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**ETHIOPIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MEKELLE
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING
URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MASTER PROGRAM**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF LAND GRABBING; CAUSE AND
CONSEQUENCE: THE CASE OF MEKELLE CITY**

By:

TEDROS FUFA WELDEMICHAEL

DEC, 2025

Mekelle, Ethiopia



Mekelle University

Ethiopian institute of technology

School of architecture and urban planning

Urban planning and development master program

**An assessment of land grabbing; cause and consequence: the
case of Mekelle city**

A thesis submitted to Mekelle University, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, postgraduate program in Urban Planning and Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Urban Planning and development study.

BY-TEDROS FUFA

ADVISOR-ZEMENFES GEBREGZIABHER /Phd/

DEC 2025

Mekelle, Ethiopia

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by:

Name: TEDROS FUFA WELDEMICHEAL

Signature: 

Date: 19/12/2025

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Zemenfes G/her (Ph.D.)

Signature: 

Date: 19/12/2025

CERTIFICATE

This thesis is submitted to Mekelle University, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, postgraduate program in Urban Planning and Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Urban Planning and development study.

Title of thesis:

Land Grabbing; Cause and Consequence: The Case of Mekelle City

Candidate: TEDROS FUFA WELDEMICHAEL

Date: DEC, 2025

Approval Board

Advisor: Zementso Gilher (PhD) Signature [Signature] Date 19/12/2025

Chair Person: Tewelde Signature _____ Date 19/12/2025

Internal Examiner: Giday D, PhD Signature [Signature] Date 19/12/2025

External Examiner: Kesate Esteria (Dr) Signature [Signature] Date 19/12/2025



Abstract

Land grabbing have significant social, economic, and environmental effect on both urban and rural areas. Therefore, this study is carried out to record the land grabbing magnitude, identify its cause and consequences by using observation, interview and preparing questioner as method of primary data collection and collecting different secondary data from governmental and non-governmental institutions and then using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis method, using sample sizes, which lead to findings that are more generalizable to a broader population. Based on the analysis The land grabbed from 2007 E.C. up to 2012 E.C. is found to be 49.86 hectare which account 0.15% area of Mekelle city; and also from 2013 E.C. up to 2017 E.C. a total area of 245.01-hectare land is illegally grabbed, which account for 0.76% area of Mekelle city and this indicating a notable increase. When we observe the last 5 years' land grabbing magnitude it directly shows direct effect of the war which open door to illegal land grabbing. Totally from 2007 E.C. up to 2017 E.C. a total of 294.87-hectare land which account to 0.91% of Mekelle's land is illegally grabbed. This alarmingly increase of land grabbing will significantly impact social, culture and economy of society and also affect the structural and urban design, hinder planned development of Mekelle city.

The finding of this study demonstrates that the land grabbing of Mekelle city due to weak governance, corruption, legal loopholes, unfair policy and economic interests. Therefore, policy makers and other related sectors should work in strengthen legal and institutional framework, providing a policy that protect land rights, promote equitable urban development and ensure sustainable resource use.

Keywords: - Land grabbing, Mekelle, Urbanization, Peri-urban, Farmer's, Illegal, Cause. Consequence, War.

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List of Acronyms

ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ha	Hectare
i.e.	that is
MCSPR	Mekelle City Structural Plan Revision
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLC	Private Limited Company
Sq.km	Square Kilometer
St.	Saint
UN's	United Nation's

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Land grabbing can be defined as being the control (whether through ownership, lease, concession, contracts, quotas, or general power) of larger than locally-typical amounts of land by any person or entity (public or private, foreign or domestic) via any means ('legal' or 'illegal') for purposes of speculation, extraction, resource control or commodification at the expense of peasant farmers, agro ecology, land stewardship, food sovereignty and human rights (*European Coordination Via Campesina*). In other way land grabbing' has many different definitions but what they all have in common is the idea that it involves the legally and illegally acquisition of land for different purposes such as: commercial, industrial purposes, agricultural, residential and big infrastructure development or tourism.

Land grabbing will also be understood from David Harvey's interpretation of the phenomena, which is defined as; a symptom of neoliberalism and a response to crises (*Harvey*). Examples of such crises are; crisis of over accumulation and financial, energy and food crises (*Hall*)

In many African countries the land grabbing process is completely legal, dispossession and relocation is often supported by the law. Africa has been especially targeted in the global land grabs.

In 2004 the World Bank identified Ethiopia's areas of growth potential, whereas increased public investments in development in specific geographic areas would conclude in agriculture growth and in 2011 Ethiopia signed 406 commercial investments projects, resulting in leasing around (World Bank 2004) one million hectare of land to both foreign and domestic investors (*Damtew, 2019*).

Land grabbing is the major source of military, political, and economic powers of successive regimes of Ethiopia. Both government and people of Ethiopia is owner of the land, but the rights of individuals and communities are 'holding (use) rights' (Proclamation No. 456/2005).

The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange. (Ethiopia's Constitution of 1994) In Ethiopia, the ownership of rural and urban land is,

by constitution, vested upon the state and peoples of Ethiopia. Farmers have use rights to land, and cannot sell or mortgage land. The term land grabbing, however, takes a more critical stance towards processes and focuses more on unfair power relations and the structural processes behind the phenomena. This thesis defines land grabbing as a; legally and illegally control of land by transnational and domestic investors, governments also in order to produce for housing development, infrastructures, industrial commodities for domestic and international markets.

Tigray, Ethiopia, had a complex land tenure system which has a long history. Traditionally, every Tigrayan was entitled to a piece of land by virtue of the fact that he/she belongs by birth to a given community (*Haile, Feb. 24, 2019*)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Access to land and its resources is important for many people around the world, but nowhere is land as crucial to livelihood as in Africa (Lisk 2013: 576). Most land transactions have been done between governments and multinational companies. For many communities in Ethiopia, land is not only important for food production and economic benefits, but their cultural and social identity is also connected to the land urbanization often leads to land grabbing, a phenomenon where individuals or entities illegally seize land for development, agriculture, or other purposes. This can occur due to several factors: Increased demand for land, weak land governance, economic pressures, displacement of communities, and infrastructure development.

The impacts of war on land grabbing are profound and multifaceted, affecting social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Here are some key impacts: displacement of communities, weakening of legal frameworks, exploitation of resources, social tensions and conflict, environmental consequences and long-term impacts on development.

Land grabbing poses significant challenges to social justice, economic development, and environmental sustainability in Mekelle city. As Mekelle expand and the recent effect of Tigray war, increasing demand for land often leads to the illegal seizure of land from vulnerable communities, resulting in widespread displacement and loss of livelihoods. This phenomenon is exacerbated by weak governance structures, inadequate legal protections, and a lack of transparency in land transactions. This research aimed to show the consequences of land

grabbing such as: violation of land rights, corruption and lack of accountability, social conflict, economic inequality, environmental degradation, inadequate legal frameworks.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research is to study the illegal land grabbing, cause and consequence of land grabbing of Mekelle city by sample sizing. Assess implications of excessive urban expansion on the rural areas.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

- Assess the contestants, perceptions of the Mekelle peoples in terms of gains and losses from the land grabs;
- Quantify the illegally land grabbed of Mekelle city;
- Explore the socio-economic implications of land grabs on the Mekelle people.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the consequence of social, economic, political and environmental impacts occurred from land grabbing and how are these impacting on the urban and peri-urban populations' livelihoods in Mekelle city?
2. What are the major Cause of land grabbing and who are the major actors of land grabbing in Mekelle city?
3. Why famers resist against changing their living condition from rural area to urban area in Mekelle city?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to elucidate the land grabbing phenomenon and its consequences on urban populations in Mekelle city. It holds significant academic value across various disciplines. The academic significance of researching land grabbing in urban areas lies in its potential to address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. By contributing to various

fields of study, this research can inform policy-makers, promote social justice, and enhance our understanding of urban dynamics in an increasingly complex world.

Researching land grabbing in urban areas has profound social significance, impacting communities, governance, and social justice. The social significance of researching land grabbing in urban areas extends beyond academic inquiry; it addresses fundamental issues of justice, equity, and community well-being. By illuminating the experiences of affected populations and advocating for their rights, this research plays a crucial role in fostering more just and inclusive urban environments. This study will scrutinize which underlying factors enable and facilitate land grabbing in Mekelle city as well as analyze the consequences that it entails on sustainable livelihoods, fairly land distribution and food security for the urban populations.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study only contains the planning boundary and administration boundary of Mekelle city which defined in structural plan produced in 2008 E.C in terms legal and illegal land grabbing. Most of these analysis starts after new structure plan approved in 2008 E.C during and after the Tigray war.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Data limitation of this study on land grabbing could be the lack of access to accurate and up-to-date report on land how many hectares grabbed legally and illegally at Mekelle municipality office. As a result, this study relied on incomplete or outdated data, leading to potential inaccuracies in the analysis and conclusions drawn from the research. This limitation could hinder the study's ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent and impact of land grabbing in a particular time. Financial, cost associated with conducting comprehensive field research and data collection, is other limitation in this study which has been tried to reduce its impact by incorporating additional self-income. Time is also another constraint that limit research ability to conduct long-term fieldwork or follow-up interviews with affected communities over an extended period. This could result in a limited understanding of the long-term impacts of land grabbing on local populations.

1.8 Organization of the Study

Introduction:

- back ground of the study
- Statement of the problem
- Objective
- Research question
- Significance of the study
- Scope of the study
- Limitation of the study

Literature Review:

- Review existing literature on land grabbing, including definitions, causes, impacts, and responses.
- Identify gaps in the literature that the study aims to address.

Methodology:

- Describe the research design, including the study's scope, data sources, and methods of data collection.
- Explain how data will be analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions.

Analysis and discussion:

Conclusion and recommendation:

Discuss the implications of the study findings for policy, practice, and future research. Provide recommendations for addressing land grabbing and promoting more equitable land governance. Summarize the main findings of the study and their significance. Reflect on limitations of the research and suggest avenues for further inquiry.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A systematic literature review is meant to be repeatable and the process should be transparent, it is furthermore imperative to document all the different stages in the research process of a literature review as for any other piece of research (*Aveyard*). We will initially develop a systematic search strategy which includes formulated research questions and key words as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria's. This will guide the review and allows us to identify relevant literature, thus minimizing the risk of a random and disorganized search process (*Aveyard*).

2.1.1 History of Land Grabbing Global Trend

As a term and a concept, grabbing invokes a very long history of enclosures of land belonging to the enclosures were usually violent and were aimed at accommodating global capital expansion. The issue of profit-making drives and orients land grabbing. This involves the opening of free markets through the adoption of neoliberal market policies (*Polany, 1880*)

Land grabbing provides a lens on the dynamics of contradictions of the food regime, which concurrently situates the land grab as something other which goes beyond a simple enclosure of land for the purposes of capitalist expansion. The recent land deals mask colonial expansionism and land alienation. In one way or the other, these land deals involve novel configurations of the old relations (*White et al., Cousins, Borras, Sauer & Ye,)* Each of these mechanisms of property accumulation either through selling or leasing land to foreigners lead to various forms of dispossession. These forms of dispossessions have varying end results for rural livelihoods as well as their social and political relations. The investments have notably surged in the areas where inputs for industrial production were readily available, markets modestly accessible, and costs of land low (*McKeon, Oliveira; Oliveira, McKay & Liu,)*

2.1.2 Land Grabbing in Africa Trend

The ownership and use of land, especially among traditional producers in most developing countries, is not just a source of livelihood but also a symbol of identity, dignity, solidarity, and peace. (*Hadary, Egemi Komey and El*). African land rushes of the 19th and 20th centuries, legal manipulations which were rooted in the notion that land in colonies was empty and un-owned drove and oriented land (*Makki & Geisler*). The decolonization process led to changes in how the

land was held. The achievement of independence changed most land holdings by large scale corporations that owned large tracts of land. Independence led to the land redistribution programs whose aim was to give the land back to the indigenous owners (*White*). The major aim of these processes, which were rooted in socialist collectivization as seen in the (*Swynnerton*), was aimed at correcting some historical wrongs. The land redistribution programs were also aimed at stemming the radicalization of the rural poor as a political force (*White*). It is ironic that the changes which ensued soon after the decolonization process are suddenly being reversed.

2.1.3 Land Grabbing in Ethiopia Trend

Agriculture is also an important element in the export sector as it stands for 85% of the country's total export (*Central Intelligence Agency*). Yet, the lack of efficiency of the agricultural sector is not providing enough food or wealth for rural populations. This has created an urge to invest in agriculture, which is seen as a necessity in order to fight poverty and meet the development goals (*Alamirew, Grethe, Siddig & Wossen*). Ethiopia has a total of 73 million hectare of arable land, but only 15 million hectares is being cultivated, in which the majority of the cultivated land is under the control of small hold over cultivation. Before 1975, there were several types of land tenure systems which differed from province to province. There is general tendency to divide Ethiopia tenure in to those of the North and those of south, because the north is the historical heartland of the empire and characterized by the communal tenure, and the south is a conquest area that has come under the domination of the north through essential private tenure system only within the last century ((*Crummey Donald*).

In most of the northern Ethiopia, the dominant tenure arrangement before the land reform of 1975 was communal form called the rist system (*Bereket Kebede, Land Tenure and the Common Pool in Rural Ethiopia: A Study Bases in Fifteen Sitesp.*). Rist has several different layers of meaning. Its most basic sense is one of a general right to inherit the patrimony of one's parent's birth rights (*[Ibid (n) 11, p.9]*). In central and northern Ethiopia, land use was dominated by the rist and rest type tenures, so often misleadingly termed communal. Another and more genuinely communal land use pattern found in the north was the village or diessa tenure, in which land was redistributed to family heads every 5-7 years, with lots being drawn in each of three fertility grades (*Donald*).

