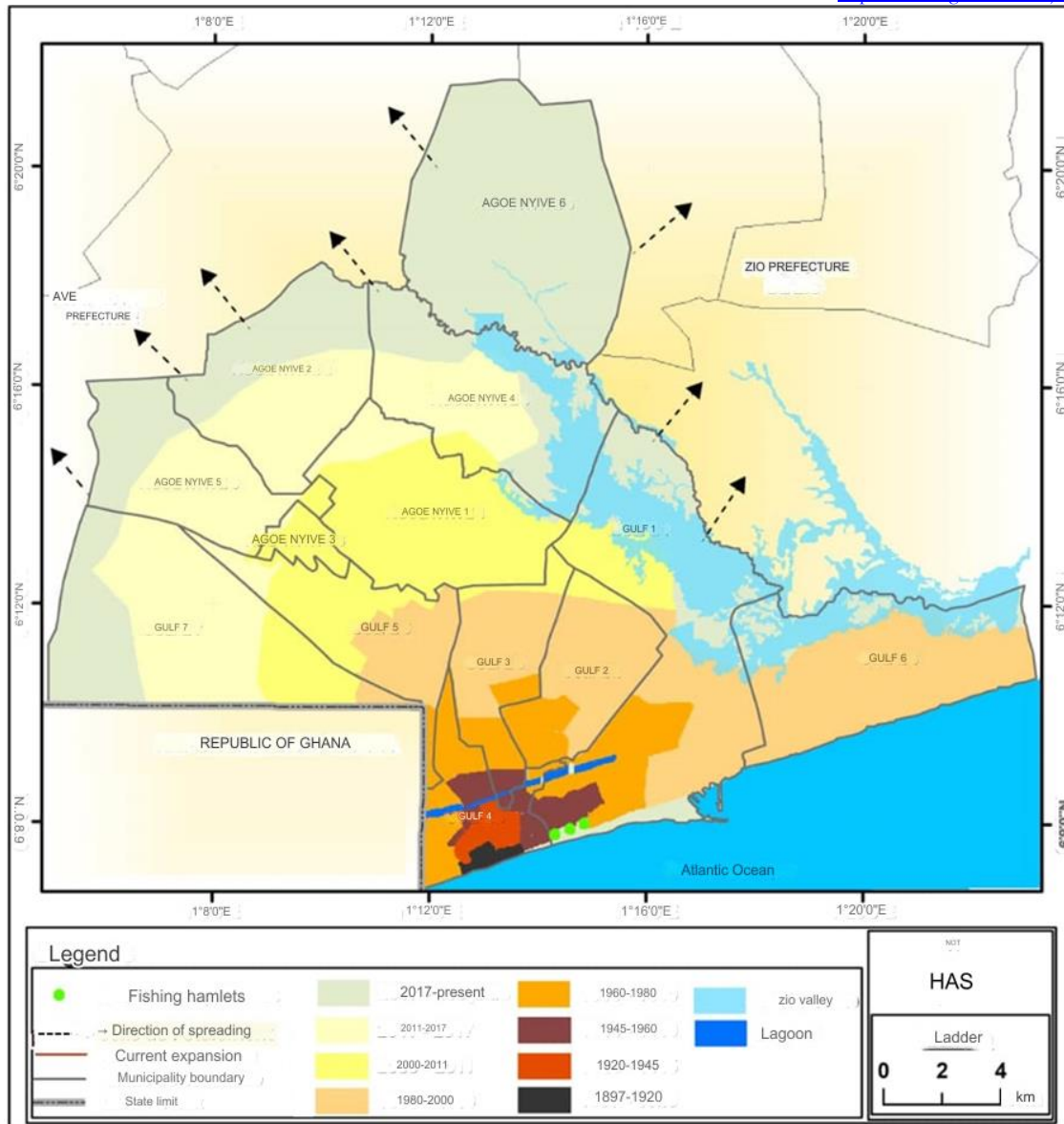
Figure 4: Means Of Access to Land In 2023 In Atakpamé and Its Outskirts

* The answers proposed at this level are multiple choice

Source: field survey, June 2023

The analysis of the two figures (3 and 4) shows a change in the modes of access to land. Based yesterday on inheritance and gift, today land is acquired through purchase. This new land practice confirms the importation and influence of urban practices in rural peripheries.

Unlike Atakpamé, greater Lomé is experiencing a conurbation. The sprawl of the capital has led to the porosity of the borders between the rural outskirts and the city center (see map 3). Lomé is advancing and its limits are almost elusive.



Map Evolution of The Urban Task of Greater Lomé

Source: Adjayi et al., 2023

The evolution of the urban task of greater Lomé, illustrated above by map no. 3, reveals an unparalleled spatial fragmentation. The capital has freed itself from its historical limits to project itself towards a new urbanized space. There is now a spatial rapprochement which makes it difficult to read or recognize territorial limits.

