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**MEDIUM SCALE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS AND THE  
COMMERCIALIZATION OF RURAL LANDS IN THE UPPER-EAST REGION OF  
GHANA**

**JACOB AFELIGA**



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COMMERCIALIZATION OF RURAL LANDS IN THE UPPER-EAST REGION OF  
GHANA**

**BY**

**JACOB AFELIGA (BA LINGUSTICS AND SOCIOLOGY)**

**(UDS/MIC/0072/16)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION,  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER STUDIES, UNIVERSITY FOR  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INNOVATION  
COMMUNICATION DEGREE**

**APRIL, 2019**



**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's signature..... Date .....

Jacob Afeliga

**Supervisors**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Principal Supervisor's signature ..... Date .....

Dr. Michael Ayamga

Co-Supervisor's signature ..... Date .....

Professor Wolfram Luabe



## ABSTRACT

This research examines medium-scale agricultural investment and the associated commercialization of rural lands, changes local land tenure regimes and in prospects for smallholder farm expansion in the Kassena-Nakana Municipal and Balsa- North districts of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The study employed a qualitative approach involving interviews, with investors, earth priests, and farmers. Key informant interviews with agricultural officials and traditional authorities were also conducted. Content analysis and interpretation were used to analyze the data. To broaden the analysis, land acquisition and registration data were obtained from Districts and Regional Land Commission offices. Information collected from the land registries included land sizes and number of acquisitions registered. The study found that, all the medium-scale investors were commercial mango farmers, with acquisitions in excess of 50 hectares. Many of the investments were facilitated by easy access to government grants and credits, and the willingness of earth priests to part with fertile land, mostly in close proximity to shallow groundwater sources. Lands mostly acquired by investors were either pre-owned, cultivated and fallowed land or lands not used for farming. Key feature of the investments was the establishment of mango plantations and the construction of simple irrigation infrastructure like mechanised boreholes. The study also found that the land acquisition had considerable impact on local land tenure regimes. Bushland, formerly managed by earth priests, became privatised, leading to conflicts over the control and benefits from these transactions. This further accelerated the commercialization of internal land relations within the investment communities. In the process, local smallholders also lost access to land formerly used for rain-fed bush farming, hunting and



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gathering, and as dry-season pasture. This negatively affected their diversified rural livelihoods. However, despite grievances and complains, the locally perceived legitimacy of land transactions authorised by traditional authorities, as well as the menial employment opportunities created by commercial farmers has so far worked to limit internal discontent and resistance to the investments.



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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife (Christiana Kennedy) and my children, Dave Afeliga and Petra Afeliga.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

From the time of Ghana's independence on March 6, 1957, governments have constantly sought for ways to provide enough food to feed the growing population as well as to create surplus to feed growing industries. Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, put in place a Seven Year Development Plan which dedicated 15 percent of the total expenditure to agriculture. The president started state farms in 1962 and by the end of 1965 he had established 123 farms totaling 64,300 acres (Anamzoya et al, 2013). Though the impact was not significant, the president acknowledged land as a means of production. Additionally, he set the pace for subsequent leaders to follow.

Agriculture continues to take center stage in Ghana and remains a key driver of economic growth. Nkrumah was ousted in a coup in early 1966 and the National Liberation Council (NLC), comprising four army officers and four police officers, assumed power. Though a new body assumed power, agriculture was not completely scrapped off development agenda. Many of the state farms established under the CPP regime were either turned into research stations or sold out to investors. These divestitures set in motion subsequent waves of agricultural investments by private entities.

On January 13, 1972, Lieutenant Colonel Acheampong seized control of the government. He called on Ghanaians to make use of the land introducing the slogan 'Operation Feed Yourself'. He later expanded it to include the 'Operation Feed the Industries'. Acheampong's agricultural revolution caught the attention of even city dwellers who





turned their pieces of land at the back of their bungalows into vegetable gardens. The government's focus on agricultural intensification and commercialization inspired economic and political elites, who acquired vast parcels of land in rural communities for the cultivation of crops. Professions such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, were incentivized to start agricultural projects. The programme was so successful that in the 1974-75 season alone, there was hardly any importation of food into the country (Anamzoya, 2013). Already during that time, land in Ghana's northern margins became the target of the government and private investors. In March 1975, Acheampong cut the sod for the construction of a 5.7 million pound irrigation project in Navrongo in the Upper East Region. Similar projects were started in Okyereko, Dawhenya and Nkrotrodu.

One can continue to give copious examples of contributions all governments made towards the improvement of agriculture in the history of Ghana. From 2008-2016, the administrations of Prof. Atta Mills and John Mahama saw the introduction of new agricultural agricultural policies and programmes targeting intensification and commercialization. Major interventions were the Ghana Commercial Agricultural Project (GCAP) and the Export Development Initiative Fund (EDIF), later termed Export Development Agricultural Investment Fund (EDAIF). The aim of GCAP was to build the capacities and provide loans to commercial farmers, so that they would improve upon their farming and create hubs of commercial farming that would eventually tie in smallholders throughout grower arrangements or contract farming. GCAP mainly focused on farmers engaging in grains cultivation, producing staple food for the domestic market. EDIF/EDAIF was to cater for farmers interested in the production for export. Many focused on fruit trees establishing plantations of mostly mango or cashew trees. As we see



later, these projects were important drivers of agricultural investment and land commodification in the study area in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

Currently, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) which won power in the 2016 elections has its agricultural slogan as 'Planting for Food and Jobs'. Under this administration, chemical fertilizers and other agro-chemicals have been subsidized to cushion the burden of farmers. This commitment that governments have continued to show to agriculture has built the moral of farmers. Farming is no longer seen as a job for illiterates; people who have not been to school. It is now seen as a profitable profession. Business men and professionals, including high ranking public servants, rush to rural communities in search of arable land to acquire.

Grappled by this development this research set out to study effects of medium-scale land acquisitions on the traditional land tenure system of the study area and the livelihoods strategies of small holders. This chapter is based on my objectives. My first priority is to uncover reasons motivating investors to acquire agro-lands in the study area. In objective two, changes in land tenure and land markets is examined. Objective three is on the strategies adopted to acquire lands. The fourth objective is to analyse the impact land tenure changes have on small-scale farmers' livelihoods and leads to alternative livelihood strategies.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Government policy and growing investor interests in agribusiness appeared to have intensified land acquisitions in the study area mostly for plantation agriculture. The intensification of land acquisitions affects land relations in diverse ways including changes



in mode of land acquisition and local land tenure regimes and smallholder agriculture and livelihoods.

While the discourse commercial-scale land acquisitions are not new in Ghana, interests in domestic investors as drivers of land deals for agribusiness is only gaining traction and has not been the focus of research. The growing interests of domestic investors in agricultural land raises a number of knowledge issues of how medium-scale agricultural investments and the commodification of rural lands affected local land tenure systems and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality and Builsa-North district of the Upper East Region of Ghana. This research will examine land acquisition by domestic investors for agribusiness and how these acquisitions impact land relations in the study area.

### **1.3 Specific Research Questions**

In order to be able to address this research question properly I needed to break it down to manageable units which are found below.

1. What drives the current land demand by medium-scale investors?
2. How do medium-scale investors negotiate for land?
3. How does the commercialization of land relation affect local land tenure in the Upper East Region?
4. How do medium-scale investments and changes in local tenure regimes affect smallholder livelihoods?



## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1 Main research objective**

My objective aims at investigating changes in land tenure and their consequences on smallholder farmers. My main objective therefore is:

To determine the effects of medium-scale agricultural investments and the commodification of rural lands on changes in land tenure and the livelihood of small holder farmers in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality and Balsa- North district of the Upper East Region of Ghana.

### **1.4.2 Specific research objectives**

In order to achieve the general objective, the following specific objectives need to be attained:

1. To examine the reasons for the acquisition of farm lands by medium scale farmers.
2. To investigate strategies that medium-scale investors use to acquire land in the Upper East Region of Ghana.
3. To establish how the commercialization of land relation affect local land tenure regimes in the Upper East Region?
4. To find out how medium-scale investments and changes in local land tenure affect smallholder farmers.



### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

The study, first and foremost, seeks to fill knowledge gaps in existing literature on medium-scale investments in the country. This study, when completed, is expected to provide information on emerging changes in land tenure and marketing, a phenomenon that threatens the traditional status quo. It in addition to help policy makers to appreciate the implications of medium-scale investments on people's livelihoods and the need to design a policy framework that would regulate the acquisition of huge tracts of land in the country. It would further guide policy makers to ensure that the potentially affected people in all land deals are fully involved in all negotiation processes.