2.2 Definition of Concepts

2.2.1 Land Grabs

The term land grabs have been defined from various standpoints and has not had a single meaning. This is because the meaning, substance and form of such large-scale land acquisitions differ. Some land deals (between governments and foreign companies) are as yet projected and not actual. They are dominated mainly by leases rather than sales. Given the fact that the social and institutional agencies of this reconstitution of global property relations also involve local capital and non-Western states unsettle the fundamental tenets and scope of the term ‘grabbing’ (Makki & Geisler , 2011). In this study, Land grabbing is the control - whether through ownership, lease, concession, contracts, quotas, or general power - of larger or small amounts of land by any persons or entities - public or private, foreign or domestic - via any means - ‘legal’ or ‘illegal’ – for purposes of speculation, extraction, resource control or commodification at the expense of peasant farmers, agro ecology, land stewardship, food sovereignty and human rights Land Leasing In this study is the antithesis of land grabbing. (European corporation)

2.3 Rules and Proclamations On Land Right in Ethiopia

The Constitution of Ethiopia, formerly known as the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), deals with ‘Right to poverty’ under article 40, which provides important details about land rights in Ethiopia. (*constitution, ethiopian*) Article 40 (3) of the constitution emphasizes what could be seen as the core question of land ownership in Ethiopia:

” The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange” (*Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*) .(*Ibid, Article 40*)

Concerns land investments. It deals with the right of investors to acquire land and declare that private investors may get land on the basis of payment arrangement. The Federal Rural Land proclamation, declares that investors are allowed by law to acquire rural land for agricultural investment:

“Private investors that engage in agricultural development activities shall have the right to use rural land in accordance with the investment policies and laws at federal and regional levels.”

(Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Rural Land ., 456/2005). According to the Ethiopian constitution, all land in Ethiopia, both urban and rural, is owned by the state, which certainly facilitates allocation to investors (Keeley, 2014). From the mid-1990s, agriculture was seen as the driving force for the national economy, particularly regarding smallholder farming and crop production. The Ethiopian government launched a development plan called ‘Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI). The ADLI strategy aimed to promote foreign and domestic investments into the agriculture sector. The purpose was to support smallholders in the highlands by supplying them with fertilizers and new technologies for irrigation and at the same time heavily promote foreign investment in the lowlands ((Hules & Singh , 2017)

Federal and regional governments were from 2007 and forth actively seeking foreign investors and promoting large-scale investments, during which time several documents were prepared in order to achieve this. These documents further stated that the lands offered were unused and that investments in these would not have any effects on local livelihoods (Regassa; Rahmato).

2.4 The Scale of Land Grabbing in Ethiopia

Land grabbing in Ethiopia, both by domestic and foreign investors; have taken place in the country over the last decade, mainly in the lowland regions. The Ethiopian government has already allowed millions of hectares of land to be commercialized for agricultural investments. (Moreda).

Between 2004-2009, domestic investors accounted for 60% of the acquired land areas in Ethiopia. However, foreign investors have increased and recent data shows that Ethiopia has assigned 2.4 million ha of land to international investors. This puts Ethiopia amongst the top countries in Africa in terms of the amount of land leased out (Cotula , Alamirew). The government of Ethiopia wanted to increase the large-scale commercial farming to 3.4 million ha by 2015 (Hules & Singh)

Table 2-1: CIA face book, Ethiopia (2018)

No	Ethiopia	
1	Area	1,104,300 sq.km

2	Population size	105,350,020(2017)
3	Population growth rate	2.85% (2017
4	Urban population	20.8 (2018)
5	GDP per capital	\$2100 (2017)
6	Population below poverty line	29.6 % (2013)
7	Land use	Agricultural land 36.3% Arbal land 15.2% Permanent crops 1.1% Permanent pasture 20% Forest 12.2% Other 15.2%
8	Agriculture products	Cereal, coffee, oilseed, cotton, sugarcane, vegetable, chat, cut flower

2.5 Land Grabbing in Mekelle

In spite of the spatial expansion of the urban area of Mekelle driven by population increase, the urban boundary was restricted within the flatland to the west of the hilly area of the city until the fall of the Derg regime, which is confirmed by the development plan of 1993. However, rapid urban growth since this period pushed urban planners to extend the urban boundary beyond the mountain. Presently, a much broader area has been added to the urban area, and road networks as well as other physical issues are in the hands of the city administration. This territorial expansion

of the city absorbed traditional settlements into the urban area. From this, “urbanized settlements” newly appeared here and there in Mekelle.

The latest edition of urban planning, the Mekelle City Structure Plan Revision (MCSPR), was submitted in 2016 to the city administration by Mekelle University. Accordingly, housing provision was a major priority among the development issues, along with unemployment and poverty, water supply and infrastructure, good governance, and municipal and other utility services. Furthermore, it also consciously paid attention to local contexts in its text.

Mekelle City is poor and the manner by which the need for new land from 1994 to 2005 the city land area increased from 23 sq.km to 74 sq.km and the increase, particularly since 2005. The number of expropriated farmers has shown almost a fourfold increase from 1010 farmers in 2005 to 3717 in 2008. This shows that a steadily rising number of expropriated farmers which has become not only financially challenging but also socially uncomfortable to the city as farmer’s livelihood is destroyed and they are forced to swell the unemployment pool. /Text document structure plan 2017/

2.6 Effect of Land Grabbing

Promotion of foreign direct investment: Foreign direct investment is an important development strategy in most African countries. To attract genuine foreign investors, governments introduced several incentives such as a ‘one-stop shop’ for business registration, tax breaks, profit repatriation, reduced import and export tariffs and, in some extreme cases, heavily subsidized land for agro-businesses, among other incentives. This is an important pull factor that often opens doors for many foreign investors in agriculture.

2.6.1 Displacement of Local Communities:

One of the most immediate impacts is the displacement of local populations. Communities may be forced off their ancestral lands without adequate compensation or alternative housing, leading to loss of homes and livelihoods.

2.6.2 Food Security Issues:

Land grabbing often prioritizes cash crops for export over local food production. This can undermine food security in affected regions, as local farmers may lose access to land needed to grow food for their families and communities.

2.6.3 Environmental Degradation:

Large-scale agricultural operations can lead to deforestation, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and water scarcity. These environmental impacts can have long-term consequences for ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

2.6.4 Economic Disparities:

While some argue that land grabbing can bring investment and development, it often leads to increased economic inequality. Wealth generated from these investments frequently benefits foreign investors rather than local communities.

2.6.5 Social Tensions and Conflict:

The process of land grabbing can exacerbate existing social tensions and lead to conflicts between local communities, governments, and corporations. This can result in violence and instability in affected regions.

Cultural Erosion: For many indigenous peoples and local communities, land is not just a resource but a vital part of their identity and culture. Land grabbing can lead to cultural erosion as traditional practices and ways of life are disrupted.

2.6.6 Loss of Livelihoods:

Local farmers and communities who rely on the land for their livelihoods may find themselves without work or means to support themselves. This can lead to increased poverty and economic vulnerability.

2.6.7 Legal and Governance Challenges:

Land grabbing often occurs in contexts where land tenure laws are weak or poorly enforced. This can lead to legal disputes, corruption, and challenges in governance as communities fight for their rights.

2.6.8 Global Supply Chain Effects:

Land grabbing can affect global supply chains, particularly in industries such as agriculture and mining. This can lead to ethical concerns for consumers regarding the origins of products and the conditions under which they are produced.

2.7 Government and Land Grabbing

African states implement conflicting policies of agricultural modernization and the preservation of family farming (Baglioni & Gibbon). So, land grabbing is initiated by national states and actors. States involve in a multidimensional areas of land investment. They make a systematic policy and administrative issues targeted at capturing 'marginal lands' and convert them into investable commodity. They involve also in the formation of cadasters, land records and titles as a means of simplifying a complex land-based social relations (Franco, Borras). Land deals taken as a state-building mechanism where sovereignty and authority are expanded to previously 'non-state spaces' using coercion and violence to enforce compliance (Borras & Franco) Moreover, state gives substantial incentives to corporate actors in pursuit of political stability, simple predation and rent seeking (Hall).

2.8 Resistance of Peasants

Different classes of peasants show the diverse social and class relation that determine their livelihoods and resistance against the force that influence them. Populists bundle together the broad categories of laborers and different peasants as 'people of the land' (Baglioni & Gibbon). However, the term peasantry is no longer applicable due to the socio-economic differentiation of the agrarian population (Hobsbawm). Similarly, there is no single class of peasant rather it involves differentiated classes (Bernstein). In contrast, Chayanov's theory of peasant economy neglects the differentiated class of peasants by seeing peasants as unchanging element. Peasant struggles are different based on their demand and the forces they resist for or against. Peasants may struggle against expulsions/re-location program that expels them somewhere to continue what they were previously doing. But, the worst scenarios are when people get expelled without compensation, especially people with informal land right and have no place to go and no jobs to do that determine their level of resistance (Borras & Franco). In social ties where indigenous peoples live the demand against land appropriation or concentration usually takes the form of

demanding recognition of claims over territory which is equivalent with the struggles to stop expulsion ((Borras &Franco). But, the struggle for incorporation is claimed by land less or migratory people who recruited as workers. Mainly struggles move either across labor or land or both of them at the same time. So, 'labor justice struggles' involves only labor issues, whereas 'agrarian justice struggles' move across land and labor issues. So, agrarian and labor justice struggles are characterized by issues that unite and divide.

Peasant politics does not it succeed due to the intra-rural conflict, lack of representation in democratic electoral politics and unable to enforce their class interest (Hobsbawm). Similarly, rural communities are socially differentiated and then the impact on and within communities is differentiated that in turn leads to diverse responses ((Borras &Franco) though unified by a common adverse impact of the land deals (Borras & Franco). Furthermore, it is rare to find rural communities mobilizing in a unified fashion due to different directions and interests of struggle against land deals. Then, such differences increase political tensions between groups within and between communities. But, groups that have a broader unity and able to engage with influential allies, state, international actors and media attention are likely to succeed (Borras &Franco, 2013).

2.9 Case Studies

2.9.1 Ethiopia, Benishangul Gumuz

The study is conducted in the Benishangul-Gumuz regional state in Metekel Zone. It is located in the northwestern part of the country between 09°17' - 12°06' North latitude and 34°10' 37'4' East longitude. The region is bordered by Amhara regional state in the north and northeast, Oromia region in the south and southeast, and Gambella region in the south. It also shares an international boundary with Sudan in the west. Administratively, the region is divided into three zones (namely Metekel zone, Assosa zone and Kemashi zone) and 20 woredas. The population size of the region was 670,847 (CSA 2008), with a population density of about 14 persons per square kilometer.

2.9.1.1 Land Acquisition Processes

While MoARD investment directorate has a mandate to transfer land more than 5000 hectare of land, the regional government is limited to transfer land up to 5000 hectares for regional

investors which should be out of the federal land bank system (Respondent 6). But, there are two clashes in the delegation of authority for promotion and regulation of investment and land and environments protection tasks. One is that the regional investment office received its authority in 2010 that was held by agricultural office, but investment has been undertaking since 2008(Respondent 6 & Respondent 2). The second is that land administration and environmental protection authority is established in 2011, but most investors have received land in 2009. The establishment of large scale farms before our land administration and environmental office is established enabled investors to start their operation without impact assessment and it influenced us to have no a smooth communication with them (Respondent 5).

Furthermore, when investors first come to the area they get many promises of helping the local communities, but are not transferring technologies to the local farmers rather they use public resources built by the state like water pumps (Respondent 2 & 7). Tracing Trading Farm has bought one mill for the community that is not even started operation yet due to incomplete machine parts (Respondent 11).

2.9.1.2 Project; Tracing Trading Farm Development

The farm is owned by Ethiopian PLC which has many investment activities in the country like coffee processing, plantation and exporting, real estate, building maintenance services, importing machineries, oil and tire, quarry and farming businesses. The farm received 5000 hectares of land from federal government in 2009. It has passed three production seasons since the start of the farm, but used only 904 hectares of land out of 5000 hectares of land. The farm annually expands 300 hectares of land still now and it will continue till the whole hectare of land is developed through clearing new forest land which is contested by the local people. The farm produces cotton as a main export item and secondarily produces crops like sesame, sorghum and bean as food crops for laborers and for export (Respondent 11 & 13).

2.9.1.3 Institutional Framework of Large Scale Farms

The farm forces laborers to form a group to do a contract works by blocking the choice of laborers to work individually. Laborers may not agree each other as there is a capacity difference between workers and other differences based on gender, experience and age. Hence, some laborers may spend the day without work (Respondent 13, 14, 21, FGD1 & FGD2). The project

gives contract work (240 Birr/hour) in the first cycle of weeding (much weeding) which is not beneficial for laborers as it takes 4-6 for three-four workers. So that they earn little money when they divide the total money for 3-4 workers for 4-6 days they gain 15-20 birr per day only. In the second (rarely) and third weeding cycle they may rarely earn 35-60 Birr when the weed is not too much.

2.9.2 Ghana

2.9.2.1 Historical background, Ghana

Since the mid-1980s, Ghana experienced a period of a stable and growing economy, which in turn has further committed the country to liberalization policies (Choi 2018: 5). In fact, Ghana ranked as the fifth largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in sub-Saharan Africa in 2014, where the majority of the investments have been in the oil and mining sector as well as in farmland (ibid.). The agriculture sector has been and still is a vital part of the Ghanaian economy, accounting for approximately 34% of the GDP whilst employing 55% of the population. Smallholders are estimated to account for about 90% of landholdings and 80% of the agricultural output (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 3, Kuusaana & Gerber 2015: 856).

2.9.2.2 Land Ownership in Ghana

Customary land tenure, meaning land which is owned by indigenous communities and administered in accordance to their customs, is still the dominant system of land use and ownership in Ghana. In general, land ownership in Ghana can be classified into three broad categories, namely: land under customary ownership, which constitute 78 percent of the total land area of Ghana; land controlled by the state, which constitute 20 percent of the total land area; and lastly land which is under some form of shared ownership, this accounts for about 2 percent of the total land area of Ghana (Schoneveld & German 2014: 192).

It is often traditional laws and norms, rather than the national Constitution that guide the ownership and use of customary land (ibid. 63). In Ghana, the Constitution vests in the President public lands whereas private lands, by large, are vested in the Stool, i.e. tribal land or land controlled by chiefs. In fact, the Constitution of Ghana recognizes the chiefs as fiduciaries and land managers on behalf of their communities (Constitution of Ghana, 1992, Article 36.8.). The chiefs are the ones who have the ultimate responsibility for the allocation and use of land, which

in turn is the result of a robust position originating from a history of resistance against the colonial attempts to nationalize land. In fact, the chiefs were already during the British Colonial time recognized as the only social group who could transact land. During that time, as in postcolonial time, land is being vested in the chiefs to manage on behalf of their own communities (Amanor and Ubink 2016: 60).