The manifestation of rurbanization in Atakpamé and conurbation in greater Lomé shows the social and spatial dynamism of the two cities.

Following the change in land practices resulting from the temporal evolution of greater Lomé and Atakpamé, recurring insecurities have been noted which destabilize the urban balance. Field investigations made it possible to list, in the two cities, the factors of land insecurity.

Table N°3: Causes of Land Insecurity in Greater Lomé

*NB: the answers proposed for this table are multiple choice.

City	Greater Lomé				P-value
	Effective	%	95% CI Lower bound	95% CI Upper bound	
Causes of land insecurity					
Double land sales	70	56.00	47,298	64,702	0.024
Evictions	39	31.20	23,078	39,322	0.749
Expropriations	33	26.40	17,673	34,127	0.497
Total	142	113.6	-	-	-

Source: field survey, June 2023

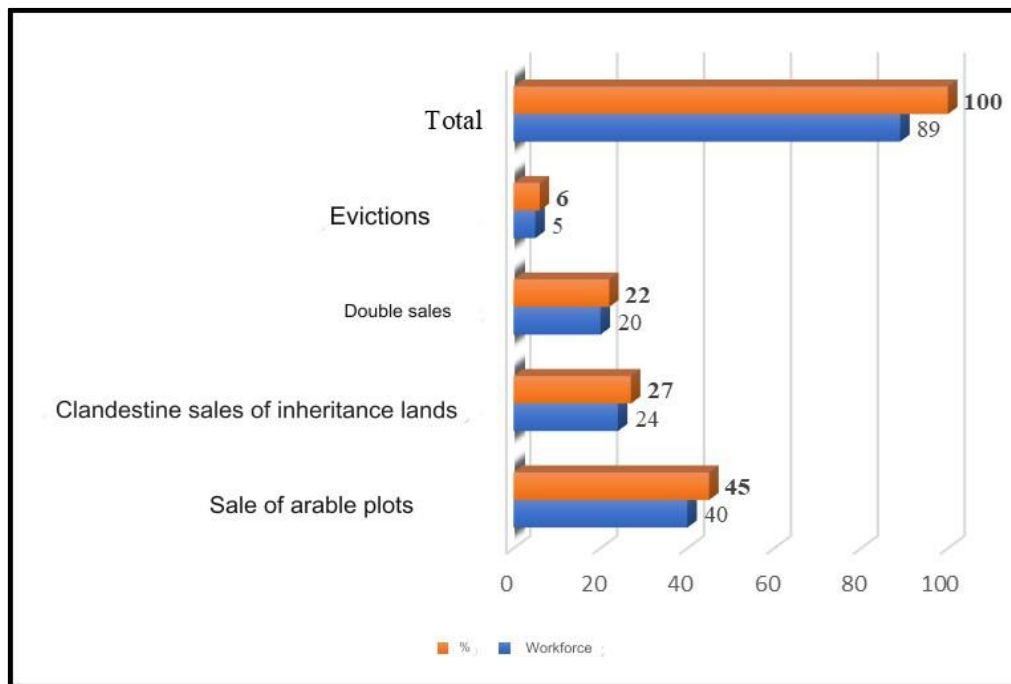


Figure 5: Causes Of Land Insecurity in Atakpamé

Source: field survey, June 2023

Reading the data in table no. 3 shows that in greater Lomé, it is mainly double sales of land (56%) and eviction actions (39%) which cause land insecurity. However, attention paid to Figure No. 5 allows us to see that the sale of arable land (45%) and the clandestine sales of inheritance land (27%) are the major factors of land insecurity in Atakpamé.

The demographic explosion of the capital and the land pressures that it implies facilitate the emergence of reprehensible behavior in access to land. The double sales of land and the eviction actions mentioned by the surveys demonstrate a complex land market, vague and often oriented towards informality.

If it is undeniable that the factors presented above keep populations in land insecurity, then it is logical to question the consequences. In other words, what consequences do land insecurities have on the people interviewed? The field surveys made it possible to present the following data:

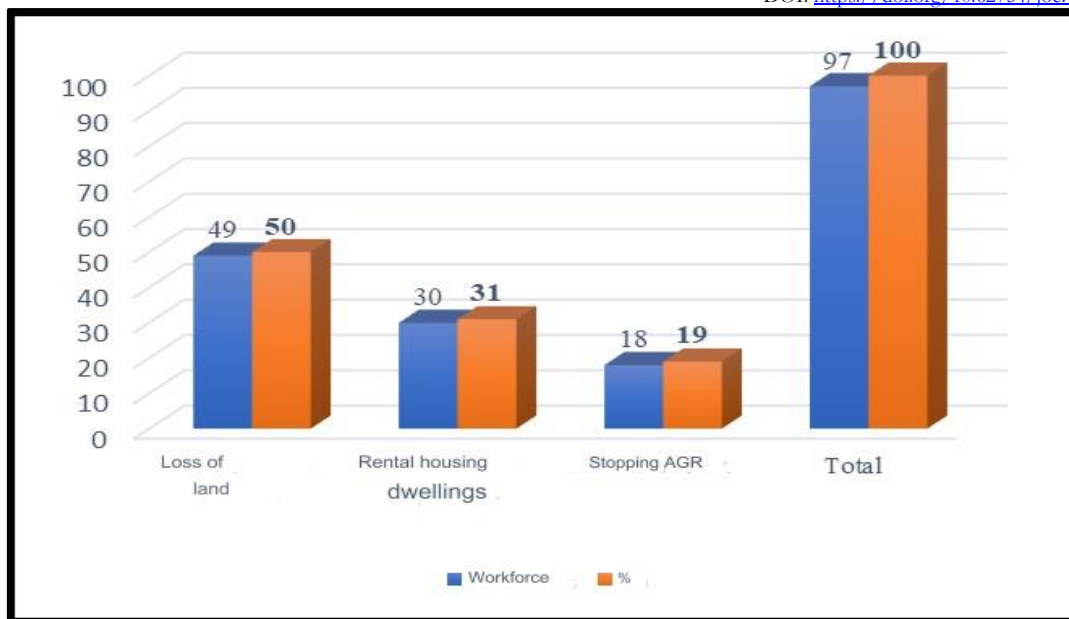


Figure 6: Consequences of Land Insecurity in Greater Lomé

Source: field survey, June 2023

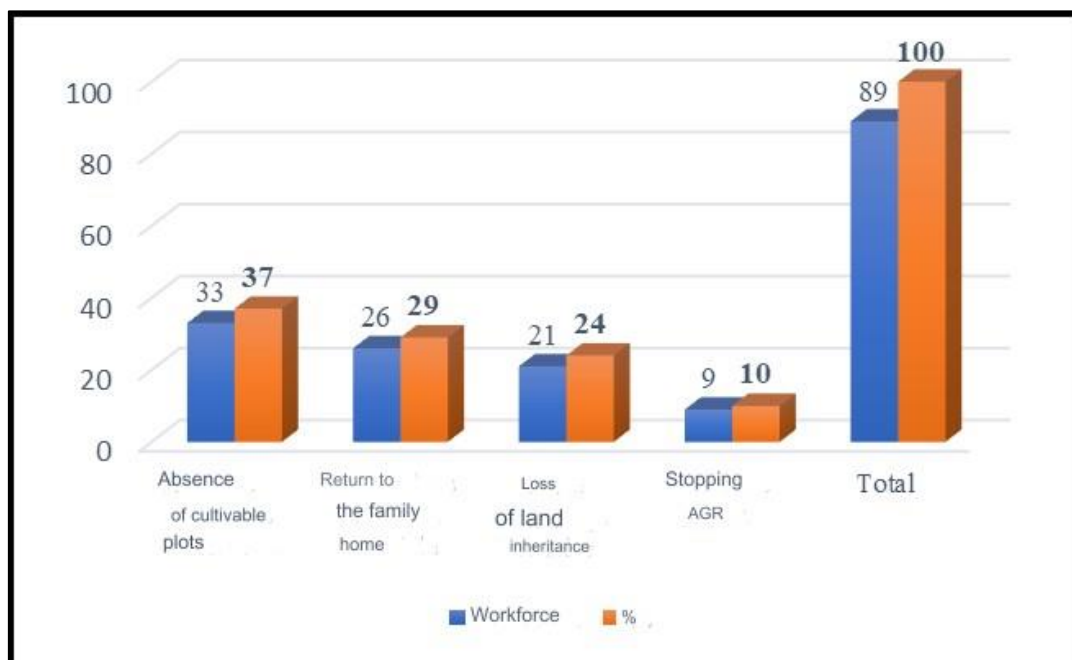
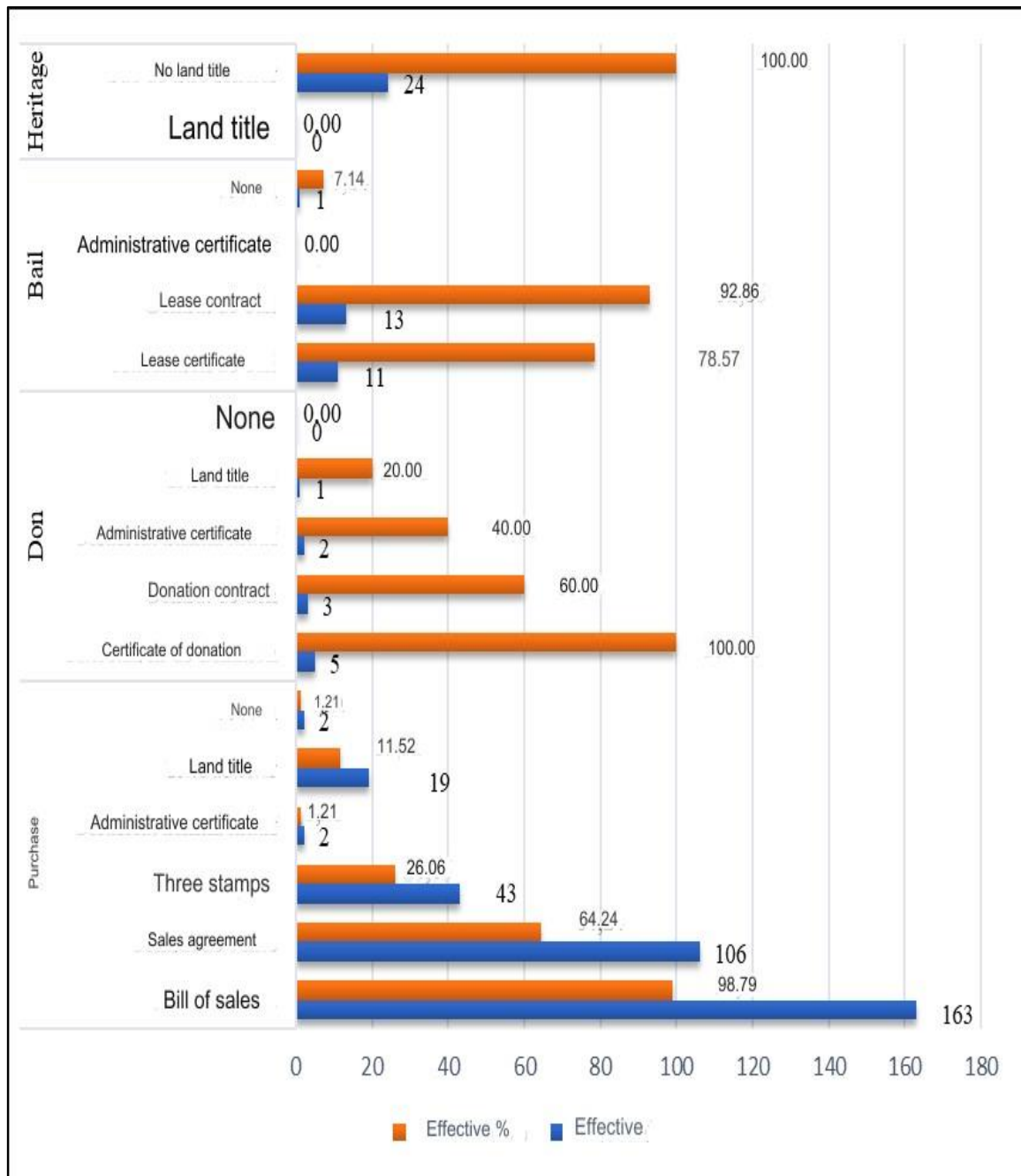


Figure 7: Consequences Of Land Insecurity in Atakpamé

Source: field survey, July 2023

In greater Lomé, the loss of land (50%) and rental housing (31%) constitute the visible consequences of land insecurity. However, in Atakpamé, it is the absence of cultivable plots (37%) and the return to the family home (29%) which demonstrate the clear effects of land insecurity. These forms of land insecurity, mainly characterized by the loss of property rights, are due, according to a land registry officer, to the absence of supporting documents such as the land title.

