

Research Article

The Potential of Land Bank for Urban Renewal in the Obuasi Municipality

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the transformative potential of a Land Bank for Urban Renewal within the Obuasi Municipality, Ghana. Grounded philosophically in the Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights and augmented by Systems Theory, the research established crucial linkages between the Land Bank concept, urban renewal processes, and their interaction with socio-economic variables like education and location. The study adopted a mixed method design that is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Questionnaire, interview guide and observation were used to collect data from 241 study participants. The findings from study indicated that a Land Bank can substantially resolve land acquisition issues by fostering market clarity, preventing duplicate sales, enhancing negotiation efficiency, improving access to reliable information, and promoting stakeholder harmony. Based on the findings, the study recommends comprehensive Land Bank implementation to effectively streamline land acquisition, integrating customary and statutory land tenure frameworks to minimize disputes and overlaps, and mandating a digitized land records system with a centralized database for enhanced transparency and fraud mitigation.

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Introduction

The global phenomenon of escalating interest in land and the proliferation of large-scale land transactions, sometimes termed "global land grab," has garnered significant attention in discussions pertaining to land issues. The idea of land banks was first proposed by Aryeetey and Udry (2010). Research by Kay et al. (2015) indicates that farmland acquisition is currently occurring in European Union (EU) nations, as evidenced by the extent of foreign land ownership, the appropriation of large land areas, and the irregularities associated with numerous land transactions. According to the Land Matrix Database, large-scale land transactions in the EU amounted to 166,359 hectares in March 2015 (Kay et al, 2015). The International Land Coalition's database indicates that 96% of large-scale land acquisitions in Mozambique were designated for agricultural use (International Land Coalition, 2004). In Senegal, estimates indicate that 17% of arable land has been bought through large-scale land deals, predominantly for biofuel development. In Sierra Leone, around 20 percent of agricultural land has been obtained by agribusiness investors (Crabtree-Condor & Casey, 2012).

In Ghana, transactions on the land market are privately held with little or no information made to the public. The variety of customary arrangements, combined with some inconsistencies in the procedures for deed and title registration, make it difficult, though not impossible for potential investors to get access and

acquire land (Asumadu and Kwame, 2003). This in the long run tends to discourage investors, since no investor would like to invest in an environment where access to land is compounded by numerous ambiguities. When this happens, investment potential within the country is reduced to its minimum. However, in contrast to countries where access to information and land transactions is readily available, thus enhancing transparency and boosting investment potential, countries with opaque or inefficient land management systems struggle to attract investors.

According to Bawumia (2010), traditional authorities and district assemblies in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions should establish land banks in order to attract people to invest in the area. It is often said that several disputes have arisen between individuals who have successfully negotiated parcels of land for residential or commercial development only to be challenged by other parties claiming ownership of, or interest in, the same parcels of land (Asumadu, 2003).

According to Kasanga (2003), customary chiefs and families or clan heads who own about 78% of the total land area in Ghana are said to be actively engaged in selling communal lands for personal benefit, often without consultation or compensation for those who lose out as reported by Cotula and Toulmin (2004). Buttressing this argument, Cotula and Toulmin (2004) argued that sometimes, a family member sells a parcel of land without the permission or knowledge of other family members resulting in multiple sales of the same plot of land.

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Consequently, land disputes and claim of ownership over the same parcel of land are mushrooming.

Aryeetey and Udry (2010) focused on the challenges of fragmented land ownership in West Africa and propose land banks as a means to strengthen property rights and streamline land access, particularly in rural communities. Alexander et al. (2011) also focuses on how land banking has been used in urban renewal contexts in other parts of the world, showing the potential of land banks to meet community land needs and improve investment climates. These works explore theoretical applications or suggest land banks as a potential policy mechanism rather than proving their existence in practice. However, the fundamental issue that engages the attention of this study is the prospects of land banks for urban renewal in the Obuasi Municipality of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In view of this, the study therefore seeks to assess the impact of land banks on housing development and the reduction of informal settlement and to identify the challenges of implementing land banks in the Obuasi municipality.

Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights

The Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights was deployed as the analytical tool to examine and understand issues of land banking and its potential for urban renewal in this study. Land would become scarcer and more valuable as the population rises, according to the Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights. As land values increased, traditional land tenure systems gave way to increasingly individualistic property rights and land was sold in open markets. After the transaction costs are covered by the rising value of land and the requirement for security in transferring ownership, land markets and institutions for managing land would emerge. As a result, atomistic family farms are starting to pop up, where farmers can purchase and sell land on the market based on their requirements and resource endowments (Binswanger and Deininger, 1993).

Land use in Ghana today is a perfect illustration of the Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights. First things first: over 80% of Ghana's landmass is divided up among several groups of people, including stools/skins, individuals, families, and clans. The majority of Ghana's private land is held in communal ownership, with stools or skins representing traditional authorities or families serving as emblems of trust, according to the Ministry of Lands and Forestry (1999).

The demand for land has grown, along with its value and commoditization, due to population pressure. The conventional wisdom regarding land as a resource that should be preserved for future generations has been flipped on its head by its commercialization. So, because land has become more economically valuable, land ownership and control have become troublesome. There have been cases when different vendors have staked claims to the same piece of land and sold it multiple times due to the difficulty in quickly verifying ownership of the title.

