

**Topic: Subaltern Struggles and Resilience: The Dynamics of Land Dispossession and Responses in Mubende District, Uganda**

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**Abstract**

Drawing on the 2001 eviction of 401 registered families from Buwekula Blocks 99 and 103, this thesis examines the responses to land dispossession in Mubende District in central Uganda. Conceptualising the dispossessed occupants as subalterns, the study explores the complex legal terrain they navigate under the 1998 Land Act, which grants them varying statuses. The central question is: how have these subalterns responded to land dispossession? Employing a qualitative, multi-design approach that integrates case study, ethnographic, and historical research, the study examines the land tenure dynamics, the contradictions driving dispossession, and the strategies employed by occupants to reclaim their land. The findings reveal that for the past 23 years, land occupants have responded through litigation, petitions, and advocacy. This non-confrontational approach assumes a benevolent state apparatus. However, this thesis argues that these strategies are inherently contradictory, as they seek redress from the very structures that perpetuate the violence. The study further reveals that the primary driver of dispossession was the pursuit of commercial coffee production, which altered existing land uses. This was exacerbated by absentee landlordism, unauthorised settlements, and the 1998 Land Act's contradictory designation of occupants as "bona-fide." In terms of theory, the research demonstrates that subaltern resistance takes a non-linear path, contrasting with the Marxist linear stance on class struggle. It identifies resilience as an individualistic, subjective response, not a collective class phenomenon, and finds no evidence of collaboration between the working class and the peasantry. Instead, non-state institutions like ActionAid and FIAN International have occupied this space. This research contributes to broader debates on resistance and subaltern agency, emphasising that contextual specificity is crucial to understanding the politics associated with power relations, fear, and a misguided understanding of the state.