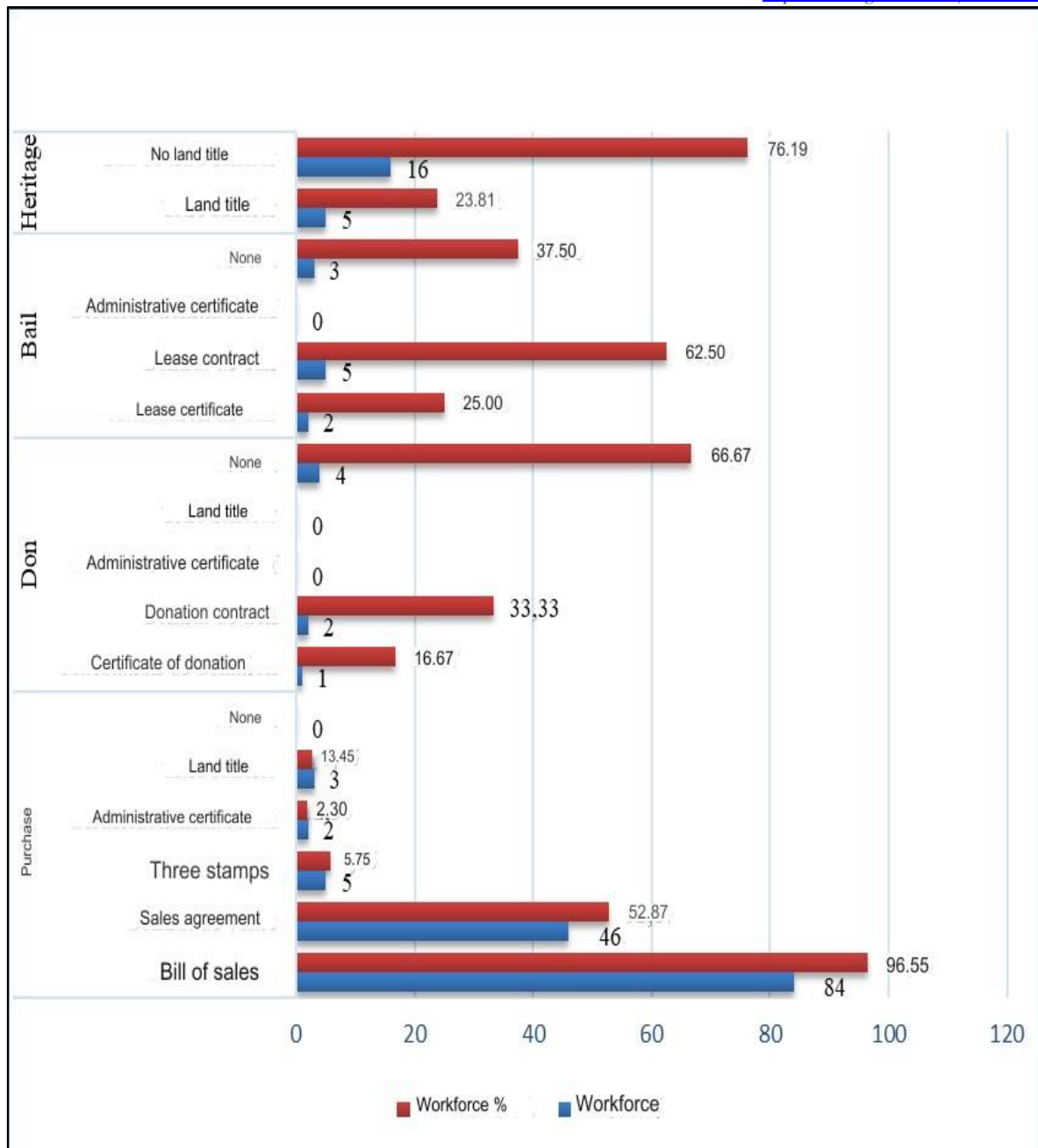
Concerning the documents supporting the property rights of the respondents, the data below were collected in the field.



NB: the answers proposed for figures 8 are multiple choice.

Figure 8: Documents Supporting the Land Assets of Respondents in Greater Lomé

Source: fieldwork, July 2023



NB: the answers proposed for Figure 9 are multiple choice.

Figure 9: Documents Supporting Land Assets of Atakpamé Respondents

Source: fieldwork, June 2023

The analysis of the two figures (8 and 9) corroborates the previous statements of the land registry agent. For each mode of access to land, the land title, taken as a legal document, is poorly represented and sometimes even absent. Taking the example of the purchase, we notice that the land title is poorly cited as supporting documents in the two cities.

The absence of this document is explained, for many buyers, by the complexity of the procedures. Some buyers interviewed do not even know the procedures for establishing the land title. This problem observed during field surveys led us to take an interest in current procedures for establishing land titles. To do this,

interviews were carried out with officials from the Directorate of Cadastre, Land Conservation and Registration. The information collected made it possible to develop the table below:

Table 4: Procedures for establishing a Land Title

STEPS	APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT
1. Submission of the file to the Single Land Office (GFU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of file for favorable opinion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study and technical verification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of files
2. Registration of the deed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the deed for attribution of value
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with the liquidation of rights
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay registration and stamp duties
3. Requisition for registration or division purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register the deed (some gift deeds are also registered)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and sign the requisition form • Enter and scan the constituent parts • Study the conformity of files in order to proceed with their liquidations • Submit liquidation slips to requests for payment • Create a requisition number
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the registration application for publication in the official journal
4. Publication of the registration application in the Official Journal of the Togolese Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a copy of the OJ to the appeal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display registration requisitions 20 days before contradictory demarcation
5. Processing and display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the date of posting to the public prosecutor, to the actual holders of the rights mentioned in the requisition, to the mayor or prefect where the building to be registered is located
	<p>Send the summons for contradictory demarcation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor or prefect of the zone where the building to be registered is located; • Traditional leader, in the jurisdiction in which the building is located; • Applicant and each of the neighboring owners named in the requisition.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute the boundary operation • Prepare the minutes • Make a final plan
6. Execution of contradictory boundaries	<p>For land register surveyors, this involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute the boundary operation • Prepare the minutes • Make a final plan
7. Land security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the conformity of the plan submitted by the applicant and the final plan drawn up by the land surveyor following the contradictory demarcation • demarcation report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the building being registered is not located in an administrative reserve, an equipment zone or does not encroach on a building already registered or in the process of being registered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out site visits when necessary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the cadastral boards and the land cadastral plan in the different software
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate and transfer the files to the land conservation division for the creation of the land title
8. Formalities for creating the land title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing the analytical form
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, control and validation of the analytical slip
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and signing of the land title
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the copy of the title and archiving of the file

Source: Our field work, July 2023

This detailed procedure for establishing land titles suggests, according to our respondents, a long and sometimes interminable process. Analyzing the information in Table 3, we notice a host of activities that require a long waiting period and a significant financial resource.

Some buyers interviewed in Atakpamé affirm, for their part, that it is very complex to obtain land titles on family estates. The majority of inheritance lands have not been subject to administrative formalities. After the death of the father of the family, it is difficult to begin this procedure because the sharing of these lands' leads to disagreements and conflicts.

By adopting a comparative approach, we see that whether in Lomé or Atakpamé, the loss of land is the first consequence of land insecurity. In this context, what implications do these disputes have on the social evolution of the actors?

Loss Of Land and Vulnerability of Buyers in Greater Lomé and Atakpamé

Today, the market value of land allows any owner to satisfy their socio-economic needs and assert their social success. However, the loss of land disorients the buyer and disrupts his life plan.

In Lomé as in Atakpamé, several actors continue to bargain for their land to: send children abroad, pay school fees and meet an urgent need such as cases of death or illness. In this context, the loss of property rights following a dispute leads the individual to a state of depression. Buyers who are victims of land insecurity are disoriented and their social and economic status experiences a decline that is detrimental to their social development.

The acquisition of land being a long process, the Togolese in general and those of greater Lomé and Atakpamé in particular invest all their savings in order to realize their vision and protect themselves from uncertainties. Unfortunately, following disputes, some buyers are dispossessed of their land. For others, their homes or homes are being taken to court.



Figure 10: Illustration Of Certain Land and Houses Pending Proceedings by The Courts in Atakpamé

Authors: Adjayi and al., June 2023

These eviction or cessation of work orders, reflected in the photos above, force several respondents to return to the rental or to the family home. Since their financial conditions, which have become very unstable, can no longer lead them to pay for new land for agricultural activities or to build a new house. Indeed, enjoying property rights for a long time and then finding yourself in a family home or rental causes a psychological shock in the individual and pushes them into a pensive and depressive state. Every time the victims, who find themselves in rentals, remember that they would have to start paying monthly rent again, they are plunged into frustration and self-contempt.

The inability to resist the demands or needs of one's current state causes the individual to experience a state of depression and precariousness. This fragility blocks social success and therefore the development of the individual. Having been a landowner and finding yourself, due to land insecurity, in a family home constitutes a form of failure, wasted time and a flouted dream. This current situation in which the respondents find themselves hinders not only their development but also that of their family.

For example, in Atakpamé, agriculture being an income-generating activity, the loss of property rights no longer allows the individual to carry out agricultural activities and increase their income. As a result, family responsibilities become difficult to provide.

Sometimes, some respondents work in other jobs such as driving motorcycle taxis and cars for men and marketing basic necessities for women. This professional transfer undergone (and not chosen) is experienced with enormous difficulties of adaptation.

In a context of a sustainable, inclusive and just city, the question of vulnerability poses a serious reflection on the social development of urban populations. By considering the social aspect of this approach, we see that the informality of the land system creates insecurities which weaken the individual and slow down their social development. The ideal that the sustainable city recommends is taking into account humans in all their dimensions. Taken as such, it is clear that public authorities must ensure control of the land system in order to guarantee the security and social development of populations. To do this, land planning and management tools such as: the Cadastral Plan and the Local Urban Plan must be operational.

Discussion

At the interface between the political, the spatial and the social, urban land presents itself as a relevant entry point for understanding the changes taking place in African cities. For Mansion & Broutin (2013, p.42) , “land is one of the most complex issues because it carries misunderstandings and gives rise to contradictory debates, where sometimes dogmatic and often simplistic ideas confront each other”.

