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The implications of large-scale land acquisitions on agrarian societies, a gender perspective: the case of oil palm development in Ghana.

Samar, Gertrude Korkor


master thesis

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The implications of large-scale land acquisitions on agrarian societies, a gender perspective: the case of oil palm development in Ghana.

by

Gertrude Korkor Samar

A THESIS
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ABSTRACT

A global rise in large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) has increased expansive, mechanized plantation agriculture based on monocultures and prompted a shift away from diversified, traditional crop production. This has led to a reconfiguration of food production patterns with important implications for small-scale farmers, food security and sovereignty, and ecological change. Governments and international organizations, such as the World Bank, vigorously promote LSLAs for industrial agriculture because it is seen as the only way to feed the world and alleviate rural poverty. However, LSLAs are often promoted on lands labeled as 'idle', marginalized, or unused, which does not recognize the different forms of land-use by many farmers, especially groups such as women.

This thesis investigates how large-scale land deals for biofuels development in Ghana have affected the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women. It contributes to the literature on the differential gender effects of land deals and analyzes the implications of LSLAs in Ghana for land access and control, livelihood changes, intra-household dynamics, and environmental variations. Using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and existing literature, this research shows that women’s access, control, and inclusion in decisions over land is minimal. Women are particularly affected by land dispossessions (external and internal) and exploitation when selling their labour to make a living. Moreover, there have been changes in environmental conditions due to modifications in land cover and land use. An altered landscape from forest and food crop farms to hectares of oil palm monoculture has contributed to pest infestation and land degradation. Food insecurity keeps increasing as the little available lands have also joined the chain of monoculture. In all these situations, there is no intervention from the state and little or no support from social organizations in the oil palm sector as it is not deemed a priority for either.
Unfortunately, there is not a strong presence of social movements to demand support or engage government and non-governmental organizations on the promised development that has eluded them. Therefore, these findings cast doubt on the state’s narratives that LSLAs for agricultural commercialization benefit local livelihoods and, hence, a viable strategy for rural development.

Keywords:
Large-scale land acquisition, biofuels, gender, oil palm, dispossession, intra-household dynamics, Ghana.
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Dedicated to

My late Mum Ernestina Ama Frah Fynn. You brought out the best in me

&

Sparkler and Skylar; mum loves you.
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<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Agricultural Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGOA</td>
<td>African Growth and Opportunity Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>APE</td>
<td>Agrarian Political Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRICS</td>
<td>Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Committee on World Food Security</td>
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<td>CHPS</td>
<td>Community-based Health Planning and Services</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Convention People Party</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCE</td>
<td>District Chief Executive</td>
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<td>ESCARD</td>
<td>Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organization</td>
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<td>FIAN</td>
<td>The FoodFirst Information and Action Network</td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Feminist Political Ecology</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>GIPC</td>
<td>Ghana Investment Promotion Center</td>
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<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<td>GREL</td>
<td>Ghana Rubber Estate Limited</td>
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<td>GOPDC</td>
<td>Ghana Oil Palm Development Company</td>
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<td>GPRS</td>
<td>Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Country</td>
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<td>IFAP</td>
<td>International Federation of Agricultural Producers</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFPRI</td>
<td>International Food Policy Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIED</td>
<td>The International Institute for Environment and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>LAP</td>
<td>Land Administration Project</td>
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<td>LSLAs</td>
<td>Large-scale Land Acquisitions</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>MICs</td>
<td>Middle Income Countries</td>
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<td>MOFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Food and Agriculture</td>
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<td>NetRight</td>
<td>Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>NOPL</td>
<td>National Oil Palms Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORPALM</td>
<td>Norpalm Ghana Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>National Redemption Council</td>
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<td>NTFPs</td>
<td>Non-Timber Forest Products</td>
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<tr>
<td>OASL</td>
<td>Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands</td>
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<td>OPRI</td>
<td>Oil Palm Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFJ</td>
<td>Planting for Food and Jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPPs</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRAI</td>
<td>Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investment that Respects, Livelihoods, and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Presidential Special Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSPO</td>
<td>Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil</td>
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<td>SAPs</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programs</td>
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<td>SOPP</td>
<td>State Oil Palm Plantation</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United Nation Agency for International Development</td>
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Chapter one: Large Scale Land Acquisitions and Agricultural Investments

1.1 Introduction

Large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) also known as ‘land grabs’ have made headlines in a lot of media reportage and international debates (Cotula et al., 2011). Landholdings around the world, that a few years prior had little or no interest to international investors, are now a highly sought-after commodity with land transactions skyrocketing since 2008. These land deals have stirred up debates, primarily between those in favor of economic growth (at any and all cost) and others who prioritize social justice and sustainability. Debates have been marked by expressions of opposing views within many spheres including academia, media and civil organizations (Voget-Kleschin, 2013). Although not a new phenomenon, the pace of the current land deals has been overwhelming, invoking contentious debate among a host of groups and organizations (Borras & Franco, 2013; Cotula, 2012). Proponents are convinced that large-scale land investments can render un(der)-used land more productive, alleviate poverty, increase food security, and generate economic growth (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). By contrast opponents base their argument on the negative socio-economic and environmental consequences associated with largescale land acquisitions (Behrman et al., 2012). The heavily generated international attention is not only due to its increasing frequency, but also the staggering sizes of land deals in recent years.

The Land Matrix Observatory – a group of global partner organizations that independently monitor land deals – has since 2009 collated and verified information on land grabs detailing rights of use transfers, transfer of control through sale, lease and concessions involving foreign and local actors (Anseeuw et al., 2013). In that report, between 2000 and 2010, about 1,217 agricultural land deals amounting to 83.2 million hectares (ha) of land in developing countries were recorded representing about 1.7% of the world’s agricultural area (Anseeuw et al., 2012; Holmén, 2015).
The data indicates that the most targeted region is Africa, about 56.2 million ha compared to 7 million ha in Latin America and 17.7 million ha in Asia (Anseeuw et al., 2012). A World Bank report also confirms the rapid rise in global land deals with roughly 56 million hectares changing hands between 2008 and 2009, compared to a global annual average of 4 million ha before 2008 (Anseeuw et al., 2012; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011).

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), while studying the phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean, defines LSLAs using these three indicators to explain LSLAs: i) The scale of the acquisition should be relatively large, using a benchmark of about 1000 ha for a single deal; ii) direct involvement of foreign institutions and governments and iii) these new investments have negative implications on the food security of the recipient country (Borras, Franco, et al., 2012). In the World Bank’s definition, the scale of land involved will have to be more than 1000 ha (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). For the Land Matrix Observatory, i) it should cover 200 ha or more, ii) there should be a transfer of rights to use, control, or own land through sale, lease, or concession should take place, iii) there should be a conversion from land used by smallholders, or for important environmental functions, to large-scale commercial use and iv) it should not include any data before the year 2000 when the FAO food price index was lowest (Anseeuw et al., 2013). Leading critical scholars in the field have challenged these conceptualizations, defining land grabbing as essentially “control grabbing”, which is the power to control land and its associated resources. It entails the interlinked dimensions of the scale of land acquisitions and the scale of capital involved. Within their definition they capture different scales for different activities such as 300 ha of high-value vineyards, 5,000 ha of a rare metal mining concession, 100,000 ha of land for industrial tree plantation, and 500,000 ha of grazing land for livestock. The final feature is that land grabs are usually within capital accumulation strategies originating from the multiple crises.

LSLA’s are occurring for reasons of agricultural commercialization, mining, real estate development, development of infrastructure among others. However, it is generally argued that the food, fuel and financial crises of the 2007/2008 years fostered renewed momentum for land acquisitions and agricultural investments in lower and middle income countries (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). GRAIN’s report in 2008 removed the veiled reasons covering about 100 cases of land grabs that were attributed to food security and financial returns. Citing countries and regional bodies involved in this practice, the report influenced the emergence of several kinds of literature addressing the causes, drivers, and dynamics of such land deals at the regional and global levels (Alden Wily, 2012; Cotula et al., 2011; GRAIN, 2008). Wily (2012), in discussing these land deals, placed his argument within a historical perspective of colonial continuity and Philip McMichael's argument on the same expressed land grabs as symptomatic of food regime restructuring, where financial capital is being invested in cheap land to bridge global food deficits (McMichael, 2012). Large-scale land demands are primarily driven by the desire for food and fodder, biofuels, industrial raw materials and partly by financial speculations. While some governments are striving to secure reliable supplies of food against market volatility and make gains from agriculture (Cotula, 2011), others are engaging in this because of expectations for ancillary investments in technology, capacity building, employment creation, infrastructural development and other spillover effects (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Jumbe et al., 2009). Large-scale agro-investments have the potential to introduce the long-awaited investment into agriculture which will contribute to the stabilization of global food prices. However, the state of recent agricultural investments raises concerns about the negative externalities on people in rural areas, who risk losing access to
and control over formal and informal land rights. Even with formal rights, they may be coerced into selling or leasing lands to investors because of the high demands and potential attractiveness of prices being offered (Jin & Jayne, 2011).

Generally, agro-based investments have targeted developing countries with large amounts of arable land, especially countries in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Many mainstream international development organizations such the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), USAID New Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Chinese Development Bank, through the rhetoric of a North-South and South-South cooperation, see agricultural commercialization and biofuels development as the pathways to enhance productivity for food security and to promote rural development (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Jumbe et al., 2009; White et al., 2012). In Africa’s case, its feasibility is premised on the notion of ‘idle’ or ‘unused’ lands, together with favorable climatic conditions and cheap labour (Cotula et al., 2008). The World Bank’s report in 2009 emphasized the possibility of expanding land usage in Africa’s Guinea Savannah Zone. The report indicates that the region comprises 600 million hectares of land, of which 400 million hectares are arable and suitable for agriculture but only about 40 million hectares are currently under crop cultivation. This under-utilization is attributed to the region’s low-level technological and capital constraints (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). According to Sugrue (2008), the term “idle land” is very often substituted for other terms such as unproductive lands, wastelands, under-utilized lands, marginal lands, abandoned lands, or degraded lands (Stomph et al., 1994; Sugrue, 2008; Wiegmann et al., 2008). Its current dominant definition significantly relates it to land areas massively under-utilized and available for development (Cotula et al., 2008). Promoting agricultural investments on lands labeled as idle or unused comes with challenges, as such labels
do not adequately recognize the different land uses by peasant farmers, pastoralists, and other vulnerable groups such as women (Cotula et al., 2008). For instance, women that depend on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) as a source of main and supplementary income always tend to lose because the productive value of the land is veiled by such 'idle' categorizations (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Schoneveld, German, & Nutako, 2011).

Women are the major producers of household food needs but control an average of about 2% of the land globally (Kachingwe, 2012). Women often have the responsibility of maintaining the household and generating income for household reproduction and basic needs, such as health and education (Kachingwe, 2012). Despite their essential contribution in both the formal and informal economy, equal land rights and property ownership has been denied to women for centuries even though they live in and survive on agrarian systems, through which they establish social networks, sustain families, and lay foundations for future generations. Not owning the lands they work on makes their rights, needs, and interests overlooked during land deal transactions aggravating gender inequalities in affected communities (Behrman et al., 2012). This thesis therefore aims to contribute to current debates by bringing attention to how rural women in Africa, particularly Ghana, might be affected by global land deals from a developmental and gender perspective – a trajectory that until now has been minimally integrated in the land grab debate and policy responses. Including a gender perspective is not only a matter of social equity but a key to poverty reduction.

1.2 Problem Statement- losing farmlands

In many developing countries with a predominantly rural and agrarian structure, access to land is a key factor of production and a primary asset (Deininger et al., 2003). The rural population
makes its livelihood from it, both directly and indirectly, as landlords, farmers, labourers and as producers of the local nonfarm goods and services sold to the farming community. What is land? The Merriam Webster dictionary defines ‘land’ as “[t]he solid part of the surface of the earth and all its natural resources; ground or soil of a specified situation, nature or quality and finally a portion of the earth’s surface distinguishable by ownership and boundaries”. Even though this definition seems straightforward there is more to the meaning of land than just the solid surface of the earth.

In discussing what land is and how it is differentiated from other resources Hall (2013a) used different attributes that distinguishes land from other resources. First and foremost, he described ‘Land’ as simultaneously concrete and abstract. It is concrete in the sense that it is 'the ground beneath our feet' and abstract in the sense that it is possible to strip away the ground beneath our feet and yet still have land in the very same space. It is fixed and immovable, cannot be exported, relocated or repositioned. He described land as heterogeneous and not having a standard pricing as compared to a resource like oil; its price is usually measured by its location. Furthermore Hall (2013a) described land as indispensable to almost all human activity and stated that some form of control over land is often necessary for accessing its resources both renewable and non-renewable and as it is commonly rented. Finally, he differentiates land from other resources based on the power and depth of people’s attachments stressing how land shapes and is shaped by people’s practices, identities and social relations (D. Hall, 2013a). As Akram-Lodhi (2021, p.3) puts it “people act in relation to land, but land acts upon people, mediating, shaping and embodying individual common sense as well as the collective knowledge expressed in social rules, norms and values”. This interrelationship is evident in the exhibition of strong emotional connections to
people’s homes, farms, villages and communities as both members of a group and as individuals (D. Hall, 2013a)

Land provides space for several human activities, be it agriculture, industry, tourism, housing and infrastructure, investment and speculation, etc., making its meaning different to different groups of people; the landlord, the farmer, the waged labourer, the agronomist, the property developer, the investor, etc. Yet it is these differences that makes land indispensable especially its centrality within rural lives, its power in rural mobilizations and agrarian politics. In these modern times, it is in Indigenous communities that this mutually co-constitutive character of land and people is evidently seen. As Thomas King writes, “[l]and has always been a defining element of Aboriginal culture. Land contains the languages, the stories, and the histories of a people. It provides water, air, shelter, and food. Land participates in the ceremonies and the songs. And land is home” (cited in Akram-Lohdi, forthcoming, p.3). Land is thus multidimensional and can be broadly conceptualized with at least four key features: (i) a very important economic factor of (agricultural) production to produce food and other goods such fiber, timber, fuel, and so on; (ii) land holds other resources: minerals, water, forest; making it a key natural resource; (iii) land can be key to capturing (cheap) labour (e.g. through contract farming, and so on); (iv) unlike other natural resources, land functions in multidimensional ways for different people -- it is a ‘territory’ for various communities of people, with deeper socio-cultural, spiritual and historical significance.

To reduce land to just one of the four key features cited above is problematic and can lead to disastrous policy outcomes. It is critical to understand land from the four interlinked dimensions. Since land is much more than a commodity, land acquisitions can have profound impacts that cut across class, gender, generational, and cultural aspects. In recent years, demand for land has increased dramatically. This is largely due to the convergence of multiple crises: a food price
crisis of 2007/8; energy crisis (peak oil) and biofuels boom; climate change crisis and mitigation strategies (green economy); industrial demands from newer hubs of global capital (BRICS and MICs); and the financialization of land (land as an investment strategy, including for speculative purposes) (see Borras et al. 2012). Debates regarding large-scale land transactions come with concerns about its impacts on the local and smallholder farming populace. Studies have focused on the risks of land investments on the rights and livelihoods of the rural poor, as well as on the implications of these land transactions on different genders (Julia & White, 2012). Others have outlined potential opportunities for food security and rural development arising from the new investments in an already long-neglected agricultural sector (Cotula et al., 2009; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). There are also existing studies on the implications of large-scale investments on other resources such as water rights and its implication on local livelihoods (Bues & Theesfeld, 2012; Smaller & Mann, 2009; T. O. Williams et al., 2012). Following persistent concerns about the welfare impacts of large-scale land transactions in sub Saharan Africa, many studies and reports that examined land investment deals found mixed impacts in different case scenarios (Songwe & Deininger, 2009). Cotula et al. (2009) acknowledged the potentials of land investments but warned that these may not be effective if governments fail to build capacities necessary to negotiate better terms for their people. Generally, there are still limited empirical studies on how large-scale agricultural investments influence changes in some sections of the populace, especially women (both in terms of their participation in land transactions and household dynamics) and youth (Behrman et al., 2012; Kumeh & Omulo, 2019). It is against this backdrop that this study aims to assess the impacts of large-scale land investments on agrarian societies with an emphasis on gender dynamics in Ghana. Ghana is important in the discussions around large-scale land acquisitions because the government markets the country as available for agricultural
modernisation to international organisations, and is characterised by a reasonable degree of macro-economic and political stability (Nolte & Väth, 2015). According to the FAO, Ghana has large tracts of fertile lands with a growing demand for major staples and biofuels (FAO, 2008; Schoneveld, German, & Nutakor, 2011). It also has significant water resources for year-round irrigation which boosts opportunities for the cultivation of water-based crops like rice and sugarcane thus a viable option for investments (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014).

Ghana has been identified in literature as one of the African countries bearing the brunt of land grabs in Africa (Cotula et al., 2009; R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015) but its data on these acquisitions are scarce, unavailable or unreliable (Cotula et al., 2009). Available data suggest that several companies from different countries have acquired land in Ghana to cultivate biofuels but there is more information on the cultivation of Jatropha than other biofuels (Acheampong & Campion, 2014). Most of these acquisitions and their respective projects took off between 2005/2006 but peaked after 2008. A newspaper publication (Ghana Business News) in 2009 identified about 23 companies both regional and international in nature engage in acquiring land to cultivate food and non-food crops for biodiesel (Dogbevi, 2009). This was further confirmed in a study that identified a total of 17 commercial biofuel developments projects (Schoneveld, German, & Nutako, 2011). In the same study it was revealed that the majority of the companies were foreign-owned and/or financed by the Ghanaian Diaspora and all but one proposed the plantations business model of more than 1000 hectares (Acheampong & Campion, 2014). The report also reveals that 13 of the companies focused primarily on the cultivation of oil palm, cassava and Jatropha curcas, and by August 2009 had collectively controlled about 1,075,000 hectares of land, scattered across Ghana.
These agricultural driven investments have increased largescale land transactions which are resulting in changes in the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of land use for the local population (Acheampong & Campion, 2014). These include various forms of dispossession, losing access and control of land-based resources, a reduction in income-generating activities associated with lands, livelihood transformation, and sometimes conflicts (Hunsberger et al., 2017). These changing land dynamics continue to impact rural livelihoods in Ghana with severe implications for women thus this study aims to contribute to filling this knowledge gap about the gender dynamics of LSLAs in Ghana.

1.3 Main research question and sub questions

Within the context of the above research problem and identified knowledge gaps, this study puts forth the following central research question: what are the livelihood and gender implications of large-scale land acquisitions for oil palm development in the Western and Eastern regions of Ghana?

In line with the above main question, specific sub questions necessary to address the above include the following

- How are large-scale land acquisitions for oil palm development affecting agricultural landholdings of men and women?
- What is the impact(s) of large-scale land acquisition for oil palm development on local farming systems and the gender differences in land-use practices?
- How are large-scale land acquisitions altering the agrarian landscape in Ghana?
- What are the gender dynamics in the value chain of oil palm plantation development?
- What forms of resistance (if any) are presented towards large scale land acquisition for oil palm development in Ghana?
1.4 Insights into the Study Area

This section presents an overview of the study areas in terms of their location, demographics, social and economic characteristics, and brief description of its political organisation. The sections continue with the research settings presenting the methodology. Appendix 1 gives more details of areas suitable for the cultivation of the oil palm in Ghana.

1.4.1 Study sites: locations

Map 1.1 A map of Ghana showing study areas

Source: prepared for author by Abagna Martha, University of Energy and Natural Resources Ghana.

Ghana as a nation state consists of 16 administrative regions and 230 district assemblies as a way of decentralising its activities (Districts.Ghana-net.com, 2019). Amongst these 230 districts are the Kwaebibirem and the Ahanta West districts, the areas of focus for this study. These districts are found in the Eastern and Western Regions respectively both in the southern part of the country.
The Ahanta West District consists of about 123 settlements with Agona Nkwanta as its district capital (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Other large settlements include Apowa, Dixcove, Ewusiejoe and Abura. It is located at the southernmost tip of the Western Region of Ghana with the Gulf of Guinea as its southern limit. The district shares boundaries with Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly to the East, Mpohor Wassa East District Assembly to the North East, Wassa West District Assembly to the North West and Nzema East District Assembly to the West. The district has a total area of about 636 square kilometers and lies within the south-western equatorial climatic zone of Ghana. The highest monthly average temperature is about 34°C recorded between March and April, with about 20°C recorded in August as its lowest. Relative humidity is very high averaging between 75% to 80% during the rainy season and 70% to 80% in the dry season. The district lies within the wettest region in Ghana experiencing a double-maxima rainfall with a mean annual rainfall of over 1700 mm. The vegetation falls largely within the high rain forest belt zone of Ghana.

The Kwaebibirem District is divided into five towns and area Councils: namely Kade-kubease, Asuon, Nkwantanang, Kwae and Abaam. It is bordered by Birim North District to the north-west, Atiwa District to the north-east, on the south-east by Denkyembour District, and on the South-west by Akyemansa District. Kwaebibirem District has a land area of 1230 square kilometers with Kade as its capital. The district has a tropical climate characterized by two distinct conditions of wet and dry seasons. The wet season ranges from April to July and from September to November with total annual rainfall of about 1500mm. While the dry season ranges from December to March. Minimum and maximum temperature ranges between 25°C – 30°C respectively.
1.4.2 Demographic Characteristics

The population of the Ahanta West District is about 95,140 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014) made up of 49,116 females and 46,024 males. The entire population is made up of 76,088 rural dwellers and 19,052 urban dwellers with an average household size of 5.9. The district is inhabited by a mix of ethnic groups including the Ahanta, Wass, Nzema, Ewes and Fantes. The Ahanta are the predominant ethnic group (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014) and the matrilineal systems of kinship is the predominantly practiced in the District.

The population of the Kwaebibirem District, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 113,721 representing 4.3 percent of the region’s total population. Males constitute 49.0 percent and females represent 51.0 percent. More than fifty percent (57.3%) of the population is rural. The population of the district is youthful (39.4%) depicting a broad base population pyramid which tapers off with a small number of elderly persons (5.0%). The average household size in the district is 4.1 persons per household. Akans constitute the largest ethnic group in the district, followed by Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Mole Dagbon and the Guans in that order. Both patrilineal and matrilineal systems of kinship is practiced in the District due to the presence of diverse ethnic groups (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014)

1.4.3 Social and Economic characteristics

About 58% of the total population in the Ahanta West District engages in agriculture (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). The remaining percentage is distributed between small scale trading, fishing, the formal sector and the current emergence of small-scale mining popularly known as ‘galamsey’. The formal sector employs a few of the people and the small-scale trading is dominated by women. Income levels are generally low giving rise to generally low
per capita expenditure. The agricultural sector has three components: the crops, livestock and fisheries. About 70% of the total farmers are crop producers because the soils and climatic conditions favour the production of both food crops and tree crops. The six major food crops of the district are cassava, maize, plantain, cocoyam, rice and yam. Other crops include oil palm, rubber, cocoa, and vegetables. There are two major agricultural companies in the district namely Norwegian Palm Limited (NORPALM) and the Ghana Rubber Estates Limited (GREL) who own large oil palm and rubber plantations respectively. Other companies include Wayoe Engineering, B-Bovid Ltd, Mantrac together with Oil servicing companies like Seaweld Engineering, 13:05 Engineering and Vehicle dealership company Renault are also present in the district. With the outbreak of the Cape Saint Paul Wilt, the coconut plantations, which used to be the viable cash crop, has been completely wiped out in the district.

In the Kwaebibirem District, the main economic activity carried out is agriculture; that is, crop and livestock production. As high as 70.8 percent of households engage in agriculture (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). In the rural localities, six out of ten households representing 61.2 percent are agricultural households while in the urban localities, 38.8 percent of households are into agriculture. Most households in the district are involved in crop farming whiles poultry (chicken) is the dominant animal reared. The crops produced in the area include cocoa, citrus, plantain, banana, cassava, oil palm, rubber, rice, leafy and fruit vegetables, and maize. However, cocoa, oil palm, rubber and citrus are the main cash crops produced. It is estimated that about 13,095 households are engaged in the cultivation of oil palm alone. About 50 percent of oil palm farmers produce palm fruits on contractual agreement with Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC), the largest palm oil production company in Ghana with an estimated 50, 700 ha are under cultivation of the oil palm in the district.
When it comes to infrastructure and social amenities, road transportation is the main form of accessibility in both districts; majority of them being feeder roads with scattered truck roads connecting major settlements. The roads in both districts are generally in bad condition and are almost impassable during the rainy season but there are few exceptions like the trunk road which traverses the Ahanta West in an east-west direction forms part of the Trans African Highway.

On healthcare delivery, both districts are performing poorly due to the limited number of healthcare facilities and personnel. The Ahanta West district has one major hospital, five healthcare centers, four clinics and two Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds. The Kwaebibirem district similarly has one district hospital and two other non-governmental hospitals together with three health centres, two clinics and 23 Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds. The major medical personnel are found in the hospital while the other facilities are served by the medical assistants.

1.4.4 Social and political organisation

The traditional authorities are responsible for the local administration, the government maintains representations at the local levels. The social setting recognises the traditional authority institution which has existed since time in memorial as the governor of customary law (Kludze, 2000). The traditional system is a judicial, political, religious and social way of maintaining security and order in the local setting (Nukunya, 2003). The chief is the highest authority, executive head, legislator, working together with elders and the Queen mother. Traditional leadership is seen as a means of articulating the needs and priorities of communities that will lead to development and local autonomy instead of dependence solely on the government. In conducting a fieldwork in
Ghana, the existing traditional system requires one to follow the protocol and the hierarchy of introducing the research to the authorities and if possible, seek their opinions on the matter. This is because land ownership and control in Ghana is a combination of customary rules and contemporary statutory overlays (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Yaro, 2010) and about 80% of lands are under customary practices.

The hierarchy of rights and interest in lands are allodial interest, customary freehold, alienation holdings, share cropping where the proceeds of a farm are divided, share cropping where the cultivated land rather than the proceeds is divided, other customary tenancy arrangements, community’s common property rights and a range of derived/secondary rights. Whiles the common law rights focuses on freehold, leasehold, licenses, and easements (Larbi, 2006). Customarily, land is owned communally, and chiefs, earth priests, clan heads and family heads serve as trustees holding the interest for the people (Kasanga, 2002; Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Yaro, 2010). The chiefs, earth priests, clan heads and family heads form the customary institution that define the rules and regulations that govern land use including accessibility and availability of land. Individual members of a land-owning group derive a usufructuary interests which are perpetual and inheritable. They are allowed to use the land for farming and also allocate land to non-members in the community for subsistence farming under various tenurial arrangements (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Kidido et al., 2017; Yaro et al., 2018). Historically, records shows how the British colonial era strengthened the hold of already powerful individuals and set the stage for the development of the an elite chieftaincy class (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Obeng-Odoom, 2014). The attainment of a chieftaincy status was done through a system that only allowed the economically powerful access to the title (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Obeng-Odoom, 2014). The roles of chiefs changed from the pre-colonial times
through the colonial period of indirect rule and post-colonial administrations which did not only empower the chiefs, but eroded their accountability to their people (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Obeng-Odoom, 2014). Colonization and the prescription of western models of leasehold and freehold tenure to promote tenure security in the colonial and post-colonial period contributed to the reduction of some communal traditional structures and institutions (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Kasanga, 2002; Yaro et al., 2018) and with time their influence in administration and judicial services dwindled. Despite this reduction, the chiefs influence and control over land especially did not wane because of the rents they derived from usage of the land (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom, 2012; Yaro, 2010). Chiefs, therefore, have a strong influence on the political economy, industrial development, and agricultural productivity of their respective areas.