There have been major shifts in land tenure systems due to increasing population pressure and the growth of market economies, according to data published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (Cotula, 2007). Land has become more valuable due to the demands exerted on it as a result of population growth and the increasing commercialization of land-based industries. Along with this comes a diminishment of the land's spiritual, cultural, and social importance. The privatization process and the subsequent push for more efficient land use have contributed to a rise in the personalization of tenure. The consolidation of indigenous property rights into formal legal frameworks serves to enrich the

principal right holder at the cost of all others by making rights more exclusive.

Power dynamics, the dominating policies' impact on land relations, and political and power dynamics are all weakened by the Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights. Perceived as inevitable and fundamental to the next evolutionary stage, the interventions sought to be initiated by dominant policy interests in the discourse around the transformation of land relations are one consequence of this discourse. The tale of individuals who were successful in acquiring and transferring land through the manipulation of powerful political forces and policies is often portrayed in this way, while the viewpoints of others who were unsuccessful and their disappointment with modern society are often overlooked (Amanor, 2008).

This study's foundational thematic areas have been linked by the Evolutionary Theory of Property Rights. For example, the theory proves that land becomes more valuable due to population growth, which causes land scarcity. As land prices rise, new land markets spring up, traditional land tenure systems shift towards more personalized property rights, and institutions for land management are set up to control land use.

A land bank could be one way to regulate land use and access. This theory's direct applicability to this study and its support for the evolutionary theory of property rights as the theoretical framework and analytical instrument here are both supported by this theory.

Conceptualizing Land Bank - Strategies of Land Bank for Urban Renewal

The definition of land banking varies depending on the sector (public or private) and context in which it is used. It is implied by land banking that the government purchases land before it needs it. The primary benefits include the ability to purchase land for public use at a reasonable cost and the provision of a tool to influence development patterns in line with overarching planning goals (UNESCAP, 1993). This idea does not imply that the government is the only entity with the authority to create land banks; private investors may also do so. However, on a larger scale, which mostly will be the overall development of a city of which the government will be the acquiring authority (Cleveland, 2005). The overall development of the Obuasi municipality can only be implemented by the government (agency).

Thigpen, a doctoral student at the University of Philadelphia, used flowchart to explain a picturesque process of the creation of land banks. In this light it makes the entire disposition of land banks much more visually possible for understanding (Thigpen, 2016). See Figure 1.

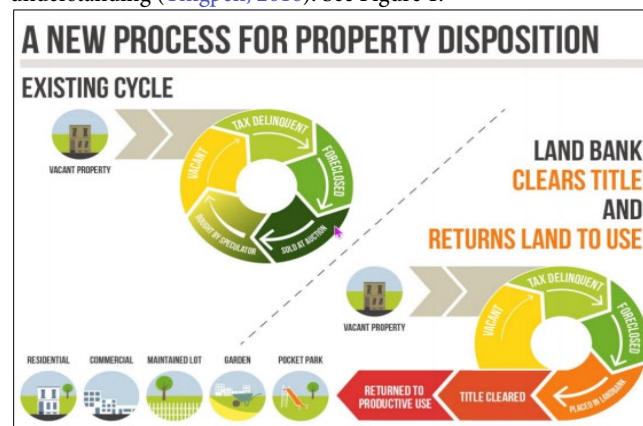


Figure 2.1 A new Process for Property Disposition.

Source: *Land Valuation Models for Land banks* by Guy Thigpen, (MUSA, MPhils), Director of Analytics, Philadelphia Land Bank Doctoral Student, Philadelphia University

The idea of a land bank, will lead to better land management practices by restoring use and clearing titles. This is how unoccupied, tax delinquent, or repossessed properties are added to the land bank to guarantee that all titles are cleared. Commercial, residential, managed lot, guarding, pocket park, and countless other productive uses can be revived from this hitherto deserted site. Land banks, as Ganindha et al. (2016) pointed out again, could help with the acquisition of land for public interest development projects in cities. Darwita (2021) adds credence to the idea by suggesting that land banks can help with land management as well.

Land Bank as Buyer of Real Estate: Implementation begins with planning, then moves on to use, and finally control, all of which are guided by the specified spatial plan, as it pertains to Land Bank activities. To prevent land from being concentrated in the hands of a select few, land banks can regulate land tenure. It is believed that the Land Bank can establish and control the price and value of land in compliance with relevant legislation.

Land Bank as Distributor of Real Estate: The functions of a land bank encompass purchasing property, holding it for future development, and distributing it according to its designated use and designation (Busroh, 2017).

Conceptually, land banking should include policies and strategies for optimizing land usage and utilization, as it is an activity of land management. According to Ranitya Ganindha (2016), the Land Bank should have the power to guide the growth of land use in this situation.

Potentials of Land Banking

According to Jansen et al. (2010), land banks offer a means for the expansion and development of agricultural land, as well as the establishment of adjacent infrastructure. The presence of a land bank in the opinion of Hartvigsen (2014), enhances land mobility, hence enabling a flexible land consolidation framework and facilitating the reallocation process.

Aryeetey and Udry (2010) suggest that land bank utilizes three features to ensure secure land tenure, ultimately yielding a profit. It rents out plots exogenously on a singular occasion. It can retain plots for an extended duration, circumventing the churning that allows individual chiefs to lease the same parcel of land repeatedly, commonly known as the free rider dilemma. It can be substantial, so establishing a reputation for leasing plots exclusively once and imposing a correspondingly elevated fee in return for that enhanced security. The land bank can effectively address the free rider problem that impacts the chiefs (The primary function of a land bank in Ghana is to enable the consolidation of parcels for substantial economic ventures).