Indeed, land fuels socio-political issues and incites social rivalries. Addressing the question of the issues, Nassi (2013, p.12) writes:

“Land issues are carried by individual and collective actors, which can be roughly placed in two categories: on the one hand, actors competing for access to resources, around relationships which can be competitive, exchange, conflict, alliance; on the other hand, bodies or institutions controlling access to resources.

Today, cities are experiencing increasing land fragmentation. Private property is more fragmented and consolidation occurs through rental (Vranken & Swinnen, 2006) . Indeed, in this process of land fragmentation, there are few administrative documents which trace the conditions of land acquisition. From there, conflicts and insecurities arise (Benjamin & Brandt, 2002) . According to Yuan et al., (2018) , land insecurity in the majority of cities is explained by informal land transfer systems. Concerning transfers of land assets for example, the authors explain that they are carried out in complete amicability without respect for administrative procedures. This makes the property rights of buyers unstable in the event of a dispute.

The land market, as it exists in African cities, contributes to increasing insecurity, fragility and vulnerability of buyers (Mandal et al., 2019) . For Atchon (2018) , the individual falls under the weight of vulnerability when, psychologically, he remembers the long sacrifice made in the purchase and construction of his house and knows, irrevocably, that he will no longer be able to recover his property. The questioning of property rights constitutes a form of land insecurity which makes the future of buyers uncertain (Jacoby et al., 2002) . Influenced by the logic of “home”, which is a socio-cultural constraint, buyers become less lucid in following land transaction procedures. Which, without knowing it or wanting it, leads them into an informal process of land acquisition (Fang et al., 2022) .

Vulnerability, in its literary conception, characterizes the state of what is injured, afflicted and weakened. For Agergaard & Lenneis (2024) , vulnerability is a subjective, multidimensional and varied experience or experience. Here, the individual interacts with an environment that influences their ability to cope with fragile conditions.

In this work, the theory of social vulnerability makes it possible to question the conditions which are at the origin of the weakening of people (Dauphiné, 2004) . For Bankoff et al., (2004) , social vulnerability is intrinsically linked to the risk of weakening to which the individual or the collective is exposed and the potential result of which would be social exclusion.

Indeed, Châtel and Roy (2010) consider that the question of social vulnerability is constructed dynamically with two other notions with which it is in debate: poverty and social exclusion. According to these authors, to fully understand the aspects and issues of vulnerability, it is important to pay attention to questions of social exclusion, questions which have marked social, scientific and political reflection for more than twenty years.

However, in the context of this research, this conception of social vulnerability must be overcome.

Faced with the land insecurities of which they are victims, buyers are disoriented and their social and economic status experiences a decline unfavorable to their social success. Although they are weakened, there is no possibility of exclusion in the literal sense of the term. We are faced with a vulnerability which weakens, precarizes and impoverishes the victims in the long term. This is why, according to Borderon & Oliveau (2016) , social vulnerability is broader and integrates poverty into its own characteristics.

For Saunders (2003) , the vulnerable are people whose economic resources are insufficient; people considered poor or close to poverty level; people who are both poorly paid and poorly housed. This is why,

for Xiao & Zhao (2020) , the unconditional sale of arable land by rural people is, mainly, motivated by contexts of family insecurity. In this case, the transferor no longer necessarily thinks about the standards but about resolving his problem.

The analysis of land insecurity and its consequences leads to the conclusion that space as a living environment is a factor which contributes to the vulnerability of its occupant. Naturally, the living space of individuals is an actor of their vulnerability and must be analyzed as such (Cutter & Finch, 2008) . Taking the example of urban space, Kpotchou (2018) writes that it imposes itself on the individual and influences them through its not too easy living conditions.

In an inclusive city dynamic open to all, access to land should be a right and an opportunity for every city dweller. However, in the absence of sovereign standards and principles, land issues constantly arise and negatively impact the experiences of urban populations. For Melguizo-Ibáñez et al., (2023) , anxiety and depression impact, over a long period, the psychological well-being of victims. This precarious condition in which the respondents live constitutes what Bourdieu (1993) calls “ social suffering”.

The future of the victims is enmeshed in continual uncertainty. The professional changes carried out do not fit well with the life plans of the actors. In this context, social evolution is slowing down since the actors themselves are weakened.

For Castel (2009) , vulnerability responds to a double weakening: weakening of statuses in the sphere of employment with the development of temporary employment, atypical employment statuses, unemployment and in particular long-term unemployment ; but also weakening of primary social bonds with the development of family instability. For Vergara-Perucich & Arias-Loyola (2024) , these situations are particularly recurrent in urban environments which are often the scene of rapid and profound social changes.