In spite of the fact that the Ghanaian government recognizes customary land tenure, it has acquired land by compulsorily methods, and thus land rights are consequently still a source of conflicts, disputes and litigation (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 63, 66). To understand why the Ghanaian government still acquires land by force, one must look at the Constitution of Ghana, Section 20 (1 and 2) which declares four conditions under which private land can be acquired. The first is that the land being acquired must be in the public interest. By ‘public interest’ it means that the land acquired must satisfy the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public health, public mortality, town and country planning or the improved living conditions for the poor. The second condition states that merely proclaiming that the land acquisition is in ‘public interest’ is insufficient; there must be an explanation of what that interest is. The third condition declares that compulsory acquisitions are allowed only if it takes place in accordance with “fair and prompt payment of adequate compensation”. The fourth and last condition that must be met is that the expropriated person shall have opportunity and liberty to question the decision of acquisition in a high court in Ghana (ibid. 70). However, it is important to note that this process of compulsorily land acquisition by the state is not unique for Ghana, this process is often referred to as ‘eminent domain’, and is practiced by most countries around the world (Cypher & Forgey 2003: 255).

2.9.2.3 The scale of land grabbing in Ghana

Ghana has been a target for land grabbing since the global peak of oil prices in 2006, during which foreign companies started acquiring large tracts of land for plantation agriculture. Concerning food crop investments these mainly targets the cultivation of grain crops, such as rice and maize, for the domestic market (Choi 2018: 6). About 36 companies have each acquired land which exceeds over 2000 ha of land in Ghana for agriculture and forestry plantation, covering a total of 2.05 million ha of land. Furthermore, 88 percent of all the 36 projects and 93 percent of all the areas acquired can be directly attributed to companies where the majority

shareholder investors are foreign-based (Schoneveld & German 2014: 188). The majority of the farmlands have been acquired in rural parts of northern Ghana, an area that already suffers from high levels of food insecurity and poverty (Choi 2018: 6).

Land grabbing processes in Ghana are driven by the government, traditional chiefs and large foreign corporations taking the land of farmers and rural poor (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 72). For example, in Tarkwa located in Western Ghana, 70 percent of the land is dedicated to mining activities. Another example can be seen in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions where seventeen companies, out of which fifteen were foreign-owned, acquired a total of 1,075,000 ha of land in 2009, mainly for the cultivation of jatropha (*jatropha curcas produces seeds that are used in the production of biodiesel*). These land acquisitions are often justified by arguing that they are meant for investments and development, even though they oftentimes lead to displacement of local farmers and rural dwellers (ibid. 72-73).

Table 2-2: CIA face book Ghana (2018)

No	Ghana	
1	Area	238533 sq.km
2	Population size	27499924(2017)
3	Population growth rate	2.17% (2017
4	Urban population	56.1 (2018)
5	GDP per capital	\$4600 (2017)
6	Population below poverty line	24.2% (2013)
7	Land use	Agricultural land69.1% Arbal land 20.7% Permanent crops 11.9%

		Permanent pasture 36.5% Forest 21.2% Other 9.7%
8	Agriculture products	Cocoa, rice, cassava, peanut, corn, shea nut, corn, banana

2.9.3 Philippines

Since 2007, the Philippine authorities have increasingly been offering large swathes of land to foreign companies and governments. To clear the way for investors, farmers are often harassed and violently evicted from the land they occupy. This has fueled tensions and, in some cases, led to violent conflicts.

2.9.3.1 Conflict history

In the Philippines, the poorest populations are severely impacted by land leases to local and foreign investors. Land deals are facilitated by attractive investment policies led by the Philippine authorities. Although several agrarian reforms supporting land redistribution in favor of landless farmers have been issued, they are not well implemented and Philippine farmers do not benefit from secure land tenure (De la Cruz, 2011; Cervantes, 2014). This context is facilitating forceful evictions to clear land for foreign investors, with frequent cases of harassment and violence being reported (Padilla, 2011; Saludes, 2015).

Since 2007, this dynamic has accelerated due to increasing land investments. Multiple violent confrontations between local populations, sometimes rebel groups, and investors supported by authorities have erupted in different parts of the country, resulting in several killings, unjustified detentions and human rights violations (Focusweb, 2015).

2.9.3.2 International rush for Philippine land

In the Pacific, competition over land is intensifying as populations grow and land becomes scarcer. Since the Philippines offer attractive conditions to investors, numerous Asian

governments and companies have acquired large swathes of Philippine land. These investments serve three main purposes: touristic and economic zones (mainly ecotourism and real estate), heavy industry like mining, and agriculture, especially biofuels and food production for export (Focusweb, 2015). Many of the investment projects have underlying ecological intentions, for example, the creation of natural protected reserves, ecotourism sites and biofuel production (Uson, 2015). The British company NRG Chemicals, for instance, has acquired 700,000 hectares of Philippine land to grow *Jatropha* – one of the biggest land leases dedicated to biofuels in the world (GRAIN, 2013). The global food prices shock in 2007 has also been followed by increased land investments in the Philippines from countries like India, Kuwait and Singapore (Asian Peasant Coalition, 2012).

The Philippine government has advertised the leasing of agricultural land to foreign investors by promising new jobs and a more efficient use of agricultural land (De la Cruz, 2011). Yet, local communities, albeit directly impacted, rarely benefit from large agricultural investments (Uson, 2015).

2.9.3.3 Growing inequalities in access to farmland

Matters are further complicated by the fact that the Philippines suffer from a highly skewed distribution of land. Wealthy landlords and the state own the land and provide farmers with rights to land plots, a system facilitating evictions and making access to land titles difficult for farmers (Vargas, 2003). This inequality creates tensions between societal groups and elites. Although there have been efforts since 1988 to redistribute arable surfaces via the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), these have had limited success, partly because of considerable power asymmetries between farmers and landed elites (USAID, 2011). In this context, large-scale land leases supporting the interests of foreign investors further add to the pressures endured by local communities and thus fuel resentments (Saludes, 2015; Focusweb, 2015; Uson, 2015).

2.9.3.4 Protests and violent repression

In opposition to large-scale land acquisitions, peaceful demonstrations have been organized on a regular basis. In 2012, for instance, several agrarian organizations protested in Manila against land grabbing, specifically calling on Asian governments to stop alleviating food insecurity in

other countries at the expenses of their own people (Asian Peasant Coalition, 2012). Peasants also gathered in January 2015 for a 'Pilgrimage for land, social justice and peace' (Saludes, 2015). In addition, some rebel groups, such as the New People's Army, have adopted brutal responses, notably by damaging projects' facilities (Farm Land Grab, 2014; Gomez, 2011).

Investing companies and landlords have called on increasingly violent intimidation methods to evict farmers, including destruction of crops, house burnings, physical assaults and arrests (Uson, 2015; Focusweb, 2015). In some cases, farmers refusing to leave and loud opponents to large land leasing projects have even been murdered, acts allegedly perpetrated by order of investors and local authorities (Mongabay, 2015; Via Campesina, 2014).

2.9.3.5 Improving access to land tenure

Efforts have been made at different levels to improve access to land rights for Philippine citizens. The legal framework has been strengthened several times to tackle this issue, in particular via the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Since 1988, it has aimed to fairly redistribute land to farmers but was not completed in the planned ten-year period. The program had to be extended twice to come close to projected results by 2014. Farmers, however, showed strong discontent with the CARP management and contested the efficiency of the land administration system, which keeps facilitating large-scale land leases (Palladium, 2014; USAID, 2011; Uson, 2015; Focusweb, 2015).

Apart from the state, international initiatives, such as the Land Administration and Management Projects co-financed by Australia and the World Bank, have aimed to improve land titling, providing computerized land records and more transparency (FAO, 2013; World Bank, 2015). Locally, activists and organizations have also been fighting to facilitate access to land titles (Focusweb, 2015). A group of lawyers, for instance, managed to draft a bill that was passed in the Congress in 2010 and allows 60,000 more title issuances yearly (ODI, 2015).

A legal framework supporting land tenure rights already exists, but its limited success so far hinges on greater implementation efforts. Experience has shown that partnerships between all concerned actors are essential and that involving local administrations in titling makes the process more efficient (World Bank, 2015).

2.9.3.6 Mobilizing influential actors around abusive land leases

Many protests against investment projects have taken place in the Philippines. Some strongly mobilized communities backed by legal arguments and influential allies have already succeeded in deterring investors. Advised by a network of social justice advocates, local protesters in Sicogon, for instance, built their arguments on state law and fought large landowners through several court cases, which they won, and abuse reports to police authorities (Uson, 2015).

In the case of a large-scale Chinese investment project by Jilin Fuhua Corporation, public outrage, supported by a Supreme Court case and congressional inquiries, forced governmental authorities to suspend the lease (De la Cruz, 2011). Similarly, many initiatives across the country try to call on decision-makers to reconsider large-scale projects. In Palawan for example, the Coalition against Land Grabbing, a local NGO, gathered signatures to call on the Vice-Governor to prevent palm-oil expansion on their island (Mongabay, 2015).

2.9.3.7 Raising awareness among local populations

Advocacy groups also ask for the right of communities to transparent information, not only about their rights but also about planned investment projects affecting them (Focusweb, 2015; Via Campesina, 2014). Since farmers are directly concerned by these land leases, better communication means as well as consultation and participatory tools are essential to handle the investments in a transparent and inclusive manner as recommended by the UN's Committee on World Food Security in its Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (FAO, 2012; Focusweb, 2015).

3 Methodology

3.1 Description of The Study Area

Ethiopia is located in East Africa between the latitudes 5° N and 15° N, and longitudes 35° E and 45° E. Its neighboring countries are Eritrea in the North, Djibouti and Somalia in the East, Kenya and Somalia in the South, and Sudan in the West (United States Central Intelligence Authority, 2000 and International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, 2001).

Mekelle city, the capital of Tigray Regional State, was founded in 13th Century. During the time of Emperor Yohannes IV, it became the capital of Ethiopia. This very tiny town, that had only seven hectares of urban lands, was expanded to 2.4 km² in the 1960s (MCPPO, 2008). Currently, this figure to 259.9 km² (ibid). The city is located 783 km to have exponentially grown north of Addis Ababa at an altitude and longitude of 13029'N 39028'E respectively with an elevation of 2084 meters above sea level. Administratively, Mekelle is divided into seven sub-cities: AddiHak'i, Ayder, Haddinet, Hawelti, QedamayWeyyane, Kwiha, and Semien. The city is used mainly as economic and education center. The industrial park, part of the GTP - II of the country, is also being constructed. The city is the host of Mekelle University that was founded in 2000 by the Federal Government of Ethiopia (Council of Ministers, regulations number 61/1999 of Article 3) as an autonomous higher education institution. The study was carried out in Mekelle city's urban center and peri-urban region. Mekelle city exhibits a significant pace of urban expansion, making it one of Ethiopia's fastest-growing cities (UN-Habitat, 2020).



Figure 3-1: Geographical location of Mekelle City

3.1.1 Naming

Mekelle city was formerly known as Enda Meskel, which was intended to commemorate the place as a stopover of the true cross that was brought from Egypt during the reign of Emperor Dawit (r. 1380-1412). Later, Meam Ambesa 3 was used as a name due to the presence of dense forest that served as a habitat for wild animals including lions. Finally, the word Mekelle has been set as a name during the time of Atse Seyfu Ared (r. 1352-1379).

3.1.2 The Spatial Growth of Settlements in Mekelle

Nine villages are mentioned in the book of Henery Salt (Rumi, 2009): Enda Meskel, Gonay Daero, May Degene, May Liham, Chomea, Enda Gabir, Enda Anania, Ada Gafaf, and May Gifaf. These villages are the oldest settlements in Mekelle. Their names are still used for the quarters so that it is not difficult to find the location of the villages. However, it is necessary to identify the exact place of each of them within the actual spread of the quarter named as such. The size of the village was 30 to 50 Hidmos, traditional dwellings of Tigray.

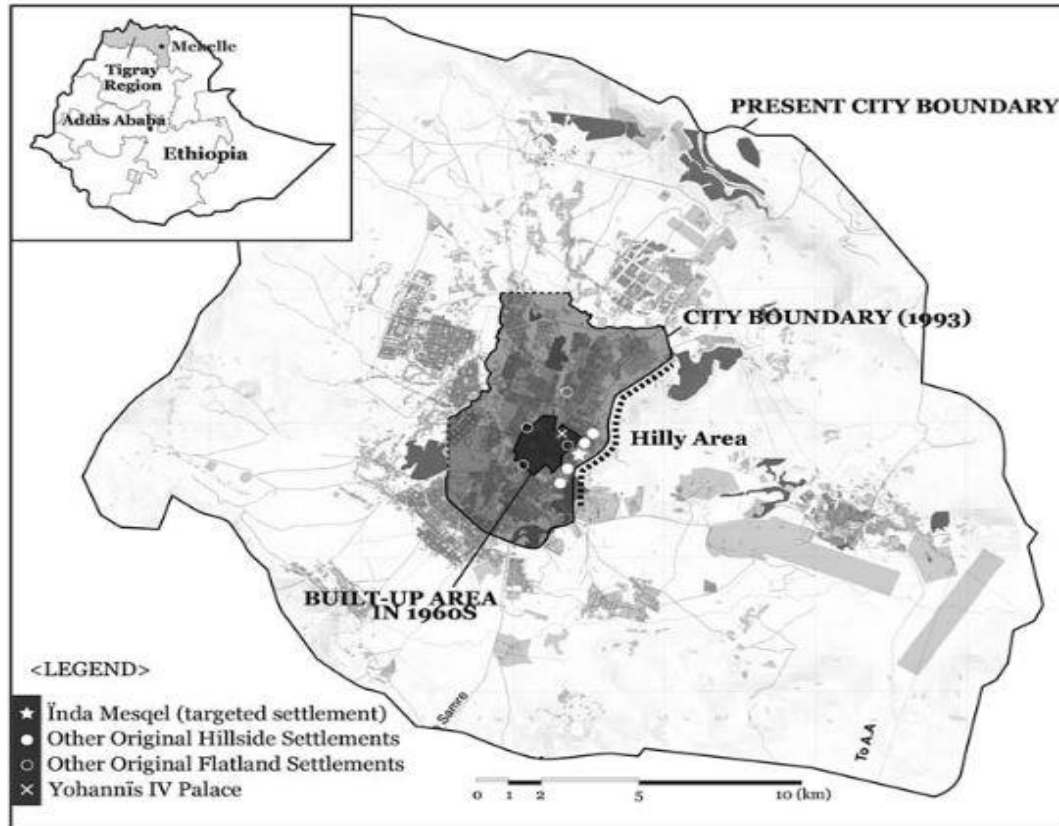


Figure 3-2: Location of First Settlement

The first settlement was probably founded with the brief resting of the True Cross at the Enda Meskel area of Mekelle. Afterwards a church of St. Mikael was constructed and served as a center of attraction. Frequent visits of Ras Weldesillasse for celebrating the annual feasting days at Enda Yesus and ritual entombment ceremonies held in the area has also contributed to a population agglomeration and growth of permanent settlements. However, the place gained attention after Emperor Yohannes IV has fallen in love with the area and its numerous charismatic natural and strategic attractions. Abundance of water due to numerous streams draining the town, firewood for cooking and heat and pasture for pack animals in the vicinity of Mekelle for his soldiers as well as its wide plains that could support an agrarian society were reasons for the selection of the town as the political seat of the Emperor.