### **1.6 Organisation of the Study**

The thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, the state of the art of the literature on land grabbing and agricultural investments and on the (potential) effects on local land tenure and smallholder livelihoods is reviewed and the conceptual framework of the study explained. Chapter 3 introduces the research area and the research design, and details research methods used and the data analysis strategies adopted. In Chapter 4, the empirical findings of this study regarding traditional tenure arrangements, the drivers and modes of land acquisition, changes in local tenure, as well as the effects on smallholder livelihoods are presented. In Chapter 5 the results are discussed, summarized and recommendations given.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Large-scale land acquisitions for agribusiness either by governments for multinational entities has a long history. The phenomenon is limited to Ghana alone and are numerous examples of large-scale land deals across Africa, Asia, Latin America and even post-industrial Europe. Research on land enclosures and their impact on smallholders or peasant populations has intensified just land deals increased especially post-2008 food and oil crises.

This chapter presents the review of literature pertinent to the research. The literature review covered several aspects of the research theme including the overview of agricultural investment and smallholder farming from both the global and national perspectives; land deals and changing land relations, the advent of large and medium-scale agricultural investments; and drivers of medium-scale land deals for agricultural investments in northern Ghana.

#### 2.2 Agricultural Investment and Smallholder Farming

Land is a critical resource on the globe. As a resource, land indirectly supports the livelihoods of many people living in both rural and urban areas. Land, for many developing countries signifies a sense of wealth, ownership and livelihood. In most rural settings, land is often the only productive means by which a household is able to sustain itself, through



cultivation of agricultural products as well as sale of produce to make a living (Cousins, 2008).

Ghana's political stability as well as access to the international markets, and significant quantities of arable land suitable for a diverse range of commodities have encouraged private sector interest in investment in the country's agricultural sector in recent times. Ghana has an estimated 23,583,900 hectares of land, 57 percent of which are assessed to be suitable for agriculture (Ahwoi, 2010).

Agriculture is a key driver of the Ghanaian economy, contributing about 23 percent of GDP and accounting for over 43 percent of national employment, with smallholder farmers responsible for 80 percent of all agricultural production (MoFA, 2013). The Government of Ghana, like other national governments in Sub-Saharan Africa, has embraced the modernization of the agricultural sector as a key development priority, and is actively targeting interventions aimed at increasing commercial agriculture investment.

Commercial investment in agricultural land can bring economic benefits like increased incomes, improved economic growth and export earnings, and additional food crops for local consumption. It can also create new sources of government and community revenue from taxes and land leases. Nevertheless, the same investments can also pose significant risks for the livelihood of both men and women living in communities affected by these acquisition of large tracks of land (Schut, Slingerland, and Locke 2010).

The negative effects of commercial agricultural investments have been well studied in Ghana and other parts of the world (Cotula and others 2009; Deininger and others 2011; German and others 2011). These negative implications include, displacement of local



occupants from the agricultural lands that they rely on for their livelihoods and the conversion of lands from production of staple crops to export crops, resulting in a reduction of local food security. Furthermore, inadequate consultation with affected communities and insufficient compensation and/or failure to fairly and equitably distribute compensation and benefits derived from commercial investments frequently lead to local grievances and can trigger conflicts. A study by Tsikata and Yaro (2011), for instance, warns that in the context of Ghana's lack of self-sufficiency in food crop production, large-scale land acquisition for the production of export crops could deepen food insecurity. The dangers of large- and also medium-scale agricultural investments are generally longstanding in nature, while at the same time evolving in character and intensity in view of new economic, demographic, and environmental pressures on land (Bugri 2012).

Following the concerns raised by many scholars in relation to land acquisitions and land grabbing, there has been growing discussion about the possible implications of agricultural investment that involve collaborations with local farmers, for instance through out-grower schemes or contract farming, rather than the outright acquisition of large areas of land (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010).

However, mounting evidence from across Africa shows that land acquisition and land deals, even those involving the rural poor are can be disruptive. They can lead to unanticipated costs, misunderstandings, and conflicts over expectations and obligations between the contracting parties and affected communities (Polack, Cotula, and Côte 2013).





Over the years, there has been a rise in land acquisition for both medium- and large-scale agriculture throughout the world. This has attracted much attention regarding the potential implications on the livelihoods of people (Scott and Pearse, 2012). The acquisition of large track of lands for investment by local and international investors, has denied the local occupants of land, their means of survival as well as their human rights (Friends of the Earth, 2012). In Ghana, interests by international and local investors in acquiring large track of farmland has been on the rise since the global food crisis in the 1980s. The demand for investment in agricultural land is triggered by the food needs of a growing global population, commodity price fluctuations, and new targets for biofuel production in some rich countries. This phenomenon has resulted in a situation where farmers find it extremely difficult to access farmland as a result of grabbing of large area of land (Tsikata and Yaro,2014).

Looking at the discussion above, it becomes clear that medium- or large-scale agricultural investments can provide opportunity as well as dangers for the future smallholder agriculture and smallholder livelihoods. On the one hand, it may introduce new knowledge, crops and forms of smallholder integration that could help to intensify smallholder agriculture, provide chances for smallholder livelihood diversification, and new forms of market integration. On the other hand, it may deprive smallholders of vital resources and future room of expansion or engage smallholders in exploitative labour relations. While the potential effects on smallholders' livelihoods are discussed further below, first we will look of how land is made available, both for smallholders and investors.



### 2.3 Changing Land Tenure Arrangements

In Africa, the subject of who owns land in Africa is dynamic and depends on the societies, regions and countries in question. This means land administration is country specific and in some cases region specific. Elbow et al. (1998) assert that different colonizers' and post-independence legal trials have resulted in this particular feature of a differentiated form of land administration system in Africa. Even though the continent basically shows an inter-marriage of statutory and customary land tenure systems, it differs across the length and breadth of the continent.

According to Ayamga et al., (2015), customary land tenure is a widely practiced form of ownership system in West Africa. Customary land tenure is more of a social construct from which land is vested in chiefs and head of clans who manage land on behalf of the people.

In Ghana, an estimated 80 % of land ownership and right falls in the domain of customary land titling, (Sarpong, 2006). This system of land ownership puts the allodial title in land under the custody of chiefs and earth-priests (Tindanna) on behalf of the people and generations yet unborn (Ayamga et al., 2015). In the northern Ghana, it is common to find heads of clans and families having control over who get access to land within the clan or family line. There exist also what is known as freehold where land is owned by individuals, families and clans in Ghana. There are mostly two forms of customary ownership rights, known as primary and secondary type of ownerships (DFID, 1999). The former is gained by virtue of ancestral lineage or kingship, whereas the latter is a derived form of right gained from a primary right holder. Both primary and secondary types of land ownership rights are mostly common among rural dwellers in West Africa and Ghana in particular. In West Africa, the state owns small portion of land, while, customarily owned land are large



as compared to state land. For instance, in Ghana, the state owns 20% of the total land size (Auc-Eca-AfDB consortium, 2011).

Thus, in line with the above arguments, this study seeks to critically examine how medium-scale agricultural investments and the commercialization of rural lands affects the local land tenure arrangements and management in the Kassena-Nakana Municipal, Kassena-Nankana West, Balsa- North and Balsa-South districts of the Upper East regions of Ghana.

## **2.4 Medium-and Large-Scale Agricultural Investments**

Medium- and large-scale land investments are one of the main drivers of changes in local land tenure regimes and also can affect smallholder livelihoods negatively. That is why they need to be discussed in this context.

Medium- and large-scale land investments are sometimes critically called 'land grabs', because they result in the amassing of large amount of land resources by investors, thereby misappropriating traditional user from their ownership, access or use rights. The issue of land grabbing in recent times has gained much attention from policy makers and development agencies. Following this interest, several scholars and organisations have attempted to explain the concept of land grab. Nunow (2011) explains land grabbing as any form of acquiring large tracts of land, especially in developing nations, by local government agencies, individual investors and richer food insecure countries, with the ultimate aim of producing agricultural and non-agricultural commodities (crops and minerals) for export. Also, Friends of the Earth (2010), a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), explains land grabbing as land purchases mostly involving hundreds of thousands of hectares, and intended to produce food commodities for foreign food and bio-fuel



markets. These lands are mostly farmland belonging to or used by poor rural farmers, taken by governments, individuals and institutions either through outright sale or lease agreements to the extent that the interest of the former right holders are threatened. Cotula (2012) expresses the view, that 'land grab' is a term proposed by the media to describe large-scale purchases or leases of agricultural or forest land on terms that are harmful to the right land holders. This is manifested in a huge increase in foreign and domestic investments in land, often concentrated in the developing countries. However, the African Biodiversity Network (2007) agrees to the views of Cotula (2012) though expressed their ideas in a different form and tone of land grabbing. Their concept of land grabbing is explained as taking control of a vast track of land for commercial and industrial agricultural production purposes that is often larger in terms of its size when matched with the average land size in the region. In this sense even medium-scale investments could amount to land grabbing. All these definitions hint on how land deals are not in the interest of local landholders as the size and type of investment mostly impact negatively on the original holder of land.