Aryeetey and Udry (2010) also observed that a land bank increases the equilibrium rent applicable to all plots. Consequently, there may be an opportunity to implement land taxes. All prior endeavours have been thwarted by the lobbying efforts of the chiefs who govern land. If a portion of the price increase may be taxed, the cash could be allocated to mitigate the expenses associated with land disputes by funding conflict resolution efforts.

Challenges of Implementing Land Bank Practices

Challenges related to Regulations

Alexander (2015), referencing examples from industrialized nations, identifies common obstacles to the transformation of unoccupied and abandoned sites into profitable uses. Depending on the relevant country and local legislation, a land bank may contribute to the eradication, or at least the alleviation, of each of these issues. Experiences from the United States indicate that political pressure may influence future land bank practices. Moreover, once operating, would the land bank consistently receive comprehensive support from the

government and stakeholders (O'Brien, 2005)? Analogous to the rationale for creating a land bank agency, inadequate land management also impacts the prospective functions of the land banks (Amakye & Ameyibor, 2022). He stated that a poor management would pose significant challenges, making it difficult for the land bank to acquire land assets. Consequently, the comprehensiveness of the land administration system is an essential prerequisite for land purchase by land banks. Furthermore, changing the status to a land bank agency necessitates a complex civil court procedure that is time-consuming (Amakye & Ameyibor, 2022).

Challenges related to Finance

Acknowledging property tax delinquency as an impediment, Alexander (2015) elucidates how it hinders the transformation of vacant and abandoned properties. Alexander (2015) emphasized that if tax foreclosure enforcement actions are not promptly initiated upon the onset of delinquency, multiple years of delinquency, along with accrued interest and penalties, may culminate in total outstanding liens exceeding the property's fair market value. This is especially true when the owner has permitted the property to decline throughout the term of delinquency. When tax liens surpass fair market value, the property will not be transacted in the open market.

Insufficient financial resources constitute a significant barrier to land banking (Fitzpatrick, 2009). The Parliamentary Working Group (2020) asserts that finance poses a significant difficulty for land bank institutions, a claim corroborated by Mungkasa (2016). Similar to the situation in the U.S., land bank operations may be hindered by a lack of financial backing from local governments or an excessive reliance on funding sources. The operational efficacy of the Land Bank relies on a steady and sustainable funding source. Amakye & Ameyibor (2022) determined that the regional or provincial government constitutes one of the funding sources identified in Indonesia's land bank, alongside the federal government. Nevertheless, as regional and provincial governments possess their respective allocations and jurisdictions, they will prioritize regional development agendas and programs above national development initiatives.

Challenges related to Management

Upon acquisition, the land bank administers its holdings through rehabilitation prior to sale (Ellen, et al. 2018). Land banks regard properties as real estate rather than as disposable commodities that lose significance after usage (Kildee, 2020). This duration extends from acquisition to disposition. Land banks ought to possess the authority to establish the terms and circumstances for the sale or other disposition of properties from their inventory (O'Brien, 2005).

Training for skills development has been identified as a crucial aspect in enhancing the capacity for success (Nzimande, 2010). The establishment of a Land Bank will entail substantial quantities of land assets. The presence of expert personnel supported by a robust system is a critical necessity (Amakye & Ameyibor, 2022). According to Alexander (2015), the personnel responsible for land bank activities should not be the current land management staff of the municipality, but rather a new autonomous entity. Alexander suggested that if a local government lacks the internal ability to manage inferior properties, establishing a land bank staffed by existing city agencies or departments will not alter the outcome. If a local government is controlled by elected officials who insist on micromanaging all decisions regarding government real property, establishing a land bank will yield minimal operational

efficiency unless its daily governance is independent from these elected officials.

Nonetheless, practical issues arise as government or state properties constitute merely 20% of the nation's total land, with 78% owned by customary authority and the remaining 2% classified as vested holdings (Larbi, 2008). This structure implies that a larger share of the lands is owned and controlled by traditional authorities. Consequently, a significant issue of the land bank concept is the difficulties encountered in purchasing land from conventional landowners. These include ambiguous boundaries, disputes regarding ownership, and the multiple sales of land, among others.

Challenges related to Technical Knowhow and Technology

O'Brien (2005) determined that an integrated management information system is essential for land bank operations to optimize title, purchase, and disposition processes. An integrated database or Management Information System (MIS) with Geographic Information System (GIS) software facilitates the rapid identification of essential properties and ownership, as well as additional relevant information (O'Brien, 2005).

A significant difficulty in implementing land bank practices is the technical difficulties, which include accessibility to land database information, readily available instructions, and technical expertise (Amakye & Ameyibor, 2022).

