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## **An Examination of Theories on Savannasation and the Peasant-Environment Debate**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examines man-environment relations in the African savanna. It argues that it is important to look at the relationship in a wider dimension involving conceptual frameworks that incorporate the dynamics of rural livelihoods, institutional factors, resource diversity, environmental variability and global influences on local socio-politico-economic landscapes. Land management decisions and investment patterns of diverse peasant representations are reflected in land use changes. Investigating these relationship has moved from the biased technocratic objective assessment of virgin lands and so-called mapping of human impacts to studies identifying the environment as an arena for synergistic interaction between 'man' economics and 'nature'. A conceptual shift to a 'people in places' paradigm allowing the experiences of people in differentiated environments to influence the analyses of social phenomena in savanna landscapes is underway. These shifts in thinking have multiple implications for designing policies for both rural development and environmental sustainability in the Ghanaian savanna. Ensuring sustainable livelihoods through institutions that grant secure and regulated access to resources, provide skills, capital and appropriate technology is key to environmental health and prosperity.