The International Land Coalition's Tirana Declaration (ILC, 2011) also, explained the term 'land grabbing' as acquisitions or concessions that are characterized by one or more of the following:

- in violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women,
- not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land users
- not based on a thorough assessment, or are in disregard of social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered



- not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing;
- not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation

This definition sees land grabbing from a much wider dimension by looking at a variety of factors. What is more important is its recognition of the need to seek the consent of the affected people, respect for human rights and taking into account livelihood status of all those affected by land deals.

This is extremely important because many conflicts that have arisen from medium- and large-scale agricultural investments have often revolved around main issues raised in this explanation. It is important that, the wider range of issues be factored in the explanation of the International Land Coalition (ILC) become the guiding principles and rules for all land transactions in order to reduce the alarming rates of land conflicts and also to ensure that none of the beneficiaries involved in such transactions is made worse off.

Shepard and Mittal (2009) also defined land grabbing as a purchase or lease of vast tracts of land by countries that are richer but have huge deficits in food production within their country and private individuals from mainly developing economies with the aim of producing crops for export.

This explanation limits the concept of land grabbing to countries with food insecurity problems and private investors. However, evidence from cases around the world revealed that it is not only food insecure nations that are involved in land transactions in poor countries. But it is also the trend to replace fossil by bio-fuels that has led to an upsurge in



agricultural investment. Following European Union legislation, for instance, member states are to use 20 percent of clean energy, especially from bio-fuel, by the year 2020, (Schaffnit, 2012). This incidence has attracted some countries even, food secured countries, to purchase large scale lands to grow *Jatropha* to meet their energy targets. Furthermore, the international fight against climate change has led to the introduction of economic instruments meant to reduce the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere by ‘carbon sequestration’ or ‘carbon sinking’. International investors can obtain tradeable carbon certificates by in forests reserves, mostly in developing countries, protected from traditional uses. This results in so-called ‘green grabbing’.

VIVAT International (2014), terms land grabbing as land acquisitions by transnational corporations, business enterprises, private investors, and foreign governments through sale or lease contracts which mostly last for as long as 99 years which are highly harmful to the interests of the affected locality. Most often, some of these land transactions are carried out without the potentially affected people being involved in the negotiation processes. In some cases, right holder not compensated properly for the actual value of the land.

Zoomers (2010) terms land grabbing as large scale deals of lands that are carried out by international corporations or foreign governments.

All these explanations see large scale land belonging to local farmers taken against their wish, often with the view that investing in such lands will contribute significantly to improving the living conditions of the affected people.

FIAN international (2010) takes a drift of the excessive focus on international or external paid acquisitions and explains land grabbing as acquiring large track of land which is



unequal in size in comparison to the average land holding in a particular community for commercial agricultural production. FIAN's explanation of land grabbing portrays the phenomenon as being an endogenous and exogenous affair from which similar effects may arise.

The sale of land is not as important as the negative outcomes that arises from the investments. It often has deepening effects on already unequal access to land and leads to conflict about the fair and equal sharing of the benefits of these transactions in the target countries. According to De Schutter (2011) effective supervision and monitoring of these land investments would prevent the institutional failure in trickling down the benefits from commercial land deals. He added a another dimension to the debate by focusing on the dangers related to the emerging export-oriented mono-crop plantations as having the potential to increase the susceptibility of target countries to price shocks. He also points to the fact that these investments increase the pressure on indigenes demand for land in the long run.

In Africa, most endogenous land deals are unregistered, even if registered, the transaction is not known to third party. Cotula, (2011) observed that, negotiations and discussions on exogenous land deals equally are kept out of public scrutiny in Africa. The big question has therefore been how these commercial deals contributed to enhancing livelihoods of the rural poor as well as lessening the dilemma of developing countries at large? This question has interested many researchers, hence arousing their inquest in attempting to find answers. Such research includes that of Cotula et al. (2009) which studied commercial land contracts using data from five African countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Sudan)



between the period of 2004 to 2009. The research concluded that, the land grabbing has adverse effects on the livelihood of original land owners.

## **2.5 Drivers and Directions of Medium- and Large-Scale Agricultural Investments**

Many factors support land grabbing and investments globally. For instance, food security concerns usually compel some countries to invest in large scale of land in other countries. The main driver of the global land grab is traceable to the 2007 and 2008 food crisis which forced food importing countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China and India to engage in several forms of land deals since they no longer wanted their food security to be depended upon the unpredictable world food markets (Anseeuw et al., 2012; Lorenzo et al., 2009). These concerns are linked to supply of and demand for food at national and international levels. With the supply side, bottlenecks and uncertainties are created by falling agricultural production, linked to negative environmental externalities affecting soil quality and water supply (Woertz et al., 2008).

On the demand side, the growth of population in countries, which depend heavily on food purchases, is another factors pushing up global food demand, and places increasing pressures on food prices. Constraints in the world food supply, increasing demand for energy and agricultural commodities for industrial needs, make agriculture an attractive investment option. Improved prospects for returns from agriculture encourage speculative investment in land, as current prices of agricultural land, especially in Africa, are and likely to rise in future (Woertz et al., 2008). However, the demand for food is not the only driver for global land grab. The aim of many advanced countries to achieve reliable energy supply, culminating in the acquisition of land for bio-fuel production is another key driver





of the global land grabbing situation. Other land grabbing phenomena include; forestry for carbon sequestration, mineral extraction, conservation of reserves, industry and tourism.

The African continent appears to be the main target of the global land grab. Out of the total cases of land grabs reported, 948 land acquisitions, totaling 134 million hectares are located in Africa, followed by 43 million hectares reported in Asia, 19 million hectares in Latin America and 5.4 million hectares in other regions particularly Eastern Europe and Oceania (Anseeuw et al., 2012). The focus on investors on Africa is partially caused by the belief that there are available lands that are unused in Africa, coupled with the assumption that, land prices could be much cheaper because of poverty. As a result of poverty, landowners are believed to be more likely to sell or lease their lands. The ease of acquiring land in Africa can also be attributed to weak land administration systems of many African countries. The availability of land, the willingness of owners to sell and the inability of governments to effectively govern land tenure arrangements provide fertile ground for foreigners, but also domestic investors to invest in medium- or large-scale agricultural projects (Anseeuw et al., 2012).

The medium- and large-scale agricultural investments can be classified into two forms:

‘domestic investments’ and international or transnational investments. ‘Domestic land grab means all forms of land deals or acquisitions that are wholly manipulated by local agents, companies and national governments (Levien, 2011). According to Amanor, (2012) transnational or international land grab involves all land acquisitions that are carried out by foreign governments and corporations and the global commodity chains.



## 2.6 Commercial Land Acquisition in Ghana

In recent times Ghana has recorded several commercial land deals. Investment in food production has been the main driver of commercial land deals, but quite a number of these deals are also targeting the cultivation of biofuel crops and come in the form of mining concessions (Kranjac-Berisavljevic, 2015). There is quite significant area of land allocated to the commercial cultivation of oil palm, rice, mango, pineapple and other export-oriented agro commodities. Most of these acquisitions can be located in the South-Western and the central part of southern Ghana.

In Ghana, there are about twenty different companies growing energy crops, mostly of foreign origin and sometimes with Ghanaian counterparts (Kranjac-Berisavljevic, 2015). Prior to the tumbling of prices in 2016, hikes of fossil fuel prices on the international market have increased the interest of many investors for the acquisition of land for Jatropha plantations in Ghana. In Ghana, the cultivation of Jatropha, a plant with little alternative use and value to farmers, is mainly aimed at biodiesel production. There have been tangible efforts to promote the use of biofuels in Ghana, while at the same time the cultivation of Jatropha is on the increase.

Fertile agricultural lands that were, in most cases, under active use by rural farm households have been acquired through traditional authorities and Ghanaian agents (Antwi-Bediako, 2013). According to Schoneveld et al. (2011) these Jatropha companies collectively had access to 1.184 million ha of land. An estimated 8.8% of arable land in Ghana, or 4.6% of the country's total land size is earmarked for the cultivation of Jatropha. However, only 10% of the total land acquired for Jatropha production has been used for actual cultivation, whilst the remaining 90% was abandoned due to reasons such as lack of



ready market for *Jatropha* in Ghana and unavailability of funds to sustain such projects. Especially these abandoned lands have led of conflict between the investors and local people who would like to repossess the land for other agricultural purposes.