Certain neighbourhoods may be accurately perceived as exhibiting symptoms of "urban blight." There may be evident indications of a decrease in property tax revenues or an escalation in housing code violations. The lack of a centralized database that precisely documents the scope of land management issues and property locations presents considerable challenges (Alexander, 2015). A significant barrier to acquiring and utilizing land productively is the challenge of obtaining a clear title, which is a legal document that confirms ownership. In the absence of a definitive title, property transactions are impeded, and land cannot be effectively transferred or developed. An integrated database or Management Information System (MIS) with Geographic Information System (GIS) software facilitates the rapid identification of essential properties and ownership, as well as additional relevant information (O'Brien, 2005). O'Brien additionally noted that both Philadelphia and Baltimore possess municipal real estate records integrated with GIS software, which facilitates the mitigation of political and administrative obstacles to the efficacy of their land bank activities. Philadelphia's Neighbourhood Information System offers online access to municipal real estate information and is hosted by the University of Pennsylvania, which also manages the data. Records encompass property dimensions, ownership details, acquisition date, acquisition cost, tax arrears, gas and water account status, municipal code infractions, and more information.

Challenges related to Awareness

Alexander (2015) noted that one reason regular market forces hesitate to acquire unoccupied, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties is due to ambiguous land titles and faults in the property titles. If the title is uninsurable, it possesses minimal or no value to potential owners. The transformation of such properties into productive uses, either directly or indirectly via a land bank, necessitates an assessment of the title issues and the formulation of suitable methods for each category of title difficulty. Alexander (2015) asserts that a crucial policy consideration for government authorities contemplating the creation of a land bank is the formulation of policies regulating sales prices for property transfers.

The enforcement of code violation ordinances during inspection and enforcement operations is essential, as is the communication with land bank management and coordinated departments both within and outside the land bank authority (O'Brien, 2005).

Urban Renewal in Obuasi

Urban Renewal

The emergence of degradation and deterioration is characterized as a process rather than a deliberate action that cannot be rectified on demand or by presidential decree (Dimuna, et al. 2010). The rise and permanence of informal communities, such as Agboghloshie and Old Fadama, in cities like Accra underscore the difficulties of urban degradation. The government's initiatives to move inhabitants or dismantle slums frequently encounter opposition and do not tackle the fundamental issues of deterioration, like poverty and insufficient affordable housing. Consequently, a concerted effort including all stakeholders to facilitate the revitalization of the deteriorating settlement must be contemplated.

In the past, the American 1949 Housing Act's public housing slum clearance program under urban redevelopment served as a case study or benchmark for the area-by-area eradication of residential slums in order to provide better housing. The harsh critiques this first urban redevelopment program provoked prompted changes to the Housing Act's provisions in 1954, replacing urban redevelopment with urban renewal (Glazer, 1965).

Urban Renewal Operations

To properly execute the renewal of an urban settlement, the activities must be conducted as a systematic procedure rather than a chaotic approach. It is a program aimed at revitalizing deteriorated urban neighbourhoods by infusing substantial public cash and governmental authority into the conventional functions of the private market (Dimuna and Omatson, 2010). This allegation renders the municipal assembly ineffective without the backing of a national statutory authority. Ecolum and Emoh (2010) delineated the following processes as essential procedures for urban renewal operations: planning, sensitization, land acquisition, displacement and relocation, site clearing, site improvement, disposition, and new building.

Synergy between Land Bank and Urban Renewal

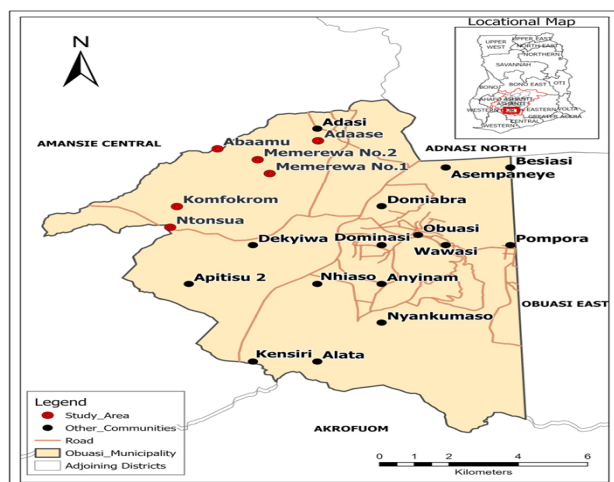
As indicated in the literature above, it can be observed that the Land banking and Urban renewal operational activities are embodied with significant similarities. Implementing land banking for urban renewal in the study area is feasible with additional advantages and improvement. Land bank has the potential to enhance land acquisition, management and land disposal as a result of its statutory legal support with minimal challenges climaxed with effective management. Invariably, even though land banking has been employed for the execution of urban renewal, such instances have taken place in developed nations such as the USA, but not in a developing economy as is being considered in this dissertation.

Study Setting

The Obuasi Municipal Municipality situated in the southern region of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It is situated between longitudes 6.35N and 6.90N, and latitudes 5.35N and 5.65N, encompassing a total land area of 162.4 square kilometres, which constitutes 0.67% of the total land area of the Ashanti Region (GSS 2010). The Obuasi Municipality is bordered by Adansi North to the north, Adansi South to the east, Adansi South to the south, and Amansie Central to the west. The Municipality's literacy rate is 78.0%, surpassing the national average of 69.8%.

The Obuasi Municipality and its surroundings host 12 senior high and technical schools, producing about 12,000 graduates annually. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of Obuasi Municipality showing selected communities.



Research Design and Approach

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. A lot of data collection, collation, and interpretation was done using this method. According to Davis (2007), data on the phenomenal of land banks' current statistics was gathered via a descriptive survey. The research used a mixed-methods strategy, combining quantitative and qualitative information.