3.1.3 Growth and Transformation

The construction of the Medhane Alem and the Kidane Mhired church in the early 1870s by Emperor Yohannis IV as a monastery and a nunnery after turning the town into a political center,

was one of the reasons for the growth. The construction of the Royal Palace in the town was another factor for exponential growth of Mekelle as urban center. The town's socio economic and political importance has enhanced the number of traders, travelers, and officials in the town.

After the retreat of Italian occupation, Mekelle has recovered its autonomy, established the first municipality in 1942 on Decree number 1 of 1942 (MCSPPR, 2016) and public housing has been built. During mid-1960s, Italian architect called Arturo Mezedemi has developed master plan for Mekelle town which is all inclusive. Later on a Swedish team has explained by intensive housing survey but the plan was not realized due to outbreak of Eritrean conflict (Rumio, 2009). On the meantime, the development of the city has accelerated according to these plans.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is defined as a blueprint that gives a researcher a specific direction to understanding a given social problem (Creswell, 2014: 42). Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 67) argue that a research design can be defined as a structure of inquiry to a given social phenomenon. O'leary (2010: 56) states that a research design gives a study its structure and acts as glue that binds it together. I used phenomenological and grounded research design for my thesis design.

3.2.1 Phenomenology Research

A phenomenological research design aims at constructing and generating meanings of the experiences of human beings through an in-depth dialogue with participants in given research (Creswell, 2014: 42). The main goal of a phenomenological research design is to accurately describe the living experiences of people. A phenomenological study aims to systematically reflect and analyses a given phenomenon in a profound and critical way (Creswell, 2014: 42). A phenomenological study makes an effort in describing social reality from a multiplicity of people's subjective meanings, which underlie their personal and subjective experiences. When carrying out a phenomenological study, a researcher makes an effort to eliminate any prior assumptions and personal biases in order to fully understand the core issues that influence the conscious feelings, thinking and behavior of the people under study (Creswell, 2014: 42).

3.2.2 Grounded Theory Research

In a grounded theory study, the researcher aims at discovering and constructs a theory from a given data set. This is achieved through systematic analysis and comparative analysis of a given

data set. When carrying out a study rooted in the grounded theory research design, the researcher makes an effort to collect and analyze data at the same time. The process is done by following a systematic set of procedures to doing the data collection and analysis. In such a context, the researcher will be in a position to generate rich explanations of very complex processes and actions (Creswell, 2014: 42). In grounded theory research, the interpretation of data is continuously derived from raw data.

3.3 Research Approach

A research approach is a plan that gives the researcher the direction to carry out research in a way that is efficient and systematic (Creswell, 2014). There are three main types of research approaches in social sciences. There is the quantitative research approach, the mixed methods research approach and the qualitative research approach. It is imperative for researchers to have a disciplined, explicit and systematic approach in their quest to get the most relevant results from a given study. In this research I used mixed method because

- I. **Qualitative studies** are mainly evidence-based and mainly aim at collecting data with the objective of ensuring an authentic voice of participants (Allen, 2016). Qualitative studies create an avenue for me to have a very critical and in-depth understanding of the social and cultural norms of a given people. When using a qualitative research approach, observations and interviews are used as the primary data collection methods (Leavy, 2017). Open-ended and close ended questioning techniques will enable the participants to respond in their own words. When using the qualitative research methodology, the researcher is immersed.
- II. **The quantitative research**
 1. **Objectivity:** Quantitative research allows for the collection of data that is measurable and can be analyzed using statistical methods, which helps to ensure objectivity and reduce bias in the research process.
 2. **Generalizability:** Quantitative research often involves larger sample sizes, which can lead to findings that are more generalizable to a broader population.
 3. **Replicability:** The use of standardized measures and statistical analysis in quantitative research makes it easier for other researchers to replicate the study and verify the results.
 4. **Precision:** Quantitative research allows for precise measurement and analysis of data, which can lead to more accurate and reliable findings.

5. Data-driven decision making: The use of quantitative research methods provides empirical evidence that can inform decision-making in various fields, such as business, healthcare, and social sciences.
6. Causality: Quantitative research can help establish causal relationships between variables, providing insights into the underlying mechanisms of phenomena.

Overall, the quantitative research approach is important for its ability to provide rigorous and reliable evidence that can inform policies, practices, and theories in various disciplines.

3.4 Source of data

3.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data refer to the first hand data gathered by the researcher himself. Some sources of primary data are I used observations, questionnaires, focus groups, case study, interviews.

3.4.2 Source of Secondary Data

Secondary sources mean data collected by someone else earlier. Secondary data are the data collected by a party not related to the research study but collected these data for some other purpose and at different time in the past. I used legal written document and GIS image stored in land management office Mekelle city.

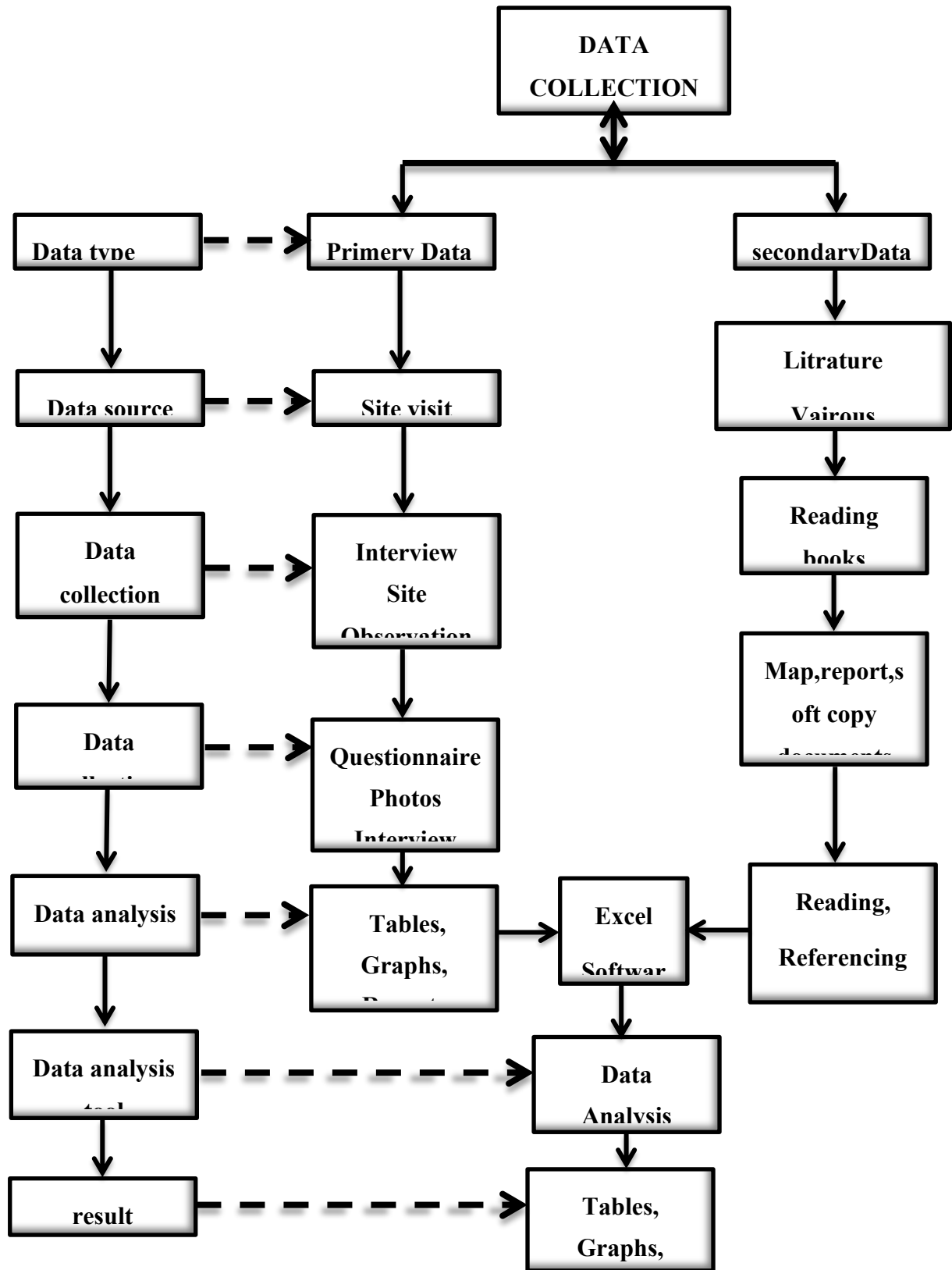


Figure 3-3: data collection structure

3.5 Method of data collection

I. **Observation:** Survey method is one of the primary sources of data which is used to collect quantitative information about items in a population. Surveys are used in different areas for collecting the data even in public and private sectors. A survey may be conducted in the field by the researcher. The respondents are contacted by the research person personally, telephonically or through mail. This method takes a lot of time, efforts and money but the data collected are of high accuracy, current and relevant to the topic. In this situation also participant observation directly and non-participant observation also through mobile.

II. **Interview:** Process started from regional level investment officer, land and environment protection officer and then proceeded to regional workers and social affairs officer. This first stage interview involves data about investment intensities of both domestic and foreign investments, potential investment areas that in turn enable to priorities and select the case study and the type of labor regime used to easily access labor agencies. In addition to the data obtained concerning investment procedures, investment types and intensities, types, amount of land and extent of land grabbing, land and environmental issues, its effect on local peoples' land, labor, livelihood and environment issues, it further helped to get support letter to access the bottom level administration levels and the company, identify and contact a case study farm, how to access the areas and key informants step by step.

The second stage of interview was with Zone level land administration and environmental protection office, agriculture and rural development (livelihoods data) and zonal level workers and social affairs office. But, unfortunately the workers and social affairs office was established before two months of the research time and then officers have no data about labor regimes as the office was not fully organized. Totally at regional level there are two offices of labor affairs, this one is the second office which is too young and weak.

The third stage of interview was with Wereda level land administration and environmental protection and agriculture and rural development officers about land investment, environment, resettlement and livelihoods. At this level of administration there is no investment (there is no investment office except at regional level) office, labor

agencies and worker's affairs offices. The fourth stage of interview was with the Kebele level officers who are working in a general agricultural office which is not well organized logistically and has not enough staffs. Though the available staffs are loaded with different responsibilities (structural problems), data regarding small scale farmers, the influence of large scale farms, migrant farmers and land rent system and local and migrant laborers and local livelihoods is gathered well. Three Kebeles (one Kebele comprises 2 villages) surrounding the case company were selected and from each Kebele one village is selected (totally three villages).

After interviewing officers and then with the help of officer's different small scale farmers, migrant farmers and local laborers were interviewed. Interviewing different local small scale farmers was also important as they provide significant employment opportunity for both local, migrant laborers and for laborers who left large farms. The selection of local small scale farmers considers their differentiation based on their land size, rent system, capital amount, and types of farmers and potential of using available land.

Finally, the data about labor issues has been accessed from labor agency and farm officials. After farm officials are interviewed, a focus group discussion arranged and undertaken with laborers after lunch and around dinner time by the help of farm officials. Interviewees were selected based on age, gender and work status

- III. **Questionnaires:** Questionnaire as one of the primary sources of data is an observational technique which comprises series of items presented to a respondent in a written form, in which the individual is expected to respond in writing. In this situation I used both open ended and closed ended questioner.
- IV. **Focus Groups:** I discuss with Mekelle land use and management core process and with vice Mayor of the city with topic of land grabbing Cause and consequence before and after Tigray war.
- V. **Case Study:** I understand an experience research written in case of legal and illegal land grabbing in Asia, Africa and Ethiopia

3.6 Sampling technique and sampling size

Sampling techniques are methods used in research to select a subset of individuals or items from a larger population for the purpose of making inferences about that population. There are several sampling techniques, which can be broadly classified into two categories: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Mekelle has 7 sub city total **300** people participate in my research by Random **Sampling** technique because this technique helps every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

3.7 Method of data analysis

Data analysis in research involves the systematic application of statistical and logical techniques to describe, summarize, and evaluate data. The methods of data analysis can vary widely depending on the type of data collected (qualitative or quantitative) and the research questions being addressed. So in my research I chose qualitative and quantitative research approach because I show my output in terms text, image and subjective judgment based on my personal feelings also the data collected are analyzed using statistical methods to identify patterns, relationships and differences among groups in my research.

3.8 Research Ethics

Research ethics refers to the principles and guidelines that govern the conduct of research to ensure integrity, respect, and responsibility in the treatment of research participants, data, and the broader community. Ethical considerations are crucial in maintaining public trust in research and protecting the rights and welfare of individuals involved. Here are key principles and considerations in research ethics:

- I. **Respect for Persons:** This principle emphasizes the autonomy and dignity of individuals. I must obtain informed consent from participants, ensuring understand the nature of my research, any potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- II. **Beneficence:** I should maximize benefits and minimize any potential harm to participants. This includes assessing the risks and benefits of the research and ensuring that any potential harm is justified by the anticipated benefits.

- III. Justice: This principle relates to fairness in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of research. I must ensure that no group is unfairly burdened by research risks and that all groups have equitable access to the benefits of research.
- IV. Integrity: I should conduct my work honestly and transparently, avoiding fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism. Maintaining integrity also includes adhering to ethical standards throughout the research process.
- V. Confidentiality: I must protect the privacy of participants by ensuring that personal information is kept confidential and that data is stored securely. My Participants should be informed about how their data will be used and shared.