Current legal and administrative practice of the public land agencies in Ghana require chiefs to grant consent to land transactions within their area of jurisdiction. Thus, although clan and family heads can allocate land, it cannot be completed without the consent of the chiefs (Campion & Acheampong, 2014; Kidido et al., 2017; Yaro, 2010). The chieftaincy institution is also recognized by the constitution of Ghana, so it is imperative to state that chiefs, by virtue of their traditional and statutory roles, are supposed to be gatekeepers of land by seeking the interest of the community during land transactions (Ahmed et al., 2018; E. Kuusaana & Gerber, 2015).

On the political front, the administrative structure is headed by a District Chief Executive (DCE) who represents the central government and is responsible for the effective administration of political and socio-economic issues of the District. There are also assembly members representing the various electoral areas and a Presiding member. Each district has one Member of Parliament at the parliament of Ghana in the capital city.
1.5 Methodology
1.5.1 Introduction

This section of the thesis describes the changes to this work from proposal through the actual fieldwork, analysis to its completion as well as an autobiography and ethical considerations to this study. It is followed by the methodology used in soliciting information through interviews and the analytical frameworks and its utility.

1.5.2 Covid 19 and its impacts on the fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study was initially scheduled to begin on the 11th of May 2020 however, the evolving nature of the COVID 19 pandemic, the increased rate of infections, the border closures and airport restrictions demanded that a new method for conducting fieldwork needed to be employed since I could not travel to Ghana for the purpose. Together with my supervisor we decided on a new date of commencement and to employ a research assistant (RA) in Ghana to collect the fieldwork data while I engaged with some of the respondents virtually according to the approval of the ethics modification (REB20-0224).

Mr. Sparkler B. Samar, a research scientist at the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) was employed for this position. Mr. Samar is a human geographer with over eight years experience in research working with indigenous forest fringe communities in Ghana. He has conducted research with ITTO on the conservation and utilization of medicinal plants in Ghana and with the Elsevier project on the digitization of indigenous forest foods and medicinal plants. His knowledge and experience made him the right fit for this position.

Although I designed all the interview guide, consent forms and recruitment letters for the study, the fieldwork data in Ghana was solely collected by Sparkler. I also partook in some of these
interviews via WhatsApp messaging app when the times of interviews were favourable to me. Hereafter in this study, I use ‘we and us’ to refer to both myself and my research assistant.

The initial contact for the communities began in the second week of October 2020 beginning with Ewusiejoe in the Ahanta West district. A key informant was identified who introduced the RA and me (virtually) to the gatekeepers of the community to formerly announce ourselves and our research intentions with bottles of ‘Schnapps’ and an amount of GHS500 ($115 CAD). After that, the key informant introduced the RA to prospective participants who also introduced other participants for this study. The RA then created rapport with them by visiting their farms and processing sites before the study commenced. The RA informed the participants that participation was voluntary, and they would not be paid for participating however the community would benefit from policy changes if the study’s recommendations were considered by the government, local authority and CSOs. He then moved to the second community (Daboase) in the Wassa East district to begin his initial contact. During the period of the initial contact, it became evident that the lands for the oil palm development were government reserved lands and not land for the community. We therefore agreed to choosing a community in the Kwaebibirem District that is affected by LSLA’s for oil palm development because of the presence of GOPDC. The initial contact at Kwae began in the third week of November and it followed a similar process as it happened in Ewusiejoe. Concurrently, I sent emails to prospective participant that I could recruit virtually introducing myself and the reason for reaching out to them. Even though most of the people I reached out to didn’t respond, I had a few people who agreed to participate in the study.
1.5.3 Ethical considerations and my positionality

Ethics in research has become very vital to protect study subjects from harmful activities. Researchers make efforts not to abuse study subjects because of the imbalances of power experienced that most participants do not question. The onus is therefore placed on the researcher to conduct the study ethically because through that, proper consent is obtained from participants and confidentiality is maintained. I chose the deontological research ethics approach closely associated with Immanuel Kant (1975/2005) which states that respect and empathy for the other is paramount. Israel and Hay (2006, 15) puts it as “obligations do not flow from consequences, but from a core expectation that we should treat ourselves and others in ways consistent with human dignity and worth”. My ethical choices were influenced by the Ethics of Care (Gilligan, 2011) elements of responsiveness (care which is concerned with conditions of vulnerability and inequality) and attentiveness (recognition of others' needs in order to respond to them). It emphasizes relationships and the importance of contextualizing and nurturing relationships (Israel & Hay, 2006). We made sure none of our participants were put in harm’s way by assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality which was strictly adhered to during the data collection. We worked with them based on their own times and schedules and made sure we didn’t put them under any discomfort. All audio recordings and pictures taken and used in this study received permission from all the participants and they agreed for the photos to be used in any publication and communications by the researcher and the assistant.

This study was inspired by experiences of my family sometime in 2010 when my father’s plot in the Wassa East District was taken over by the Subri Industrial Plantation Ltd which has been divested to Plantations Socfinaf Ghana. This takeover affected income for my family and the management of our household, making the meeting of basic needs difficult. This therefore
influences my position that LSLAs are problematic and not beneficial to the local communities. My intention however was to find out if the effects are similar in other parts of Ghana and if it would have been different for females.

1.5.4 Methodological choices

The mixed method is the contemporary social science methodology that combines the methodological traditions of quantitative and qualitative research. As all methods have their limitations and strengths, it is appropriate to combine qualitative and quantitative methods so as to compensate for their mutual and overlapping weaknesses. The mixed method was especially useful in this study because it reflected participants’ point of view by giving a voice to the participants and ensure that the study findings are grounded in participants’ experiences together with quantitative information. This method was also used because it has great flexibility and adaptability to the study design, such as observations, interviews and group discussions to elucidate more information than can be obtained in only quantitative research. It provided this study with rich and comprehensive data than employing a single method either qualitative or quantitative.

This study employs the mixed methods approach in obtaining information from the study field. The quantitative data collected were on farm sizes, type and source of planting materials, yield data, price of fresh fruit bunches, farming systems, input use, management practices and land tenure. Secondary quantitative data such as 2010 Population and Housing census data, demographic and land data were also consulted. The qualitative method drew from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and observation of farming and processing practices carried out by farmers and palm oil processors as a means of understanding household production
and market structures. In addition, interviews were held with stand-in community leaders, opinion leaders and leaders of oil palm associations. Additional information was gained through a review and analysis of literature and existing policy documents. This technique did not only enable us to reduce errors during data collection and analysis but also compensated for the shortcomings of each method that was used. Collected data was used to construct meanings and integrate different perspectives regarding how LSLA for oil palm development have shaped the socio-political systems and its diverse implications revealing the different facets of the problem.

1.5.5 Sampling techniques and data generation

In-depth study was carried out in the Ahanta West and the Kwaebibirem Districts of the Western and Eastern Regions of Ghana respectively. In selecting the study areas, the criteria used included the role of oil palm in the livelihoods of the people, the history of oil palm production in these areas and the location of major palm oil producing companies. Ahanta West District is one of the first districts in Ghana where commercial oil palm plantations started as far back as in 1912 by the Lever Brothers. The Oil Palm Research Institute (OPRI) – the only institution fully dedicated to research into oil palm and the only institution that produces seed nuts in the country - is located in Kwaebibrim District. The selection of participants for the study at the community levels was through purposeful and snowballing techniques.

Initial contact of the RA was with identified key informants from the communities during his reconnaissance visit. He sought permissions from the gatekeepers - such as chiefs, elders and the district assembly- to engage the community. They were the first point of call because they are the ones to grant permission for any such activity. The study's context, objectives and rationale were verbally explained in the local dialect (Akan) to eliminate any ambiguity and frame appropriate expectations. After receiving permission, he introduced himself to the community
through a series of meetings with community member associations and town-hall-style gatherings in order to inform community members of who he was, why he was in their community, the purpose of the study, and to stress the voluntary nature of the project. During the date collection period he established contacts with relevant participants independently and individually.

About 60 individual smallholder farmers and processors were interviewed in both communities of people who have been affected directly or indirectly by LSLA’s. Information about how the different gender utilizes lands, and food security issues were gathered to understand how the agrarian landscape is being altered. Most of the participants had lived in the area for over fifteen years and have been involved in farming or other related activities for over the same period. They were the appropriate criteria for the survey because they had either experienced conversion of some of the lands into oil palm plantations and had experienced changes in their local activities due to the plantation. Additionally, he conducted five interviews with respondents aged between twenty and twenty-five years (split between males and females) in each of the study communities to gain insight into how oil palm development currently impacts the youth and available generational opportunities. Two focus group discussions consisting of five members each were held in each of the two communities (males and females organized separately because of cultural sensitivities). Cultural factors constrain women in rural communities from expressing themselves in a mixed-gender setting. However, this approach enabled women participants to share their perspectives freely and comfortably. Through focus discussions, participants built on each other's ideas after initial questions were posed.

The total number of my respondents were 65, 30 individuals from Ewusiejoe and Kwae, two from government agencies, two from the social agencies, and one scholar who has written extensively on land grabs and gender. Out of the 65 participants, 48 individuals representing
approximately 73% participated in one-on-one interviews, and 17 individuals representing 26% approximately were the participants for the focus group discussion. The majority of the participants were above the age of 55, and the youth were between 25 and 30 years. 63% of the total participants were female while the male participants were 36%, and this was because the focus of the study is to understand the experiences of the women, which has been silenced for a while now. The social demographic characteristics were necessary for this study to understand trends in gender and generational issues. Information collected included age, sex, sources of income, hometowns, and number of dependants. In terms of their occupations, most of the participants were farmers but were also involved with other activities.

Online interviews via zoom were conducted with two representatives from Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural development (ESCARD) and Network for Women’s rights in Ghana (NetRight), one representative from the Ghana Investment Promotion Center and two people who have written extensively on gender and largescale land deals from the University of Ghana.

Table 1.1: Profiles of participants of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Number of Individuals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>49.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>
Dependants

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<th>6-9</th>
<th>10-13</th>
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<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Occupation

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + Oil processing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + working @ Norpalm/GOPDC</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming + other trade</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non farming</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (gov't officials, expert &amp; CSO)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)

1.5.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis commenced as soon as data generation started with the aim of identifying and following up on peculiar issues that came up with the same and other respondents. The plan was to listen to the conversations and note issues to pursue to fill gaps in information before ending the fieldwork. On the average interviews lasted 45 minutes and FGD’s lasted 75 minutes. The shortest interview was 18 minutes and the longest was about 60 minutes both at Ewusiejoe. While transcribing the data gathered, pseudonyms were assigned to participants and actual names deleted. An essential part of the data analysis process was to read the data on different levels such as interpretatively apart from doing so literally (Mason, 1996). On the literal level basic information such as biodata, birthplaces and household were retrieved. In reading interpretatively, attention was paid to respondents’ remarks (anecdotes and proverbs) to infer the messages being conveyed. The use of NVIVO was employed to assist in drawing correlations among responses and to highlight the greatest concern for the communities. I coded responses on ways of acquiring and
accessing land, land agreements, prospects of the women in the area, food security and household dynamics.

1.6 Analytical Framework

1.6.1 The Feminist Political Ecology of Land Acquisitions

Large-scale agricultural and industrial projects can have implications that affect the livelihoods of genders differently (Behrman et al., 2012; Yaro et al., 2017). The gender most affected is women because they often lack secure tenure and access to reliable lands mostly in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa (Behrman et al., 2012; Kachingwe, 2012). It is a known fact that land is an essential resource for women’s livelihoods because they derive necessities such as food, medicine, fuel wood and other Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Schoneveld, German, & Nutakor, 2011). A report by ActionAid (2012) demonstrates that women do not only feed families, but are crucial to feeding communities and nation-states; as such their claim to land and their livelihoods are deemed very influential even though patriarchal structures and norms form major blockades to their quest (Kachingwe, 2012; Mbilinyi, 2012). Following the trajectory of the Mbilinyi (2012) position, this section concentrates on acquisitions, women’s claims to land and their livelihood within norms and patriarchal structures. It examines gender and power relations using a Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) approach. This approach provides reasons in supporting women’s claims and livelihoods and argues that large-scale monocropping in areas where women’s land tenure is weak worsens their situations especially due to customary norms. In such a situation they lose both access to land for food and other natural resources such as medicine and NTFPs.
FPE presents arguments on economic development, environment, politics and a lens on gender power relations. It interrogates the gender dimensions of issues such as politics of environmental degradation and conservation, poverty, social justice, accumulation, enclosure and dispossession (Elmhirst, 2011). FPE is seen as an appropriate approach because it factors respect for all living forms and breaks down uneven power dynamics (Nicholson, 1990) together with considering intersectionality and interrelationality (Lykke, 2010). It also identifies gender differences, abilities, knowledge and interest as a direct consequence of social construction of gendered spaces, socialization, experiences, labour and social life (Rocheleau & Edmunds, 1997; Thomas-Slayter, et al., 1996). Its application goes beyond household and community levels to analyse interlinkages at several levels, places and spaces. Thus, in this project I seek to understand the concerns, experiences, situations, and perspectives of women through the exploration of social and gender power relations at the local level.

FPE came into existence as a sub framework of Political Ecology when Dianne Rocheleau and her colleagues requested political ecologist to consider gender relations inclusivity in the discussion of power relations and include another index- the household- as a scale of analysis (Elmhirst, 2011). Their work titled “Feminist Political Ecology: global issues and local experiences” highlighted gender as the most important variable in access and control to resources, its intersection with factors such as caste, race, class, culture and ethnicity in shaping ecologies, sustaining ecologically viable livelihoods and sustainable development (Thomas-Slayter, et al., 1996). They identified gendered environmental rights and responsibilities, gendered environmental, political and grassroots activism and gendered science of survival as themes that run through different cultural and ecological settings. It can be stated that this publication inspired several other literatures that includes gender, power and nature in other contexts (Hawkins et al.,
2011) including Mbilinyi (2012) whose view on the struggles over land and labour in agriculture see an increasing politicisation by institutions such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Mbilinyi argues that women’s claim to land and livelihoods through these norms and patriarchal structures present barriers to agro-industrial development and it is these barriers that have convinced interest groups to form collaborations with women groups. Following FPE literatures in general, and Mbilinyi’s position in particular, a central focus of this project is to examine how women are able to navigate the struggles over resources, particularly access and control to land and natural resources in their complicated relationships at the local and national levels.

1.6.2 The Agrarian Political Economy (APE) of land transactions

The Political Economy framework is based on the presumption that the economics of agrarian structures are inseparable from social organization and politics of an economy. This social organisation fundamentally determines land use rights including inheritance arrangements, customary arrangements, laws, rules and regulations. This study adopts an Agrarian Political Economy framework and considers the economic influences political institutions, and their processes exert on land transactions. The APE approach offers explanations into the roles institutions play in shaping economic choices of different stakeholders (Chinsinga et al., 2013) and explains how power and resource allocation asymmetries also occur (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). I draw from the Agrarian Political Economy questions of Bernstein (2010) which are “who owns what”, “who does what”, “who gets what”, and “what do they do with it”. Borras et al. (2010), White et al (2012) and Peter (2013) add two additional questions to the framework: “who interacts with whom” in land deal processes and “participation by whom in what” (Ribot, 1996). Bernstein (2010) and Vermeulen & Cotula (2010) suggests that in agrarian societies the rural poor can be
grouped into different classes of labour who have conflicting interests and are impacted by land deals differently. For instance, members of different classes could be beneficiaries, victims, gatekeepers, intermediaries and exploiters in land transactions. Expanding further the question of Bernstein, the question of “who owns what” relates to land rights and claims of different groups, or the social relations of different ‘property regimes’ and how the means of production and reproduction are distributed (2010, 22). “Who does what” relates to the division of roles of different classes of labour within the society, or the social divisions of labour. “Who gets what” relates to what each group benefits or otherwise depending on their social position (i.e. the distribution of ‘income’). “What do they do with it” is simply explained as what they utilize the proceeds on in terms of consumption, reproduction and accumulation. “Who interacts with whom” and “participation by whom in what”, views societal interactions as a mechanism through which land deals take place. So, in this study, the emphasis is on land deal processes and different roles of different classes, as well as the intra-class and intra-household gender dynamics. For example, how local authorities such as chiefs interact with investments locally, and how this has influenced the investments turnout.

Although Bernstein’s (2010) framework is suitable to lay bare these local effects compared to other political economy frameworks (Obeng-Odoom, 2012), the additional questions from Borras et al., (2010) and Ribot (1996) bring alternative lenses to understanding the complex class interrelationships between local authorities, local communities, investors and the state, within the context of large-scale land acquisitions (Ahmed et al., 2018). These frameworks that I have adopted as the basis of my work are as a result of their focus on human- environment interactions in agrarian settings.
1.6.3 Analytical utility

This study combines Agrarian Political Economy & Feminist Political Ecology frameworks because they intersect social relations of production with class and power relations together with gender and environmental issues. APE helps me answer questions on i) narratives of different interest groups involved in LSLAs, ii) groups that are involved in resistant activities, iii) labour relations in the plantations and iv) changes in agricultural landholdings, while FPE helps me uncover issues in relation to i) changes in land-use and farming practices and their gender implications, ii) environmental change and its associated agrarian changes and how these shape and are shaped by gender relations, and iii) gender roles in the production chain.

I draw on APE and FPE because they intersect social relations of production with class, power relations, gender and environmental issues. Agrarian political economy probes the social relations of production and reproduction, division of labour, distribution of the product of labour and the uses of reproduction which is underpinned by class relations, property and power in agrarian formations and their processes of change, both historical and contemporary (Bernstein, 2016). Feminist Political Ecology, on the other hand, points to the power relations inherent in ecological issues and the ways in which nature is managed, appropriated, and represented. It examines power relations with particular emphasis on gender inequality (Elmhirst, 2011; Rocheleau et al., 1996; Rocheleau & Edmunds, 1997). It provides an understanding of the relations between nature and society through carefully analyzing the forms of access and control over resources (Forsyth, 2003). FPE allows for a more intersectional political, economic, and gender analysis by highlighting the fact that a sole gender is not enough unless it intersects other factors such as ethnicity, class, race, age, disability, and sexual orientation. It also takes a swipe at the hegemonic processes that transform social relations of production and reproduction (Elmhirst et
al., 2017; Nightingale, 2011; Rocheleau et al., 1996). FPE is uniquely placed on examining the gender impacts and outcomes that emerge from agrarian frontiers.

Combining APE and FPE provides this research with the tools for studying how rural social relations are shaped not only by political-economic forces but also by dominant forms of social relations of power in its intersecting expressions of class, gender and ethnicity (Lykke, 2010). It requires a deeper understanding of the concerns over resource access and control by highlighting women's experiences of oppression, exclusion and resistance (Rocheleau et al., 1996) while calling for a decentring of gender in terms of differential power and social inequality (Elmhirst et al., 2017; Nightingale, 2011; Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2012). Following the integration of APE and FPE frameworks for this work, issues of critical analysis on power relations with particular emphasis on gender inequality, the struggles over resources i.e. access and control over land, and how the resources on the land are utilized are analyzed.

1.7 Land grabs and accumulation: The link to capitalist mode of production

Discourses on land grabs cannot be complete without the inclusion of the writings of Karl Marx and David Harvey, two key scholars who have written extensively on the dynamics and historical/contemporary transformation of capitalism using large-scale land acquisitions for the production of crops and resource extraction. Several authors in discussing land grabs fix their views through the lenses of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession by Marx and Harvey respectively (D. Hall, 2013b)

Primitive accumulation and ABD primarily focus on the separation of people from their means of production, dispossessing them of lands that they previously owned and making them
proletarians for the purpose of capital accumulation (De Angelis, 2001; D. Hall, 2013b). Primitive accumulation discussions usually address issues of transformations as essential parts of global capitalist development. These transformations are argued to contribute to the understanding of the trajectory of the capitalist developments. For instance, privatization and consolidation of lands in the countryside after the removal of agricultural producers is a problem discussed during Marx’s time and it still relevant today affecting billions of people (D. Hall, 2013b). Marx’s concept of primitive accumulation refers mainly to the creation of proletarians whose livelihood is dependent on the selling of their labour power to the market and capital to be used for industrial work (De Angelis, 2001), the changes in property relations, capital consolidation and the transformations in human-environment relations. In analysing this phenomenon, Marx contextualises it as a change in social relations where the social means of subsistence and production is transformed into capital and producers into wage labour (Akram-Lodhi, 2012; Margulis et al., 2013). Contemporarily, the concept of primitive accumulation is explained to mean a continuous event within the capitalist mode of production, where the Global South is subordinated to the North in terms of the political economy (De Angelis, 2001).

Similar to Marx’s discussion, Harvey’s discussion of primitive accumulation which he termed accumulation by dispossession, emphasizes the global expansion of capitalism from the global core into the periphery. With emphasis on privatizations, calling it the ‘cutting edge of accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2003), he put the activities of the organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the spotlight because of the regulations of privatizations of state enterprises when offering support. To Harvey, privatization is one of the ways in which capitalist have managed to create proletarianizations and private appropriations of public property in both global core and peripheries (D. Hall, 2013b; Levien, 2012). He further mentions the World
Bank and the World Trade Organisation as championing this agenda too. These promoted agendas make the connection between accumulation by dispossession and expanded reproduction increasingly clear since there are higher collaborations between groups that suffer from the privatization in the North and South (D. Hall, 2013b). Harvey (2003) asserts that accumulation by dispossession has always been an aspect of the broader process of capitals’ accumulation where proletarianization has moved from the background to becoming dominant (D. Hall, 2013b) Conceptualising land deals in terms of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession implies that some form of dispossession always occur when land deals occur. However, it is more nuanced, and more is to be known about the number of people affected by largescale acquisition for agricultural purposes globally. Understanding LSLAs in this context will help for a better analysis of these dynamics and tendencies in the context of contemporary capitalist development.

1.8 Significance of the study

The relevance of this study is to understand the nature and extent of impacts of largescale land acquisitions on smallholder landowners, local farmers, women and the youth in Africa using Ghana as a case study. Specifically, the study examines how agricultural landholding arrangements, farming systems, and practices are changing due to LSLAs, including the alteration of the agrarian landscape, and its effects on different genders. Existing data from the Land Matrix Global Observatory project points to the fact that large-scale agricultural investments have come to stay and the trends may continue into the future (Anseeuw et al., 2011). Several studies have been conducted on LSLAs around the world including Fairbairn (2013) who focused on the importance of domestic power imbalances. Central to a study by German et al. (2013) was the
need to understand the motivations of different actors since some positions of authority can shape collective outcomes; while Wolford et al. (2013) called for a deeper understanding of the role and nature of the state and state-society relations. Although all these relate to the implications of LSLAs their generality can mask the gender disparities and underlying realities that affects men and women differently. Thus, the significance of this study is to unpack the gender inequalities and impacts due to LSLAs.

Additionally, an understanding of the impacts of large-scale land transactions on agrarian societies will enhance policy formulations on how to insulate the rural populace and farmers from exploitation with a particular focus on unequal gender dynamics. Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to understanding the roles of government institutions in large-scale land acquisitions in Ghana since there is a possibility of opportunities of corruption in both formal and informal institution with the heightened land demand (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Nolte, 2014). Typically, these institutions play a greater role and have influences on land transactions. Finally, this study, falls in the broader category of development research necessary for poverty alleviation, enhancing sustainable development and improving development-oriented policy making.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This thesis is outlined in five chapters, including this introduction which has provided an overview of contemporary land acquisition trends and definitions, outlined the main research question and sub research questions of this study, the study area, methodology and the analytical frameworks and its utility. The second chapter features a review of the relevant literature of LSLAs beginning with broader global debates, key trends concerning investment flows in Africa, as well as global governance initiatives which focus on ‘best practices’ for LSLAs. The chapter then
provides an overview of agrarian change, land grabs and gender dynamic in Ghana. The third chapter focuses on the ecological changes and environmental outcomes that have emerged after the LSLAs and how such changes shape and are shaped by gender and power relations. Chapter four discusses the findings of the fieldwork through a gender lens. Information on gender participation in land acquisitions, how women navigate their lives around oil palm plantations regarding availability and access to land and food after dispossessions, their place in the oil palm value chain and any forms of resistance exhibited. Chapter five concludes this thesis and provides some recommendations to various state and societal actors.
Chapter Two: Global debates for land investments and a focus on Ghana

2.1 Introduction

LSLAs have been at the forefront of global debates regarding agrarian change and land politics, while also central to the agendas of international institutions. This chapter engages with the key debates concerning LSLAs, contentions around global land investments, and global governance initiatives. It also focuses on investments in Africa and a discussion of the implementation and use of the certification schemes, such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, as a governance tool in Ghana. It then reviews the literature on agrarian change, land grabs and gender in Ghana.

2.2 Large scale land acquisitions: global debates

Large-scale land acquisitions (LSLA) or ‘land grabs’ have been associated primarily with the current wave of large scale (trans)national commercial land transactions (Borras & Franco, 2012; White et al., 2012). According to GRAIN (2008), the surge in land acquisitions was initially linked to changes in the global agro-food system that made some financially powerful nations seek alternatives to food production through the control over large tracts of lands outside their jurisdiction (GRAIN, 2008) and Africa was identified as a viable option (Cotula et al., 2008). However, land grabs are not peculiar to Africa. Visser and Spoor (2011), Borras and Franco (2011), and Borras et al. (2012) identify the former Soviet Eurasia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, respectively, as important regional sites of land grabs too. Land grabs are evident in Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines with the development of sugarcane, oil palm, and jatropha (Borras et al., 2011). While the expansion of soy, sugarcane, oil palm, and flex crops - crops that have multiple and flexible uses - has led to a major expansion of commercial farms and plantations in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Guatemala. The unusual increase in demand for meat and dairy products (particularly due to rising
demand for meat in China, as well as internal changes to the agrarian structure), growing competition for food and feed production together with increased demands for fruits and wines have contributed to additional land expansion for livestock, fruits and vineyards in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Nicaragua (Borras & Franco, 2012; White et al., 2012). This information of increases in land investments is confirmed by the reports of organisations such as the Land Matrix Observatory and GRAIN, other institutions in media, policy, activist and non-activist have also been consistently reporting on land grabs giving it a lot of global attention. In April 2009, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) issued a statement quantifying farmlands in developing countries that have been sold, leased or under negotiation to foreign entities. The statement claimed that, since 2006, 15 million to 20 million hectares had been identified as sold, leased or under negotiation, with several of the cases in Africa (Borras et al., 2011). The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) land grabbing report in Africa following the report from IFPRI revealed that about 2.4 million hectares of land grabbed had not necessarily yet fully utilized (Cotula et al., 2009). Citing the UN and other sources in India, Washington and London, The Guardian Newspaper in 2009 reported of an estimated 30 million hectares of land acquired by China and the Gulf states to grow food (Borras Jr. & Franco, 2010; Borras et al., 2011). Several other publications have discussed land grabs in different contexts around the world, and in each, reactions from states, corporations, and civil society groups are shown. These civil society groups including radical environmental justice, agrarian and human rights activists are documenting cases of land grabbing worldwide and bringing them to public attention. The FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) needs to be mentioned on this agenda (Borras & Franco, 2012), however, it was the World Bank report in 2010 titled ‘Rising Global Interest in farmland: can it yield sustainable and equitable benefits’ that detailed the
exponential rise in global land deals for both food and non-food purposes and also one of the documents that received a lot of reviews on the phenomena. The report established the global trend in land grabbing linking it especially to food-for-export initiatives and biofuels promotion. It also argued in favour of large-scale land acquisition as an avenue to reduce poverty by better utilizing under- or unused lands. Further, an entire chapter of the report was dedicated to identifying potentially arable, non-forested lands around the world which are producing below their potential capacities and with very few inhabitants (Borras & Franco, 2012; R. Hall, 2011). With the above criteria, large-scale land acquisitions appeared as having a positive trajectory. LSLAs had the ability to increase and improve production to meet demands for both food and other resources, while growing the national economies of the countries involved and suppling food to the masses without destroying their forests. Also, because lower density populated areas were the targets, it meant that respecting the rights of the ‘locals’ were paramount when creating protected enclaves’ side by side the local populace (Li, 2011). This report was used as a means of bridging the big information gap, and to dispute the lack of reliable data that social movements and activist publicized (Scoones, 2010). Generally, the report made visible the complexity of ‘Land Grabs’ usually involving several other actors instead of the perception that the grabs were by foreigners. Although it constituted a useful compilation of existing data, some critics identify flaws in its analysis and key methodology (Li, 2011; Scoones, 2010). They concluded that some of the cases studied showed how land investments had frequently failed both the local people and investors. These included studies in Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Ukraine, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Scoones, 2010).