Jurisdictions' capacity to purchase land for personal use or sale to private parties was investigated using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The objectivity of quantitative approaches has been lauded, whereas the subjectivity of qualitative methods has been attacked (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). A seemingly objective questionnaire is really a result of the researcher's biases in terms of both design and content. The necessity to reconcile qualitative and quantitative research approaches has recently come to light, however, as it has become clear that the two are not mutually exclusive (Robson, 2001).

Population and Sample Design

In all, 241 surveys were sent out to residents of the five chosen neighbourhoods. The study's representative sample size for each of the five communities was determined by striking a compromise between precision and practicality, with 241 participants selected (See Table 1).

Table 1: Sampled Communities with their Sample Size

Community population 2021	Total populations 2021	No. of households	Household (%)	Sample selected from community
Abaamu	252	252	3.749	9
Adaase	559	559	8.316	20
Ntongua	567	567	8.435	20
Memiriwa 1 & 2	1223	971	14.445	35
Konfokrom	5353	4373	65.055	157
Total	7954	6722	100.00	241

Source (Author's calculation: Census 2021)

The total number of households, i.e., 6,722 was used the sampling frame. The total number of households sampled was determined using the formula;

$n = N/[1+N(A)^2]$ where 'n' was the sample size, 'N' was the total number of households, 'a' was the margin of error at 5% (0.05).

$$n = 6722 / [1+6722(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 6722 / [1+ 6722 (0.004)]$$

$$n = 6722 / [1+26.888]$$

$$n = 6722 / 27.888$$

$$n = 241.029$$

$$n = 241$$

The number of households for each selected community was calculated using simple percentage, as shown in table 1.

Sampling Techniques

A total of 241 houses were included in the study, with the following numbers randomly picked from each community: Abaamu 9, Adaase 20, Ntongua 20, Memiriwa 1&2 35, and Konfokrom 157. These are the heads of household. In contrast, five individuals from the Ashanti area were included in the study using purposive sampling technique. These individuals represented five different departments: the Lands Commission, the Stool Land Secretariat, the Planning and Physical Planning Division, the Estate Division under the Lands Commission, and the Chiefs and Land Custodians. According to Trochim (2006), when a researcher uses purposive sampling, they are more likely to hear the voices of the target group.

The 2021 Population Census already includes this information, so it was a breeze to find. They proceeded to use both random and purposeful sampling methods. The 2021 Census provided the enumeration areas, and the communities were chosen via purposive sampling. Every fifth unit was chosen for the Households and Jurisdictions using a sampling proportion of 1/5, which means the sampling started randomly.

The researchers combed through scholarly publications, books, journals, and unpublished reports to locate any pertinent material regarding the land bank, mining, and urban redevelopment projects. They used the internet to look for a number of databases and search engines related to land banks, mining, and urban regeneration. A number of Ghanaian libraries and online resources were combed through for primary sources and archival records pertaining to mining, urban redevelopment, and land banks.

Using a basic random sample procedure, the households were chosen to administer the questionnaire. However, a home must be a part of the chosen community in order to be chosen. In one home, we polled the head of the household. The survey's responder was the household's breadwinner.

Methods of Data Collection

The feasibility of land banks as a tool for urban redevelopment in certain Obuasi neighbourhoods was first investigated in a desk study that formed the basis of this investigation. Meetings were held to gain insights into the current land management situation by key stakeholders, including local Chiefs and Land Custodians, the Lands Commission, the Estate Division under the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands, the Valuation Division, the Physical Planning Department, and the Office of the Stool Land Secretariat. We had a lengthy conversation about land bank issues in the chosen towns. This method is in line with what Hampton (2006) called a quick participatory appraisal, which places an emphasis on community and stakeholder involvement in the research.

Focus group discussion and interview were also conducted in order to understand how residents of Obuasi Municipality

feel about land banks. Focus groups discussions were conducted in Twi, a language that the researcher is fluent in, while interviews were conducted in English and Twi and careful observations were all part of the methodology. Focus groups had a longstanding history in market research and, more recently, in medical research (Powell and Single, 1996). They have been variously defined in the literature. Powell et al. (1996) define a focus group as a collection of persons chosen and convened by researchers to discuss and provide feedback on various facets of the research based on their personal experiences. Consequently, focus groups were utilized to facilitate discussions on land bank, urban renewal matters, and other subjective topics as a collaborative endeavour. The primary objective of employing focus groups in this study is to gather respondents' perceptions, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and experiences regarding land banks and urban renewal, and to ascertain their perspectives on the potential of land banks for urban regeneration.

In addition, In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit data from study participants as Johnson et al., (2002) observed, In-depth interviews are comprehensive interviews designed to elucidate links that cannot be discerned by more extensive quantitative methods. It enables the researcher to examine subjective meanings and motivations alongside quantitative features accessible through organized surveys. When the interviewee declines to authorize tape recording, the researcher meticulously notes observations, focusing on the respondent's body language and expressions.

Observation is an exceptionally efficient technique in qualitative research, especially in comprehensive studies. The process includes visits to individuals within the studied community and emphasizes non-verbal methods of information acquisition, such as observing, listening, recording, and taking notes as respondents engage in their activities. Observation is a methodological approach intimately linked to anthropology, gaining prominence through the contributions of Malinowski (1929) and Franz Boas in the urban studies of the Chicago school of sociology.