4 Research Questioner and Data Analysis

4.1 Data presentation and analysis

It is of paramount importance for a researcher to take into consideration the method of data analysis that should be employed in any given research. Data analysis involves organizing the data into meaningful units, its interpretation and the actual process of report writing. Data analysis includes the process of coding the data, synthesizing it and searching for recurrent patterns (Tappen, 2011: 43). Data presentation

Table 4-1: Demographic profile (habitant in Mekelle city)

ITEMS		RESPONDENTS	
		Number	%
EDUCATION LEVEL (the one who more educated he/she have knowledge about land grabbing in Mekelle city)	primary	75	25
	Secondary	61	20.3
	BSc and above	55	18.3
	none	109	36.3
	Total	300	100
GENDER	Male	171	57
	Female	129	43
	Total	300	100
OCCUPATION	employed	112	37.34
	unemployed	87	29
	peasant	101	36.66

	Total	300	100
ADRESS / this helps at which sub city more land grapping appear/	Hadinet	41	13.66
	Adi-Haqi	55	18.34
	Quiha	39	13
	Semen	40	13.34
	Ayder	42	14
	Kedamay-Weyane	30	10
	Hawelti	53	17.66
	Total	300	100

Table 4-1 contains a detailed list of demographic variables for participating people in the study. The final study sample consists of 300 respondents, whereby the participants academic level 25% primary school ,20.3% the secondary school students, BSc and above participants also 18.3, and none educated participants also 36.4 %, in this questioner also 57% male and 43% female and 16.66% participants from Hadinet 18.34% from Adi-Haqi sub city 13 % also from Quiha 13.34 from semen 14% also from Ayder 10% from Kedamay-Weyane and 17.76 from Hawelti sub city participant participate in this research.

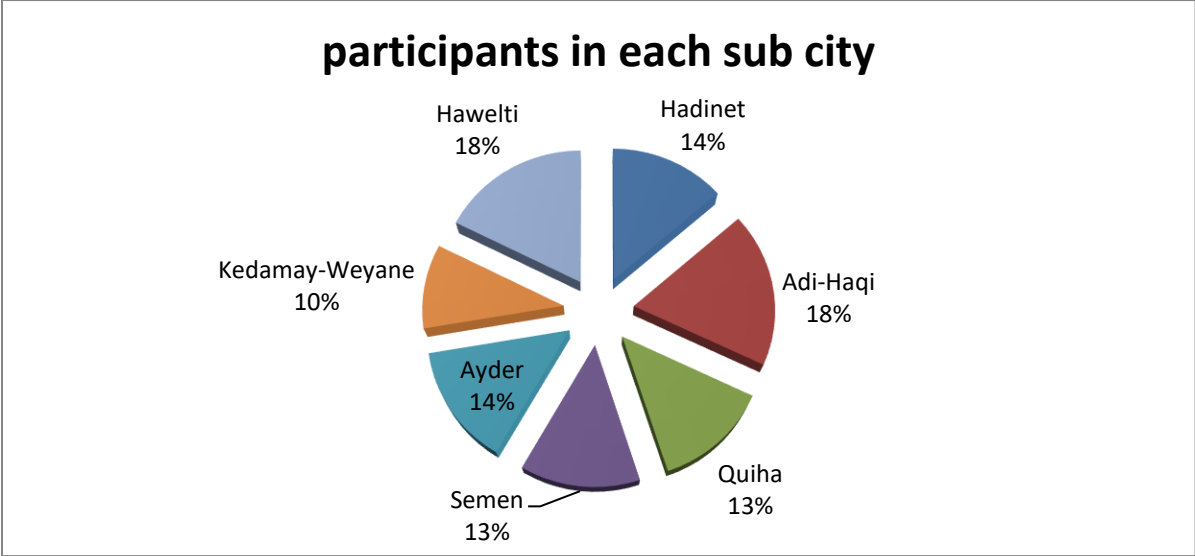


Figure 4-1: number of participants.

Table 4-2: shows side effect of war in case of land grabbing

No	Variable questions and responses	Respondents	
		Total No	%
1	Do you believe that land grabbing is a significant issue in Mekelle especially in your sub city?		
	yes	278	92.67
	no	22	7.33
	Total	300	100
2	do you know or experience land grabbing before Tigray war?		
	yes	281	93.67
	no	19	6.33
	Total	300	100
3	Do you believe during Tigray war land grabbed in Mekelle city?		
	yes	300	100
	no	0	0
	Total	300	100
	If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, how much land do you think is grabbed during Tigray war in Mekelle city?		

4	Very small	5	1.67
	small	37	12.33
	many	258	86
	Total	300	100

In table 4-2, more than 92.67% respondents agree significance issue of land grabbing but the rest 7.37% they have not agreed importance issue of land grabbing in their sub city and also before Tigray was 93.67 % there was land grabbing in their sub city but the remain 6.33% respondents agree their ware note land grabbing before Tigray war. Beside the above question 100% of the respondents give answer to the surveyor there is land grabbing in the time Tigray war and out of the 300 respondents during Tigray war 86% agree that many land grab happen and 12.33 % also believe that small land garb happen in their sub city and 5% of respondents show their answer very small land grab in their sub city.

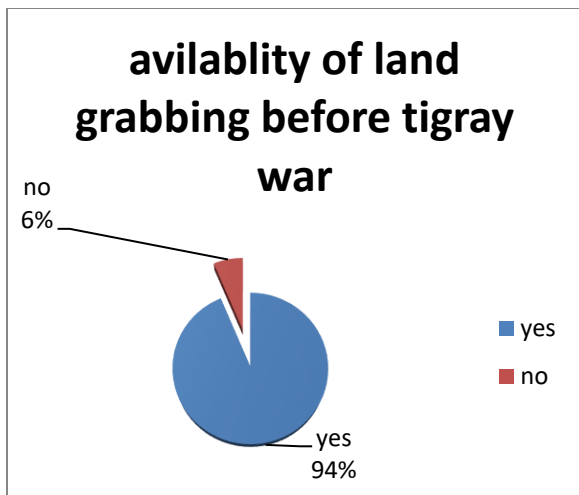


Figure 4-2: response land grabbing before tigray war

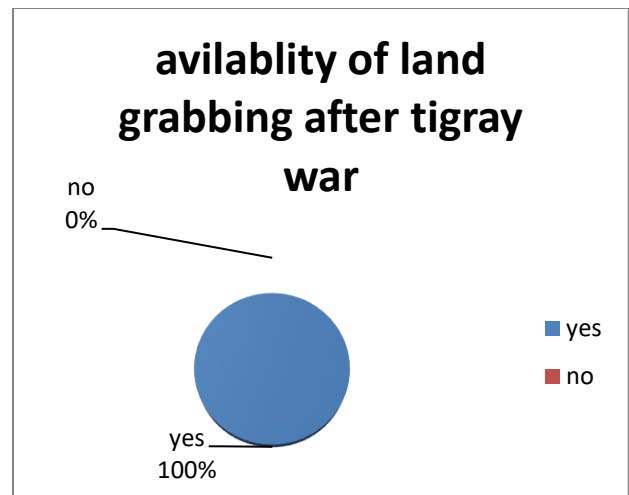


Figure 4-3: response land grabbing after tigray war

Table 4-3: shows understanding of society in land grabbing

No	Variable questions and responses	Respondents	
		Total No	%
5	What type of land is most often targeted for grabbing in your sub city? Select any		
	Agricultural land	120	36.48
	Forest land	59	17.93
	Urban land	150	45.59
	Pasture land	0	0
	Other (please specify	0	0
	total	329	100
6	Who do you think is most likely to engage in land grabbing in Mekelle city?		
	Habitants	113	37.67
	Corporations	55	18.33
	Government entities	108	36
	- Foreign investors	24	8
	Other (please specify)	0	0
	total	300	100

7	Are you aware of any legal protections against land grabbing in Mekelle city?		
	yes	254	84.67
	no	46	15.33
	Total	300	100
8	Have you ever reported a case of land grabbing to local authorities?		
	yes	25	8.33
	no	275	91.67
	Total	300	100
9	If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, were you satisfied with the response from authorities?		
	yes	77	25.67
	no	223	74.33

In table 4-3, type land grabbing mostly show in different type as a result in number one question respondent have chance to select more than choose by this impact 300 respondent select 329 answer so 36.47% give answer to surveyor land grabbing happen in agricultural land also 17.93% respondents replay land grabbing happen in forest land and 45.59% respondents believe land grabbing happen in urban land.in other question who more participate in land grab in Mekelle city 36.67% respondents answer habitants participate in land grab and 18.33% respondents also believe cooperatives participate in land grab beside this 36% also give their answer government participate in land grab also 8% respondents believe in Mekelle city foreign investors have their hand in land grabbing.in Mekelle city 84.67% respondents have knowledge

legal protection against land grabbing beside this 15.33% respondents they have not awareness legal protection against land grabbing and 8.33% of respondent have been reported to legal authority if any land grabbing happen but 91.67% respondents they have not any experience to reported if any land grabbing happen.

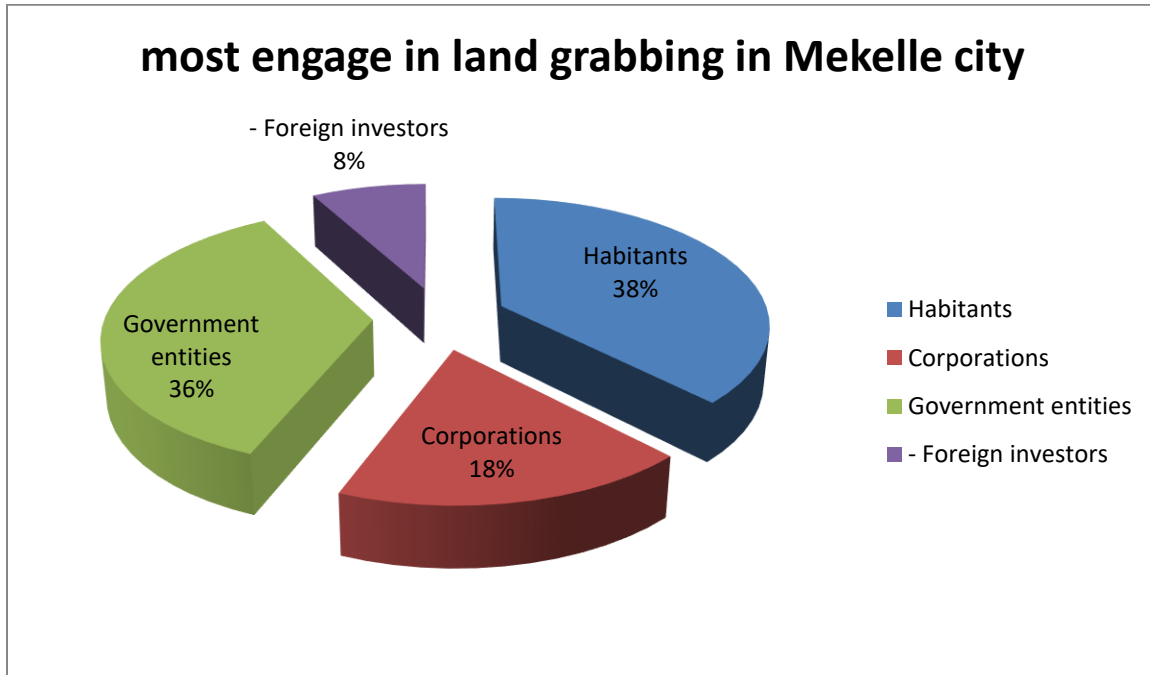


Figure 4-4: most people engage in land grabbing

Authority of land management have the power to protect land grabbing in Mekelle city but 25.67% of respondent happy with answer governmental body if they reported there is land grabbing and 74.33% also un happy with their answer.

Table 4-4: shows impact of governmental rules and regulations on land grabbing

No	Variable questions and responses	Respondents	
		Total No	%
	How would you rate the effectiveness of local laws in protecting land rights? (Select one)		
	Very effective	51	17

10	Somewhat effective	65	21.67
	Neutral	22	7.33
	Somewhat ineffective	95	31.67
	Very ineffective	67	22.33
	total	300	100
11	Do you believe that community awareness about land rights is sufficient?		
	Yes	78	26
	No	222	74
	total	300	100
12	Do you believe that governmental compensation for land is enough for land owners?		
	yes	0	0
	no	300	100
	Total	300	100
13	Have you participated in any community meetings or workshops about land rights in the past year?		
	yes	59	19.67
	no	241	80.33
	Total	300	100

14	How serious do you think the impact of land grabbing is on fair land distribution in your area? (Select one)		
	Very serious	178	59.33
	Somewhat serious	79	26.33
	Not serious	31	10.34
	Not at all serious	12	4
	Total	300	100

In table 4-4, most of the question depend on understanding of society on the proclamations and local rules of land in Mekelle city so the effectiveness of local laws in protecting land right 17% of respondent agree it is very effective:21.67% also say somewhat eeffective:7.33% neutral:31.67% somewhat ineffective:22.33% also agree very in effective community awareness about land right I gather out of the 300 respondent 26% yes and 74% say no beside this question I asked the question compensation rate is enough for the society the respondent believe 100% no.in the question participation of community in any meeting or workshop about land right in the past year 19.67% say yes and 80.33% say no. I asked the question how serious the impact of land grabbing on the fair land distribution 59.33% they answer very serious 26.33% somewhat serious: 10.34 not serious 4% answer that not at all serious.

Table 4-5: side effect of international organization in land grabbing

No	Variable questions and responses	Respondents	
		Total No	%
15	Do you think that international organizations intervene in cases of land grabbing?		
	Yes	73	24.33

	No	227	75.67
	Total	300	100
16	Would you support initiatives aimed at strengthening of land tenure security in your community?		
	Yes	272	90.67
	No	28	9.33
	Total	300	100
17	How often do you hear about land grabbing incidents in your local news? (Select one)		
	Very often	8	2.67
	Occasionally	3	1
	Rarely	256	85.33
	Never	33	11
	Total	300	100
18	Are you aware of any organizations working to combat land grabbing in your area?		
	yes	128	42.67
	no	172	57.33
	Total	300	100

In table 4-5, international organizations intervention in cases of land grabbing 24.33% respondent agree there is intervention and the remaining 75.67% believe there is not intervention also 9.33% of respondent answer yes we support the strengthening land tenure security and 90.67% says no we can't support land tenure security. Land grabbing incidents in your local news 85.33% of respondent hear information rarely and 11% also have not hear any news but the rest have information. Any organizations working to combat land grabbing in this last open ended question 42.67 respondents have information organization in the protection land grabbing but the remaining 57.33% respondent select no.

4.2 Presentations of Data Obtained from Observation

Observational data refers to information collected through observation rather than through experimental methods or direct manipulation of variables. In observational studies, I observe and record behaviors, events, or characteristics without intervening or controlling the environment. So by this context I prefer observational data by taking different image in the field and from Google earth.

4.2.1 Land Grabbed in Hawelti Sub City

Hawelti sub city found western part of the city; it has 3132.02-hectare sizes with 5 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 81-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and from this sub city total land 2.6% is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land is grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.