A critical look at various areas of the expected win-win outcomes of commercial land deals on the improvement of rural livelihood in Ghana has been embarked by researchers in the past years. ElHadary and Oben-Odoom (2012) noted that, land deals benefit the signatories but not the interest of the public. This deals have the potential to aggravate rural poverty as Ghanaians in farming communities continue to lose access to vital livelihood resources owing to the promotion of monoculture plantation crops (Schoneveld et al., 2011).

Land deals are also common in northern Ghana. Yaro and Tsikata (2014) provide an anthropological perspective on medium- and large-scale land deals in the area. They examined how in the case of major transnational acquisitions agreements between the investors and different local stakeholders were reached and how the investments affected different interest groups. Yaro and Tsikata (2014) argue that the agreements with transactional investors have disappointed many communities, who originally were supposed to have benefited from the investments. They were to get employment opportunities and should have profited from capacity building and technology transfers. But both did not materialize in the way expected. Their study further stated that local biodiversity was greatly affected as very large stretches of land were cleared with no regard to the existing fauna and flora. Kranjac-Berisavljevic (2015) describes the method by which a company from Norway took ownership of 38,000 ha of land from Kusawgu in the Northern Region as colonial.



It is essential to address issues of land in Ghana because about 56 % of the population lives in rural areas and 51 % of the total population of Ghana earn their livelihood through agriculture related activities, (MOFA, 2011). The agricultural sector also contributes to 19 % to the total Gross Domestic Product of the country (GSS, 2017).

Land has social, economic and political dimensions. Land management, land distribution and equity in access to land are political. The economic issues revolve around the value of land and the fact that it is the major means of production that forms the basis of the livelihoods of the rural folks. Social cohesion, peace and intra and inter community conflicts in many instances revolve around land. Thus, national political, economic and social development depends largely on the way land is governed at all level of society. Apart from the economic and political nature of land issues, socio-cultural connotations of land in Ghana are of much importance and cannot easily be over-looked. In Ghana, having ownership right and access to land may result in self-actualization, prestige, belonging, power and wealth. The socio-cultural and economic benefits from land are widely shared. In Ghana, agricultural land tenure is characterised by a high level of farm land fragmentation and subsistence farming. It is estimated that 90% of farms in Ghana are less than two (2) hectares in size (MOFA, 2011).



**Table 1: Area of Ghana's Agricultural Land by Region**

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Area (000 sq. km.)</b> | <b>% of Total</b> |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Northern      | 70.38                     | 29.5              |
| Brong-Ahafo   | 39.56                     | 16.6              |
| Ashanti       | 24.39                     | 10.2              |
| Western       | 23.92                     | 10.0              |
| Volta         | 20.57                     | 8.6               |
| Eastern       | 19.32                     | 8.1               |
| Upper West    | 18.48                     | 7.7               |
| Central       | 9.83                      | 4.1               |
| Upper East    | 8.84                      | 3.7               |
| Greater Accra | 3.24                      | 1.5               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>238.53</b>             | <b>100.0</b>      |

Sources: The Ghana Survey Department and MOFA, (2010)

The existing scope and nature of land ownership, access and use becomes more complicated when threats such as unduly paid or unpaid compensation from commercial acquisitions is coupled with compulsory acquisition by government (Crabtree-Condor and Casey, 2012). Either of the two scenarios poses a degree of uncertainty to the rural farmer as well as increasing his or her vulnerability.

In the case of commercial land acquisition by local and foreign investors, small holder farmers do not only suffer the risk of losing important livelihood assets but they are also exposed to an extended form of risk that may arise from a potential future land grab in terms of aggravating livelihood asset losses. Such risk of future land losses is particularly high as investors often want to extend their farms after some time. Furthermore, large-scale commercial investments often lead to increased demand for land among medium-scale investors who want to take advantage of the infrastructure and new market channels large investors often create. Areas neighbouring large-scale investments thus become target zones for domestic elites. The initial may spark a wave of agricultural intensification and



result in the creation of land markets (Boserup, 1965). Farm land stands a high chance of being sold to the highest bidders who can invest in land, which then would lead to agricultural intensification (Boserup, 1965). Developing land markets, renewed interest in agriculture and new technologies introduced by the large-scale investors, but also support programmes like GCAP and EDIF/EDAIF for commercial farming by the government of Ghana (see Introduction) result in an upsurge in medium-scale domestic investment even beyond the areas affected by large-scale international investments.

Yaro (2006) and Adi (2007) stated that in spite of the engagement of farm households in non-agrarian ventures, their secondary activities have no significant adverse effect on farm activities or outputs. This shows how diversified livelihoods are of the rural farm households are well adapted to the seasons and the natural patterns of weather and help them to attain sustainable livelihoods. Mixing diverse livelihood strategies smallholders largely rely on a variety of natural resources, for instance: farmland, bushland, and fallows for farming, water for domestic purposes, the watering of livestock and irrigation, bushland and forests as pasture, forage and hunting grounds. Being increasingly enclosed by investors they lose access to these vital resources forming essential part of their diversified livelihoods. So, under the pressure of large- and medium-scale investors rural households may increasingly disengage from farming, which could lead to deagrarianisation and the disintegration resulting in the disintegration of smallholder farming. In the following the potential impacts are further discussed.



## **2.7 Impact of Medium- and Large-Scale Investments on Rural Livelihoods**

The effects of large-scale agricultural investments have gained much attention in academic discourse in recent times due to the increasing cases coupled with the sizes of large tracks of land acquisitions. Investors and funding agencies such as the World Bank (2010) argue that land grabs can be beneficial for development with the potential to alleviate poverty. However, scholars like Anderson (2010) are strongly against large scale land acquisition by investors.

Advocates of land grabbing suggest a number of opportunities for smallholders to be derived from land grabbing such as the provision of farm and off-farm jobs, and the construction of rural infrastructure including schools and health posts for the poor rural dwellers. Some potential benefits arising from land deals also include resources for new agricultural technologies and practices as well as enhanced market access. Globally, potential improvements could result from a largely increased production of food crops that could supply domestic as well as international consumers and lead to an increased price stability (Braun and Ruth, 2009). Land grabbing can lead to increased investments in food and agro-fuel production flowing to rural areas of some developing countries, it might present essential benefits and opportunities for promoting the livelihoods of poor rural communities. These investments have the potential to boost the agricultural sector, promote its modernisation and influence rural economies by the development of processing industries, livelihood diversification and employment generation. Investments also can increase agricultural productivity through the provision of improved seed varieties, know-how and new technologies, low cost of production and higher returns for the farmers,



provision of facilities including roads, ports, schools, health centres and water services (Haralambous, Liversage and Roman, 2009). Large-scale land acquisitions can thus be a win-win deal for both investors and land holders. Investing grabbed lands in agriculture can be a growth opportunity.

This is because increasing the size of land under agricultural production and improving productivity through the use of modern agricultural technologies and economies of scale can benefit the country of investors as well as the host country financially (Sheppard and Mittal, 2009). The World Bank (2010), is generally supporting investments, as it is optimistic that through land deals, there could be important improvement in productivity. The bank states that in countries where there are large tracts of suitable farmland coupled with a greater percentage of smallholders with very low productivity, the inflow of foreign investment and technology might provide large benefits to local people. From the viewpoint of the World Bank, local communities can learn new production methods from foreign investors' expertise and capital in order to utilise their own resources more efficiently and become more productive. Though the World Bank (2010) recognises that risks associated with such investments are high, it also acknowledges that, if governments implement the right policies, the risks can be turned into equally large opportunities for both investors and local people.

As many arguments expressed by advocates of agricultural investments cannot be completely disputed, it is also important to note that because these investments are mostly done by the private sector, profit seeking can easily override the investors commitment to really create opportunities for the local people. Even where these opportunities are created they may often not be sustainable. Furthermore, there is a high risk that local intermediaries





involved in land deals try to take advantage and betray their own people from the actually enjoying potential benefits. In terms of the promises often made by investors such as the provision of social amenities and economic infrastructure, it has been reported, notably by the World Bank a proponent of these investments, that these benefits are very slow to develop and often do not even materialise (Morges, 2010).

Even when the investors promise to offer employment to the local people whose lands have been bought, this is usually seasonal in nature, often poorly paid and offers poor working conditions. This is often the case for plantation workers (Oviedo, 2011), as can be seen below (see 0). Furthermore, whenever the projects are fully owned and controlled by investors, they may bring their own national workers. Additionally, large-scale projects are generally highly mechanized and do not generate much employment for the smallholders or newly landless farmers. Often, host governments do not have the prerogative to compel foreign investors to adhere to their promises (Morges, 2010). In addition, for some local people, it is very difficult to adopt new livelihood strategies in order to take advantage of the opportunities provided by large-scale agricultural investments. The livelihoods of such people will, therefore, become precarious. Because of these reasons, it is unlikely that all affected people will indeed be able to benefit from medium- and large-scale investments as argued by the proponents. All the same, it does not necessarily imply that, agricultural investments do not have any positive effect on the livelihoods of the members of the host communities. If the investments are responsibly and effectively carried out, their benefits on the local people's livelihoods and host nations development cannot be underestimated.