The World Bank’s focus on the suitability and availability of certain lands for agricultural investments ignores the fact that such areas may be used for other purposes such as the collection
of non-food timber products (NFTP’s), pastoralism, medicinal plants, or other livelihood purposes (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Schoneveld, German, & Nutakor, 2011). These may well be the most productive, equitable and sustainable lands for the local population. So, while investors and organizations such as the World Bank stress that the lands could be used for food and biofuel production (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Schoneveld, 2017) because it contributes to economic growth by creating employment, introducing technology and contributing solutions to the food and energy crises, opposing organisations such as La Via Campesina, the Oakland Institute and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food criticize their views by showing the adverse effects from a human rights perspective (Schutter, 2010).

These ‘anti-grabbers’ argue that large-scale land investments harm local populations who are often not properly informed or consulted about the investments or are even forcibly displaced from the areas where the investments are being made (GRAIN, 2008; Wolford et al., 2013). However, between these two entrenched positions is a range of varying views which consider scale, actors involved, and the social, economic and environmental implications.

Scanning the literature and media reports, one is likely to agree to the consensus emerging against land grabs but even with this common concern, not all of the people share the same analysis of the problem especially with strategic vision and solutions (Borras Jr. & Franco, 2010). Besides the recognition of the huge land deals by the various groups, there are competing perspectives on how to offer their responses because of the way they see it. Different groups see commercial land deals as ranging from an enthusiastic acceptance to outright opposition and different shades in-between. This diversity is even evident in civil society groups at community, local, national and international levels (Borras Jr. & Franco, 2010; R. Hall, 2011; Li, 2011). Borras & Franco (2010:5)
states that “the differences are not trivial, they are partly linked to contending social class standpoints and/or ideological and political viewpoints that have strategic implications for policy advocacy and action, as well as for alliance work”.

An example can be cited of two of the most influential organisations for farmers seen at the opposite ends of the “for and against” spectrum. International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and Via Campesina are the most numerically and politically significant farmer organisations in the world currently (Borras Jr. & Franco, 2010; Menzies, 2011). The IFAP’s ideology to farming is influenced by the middle-rich farmers of the global north because it is mainly composed of commercially small, medium and large groups interested in industrial agriculture (GM crops and agrofuels) and has hence dominated its leadership. La Via Campesina on the other hand, is a movement constituted of peasants and small farmers whose ideology to farming is shaped by the class interest of the masses and subscribe to ‘sustainable’ and environmentally friendly means of production. These two organisations represent the two main polar positions on food and biofuels development in most discourses (Borras Jr. & Franco, 2010; Borras et al., 2011; Menzies, 2011)

2.2.1 Is it a ‘Land Grab’ or a ‘Land Investment’?

Large-scale land acquisitions are seemingly not as clear and straightforward as most people presume. No matter what the purpose to which the land has been taken, there are controversies. The controversy is centered on whether it is an investment or a grab (Amanor, 2017; Borras & Franco, 2012). The FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), The World Bank (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011), and other aid agencies like the German Development Agency (GIZ) somewhat lean towards the land investment end of the spectrum (Deininger & Byerlee,
2011; Von Braun & Meinzen-Dick, 2009) whereas most NGOs- Oxfam and GRAIN-, social organisations, critics and activists prefer to use ‘land-grabs’ using dispossessions by foreign agribusinesses as their underlying notion (GRAIN, 2008; Menzies, 2011). Thus, although the same phenomenon, the word used to represent it is dependent on where in the divide one belongs. From the investment position, land transactions contribute not only to job creation, social investments and environmental protection but also engages local farmers and small-scale businesses in their supply chain (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Commitments to employment and infrastructure by the “Land Investment” group is seen in the robust business models that they put across prior to the commencement of their projects which encourages local participation. Thus, bringing capital, know-how, creating employment and developing infrastructure, is the vital area where international land deals may constitute a development opportunity in recipient countries (Cotula et al., 2009; McMichael, 2012; Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010). Cotula et al. (2009) cites Mali and Sudan as examples of countries where long term leases granted meant that companies were supposed to develop irrigation infrastructure outside the project area as part of the condition of the lease. The Syria-Sudan deal required the government of Syria to develop an irrigation project of 4,200 ha outside the project area. In another case, the government of Qatar had to provide funds to the Kenyan government for the construction of a sea port and to lease 40,000 hectares on north coast of Kenya (Cotula et al., 2009).This approach is usually seen as in line with the common practice of land deals by governments by including other business transactions, loans and development aid to make a full package.

On the other hand, the ‘land grabbing’ group acknowledges this phenomenon as an opportunity for capitalist agro-industry players to extend their control over land and other natural resources to derive a profit. They explain that, decisions are driven purely by boardroom
transactions with little concerns on environmental integrity (Margulis & Porter, 2013; McMichael, 2012). Thus there is the possibility of lack of respect for customary and informal land tenure, less influence from the local communities in decision-making, insecurity and violence (García-López & Arizpe, 2010; Grajales, 2011; Lapegna, 2013). The displacement of pastoralist in the Laikipia county in Kenya is a clear example of this problem (R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015). But the use of ‘land grab’ can also be problematic because it suggests an illegitimate way of access to the land while in reality some of these deals are completely legal.

### 2.2.2 The need for investment in Sub Saharan Africa and its key trends

The supposed inability of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to feed itself from domestic sources has been a primary concern for many governments and international organisations (Holmén, 2015). About 70% of the labour force in SSA are involved in agriculture but it is mostly on a small-scale, rain fed, semi-oriented basis using simple technology (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Holmén, 2015). The result is low productivity and not enough food to feed the ever-growing populations. Holmén (2015:1) states that “[w]ith a population that is expected to increase from 856 million in 2010 to 3.4 billion by the end of this century (United Nations Population Division, 2011), sub-Saharan Africa is in need of massive investments in agriculture, especially for food production”. To the various SSA governments, the situation is dire, and a solution is required as quickly as possible.

In 2003, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) was approved by the first Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of the African Union in Maputo (Benin & Yu, 2012). Also known as the Maputo Declaration (Appendix 5.1) on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, it was a resolution among other things to set aside at least 10% of national
budgets to improve the agricultural sector (Holmén, 2015; Kolavalli et al., 2010). The commitments were subsequently reaffirmed with numerous other declarations such as the Sirte Declaration (Appendix 5.3) to address the challenges of implementing integrated and sustainable development on agriculture and water in Africa, the Abuja declaration (Appendix 5.2) on food security and the Abuja declaration on fertilizer for the African Green Revolution. These declarations added new directives and made concrete set objectives (Kolavalli et al., 2010). For example, The Sirte Declaration required all countries to work towards the establishment of a common market in the sub region. As Kolavalli et al. (2010:2) notes “while the Declaration on Fertilizer set a target of increasing fertilizer use from an average of 8 kilograms per hectare to 50 kilograms per hectare by 2015, the Food Security Declaration designated specific crops as strategic commodities needing special attention, including rice, maize, legumes, cotton, oil palm, beef, dairy, poultry, and fisheries products at the continental level and cassava, sorghum, and millet at the subregional level; the commodities were identified to be the basis of a continental free trade area”. Although this seemed a step in the right direction, Holmen (2015) confirms that only a few countries had reached the level of committing 10% of their national budgets in 2010 when the AU revisited the issue, and even when they did, their budgets are extremely low thus affecting the amount committed. Hence, it was concluded that resources from elsewhere were necessary – ‘Africa definitely needed investors from outside’ (Holmén, 2015:1).

Goverments in Africa see the increase in foreign land acquisitions as a necessary evil because of the limited domestic resources for land development. Thus, modernising agriculture and building infrastructure through foreign investments appears necessary (Cotula, 2012). Necessary because the majority of the population are eking out a living below the poverty line, thus governments have to make a choice between “the devil and the deep blue sea”. Referencing
issues in Latin America and Southeast Asia, large scale land transactions beg the question: will investments in Africa yield similar results or will the dynamics change? Some literature suggests that the main actors in these deals are mostly concerned with feeding their populations and making profits instead of helping to solve the problems of Africa (Holmén, 2015). They invest outside their countries because they want to secure future supply for their populations and avoid the sole dependence on the ‘volatile’ world market (Bernstein, 2016; Holmén, 2015; McMichael et al., 2014). Thus, it remains important to examine whether, for whom, and how the ‘rising global interest in farmland’ can actually ‘yield sustainable and equitable benefits’ (Deininger and Byerlee, 2011).

GRAIN’s (2012) report on the analysis of large scale land acquisitions worldwide records that about half of the total land acquisitions are taking place in Africa- a region of ‘abundant uncultivated’ arable lands (Lisk, 2013). Allocations of approved land transactions documented in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mali, Ghana and Sudan give indication of the trends of acquisition even though there are some data gaps and incomplete information from government sources (Cotula et al., 2011). (Cotula et al., 2009). A total of 12 million hectares have been purchased in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Madagascar, and Sudan (Saka, 2019). Some of the purchases include Addax Bioenergy, a Swiss company that purchased 26,000 hectares for sugarcane cultivation in Sierra Leone; Agroils, an Italian business that obtained 105,000 hectares in Ghana; 400,000 and 100,000 hectares under the control of ScanFuel of Norway and Galten of Israel respectively in Ghana (Hathie & Yiyugsah, 2013; Onoja & Achike, 2015; Saka, 2019). There is the anticipation of further growth given most countries efforts to attract foreign investments. For example, a proposal to the government of Benin to convert between 300,000 to 400,000 hectares of wetlands for oil palm production cultivation was underway during the study of Onoja & Achike in 2015.
and the government of Ghana in 2016 had launched the ‘one district one factory’ as a response to the government’s decentralisation and industrialisation agenda and to attract foreign direct investments (Mensah et al., 2019). About 90% of Africa’s land deals are private sector related, especially in the countries already mentioned above, but strongly behind these investors are their home country governments that provide major supportive roles in diplomacy and finances. Cotula et al. (2011) confirms about three-fourths of all allocated lands in the above-mentioned countries are foreign investments mainly from the Middle East, South and East Asia, the Gulf and Europe. Taking land acquisitions in Madagascar as an example, 70% of the investors are European, 19% from South and South-East Asia and 11% from the Middle East. Apart from the taking over of lands, international governance and the flow of money for research and development are also important factors facilitating land grabs around the world.

2.2.3 Governance and the flow of money for Research & Development

Globally, land deals are facilitated through the flow of capital, goods and ideas across national borders in the axis of power that mimic the core and peripheral ideology (Margulis et al., 2013). There are also land grabs between countries in the global south under the guide of south-south cooperation. For instance, Brazil has investments and grabbed land in Latin America and Africa; while South African capital controls lands and infrastructure in Sub Saharan Africa; China in Southeast Asia, among others. We now live in a multipolar world where the core-periphery relations remain but are more complex, especially with multinationals corporations which move beyond borders and form alliances with local elites. Land deals are taking place in mostly sovereign states where control over large portions of land are for producing for the international markets but not local consumption. The flow of capital is usually from an economically powerful nation to a less powerful one. The flow is seen through formal governance mechanisms of trade
treaties, investments and financial markets (Margulis et al., 2013) displaying properties of economic globalisation. Thus, land transactions have become an avenue for struggle for authority, power, resource control, governance and the determiner of the direction for future global agriculture. However, because land deals have resulted in experiences of dispossession, violence, and social exclusion (Cotula, 2012; Margulis et al., 2013), it has become a matter of urgency for global leaders to implement global governance instruments in order to gain and maintain legitimacy (Margulis et al., 2013). Organisations such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the World Bank, European Commission and the African Union are few of the various organisations championing discussions on projects that share the objective of promoting large scale land deals but putting in place structures to minimise its negative impacts.

‘Global governance’ is a commonly used term to represent the contemporary practice of presiding over problems that are cross border in nature, institutions, actors, ideologies that are directing the global political economy (Margulis et al., 2013). As land deals became a matter of a greater general concern, it provided the sense of urgency for global land governance to move in a direction of acceptance. This lead to the negotiation and adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (hereafter ‘Voluntary Guidelines’) (Appendix 5.4) and the Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investment that Respects, Livelihoods, and Resources (PRAI) (Appendix 5.5) (Margulis & Porter, 2013). These are spearheaded by international institutions and organisations such as the World Bank (WB), the Inter America Development Bank, the G8 and G20. They play major roles in mediating affairs among states regarding the new politics of land grabbing delegating roles to multilateral institutions. For example, the G8 countries nominated the
World Bank (WB) to be their organisation for global governance implementation strategies providing resources and entrusting it to manage the global agricultural development programs.

Aside development organisations, civil societies also choose the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as their representatives on global fora for global land governance issues. These two organisations have a more open and incorporating global policy spaces that are alternative paradigms for global agricultural policy centring more on human rights and food sovereignty (Margulis et al., 2013). McKeon (2011) mentions that the CFS fills the governance gap for some transnational institutions by taking a key role in global agriculture debates but the CFS is not the only organisation working in favour of these transnational and smaller organisations. La Via Campesina another organisation that advocated and negotiated Peasants’ Rights with the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council in 2009 (Edelman & James, 2011; R. Hall, Edelman, et al., 2015). The presence of the civil societies on the global governance stage has its own challenges in terms of agreeing to regulations on facilitating land deals, mitigating negative impacts and maximizing opportunities for the local people (White et al., 2012). But their various positions are relevant because they ‘compete with each other in their interpretations of key international governance instruments, how to use these, for what purposes’ and how they should be implemented before a conclusion is arrived (Margulis et al., 2013:10).

The last group of global governance actors are the private non-state actors who have also through fair trade labelling and certifications, monitoring and reporting of environmental and human abuses, increased their power of negotiation on these international governance platforms (Margulis et al., 2013). At least these evidently show that governance contests are not limited to institutions or organisation and governments but is more nuanced and span across several
transnational actors. Transfers and controls are in tandem with transnational practices such as investments, trades and certification regimes which shapes the production and movements of goods and services between states and across borders which makes authority entangled across several governance institutions at multiple levels.

Trends in agricultural research and development also follow the same trajectory, where research institutions in the Global North lead on the majority of the projects globally and funding flows from the North to the South. African research institutions are the main recipients of funding from philanthropic, governmental and non-governmental organisations like the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, the Swiss government, the FAO, International Fund for Agriculture Development among others using public-private partnership (PPPs) (Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development & IPES-Food, 2020).

2.2.4 The use of Certification Schemes as a governance tool

Certification and labelling have become a necessity in most global agro food chains with an aim of enhancing the sustainability of agricultural production process. The Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification is a clear example of what pertains in the global palm oil supply. Whereas these certifications are targeted towards sustainability of primary production, they can have unintended and indirect consequences on the global food security because of the high costs involved in the certifications which can exclude small holder farmers, increase food prices and displace local production (Bush et al., 2013; German & Schoneveld, 2012; Hatanaka, 2010). At the same time, certification schemes may positively impact local producers through crossover effects in technology, knowledge and inputs (Oosterveer et al., 2014). The commodification of the oil palm made the West African smallholder farms swamped by the
expansion of monoculture plantations into its rain forests. Evidence from the Southeast Asia reveals that the spread of oil palm monocultures in rural areas led to people labelling it as a ‘hated crop’ (Oosterveer et al., 2014; Yan, 2017) for its role in biodiversity loss and deforestation (Gutiérrez-Vélez & DeFries, 2013; Koh & Wilcove, 2008; Ocampo-Peñuela et al., 2018). These examples are what yielded an array of “sustainability” initiatives including the RSPO, MSC and GlobalGAP which sets certification standards to ensure that palm oil is produced in a safer environment (Brandi et al., 2015; Oosterveer et al., 2014). The RSPO initiative has also made its way into Ghana, aligning national productions with international standards. The certification prioritizes intensification against extensification as a way of increasing yields for export without causing deforestation and this aligns with the international standards (Byerlee et al., 2014).

Major oil palm plantations like Benso Oil Palm Plantation and Norpalm Ghana started the RSPO certification process due to renewed government support for the oil palm sector in the Presidential Special Initiative (Brako et al., 2020). However, there is the alienation of small holder farmers from sectoral development negotiations and plans, even though they are the largest producers and remain key to future plans. Their alienation is because their yields per hectare are lower in comparison to the industrial plantations which is attributed to a lack of access to key resources and their production below industry standards (Khatun et al., 2020; Osei-Amponsah et al., 2012). Since the main objectives of the certification by governments and plantations is for export, small holder farmers’ access to markets is affected because the certification would have changed what is acceptable in the market. This is confirmed by a study by Khatun et al., (2020) that the development of “Best Management Practices” (BMP)- key opportunities, challenges and barriers- exclude small holder farmers. At the same time, the framing of less intensive production by smallholders overlooks the traditional knowledge and livelihood strategies associated with
Ghana’s local and domestic markets. In conclusion, certification schemes consider little about the diversity of oil palm production models in Ghana, and their critical links to local livelihoods.

2.4 Ghana in Context

2.4.1 Social setting and Gender Dynamics

Located in West Africa along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, Ghana is bordered by Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Togo to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. With a population of about 22 million, Ghana has 16 administrative regions and is characterised by ethnic diversity. The major groups are the Akan, the Ga Adamgbe, the Mole Dagbani, the Guan, the Ewe, the Gurma, the Grusi and the Mande-Busanga (Addai & Pokimica, 2010; Ayentimi et al., 2020). Internal migration has made most communities ethnically heterogeneous, especially in urban areas. Interestingly, ethnic identification and bonds continue to feature strongly in most societies regardless of the consistent geographic movement. It is therefore very common to find ethnic enclaves in the cities and rural areas (Adjaye & Aborampah, 2012; Ayentimi et al., 2020). The sense of ethnicity and identity are paramount in rural settings as compared to the urban settings which tend to be ethnically more homogenous. Even though none of the regions are ethnically homogeneous, a prominent feature of the county’s ethnic polarization is the north–south divide. The southern half of the country is dominated by the Akan group but there isn’t a dominant group in the northern half except for the Mole Dagbani when one is considering the context of language (Addai & Pokimica, 2010; Langer, 2009).

The extended kinship is the center around which social organization revolves. It consists of a nucleus family supplemented horizontally with brothers, sisters and their spouses, and vertically with several generations of their lineages. Members of the family are collectively
responsible for the well-being, the physical protection and the social security of all its members. The dominant kinship forms are the matrilineal and patrilineal systems. Under the matrilineal system, property and inheritance rights are passed through the mother’s line, whereas under patrilineal, such rights are transferred through the father’s line (Addai & Pokimica, 2010; Takyi & Gyimah, 2007). These two-family arrangements serve as the basis of social organizations and are reproduced in succeeding generations. The study area in this proposal is found in the southern part of the country, which is dominated by the Akans namely the Fantes, the Ahantas and the Kwahu/Akyem/Akwuapem.

**Map 2.1 A map of Ghana showing the various ethnic groups.**


Ghana is a patriarchal society, its socio-economic as well as political systems and structures show grave cases of gender inequality that are rooted in paternalistic systems and practices. These patriarchal values ensure male domination in societal relations while subjugating women’s rights and undermining real and potential agency (Takyi & Broughton, 2006). Societal structures such as religion, marriage and cultural norms institutionalize these inequalities together with customs
and laws. Women are often prevented from participating in the public sphere and decision-making activities because they are considered inferior. Even though the constitution accords both sexes equal rights in every sphere of life and proscribes discrimination on the basis of sex, the reality on the ground is different, especially in rural areas. This coupled with low literacy levels makes women issues very under-represented in the public life increasing their vulnerability and deepening poverty amongst them (Ayentimi et al., 2020). Women form the core of the informal sector because of limited formal education and marketable skills which makes them disadvantageous in the formal sector. This undermines their economic independence in the society and therefore makes them susceptible to control by the men especially in the rural areas. Several interventions toward gender equality have been undertaken by both state and non-state actors yet wide gender gaps still exist in matters of women’s access to, control over and ownership of productive and valuable resources (Addai & Pokimica, 2010; Ayentimi et al., 2020; Takyi & Gyimah, 2007).

2.4.2 Land Governance in Ghana

2.4.2.1 Land tenure and rights

Different land rights and tenure regimes are prominent in Africa, all characterized by flexibility, complexity, and negotiability (Shipton & Goheen, 1992). Claims to land and its resources are commonly dependent on one's membership in broader social groupings: villages, lineages, extended family relations, or other social networks. Tenure of land is often multi-layered with differentiated rights over the land and its resources. The complexity of the tenure is often associated with conflicts between individuals and groups who have an interest or lay claim to the land (Udry, 2012). Ghana recognizes both customary land laws and statutory land tenure. The majority of the customary land laws in Ghana are unwritten and traditional authorities, rather than
the state officials, have the power to decide on its management and allocation for development (German et al., 2013). Given Ghana's numerous ethnic groups distinguishable by cultural differences, considerable diversity is also seen in indigenous tenure systems (Yaro, 2012). The most crucial distinction in acquisition and ownership practices, however, is based on the indigenous systems of descent (patrilineal and matrilineal inheritance), which is often also the basis for the local political organization. The rules of succession to land, therefore, have significant long-term implications for land acquisition, distribution, and land use (Kasanga, 2002; Yaro, 2012).

Land in Ghana can be classified as public or private. A public land is any land that is vested in the government on behalf of, and in trust for, the citizenry and any other land acquired in the national interest for public service (Yaro, 2010; Yaro et al., 2018). Private lands, on the other hand, are land(s) that belongs to individuals, families, and communities. Private land constitutes about 78% of all lands in Ghana and is often held by traditional authority (chiefs, priests, elders) in trust for the community. Also, about 2% of lands are held jointly by the state and other private entities, while the rest is held solely by the state (Kansanga et al., 2019). In pre-colonial Ghana, chiefdoms and kingdoms waged wars for control and ownership over land (Kasanga, 2002). Kingdoms and chiefdoms increased their wealth through tributary payments and war booties. The chiefs during such wars, became founders and leaders of the state, its divisions, and villages (Agyeman-Duah, 2007). The chiefs provided security and wellbeing for their subjects and in return, the subjects paid tributes in the form of foodstuffs or meat. The male descendants of the chiefs who led these wars automatically became the chiefs of the area or village after their demise.

There are also clan heads and family heads below the administrative ladder who see to the administration of duties (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). Families within villages also possessed land
through clearing the virgin bush in addition to the ones that have been given to them by their ancestors. Any piece of land that an individual or a family acquires in this way is respected or protected by the community as theirs (Selase et al., 2015). Non-indigenes of an area could also acquire land if they are socially and politically acceptable in the community. This is done by officially consulting the chief of the village together with his elders and expressing the desire to farm on a parcel of land. Here, the uninterrupted usufruct rights to the land depend on the family’s loyalty and obedience to the leadership of the community. On the death of the family head, the land will either revert to the community or continue to be used by the immediate descendants depending on their demonstration of respect and loyalty to the community (Selase et al., 2015).

Traditional land tenure systems are structured around a communitarian concept of ownership in which all individuals who belong to a common ancestry, own and share a piece of land obtained through early settlement or conquest. The underlying idea is that all members of the society must have some form of access to land resources to support their livelihoods (Chimhowu & Woodhouse, 2006; Yaro, 2010). However, this equal access is constrained by gender inequality as most families and clans argue that women marry out of the family and would, therefore, enjoy the husband's allocations. Nevertheless, the husband's tribes also deny women based on the fact that they do not belong to their lineage (Yaro, 2010).

In these contemporary times, land is managed through a complex mix of customs, market, and state regulations. The significant alterations of customary land tenure rules and exchange mechanisms are creating a terrain of differential effects rather than a fair playing ground. The principle of communal ownership is under severe siege by the forces of the market, transforming traditional society to a capitalist one. This transformation has brought varied problems with land tenure in Ghana, leading to several contestations in the courts of law. As of 2003, there were
approximately 60,000 land cases (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001) under various stages of trial, creating not only uncertainties about ownership but also signaling the possibilities that other parcels could become subjects of litigation (Ubink & Quan, 2008). This form of insecurity has resulted in the proliferation of security guards popularly referred to as 'land guards' – individuals privately contracted to protect the land from competing interests- and has called for reforms throughout the country.

2.4.3 Land reforms in Ghana

In 1999, the government decided to undertake land reforms as a resolution to many-land based problems (including land concentrationa and inequality) in Ghana. These reforms were collectively called the Land Administration Project (LAP), comprising four main components that dealt with the harmonization of land policies, institutional changes, monitoring, and evaluation (Karikari et al., 2005). The project, launched in 1999, but operationalized in 2003, is expected to last 20 years (World Bank, 2003). The state-led land reform was aiming to enhance and strengthen the tenure security of landholders on both customary and state lands, at different levels. It was based on the assumption that the registration of land and the strengthening of land management institutions will reduce land disputes, increase investment, enable a better and more efficient use of the land, and finally make its administration fairer (Spichiger & Stacey, 2014).

The government undertook several routes in the land administration process, including formulating a National Land Policy (Anaafo, 2015; Narh et al., 2016) and revised its legal framework surrounding land (World Bank, 2013). Prior to the restructuring the legal frameworks that regulated land administration and management, and the agencies responsible thereof were complex. The most important legal texts included the 1992 Constitution, the State Property and Contracts Act of 1960, the State Lands Act of 1962, the Land Title Registration Act of 1986, and
the Administration of Stool Lands Act of 1994. Other governing laws included inheritance and property laws enacted to support spousal and family relations, the Marriage Ordinance of 1884, the Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance of 1907, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1971 and the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Amendment Law 1991 (Kidido et al., 2017; Spichiger & Stacey, 2014). The government began with the tenurial reform process, by documenting and giving recognition to registration and classification of titles. It streamlined the registration process by merging different land sector agencies into one Commission through the passing of the Lands Commission Act 2008 (Narh et al., 2016; Spichiger & Stacey, 2014). The government also implemented a program for the production of large scale maps, enacted legislation that required landowners to demarcate the boundaries of their land correctly, established a mechanism to detect possible areas of dispute and tasked the Chief Justice to establish a special division of the High Court to deal with all disputes related to land (Anaafo, 2015).

Even though the reform process is still on-going (Karikari et al., 2005), some studies, including Hammond (2008), suggest that security of tenure so far has not improved with regularisation of land titling. There remain many people who legally own land, possess formal titles, but are not secured or safe from encroachment, double sale, or litigation (Abdulai & Hammond, 2010). Landowners who do not have any formal titles may sometimes feel that their tenure is secure until there is an impasse or litigation. For example, a study by Bugri (2007) shows that 80% of his sample size had no registered title yet felt that their lands were secured (Bugri, 2012). These land disputes have affected the land ownership and agrarian structure of the country to date.
2.4.4 History and politics of agrarian regimes in Ghana

The success of commercialization of agriculture in Ghana is quite a recent one. Historically, the country has not been able to achieve substantial growth in agriculture because most of its growth strategies haven’t been sustainable and lose its momentum after few years after implementation (Yaro et al., 2018). Large-scale agricultural land deals are captured in the context of foreign investments characterized by abundant land, cheap labour, visible export markets, and therefore increased profitability. This profitability is premised on several factors, including providing an enabling environment such as financial and technical support as well as liberalized trade and investment policies (Kidido et al., 2017; Yaro et al., 2018). The dynamics, drivers, and outcomes of contemporary land deals can be situated within the broader historical, political, economic context of commercial agriculture (Ahwoi, 2010; Amanor, 2010). This is particularly evident in the interplay of socioeconomic and policy changes from the colonial era, that has defined and shaped agrarian relations of production around land, labour, and markets (Amanor, 2012; Yaro et al., 2018).