Indeed, land insecurity has gradually caused the disappearance of arable land which allows populations to cultivate crops and market agricultural products. This income-generating activity being mortgaged, they are, against their will, forced to find other activities with adaptation difficulties (Zhen, 2010) .

It should be remembered that sustainable urban development, which we are calling for with all our hopes, questions urban societies on the ways of organizing space, the ways of living and moving, the management of natural resources, living conditions and the quality of the living environment of city dwellers. For Villoria (2023) , good governance, which is specifically based on the prediction and management of irregular norms, must be the fundamental principle of the State. For Jin et al., (2024) , it is imperative that the land standards that exist ensure fairness and efficiency in the allocation of land resources. Indeed, the restructuring of the land system will allow the State to avoid insecurities and promote the development of rural and urban territories (Ye, 2015) .

However, for Gebremedhin & Swinton (2003) , this task promises to be difficult if not impossible because the functioning of the land market gives States little room for maneuver to invest in securing land. Opposing this analysis, Suchá et al., (2020) insist on state intervention and recall that land insecurity is not only a problem for buyers. It is also an evil which weakens the development policies of States. It destabilizes the framework for implementing social projects and increases social tensions.

To reduce land insecurities which make populations precarious and fragile, public authorities should take action to regulate spatial occupation through the operationalization of land management tools. This land policy, if well executed, consists of establishing standards, valid at all times, which impose that "no organization or person can appropriate, buy, sell or rent land, nor illegally transfer land from in any way" (Gao et al., 2019) . At this point, we could see fundamental stability.

For Besley (1995) , land stability reduces uncertainty in land transactions and stimulates the commitment of buyers in land transfer markets. According to Chankrajang (2015) it ensures the security of populations and motivates them to invest, in a sustainable manner, in land activities (Long et al., 2024) .

Conclusion and Recommendations

Land remains a primary factor in conflicts in southern cities. The market value of land and the desires it implies lead to insecurities that are detrimental to the social development of individuals.

In Togo, the recurrence of land disputes observed in greater Lomé and Atakpamé leads us to address its influence on the social life of the victim populations. When discussing the sustainable city approach, the social aspect is considered in the same way as the economic, cultural and environmental aspects. In this context, this article aims to explain how land insecurity weakens the social development of individuals.

The results presented show that double sales of land, eviction and expropriation are the major causes of land insecurity in greater Lomé. However, in Atakpamé, the selling off of arable land and the clandestine sale of inheritance land are the factors that cause land crises. The main consequences of these disputes are among others: the loss of land assets, the loss of AGR and the return of buyers to family and rental homes.

The consequences mentioned above lead buyers into serious precariousness. Access to urban land remains, in African cities, a question of hellish struggle. Informality and weak institutional control of the land system give rise to crises which destabilize the social development of buyers. The various field interviews carried out make it possible to assess, in the short and long term, the effects of land insecurity on the socio-economic development of stakeholders.

The principle of a sustainable city lies in its ability to resist and find innovative and sustainable solutions to urban crises. Taken as such, the conditions of vulnerability of the urban populations of greater Lomé and Atakpamé must be analyzed in correlation with the level of land management. Reducing the precariousness of victims strongly depends on the attention that public authorities will pay to the operationalization of standards and spatial occupation plans.

As long as land access strategies escape institutional powers, land insecurities will persist and conditions of vulnerability will become acute. To overcome this problem which delays the social evolution of buyers, we need an operationalization of the Cadastral Plan and the Local Urban Planning Plan, the only guarantees of a planned, sustainable, fair and resilient city.

Also, buyers must be made aware of the formal security of their land through land titles. By analyzing the land market, Deininger et al. (2011) assert that it would be more judicious, given current dynamics, for each buyer to administratively secure their land. For Saint-Macary (2010), this land certification is the legal confirmation of land rights. In this same perspective, Zheng et al. (2023) believe that land certification, after land transactions, reduces the risks of social weakening. According to Soto (2000), this process, legally recognized, is a precondition for any land occupation.

Finally, to ensure effective and sustainable security of land, Sossou & Mbaye (2018) call for recognition and full involvement of community leaders (traditional chiefs, etc.) in the process.

Regarding the difficulties and limitations of this research, we can say that the absence of a formal database of people who are victims of land insecurity did not make it possible to reach all buyers in vulnerable situations. Several respondents, having the status of landowners, fear giving information that could harm their land holdings. Despite our confidence, the reluctance of certain informants made individual interviews complex. However, all these difficulties did not prevent the collection of necessary and relevant information. Some respondents, overwhelmed by land problems, preferred to tell us about all their frustrations with the sole aim of freeing their hearts.

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