Survey Instruments

Questionnaires are a cost-effective method for collecting data from a potentially extensive pool of responders. They are very simple to give discreetly, particularly if participants are to respond honestly (Mum and Drever 1999). Questionnaires were utilized to gather information for the study. This study administered questionnaires to household heads. The questionnaires comprise both closed-ended and open-ended questions, designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data. In order to get a feel for the actual scenario, the researchers administered the questionnaire with the help of research assistants. In cases when the indigenous individuals are illiterate and unable to complete the questionnaires independently, the closed-ended questions were elucidated to respondents when they expressed uncertainty. Multiple choice options were offered, including an 'other, please specify' choice for supplementary responses. The Likert scale method was employed to inquire about the land bank institution and its impact on urban regeneration.

The study also made use of interview and focus group guides. The interview guide was intended for the additional stakeholders engaged in land administration. Using a digital voice recorder to capture all activities, refraining from interruptions, making notes, and asking for clarifications and definitions of local jargon, the researcher conducted all interviews and mediated all group discussions.

Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instruments

The unstructured sections of the questionnaire were employed to validate findings obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The interview method employed verbal administration of questions to reduce the non-response rate. The researchers were able to update and clarify several points during pre-test of the questionnaire that was carried out in all the selected communities. The time required to conduct a questionnaire was estimated in the pre-test. After the pretest, the questionnaire was slightly revised by rephrasing a few questions.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques were used in this investigation. Descriptive methods (cross tabulations and frequencies) were employed for the quantitative analysis in order to establish guidelines for the best possible manner to combine the variables using the statistical program for the social sciences (SPSS). Following the re-coding of all open-ended data, these were completed. To provide a visual representation of the data, graphs and charts were created. Additionally, descriptive percentages and frequencies were used. Direct quotes from study participants and thematic analysis were also used to analyse the data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions.

Result and Discussions

Demographic Characteristics of study participants

Education Level of Respondents

This study examined respondents' level of education as it could have influence on their knowledge of land banking initiatives. The findings showed that 55 respondents representing 23% were not educated, 58 respondents representing 24% were educated up to primary school, 101 respondents representing 42% were educated up to Junior High School/Middle School, and 22 respondents representing 9% were educated up to secondary/technical school level. Only 5 respondents, representing 2% were educated up to tertiary level as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Education level of respondents

Education Level	Respondents	Percentages
None	55	22.8
Primary	58	24.06
JHS/Middle school	101	41.90
Secondary/Technical	22	9.1
Tertiary	5	2.07

Education level and knowledge of purpose of land banks

In order to establish whether respondents' level of education has an influence on their knowledge of the purpose or reasons for establishing land banks, regression analysis was conducted. The findings are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Education level and knowledge of purpose of land Banks

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.046788052
R Square	0.002189122
Adjusted R Square	-0.000382556
Standard Error	0.660101878
Observations	241

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	0.37092	0.37092	0.85124	0.356774373
Residual	241	169.065	0.43573		
Total	241	169.436			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

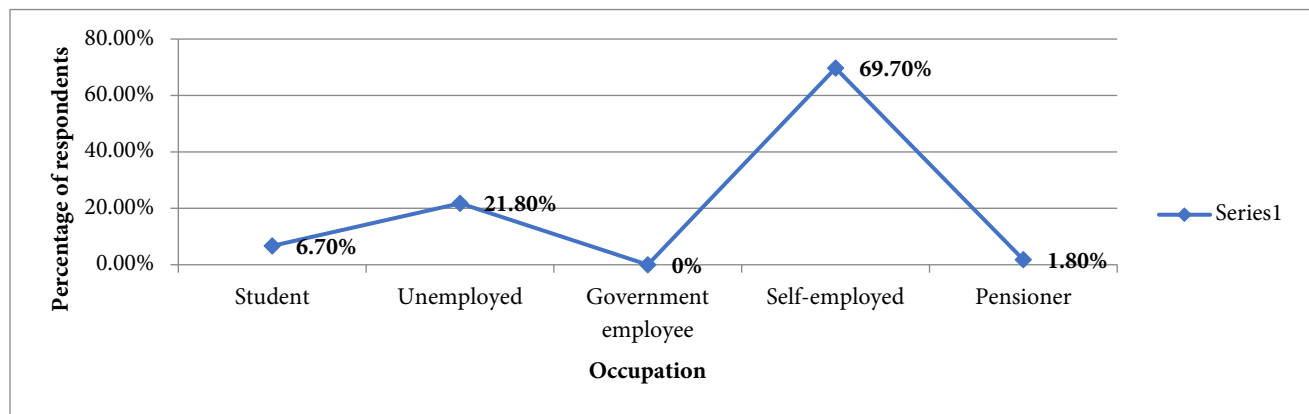
When the regression was run, the R result turned out to be 0.046 which has a weak or low effect on respondents' understanding of the reasons for establishing land banks. In other words, respondents' level of education had a weak or low effect on what the definition of a land bank is. But there was a positive correlation between their level of education and their

understanding of the reasons for establishing land banks, even though this positive correlation was also weak 0.06. Furthermore, since the F-test value of **0.85124** is greater than the significance F value **0.356774373**, there is no relation between respondents' level of education and their understanding of the definitions of a land bank.