Several Ghanaian governments have introduced agricultural policies that sought to transform the nature and organization of farming in the country since colonialism. Prior to the colonial era, subsistence food production dominated the agriculture landscape in the entire country. Attempts under colonial rule to develop large-scale plantations using both coercive and incentive structures indirectly via chiefs came very early in their rule (Yaro et al., 2018). The Dutch were the first to introduce the plantation system in Ghana (then Gold Coast) during their rule between 1598 and 1637. However, it failed to gain acceptance partially due to inter-ethnic conflicts, inter-colonial disputes over territorial expansion, and the hostile attitude towards the plantation system by the British who believed in the traditional farming systems being more economically resilient.
than large plantations (Huddleston & Tonts, 2007). Gyasi (1996), explains that the British feared that extensive land acquisitions for plantations could alienate peasantry which will disrupt their export production system, and precipitate conflict (Gyasi, 1996a). The colonial state economy was export-oriented particularly to meet the industrial and funding needs of the government. The economy of the country revolved around export crops, encouraging the flow of labour southwards where commercialization had taken off (Yaro et al., 2018). However, it was not until independence in 1957 that the development of large-scale mechanized agriculture became a policy objective to be vigorously pursued. This was primarily informed by the belief that smallholder farming was inefficient and an obstacle to national progress, whereas large scale agriculture was in line with development and modernization (Hansen & Wernerfelt, 1989).

2.4.4.1 Shift to plantations agriculture (post-independence era 1958-1979)

The early period after independence (1958-1966) saw a shift to commercial food production and the beginning of the agroindustry sector. The Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) was established by the Convention People Party (CPP) government, headed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in line with the production of industrial crops and promotion of export crops for foreign exchange earnings. As part of the crops to be developed, oil palm was handpicked as the second most important crop after cocoa. It was considered the essential oilseed that could lead to economic development by increasing production for export culminating into foreign exchange and as inputs for local industries such as soap making (Ofosu-Budu & Sarpong, 2013). The main emphasis was on establishing state farms and cooperatives for production (Grischow, 2008). This period saw transformation in large-scale agriculture because it favored state-led social and economic development (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). The government had socialist ideologies aimed at making the state the sole driver of economic activities, thus it implemented policies to
boost food production solely through large-scale state farms while reducing individual control of peasant lands (Larbi et al., 2004). Commodities such as cereals, fish, rice, sugar, and cocoa were given special attention for improving the nutritional requirements of the populace, whereas oil-palm, cocoa and coffee were for industries and export. The Western, Eastern, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions became the production frontier for cash crops while the north of the country was appropriated for the cereals (Yaro et al., 2018). Farmers were motivated to join cooperatives to access machinery, modern techniques, and extension services. Thus, the government was able to use this method to advance an economy where public organizations and private farmers roles were well laid out (Asuming-Brempong & Osei-Asare, 2008). Daddieh (1994) mentions in his study that, the agricultural policy wavered between creating a 'public sector farming' and an 'agrarian bourgeoisie,' because the government exhibited a preference for socialized agricultural production (Yidu & Dzorgbo, 2016). Unfortunately, this agrarian structure did not achieve success mainly due to capital constraints, political interference, poor management planning, as well as the rigidity of the centralized state control system (Gyasi, 1996). This led to the revocation of this model after the overthrow of the CPP government in preference for privatized commercial farms leaning towards an export market-oriented approach (Obeng-Odoom, 2012)

The succeeding government in 1972, the National Redemption Council (NRC) government headed by General I.K. Acheampong, highly encouraged and prioritized large-scale private investments in plantation agriculture even though the economic and social benefits of traditional small-scale farming were recognized. Nevertheless, since the governments’ preference was for large-scale investment, it insisted on having contract farming as an integral part of many agribusiness operations (Yidu & Dzorgbo, 2016). Based on that, commodity development boards were established to support agricultural activities of smallholder farmers under the contract
farming system to oversee production (Yaro et al., 2018). The famous 'Operation Feed Yourself' program was introduced by this government aimed at encouraging locals to produce enough food for consumption (Diao et al., 2019). Following closely after that was the 'Operation Feed Your Industries' - a program instituted between 1972 and 1974, aimed at producing raw materials for local industries, a very similar initiative to that of the CPP government. An effective partnership was forged between large-scale and small-scale agriculture to achieve a national aim of export crops production and raw materials for industry (Yaro, 2010). Analyzing the pursued agricultural policies under these post-independence regimes indicates a skewed preference for large-scale, capital-intensive production over small-scale production units. Obviously, with the assumption that direct control of the production process via plantations would provide cheaper commodities for the industrialization drive more efficiently than the peasant farmers. (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014).

2.4.4.2 The era of economic recovery programs and trade liberalization (1982-1999)

Independence put the economic faith of the country into its own hands and there was an expectation of the improvement of the standard of living for the citizenry, but the hopes and expectations became merely illusionary since successive governments formulation and implementation of industrial and agricultural policies realized very little economic results (Arthur, 2002). There were substantial economic losses due to mismanagement in various sectors of the economy worsening microeconomic indicators (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). This, coupled with the Sahelian drought of 1968-1973, sent the economy into a downward spiral. In a dire situation, the country was compelled to consider external support in 1983 (Bawumia et al., 2004). It then subscribed to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Economic Recovery Programmes and later the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) (Bawumia et al., 2004; Obeng-
Odoom, 2012). Structural adjustment is the process of economic discipline whereby policies are reformulated for governments in a view to increase economic efficiency, improve resource allocation, enhance economic growth, and raise the economic resilience through the advancement of loans and other structural facilities by the World Bank and the IMF (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). The policies were designed to reduce short term imbalances between demand and supply manifested in the balance of payment and budget deficits (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). While conditionalities can differ slightly between countries, they are centered on the fundamental pillars of trade liberalization, privatization, and market deregulation. Some studies suggest that the World Bank and IMF's SAPs almost invariably lead to macroeconomic improvements, reduction in poverty and gap bridging between the rich and the poor, but this has been highly contested in other works (Appiah-Kubi, 2001; Arthur, 2002; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Ninsin, 1996). Evidence from Zambia, for example, confirms that the implementation of the SAP widened the poverty gap and increased inequalities (Loxley, 1990). Loxley (1990) wrote that, while the elite were able to protect their standard of living, the middle and low-grade miners bore the biggest burden of austerity. They experienced a fall of their real wages by 77% and 84%, respectively, between 1981 and 1986, while real per capita GDP fell by 19%.

In Ghana, the SAPs were envisioned as the solution to the massive unemployment and wide poverty gaps (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Obeng-Odoom, 2012). So, with the intention of stabilizing the economy and promoting growth, the country opened its borders to free trade with foreign countries. The implementation of SAPs marked the birth of trade liberalization, privatization, and market deregulation in Ghana. However, it became evident that incomes of a few wealthy people were increased to the detriment of the majority of the rural dwellers (Issahaku, 2000; Obeng-Odoom, 2012). The impacts of the adjustment program were many and varied both
at the macro and micro levels. The economy recorded improvements in its gross domestic product (GDP) recording a highest ever rate of about 4% from the negative growth in previous decades. Inflation rates had also realized improvements from a rate of 123% in the 1980s to 29% in 1997. Its effects were also experienced in industries where operational efficiency rate of between 35% to 40% were recorded as compared to declines in the 70's and early 80's. Thus on the macro level, there were repairs of the structural imbalances in the economy, growth in goods and services, generation of donor confidence, and the attraction of foreign investment (Appiah-Kubi, 2001; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Unctad, 1996). But these positive statistics didn’t translate into livelihood improvements for the populace because one of the primary tasks of SAPs was to reduce governmental budgetary expenditure to the barest minimum, and social services became the casualty. The implementation culminated in unprecedented cuts in expenses on public services, especially health, education and other social welfare interventions. There was also the mass retrenchment of public sector workers due to the privatization of state-owned enterprises, and individuals had to seek other forms of supporting their livelihoods (Appiah-Kubi, 2001; Arthur, 2002; Ninsin, 1996). The subjugation of these services to market forces lead to the worsening of spatial and socioeconomic disparities, not only between the urban and rural areas but also at inter-regional levels. The cuts for health services and education left hospitals and schools in hardships, understaffed, and also made them unaffordable to the poor (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000).While the adjustment program was aimed at raising rural incomes and reducing urban bias, it rather had the opposite effect on poverty and inequality deepening it further. Devaluation of the currency also raised the cost of importations for essential items such as machinery, drugs, and education supplies, which increased the country's debt instead of reducing it.
Available evidence shows that the agricultural sector under the structural adjustments suffered enormous challenges. For instance, reduction of subsidies on food items were supposed to make agriculture more profitable however, the reduction and removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs increased the cost of production thus pushing the prices of food up (Braimoh, 2009). The controlled prices under structural adjustment made the prices of agricultural produce market-determined making crop prices a significant consideration in land decision-making. Due to the economic reforms, many farmers faced several constraints related to changes in incentive structures and relative prices. The decline in government spending on agriculture subsequently affected the availability of credit facilities provided by the commercial banks and informal sources to these farmers (Braimoh, 2009; Diao et al., 2019). The absence of these credits constrained farmers’ usage of technologies that could enhance productivity that complemented their labour (Braimoh, 2009). High interest rates on loans that were offered affected investment in small-scale irrigation, animal traction equipment and post-harvest machinery (Braimoh, 2009; Yilma et al., 2008). Such issues at the farm level lead to several land problems such as nutrient mining thereby increasing rural poverty. Although there are several studies on the effects of SAP on the economy and subsistence agriculture there is limited documented information on its effects on large scale plantations both state owned and private, however, investments in tourism, logging, real estate, and mining were introduced during the same period accounting for the second wave of large-scale land acquisitions in the country after independence. Even though the SAPs also failed to deliver on its original objective of reducing poverty, particularly in rural areas, its footprint still characterizes the nation’s economy. Its support for increased private sector investments is still the primary driver of economic activities in the country (Fold & Whitfield, 2012).
2.4.4.3 Current Agricultural Interventions (Presidential Special initiative and Planting for Food and Jobs)

Ghana is predominantly an agrarian country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Agricultural sector employs about 48% of the population and contributes about 20% to the gross domestic product (GDP) (Ministry of Economy and Industry, 2020). It also contributes over 30% of all export earnings and provides the main livelihood for majority of the population (Ministry of Economy and Industry, 2020). The country has a landmass of approximately 239,000 km$^2$, of which agricultural land constitutes about 57%, 58,000 km$^2$ (24.4 %) is under cultivation and 11,000 hectares under irrigation. (FAO, 2015; Ministry of Economy and Industry, 2020)

Since 2007, the sector has grown significantly benefiting from high international prices, particularly for its main exports such as cocoa. (Yaro et al., 2018). The sector has seen several restructuring and strategies post-independence till date to provide food for the population and for export. Agricultural investments have been one of the popular strategies adopted which is contributing to the large-scale land acquisitions together with mining and quarrying because it requires vast tracks of lands for it to be successful (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Below is a snapshot of it performance against other sectors of the economy.
Ghana’s Agricultural Landscape

Figure 2.1 The contribution of Agriculture to Ghana’s economy

![Contribution to GDP](image)

Source: Ministry of Economy and Industry- Foreign Trade Administration 2020

Figure 2.2 The agricultural growth rate in Ghana

![Agricultural Growth Rates](image)

Source: Ghana Investment Promotion Center 2019

Figure 2.3 Employment sectors in Ghana

![Employment by sector](image)

Source: Ministry of Economy and Industry- Foreign Trade Administration 2020
Agriculture sector is divided into 4 subsectors, which are crops, livestock, forestry and logging & fishing. Ghana’s main agricultural commodities include Cocoa (beans), yam, cassava, plantain, maize, groundnuts, cocoyam, rice, oil palm, tomatoes, pepper, oranges, onions, sorghum and pineapples. Production of food crops by smallholders has increased in recent years, but is still characterized by low productivity due to poor extension services, aging farmers and lack of finance for investment in better inputs.

**Figure 2.4 Contribution to the Agricultural sector by different segments**

![Sector contribution by segment](image)

Source: Ministry of Economy and Industry - Foreign Trade Administration 2020

Prior to the year 2000, Ghana depended on the exportation of few commodities (cocoa and gold) and international aid for the management of its economy. The unstable performance of cocoa and gold prices on the world markets moved the economy from one crises to another due to its fluctuations (Tonah, 2006). In 2001, the ruling New Patriotic party Government (NPP) launched the Presidential Special Initiative (PSI) to stimulate public-private partnerships (PPP) in agriculture and industrialisation under the tagline ‘creating the enabling environment’ for the creation of jobs. The strategic intent was to move Ghana’s economy beyond the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status, reduce the country’s over-dependence on aid and donor support, and
reliance on a few commodity exports (Tonah, 2006). The government also intended to take full advantage of the United States’ African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the US response to the global poverty agenda (Asante, 2012; Mattoo et al., 2003; Williams, 2017). Even though the PSI’s were intended to cover accelerated development for many local products, the government quickly realized the daunting task involved and decided to focus on developing textiles and garments, salt mining, oil palm, and cassava starch production. In 2005, the PSIs were incorporated into Ghana’s Growth and Poverty Reductions Strategy (GPRS II) and thus rendered eligible for financing through the central government budget. Despite being mainstreamed, the projects suffered losses due to mismanagement and stalled in 2007. Farmers waited for ‘rescue’ funds from the government to avert collapsing but nothing was received. Support and extension services were all suspended for non payment of wages. District coordinators were indirectly dismissed making farmers, workers and authorities incharge disillusioned (Asante, 2012).

Another attempt was made after the return of the NPP government to manage the affairs of the country in 2016 by lunching and implementing Ghana’s Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) in 2017, an ongoing Ministry of Food and Agricultural programe that emphasize reforms of input supply systems, improving market functioning, infrastructure, information and access (Ansah et al., 2020). The programe goes beyond traditional input subsidy programs aimed at transforming Ghana's agriculture by increasing food production to enhance food security, and employment opportunities. PFJ has been sucessful so far even though there have been reports of problems in some regions over procurement of seeds, drying and storage facilities (Azumah et al., 2019).
2.5 Land Grabs in Ghana

International organisations and local companies in partnership with foreigners are scrambling for lands in Ghana in pursuit of plans in agricultural commercialisation particularly cultivation of biofuels (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015), mining (Hausermann & Ferring, 2018), real estate development (Adarkwah et al., 2018). Available data suggest that several companies from different countries have acquired land in Ghana to cultivate biofuels but there is more information on the cultivation of Jatropha than other biofuels (Acheampong & Campion, 2014). A newspaper publication (Ghana Business News) in 2009 and a study by Ahmed et al., (2017) identified national, regional and international companies engage in acquiring land to cultivate food and non-food crops for biodiesel (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2017; Dogbevi, 2009). Between 2006 -2011, the companies involved had acquired 950,131 ha for biofuel projects out of which 526,561 ha were acquired for jatropha, 520 ha for sugarcane, 401,050 ha for oil palm, 20,790 ha for soya and 1,210 ha for maize (Ahmed et al., 2017). A field study in 2010 by Schoneveld, German and Nutakor, revealed that majority of the companies were foreign-owned and/or financed by the Ghanaian Diaspora and all but one proposed the plantations business model of more than 1000 hectares (Acheampong & Campion, 2014). The report also reveals that thirteen of the companies focused primarily on the cultivation of oil palm, cassava and Jatropha Curcas, and by August 2009 had collectively accessed about 1,075,000 hectares of land, scattered across Ghana. Cultivation fields are found in the Volta, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Western, Eastern and the Northern regions of Ghana. According to reports from the Ghana Business News the Israeli company, Galten had acquired 100,000 hectares of land, an Indian company was requesting for 50,000 hectares of land from the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC), to cultivate jatropha and finally Gold Star Farms Ltd was cultivating five million
acres of jatropha for the production of biofuels for export (Ahmed et al., 2017; Dogbevi, 2009). ScannFuel Ghana Ltd a subsidiary of ScanFuel Ltd, a Norwegian company also said it had contracted about 400,000 hectares of land, with about 60% reserved for biofuel production, 30% for food production and the remainder for biodiversity buffer zones (Ahmed et al., 2017; Dogbevi, 2009; Schoneveld, German, & Nutakor, 2011). For food crops cultivation and industrialization, the oil palm, cassava and other food crops cultivation became prominent after the implementation of the PSI (Asante, 2012) with so many actors involved.

2.5.1 Politics and Position of Land deal actors: Investors, Government, local authorities and others

Several authors on LSLAs stress the many actors involved in the phenomena. These include the “investors”, governments, local authorities and their associates among others (Anseeuw et al., 2013; Boamah & Overå, 2016; Nolte, 2014). The “investor” represents a heterogeneous group that include both foreign and domestic organisations and individuals. The organisations could be private or state-owned companies, investment funds or public private partnerships, there also could be different investors collaborating on a project (Anseeuw et al., 2013). The governments represent the host county’s governments, and its respective agencies whiles the local authorities represent the chiefs, community elders, queen mothers and their associates.

2.5.1.1 Government and its Agencies

There seem to be some sort of competition among governments in Africa to attract investments into their countries. In their efforts to modernize agriculture, they offer the opportunity for the utilisation of the ‘vast unused lands’ to be put into production (Yaro et al., 2018). In Ghana,
the responsibility for creating an enabling environment, seeking investors and assisting with negotiations and registration of investments falls on the Ghana Investment Promotion Center. Within their mandate is the ability to grant extensive concessions that makes it attractive for foreign investors to choose Ghana over the 53 other countries in Africa. Other institutions in land transactions in Ghana include the Lands Commission, the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands (OASL), the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency, Town and Country Planning Department and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (for agricultural investments). Lands Commission and Town Planning are institutions solely mandated to handle all issues related to land acquisitions and registrations. The above-mentioned ministries are generally responsible for policy formulation whiles their agencies are responsible for the implementation of policy directives including the licensing of companies. Research and Development in viable projects usually undertaken by government research agencies and tertiary educational institutions with funding from both bilateral and domestic sources.

In Ghana, the State as a player in transnational land deals exhibits a positive attitude towards investors accessing land for commercial development reasons. This is evident in Ghana’s Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy which mentions “new foreign direct investment in horticultural and industrial crop production” as an opportunity to expand agricultural production and trade (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2007; Wisborg, 2014). In an interview with a MOFA official he confirmed that the position of the Government of Ghana is always agreeable to investments associated with LSLAs (Interview 2021) and an official from the GIPC stated “Large scale land transactions for agro investments is good and the need for the Government to facilitate these investments due to the high employment prospects for local populations”. The GIPC’s role is to facilitate the land acquisition processes for the prospective investors. Since GIPC is the first
point of call for most investors, the investors are guided through the land acquisition process and encourages individuals, family heads and chiefs to make available land” for such projects for a fifty - year lease. It is the responsibility of the Lands Commission to examine the previous and existing registered lease agreements however, it doesn’t consider it previous allocation under the customary law. Before the commencement of any project investors are encouraged to consult the Lands Commission and Environmental Protection Agency because these authorities are responsible for initiating an exchange among all relevant actors making sure all parties understand the plan, possible effects and finally provide a space to resolving all objections and oppositions. Although all these institutions are responsible for large scale acquisitions there is still the lack of specific regulatory instruments opening up transactions to favouritism by the state agencies and officials towards foreign investments against the local communities.

2.5.1.2 Local Authorities in land administration

“Local authorities” includes chiefs, elders, queen mothers and the local district representatives. Local authorities in general and chiefs in particular have become central actors in land investments transactions, this is because of their major obligation as the care takers of land and property which is embedded in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. Article 36(8) states that:

“the State shall recognise that ownership and possession of land carry a social obligation to serve the larger community and, in particular, the State shall recognize that the managers of public, stool, skin and family lands are fiduciaries charged with the obligation to discharge their functions for the benefit respectively of the people of Ghana, of the stool, skin, or family concerned and are accountable as fiduciaries in this regard”.


Chiefs are viewed locally as development agents and thus are mandated to lead in attracting investments into the locality by illuminating opportunities (Crook, 2005). They have the rights to administer lands and together with their council decide on which development projects most suitable for the locality. Although they wield a lot of power, they are also answerable to the community members and to the national and regional government authorities. This duality of roles has influenced their allegiance in national politics around commercial investments and extraction of new agricultural frontiers (Ubink, 2008). They tend to easily agree to the terms provided by the government than considering in-depth the effects to the local population. These local authorities have the power to negotiate terms, prices and conclude land transactions on behalf of the communities and families (Kuusaana & Gerber, 2015; Tsikata & Yaro, 2011). But this has resulted in a general abuse of their power since they disingenuously dispose of land to supposed investors. They have on countless occasions refuted the practice by explaining that the amounts they collect are ‘drink money’/‘kola money’/‘aseda’. These terms are used to refer to the payment made to the chief and the elders after a parcel of land has been allocated in customary settings. In the past, it behoved on the acquirer to provide a drink mostly schnapps to the chief or the family head however, over the years the increased demand for land has made money preferrable to the drinks and has metamorphosized the practice into ‘drink money’/‘kola money’/‘aseda’ as part of the customary protocol fees. Although the amounts vary in many locations in Ghana, they are sometimes exorbitant within the local standard, usually equivalent to the economic value of the land (Ahmed et al., 2018; Kuusaana & Gerber, 2015). It is deemed exorbitant because it only transfers land use rights and not outright ownership, but the chiefs still maintain that it is not a sale or a rent but a value to the agricultural use of the land. According to Amanor (2006), payment of
‘drink money’ is essential to accessing farmland in economic crop frontier areas, even if one is a family member and therefore, should be regulated to avoid or reduce exploitation.

In summary, motivations of local authorities on LSLAs are diverse which could be for personal gains or protect local interests; local interests can be to increase the welfare of the local community, to secure access to land for smallholder farmers and to bring infrastructural development to the locality. Thus, the authorities can be either very welcoming to investors or oppose investors so as to secure land access for their local communities. In light of the increased demand for land, the role of local authorities in land administration has been strengthened and this needs attention (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Kidido et al., 2017) but instead of strengthening their role as gatekeepers of the land on behalf of the community they are rather encouraging these land deals.

Within this group of actors (local authorities) gender and generational inequalities is highly manifested; the power of men over women and of the old over the young (Grischow, 2008; Park & White, 2017). The men are the land rights holders, decision makers and voices for the community. Usually elder males, they wield the power, take decision on behalf of the communities and are therefore the one consulted for all developmental projects including land deals (Ahmed et al., 2018; Grischow, 2008; Torvikey, 2021). The women and youth are not allowed into this groups because of customary restrictions and the fact that they are not custodians to the land (Ndi, 2019; Torvikey, 2021). The thought process of the youth are deemed as not developed enough to engage in community-wide discussions and decision and also their interest in farming had decreased (Amanor et al., 2020; Kumeh & Omulo, 2019)
2.5.1.3 The Investors (Foreign and local)

Around the world, the large-scale land investments are encouraged by transnational organisations and foreign governments for the purpose of agricultural investments for profits and to feed their population. For example the Government in China expatriate its farmers to grow fuel and food crops offshore while wheat production in Saudi Arabia has been relocated offshore due to its decline in water resources and the intention by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to expand imports (McMichael, 2013). Bracco (2015:133) states “Since 2000, the European investors have contracted a total of about 8.5 million hectares abroad. In particular, economic operators from the United Kingdom seem to be very involved in land deals: globally they are involved in about one hundred concluded deals for more than 2 million contracted hectares. Many UK investors are financial actors investing in land as financial asset. Other countries whose companies are investing on land are Italy, the Netherland, Sweden, Luxembourg, France, Portugal and Finland. There are several reasons why EU investors are acquiring land abroad. For instance, while almost all the Italian and Netherland’s acquisitions aim to produce biofuels’ crop, companies from Nordic Countries such as Sweden and Finland are mainly acquiring land for wood or forestry purpose. Still, biofuels feedstock cultivation is by far the main purpose for European land acquisitions”.

According to their analysis, biofuel production has taken about 4 million hectares while non biofuels about 1.5 million hectares of lands in Africa associated with EU investors. Evidence shows acquisitions in Mozambique of 1.2 million hectares majority of which for biofuels purposes, 500,000 ha in Madagascar and 800,000 hectares in both Sierra Leone and Guinea (Bracco, 2015). These statements affirm the point that most investors in LSLAs are foreigners. Another prominent observation is the increase in intra- regional investments. For instance, Libyan investments in Mali
(Holmén, 2015; Larder, 2015), the Malawi government leasing land for crop production to Djibouti (Holmén, 2015) and South African investments in the republic of Congo (R. Hall, 2011). The foreign companies involved in the land acquisitions include but are not limited to Agroils (Italy), Galten Global Alternative Energy (Israel), Viram Plantation Ltd (India), Northern Sugar Resource (Brazil), Biofuel Africa (Norway) and ScanFuel/ScanFarm (Norway) (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2017; Boamah, 2014; Hathie & Yiyugsah, 2013). Details of some of the acquisitions include 23,700 ha by Biofuel Africa Limited (Norway) in Northern Ghana for jatropha plantations, 400,000 ha of land acquired by ScanFuels/ScanFarm Gh (Norway) in the Asante Akim North Municipality of the Ashanti Region, 120,000 ha of land by Jatropha Africa (UK/Ghana) for jatropha farming in the Brong Ahafo Region, 105,000 ha by Agroils (Italy), 100,000 ha acquired by Galten Global Alternative Energy (Israel) for jatropha plantation, (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Boamah, 2014; Hathie & Yiyugsah, 2013). However, this assumed perspective misses the fact that not only foreigners take part in the land investments. It has been observed that in many of the cases land investments are also driven by the private sector local elites and governments found at the supply side of the equation and playing very active roles (Boamah, 2014; German et al., 2013). It can be said that several governments, and local elites in Africa are making efforts to attract foreign investments, this is confirmed by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (2011:20) statement that ‘in their search to compete for investors, governments are offering highly preferential terms’. Apart from the government and local elites, local nationals living in the diaspora are gradually becoming major players in land acquisitions too (Holmén, 2015). Thus, domestic investors are more prevalent than foreign investors but what makes investments by foreigners more noticeable is because they acquire larger areas, making the share of total lands under their control bigger. To conclude this section, there
are several ‘Investors’ who engage in LSLAs and this makes the problem more nuanced and pervasive than probably originally thought.

2.5.1 Local investors, elites and partners

Land deals are not only promoted by the state actors. They are also promoted by powerful local elites whose interest may or may not coincide with that of the community members (German et al., 2013). This group of people has enormous knowledge of the local terrain and know how to circumvent regulations to their benefit. They sometimes serve as liaisons to facilitate entry into communities and also as spokes persons (Ahmed et al., 2018). This group consist of other community leaders, technocrats and of special mention are local partners of foreign investors. Jatropha Africa and Kimminic Ghana are both joint venture between the UK and Canadian companies and Ghanaian diasporas with fronting from individuals in Ghana. The Kimminic project involves a 40-year joint venture land deal with six traditional councils in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana for the cultivation of jatropha for biofuel production. Funding for the Kimminic project came from Canadian investors and Ghanaian residents in Canada (Boamah, 2014). The partners usually inform the investors of the availability of lands and acts as their representative because they enjoy the trust of the authorities and have somewhat direct access to land institutions. They persuade the communities to accept the projects since it will bring development in the form of new and improved infrastructure namely roads, educational and health facilities as well as employment opportunities by persuading the chiefs and elders first (Ahmed et al., 2019). Companies such as Gold Star Farms, Buabeng Oil palm Plantation and Natural African Diesel Ghana Ltd are Ghanaian owned and operated identified in literature as land grabbers (Ahmed et al., 2017). Secondly, there are the “local land users” group. This is a heterogeneous group with different degrees of wealth and vulnerability, different motivation drive, and different degree of influence. The individuals
labeled as the elites’ own land and have influence through their wealth that sustain their livelihood. The others may only own land because it was an inheritance but have little influence. their different motivations maybe in direct conflict with investors and feel threatened by investments moving into the area or encourage investments in their areas. On the other hand, other local land users who are landless and hope to benefit from these investments through, for example, employment opportunities are always in support and as such there is a clash of interests between either opposing the projects or collaborating with investors (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010). As compared to the investors, local land users sometimes have limited resources and limited power to safeguard their interests and are thus in an unfavorable negotiating position during these land deals. Due to unavailable or limited information to this group, they are in a disadvantaged position and can easily be influenced by investors (Ahmed et al., 2017, 2019).