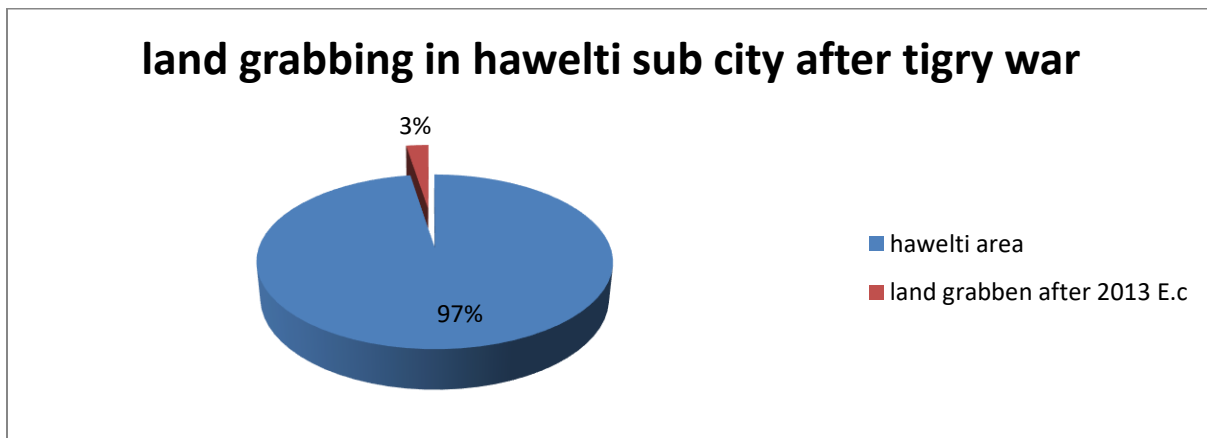


Figure 4-5: land grab in hawelti sub city



Figure 4-6: residential land grabbing in Hawelti sub city Tabiya Hidasea



Figure 4-7: land grabbing in Hawelti sub city Hidasea Tabiya

4.2.2 Land Grabbed in Ayder Sub City

Ayder sub city found northern part of the city; it has 3263.39-hectare boundary size with 5 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 102.2-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and from this sub city total land 3.13 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land is grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.

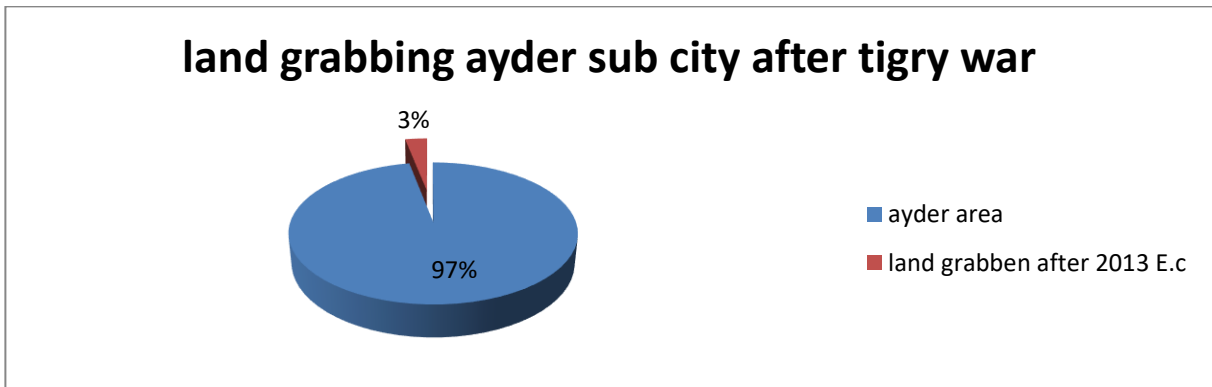


Figure 4-8: land grab in ayder sub city



Figure 4-9: land grabbing in Ayder sub city

4.2.3 Land Grabbed in Semen Sub City

Semen sub city found northern part of the city; it has 8599.78-hectare boundary size with 5 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 6.12-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and from this sub city total land 0.07 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land is grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.



Figure 4-10: land grab in semen sub city



Figure 4-11: land grabbing in Semen sub city

4.2.4 Land Grabbed in Hadinet Sub City

Hadinet sub city found southern part of the city; it has 4971.72-hectare boundary size with 5 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after tigray war until now 11-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and out of the total area 0.23 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land use was grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.

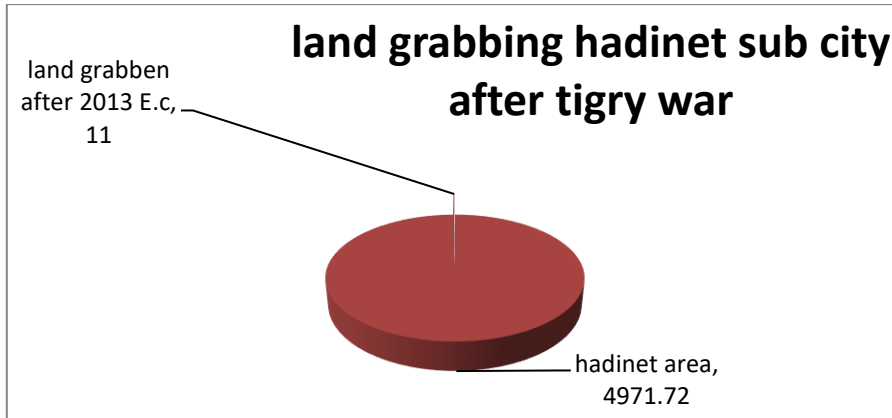


Figure 4-12: land grab in hadinet sub city



Figure 4-13: land grabbing in Hadinet sub city

4.2.5 Land Grabbed in Adi-Haqi Sub City

Adi-Haqi sub city found southwest part of the city; it has 3387.01-hectare boundary size with 5 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 25-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and out of the total area 0.7 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land use was grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.



Figure 4-14: land grab in adi haqi sub city



Figure 4-15: land grabbing in Adi-Haqi sub city

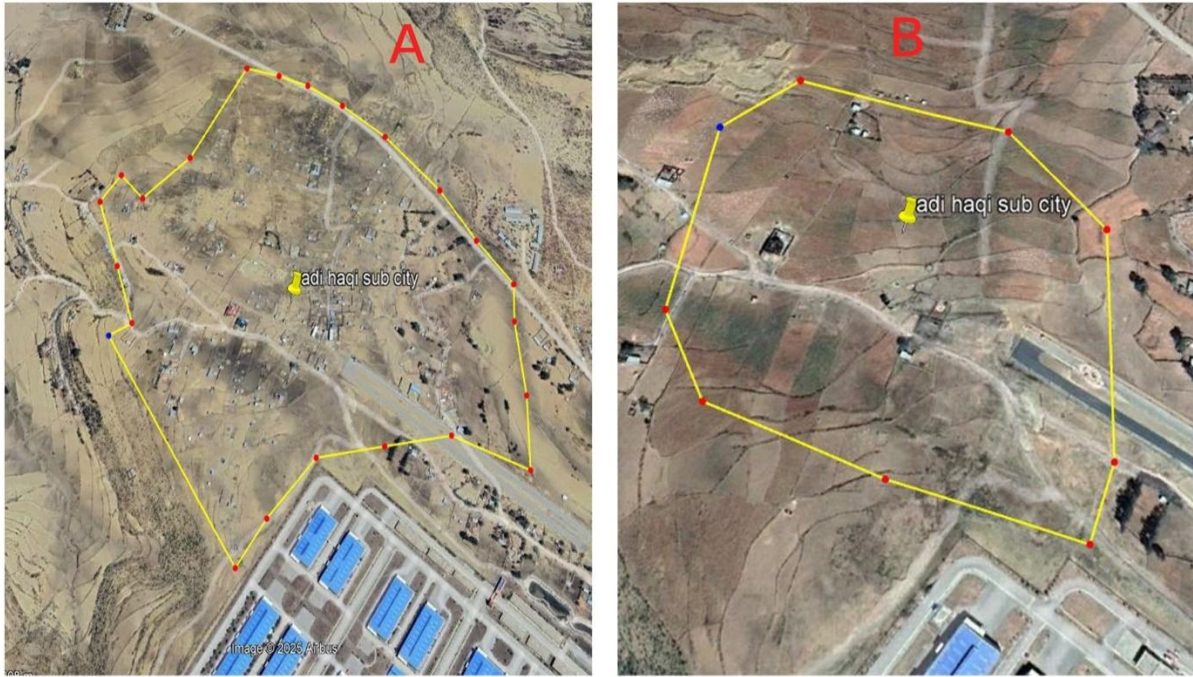


Figure 4-16: at "A" land grabbing after Tigray war "B" also before Tigray war

This area found in Mekelle city Adi-Haqi sub city around industrial park I confirmed in Google earth that more than 48.2 hectares were built during and after Tigray war. And also in this land grabbing participate merchants, farmers and governmental body because this government until now they can't take any measurement.

4.2.6 Land Grabbed in Quiha Sub City

Quiha sub city found eastern part of the city; it has 8231.65-hectare boundary size with 4 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 18.79-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and out of the total area 0.22 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C until now. In this sub city most land use was grabbed green area, residential zone, commercial zone, administration zone.

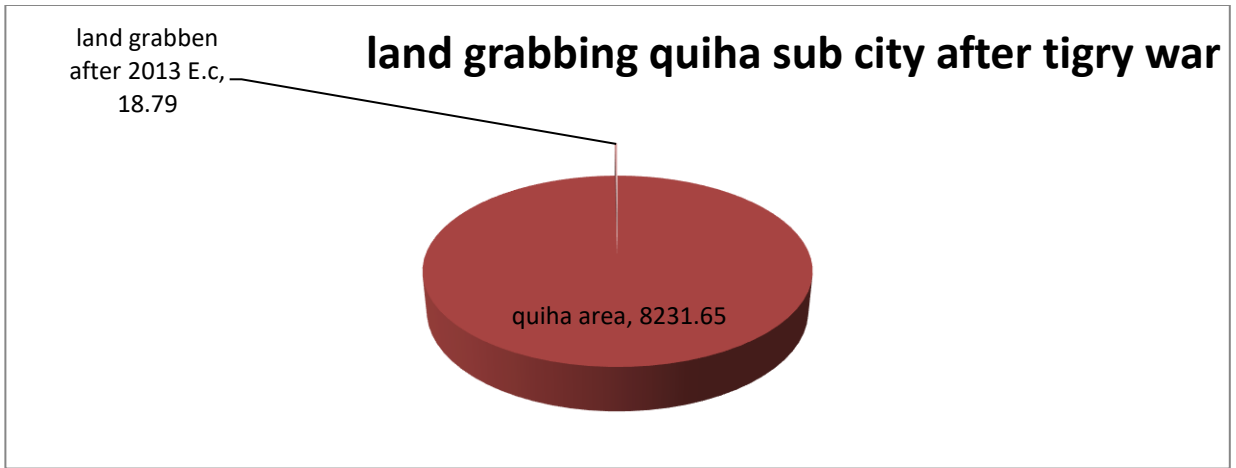


Figure 4-17: land grabbing in quiha sub city



Figure 4-18: land grabbing in Quiha sub city

4.2.7 Land Grabbed in Kedamay-Weyane Sub City

Kedamay-Weyane sub city found center part of the city; it has 645.70-hectare boundary size with 4 administrative wereda in this sub city in the beginning and after Tigray war until now 0.14-hectare land had been grabbed. This data is reported from Mekelle land administration office and from this sub city total land 0.02 % is grabbed from 24/02/2013 E.C. until now.

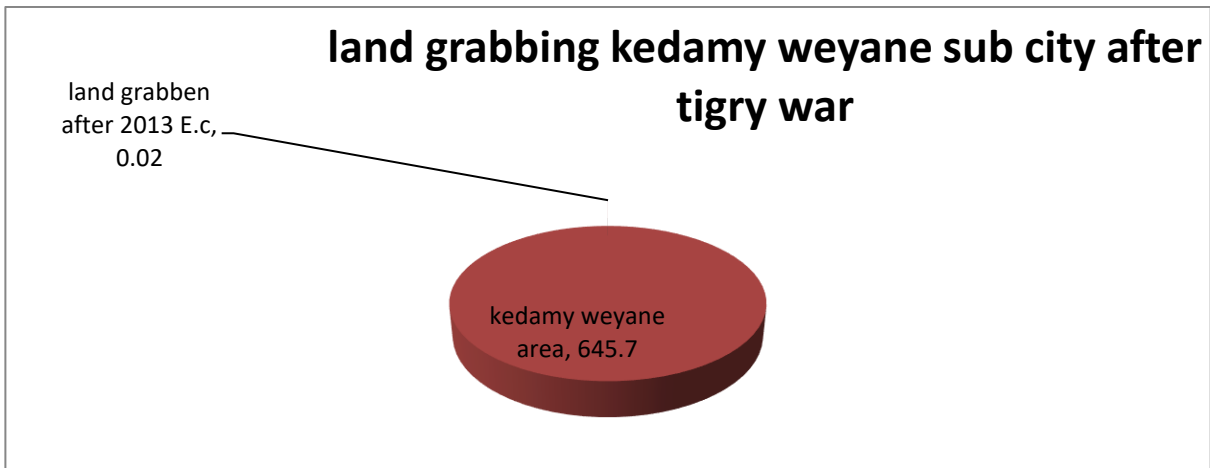


Figure 4-19: land grabbing in kedamay-Weyane sub city

4.3 Presentations of data obtained from administrative body

Data obtained from administrative bodies refers to information collected and maintained by government agencies, organizations, or institutions as part of their routine operations. This type of data is often used in research to analyze trends, behaviors, so in this research I take data about land grabbing by interview and from the written report from vice mayor office and from head of Mekelle land use and management core process. Both the data have the same token from report after Tigray war the same meaning.

Table 4-6: Land grabbed and number of participant from each Sub Cities from 2013 E.C. – 2017 E.C.