Occupation of Respondents

The nature of the respondents' occupation can influence their thinking on the purpose land banking should serve. It was therefore necessary to conduct analysis of respondent's

occupation and further establish the extent to which respondents' type of occupation influenced their thinking about the purpose of land banks. The findings are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 5.5 Occupation of respondents**

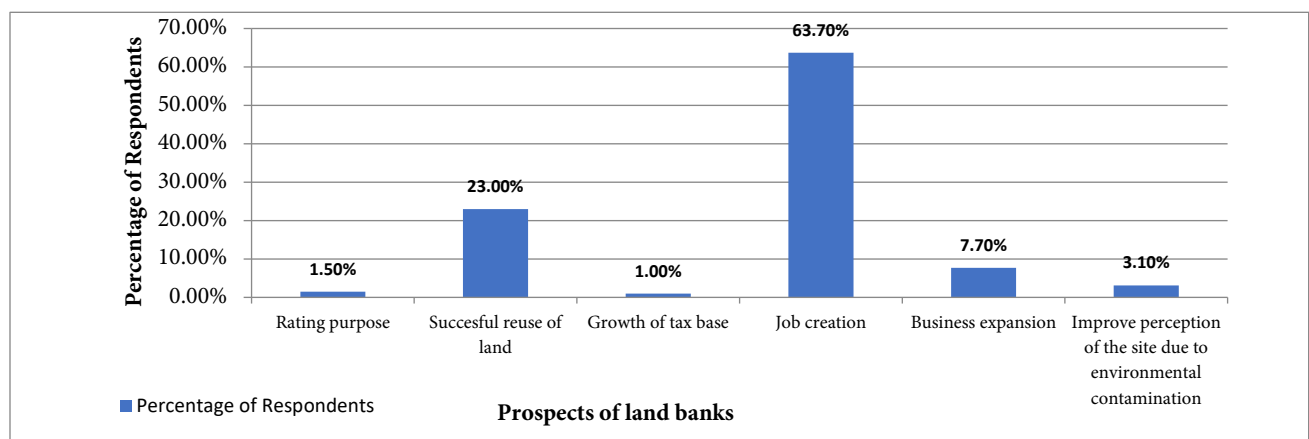
Source: Field data, 2023

From the figure 5.5 above, the findings show that 168 respondents, representing 69.7% were self-employed, and 53 respondents representing 21.8% were unemployed. The self-employed were mainly identified as people engaged in farming, small-scale illegal mining ("galamsey"), "okada" (commercial motorbike riding) operation, tilling, hairdressing, trading, dressmaking, electrical work, shoe making, carpentry and commercial driving. None of the respondents interviewed was employed in the government sector and only 16 respondents

representing 6.7% were students, and 4 respondents representing 1.8% were pensioners

Prospects of land banks for urban renewal

Land banking is seen as a strategy that has prospects for urban renewal in the sense that it enhances secure tenure to land and improves the welfare of the poor. In view of this, the study delved into respondents' understanding of what they considered to be the prospects of land banking. The findings are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Prospects of land banks**

Source: Field data, 2023

From Figure 3, majority of respondents 153 representing 63.7% identified job creation as one of the prospects of establishing land banks. The findings also showed that 55 respondents representing 23% of those interviewed, identified re-use of land as another prospect that comes with the establishment of land banks. Respondents maintained that land banking can serve as a strategy to reclaim and develop abandoned lands into land banks for various purposes as identified earlier. Closely related to this is the prospect of improved perception of sites abandoned due to environmental contamination by mining activities as identified by 7 respondents representing 3.10%. Other prospects identified included business expansion proposed by 19 respondents representing 7.7%, rating purposes was suggested by 4 respondents, representing 1.5% and growth of tax base was identified by 3 respondents representing 1.0%. The identification of prospects such as business expansion, rating purposes and growth of tax base are particularly of high interest to a country like Ghana which has over the years struggled to meet its domestic revenue collection targets.

This finding affirms the proposition set for the study that “institution of land bank has prospect for urban renewal” since the prospect is not only in ensuring sanity in land acquisition due to reduced land dispute but also improve the wellbeing of the people in the community as it offers job opportunities. Besides, it also leads to proper land administration and efficient and effective use of land which are tangential to urban renewal. Van der Krabben et al. (2020) further assert that the deployment of land banks differs according to the legislation and objectives governing their implementation in a certain country. The objectives may include shaping and regulating suburban communities (Stoebuck, 1986), revitalizing deteriorated urban areas (Brownfield, Tappendorf, and Denzin, 2011), ensuring conformity with overarching planning goals (Van der Krabben et al., 2020), and managing land prices influenced by speculation (Carr and Smith, 1975; Davis, 1976). This study restricts the discourse to the potential of land banks for urban redevelopment.

Challenges in establishing land banks

The land tenure arrangement in Ghana for instance presents challenges that could affect the implementation of land banking initiatives. The study therefore sought to identify some of the possible bottlenecks that could affect the implementation of land banking initiatives in the study area. The results of the study identified five major challenges that could affect the implementation of land banking. These five major challenges were ranked by respondents as indicated in table 3.