2.6 Gender and Land Grabs in Ghana

As land grabs emerged in global circles as a ‘hot’ topic of discussion, discourse on gender relations were pushed to the back on the agenda until recently when it gained some traction (Chu, 2011). Contemporary discussions lay gender relations as one of the key developmental issues that needs addressing after the adoption of the Roundtable on Sustainable Oil Palm (RPSO)’s Principles and Criteria in 2005 (Teoh, 2010). In Ghana, when companies intend on establishing plantations, they approach community leaders who are mostly male custodians. They discuss and seal the land deals before other parties become aware of it. Because women do not play a part in formal communal politics, they are seldom consulted even though they may be the actual users of the lands (Ndi, 2019). Even if employment opportunities are made available, in a patriarchal society such as the one in Ghana, it is to the benefit of the men rather than the women because women are supposed to carry out reproductive roles at home. This reveals that gender disparities
in human capital opportunities is always more advantageous to men than women. Women are also further disadvantaged by their lower levels of education, lack of academic qualifications and experience necessary for these firms (Julia & White, 2012). Gender differences in educational attainment are prominent in rural contexts where families with limited resources tend to support the male over the female (Behrman et al., 2012). In an extensive review of primary survey data in Ghana, Ethiopia, and India, researchers from the World Bank and IFPRI (2010) found vast gender inequalities in access to extension services. This confirms the data collected for this project as some respondent said ‘We are only employed to the menial jobs because we didn’t go to school’ (Fieldwork, 2020)(Borras & Franco, 2011). Although recent statutory laws have eventually allowed for women's ownership of land via commercialization there is still a limitation to access, because of the patriarchal nature of customary laws (Tsikata & Yaro, 2011; Verma, 2014).
Chapter Three: Altering the agrarian landscape, Farming practices, and Gender differences in land-use

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings on the agrarian landscape changes due to LSLAs in the communities of Ewusiejoe and Kwae that have influenced changes in farming and land-use practices. With hundreds of acres of agricultural lands in production, agricultural land-use represents one of the most pervasive alterations to the natural state of lands, but it is also a means to feed the ever-increasing population. This chapter discusses the changes in the agrarian landscape through climate variability, farming, and land-use differences due to the LSLAs by Norpalm Ghana Ltd and Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) which began as state farms in 1975 but gained notoriety in 2009 and 2010 for new land purchases. Started as a state-owned farm, the Norpalm plantation has contradictory figures to its land size. Some literature mentions a total of about 12,600 ha while others document over 22,600 ha (Adeho, 2015; Ofosu-Budu & Sarpong, 2013). Incorporated in 1998 following the government’s divestiture of the state-owned company National Oil Palms Limited (NOPL), Norpalm began its operations after the 2000s with 68.1% of shares, while a private Ghanaian company, PZ Cussons Industries Ghana Ltd., owns the rest (Adeho, 2015; Yaro et al., 2017). After the takeover, the company begun its replanting program in 2002 after the implementation of PSI and an increased rate of planting in 2009 towards their palm oil production. GOPDC was also a previously owned state enterprise that was privatised under the Ghanaian government’s divestiture program in 1995. GOPDC was purchased by SIAT (Ghana) Ltd. (80%), with the government retaining a 20% share. In 2002, it purchased a nearby former State Oil Palm Plantation (SOPP) at Okumaning to expand its plantation (Stenek, 2011). Similar transactions of land purchases happened between 2009 and 2012 although not documented in New Abriem, Afosu and Ofoase (Huddleston & Tonts, 2007; Ofosu-
Budu & Sarpong, 2013). Norpalm and GOPDC provides a particularly good case study of the development of the oil palm industry in Ghana because they are both among the first large plantations in the country and continue to acquire lands to include in its plantation (Adeho, 2015; Ntsiful, 2010).

3.2 Description of participants

In this section, I will describe the characteristics of the participants who engaged in this study within the framework of Agrarian Political Economy. The total number of 60 respondents were interviewed by the research assistant from both communities, 30 respondents from Ewusiejoe and 30 respondents from Kwae. Out of the 60 participants, 42 individuals representing approximately 70% were landowners while the 30% constituted the youth and other residents who didn’t own land. The 42 landowners together own a total of 220 acres (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). However, the groups are not exclusive as some of the landowners are farmers, labour for Norpalm and GOPDC and palm oil processing mills (Table 3.2). There are others who are labour for smallholders and the processing mills or processing mills and Norpalm. Majority of the men were farmers, the women were farmers, oil processors and labour for Norpalm and GOPDC plantations while the youth are found to be intersecting between labour for the farms of independent smallholders farms and labour at Norpalm and GOPDC.

Table 3.1 Land ownership of study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landowners</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 acres</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 acres</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOPDC/Norpalm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 Types of land ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Ownership</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
<th>Number of acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rented/Leased</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned/Family owned</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norpalm/GOPDC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of Leased and owned</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)

Details of land ownership is enumerated in Table 3.2, family owned, and inherited lands constitute the majority of cases reported by the study group. However, rented lands together make the highest number of land ownership. In Table 3.3 provides information on how the lands were acquired in both Kwae and Ewusiejoe.

Table 3.3 Medium of acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of land acquisition</th>
<th>Ewusiejoe</th>
<th>Kwae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase from stool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norpalm/GOPDC</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase/Rented/Leased</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)

3.3 Altering Landscapes
Large-scale land acquisitions, in many cases, have changed landscapes because of their negative impacts on the environment. Several studies have highlighted these effects on the environment, including biodiversity loss (Davis et al., 2020; Obidzinski et al., 2012), soil loss and land degradation (D’Odorico et al., 2017; Galli et al., 2014), land cover change (Davis et al., 2020; D’Odorico et al., 2017), pollution of water bodies (Dell’Angelo et al., 2018) and habitat destruction (Kugelman, 2012; Turner et al., 2006). Due to the weak enforcement capacity of several host governments, impact assessments are either not done or poorly conducted. It is also rarely accessible to the locals for any input (Nhantumbo & Salomão, 2010; Schut et al., 2010). This raises concerns about the ecological sustainability of land and water resources leading to long-term sustainability problems and health implications for local populations (Rulli et al., 2017).

In this section, I will be examining i) landscape alterations brought about by environmental changes, ii) changes in farming practices, and iii) gender differences in land-use that have been observed. LSLAs have resulted in different environmental challenges for local populations and communities living in the catchment areas of projects. As observed by the research assistant during the fieldwork and confirmed by the participants, the significant observable impacts in the area are clearing vegetation cover, pollution of water resources, soil degradation, soil infertility, and pest infestation. These impacts are severe and sometimes irreversible even when measures have been in place.

3.3.1 Climatic Variability

Because agriculture is heavily dependent on rain, changes in the temperature and rainfall patterns weigh heavily on farmers and their means of sustenance as changes in the growing seasons affect crop yields. Studies by Arndt et al. (2015) and Anim-Kwapong & Frimpong (2005) show
that impacts of climatic changes are already manifesting in response to increased temperatures and rainfall variability (Williams et al., 2020). Other studies indicate the significant adverse effects on livelihoods and food resources, particularly among subsistence and small-scale agricultural production (Fosu-Mensah et al., 2012), increasing their vulnerability and threatening their survival.

Rainfall variability and increased temperatures are also situated within a myriad of social, economic, environmental, and political challenges. These include underdevelopment, high poverty rates, educational gaps, land degradation, and unimplemented agricultural policies that retrogress agriculture development (Antwi-Agyei et al., 2014). Direct implications on farming include challenging sustainable production and increased exploitation of natural resources (land and water) due to the growing demands. For example, Williams et al. (2020) attribute low yields of vegetables to high temperatures together with alternating limited and excess moisture.

In the interviews, a total of 24 persons representing 90% of the 36 farmers mentioned rainfall and temperature changes in the conversations (Table 3.4). Statements referring to insufficient rainfall and droughts were identified as the most limiting factors for agriculture production. This was rated among the top three challenges for a good harvest when they were asked by the RA.

**Table 3.4: Number of participants who mentioned climate variability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ewusiejo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kwae</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Westerhoff & Smit (2009) mentioned that mean annual temperatures in Ghana had increased by 1.0°C since 1960, with April, May, and June recording the most erratic temperature changes and rainfall patterns. Future forecasts show changes of 0.6°C, 2.0°C, and 3.9°C in 2020, 2050, and 2080 respectively (Westerhoff & Smit, 2009). Although the amount and distribution of precipitation is also expected to increase, the number of rain days is set to reduce.

The evidence from these interviews (Table 3.5) shows that a majority of the farmers and non-farmers in the study communities are aware that climate change is happening, attributing the erratic rainfall distribution, reduction in rainfall amounts, and increasing temperatures to the depletion of the vegetation, bush burning and switch to monoculture. The farmers particularly singled out deforestation as the main factor. The table shows that 24 individuals - 15 farmers & 9 non-farmers- out of the 65 sampled population have observed increasing temperatures and that the weather had become hotter compared to when they were young. 16 individuals also mention the unusual or fluctuating temperature as what they have observed. 27 of them mentioned changes in the onset of the rains during their lifetime, with 10 stressing its unpredictability. While 34 members categorically mention that the rains volumes are decreasing, 16 said they were fluctuating.

**Table 3.5: Respondents who identified climatic changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rainfall</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in onset</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing rainfall</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing rainfall</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A general perception of the onset of rains in both communities was that it came ‘later than before’, with farmers describing early events as they remembered it. ‘“In the past, the rains started in mid-March to July for the major season and August to mid-November as the minor season”’ (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe), suggesting that farmers began planting after the first rains in March especially for maize which was a major staple. Also, the notion of unpredictability explains the difficulty of knowing if the rains had finally come or it was just a conventional rainfall from the extreme heat causing evaporation of the water bodies around them. One of the farmers said: ‘in the past, there was a specific period, you definitely knew it will start at this time and it would, but nowadays, the rains can come at any time now’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe).

The all-female focus group discussions in Kwae concurred that the rains, particularly its onsets, had become progressively more difficult to predict. ‘Sometimes the rains come, we plant
our maize it starts flowering then the rain stops so obviously the plants will die’ (Female respondent, Kwae). The farmers also complained of a shorter duration, frequency, and/or intensity of the rains when it comes. One of the male farmers said, ‘Sometimes it is much heavier rain over a week, then light rains for three days then stop completely’ (Male respondent, Kwae). ‘Another female farmer in the FDG said, ‘In the past they were quite reliable starting on time, raining for long enough then lowers in one month then rains again, then a break, then the second rains start’ (Female Respondent, Ewusiejoe). It was the focus groups in Ewusiejoe that first mentioned the rains stressing that the rainfall season looks cut by a month or two. ‘It appears late and will cease even before you know it; we are unable to figure it out nowadays’ (All female FGD, Ewusiejoe).

This was confirmed by the focus group discussion in Kwae as one member said, ‘Rainfall nowadays behave differently when you expect it, it does not come, and when it finally comes it goes away that fast’ (All female FGD, Kwae).

This later-onset, earlier cessation, or both has shifted the duration of the growing season and is consistent with other reports in Sub-Saharan Africa. Simelton, et al. (2013), Ayal & Filho (2017), and Usman, et al. (2018) all confirm this is happening in southern Africa¹, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, respectively. An unpredictable onset and increasing dry periods between each rainfall sometimes result in planting too early and plants drying out before the proper rains sets in, causing farmers to lose their seed stocks before the season begins.

Amounts and distribution of rainfall are significant to these farmers as too much of the rains at a particular time also usually flood along the major rivers and their tributaries. Incidences of flooding were also mentioned, especially the first few days after the delays. The alternating flooding and drought conditions result in variations in crop yields and fluctuating food availability.

¹ Botswana and Malawi
for most households. Changes in precipitation have affected water levels and fish populations, especially in Ewusiejoe (The Hwini and Butre rivers), while stormy situations have rendered the rivers unsuitable for fishing. These difficulties have contributed to the overall food security as fish is an important source of protein for their many diets. Also, the switch to monoculture has increased the use of agrochemicals, which has contributed to the eutrophication of these rivers and their tributaries. In sum, the changes in the rainfall and temperature patterns have affected the land's sustainability for most of their livelihoods. This rainfall volatility affects different farmers differently, while the volatility of the rainfall is detrimental to food crop and oil palm farmers, tree crop farmers were indifferent because their farmland are not in the flood prone zones. The flood prone zones were farmland of oil palms and a majority belonged to the women in the communities.

3.3.2 Land-use changes and land degradation

Usually, lands labeled ‘unused’ are rendered appropriate for agricultural investments. Nevertheless, these are either croplands, grazing lands, or forested areas directly or indirectly in use by close communities. Designating such areas as unused allows for privatization, and privatizing lands in other places has resulted in natural resource depletion and degradation. Local communities tend to have overutilized the other areas left to compensate for the access to the resources they lost (Johnson et al., 2016; Kansanga et al., 2020). Hence the operations of Norpalm and GOPDC have contributed to the resource depletion due to the changes in land use and cover they have encouraged. Land-use\(^2\) and land-cover\(^3\) change refers to the conversion of forest or grassland habitats into cultivated land. Land-use change for cultivation is one of the most important

\(^2\) the manipulation of the biophysical attributes of the earth’s surface and subsurface
\(^3\) the state of the earth's surface and immediate subsurface
and potentially will continue to be so in the future (Alcamo et al., 2008; de Chazal & Rounsevell, 2009). Although touted as a high-income yielding activity with good social returns (Rulli et al., 2017), land acquisitions for agricultural development seem to affect the environment through intensification and extensification activities negatively. The most apparent conversion of virgin forested lands into production resulted in habitat destruction and enhanced soil erosion (D’Odorico et al., 2017), damaging the natural resources and viability of the lands. The removal of the vegetation cover, most especially, has become one of the significant things to be done to get the land ready for a project’s commencement. And this process has left lands susceptible to rigors of the weather, i.e., direct sunlight and run-offs.

It was observed by the RA that, even though the companies-Norpalm and GOPDC- have taken a majority of the community lands, not all the plots are under production. These non-productive plots were part of lands prepared for cultivation which never begins. Left unattended has increased the rate of deterioration and susceptibility to erosion and loss of fertility. According to the farmers who participated in this study, because the company has not cultivated on the total land area, it has exposed the land to soil erosion. When it rains, the water runs from the land through farms, washing away nutrients from the soil and rendering it unproductive, leaving them with failed crop production year after year. In Ewuseijoe one of the male senior respondents said, ‘When they first came, they said the government needed the land for massive production, we could not resist because we were promised of jobs. They cleared all the vegetation on the land to begin the project, and from time to time, they use graders to clear overgrown weeds’ (Male Respondent, Ewusiejoe). When the issue was raised in Kwae, a female respondent said ‘We only realized the land had been sold when they brought in machines to clear the land of all crops; they said the government had sold it to them for the development of oil palm and there will be a lot of
opportunities for the natives to learn and work’ (Female respondent, Kwae). Another response received was ‘when the project began, the company cleared to whole land area, destroyed our cassava, plantain and coconut farms. Even cocoa farms were destroyed to make way for the palm plantation, but bare lands have not been used’ (Female respondent, Kwae). Both farmers and non-farmers were deeply unsatisfied with how the natural forests were and continue to be cleared, but since these projects are backed by the government and local authorities, they are not in the position to resist.

Map 3.1 Kwae and its environs, land-use change 2000-2020
Map 3.1 shows the trend of agricultural expansion and its associated land degradation in the catchment area of the GOPDC.

Source: Google Earth Engine Timelapse  [https://earthengine.google.com/timelapse/](https://earthengine.google.com/timelapse/)
Another activity that is contributing to the destruction of the vegetation cover at Ewusiejoe is small-scale mining.⁴ During their operations, large tracts of lands—crop and fallow—are destroyed because the topsoil that supports growth is removed, rendering the land incapable of supporting any type of cultivation after their activity is ended and being left exposed to mercies of the weather. When asked about it, a respondent said, ‘But for the operations of Norpalm, there would be abundant lands for several crop farms, but our major problem is the land, there is none (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe).’ Most of the youth would have entered into farming if there were lands available. Because there is none, they, together with other nationals from Togo and Burkina Faso, engage in ‘galamsey’ (All female FDG, Ewusiejoe). They have destroyed all the water bodies surrounding us. These were waters we used to directly drink from during the olden days’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe). One of the youths confirmed this information and said ‘we do not have any work to do, we are not being hired, but we must survive, we will stop when we get proper jobs to do’ (Male respondent Ewusiejoe).

Map 3.2 (below) depicts the altered landscape of the Norpalm plantation and its respective community settlements. It is very clear from the maps that over the period of 2000–2020 a lot has changed in the area in terms of land use.

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⁴ Also known as ‘Galamsey’ in Ghana. Small-scale mining in Ghana is defined as exploiting mineral deposits using rudimentary equipment at low levels of production with low capital investment (Aryee et al., 2003). Small-scale miners are individuals or small groups who depend upon mining for a living.
Map 3.2 Ewusiejoe and its environs, land-use change 2000-2020

![Map of Ewusiejoe and its environs showing land-use change from 2000 to 2020](image_url)
The environmental impacts of their operations have been detrimental, and this has recently incited communities to pressure the government to stop all 'galamsey’ operations in Ghana. A study by Geist and Lambin (2002) better explains the underlying reasons for these happenings; according to them changes in land use and land cover are driven by proximate causes and underlying driving factors (D’Odorico et al., 2017; Geist & Lambin, 2002). The proximate causes are associated with local conditions determining the choices and actions of land users\(^5\) while the underlying drivers can be attributed to policies, market dynamics, and macro and microeconomic dynamics (Geist & Lambin, 2002). In the cases mentioned above, both proximate and underlying drivers are at play, causing the land's degradation in Ewusiejoe and Kwae.

Land degradation\(^6\) is affecting agricultural productivity (Pacheco et al., 2018). The global cost of land degradation is about US$ 500 billion per year (Pacheco et al., 2018) and some studies

\(^5\) It is best explained by multiple factors that may include agricultural and infrastructure expansions

\(^6\) is a major environmental problem. It results from complex inter-relationships between biophysical and socioeconomic issues that affect communities and their land.
show that Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for about 22% of the total global cost of land degradation (Nkonya et al., 2016). The term land degradation involves soil and vegetation degradation, with soil degradation referring to negative changes in the soil’s physical, chemical, and biological properties. In contrast, vegetation degradation is the reduction in the number of species and the vegetational composition. Thus, the degradation is the decline in the biophysical composition of the soil and reduction biodiversity. According to the Office of Technology Assessment, biodiversity\(^7\) refers to species -most often native or endemic- the richness of diversity (usually in number and relative abundance) and represent a single species through to selected groups of species. Changes in land use and land cover demand different species to respond positively, negatively, or exhibit no change - an adaptation to the new environment or face extinction (de Chazal & Rounsevell, 2009), and that is precisely one of the many problems facing both study communities. Biodiversity loss has been driven principally by the expansion of monoculture agriculture. Native plants have reduced drastically in number and proximity to communities making locals travel long distances to reach them. Also, animals served as food sources have gone into extinction or have relocated to favorable areas, reducing species richness in these localities.

The health of their soils has been drastically affected because of their poor maintenance. Soil health is essential for sustained production of food, decomposition of wastes, storage of heat, sequestration of carbon, and exchange of gases; however, because of its poor management, soil infertility has become a major problem for the farmers, particularly in Ewusiejoe. Most of the lands

\(^{7}\)“variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes in which those organisms occur, encompassing many levels of biological organization and spatial extent” (Marcot, 2007). In the ecological literature, “diversity” refers to the number of species (species richness) in a community or area and their relative abundance (species evenness) or some variations of these measures (de Chazal & Rounsevell, 2009; Marcot, 2007)
are infertile due to the continuous use of the same pieces of farmlands without fallowing, and as such most crops are not well as it previously used to. Their only solution is the use of chemical fertilizers to support crop growth. This was confirmed by most farmers that ‘Crops do not grow well if chemical fertilizers are not applied, and pest control is becoming difficult’ (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe). They compared the quantity of produce about ten years ago to what they get now and believe something needs to be done. Similarly, because they do not have enough knowledge on the applications of these chemical fertilizers, they tend to overdo it ‘we have kind of resorted to ‘trial and error’ to ascertain which chemicals work best and in what combinations. This process we have observed is polluting our water bodies when it rains’ one male respondent said. Another person commented that “The chemicals are not good for the soil we know, if you use the chemicals for the entire farm it kills all organisms and the farm becomes a desert sort of and when it rains it washes off into the nearest water body’ (Female respondents, Ewuseijoe). Pest and weed control have also become problematic for many farmers, and the only solution is to apply more chemicals deemed more harmful to the pest. Unlike Ewusiejoe, the farmers in Kwae did not initially use chemical fertilizers and herbicides. The company advised the farmers using GOPDC land to avoid the use of chemicals- both fertilizers and pest control, so they were using natural ways of control, but it has become ineffective, forcing them to introduce these chemicals.

Table 3.6: Challenges facing farmers on the land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ewusiejoe</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil Infertility</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of NTFP</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest Infestation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land &amp; Water Pollution</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed infestation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than 70% of respondents attributed a decrease in yield, increased incidence of weeds infestation, increased pest, and disease outbreak to the change of the ecosystem with land-use and cover changes featuring prominently. The major challenges they face have been enumerated above. The most issues discussed in order of priority were land and water pollution, loss of non-forest timber products, and soil infertility.

3.3.3 Water Resources

Access to freshwater resources is one of the significant reasons why SSA countries have been targeted in the global land rush for agricultural purposes, and Ghana is no exception (Cotula et al., 2008; FAO, 2015). Water for irrigation purposes is a major consideration when deciding the site of plantations and production plants, although it is seldom discussed in land transactions. In the study area, the plantations have impacted the water resources in different ways. First and foremost, farmers complained of the reduction in the volume of water that flows in their rivers. This is largely a result of the clearing of the vegetation along the river and its tributaries, allowing direct sunlight contact with the water, which has increased its evaporation rate. Secondly, the dumping of effluents into the rivers and their tributaries kills aquatic life and other living organisms.
that the community used to enjoy. Mr. Baidoo, in a conversation on what benefits they (as a community) have received from the company, said,

"they dump their sludge into the river “Butre”, this kills all the fishes and other living organisms in the water. We cannot use the water anymore because it is stinking and full of unwanted materials. Knowing that this is the problem they have brought to us, they could have even provided us with pipe borne water, but they’ve brought us nothing” (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe).

In addition to that, the consistent use of large quantities of fertilizers and pesticides has contaminated their rivers\(^8\) making it unusable. Improper effluents discharge, lubricants, and other oils used on their machines are also causing de-oxygenation, increasing the threat to aquatic life. So, in summary, an overwhelming majority of individuals in our conversations mention these as challenges they are constantly facing.

### 3.4 Changes in farming systems and land-use practices

The narratives gathered from the interviews revealed that farmers’ decisions on crops to cultivate mainly depended on the needs of their household (food or money). Other factors considered are input needs for their farms as well as market availability of their produce. Farmers who cultivated food crops did that for most household consumption but cultivated other cash crops as well. Prior to the commencement of the oil palm plantation, people were keen on food crops because virgin lands were abundant and soils were fertile, but because of the decline of soil fertility, food crops are no longer grown for commercial purposes. The is because yields have

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\(^8\) Butre and Hwini
become small, and most people preferred the cultivation of oil palm since it generated more income than food crops.

The focus group discussions and individual interviews in Ewusiejoe suggested that land was abundant in the years back, the population was very low, and farms were closer to homesteads. Access to land was virtually free, migrant farmers needed only to give a bottle of schnapp beverage to the chief to access farmlands. During that time, cultivated lands were left fallow, and farmers moved to clear virgin lands every 3–4 years using shifting cultivation methods, but over the past decades, deforestation took place as the vegetation was removed. Now there isn't land available for indigenes, and so if they want to farm, they need to look elsewhere. Farmers indicated that anyone who needs farmlands must now buy them, adding that the land frontiers are expanding far from their settlement, as far away as Ayem\(^9\) or Ayinase\(^{10}\). According to the outgrower association chairman, most of the association members cultivate farmlands outside the community’s boundaries. Likewise, in Kwae, community members indicated no available lands, and they are forced to move far into neighboring land-abundant communities for new lands when the need be. In both communities, all responses suggest that large-scale land acquisitions (foreign and domestic) play a major role in restricting farmers access to the land, resulting in land scarcity and affected how they go about their lives.

**Table 3.7: Major Land-use prior to 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ewusiejoe</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) A town in the Abura district

\(^{10}\) A town about 52km by road.
Maize 7
Plantains 7
Coconut 6
Vegetables (Tomatoes & garden eggs) 8

**Kwae**
Plantains 8
Cocoyams 6
Cocoa 2
Maize 10
Vegetables (Garden eggs, okra, tomatoes & pepper) 7

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)

Before the commencement of the new oil palm 'craze' in 2001 after the government implemented its PSIs, the farmlands in the Ewusiejoe and Kwea were used for a variety of food crops (Table 3.7) (Asante, 2012). Although not exclusively because the oil palm had already started to gradually ‘invade’ the food crop space. New acquisitions were also experienced after 2009 especially in Ewuseijoe not necessarily attributed to any policy implementation by the government but likely to the discovery of the oil and gas in the region. Several of the female farmers were able to maintain a combination of a portion of food crops, especially with the vegetables but the table represent the major food crops they cultivated for both commercial and household purposes.

**Table 3.8: Current Land-use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ewusiejoe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solely Oil Palm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil palm + Food crops</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Oil palm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil palm + Rubber</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As evident from Table 3.8 an overwhelming 87% on the respondents are cultivating oil palm either solely or together with other crops. Only 13% are cultivating other crops such as cocoa (Kwae) or rubber (Ewusiejoe). The land-use analyses suggest changes in land cover and dynamism in the land-use systems. There is a trend of transformation from a diversity of vegetation types through a variety of crops to oil palm dominated landscapes. Reported narratives of changes in crop mix and local cropping patterns, to swath of oil palm land cover. Several respondent’s said cultivation of food crops has declined drastically and were quick to add that pest and disease control were part of the reasons why they switched to the oil palm. In Ewusiejoe for example the Cape Saint Paul Wilt Disease reduced coconut products production as most of the coconut in the area dried up and died. Table 3.7 shows that crops traditionally grown such as cassava and cocoyam, are almost non-existent, whereas maize, plantain and some vegetables were only found in backyard gardens. Today, oil palm is the most commercialized crop due to demand from the companies and the good returns it provides the farmers.

In summary, the focus group discussions and interviews suggest that cropping patterns and cropping mix changed over time from subsistence crops to mostly monocropped and commercially produced oil palm mainly highly driven by profitability. Likewise, these patterns reflect various
socioeconomic and biophysical changes including population growth, decline in soil fertility, market accessibility, pest control and climate.