No	Sub city	Land grabbing	
		Number people	In hectare

1	Semen	722	6.88
2	Adi-Haqi	254	25
3	Quiha	841	18.79
4	Kedemay-Weyane	94	0.14
5	Ayder	839	102.2
6	Hadinet	1029	11
7	Hawelti	1640	81
	Total	5419	245

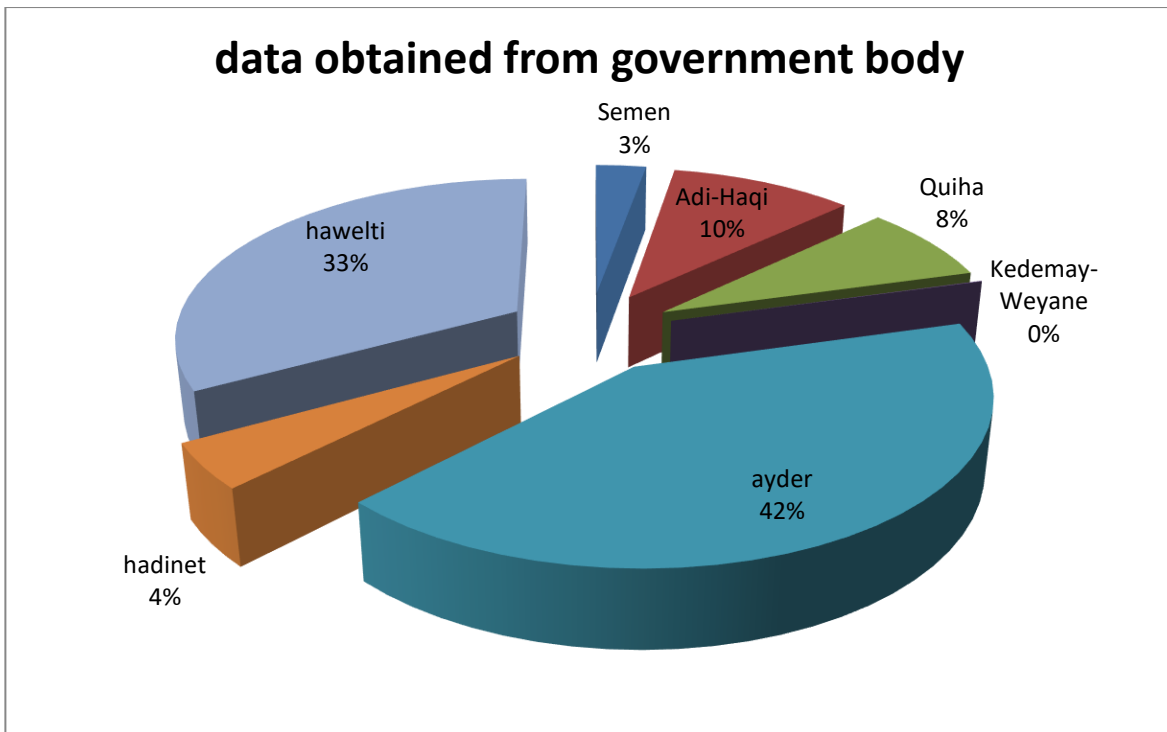


Figure 4-20: land grabbing in kedamay weyane sub city

And also before the Tigray war was land grabbing in Mekelle city I represent in the table below from 2007 to 2012 this data taken from land administration office.

Table 4-7: Land grabbed and number of participant from each Sub Cities from 2007 E.C. – 2012 E.C.

no	year	Land grabbing													
		Semen		Adi-Haqi		Quiha		Kedemay-Weyane		Ayder		Hadinet		Hawelti	
		No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha	No-of people	Area in ha
1	2007	9	0.1	8	0.15	10	0.2	8	0.2	8	0.06	102	3	3	0.07
2	2008	7	0.08	11	0.02	4	0.08	2	0.07	6	0.02	95	2.7	15	1
3	2009	65	2	39	1	10	0.5	3	0.01	124	2	105	4	125	7
4	2010	0	0	32	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	5.2	0	0
5	2011	122	2.5	21	0.6	45	1.2	10	0.21	0	0	98	3.8	31	0.5
6	2012	45	1.3	10	0.42	7	0.2	3	0.07	53	3	72	3.7	26	2.1
	total	248	5.98	121	2.99	76	2.18	26	0.56	191	5.08	552	22.4	<u>224</u>	10.67

5 Research Findings and Discussion

5.1 Research Findings

According to my analysis from the questioner sample prepared, data and facts gathered from Mekelle city administration and regional data sources there is a large scale illegal land grabbing going on with enormous increase involving many government sectors, wealth individuals, local middlemen and brokers and peri-urban farmers.

5.2 Land grabbed by government

In this situation government participate in land grab, because he gives low compensation to the land owners. as we see from 2007 until now mekelle administration boundary 10012.3 hec and now 17106.6 hec plan boundary 32386.2 hec . So industry category 1562.4 hec for other land use 1000.9 hec total 2563.3 hec. Owner land government give low compensation and without long term of treatment.

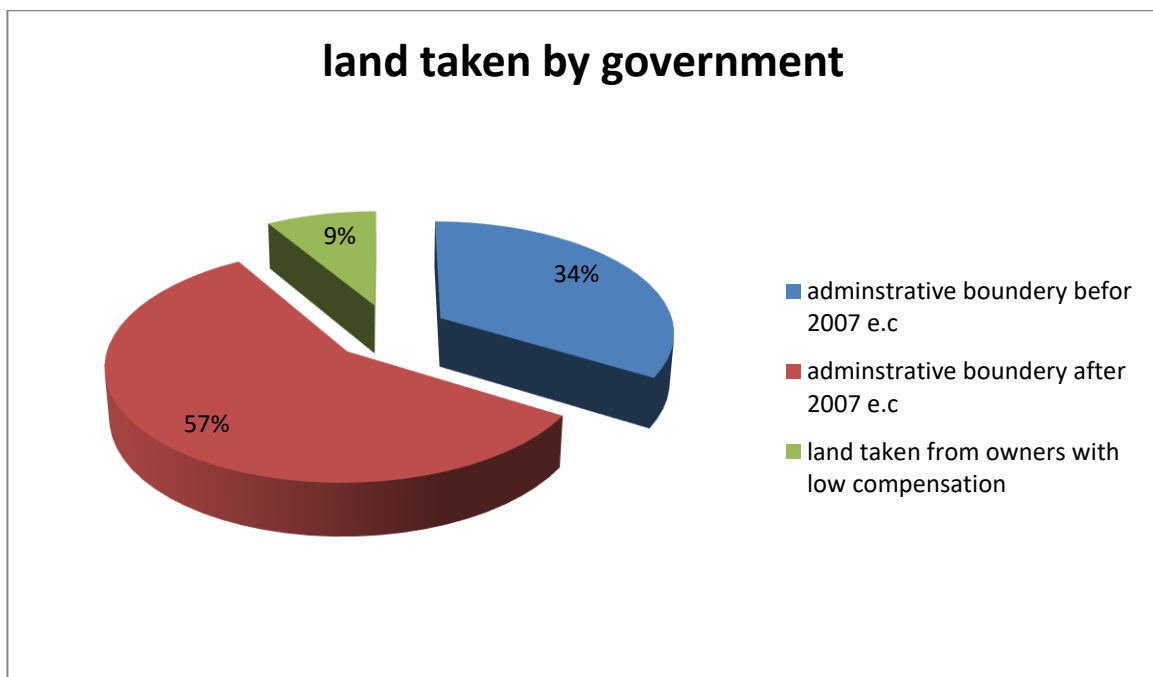


Figure 5-1: land taken by government

5.2.1 Pattern of Land grabbed

The land grabbed from 2007 E.C. up to 2012 E.C. is encountered to be 49.86 hectare which account 0.15% area of Mekelle city; and also from 2013 E.C. up to 2017 E.C. a total area of

245.01-hectare land is illegally grabbed, which account for 0.76% area of Mekelle city and this shows a significant increase. When we observe the last 5 years' land grabbing magnitude it directly shows the effect and harm of the war in weakening the legal framework and economy, that lead to the enormous illegal land grabbing.

Table 5-1: Land Grabbed from 2007 E.C. – 2013 E.C.

year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013-2017
land grabbed (ha)	3.78	3.97	16.51	6.00	8.81	10.79	245.01

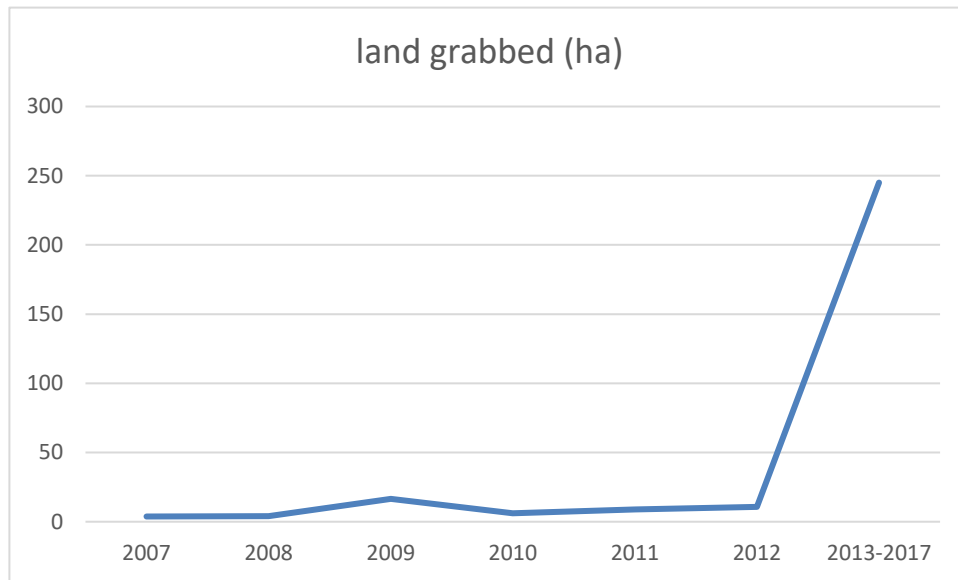


Figure 5-2: Land Grabbed from 2007 E.C. – 2013 E.C.

Table 5-2: Land Grabbed between Ranges of 2007-2012 E.C. and 2013-2017 E.C.

year	2007-2012	2013-2017
land grabbed (ha)	49.89	245.01

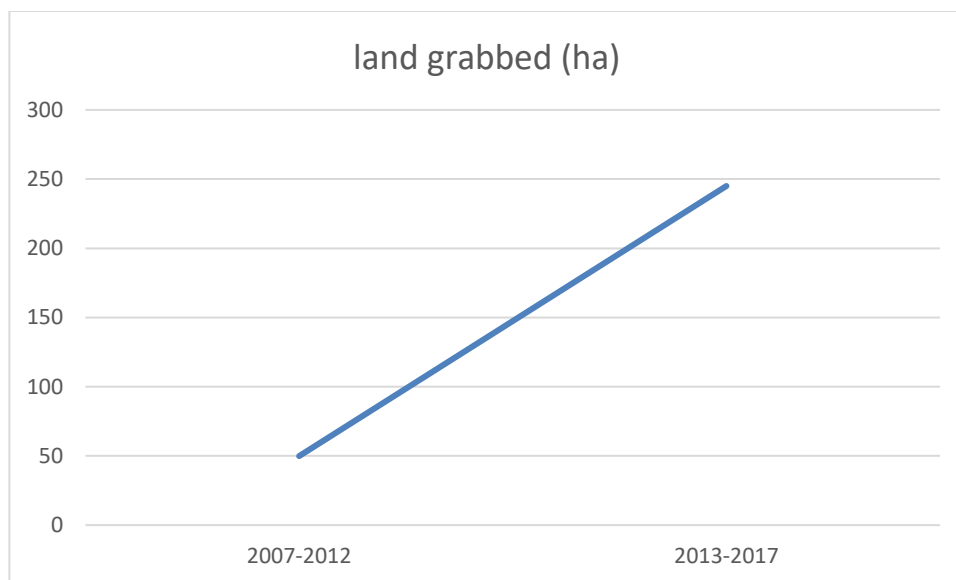


Figure 5-3: Land Grabbed between Ranges of 2007-2012 E.C. and 2013-2017 E.C.

Totally from 2007 E.C. up to 2017 E.C. a total of 294.87-hectare land which account to 0.91% of Mekelle’s land is illegally grabbed. Looking to the pattern of land grabbed it is focused mainly in sub cities where peri-urban (urban peripheral), where farmers mostly located and have weak tenure system. As shown in graph below high land grabbing is encountered in both Ayder and Hawelti sub cities which both have the characteristics mentioned above.

Table 5-3: Sub Cities Land Grab from 2007 E.C. up to 2017 E.C.

Sub city	Land Area grabbed(ha) [2013-2017]	Number of people [2013-2017]	% of land grabbed [2013-2017]	Land Area grabbed(ha) [2007-2012]	Number of people [2007-2012]	% of land grabbed [2007-2012]	Total Area(ha)
Semen	6.88	722	0.08	5.98	248	0.07	8599.78
Adi-Haqi	25	254	0.74	2.99	121	0.09	3387.01
Quiha	18.79	841	0.23	2.18	76	0.03	8231.65
Kedemay-Weyane	0.14	94	0.02	0.56	26	0.09	645.7
Ayder	102.2	839	3.13	5.08	191	0.16	3263.39
Hadinet	11	1029	0.22	22.4	552	0.45	4971.72
Hawelti	81	1640	2.59	10.67	200	0.34	3132.02

Total	245.01	5419	7.01	49.86	1414	1.22	32231.27
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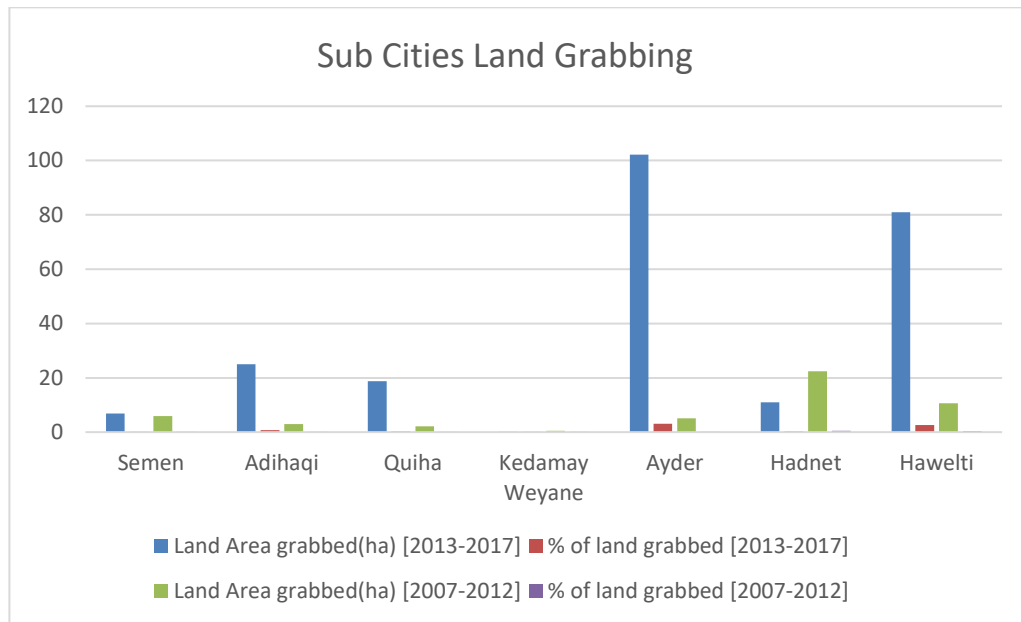


Figure 5-4: Sub Cities Land Grab from 2007 E.C. up to 2017 E.C.

