

A Critical Geography of Reforestation Program in Ghana

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Abstract : There is high rate of deforestation in Ghana due to agricultural expansion, illegal mining and illegal logging. While it is attempting to address the illegalities, Ghana has also initiated a reforestation program known as the Modified Taungya System (MTS). Within the MTS framework, farmers are allocated degraded forestland and provided with tree seedlings to practice agroforestry until the trees form canopy. Yet, the political, ecological and economic models that inform the selection of tree species, the motivations of participating farmers as well as the factors that accounts for differential access to the land and performance of farmers engaged in the program lie underexplored. Using a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach in five forest-fringe communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, the study reveals that economic factors and Ghana's commitment to international conventions on the environment underpin the selection of tree species for the MTS program. Social network and access to remittances play critical roles in having access to, and enhances poor farmers' chances in the program respectively. Farmers are more motivated by the access to degraded forestland to cultivate food crops than having a share in the trees that they plant. As such, in communities where participating farmers are not informed about their benefit in the tree that they plant, the program is largely unsuccessful.

Keywords : translocality, deforestation, forest management, social network

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