Some scholars focusing on the negative effects of land grabbing hold the view that the potential benefits or opportunities claimed by the investment advocates are negligible



considering the challenges that the land acquisitions present on the livelihoods of rural poor. Andersen (2010) for instance, believes that, if the risks associated with land acquisition are not properly handled, it would not bring the desired development opportunity to the host nations. These risks are natural resource degradation, loss of traditional farming techniques and increasing food insecurity.

He further stresses that – even though many land-lease agreements make provisions for investments in rural development – they are usually not made on an equal playing field between the investors and local communities, Power differentials have in several cases affected the livelihoods of rural smallholders depending on access to land and water for farming and livestock rearing. In a study carried out in eastern African countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique, Theting (2010) was able to show that large-scale agricultural investments failed to fulfil the promise of building infrastructure and creation of jobs. Also, Kachika (2010) adds that, even in situations where farmers were employed, the conditions contained in the contracts were not favourable and the number of workers was rather small due to the high degree of mechanisation on in large-scale farming. In terms of productivity, research has revealed that the output from large-scale agricultural projects is not necessarily larger than that of smallholder farms, which have received had enough capital to improve their productivity. Individual farms are often economically more efficient than big farms or plantations operated (Tran-Nguyen, 2010).

Big agricultural investments may result in land-use changes reducing the food security because high quality land is diverted from local food production, livestock grazing, and income generation activities previously undertaken by rural communities. As a consequence, smallholders may have no other option but to seek a living on marginal lands



(Action Aid International, 2008). This suggests that, global land grabs will result in the dominance of large estates over smallholders (Borras and Franco, 2010). Critics also point to the fact, that foreign large-scale agricultural investments, while theoretically contributing to global food security, create problems of food sovereignty and local food security in the host nations because of the exportation of crops (Jägerskog, Harsmar and Kim, 2012).

According to Makutsa (2010), who discusses the effects of land grabbing on rural livelihoods in the Tana river delta in Kenya, a hotspot of land grabbing, there will be severe local food deficits, if all the proposed agricultural investments take off in the region. Looking at a case study in Uganda, the National Association of Professional Environmentalist (NAPE, 2012) states that the use of grabbed lands for oil palm plantation has negatively affected the local livelihoods, which previously combined fishing, timber harvesting and food crop farming as the major economic activities. Local food security was affected since large tracks of lands desirable for growing food crops are now dedicated to grow mainly oil palm. Because of the huge capital investment in grabbed lands, local subsistence farmers and pastoralists are now taking forced to engage in casual labour, which is lowly paid. Evidence from plantation workers on grabbed lands in countries like Mali and Sierra Leone reveals that seasonal workers are paid approximately USD 2.25 a day in Sierra Leone, while workers in Mali receive even lower wages of USD 0.60 to USD 1.20 a day (Oviedo, 2011).

Many development-oriented organisations, have criticised that as large-scale land deals increase competition for land which leads to higher land prices, and in turn, the price of



food might also increase. Therefore, poor local communities in developing countries will be less able to afford food purchases (Christiane, Timo, Knoblauch and Krista, 2011).

The literature cited above therefore suggests that food security in developing economies is endangered since many subsistence farmers are becoming casual paid workers on foreign invested lands, depending on the purchase of increasingly costly food. Thus, without good investment governance to manage and regulate the activities of land grabbing and its subsequent eviction of local farmers, it would not be surprising to see severe forms of food insecurity in many developing countries.

Another key effect linked to the acquisition of large tracts of land is the potential loss of residential-based assets. These effects may worsen, when the land is acquired forcefully without any form of negotiation and also accompanied by forced evictions of affected population (Cotula, 2012). Land grabbing, instead of facilitating rural development, rather deprives the local communities off their natural resources that constitute the assets upon which rural livelihoods depend.

Not only does land grabbing mean that farmers will lose their livelihood assets, but smallholdings are transformed into large industrial farms, mainly meant to produce for only international markets (GRAIN, 2008).

Looking at the gender dimension large-scale land deals, sometimes make it difficult for women to provide food, water and fuel for their families. This is because areas initially used for farming, animal grazing, fishing, gathering wild foods are lost to local communities (Action Aid International, 2014). In Zambia, as a result of the impact of large scale land acquisitions, women who were traders were displaced thereby forcing them to



travel a long distance from their homes to the public market to carry out their businesses (Cotula, 2012). In recent years, FIAN, an International NGO has been investigating and documenting land grabbing case in Uganda. Here the government of Uganda released land to a German coffee trader to establish a plantation under its local subsidiary known as Kaweri Coffee Limited. The outcome was that 401 families, comprising roughly 2,041 individuals were evicted. Their houses and crops such as cassava were demolished by the army without adequate consultation and compensation (Alison, Sylvain, Rolf and Sofia, 2011).

Mutopo and Manase (2012) observed the effects of land grabbing on livelihoods of rural women in the context of a bio-fuel plantation in Zimbabwe. They show that women were disadvantaged in the land deal, since displacement and land reallocation put undue pressures on the already tenuous land rights system and reduced female access to land disproportionately. This is because large parts of the bush land, on which primarily women relied for foraging and firewood gathering to earn their livelihood, were given away to foreign investors. Furthermore, they had to directly bear the costs of higher food prices that resulted from the commercialisation of staple foods. The land acquisition process of the bio-fuel plantation land deal in Zimbabwe was also accompanied by water appropriation, which also affected women's access to potable water for domestic use, as a result of the pollution of water sources, as well as the reduction of the water table in the community (Mutopo and Manase, 2012).

An investment in a sugar cane plantation in Mozambique exploited the women who were hired. They were excluded from old age benefits and childcare assistant (Andrade, Cristiano, Casmiro and Almeida, 2009).



Daley and Englert (2010) argue that women are neglected in the distribution of benefits from large-scale transactions in land because benefits such as compensation, employment and income generation opportunities often go to the men, thereby increasing the marginalization of women and especially women-headed households.

Atafori and Aubyn (2012) highlighted the gender impacts of land grabbing using a case study of involving 1,250 hectares of grabbed land involving the Prairie Volta Rice Ltd in the Tongue District of the lower Volta in the upper east Region of Ghana. They showed that the loss of land brought a negatively affected women because of their high dependence on landed resources (Atafori and Aubyn, 2012). Women were not lost their access to land because they were locked by land belonging to neighbouring villages and by another fruit plantation. As a consequence, many residents left the area, and those remaining, especially women, had to resort to cooking and selling food to plantation workers as a way of making ends meet.

In resume, the literature review regarding the effects of land grabbing on rural livelihoods in Africa on the one hand shows that the supporters of medium- and large-scale agricultural investments see it as a growth opportunity providing on-farm and off-farm jobs, opportunities for technology transfer and increased market access, as well as social and economic infrastructure for African smallholders. Critiques see land grabbing as a threat to food security and the overall livelihood assets of the affected people because of the loss of livelihood assets such as land, forest and water, which may result in further impoverishment and conflicts. Since asset loss is a complete denial of rural livelihoods they conclude that land grabbing generally ruins rural livelihoods.



Indigenous agricultural technology for instance, is gradually waning as many local farmers are now turned into casual paid labourers on large scale industrialised farms often managed and controlled by foreigners or local elites. Notwithstanding the potential chances of land acquisitions on rural livelihoods, it is evident that medium- and large-scale land acquisitions in rural areas are threat to rural livelihoods. In the following the literature providing analytical approaches for the study of rural livelihoods is reviewed.

## **2.8 The Concept of Livelihoods**

The debate about the term ‘livelihood’ is diverse and dynamic. Chambers (1995) explains a livelihood as “the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets”. Thus, central to a livelihood is a living as a function of individuals, tangible assets and intangible assets. The tangible assets commanded by a household will include stores such as food stocks, stores of value such as gold, cash savings in banks and credit schemes; and resources such as land, water, livestock, farm equipment, tools and domestic utensils. The intangible assets are claims which can be made for material, moral or other practical support, and access, meaning the opportunity in practice to use a resource, store or service, or to obtain information, material, technology, employment, food or income (Chambers, 1995).

Frankenberger and McCaston (1998) explain livelihoods as “a range of on-farm and off-farm activities which provide a variety of procurement strategies for food and cash so that each household can have several possible sources of entitlement.”