3.4.1 Gender-related land-use differences

Gender-related differences can be seen in the various activities undertaken by the farmers of the Ewusiejoe and Kwea communities. The most obvious are in the types of crops grown and market participation: The women farmers make up 100% of the group that cultivated oil palm together with food crops and other vegetables. In comparison, their male counterparts cultivated oil palm or oil palm and rubber/cocoa solely. This information is consistent with Doss (2002), where men are responsible for producing cash crops and women food crops. It identifies and reinforces the gender division roles in which women are often confined to subsistence farming while men are engaged in high-income earning cash crop production. Although some spouses of male farmers who owned oil palm farms indicated that they grow their crops independently and without any help from their husbands, others were dependent on their husbands and had to maintain a joint farm investment and allow their husbands to take the major decisions even though the land belongs to them. The women who maintain their own plots in all the cases hired labour to work for them, likewise the respondents who were above the age of 75. The rest worked on their own plots, although not alone, major activities and decisions were taken by them. One major practice of the women which is not found amongst the men is to divide their plots into portions and work on ¾ of their plots, leaving ¼ to fallow each time. For the plots under cultivation, they are used for 1 to 5 years then a shift is made. This practice is also not found amongst women using the GOPDC lands because it is the constant cultivation that will yield their desired incomes. In terms of the usage of the incomes generated, the incomes from the women are mainly for household
expenditure, especially food, school fees, health bills, and reinvestment into their farms (sole ownership) and other trades whiles the incomes for the men is for the reinvestment into the maintenance of the farm and school fees.

3.5 Conclusion
This chapter adds to the empirical data on the environmental impacts of LSLAs on smallholder farmers. The impact is narrated through the experiences of the farmers who associate land degradation, soil nutrients loss, losses in biodiversity and pollution of the water bodies to land use changes and changes in the farming systems influenced by the oil palm plantation. According to them, although the plantation has been beneficial to them economically their lands especially the potential to regenerate nutrients is impossible leaving them with the option of applying chemicals even though appropriate quantities for application is usually unknown. So, farmers mostly applied chemical quantities in excess, polluting their rivers and streams.

Changes in the farming systems and land use practices began after the development of the oil palm plantations which the farmers claim took over a majority of their farmlands that belonged to members of the communities. With the little lands left, it became profitable to cultivate oil palm than the cultivation of food crops because the lands had lost most of its nutrients making food crops struggling to grow. Communities which were hither to ‘food baskets’ had switch completely to become oil palm farmers and palm oil producers.

Land use differences were very evident in the types of crops grown by both women and men. Although the cultivation of the oil palm was prominent, the women still cared about food crops to feed their households, but the men concentrated on also cash or tree crops such as rubber and cocoa together with the cultivation of the oil palm. When it came to farming practices, such as fallowing for natural restoration of farmland, it was the women who solely practised it showing that women cared for the environment more than men in both Ewusiejeoe and Kwae. These changes
in farming practices and land-use changes have influenced the livelihoods of members of the Ewusiejoe and Kwae communities positively and negatively. The positive spillover by the presence of the oil palm is the availability of jobs and market for their produce. However, the negative experiences felt by farmers are dispossessions, food insecurity, farming struggles among others. In the next chapter I will explain these struggles in a gender lens projecting the experience of women in these communities.
Chapter Four: Social and Economic outcomes of land grabs through the gender lens

4.1 Introduction

Women are substantial contributors to the social, economic, and environmental development of rural livelihoods. As farmers, land managers, and workers, they make up a majority of small-scale food producers and home keepers. Despite this role, they face challenges in their rights to access and control land-based resources (Yengoh et al., 2015). Control over land and other agricultural productive resources is key to catering for their households and contributing to food security and sustainable economic development (FAO, 2008; Kachingwe, 2012; Yengoh et al., 2015). However, in Ghana, their access and control are limited because they are not customarily allowed to be custodians of the land and would have to seek its access through family heads or chiefs who are all male. Because of this, when lands are sold or leased, women are seldomly informed, usually dispossessed, and expected to look for alternatives of survival. The loss of their source of income and food becomes detrimental to the household's survival, which sometimes leads to out-migration of other members of the family.

In this chapter, I will analyze the implications of LSLAs for livelihoods from a gender lens. I will begin with information on gender participation in land acquisitions and shed light on how women navigate their lives around oil palm plantations regarding availability and access to land and food after dispossessions—their place in the oil palm value chain and any forms of resistance they exhibit. I will also describe the generational issues and opportunities with access to land for the youth, their expectations against reality, and other issues they face as farmers.
4.2 Social Outcomes

4.2.1 Gender participation in land deals

Since local authorities and family heads (who are always male) are custodians to land, they are always assumed to be the owners and users of the land and, therefore, consulted during LSLA negotiations. A few of the women participants of this study witnessed the takeover of ownership of the community lands from the chiefs and family heads to Norpalm and GOPDC. They mentioned that they were not involved during these transfers because they were young. However, they could speak about it because they were grown enough to understand what was going on, as explained by their parents, and why they must move from their previous farming lands. During that period, consultations were with the chiefs, elders, and the family heads; the women were not allowed to partake in these consultations and negotiations because of customary restrictions. Decisions on leasing farming lands were primarily made by the chiefs and their council of elders with the regional and district administrators. These positions of authority are generally occupied by men who tend to wield power over land transfer processes and proceeds. In the focus groups, the women were keen to point out that no consultations of women were actively sought on issues of land leases. Women's consent and contribution in the decision-making to community land leases were influenced by the prevailing culture of the land and the fundamental cultural norm that women do not own land and therefore cannot decide on what becomes of it. Members in the focus group in Ewusiejoe commented that the lack of decision-making on issues and processes of land transfer translates to the limited access to and decision-making on income resulting from these land leases. However, with time, some families have changed the inheritance pattern of land ownership to allow female children to inherit from their parents. By so doing, current land acquisitions, although smaller in sizes, allow the owners who are females to participate in the lease
or sale transactions. Together with the chiefs and family heads, the women deal directly with individuals and companies willing to purchase land for oil palm investments. The experience of the women leaders (known as queen mothers) was not different from that of other community members except that the former have continually enjoyed the proceeds of land acquisitions previously and now. Nonetheless, the general exclusion of women’s voices in resource-based decision-making like land deals have left them with minimal options. When their lands were taken over, they had to consult their family heads and husbands for different allocations or discuss their alternatives. This observation is consistent with information from other countries in Africa where women would have to rely on their husbands, brothers, and uncles to access lands for farming before and after land deals (Ndi, 2019).

4.2.2 Resource access and negotiation for women after LSLAs

Since women’s access and use rights to farmlands are assigned to them by their families, significant decisions are taken by the family head, and the same applies to lands that were received from their husbands. Once a woman is provided with farmland, household food, childcare, personal care, and other household expenditures become her responsibility while the men take care of long-term strategic investments such as building the home and family health care. In situations where their lands are affected by land deals, they must consult these custodians for new farming plots or look for alternatives to farming because of the responsibilities mentioned earlier.

Access to Non-Timber Forest Products/resources (NFTP) such as firewood, snails, roots, fruits, resins, and medicinal plants always depends on how easily it could be reached. They mentioned that if these resources are in the enclosed area controlled by agro-industry11, then they

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11 The plots that had been taken over by Norpalm and GOPDC
were not allowed to access them and must search for these resources in other areas. In the interviews, many women mentioned difficulties with acquiring firewood, medicinal plants, and other foraged foods because these are known to be abundant in enclosed areas. They either must walk very long distances to access them or buy them from other communities, especially for the group of women who sold firewood for supplementary income. Most NTFP users must purchase charcoal as an alternative to firewood, purchase medicinal plants and foraged foods. The economic impact of these changes is thus the cost of purchasing things that were previously foraged, the additional burden of time required to travel farther to find materials, and the loss of income from selling foraged materials, as expressed by one of the respondents:

‘My family has used firewood for cooking food ever since I was growing up; we got them from the farm it was easy to access and sold the surplus for some income unfortunately not anymore. The current location of our farm has less firewood. I have to walk long distances in search of firewood, so I stopped searching. Now I use more charcoal than firewood which I get from the market’ (Female Respondent, Kwae).

On the same subject in Ewusiejoe, a female respondent in the focus group was very interested in responding to the issue of medicinal plants. She said

‘My mother was a traditional healer, so I picked up the knowledge from her; we could just walk a few meters to collect the herbs she wanted. Now I have stopped practicing because I can’t find any of the herbs close by. The distance I need to walk for them is unimaginable, I can’t, so I stopped. Now we all buy from the trucks that sell herbal mixtures.’

This loss of the major source of social and economic well-being for the households left members with different adaptation choices, including switching to other forms of self-employment, finding
farmlands outside the community, finding work with the land appropriating company, and migrating out of the community. As already mentioned, LSLAs affect genders differently, so is their response, the women in Ewuseijoe and Kwae switched to others forms of self-employment (petty trading and palm oil processing) and finding work with Norpalm or GOPDC, respectively. In Ewusiejoe, most of the women became casual workers for Norpalm, small scale palm oil producers and petty traders\textsuperscript{12}, while the women in Kwae became nucleus smallholders and petty traders\textsuperscript{13}.

4.2.3 Differential effects of Land deals- Power & Control

Power relations underpin land grabbing, which has been confirmed by analyzing several literature (Margulis et al., 2013; Nolte, 2014). These relations may be international, national, or local. In the interviews, the farmers indicated that there weren’t any consultations in the processes leading to land acquisitions and other non-farming participants also confirmed this. This means that there was no community participation in the processes, and the traditional and district authorities only took decisions. The study also found inequalities in land revenue benefits which were rooted in the customary land policies. The unequal power relations between the land custodians and land users dictated who benefitted from land transactions. It became evident that Chiefs and family heads entrusted with allodial titles as well as government representatives in the district gained immensely while smallholders who cultivated land didn’t receive any benefits. The

\textsuperscript{12} Petty trading in fish, women clothing and rent out chairs for social gatherings

\textsuperscript{13} Petty trading in clothing, charcoal and food stuff
proceeds of these transactions did not trickle to the community members, nor the family members and they felt afraid to ask about it. One interviewee commented:

‘There hasn’t been any compensation paid to us, and people feel afraid to ask about it. If anyone starts asking questions, they are perceived as the public enemy number one. If you know Mr. Essien, the head of the family, a payment was made to him for our land, but details were not shared, neither was the money. We do not know how much we got as a family, and we do not know what it has been used for’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe).

As part of the response to what the community received as compensation for their lost land, one of the family heads responded:

‘We also heard the families in Mpohor were paid, so we inquired, and we were told it was true the families were paid, and they in-turn paid a percentage to the chief, but that didn’t happen here. We inquired from the company, they confirmed the information and stating about 25% was paid through the divisional chief at Otopo, but it was not supposed to be so. The families didn’t get any payment for their lost lands. The divisional chief had received the monies without consulting the various family heads. I don’t really know, but I feel there was a conspiracy between the divisional chief and the Ebusuapanyin (the head of the family for the Ewusiejoe chief)’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe).

Another respondent made this comment:

‘My family had several parcels of land, so we moved to the ones that were not affected. However, for those families that didn’t have other land that had to rent other people’s land for their farming. So just looking at this situation where you lose your land and then do not get some of the monies paid, our elders will say” sit down, fall down,” interpreted as losing at both ends’ (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe).
In Kwae, one of the respondents noted:

‘My dad was among the elders who had to take the decision to lease the land, when he mentioned that they shouldn’t give all the land out to GOPDC, he was branded as not wanting development for the area and asked to perform a ritual to pacify the chief for saying that. It later resulted in our family not receiving any proceeds for the land lost just because of what my father said’ (Female respondents, Kwae)

Currently, in Ewusiejoe, although a higher proportion of their land has been taken over by Norpalm Gh Ltd’s oil palm plantation, the remaining lands are being scrambled for by oil service companies and elite individuals. This is leading to a rapidly growing middle-class and an emerging power differential among the locals. The increase in foreign direct investments, particularly with the recent discovery of oil in the Western Region, has encouraged local elites from Takoradi, and its environs with influence and financial resources to buy huge parcels of remaining lands along the Takoradi- Agona Nkwanta stretch of which Ewusiejoe is included. The community members who want these lands for farming purposes are told the lands aren’t available and have to look elsewhere. Explanations given are that the local authorities and family heads intend to lease these lands for higher returns paid by the new companies. There were, and still are, mixed reactions to the location of the companies on their lands. According to some of the community members, they, as a community haven’t benefitted from the location of these companies on their land be it infrastructure or increased incomes. The only people they believe benefitted most are the workers of Norpalm and GOPDC who were migrants and local people who provide ancillary services. The group most disadvantaged are women farmers who lost their lands. The unequal power relations put most of the women at a disadvantage to men because they lose most of their lands, get none of
the monetary proceeds, and are required to look for alternatives to maintain household reproduction.

From these interviews, it is clear that the effects of LSLAs are different depending on one’s class and gender. Companies and local elites get the lands; Chiefs, elders, and family heads get the benefits- both monetary and non-monetary; while women, youth, landless and migrant labourers get nothing. Benefits are directed towards the males rather than the females in families, while dispossessions and displacements affect females the most.

4.2.4 Displacements, disposessions, and changes to landholdings sizes

Displacements\textsuperscript{14} and disposessions\textsuperscript{15} have been emphasized by most land grab literature that focuses on livelihoods around the world, and this is no different from what is happening in Ghana. One of the most direct and immediate implications of LSLAs for biofuels production in local communities has been the loss of land. Control of several tracts of land have changed hands from local users to foreign companies or local elites who wield power, influence, and resources-rich. This change in land control results in exclusions and disposessions for those lacking the power and agency to defend their land rights. For example, studies in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions of Ghana of biofuel plantations revealed that both households and individuals were required to relinquish landholdings for the purpose of the plantation development (Schoneveld, German, & Nutakor, 2011) as ‘community development’ was prioritized over individual desires. Such land transfers reinforced existing power inequalities, as most people were expelled from their lands and further marginalized by the ‘development’ drive. In line with the findings of Schoneveld

\textsuperscript{14} Removal from an original habitation which often means not only the physical relocation but also the loss of livelihood derived from the subsistence resources offered by the local environment (Jaysawal & Saha, 2016)

\textsuperscript{15} Defined by Levien (2018) as ‘a social relation of coercive redistribution’
and German (2014), the people of Ewusiejoe confirm that there were significant displacements of smaller villages that fell within the oil palm plantation. One of the respondents whose family was affected said:

‘When we were asked to relocate, the chief Aseleku\(^{16}\) was one of the first people to leave the town. The residents had no choice but to follow suit. I remember my grandmother, my mum and I were the last residents to leave and wherever you relocated to was based on how receptive they were’ (Female. respondent, Ewusiejoe).

From the interviews conducted, 72\%(n=32) and 50\% (n=8) of the farmers and non-farmers had lost portions or entire land due to the oil palm projects by GOPDC and Norplam Ghana. The proportion of female to male in this category is about 75\% : 25\% respectively which supports the argument that women are more vulnerable to the disruptive effects of the biofuel projects in Ghana (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014)

**Table 4.1 Acres of farmlands lost**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ewusiejoe</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 acres</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 acres</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kwae</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 acres</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 acres</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 acres</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) A village located within the confines of the current plantation at Ewusiejoe. Currently non-existent
Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)

Regarding the table above, a significant number of 30 respondents lost between 1 to 10 acres of land. Out of a total of 40 respondents, 27 were female, and 12 were male. The females also represented the group that lost over 10 acres of land.

In instances where the families had alternative lands, these lands were saddled with contentions because of double allocations causing friction between family members. Some of the women mentioned that the plots allocated to them were of poor-quality making production difficult. Others also indicated that the dispossessions rendered gardening plots increasingly insecure as husbands and family members invaded these plots. As the men lost control of their plots, they dispossessed their wives and sisters of their lands and took control of them because of the patriarchal power they wield. This 'control grabbing' transformed the domestic arena into a site of struggles, claims, and counterclaims over lands which I call ‘internal dispossession struggles’ Internal dispossession struggles encompasses husbands dispossessing wives, brothers dispossessing sisters, fathers dispossessing children and in-laws usually (husbands kins) dispossessing brothers’ wives because it is their family land and not that of the women. Nyantakyi-Frimpong and Kerr (2017) made a similar observation during their study in the Upper West Region of Ghana, which they called 'domestic land grabbing’ and mentioned this phenomenon was increasingly becoming prominent in land grabbing areas in Ghana. Explaining their term ‘domestic land grabbing’, Nyantakyi-Frimpong and Kerr (2017) used land struggles within different classes (land rich, near-landless and landless) households with a focus on women as their illustration.

Between the ‘internal dispossessions struggles’ and ‘domestic land grabbing’ are many similarities and few differences. The similarities include dispossessions within near-landless and landless households by husbands and in-laws against wives and dispossessions leading to
migrations. Dispossessions by brothers against sisters and fathers against children were not mentioned. Also conflict between the kinds of crops to be cultivated within the limited available land surface between disposessors and the dispossessed was not analysed. Another main difference is that no matter the class of the household the women are responsible for looking for alternative access to farming land or an economic activity that will ensure a smooth maintenance of the household. These ‘internal dispossesson struggles’ have contributed immensely to reducing land sizes in both Ewusiejoe and Kwae under the control of women. The impact has therefore been one actor's access meaning another’s exclusion (R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015)

4.2.4.1 Changes to landholdings sizes

Landholdings are a major determinant of wealth in farming communities. Most people intend to control a lot more parcels of land either for food or cash crop production. However, with the onset of LSLAs and their associated dispossessions, their intentions of increasing land sizes do not materialize; rather, a trend of reducing landholdings is experienced. Farmland reduction caused by LSLAs was one of the main points of a study by Schoneveld, German & Nutakor (2011) in the Pru district of Ghana. They noted that the average household landholdings in that district reduced by 61% as of 2009 and another 16% earmarked for conversion just following their research. According to them, the average total household landholdings had reduced from 26.1 acres to 12.7 acres and was expected to decrease further to about 8.5 acres (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor, 2011).

Scrambling for remaining lands by family members in Ewusiejoe and Kwae leads to a further reduction of land sizes controlled by individuals within these families. This has, over the years, reduced the average land size of 50 acres per person to about 11 acres per person. The reason for this reduction is the increasing member interest in having their own plots of land, but this is
not necessarily translating into the increase in farmer numbers. As the young people in the family grow into adulthood, they demand their share of the family plots, which are already small but will have to be redivided to include the new members. Over the years, the sizes of farmlands lost ranged from 1 acre to 25 acres, with a mean size of 11 acres. The following are a few of the responses received when respondents were asked about their land sizes: ‘Other members in my family are demanding lands for farming, so if I want to increase my farmland size, I will have to go for a leased land’ (Male respondent, Kwae). ‘As my family expands, other members are demanding land for farming. I would rather give to them than using it myself’ (Female Respondent, Ewusiejoe). ‘When I finish harvesting, I have to allow my brother to use half of the plot. This land was given to both of us by our mother, but I used it because my brother was young. Now that he is grown, he will start his own farm. When my kids inherit my land, they will have to share it equally’ (Female Respondent, Kwae).

This division of the family plots has become problematic because it is contributing to food security issues in the area as almost all the new farmers are changing the land-use from food cultivation to oil palm.

4.3 Economic Outcomes

4.3.1 Livelihood Implications of LSLAs

“Livelihood” is a term used by Chambers and Conway (1991) to refer to a means by which one secures the basic necessities of life to make a living comprising both material and social resources. Bebbington (1999: 2022) defines it as this “[A] livelihood encompasses income, both cash and in kind, as well as the social institutions (kin, family, village), gender relations, and property rights required to support and to sustain a given standard of living. A livelihood also
includes access to and the benefits derived from social and public services provided by the state such as education, health services, roads, water supplies and so on”. The implications of LSLAs on the livelihood of residents of Ewusiejoe and Kwae are enumerated below.

4.3.2 Economic benefits of the plantations

Although the existence of the oil palm plantations has resulted in land-based dispossession and exclusions, it has been economically beneficial to some other members of the communities in both Ewusiejoe and Kwae. First are the educated migrant workers from the regional and national capitals who are employed as top and middle management. There were also predominantly male groups like ‘gang leaders’ or headmen and lower management members. Women, youth and some elderly members form the base of the hierarchy sell their labour for wages either on farms or at the mills. Other beneficiaries are persons providing ancillary services who are usually people who have higher income levels (mostly male) or people whose family members have out-migrated and remit for investing in trading businesses. Smallholder independent farmers and mills operators also benefit from available markets provided by Norpalm and GOPDC. It therefore can be said that the oil palm plantations have provided direct and indirect job opportunities and a multiplier effect on other jobs in the local economy. Employment opportunities include daily wage labour and permanent employment with Norpalm and GOPDC, palm oil processing, ancillary services such as the sale of inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, and farming tools) and outputs (palm fruits, palm kernel oil, palm oil local soaps and sweeping brooms). Most of the women farmers are also part-time wage labour, offering services for tasks that do not require extra skills such as planting,

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17 A term used to refer to the heads of working groups within the plantations.
harvesting, carrying fruits, and chemical application. With many more people (mostly male) gaining employment as outgrowers, nucleus smallholders, and independent smallholders, there is an increase in purchasing power, enhancing the local economic flow. Revenues made circulate in the economy as people pay for goods and services. Significant amongst these are the buying of motorized vehicles, investment in farming tools, labour and oil processing equipment, repairing of houses, and investment in other business ventures.

4.3.3 The Oil palm value chain in Ghana

Figure 4.1: Structure of the oil palm industry in Ghana

Source: Asante, 2021. The oil palm value chain.

In Ghana, the oil palm industry’s prevailing business models are the nucleus smallholder, the outgrower, and the independent smallholder farmers (Ofosu-Budu & Sarpong, 2013). The nucleus-smallholder model involves smallholder farmers cropping on the land that belongs to the company after acquiring the land. The farmers are structurally bound by contract and are obliged to sell what they produce to the particular company. They are often required to adhere strictly to
the company’s processes, including planting and crop management techniques. The outgrowers, on the other hand, cultivate oil palm on their own land or as tenants on a third party’s land, usually close to the plantations. They receive inputs from the company under the agreement. The contract stipulates that the estate provides inputs on credit to the farmer (at cost), and the farmer, in return, supplies all his production output to the company. A percentage of the value of the supplied crop is used for loan servicing. The farmers enjoy a moratorium on their loans and start repayment when the trees are in full production. Outgrower farmers remain under the agreement until their loans are repaid. Just like the nucleus smallholders, they are also required to sell their produce to the estate at an agreed price until the loan is fully repaid. The last group of oil palm farmers - independent smallholders - have the freedom to choose how to use their lands, which crops to plant and how to manage them. They are self-organized, self-managed, and self-financed and not contractually bound to any particular company. They have the freedom to crop and market their fruits on the open market and to source their inputs from the open market. In the Kwae community, a majority of the farmers were nucleus smallholders with a few outgrowers. Out of 21 oil palm farmers, 15 were nucleus farmers while the rest constituted outgrowers and independent smallholder farmers. The dynamics in Ewusiejoe were quite different; there were only independent smallholder farmers, no nucleus smallholder or outgrower arrangements.

The oil palm value chain begins with the nurseries, which is operated by the Oil Palm Research Institute (OPRI). Previously part of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, it is currently autonomous in its mandate of researching oil palm development and supplying planting materials to growers. Next in the chain are the oil palm producers, which includes the companies or estates (Norpalm and GOPDC) and independent smallholders. Outgrowers and nucleus smallholders work under the mandate of the companies, managing plots owned by the
estates or contracted by the estate as a supplier of palm fruits. The next group in the chain are the processors (large, medium, and small-scale mills). Large-scale operated by the Norpalm and GOPDC on the one hand and the medium and small-scale mills operated by sole proprietor enterprises and individuals respectively on the other. End-users of the palm oil produced may be industrial or domestic.

Participants of this study contribute to different parts of the value chain; as independent smallholders, outgrowers, nucleus smallholders, owners and workers of processing mills and finally end-users and consumers. For example, in the Ewusiejoe community, independent smallholders, owners, and workers of the mill dominated the population while outgrowers and nucleus smallholders dominated the population in Kwae. Others included day labour workers, who work directly on the farms and at the milling centers of Norpalm and GOPDC.

4.3.3.1 Role of women in the value chain

Evidence from the study indicates that gender roles are clearly delineated within the oil palm value chain. Traditional gender roles and norms that define individual responsibilities of activities for men and women in the local setting is replicated in the chain. Within Norpalm and GOPDC production chains, women are responsible for planting, nursing, aggregating, and carrying of harvested fruits and collection of loose fruits as well as fertilizer application, spraying of weedicide, and rodent control. Only a few enter into contractual agreements with Norpalm and GOPDC as nucleus smallholders and outgrowers because they tend to lack secure access to land (Dzanku et al., 2020). Men are, however, the decision-makers and overseers of the work women do on the farms. The men form the majority in management in the companies (upper, middle and lower) with the employees from the communities at the base of the hierarchy. In the smallholder and outgrower models of operation, women’s’ labour is employed seasonally during harvesting
where they are solely responsible for aggregating, carrying, and collecting harvested fruits and loose fruits. Women also dominate the medium and small-scale palm oil production; they produce, market, and distribute the palm's products and derivatives by working individually or in groups to provide products to local markets and private marketers.

Women are in every part of the value chain and contribute immensely to its continuity. Off-farm income has become their main revenue source because they found these options better alternatives to working as labour on other peoples’ farms.

Figure(s) 4.2 - 4.4 The local processing of palm oil

Woman cooking oil palm fruits to be processed into palm oil

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)
Grinding of cooked oil palm fruits and extraction of the palm oil

Source: RA’s fieldwork (2020/2021)
4.4 LSLA, food security and the role of women

As already mentioned, lands in Sub-Saharan Africa are perceived to be under-utilized due to the predominant smallholder agriculture model employed by farmers since time immemorial. This model is usually rain-fed, employs rudimentary equipment (such as hoes, machetes and racks) and a lot of human labour. It is therefore assumed that this model doesn’t ensure full utilization of the land. For instance, The World Bank’s report in 2009 mentions that out of 400 million hectares of arable and suitable for agriculture in Africa only about 40 million hectares are currently under crop cultivation attributing it to smallholder farming (crops and pastoralist). The authors argued that Africa can only be competitive in the world market if it employs large-scale farming. Therefore, advocates are calling for its replacement with large-scale farming as a new approach to confronting food insecurity (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Food security is said to exist when people have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life at all times (Cafiero et al., 2018; Cochrane, 2011). Food Security has become topical because it has been observed that biofuel is replacing food production in the agricultural sector in Sub-Saharan Africa (Acheampong & Campion, 2014; Cochrane, 2011). Many farmers are switching from food crops to cash crops like oil palm, jatropha, rubber, cotton, cocoa, sugarcane among others (R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015). This switch has created a deficit in food production and contributes to increasing the rate of hunger (Fonjong & Gyapong, 2021; R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015).

By restricting access to the land and its natural resources, LSLAs for oil palm development in Ewusiejoe and Kwae have significantly impacted the self-sufficiency of communities and limited their potential of food security options. LSLAs for agricultural development in Ghana is promoted in line with the country's development vision of achieving middle-income status, with
food security being one of the main priorities. Yet, this study found out that both communities are rather losing their notability as the 'food baskets' for their respective districts and are experiencing a negative food security impact. Prior to the arrival of the oil palm plantations in both Ewusiejoe and Kwae, these communities were noted for the abundant production of cassava and plantains, respectively. They were also noted for eatables like cocoyam, yams, coconut, and vegetables such as okra, tomatoes, and cocoyam leaves. However, this notability has changed because they have channeled their resources to the cultivation of oil palm.