Table 3: Key barriers to establishing land banks

No	Key Barriers	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Lack of political will	91	37.8
2	Lack of funds to acquire, manage and dispose-off land banks	72	29.9
3	Environmental problems associated with clearing of virgin lands for establishment of land banks	38	15.8
4	Reluctance of property owners to release land	28	11.6
5	Possibility of lack of demand or buyers from land banks	12	4.9

Source: Field data, 2023

From table 3, the reluctance of property owners, especially traditional authorities, family/clan heads to release land for purpose of land banking is partly in sync with Larbi's (2008) observation of the frustrations associated with acquiring land from landowners. In the view of this, the fact that state lands only constitute 20% of the total lands in the country as against 78% ownership by customary authorities and 2% as vested lands present practical challenges such as undefined boundaries, conflict over ownership and multiple sale of land among others. This study further observed that the possible reluctance of property owners to release land for the establishment of land banks could be due to lack of understanding of the concept of land banking and the anticipated beneficial effects of land banking on the livelihoods of community members.

Respondents also pointed to available evidence which suggests that state agencies have over the years proved to be ineffective and unreliable in initiating and sustaining public projects of this magnitude. Therefore, the fear that lands released may either be diverted for the benefits of high-profile political elites rather than the ordinary citizens or general public may be the reason for the unwillingness of property owners to release land for purposes of land banking. Finally, respondents were also oblivious of the fact that property owners who voluntarily release parcels of land for public projects have often encountered challenges such as non-payment of compensation, delay in payment of compensation or inadequate compensation packages. These three key factors were found to be the possible factors that could trigger property owners' reluctance to release lands. The above findings, consequently, confirm the proposition stated to guide this study that “Implementation of Land Bank in Obuasi Municipality is likely to face some challenges”. This explains the limited nature of public private partnership in using the concept of land bank as an urban renewal process as affirmed by Wang, Fan, & Yang (2022). This stand defers from what is captured in the literature as Parliamentary Working Group (2020), sees financial bottleneck as the greatest challenge to the establishment of a land bank.

As indicated in table 3, lack of political will was identified by 91 respondents, representing 37.75% as a key barrier to the establishment of land banks. Furthermore 72 respondents, representing 29.87% identified lack of funds to acquire, manage and dispose-off land banks. Also, environmental problems associated with the clearing of virgin lands for the establishment of land banks was identified by 38 respondents, representing 15.76% while 12 respondents, representing 4.97% identified the possibility of lack of demand or investment in land banks. Reluctance of property owners to release land for the establishment of land banks was identified by 28 respondents, representing 11.61%. The identification of lack of political will as a key barrier to the establishment of land banks by majority of the respondents was an indication of community members' reservations of successive governments' commitment towards the implementation of projects of similar nature. With respect to lack of funds to acquire, manage and dispose-off land banks, respondents intimated that successive governments have over the years demonstrated their inability to raise sufficient revenues and judiciously use such revenues to undertake major projects. Respondents therefore expressed doubts that an initiative of this magnitude would attract the needed financial support from government agencies due to competing demands on limited government's financial resources. It was however noted by staff of some land sector agencies that a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement could be a more effective way of initiating land banking initiatives.

How land bank can help improve housing development and reduce informal settlement in Obuasi municipal

This objective sought to find out how institution of land banks could be a significant contributor to improving housing development and reducing informal settlement in most communities of the country. The result of the study suggests that 181 participants representing 75% of the total participants agreed with the statement that land banks can improve housing development and reduce informal settlement due to the right demarcation of land for various uses. However, 25 participants representing 10% disagreed with the statement. See Table 4.

Table 4: Land bank improves housing development and reduces informal settlement

Statements	Agreed		Uncertain		Disagreed	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
land bank improves housing development and reduce informal settlement due to right demarcation of land for various usage	181	75	35	16	25	10
land bank improves housing development and reduce informal settlement because it prevents erection of improper structures	145	60	75	31	21	9
land bank improves housing development and reduce informal settlement due to provision of well plan layout for residency in Obuasi.	175	72	60	25	11	5

Source: field survey, 2023

This analysis and observations from the table are in conformity with the proposition stated for the study that, “land banks could impact on housing development and the reduction of informal settlement in Obuasi municipality” (Wang, Fan & Yang, 2022).

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Considering the extent to which land bank practice could be improved upon to make land easily accessible, it can be concluded from the study that indeed land banks if fully implemented could help to resolve land acquisition issues, thereby making access to land much easier in spite of the implementation challenges

In view of the findings from the study, it is recommended that Government should initiate land tenure reforms to facilitate access to large hectares of land for large scale agribusiness and commercial ventures. This may be achieved through; Integrating customary and statutory land tenure frameworks to minimize disputes and overlaps. implementing a digitalized system for land records along with a centralized database that enhances transparency while mitigating fraud risks. Formulating explicit policies and legal structures designed to safeguard the interests of both customary landowners and investors., Involving traditional leaders and landholders in policy development, thereby fostering support and collaboration, creating district or regional-level land banks, overseen by local authorities working together with the Lands Commission. It is also recommended that land policy

should be backed by appropriate legislation to improve security and certainty of land placed in the bank. So, the commitment of the stool and families to such a scheme could be guaranteed for future development and by so doing issues of encroachment on the part of customary owners could be reduced.

Furthermore, it is recommended that, the land banks policy should be fully implemented in the country, in so doing there may be an opportunity for land taxes to be introduced. This will go a long way to boost the economy of the country and these incomes can be used in creating jobs for the people in Ghana and also ensure harmony between land owners and users and promote economic and social stability by improving land security.

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Competing interest

Authors declare no competing interest

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest

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