These entitlements are based on the household's endowments and its position in the legal, political and social fabric of society.

Chambers (1995) claims that employment can provide a livelihood, especially for the rural poor, comprise of “multiple activities and sources of food, income and security” as individuals and households strive to diversify and complicate their livelihood strategies, increase their income, reduce vulnerability and improve the quality of their lives. Chambers (1995) symbolically uses hedgehogs and foxes to draw a parallel between the livelihoods of the poor and those of the mainstream formal employees. Also, he further observes that “the fox has many ideas but the hedgehog has one big idea”. Thus, full-time employees in the industrial world and industrial sectors, according to Chambers (1995), are hedgehogs with one big idea that is a single source of support. Additionally, most poor people especially in the global south are “foxes with a range of livelihood activities, with different members of the family seeking and finding different sources of food, fuel, animal fodder, cash and support in different ways in different places at different times of the year”. The poor, thus, improvise and sustain their living through their livelihood capabilities, tangible assets in the form of stores and resources, intangible assets in the form of claims and access. The ingenuity and opportunism of poor people, and the diversity and difficulty of their strategies, can be attested by the fact that even within the same village, different social groups of the landless can have completely different strategies for sources of food, income, support and survival (Chambers, 1995). Moreover, these livelihoods remain improvised adaptive performances whose versatility is meant to cope with adverse conditions, sudden shocks and unpredictable change.





Chambers (1995: 203) comes to the conclusion that: “with respect to rural settings, it is imperative to consider that many sources of rural livelihoods such as fuel wood and herbal medicine are not captured in either income or consumption-based survey data because they are neither commoditized nor noticeable enough. Similarly, a significant element of the safety net for many rural people, in times of stress, consists of ‘famine foods’ which can be gathered from the bush”.

As argued above, in the case of northern Ghana, Yaro (2006) and Adi (2007) how diversified the livelihoods of the rural farm households are, and how this helps the smallholders to adapted to the seasons and the natural patterns of weather and help them to attain sustainable livelihoods.

## **2.9 Strategies to Improve Rural Livelihoods**

Carswell (1997) suggested that, the surest ways of ensuring sustainable livelihood is by promoting intensive agriculture and discouraging agricultural expansion. He noted that, by encouraging agricultural intensification through the adoption of improved agriculture, like the use of natural or artificial fertilizers, improved seedlings and soil conservation, yield per hectare will increase without necessarily expanding the size of farms. To increase yield per land area, will enhance the livelihoods of farmers. Agricultural intensification guarantees a more reliable means of livelihood for present generations and generations yet unborn.

Though agricultural intensification can be a successful means to enhance rural livelihood through the use of modern farming methods such as fertilizer and other chemicals,



however, excessive or wrongful application of such chemicals can make soils impoverished. This will in turn endanger farm yield and further affects the livelihoods of rural people.

Karim and Nelson (1998) called for livelihood diversification among rural people as one of the best ways of enhancing farmers' livelihood. They suggested that, efforts should be made by individuals and households to discover new avenues or ways of generating incomes to improve or maintain living standards. Livelihood diversification consists of both farm and off-farm activities usually undertaken by households to raise additional income to augment that from the farming activities. In Northern Ghana, for instance, during the dry season most youths migrate to Southern Ghana for paid jobs.

However, livelihood diversification may not be able to provide enhanced livelihoods for households whose members are old. They may not have the strength to engage in other income generating activities, as households whose members are younger, active and energetic have.

In an attempt to enhance the livelihoods of rural people, considerable attention must also be directed towards the role culture plays in enhancing rural livelihood and community development.

Some individuals and communities have their own values, norms, customs and knowledge systems which determine the type of livelihood activities or strategies they use to exploit the natural environment for a living. Because of local norms, rules or traditions certain resources are over- exploited while others are left untapped, since certain forests in Northern Ghana, for instance, may be believed to be the holy grounds (Chandima, 2009).



Therefore, measures to enhance livelihoods will be difficult to successfully implement, without adequate knowledge about the culture of the prospective beneficiaries. Their culture can on the one hand help to maintain rural livelihoods and at the same time it might hinder their progress.

But agricultural programmes can also be successful. In Tanzania, there was an agricultural sector support programme for local farmers, which provided free extension services in addition to subsidised inputs, which were supplied as part of the government's attempt to enhance the livelihood rural folk. This intervention, according to Franks et al. (2004), has contributed to more secured livelihoods for local farmers and provided income and better nutrition for the smallholder farmers – women in particular. While the success-story reported by Franks et al., (2004) may be true, they fail to acknowledge how expensive this exercise was. These capital-intensive programmes need external assistance by rich governments or international donors. For poor rural societies, where access to land is unrestricted, the surest alternative strategies that could be adopted is agricultural expansion. Since most societies are striving for enhanced livelihoods, it is understanding to ensure good management of wetland ecosystems on which many rural livelihoods depend.

Novib (2008) also identified three key strategies for ensuring enhanced rural livelihoods. In the first case, conscious efforts should be put in place by the government and private sectors to build and protect livelihood assets of the people. These will ensure that financial services such as credits, savings and insurance are provided for the rural poor whose livelihoods depend on natural resources such as land, water and forest. In their quest to use these resources, they will be well positioned to use their credits to employ the best possible and less destructive strategy.



Moreover, the livelihoods of rural people would be strengthened through access to credit coupled with access to the natural resources. There is also the need to reduce disaster risks and credit risks and build people's capacity to be able to adapt to environmental challenges since these are detrimental to livelihood of rural people.

However, one deficit in the arguments of Novib (2008) has been the failure to notice that there is the urgent need for both government and the private sector to act responsibly by ensuring that changes in the global trade regimes do not crowd smallholder farmers poor out of the agricultural markets. Trade terms in developing nations are so liberal that they create huge opportunity for competition which tends to displace local producers and traders, thereby weakening their livelihoods. Whereas, these strategies are important, it is also worthy to stress that smallholder livelihood enhancement could be promoted, if sustainable forms of agricultural investments improve the position of smallholder farmers in the supply chains – however this seldom happens (see 2.6).



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the study area. It also presents the research design and the methodology used to collect relevant information for this study. It explains how respondents were sampled, data collected and finally analysed. The first section of the chapter is devoted to the description of the study. This is followed by the presentation of a conceptual framework, study design and data collection methods. The final section describes the approaches adopted to analyse the data.

#### 3.1 Description of Study Area

The study was conducted in rural parts of the Kassena-Nakana Municipal and Builsa-North of the Upper East regions of Ghana. The research area was selected because secondary data from the Lands Commission of Ghana showed that most of the medium-scale land acquisitions in Upper East Region are within Kassena-Nakana Municipality and Builsa-North District (Ghana Lands Commission, 2017). Since these types of acquisitions and their effects on local tenure regimes and livelihoods are at the heart of this research this part of the Upper East Region has been chosen.

#### 3.2 The Upper East Region

The Upper East Region (10.70820 N, 0.98210 W) covers a total land area of about 8,842 km<sup>2</sup>, which translates into 2.7 percent of the total land area of Ghana. The soil in the region are mainly ‘upland soils’ mainly developed from granite rocks. Soils are generally shallow



and low in soil fertility, with low organic matter content, and predominantly coarse textured.

The natural vegetation of the region is that of the savannah woodland, characterized by short scattered drought-resistant trees and grasses that are mostly burnt by bushfire or scorched by the sun during the long dry season. The semi-arid climate of the region is characterized by a single rainy season from May to October. Mean annual rainfall during this period is usually between 800 mm and 1.100 mm.

The social structure of consist of social relationships and social institutions that promote social cohesion and collaboration. The social structure includes the chieftaincy institutions, lineage and systems of inheritance, ethnicity, festivals, language, religion, customs and others, the complex of which constitutes the society.

The research area is mainly rural where the population is largely engaged in the agricultural sector. Farming is mostly done during the rainy season. The study area's one rainy season between May and October have significantly reduced in recent times largely due to the impact of climate change. The Savannah vegetation of the study area favours the growth of cereals such as millet, maize, sorghum, as well as groundnuts and various pulses.

Rural livelihoods are usually diversified with households having multiple supplementary (to crop agriculture) livelihood activities such as livestock rearing, poultry farming, and the collection of shea nuts and firewood. Female household members engage in petty trade and limited agro-processing using traditional methods for local markets.

Furthermore, the area is noted for cultivation of vegetables by irrigation. The production of vegetables in the Districts has a long history. During the colonial period, Bishop Moran



(White Father) who was stationed in Ouagadougou, was reassigned to Ghana to open a mission house in Navrongo on the request of the British administrators. Fr. Moran arrived in Navrongo in 1906 to start evangelization work among the people. During his stay, he did not only preach the gospel but also collaborated with the British administrators to dig hand dug wells in nearby Pungu for use by locals in vegetable production. Income derived from the sale of vegetables would help locals pay taxes demanded by the colonial government. To date, the people of Pungu rely on vegetable cultivation as an alternative income generation activity.