Even though this is troubling, it's somewhat consistent with other studies in other parts of Africa (Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner Kerr, 2017; Osabuohien et al., 2019). The first underlying reason for this switch is government policies tailored towards creating an 'enabling environment' for foreign direct investment in agricultural production (Torvikey, 2021; Yaro et al., 2018). This has created cheap and investible lands for investors and strengthened their foothold and use of resources at their disposal. In such a pro-investment arrangement, export-oriented crops are prioritized over production for local consumption, exacerbating food's non-availability. It is, therefore, not surprising that many community members associated LSLAs experience food insecurity. In the interviews, food security was frantically mentioned by the women. After all, they were the ones responsible for food in the household, whiles the men didn't have much to say because their interest was in the commercial crops to make more money.

Another underlying factor contributing to food insecurity is the current land-use choices adopted by the majority of farmers. Almost all farmers have switched totally or partially from the cultivation of food crops to oil palm cultivation, thereby decreasing the local food crop production. When asked about this change, a respondent in Kwae said “There is no land available in this area for food crops. This is because almost all the farmers have switched from food crops to oil palm
because it has a longer life span” (Female respondent, Kwae). "Most of the lands in this area went into the plantation, so even though some of the residents here want to farm food crops, there isn't enough land available, so you have to consider other places. Most people are growing cash crops neglecting the food crops. It's all about the returns they will make" (Female respondent Ewusiejoe). Thus, the primary motive of crop farmers to become oil palm farmers\textsuperscript{18} is the guaranteed market access, and the accompanied increased income from the sale of cash crop with a reasonable level of risk. There are just but a few food crop plots that are meant for household consumption. In general, farmers switched to oil palm because it fetches good money compared to the food crops since palm trees have a longer lifespan with yearly harvests. Incomes resulting from farm surpluses and non-timber forest products have drastically reduced for the women who have lost land and thus will have to depend on their husbands. They continually mentioned that increases in land loss had reduced their independence and increased their pressure in providing household resources, especially food. Due to the switch to cash crops especially oil palm, food is imported from districts and towns about 63km in distance. The women in Ewusiejoe mentioned that they by their foodstuff from Benso, Esiam, Axim and sometimes Agona Nkwanta while their counterparts in Kwae buys from Agogo, Akim Oda, Asesewa, Asamankesse and Akim Swedru. The cost of transportation for importing the foodstuff is generally added to the cost of produce making it expensive to purchase and as such most people buy food stuff when they go visiting family members in other places or when they go for events such as funerals, festivals and marriage ceremonies outside their district. ‘Food crops are very expensive so what I usually do is to bring food from my hometown anytime I visit. If not, then I buy from other towns such as Akim Oda and

\textsuperscript{18} Nucleus smallholders, outgrowers and independent smallholders
Asamankesse. The current cost of one tuber of cassava in our village is GHS10 ($1.70) an increase from five tubers which used to be GHS2 ($0.34) about 10 years ago (Female respondent, Kwae)

Most of our farmers cultivated food crops especially cassava and maize so there was a lot eat and getting access to land was easy. Now, we buy bags of rice for the household but sometimes we get it on credit mostly with a higher price than its actual sales price (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe)

4.5 Youth and generational opportunities

Since land is the key factor in farming and attaining food security, measures that improve access to land for all groups must be enhanced, including that of the youth (Rosset, 2011). Currently, the impacts of LSLAs on the youth in Sub Saharan Africa have been minimally explored compared to issues of livelihoods and food security. Kumeh & Omulo (2019) has been one of the studies that have given a head start in this discussion. Among other things, Kumeh & Omulo (2019) discusses the belief that Sub-Saharan African youths are not interested in agriculture, and their major barrier being land access.

‘Youth’ is defined by the World Bank (2007) as that stage of life that marks the transition between childhood and adulthood, education into employment, from ‘risky behaviors’ to responsible citizens, and finally from dependency on adult-headed families to independence. The United Nations and the African Youth Charter put this group into the age range of 15-35 years characterized by requiring a support system to function well since they are fragile and inept (Kumeh & Omulo, 2019). According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017), about 19% of Sub Saharan Africans fall between the ages of 15 and 24 years, out of this, an estimated 70% reside in the countryside where agriculture remains the major source of sustenance and income (Adesugba & Mavrotas, 2016; Kumeh & Omulo, 2019).
Clearly, access to land is required for youths to enter agriculture, yet this current land grabbing phenomenon has reduced the sector's potential, absorbing them as farmers or producers of food. A study by Kidido et al., (2017) in Techiman, a town in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, found that although the youth had an interest in entering into agriculture, they were unable to access land because chiefs and the elders preferred dealing with wealthy adult farmers and property developers instead of supporting the continuity of farming through the youth. Their access to land was a constant struggle with wealthier adult farmers and other local elites who wanted the lands for other purposes. “The youth are increasingly dependent upon elders for land, while elders compete among themselves for control of land and family labour. Both youth and women/wives are no longer guaranteed easy access to land” Amanor, Yaro & Teye (2020:25). Sumberg et al., (2017) also concluded in their study that access to lands and the attention given to farming by the government were the major reasons for the youth neglecting agriculture (Kumeh & Omulo, 2019). The increased commodification of land in Ghana has undermined the inheritance system of land use, and therefore only a few have access to land through such means (White et al., 2012). Now, access to land is influenced by a combination of local political connections and one’s personal networks, which most youths do not have (Khatun et al., 2020).

Interviews with the youth involved in agriculture in Ewusiejoe and Kwae indicated diverse aspirations and opinions on the sector, envisioning the future of agriculture with monocultures, mechanization, and access to support (financial and extension services). At the moment, most of them do not have plots of their own and are either labour on other people’s farms or working with Norpalm or GOPDC. They aim to make enough money to buy their own lands at other communities if they are unable to get it at Ewusiejoe and Kwae. That will be the time when they can confidently say that they are farmers. Although currently not farmers, they are a vital force
and a significant stakeholder group in the socio-economic development of rural areas. Their activities make them vital in supporting the well-being of households with farms they offer their services to.

4.6 Alternative employment for farmers in Ewusiejoe and Kwae

When farmers lose their central resource of sustenance which is the land, they tend to adapt to the situation temporarily or permanently by looking for alternative means to support their livelihoods. Generally, they become labour for other peoples’ farms or enter different ventures. In both Ewusiejoe and Kwae the major alternatives were finding farmlands outside their communities, finding work at Norpalm and GOPDC, other forms of self-employment, outmigration and small-scale mining (specifically in Ewusiejoe). A lot of the women became self-employed as they resorted to palm oil production. Others became petty traders in the sale of fish, women clothing, plastic chair rentals, charcoal, food stuffs among others and some became the middle persons between the palm oil producers and buyers in places like Apowa, Esiama and Takoradi in the Western Region and Akim Swedru, Asamankesse, Akim Oda and Kade in the Eastern Region. They complemented their self-employment with working as labour for Norpalm and GOPDC while others became nucleus smallholders. They combined these jobs because their responsibilities as home managers and food and domestic care providers in rural societies had not changed.

The men who became landless due to LSLAs generally sought for new farmlands in other communities not affected by LSLAS. In their interviews they mentioned that access to such farmlands were difficult because people in other communities were either leaving the lands to fallow or needed these lands. The youth mostly left the community in search of greener pastures,
sometimes encouraged by their parents. Such movements generally involve migrations to cities and towns searching for unskilled employment or into neighboring communities to work as hired labour in farms, mines, and other primary production sectors. Some of the women particularly mentioned how they encouraged their children to out-migrate because they didn't have lands for farms and were not employed by the companies either. In one of the interactions, one older woman from Ewusiejoe explained the dwindling size of the agricultural workforce using her own household as an example. "My husband and I decided to allow our children leave when they become of age to look for better opportunities. Our eldest son first left, a year later, our daughter left, then the youngest followed exactly five months later, I haven't seen them in a while, but they make sure to send me something for my upkeep" (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe). Specifically, in Ewusiejoe, if the youth chose to stay, they engaged in small-scale mining.

4.7 Expectation versus Reality of LSLAs

In Sub-Saharan Africa and specifically in Ghana, all projects undertaken are expected to be beneficial to local communities. Ewusiejoe and Kwae are no exception; members were in high expectations of development both economically and socially. Interviews with the people who saw the commencement of the project said the community members showed a positive attitude towards the development of oil palm plantations because of the anticipated positive outcomes that the community was going to enjoy, especially related to improved living standards and infrastructure. In the socioeconomic aspects, the benefits included availability and accessibility of jobs, increased incomes for community members, increased business opportunities, and certainty of incomes. Infrastructure-wise, the development of roads, health facilities, educational facilities, and community needs such as clean water and electricity would not be lacking. After a while, these expectations became unrealistic as the anticipated benefits eluded the majority of community
members. Except for employment as casual labour in Ewusiejoe and nucleus smallholders in Kwae, the members could not boast of any major development project undertaken by either Norpalm or GOPDC. Their employment offered little security and no secondary benefits. In contrast, workers hired from urban areas like Accra, Kumasi or Takoradi for technical and managerial positions rather enjoyed benefits. Roads were still the same, no water, no schools, no health facilities, in short, no improvement in infrastructure as anticipated. Below are some of the comments from respondents ‘I don't see any benefits from the company's presence here. Our roads are in a deplorable state, and it is as if they haven't seen it, especially the road from this town to the company’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe). ‘We were excited when we heard that the government was locating a company here because they were helping the school leavers who were not able to further their education on their own with jobs, but with time, we realized they didn't want us working in the company’ (Female respondent, Ewusiejoe). ‘Our expectations were partially met because they provided jobs, but the problem is they do not want natives in their top management, no matter your level of education’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe). ‘We haven't seen anything that this company has done. It is quite recently that they said they are helping us with pipe-borne water. So, we haven't enjoyed anything from previously till now apart from the farming of oil palm' (Female respondent, Kwae). ‘We lack social amenities that the company could have provided, but they haven't responded to any of our request to provide us with these’ (Female respondent, Kwae).

However, few respondents were satisfied with the presence of Norpalm in their community because it has made them medium-scale oil palm producers, transport fleet owners, and oil palm processors. In addition, at the time of the RA’s field visit, GOPDC was laying pipelines to provide pipe-borne water for the residents of Kwae. In conclusion, some of the respondents were very
disappointed by the turn of events as they mentioned that communities outside the catchment area of the plantations were better off than them.

4.8 Resistance dynamics

A couple of literature write-ups have shown that the strength of community movements and especially agrarian groups lie in the power of their numbers. The larger the number, the more likely their cases will be heard by officials supposed to advocate for them (Rutten et al., 2017). Their bargaining power may be enhanced by their mobilization efforts in social relations rooted in solidarity ties that support collective action (Barker et al., 2013; Rutten et al., 2017). The agrarian struggle is a contestation process for sovereignty that is fueled by impulses from the ideas of protection of livelihoods, local environments, and sometimes claims for autonomy (Martiniello, 2015). While Scott (1985) defines resistance to include “any act(s) by a member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims made on that class by superordinate classes (for example, large scale farmers or the state) to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those superordinate classes” (p.290), Kerkvliet (2009) defines it as "what people do that shows disgust, anger, indignation or opposition to what they regard as unjust, unfair, illegal claims on them by people in higher, more powerful class and status positions or institutions” (p.233). In both definitions, it is well noticed that resistance comprises both actions and thoughts, which can be organized, disorganized, overt or covert.

and this has heavily influenced debates. These scholars have contributed in different areas, including resistance against large-scale "land grabbing" (Borras & Franco, 2013 p.3), "peasant agency" (Hall et al., 2015 p.10), resistance versus domination (Borras & Franco, 2013 ; Hall et al.,2015 p.10), the range of possible responses apart from full-scale resistance (Scott, 1985 p.27) and the analysis of non-resistance (Mamonova, 2015). Hall et al. (2015) shed more light on the nuances of resistance in relation to land grabs which comprises responses including mobilizations in seeking improvement for compensations, insertion into land deals as workers or contract farmers and counter-mobilizations against land deal resisters (R. Hall, Edelman, et al., 2015; Zaehringer et al., 2019).

A general study of resistance reactions in Ghana shows different responses in different areas. The presence of resistance or lack thereof depends on the forms of consultation employed within the community. When deals are concluded without informed consent from the land users or adequately telling land users the implications of the project, physical violence becomes more likely (E. D. Kuusaana & Bukari, 2015). In the study areas, the local authorities used their power to decide the acceptance of the oil palm projects. In Ewusiejoe, the respondents mentioned that they were informed that the government needed the land for a development project while in Kwae some of the respondent only noticed the land had been sold when they saw a grader machine on their farms. The following statements from two of the respondents, summarizes the common sentiment: ‘They didn't give us anything. Initially, the elders told us that they would compensate us, but it was lies…. Anytime we go for meetings, we raise the issue, but they don't do anything about it. So both GOPDC and the elders deceived us’ (Female respondent, Kwae).
‘Taken over the land for a long time, it was only in 2017 or 2018 that we heard that the company wanted to make payments to the families affected by the land appropriation. We also heard the families in Mpohor were paid, so we inquired, and we were told it was true the families were paid, and they, in turn, paid a percentage to the chief, but that didn't happen here. We inquired from the company, they confirmed the information and stating about 25% was paid through the divisional chief at Otopo, but it was not supposed to be so. The families didn't get any payment for their lost lands. The divisional chief had received the monies without consulting the various family heads. I don't really know, but I feel there was a conspiracy between the divisional chief and the Ebusuapanyin (the head of the family for the Ewusiejoe chief). The families whose land was taken formed an association and took the matter to legal aid. It was then agreed that the divisional chief and the head of the chief's family were not the right people to receive the monies. Therefore, the divisional chief agreed to pay families when 75% of the amount was paid. The association then made a list of all the affected families and gave copies to the Ebusuapanyin and the company. However, the 75% was still paid to the divisional chief and the Ebusuapanyin, the families have received nothing till date’ (Male respondent Ewusiejoe).

Reactions from the members of the communities were not uniform as expected but depended on individual perceived losses or benefits. Unfortunately, because there wasn't any collective group in any of the communities, it didn't result in any group action against the local authorities or the companies, although several interviewees mentioned that they felt cheated by both the investors and chiefs. The interviewees indicated that they didn’t contest the takeover because of the expected jobs and development in the areas as promised. In both communities there was lack of organized mobilizations except for the growers’ associations providing services and palm fruits to Norpalm and GOPDC (Oil Palm Growers Association in Ewusiejoe and GOPDC
Farmers Association in Kwae). The non-existence of organized mobilizations is, in part, due to the discourses by local governments and chiefs that the state needed to develop their communities and LSLAs are the way forward. The local authorities continually claimed that conflict would drive investors to cease operations or discourage them from delivering on their development promises and deter other investors from coming into the area. So rather than struggle against the LSLAs, the individuals within the communities sought to be integrated into the oil palm project as workers. This is consistent with Hall et al., (2015: 472) “sometimes special groups in local communities mobilise, seek allies and demand to be inserted into land deals”

Although some of the community members have been inserted into the oil palm plantations, they exhibit resentment directed towards the chiefs and local elders for failing to represent community interests. As a result, some community members boycotted meetings called by local authorities, while others decided not to contribute to any discussions at the meetings. As one respondent detailed, ‘I hardly engaged myself with the community gatherings except for association meetings. I excuse myself because they are the leaders of the community they should take charge of seeing to the development since they say they know what is best for the community’ (Male respondent, Ewusiejoe). 'I hardly attend community meetings, and if I do, I will not speak because there are the community elders' (Female respondent, Kwae). Above were responses received from respondents when they were asked about why they decided not to attend or contribute to community meetings. Collectively, most of the community members did not appreciate the current state of their communities and wished they could take back ownership of their lands. The community members also discussed the issues of lack of support in their sector in general and dependency on GOPDC in particular.
4.9 Support to farming and dependency struggles

Support services for farmers - physical infrastructure and research services - have been the responsibility of the government since independence (Buadi et al., 2013). However, extension services and agricultural credits have been a mixture of both public and private participation. With the onset of neoliberal policies, there has been an observed decline in public services, especially government involvement in providing extension services. Although support for the sector in investments has considerably increased since 2007, its expenditure on extension support is still lacking. This has led to an increase in the role of the private sector, most especially not-for-profit organizations, in supporting farmers (Ofosu-Budu & Sarpong, 2013).

Improvement in production for farmers depends on their understanding of new technologies introduced, but unfortunately, information on new technologies has not been gained through the proper channels over the years. Farmers’ access to information, knowledge to alternatives and capital to purchase inputs has been from other farmers who have experiences with these technologies and sometimes through recommendations radio programs. Even when they receive support services from government agents which is predominantly advice and information, there is the lack of recommended inputs because it is usually not affordable. The support services were only relevant to farmers when they were adopted for use. Once the service was relevant, the farmers desired its provision to be adequate and available. This implied that the service provision had to be timely, provided in enough quantities and needed by the farmers. Support to farmers be it state or by not-for-profit organizations has been lacking and limited in Ewusiejoe and Kwae respectively. Most of the farmers mentioned that they hadn’t received any kind of support since they began farming. Specifically, in Ewuseijoe one of the participants who had visited other farms in Ivory Coast complained bitterly about the state of farming and lack of support in Ghana.
Comparing farming in Ghana to that of the Ivory Coast he described it as shameful and without focus. He attributed the success of farming in Ivory Coast to government support in the agriculture sector. He commented saying

“It was recently that the government mention that they were going to support us with affordable fertiliser even that you need to pay something first. But this doesn’t help farming. If we adopted a model that is in Ivory Coast that will help tremendously. The only thing the farmer needs to have is the land everything else is provided by the government. They can also help in services to the farm then the expenses will be taken out of the yield returns. You can’t get the Ghanaian government to do that for you they want the farmer to do everything” (Male respondent Ewusiejoe).

The consequences of no support are low-quality inputs, low yields and outputs, low revenues and endemically high levels of poverty for the farmers. The situation in Kwae differs from that of Ewusiejoe. Luckily for them, an NGO -Solidaridad West Africa Ghana- occasionally supported them with information and advice on sustainable production, marketing and trade relations, food security, and nutrition. They confirmed learning a lot from the NGO’s workshops and wished to have similar workshops with other NGO’s or from the government.

The problem of debt and dependency arises when there are delays in payments to the farmers from Norpalm and GOPDC. Especially in the Kwae community, a few years after the company took over their lands, they were contracted by the company as nucleus smallholders for the lands the company could not utilize by itself. A maximum of 4 acres of land was given to each farmer together with farming inputs. Per the agreement, farmers have to sell all their harvest to the GOPDC, out of which the cost of farm inputs will be deducted. Participants were partially satisfied with the arrangement and mentioned that it was a good business deal because it had given them
jobs, however, it has made them extremely dependent on GOPDC because GOPDC provides all inputs, and the prices for the palm fruits are set them as well. The farmers complained of delays in payments from GOPDC, resulting in their inability to settle their borrowings and accumulated debts. In Ewusiejoe, delays in payments resulted in the struggles to pay other creditors and undue pressure to get the farm running. This, they complained, had become a cyclical phenomenon because they depend solely on Norpalm to buy their fruits, and the only solution will be to receive financial support either locally or internationally.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I sought to examine the livelihood implications of LSLAs and the impacts of oil palm plantation agriculture on women in Ewusiejoe and Kwae in Ghana. The chapter underscores the fact that women suffer the most from LSLA’s for plantation development as they have no power to contribute during land transactions, they are externally and internally dispossessed, their access to land and its resources are reduced but they remain responsible for the upkeep of the household. One of these effects of LSLAs on women is the problem of food insecurity and home management. As already mentioned, in most parts of Africa, women are responsible for producing food crops, so when they are dispossessed through LSLAs, the resultant effect is a reduction of food crop production and the emergency of food scarcity. As a result, Ewusiejoe and Kwae, which was hitherto the ‘food basket’ in their respective districts, can no longer boast of this tag. The food insecurity problem is also influenced by the ongoing issue of reduction in farm sizes which is an immediate displacement effect. Displacement, tenure insecurity, and the increase in the family members interested in taking up land for farming have
resulted in the decreasing farmland sizes, which has translated into lower food crop investments in the affected communities, presenting a threat to food security Ewusiejoe and Kwae.

Womens’ position in the value chain was also discussed in this chapter, as their contribution cannot be underestimated. They are found in the value chains as farmers, processors, end-users, and consumers. As plantation workers, they are only employed in menial jobs that pay the lowest with poor working conditions and no benefits. As palm oil processors, they worked for other small and medium-scale producers with locally manufactures equipment which sometimes places them at risk of accidents. The young women usually worked as labour for Norpalm/GOPDC or independent smallholder in the farms or at their mills. However, most of them tend to migrate out of the communities to seek greener pastures as there weren't many alternatives available to them. In addition, support to farming from the government and other NGOs are non-existent, making them heavily dependent on Norpalm and GOPDC.

Overt resistance approaches haven’t been manifested yet because their understanding of the plantation was that the government of Ghana needed the land for development, but since this development agenda has not been beneficial to them, they are now directing their resentment towards their chiefs and elders who oversaw these deals.

As Welch (2013), and Li (2011) have argued, poverty presents opportunities for investors access to inexpensive land, cheap and abundant labour, of which vulnerable communities are preferred destinations. However, this means that women in such communities are always worse off if appropriate measures are not implemented. Therefore, there is the need to ensure that women's interests are considered in important decision-making about lands because it has substantial ripple effects for family livelihoods generationally.
Chapter Five: Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In Ghana, there has been a rise in LSLAs in recent years facilitated by state policies for agro-industrial and biofuels development. The government promotes agro-industries on the premise of available and unused lands that other rural farmers use to support their livelihoods. How LSLAs for oil palm development have affected rural dwellers’ access to land and land-based natural resources, changes in the landscape around them, and how their social and economic lives have particularly been impacted by the location and operation of Norpalm and GOPDC was studied.

Therefore, this study analyzed the implications of LSLAs for oil palm development in selected communities in the Ahanta West District of the Western Region and Kwaebibriem District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the communities of Ewusiejoe and Kwae were chosen because they were at the heart of the plantations by Norpalm and GOPDC. The Ahanta West and Kwaebibriem Districts of Ghana are best known for the vast development of oil palm plantations. In both districts, most of their lands have been acquired by corporations supported by the government as divested state farms and later through the companies' own expansion initiatives. According to the community members, as high as 90% of the land is under corporate control, although this study didn't find any documentation to back this claim. The only observable fact was the distances they traveled through parts of the plantations to access their farmlands which were over 10km for the farmers at Kwae and about 15km for Ewusiejoe farmers.

Based on the narratives of the members of the communities, the oil palm development on their lands have been both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is explained economically as increasing economic activities directly and partially related to the oil palm plantations in both communities. Availability of jobs at Norpalm, GOPDC, and with other independent smallholders and medium
scale mills earned the praise of making these towns vibrant farming and palm oil processing communities. The women are found in various parts of the value chain as labour but with less job security. On the other hand, the plantations are blamed for altering the landscape (land-use and land cover), resulting in land degradation, water pollution, pest infestation, and the loss of non-timber forest products. It has also reduced local ownership of lands via dispossessions and increased women's vulnerabilities as the labour work opened opportunities for exploitation and affected their position as food providers in the household. The issue of food insecurity is threatening to both Ewusiejoe, and Kwae as increases in the cultivation of oil palm by individual farmers are leading to decreasing food crops cultivation. Ewusiejoe and Kwae, two communities which were hitherto ‘food baskets’ in their respective districts, are now mostly palm oil producers. The cost of food has become extremely high as they import food from other districts, food that they used to grow themselves.

It was also evident that the continuity of farming is hindered by the reduction of landholdings and diminishing chances of the youth owning lands. The study revealed a bleak picture for generational opportunities as the options available to the communities' youth are limited. They must become labour for other people's farms or relocate to other communities where they can access lands, which is also less likely because the other communities are safeguarding their own lands. In both communities, the members' expectations had not been met since the inception of the plantations and their mills. The promised infrastructure and social amenities hadn't materialized yet. Even though one expects many resistance activities channeled towards the plantations in such situations, this was not observed in the study areas. The only form of resistance mentioned was boycotting community meetings held by the local authorities as they are responsible for the development of the communities as local movements were non-existent.
Within the lenses of APE and FPE frameworks, power over and ownership of lands in Ewusiejoe and Kwae is found within one's (class) positions (i.e Chiefs, clan heads, relations to the means of production), age (old versus young), and gender (male versus female). It was observed that although more females were engaged in the study as participants, the majority of the landholdings were under the influence of male heads and figures as women’s access to lands was still through these routes due to customary practices. Women are still excluded from LSLAs transactions except for a few cases where the family had successfully changed the rules on inheritance. Women were very visible as labour for Norpalm and GOPDC and as palm oil processors. Income generated was purposely for the maintenance of the household, specifically provision of food and catering of household expenses. Age-wise, older people had a lot of control and influence over lands than the youth. None of the youth interview owned lands that they worked on although they hoped that they would soon acquire their own land for farming activities.

Unfortunately, it was observed that the influence of CSO’s in LSLAs for oil palm development are limited. The only identified CSO was the Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (ESCARD) associated with La Via Campesina working in Kwae but none in Ewusiejoe. Again, support from an NGO-Solidaridad West Africa’s was only mentioned by farmers in Kwae, and that was the only one that existed in the area none for Ewusiejoe.

In summary, this study is consistent with other critical studies in other parts of Ghana (Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner Kerr, 2017; Schoneveld & German, 2014) and in Sub-Saharan Africa (R. Hall, Scoones, et al., 2015; Hufe & Heuermann, 2017), confirming that LSLAs doesn’t truly benefit rural communities. The disadvantages of the presence of LSLAs for oil palm development at Ewusiejoe and Kwae communities outweighed the advantage, thus a negative correlation between LSLAs for oil palm development and the livelihood for rural dwellers.
Therefore, these findings cast doubt on the narratives of governments and pro-investments/development organisations such as the World Bank, that LSLAs for agricultural commercialization are beneficial to local livelihoods and hence a viable strategy for rural development.

5.2 Recommendation and conclusion

Based on the observed and narrated impacts of LSLAs for oil palm development in Ewusiejoe and Kwae, the following recommendations are made to various stakeholders involved. These include the CSO’s and/or representatives of communities, government and its agencies, and investors, both foreign and local.

5.2.1 Recommendations

5.2.1.1 On Landholdings and farming systems

In areas where the population derives the bulk of their income from agriculture, landholding is a major determinant of wellbeing, the more access you have to land the better placed you are to control other resources. Landholding has been the preserve of male figures for the longest time while women have been its users. Therefore, requiring a change in landholding demands space made available for women to be tenure holders and make their own decisions on their lands. Female authority figures such as queen mothers should seek a gender-equitable system of distributive justice and, if possible, engage their male counterparts to revisit and revise customary law to fulfill its mandate to be all-inclusive appropriately.

Local authorities should accept and encourage land inheritance by women. Their voice will be heard in community development decisions in such situations as they will be consulted during
land transactions. Another avenue of landholding for women can be through land titling via joint ownerships and spousal consent clauses. Local authorities and support groups can encourage community members, especially women and youth, to get involved in community decisions and land negotiations, allowing their concerns to be represented.

LSLAs for agricultural investments in Ghana are still ongoing even though there have been calls by civil society organizations to revaluate its impact. Since the government of Ghana's policies on agriculture still encourages largescale over small-scale, the possibility of a total caseation of LSLAs is far-fetched. However, through its respective agencies, the government can encourage agricultural investments and farming practices that are regenerative and can sustain ecological balance. Tree crops are important for the generation of incomes; however, food crops are necessary for humans' survival; therefore, awareness creation on the consequences of switching entire farms from food crops to cash crops should be made paramount when support organizations engage with local dwellers on discussions of food insecurity.