5.2.2 Effect of War on Farmer’s Land Grabbing

The war and siege that was in Tigray destroys almost the entire economy of the regional state which farmers are the first to be affected economically and livelihood. They loss access to seeds, fertilizer. Farm equipment and many things necessity for farming therefore they are forced to sell their farm land in order to survive and feed their families.

5.3 Discussions

In this section the study is discussed in relation to previous relevant literature to give inferences. The study was aimed to find out the land grabbing in mekelle city and its surrounding, cause and consequences of land grabbing.

Land grabbing is not an isolated phenomenon but a systematic issue driven by a combination of economic, political, legal and social factors; On top of that government and civic society has also been mixed, ranging from complicit and weak enforcement to resistance and policy reform. It is a large scale acquisition of land by corporations, governments and individuals; disrupts rural and urban communities. While often associated with rural displacement; its effects spill over into

cities impacting urban population in many ways such as; social, economic, political and environmental impacts. According to my questioner the graph below shows percentile of occupation involved in land grabbing.

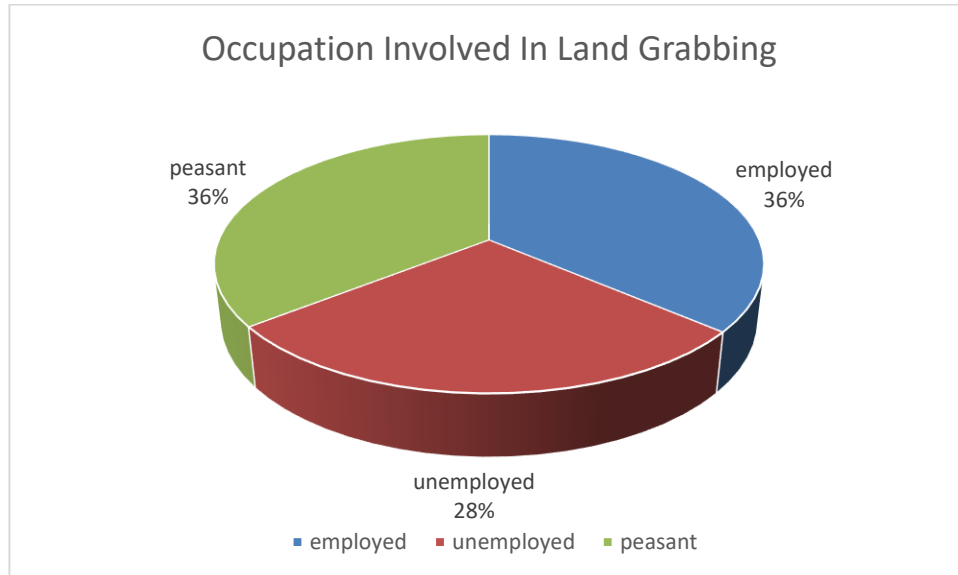


Figure 5-5: Occupations Involved in Land Grabbing

Land grabbing does not just affect rural communities but it also destabilizes urban areas by increasing migration, poverty and social conflict while straining infrastructure and resources.

The land grabbing towards near city rural areas (urban periphery, peri-urban) lead to uncontrolled and unplanned urban expansion. Such excessive urban expansion driven by population growth, industrialization, infrastructural development and absent of well-studied and organized short and long term urban structural plan have severe consequences in peri-urban and rural areas.

In Ethiopia uncontrolled urban sprawl disrupts agricultural system, displaces farming communities and threatens food security. In my case study of Mekelle city I observed the consequences of such adverse effect of the excessive expansion effect of Mekelle city in the farmers of the city surrounding rural areas that the city administration intends to include them to its city boundary. In such areas agricultural practice has been partially disrupted and in some areas completely stop, in some areas due to fear of low compensation from government famers start to parcel their farm land and sold it; which is large and direct land grab and opens door to many type of land grabbing mechanisms that played by many actors such as: government, public

authorities, investors, wealthy individuals, illegal land brokers and farmers themselves. According to my questioner the graph below shows in percentile of types land targeted for land grabbing.

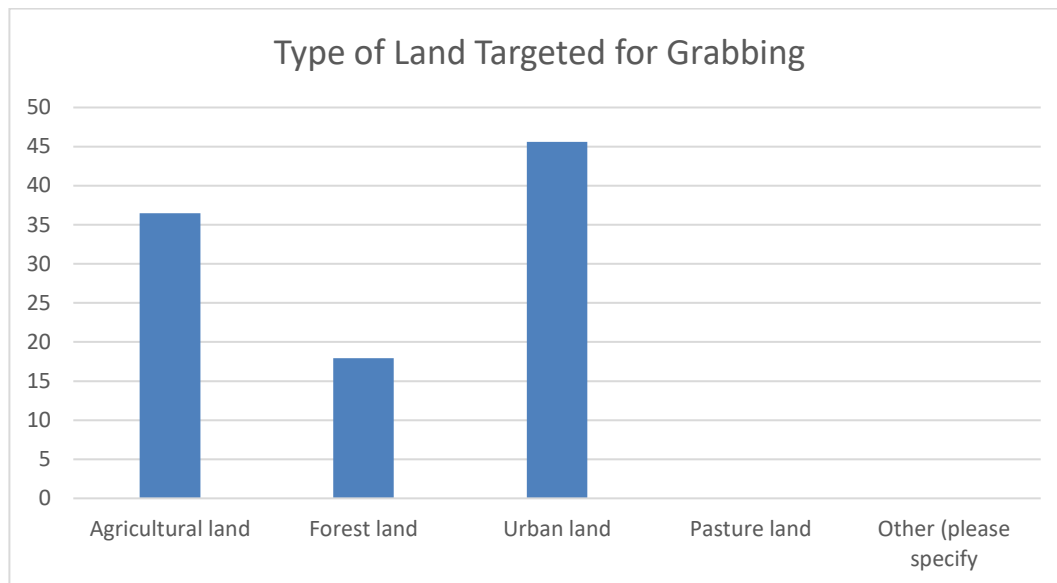


Figure 5-6: Type of Land Targeted for Grabbing

5.3.1 Major Actors of Land Grabbing in Mekelle City

Land grabbing in urban areas involves a mix of various actors who exploit weak governance, legal loopholes, and economic inequalities to acquire land for profit or control. Land grabbing in Mekelle also involves various actors, including government entities, foreign investors, domestic investors, and local elites. Here are the major actors in my case study Mekelle:

5.3.1.1 Government and Public Authorities;

Government institutions located in Tigray region, Mekelle have a mandate to fulfill the federal government's policy which Promotes large-scale agricultural investments through policies like the Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) and Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP) by facilitating land allocation in their state often without community consent.

Political and public authorities, urban planners and local elites; manipulate land registries, exploit weak tenure system to claim ownerships, rezone land for elite development, displacing poor community under the guise of "urban renewal" or "slum clearance" (like the case of kebele 14), acquire land for large infrastructural projects (highways, railways etc.) with little regard for

resident rights. Facilitate illegal land deals, falsify records in exchange for bribes. City administration also leases land in a high rate which it acquired with low compensation.

5.3.1.2 Private Corporations and Investors

Private corporations and investors Acquire land through government connections, often displacing small farmers and invest in urban land for factories, logistics hubs, or retail chains, often backed by government incentives.

5.3.1.3 Local Middlemen and Brokers

Facilitate deals between investors and local officials, often bypassing community consent. Facilitate illegal sell of farmer's farm land and land owned by the government by preparing falsified document incorporated with local officials.

5.3.2 Cause of Land Grabbing in Mekelle

Land grabbing is driven by economic demand, weak governance, and resource scarcity leading to severe social, environmental and economic consequences. In the case of Mekelle, Tigray in general Ethiopia focus of the government is sidelining rural areas, small and some medium urban cities mainly emphasizing in capital cities and some historical and relatively large cities only; which leads to unequal development, large migration of people to urban area, lead to scarcity of resource and by nature living in urban cities is expensive and included weak governance encourages land grabbing. On top of all the above the war in Tigray enables some individuals and public authorities to be able and exercise beyond the rule of law lead to illegal land grabbing easily be done involving government sectors. Those are the reasons why high illegal land grabbing is recorded during and after the Tigray war, from 2013 E.C. up to now, i.e. 245.01-hectare land is illegally grabbed. Which is 0.76% land of the total area of Mekelle city is illegally occupied only during and after the Tigray war. Below are the key general underlying forces that enable land grabbing.

5.3.2.1 Weak Governance and Corruption

- ✓ Lack of Transparent Land Administration: Many governments have outdated or incomplete land registries, making it easy for elites to falsify ownership documents.
- ✓ Corrupt Officials & Elite Capture: Politicians, bureaucrats, and traditional leaders often collude with investors for kickbacks.

- ✓ Weak Rule of Law

5.3.2.2 Legal Loopholes and Unfair Policies

- ✓ Failure to Recognize Customary Land Rights: Many African countries only recognize formal land titles, ignoring communal or indigenous ownership.
- ✓ Investor-Friendly Laws Over People's Rights: Governments pass tax incentives, long-term leases (99 years), and lax regulations to attract foreign agribusiness.
- ✓ Eminent Domain Abuse: Governments use "public interest" justifications (highways, railways etc.) to forcibly displace communities.

5.3.2.3 Power Imbalances and Marginalization of Communities

- ✓ Lack of Political Representation for Rural Poor: Small farmers and indigenous groups often lack influence in policymaking.
- ✓ Gender Inequality in Land Ownership: Women, who produce 60-80% of Africa's food, are often denied land rights.
- ✓ Divide-and-Rule Tactics: Investors bribe local chiefs or faction leaders to fracture community resistance.

5.3.2.4 Conflict and Post-War Instability

5.3.2.5 Climate Change and "Green Grabbing"

Land grabbing persists because it is **profitable for powerful actor's** governments, corporations, and wealthy individuals while **local communities lack legal protection, political power, and economic alternatives.**

5.3.3 Consequence of Land Grabbing in Mekelle

Land grabbing the large-scale, often illegal or coercive acquisition of land by governments, corporations, or wealthy individuals has severe consequences in developing countries, where weak governance, corruption, and lack of legal protections make communities vulnerable. Below are the key current and future consequences of land grabbing.

5.3.3.1 Social Implications

- ✓ Displacement of Poor Communities: Low-income residents are often evicted without fair compensation, leading to homelessness or relocation to slums.

- ✓ Loss of Ancestral Land: Indigenous and farming communities lose land to corporations, destroying cultural heritage.

5.3.3.2 Economic Implications

- ✓ Rising Property Prices: Land grabbing by developers drives up real estate costs, making cities unaffordable.
- ✓ Corruption & Illegal Land Deals: Politicians and elites often manipulate land registries for profit.
- ✓ Unequal Development: Luxury housing and commercial projects replace affordable housing, deepening inequality.
- ✓ Loss of Livelihoods: Small-scale farmers and pastoralists are displaced, increasing rural poverty.
- ✓ Land Concentration: A few wealthy elites or foreign investors control vast lands, worsening inequality.

5.3.3.3 Environmental Implications

- ✓ Destruction of Green Spaces; Parks and wetlands are often converted into commercial zones, worsening urban heat and flooding.
- ✓ Poor Urban Planning: Unregulated land grabs lead to overcrowded, poorly serviced neighborhoods.

Therefore, Land grabbing exacerbates inequality, fuels conflicts, and harms ecosystems in both urban and rural areas.

5.3.3.4 Environmental Implications

Lead protest against the government by say no for urban expansion, at the end this will lead government fall.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

From land grabbing; cause and consequences analysis of Mekelle city it can be concluded that the land grabbing with in and peri-urban of Mekelle city for the period 2007 E.C. to 2017 E.C. shows significant increase due to weak governance, corruption, legal loopholes, unfair policy and economic interests; Especially for the past 5 years which is for the period of 2013 E.C. to 2017 E.C. shows dramatic increase of illegal land grabbing due to the additional effect of war in Tigray that contribute to the illegal land grabbing enormously.

The finding of this study also demonstrates the land grabbing of Mekelle city due to weak governance, corruption, legal loopholes, unfair policy and economic interests; play a vital role for Mekelle city in identifying causes of the land grabbing and to take measure such as: creating knowhow on land right, land tenure system, policy reform etc. Beside studying illegal land grabbing is vital for investigate illegal land grabs and enforce restitution.

The result from this study shows that 49.86-hectare land is illegally grabbed from 2007 E.C. up to 2012 E.C. and 245.01-hectare land is illegally grabbed from 2013 E.C. up to 2017 E.C., totally a land area of 294.87 hectare illegally grabbed. This increasingly land grabbing will significantly impact culture, economy of society and also affect urban development of Mekelle city.

6.2 Recommendation

To protect the rights and interests of local farmers during land grabs, governments should implement a combination of legal, economic, and social measures that ensure fair compensation, community consent, and sustainable livelihoods.

✓ Here are key policy recommendations:

- Strengthen Legal & Institutional Frameworks; Recognize Customary Land Rights, legally acknowledge communal land tenure systems, Require community approval before any large-scale land acquisition, provide required consent for land deals, Establish Independent Land Commissions, oversee disputes, investigate illegal land grabs, and enforce restitution.
 - Ensure Fair Compensation & Alternative Livelihoods; Transparent Valuation & Compensation, pay farmers market value + future income loss (not just token amounts), Provide Alternative Land or Resettlement and continuous income generating mechanism, Job Creation & Skills Training, Train farmers in agribusiness, urban farming, or vocational skills for new livelihoods, Offer equally fertile land or urban housing if displacement is unavoidable.
 - Promote Responsible Investment & Accountability; Regulate Foreign & Corporate Land Deals, Public Land Audits, Expose corrupt land deals and punish officials who facilitate illegal grabs, help farmers pool land for collective bargaining against corporate takeovers and prevent land waste.
 - Constitute a policy that protect land rights, promote equitable urban development, and ensure sustainable resource use.
 - Draft a policy that enable farmers to have a share in domestic investment contributing their land.
- ✓ Further research on land use, land value and land zoning should be done.
- ✓ Land policy should be reviewed participating land owners, communities, civic societies and including all other stakeholders.
- ✓ Short and long or future urban structural plan should be prepared, reviewing from time to time and implement according with great care and considering all the consequence in to account.

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