When the Tono irrigation dam was established in the late 1970s vegetable farmers from Pungu migrated to lands within the project area, especially within Gia community and continued with irrigation farming. In time, the people of Gia joined in the cultivation of vegetables and the practice spread to other parts of the Region.

### **3.2.1 Profile of Kassena-Nakana Municipal District**

The Kassena-Nankana Municipality has been reported by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) to have over 52 percent of the population engaged in agriculture (GSS, 2014). This farming population is spread in over 82 percent of households in urban and peri-urban areas and increases to over 93 percent of households in rural localities. Most households in the municipality (96.1 %) mostly engage in crop farming with minimal livestock and poultry farming.

The municipality covers a total land size of 851.5 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population density of 129.1 persons per km<sup>2</sup> (GSS, 2014). The district shares boundaries with the Kassena-Nankana West District to the North, Bolgatanga Municipal to the East, to the West with the Builsa

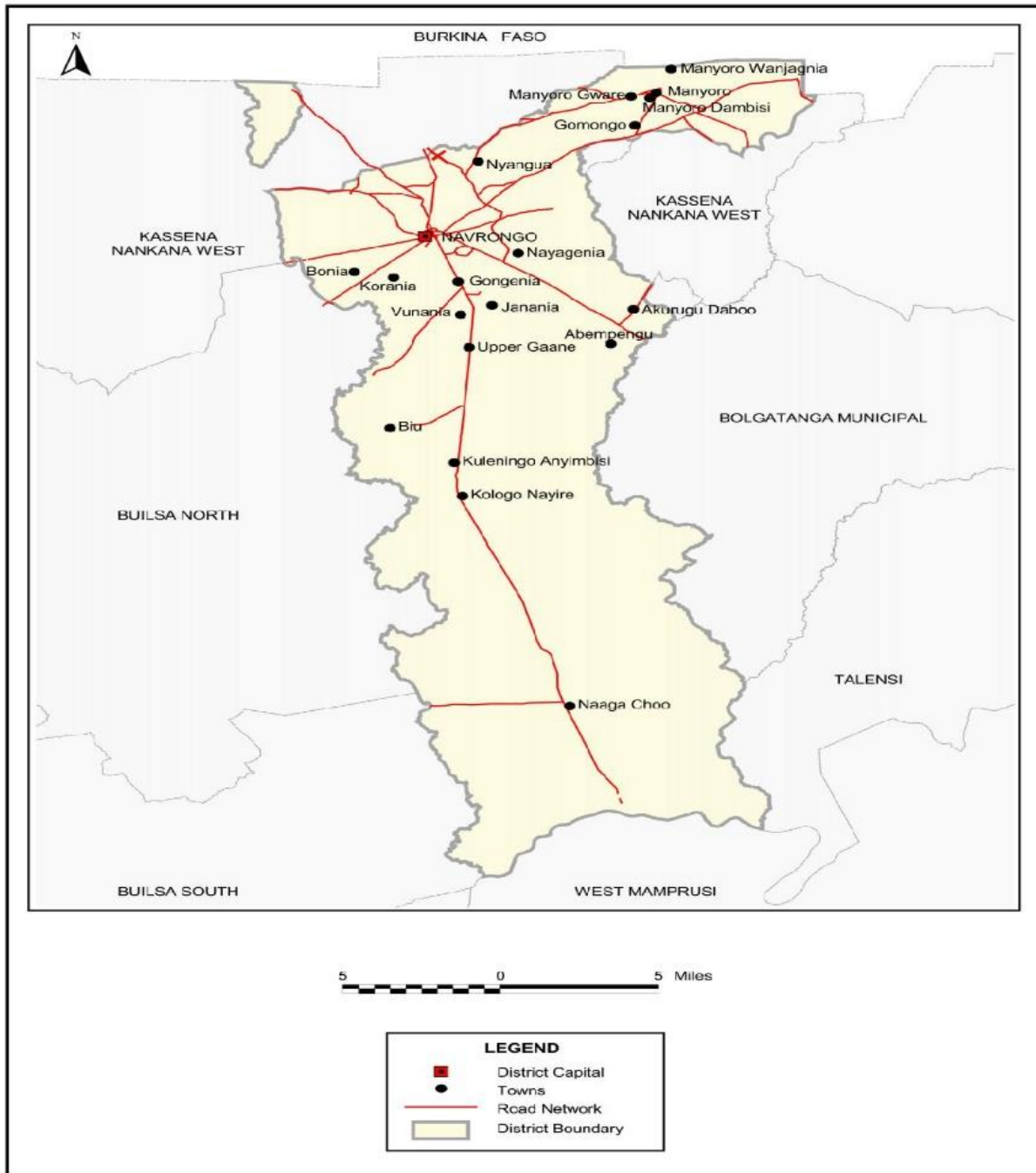


North and the Kassena Nankana West Districts and to the South with the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region. The Ghana Lands Commission recorded twenty-five (25) sales of medium-scale agricultural land, which were within the ranges of 10.24 Ha to 50 Ha across the municipality by the end of 2016 (Ghana Lands Commission, 2017). In the Kassena Nanakana Municipality the study was carried out in the villages Gaane, Tangabisi, Kologo and Biu, because these were clearly affected by medium-scale investments on neighbouring bush land.





**DISTRICT MAP OF KASSENA NANKANA EAST**



*Figure 1: District Map of Kassena-Nakana Municipal*

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, (2014)



### 3.2.2 Profile of Builsa- North

The Builsa North District lies between longitudes 10 05" West and 10 35" West and latitudes 10 20" North. It shares boundaries with Kassena-Nankana West District to the North, to the West with Sissala East District, to the East with Kassena-Nankana East Municipal and to the south with Builsa South District. The district covers an estimated land area of 816.44030 km<sup>2</sup>. (GSS, 2014).

The Builsa-North District has been reported by the Ghana Statistical Service (2014) to have 83.1 percent of households engaged in agriculture, Crop farming is the main agricultural activity with 96.3 percent of households engage in it. Those in livestock rearing accounts for 81.4 percent. In the rural localities, 97.4 percent of the households are agricultural households and only 33.5 percent are in the urban localities. Poultry is the dominant animal reared in the district.

In the Builsa North District the study was carried out in the villages Naamonsa and Jaata, because these were clearly affected by medium-scale investments on neighbouring bush land.