Collectively, rural women can form social movements to pressure local authorities and national governments to address their concerns on land access and ownership since authorities are likely to listen to a group with more numbers than individuals.

5.2.2 On land acquisition transactions

5.2.2.1 Investors

The interest of investors is primarily profitability. They invest in avenues that would yield the maximum profits at a minimum cost, but investors also work within the confines of the laws and policies enacted by the governments of the countries they invest in. In terms of LSLAs, investors have received enormous backlash over how they have acted in previous deals. It,
therefore, behooves on them to set out on a right footing. Conduct due diligence and feasibility analysis, including ex-ante social, economic, and environmental impact assessment, is one of the major activities they need to undertake while also employing other means of ascertaining true ownership of land and the right people to deal with. Due diligence and good practice should be issues of corporate interest that will include free prior and informed consent. Investors need to honour their promises of providing and maintaining social infrastructures or services determined by the clearly expressed needs of communities rather than by investors’ perceptions of community needs, particularly beneficial to marginalized groups. Investors should disseminate information on the acquisition process to male and female groups through their respective community leaders and use channels that will reach a wide audience rather than the dispersion of information through male community leaders. Consultation with both men and women on long and short-term goals, wants, and needs throughout the acquisition process should be made paramount.

If possible, develop a system of monitoring the change outcomes of community members relative to their presence and operations in regular intervals over a period to assess effects that are not apparent in the short term. Last but not the least, corporations should also be open to third party scrutiny prior and during their operations, which will reduce their risk of a bad investment and contribute to long-term sustainability and prevent bias in monitoring.

5.2.2.2 Government

Government plays a major role in LSLAs transactions. Through its agencies and mandates given to the GIPC, they promote LSLAs on the premise of availability of land to entice and invite foreign investments. But its policies and procedures on land acquisition are not cut as it is not the primary owner of most lands in Ghana. Because of this position, it can only
facilitate the transactions instead of having the power to sell or lease. I draw on the findings to propose to government the following recommendations:

1. Within their facilitation role, the government needs to create a national governance body that monitors the performance of land deals across various indicators, including attention to gender and generational issues, to ensure benefits of LSLAs trickle down to land users not only titleholders. It should be easily accessible to rural women and other marginalized groups, democratic and accountable to the local population, and empowered to sanction injustices. It should also introduce a system of vetting and independent certification of LSLA contracts to ensure that they are clear and transparent, for example, spelling out the rights and obligations of all parties.

2. The governance body should also reassess all existing LSLA projects and assist communities to renegotiate compensations with the corporations. Building and enforcing stronger prior and ex-ante impact assessment support systematic monitoring, ensuring proper processes and outcomes of implementing agreements and measuring success or otherwise against community-defined success indicators.

3. Government must consider past investor actions and performance when authorizing deals as some investors acquire more land than can utilize due to speculative reasons, if possible, put a freeze on new deals and reassess lands unused and not likely to be used in the next 10 years. In consultations with communities, the government must implement proper participatory land-use planning, and institute appropriate statutory limits on land allocated for different land-based investments and its duration. Within the re-assessment, it should include its own position and experiences in terms of contribution to national economic objectives. This assessment could lead it to more strategic decisions that limit
displacements of people and their rights but still compatible with international investment in the agricultural sector and allow for investment plans that include fallowing and regenerative models of farming.

4. Land-based investments for agricultural purposes must clearly demonstrate the added value to the rural development plans that enhance women’s rights, promote food self-sufficiency and protect the environment. All land acquisitions must include the value of thorough, gendered cost-benefit analyses to compensate any losses that women might face as a result.

5. The formal titling and registration process is cumbersome and less understood by a lot of the population and specifically people in rural areas in Ghana it will therefore be beneficial for the government to streamline the land registration process, make it accessible and affordable for rural dwellers to obtain formal tenure rights. Within an appropriate regulatory framework government should make free, prior, informed consent mandatory for LSLAs to support good practice by investors. Government should insist on the principle of non-eviction, and where it seems unavoidable, financial compensation based on independent assessment should precede relocations.

6. Existing policies should be reworked to include agricultural investments that must directly benefit rural communities in targeted areas and strategically create space programs that enhance women, based on proper gender analysis. Introducing checks and balances on traditional authorities will go a long way to ensure responsible and equitable decisions made over customary rights and elite capture.

7. Finally, the Nairobi Action Plan implementation will be a step in the right direction for Ghana and Africa as a whole (Appendix 4). It is doubtful for Norpalm and GOPDC to discontinue their plantation and mills operations because of the problems they are brought
to the residents Ewusiejoe and Kwae. However, their support to the communities will go a long way to reduce these negative experiences.

5.2.2.3 Civil Society Organisations (CSO’s)

Although several civil society organizations are operating in Ghana, only a few were found operating in the oil palm sector and specifically in the study areas. There is, therefore, the need to channel more efforts into supporting local communities. The following are recommended to increase the presence of CSO’s in the oil palm areas.

1. Existing CSO’s should direct and focus their efforts and resources in supporting, training and creating awareness and establishing grassroot organisations to help build civil society’s oversight and sensitize communities to their rights. They can also encourage community members to form cooperatives to negotiate with companies to use their ‘unused lands’ for specific periods.

2. As a social organisation, they should advocate and work actively towards protecting and strengthening freedoms and rights to participation and complementing government agencies' efforts in delivering basic social services and undertaking local development activities.

3. CSOs working in rural areas should become partners of government institutions in delivering a wide range of basic and specialized services. They should play the role of identifying priorities and monitoring projects and funds to churn out reports that puts government and companies under check. With increased credibility and support.
5.3.1 On Sustainable livelihoods and empowerment: gender

Gender and generational support are important in the discourse on sustainable livelihoods under LSLAs. As discussed in the earlier chapters, their neglect has led to undesirable consequences, and as such, there is the need to create space for their involvement in local decision-making and control of resources. To ensure achievement of equity:

1. Women will have to create or align with social movements responsible for documenting and quantifying the impacts of land grabs on rural women. Seeking justice where their rights have been violated and provide concrete suggestions for steps forward by themselves should be the focus.

2. Rural women should use their voices to demand opportunities to engage with relevant organisations and decision makers, involved in contracts of LSLA’s or other commercial land-based investments. Their demands on government and its agencies should include open forums and the tools to identify the land use patterns in communities so that all the resources that they require to sustain and care for households, expand their economic activity and ensure food security are identified and protected.

3. Women need to impress on local authorities to create mechanism for continuous and inclusive consultations, information and consent for any development projects that may affect their access to and control over land and natural resources, food security and economic opportunities. Their participation in negotiations should be free from enticements and cohesions while the consequences of completely selling off lands should be clearly explained.

4. If possible, women should begin domestication of NFTP to reduce the hours travelled to access these products and maximize the use of productive hours.
5. Support groups and CSO could assist women groups with palm oil processing machinery to empower them as owners to reduce exploitation. While empowering them through this medium, the measure should be put in place to prevent male takeover as this is very likely in rural settings.

Addressing gender-based constraints in LSLAs will lead to a virtuous development cycle where women increased economic opportunities will lead to improved overall development outcomes. Increases in women’s employment reduce poverty through intergenerational transmissions of wealth as earnings are often transmitted to and invested in other family members. These intergenerational transmissions of wealth contribute to human development and human capital creation, concluding that gender equality helps foster economic growth.

5.4 Future research

This thesis provided detailed information on the impacts of LSLAs for oil palm development on the communities of Ewusiejoe and Kwae. The findings reveal benefits to the communities in economic terms but negatively affect their environment, food security and local livelihoods. However, there is more room for studies on this subject, including generational effects, as this study did not conduct an in-depth analysis except for documenting responses given. Other areas to consider are quantification of the contribution of LSLAs to Ghana's national goals regarding agricultural productivity, net job creation, local multiplier effects, national food security and fiscal contributions. Other issues such as LSLAs abandonment (rate, reasons and consequences) require further studies and LSLAs for non-agricultural production such as forestry, quarrying, and tourism. Combining this research will give a deeper understanding of the LSLAs phenomenon in Ghana and what measures could minimize it. Research is required on the performance of Ghana's implementation of the 2011 Nairobi Action Plan 10 years after its
declaration. Lastly, an interdisciplinary study between anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and geographers will provide a holistic perspective of the impacts of LSLA and how local communities genuinely understand what is at play.

5.5 Conclusion

Over a decade of encouraging and promoting LSLAs for agricultural commercialization in Ghana, the advantages have not trickled down to the rural population where these investments have occurred. The rural people still live in conditions that bear no resemblance to improvements to their lives. On the contrary, they are continuously losing their access to land and its natural resources, food is becoming hard to come by and climatic conditions are becoming intense and unpredictable since they still depend on rainfall. Therefore, this study examined the impacts of LSLAs for oil palm cultivations on the livelihoods of rural population, projecting its effects on women in Ewusiejoe and Kwae. It has contributed to the overall literature of LSLAs in Africa and Ghana and has proposed recommendations that will change the approach of African governments towards LSLAs that will increase social protection, reduce displacement of families, and improve gender equity in access to lands. This study confirms that LSLAs are characterized by:

1. A consultation process that lacks information and transparency accompanied by enticements, coercion and pressure that marginalizes customary rights holders.
2. Traditional authorities with power in LSLA transactions who mostly put personal interest ahead of community interest.
3. Exemption of women in consultation processes leading to dispossessions.
4. Disappointing levels and conditions of employment. Short, seasonal terms and poorly paid due to low levels of skills.

5. Failed promised social infrastructure and services.

6. Deforestation and land degradation

7. Failure to undertake environmental and social impact assessment or, not making assessments available to all stakeholders before the LSLA was approved

8. Less or no support from CSO’s, other support groups and governments

9. Increase in food insecurity.

Further research can unveil other consequences through other lenses and help correct governments’ development discourse, although these attempts to change policies to LSLAs may come up against the political economy drivers of land grabbing internationally and nationally. However, experiences from Latin America suggest that democratization and devolution are the main solutions to such problems. Where the voices of local communities are amplified and supported over time, change becomes possible.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Sectional map of Ghana detailing the suitable place for oil palm cultivation.

Source (Khatun et al., 2020): Map of southern Ghana (including the Central and Ashanti Regions) showing areas climatically suitable for oil palm production.
Appendix 2 Semi Structured Interview Guide

2.1 Interview guide for households’ and community

A. Personal Profile

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1. Please, what is your household composition?
2. What is your source of individual/household income?
3. What is your level of completed education?
4. Where is your birthplace/hometown?
5. Please, do you have Children?
   a. If so, do they want to farm/do you want them to take over the farm/continue farming?
6. What is your ethnicity and language?
7. What are your aspirations of employment?
8. Are you affiliated to any organizations, union, social groups, etc.

B. Land Access

1. Please, are you the owner of the land or it is leased?
   a. How many hectares do you farm on?
   b. If leased, what were the terms of arrangements?
2. Can you tell me about how you acquired land for farming?
   a. Can you describe how different this is for other categories of people?
   b. Can you explain how you pay for the land (cash rentals, sharecropping or any other forms of payment)?
3. Can you tell me how land acquisition arrangements have changed over time?
   a. Are you able to acquire the desired land size for farming?
   b. How do you compare the situation before the oil palm project?

4. What did you do prior to farming?

5. Can you explain how your access to land has changed over time and how this has affected your livelihood?

6. Do you have plans/aspirations to expand your landholding? What are the possibilities/options for you to do this?
   a. Are there any barriers hindering your expansion?
   b. Has anyone ever tried to purchase or take your land?
   c. Would you ever consider selling your land? Why/why not?

7. What do you produce on your land?
   a. What is your harvests per year?
   b. What percentage of production for consumption vs. for market?
   c. What do you use the sales returns for? (fees, health bills, investments, others)
   d. Who buys your crops and do you think it’s a fair price? What other options do you have?
   e. Do you use agro chemicals?
   f. If yes, Where do you buy your agro-inputs and what do they consist of?
   g. What has been its impacts on your farm produce?

8. Can you describe your experience with oil palm plantations in this community?
   a. Did you lose land due to the oil palm development?
   b. Can you tell me if it resulted in conflicts?
   c. Please, explain how the conflict was resolved?
   d. Were you satisfied?
   e. Can you tell me about your current farms?
   f. Can you give an estimate of your current farm size (all individual farms added)?
   g. Can you explain to me how your farm size has changed over time?
   h. Can you tell me the proportion that has reduced since oil palm project started?
   i. Can you tell me about what the average output from the lost land would have been?
9. Can you describe how the reduced farm size has affected the types of crops cultivated, the planting cycle and farming system?

C. Alternatives to farming

10. Please, can you tell me what alternatives are available aside farming?
   a. What are the opportunities available on the plantation for you?
   b. Can you tell me what process you have to go through?
   c. Do you know anyone who has benefited from the plantation?
   d. What work do they do?

11. Can you describe the coping strategies you adopted after your land was taken over?
   a. Can you describe the kind of support you get from elsewhere?
   b. What is your relationship with the person/or organisation?
   c. Do you send family members to the city?
   d. Do you gather wild foods or any NFTPs?
   e. Has your family switched to other trades?

12. Do you receive any support from the government?
   a. If so, explain what you receive and under what terms.
   b. Does the government provide enough support for farmers? Who’s included/excluded?
   c. What has been, if any, your experience with government officials?

D. Participatory land use decision-making processes

13. Can you describe the categories of people that live in this community?
   a. Can you tell me which of these categories you consider vulnerable/powerful? Why so?
   b. Which is most vulnerable? Why so?
   c. Which category do you belong to? Why so?

14. Can you describe the avenues which are available for discussing issues that affect community members?
   a. Do you feel involved in community decision making processes? Why so?
   b. Can you describe how you are involved?
   c. Can you describe ways that you think you could participate more effectively?

15. Can you tell me how you heard about PSG/Norpalm oil palm project?
a. Can you describe your expectations when you first heard about the project?
b. Can you tell me if your expectations were met?

16. How has this region changed since the past 10 years? In terms of land access, land-use, land distribution and people/businesses farming, land policies and access to support services?

17. Have there been new farmers in this area? Who are they, how did they gain access to land, what are they producing?

2.2 Interview guide for youth

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1. Did you grow up in this community or you migrated here.
2. How long have you been farming? And what crops have you been farming?
3. What is the process involved in selling your crops? What other options do you have?
4. What are the main things you spend the money you get on (household expenditure or farm inputs)?
5. Have you observed any changes in farming practices from the time you stared farming till now? What are those changes? Who is involved?
6. Is farming what you wanted to do or that is the only option available to you? What other job opportunities are here apart farming?
7. Do you own the land(s) that you are farming on? How easy or difficult is it to get a land to farm on. If yes to the first question- how did you get it?
8. Do you intend to farm for the next 5-10 years? Do you have plans/aspirations to expand your landholding? What are the possibilities/options for you to do this? Barriers?
9. What is your relationship with the oil palm plantations? Would you want to work with them? Why/why not?

10. Do you know anyone (youth) who works with them? What kind of work do they do? Do you think they are satisfied with the position?

11. What does the future hold for farming in this community for the next 10-20 years? Food security, infrastructure development? What would they want to see change about their current situations? What would they ask from government and regional authorities to cushion/reduce their misfortunes.

Appendix 2.3 Interview guide for landowners (Chief and village elder, queen mother, and assemblyman/woman)

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<td>Chief/village elder or queen mother/assemblyman/woman</td>
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A. Land access

1. Please, can you describe how you come into contact with plantation development companies?
a. Can you tell me about land that you leased to the company? (and their characteristics)
b. Can you explain why you offered them land in your community why your community was chosen?
c. If chosen by whom?
d. Can you explain any personal benefits derived?
e. Who is involved in the land deal process? Elders, queen mothers, other community members?
f. What is the women participation rate in land deals?

2. Can you describe how you formalized the land transfer?
   a. How would you describe the expected benefits to your community?
   b. Can you explain if these expectations were met? Why so?

3. Can you describe the company’s operation in your community?
   a. Can you describe the activities they are currently involved in?
   b. How would you describe the benefits of their current activities to your community?

4. Do you think their activities have any negative impacts on your community?

B. Local farmers land access

5. Can you describe how community members acquire land for farming?
   a. Can you describe how different categories of people acquire land (migrants, women, men)?
   b. Can you explain how they pay for the land (cash rentals, sharecropping or any other forms of payment)?
   c. Can explain if land acquisition arrangements have changed over time? And how?
   d. Can you explain if local farmers have lost land to the plantation?
   e. Can you describe the categories of farmers?

6. Can you explain if there was any engagement with the farmers and landowners before the company acquired land in this community?
   a. Can you tell me about the consultation process that took place?
   b. Can you explain which categories of farmers that were most affected? (migrants, women)
c. Was there any resistance/conflict from the community or specific farmers? If so what form did it take and how was it resolved.

7. Can you describe the compensation package for these members/ farmers?
   a. Were they different options available to them?
   b. Can you explain if there were any conflicts on the package?

8. Particularly to the women who worked on land, how did they cope when the lands were taken? What alternatives were made available to them?

9. How are the youth responding to land deals? What future opportunities are there for them in the area?

10. When the lands are leased do you feel you have lost a connection to the lands (ancestral relations)

**2.4 Interview guide for Focus Group Discussion**

What are the aspirations for members in this community?

What are the routes of land access in this community?

- Has it changed from how it was in the past 10-15 years?
- (If changed) Explain how your access to land changed over this period and how this has affected your livelihood (income/socially?).
- Do you have plans/aspirations to expand landholding? What are the possibilities/options for you to do this? Or barriers if any?
- Would you ever consider selling your land and move to something else? Why/why not?

What is the attitude of the youth and children towards farming?

- Do you think they are willing to take over from you?
- What are their aspirations?

What do you produce on your land?
• What % of general production goes into consumption vs. for market?
• Which market to you take produce to? do you think you get fair prices? What other options do you have?
• Do you use agro- inputs? If yes where do you buy your agro-inputs and what do they consist of? Were you trained on its usage?

Do you receive any support from the government and CSO?
• If so, explain what you receive and under what terms.
• Does the government provide enough support for farmers? Who’s included/excluded?
• Does the CSO’s provide any support for the community?

Agro-industry
Which company owns this plantation and What is your relationship with them?
• Do they form part of your community? How so?
• Does the community benefit from their operations (direct/indirect job creation, community services, infrastructure development, philanthropy, etc.)
• Does the community suffer from their operations? How so and to what extent?
• Has the company area of operation expanded? (legally/illegally) their land control?
• If so, how has this affected your (and other people you know) access to land/resources?
• What indirect effects does this have on your own livelihood – in terms of water access, land fertility, market access?

Land laws and regulation
• Have there been any issues/conflicts over land tenure?
• If so, how have these been dealt with and by whom? Have they been resolved? To what extent do state actors intervene? What have been the outcomes of their intervention? Who are the (usual) winners and losers?
• Can you rely on the law to be properly enforced to protect your right to land control and access? Do you think some groups are favoured?

Agrarian change
How has this area changed since you’ve been living/working here? In terms of land access, land-use, land distribution and people/businesses farming, land policies and access to support services?

Have there been new farmers in this area? Who are the new farmers, how did they gain access to land, what are they producing?

What, in your opinion, is the nature of the relationship between company and the government?

Between other civil society organizations and the company?

Appendix 2.5 Interview guide for national/regional level government officials

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1. What is your opinion about land acquisitions for biofuel projects (Oil Palm) in Ghana?
   a. What are the positive aspects of the project?
   b. What are the main problems of the project?

2. Could you describe how PSG started operation in Ghana?

3. Could you describe major changes policies in biofuel and land acquisition within last 15+ years?
   a. What do you think are the major causes of those changes?
   b. Can you describe the major actors in policy process?
c. has there been any changes in the role of the actors?
d. Do you believe these changes are related to biofuel projects?

4. What is your opinion about the relationship between plantation companies and the local communities?

5. What are the national and local priorities of biofuel developments?

6. Are current land use management compatible with national and local expectations?
   a. Can you explain what the major problems are?
   b. Have there been resistance from communities?

7. What solution or alternatives would you propose in order to deal with the challenges?

8. What is the governments plan in biofuels for the next 10 years?

9. Do you agree that these developments have effects on the localities? How? Positive and negative.

10. Particularly women and youth, what are the opportunities available to them?

**Appendix 2.6 Interview guide for civil and social organisation officials**

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Name:

Gender:

Position:

Organization

1. What is your opinion about the largescale land acquisitions in Ghana?
   a. Acquisitions for biofuels development (Oil palm)
   b. What is the main positive aspect of the projects?
   c. What is the main problems of these projects?

2. Could you describe how BOPP/PSG started operation in Ghana?
3. Could you describe any major changes policies in land acquisition for biofuels within last 15+ years?
   a. What do you think are the major causes of those changes?
   b. Can you describe the major actors in the policy process?
   c. Has there been any changes in the role of the actors? How?
   d. Do you believe these changes are related to biofuel projects or other projects?

4. What is your opinion about the relationship between the company and the local communities?
   a. Government and the companies?
   b. Government and local communities?

5. Are current land deals problematic?
   a. Can you explain what the major problems are?

6. What solution or alternatives would you propose in order to deal with the challenges?

7. Have you observed any form of resistance exhibited by the communities?
   a. How was it resolved
   b. Was any organization part of the resolution process?
   c. Which other organization was included?

8. What has been the response for women? Any alternate arrangements for land taken?

9. How is the youth responding to such transactions? What are their alternatives?

Appendix 2.7 Ghana Investment Promotion Center

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1. What is your opinion on largescale land transactions for agro investments

2. What is GIPC’s role in land investments in Ghana?
3. What is the land acquisition process for agricultural investments?
4. Who are the other actors involved in these land transactions?
5. What is the process of transfer of ownership and the role of the GIPC in this transition?
6. Which institutions are responsible for policies to attract the new investments in Agriculture aside from the GIPC?
7. What is the future of largescale land for agro investments in Ghana?
8. Which institution is responsible for the pricing of the lands?
9. What is the ownership situation of these lands? Are these lands already farmlands, or they are 'idle'?
10. If farmlands were the affected parties (those who lost their land) compensated?
11. If 'idle' who provided that categorization?
12. What percentage of the amount goes to the affected population?
13. What alternative livelihood opportunities is created if the land which is their source of livelihood is no more available

Appendix 2.8 Interview guide for participants of the Institute of African Studies- University of Ghana

1. Why do you think the government concentrating its efforts on large-scale (commercialization) agriculture as compared to small-scale farming?
2. Are the current large-scale agro investments different from previous agro-investments?
3. How are small-peasant farmers positioned in this new agricultural development trend?
4. What are the factors that are accounting for the recent interest in foreign investments in agriculture?
5. Which policies have the government put in place to aid smallholders expands their farms and produce profitably?
6. How has large scale agriculture, whether foreign or locally-led, stimulate smallholder productivity?

7. What is the role of women in these transactions?

8. When large-scale agro investments take over the lands of women, what alternatives are available to them.

9. What is the ownership situation of these lands? Are these lands already farmlands, or they are 'idle, private or public lands?

10. If farmlands, were the affected parties (those who lost their land) compensated?

11. If 'idle' who provided that categorization?

12. What alternative livelihood opportunities are created if the land which is their source of livelihood is no more available

13. What has been the responses of the governmental organizations to these lands and agro investments

14. Which civil society organisations are working on this issue and what has been done so far?

15. Any other comments and additions.
Appendix 3 Pictures of RA’s Fieldwork Activities

Appendix 3.1 RA interviewing a local oil palm worker in Kwae

Source: RA’s (Fieldwork, 2021)
Appendix 3.2 Visiting an oil palm farmers farm in Ewusiejoe

Source: RA’s (Fieldwork, 2020)

Appendix 3.3 Major road through the Norpalm farm enroute to farmers farm

Source: RA’s (Fieldwork, 2020)
Appendix 3.4 A cassava farm inside a palm oil farm for a female farmer

Source: RA’s (Fieldwork, 2021)

Appendix 3.5 Woman working on her cassava farm

Source: RA’s (Fieldwork, 2021)
Appendix 3.6 Pictures to illustrate palm oil mill processing in Ewusiejoe
Appendix 4  NAIROBI ACTION PLAN on Large scale land-based investments in Africa

We, participants of the High-Level Forum on Foreign Direct Investments in Land in Africa, representing African governments, Members of Parliament, traditional leaders, private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, meeting in Nairobi, Kenya from 4 to 5 October, 2011;

REAFFIRMING the various commitments made by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union to eradicate poverty and raise the living standards of African people, and in particular, specific commitments under the Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa adopted in July 2009 calling for the use of the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa to guide the development and implementation of land policies that provide for equitable access to land and related resources among all land users;
FURTHER AFFIRMING the importance of developing land policies in synergy with other sectoral frameworks and policies at national, regional, and Pan African levels including the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP);

NOTING the increasing investment opportunities in agriculture driven by new global markets, Africa’s own growing demands and the resulting increases in the value of land, water and other natural resources;

ACKNOWLEDGING that Africa faces many challenges in its quest to promote land based investments that ensure its rich land and natural resources are fully utilized to promote equitable economic growth, peace and prosperity for its people;

AWARE of the spiritual and cultural importance of land in Africa; and that the majority of Africans derive their livelihoods from land based activities including agriculture, pastoralism and hunting and gathering; and further, that the majority of African farmers are smallholders, most of whom are women;

BUILDING ON the policy messages from the joint AU-ECA-AfDB Land Policy Initiative (LPI) and the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) Lisbon Policy Forum on Foreign Direct Investment in Land in Africa;

RESOLVE TO work in close consultation with governments, parliaments, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), private sector, traditional leaders, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders to promote alternative land based investment models. These models should aim to increase agricultural productivity, maximize opportunities for Africa’s farmers, with special attention to smallholders and minimize the potential negative impacts of large-scale land acquisitions, such as land dispossession and environmental degradation, in order to achieve an equitable and sustainable agricultural and economic transformation that will ensure food security and development;

UNTERTAKE TO PROMOTE:

1. Assessments of land-based large-scale investments, including gender differentiated and poverty impacts, in support of evidence-based advocacy that draws on best practices and ongoing initiatives of governments, private sector and development partners to promote profitable, equitable and sustainable land-based investments, within 12 months;
2. Capacity support to governments, traditional leaders, civil society organisations and communities to facilitate fair and transparent negotiations that lead to equitable land related investments, initiated within 12 months;
3. Establishment of a monitoring and reporting mechanism for tracking large-scale land based investments with a view to ensuring that these ventures are beneficial to national economic development and local communities, including women, within 12 months;
4. Development of principles which encourage sound and sustainable investments in land, and guide fiscal policy in this regard, within 6 months;
5. Development and implementation of land policies and land use plans that facilitate equitable access and secure land rights for communities - including women and investors, both local and foreign, in the medium term.

To ensure implementation of the above

CALL UPON:

1. The LPI in collaboration with CoDA to develop a detailed work plan and implementation mechanism for the Nairobi Action Plan with specific timeframe, deliverables and responsibilities, within 3 months;
2. LPI consortium, in implementation of the work plan, to facilitate collaboration with governments, parliamentarians, traditional leaders, RECs, private sector, civil society, development partners, centres of excellence, and other stakeholders.
3. The AUC to facilitate the identification of a High level panel of African champions to support the AU Declaration on Land issues and challenges in Africa and the Nairobi Action Plan;
4. The LPI Consortium and its partners to increase human and financial resources available to the LPI in order to see an expanded team within 3 months, able to implement the AU Declaration on Land and this Nairobi Action Plan.

Appendix 4.2 Other links to the Nairobi plan

Appendix 5 Links to major documents mentioned in this thesis

5.1 Maputo Declaration

5.2 Abuja Treaty
https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37636-treaty-0016_-_treaty_establishing_the_african_economic_community_e.pdf

5.3 Sirte Declaration

5.4 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure
http://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf

5.5 Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investment that Respects, Livelihoods, and Resources