DISTRICT MAP OF BUILSA NORTH

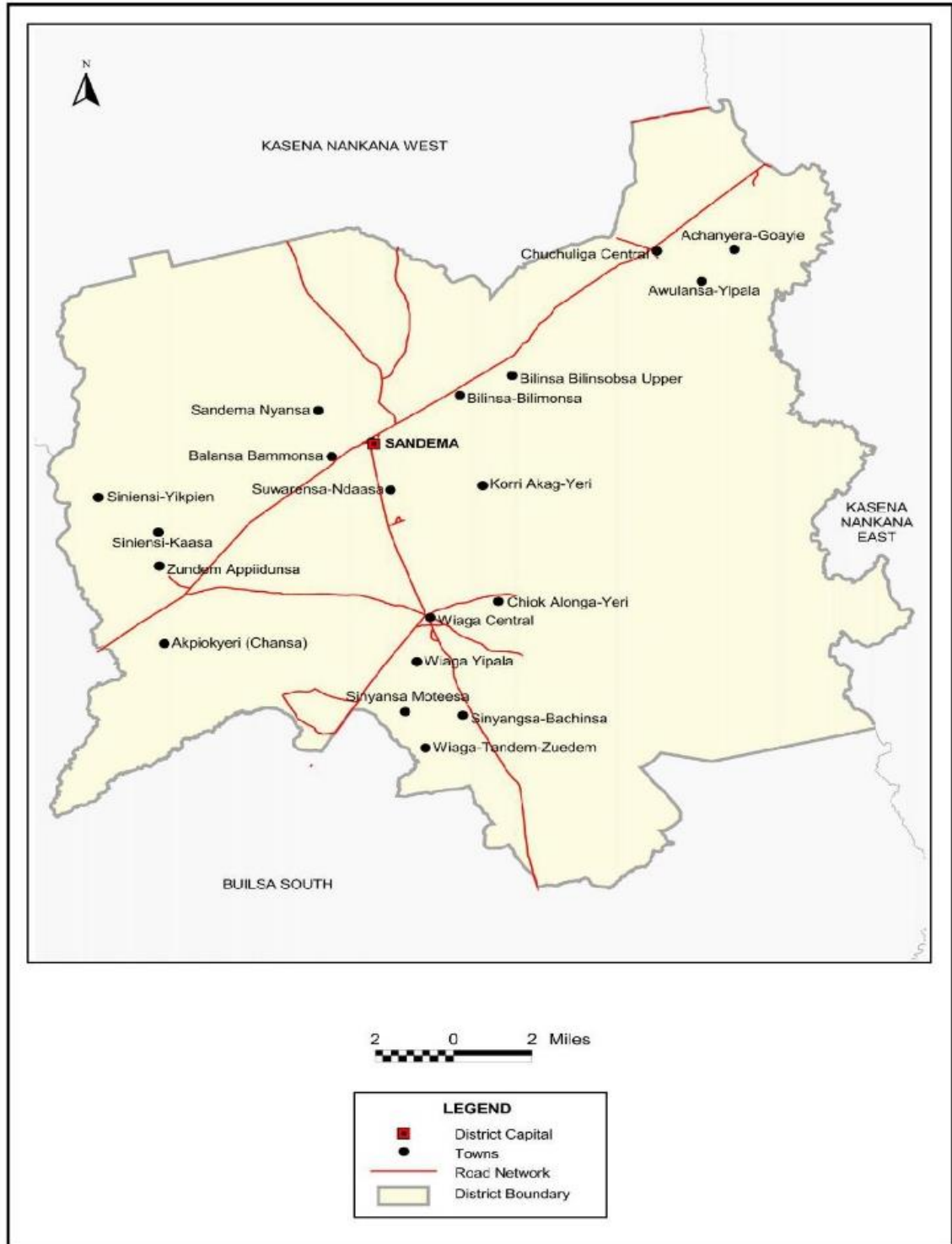


Figure 2: District Map of Builsa- North

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, (2014)



### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

This thesis examines medium-scale land acquisitions for agricultural investments and how it affects land tenure regimes and smallholders farming systems in two districts of the Upper East Region in Ghana. Based on the literature review and preliminary surveys, a conceptual framework was adopted for the study. The conceptual framework includes definitions of key terms in the topic and explanations of causal relationships between relevant parameters.

#### **3.3.1 Medium-scale Agricultural Investment**

Medium-scale agricultural investments are commercial interventions aimed at the production of crops and/or agricultural raw materials for domestic sale or export. Medium-scale investments are usually made by domestic elites mostly in business, public administration or politics in a bid to diversify their income portfolios. These kinds of investments have been common in Ghana and the study area for periods dating back to Acheampong's 'Operation Feed Yourself'. Review of secondary data over the last decade and field observations suggests an upsurge in the activities of medium-scale investors across Ghana. High prices of agricultural products which triggered the post-2008 land grabs – large-scale agricultural investments by foreign entities that are associated smallholder dispossessions and the limiting of access to land and water for smallholders appears to also influence domestic agribusiness investors. Government and donor initiatives aimed at promoting and facilitating commercial and export-oriented agricultural have triggered renewed elite interest in medium-scale agricultural investments. Definitions



of medium-scale land acquisitions have based on statistical reasons. Spatial definitions of medium-scale investment such as provide by Ayamga et al, (2015), is driven by the type of investor and size of land.

### **3.3.2 Medium-Scale Land Acquisition and Local Land Tenure Regimes**

In many African contexts, particularly in Ghana, cropped and fallow lands are often under the control of traditional authorities who have the mandate to manage common property resources for the benefit of their constituencies and future generations. The unwritten code on land relations are enshrined in social relations (kinship, ethnic belonging, semi-feudal arrangements) and seldom officially formalized. In the past, local land tenure regimes have provided smallholders with sufficient tenure security to invest in their lands and to manage them in a sustainable manner, for instance through regular fallowing, because traditional authorities did not engage in the reallocation and/or sale of land used by smallholder farmers. In areas that were not or not regularly farmed, so-called bush land, local tenure regimes allowed short-term or long-term access to land for agricultural expansion, and or access to additional resources, such as firewood, herbs, fruits, or game, highly important for the diversified livelihoods of smallholder households.

Like in the case of large land grabs, medium-scale investments are perceived to have disruptive impact on local tenure regimes. Often led by local intermediaries, such as educated youth or agricultural officers, commercial farmers offer traditional authorities substantial amounts of money for the sale or long-term lease of land. Sometimes hope for additional benefits accruing from the investments, such as infrastructure development,



employment opportunities, or enhanced market access, also influence the decision of traditional authorities to sell or lease-out land. Investors mostly target bush land – the sale of large tracts of family land used by smallholders would be to conflict-prone – that is only extensively used for farming, and where traditional authorities can reallocate land more legitimately. Land titles obtained are sometimes formalized in the official land title administration, often as a result of the demands for collateral of donor agencies or banks.

The commodification of land, disembedding it from social and often spiritual context, and transforming it into a tradable resource, has the tendency to affect local land relations. Conflicts over ownership, over the benefits of sales within land-holding clans and a general tendency to commercialize land transactions are often the result.

### **3.3.3 The Effects of Medium-Scale Agricultural Investments on Smallholder Livelihoods**

Smallholder livelihoods are usually based on the use of natural resources such as land, water, pasture and bush land. This means the livelihoods of smallholders consist of a combination of a number of on-farm and off-farm economic activities in diversified livelihood strategy. Apart from resource-based economic activities, smallholder households frequently engage in other off-farm activities such trade, food processing and vending, and wage labour. Economic livelihoods are usually embedded in rife local knowledge, adapted agricultural technology as well as supporting social relations that facilitate collaboration and reciprocity.



As argued above, medium-scale agricultural investments often target bush land, areas that are less densely populated and only extensively used for supplementary agriculture. In so far, the immediate effect on the farming income of smallholder households is often negotiable. However, as bush land is an important local resource, usually managed by traditional authorities but used as a common, for hunting, foraging and the grazing of animals, the conversion of bush land into commercial farms, can have important negative impact on local livelihoods. While the loss of pasture affects the whole household, the loss of bush land particularly affects women – especially poor women and female headed households with little access to farm land – for whom the sale of firewood or charcoal and the sale of fruits gathered from the bush form important parts of their income. However, like land grabs by multinational corporations, medium-scale investments also provide opportunity to smallholder households. Access roads and bridges created by commercial farmers can facilitate access to smallholder farms. Smallholders may learn new agricultural techniques and can be introduced to new crops or crop types, enhancing their production. Furthermore, commercial farmers can attract buyers, thereby also enhancing market access for smallholders. Last but not least, the commercial farms can offer employment opportunities – at fair or exploitative conditions. These are often valued by the poor, the youth and women, who lack access to productive resources and eagerly look for additional income.

Medium-scale land acquisitions associated with investment of domestic entrepreneurs in agribusiness has strong implications for land management and land access for smallholders, impacts smallholder farming systems and by extension their livelihoods. The



focus of this research is to examine how the largely underexplored medium-scale investors interest in rural lands affect smallholders.

### **3.4 Research Design**

The research area has been selected as a good and clear case study for the effects of medium-scale investments in the Upper East Region. A qualitative case study approach was adopted. The adoption of a qualitative research design would allow the research closely interact with actors at different levels to get a holistic picture of the various factors and fields that are pertinent to the topic (Hering & Schmidt, 2014). Qualitative research allows for openness and the possibility to integrate new findings the researcher may have overlooked certain questions (Mayring, 2002). Qualitative research is defined as social research, where the researcher depends on their own skills as an empathic interviewer or observer to collect special data about the problem under investigation, (Jary et al., 1991). This method of research allows the researcher to use data collection techniques that encourages him/her to dig deeper and probe further into the experiences faced by respondents.

Data collection techniques such as semi-structured interviews, group discussions and expert interviews were employed in data and information gathering. The use of multiple approaches in the case studies was enable the researcher gain holistic understanding of the nuances of land relations and customary resource management. The triangulation of method improved the validity of research findings (Flick,2014).

Both primary and secondary data were collected for this study. Personal interviews with the aid of semi-structured questionnaires and key informant interviews with the aid of check list were used in collecting primary data. Secondary data on total land size in the





four districts and the number and sizes of registered lands was obtained from Districts and Regional Lands Commission offices respectively.

Primary data used in this research has been collected from interviews conducted by the researcher in the months of March to April, 2018.

### **3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Open-ended semi-structured interviews were the main method for collecting qualitative data from the respondents. Additional primary data was collected through observation. The use of semi-structured interviews for data collection was deemed appropriate as it allowed the respondents to express their feelings and views about the situation. According to Robson (2008) semi-structured interviews enable the respondent interviewed to be more flexible in their responses to questions. Additionally, semi-structured questionnaires enable the researcher to probe beyond the answers for the purposes of seeking clarification and explanation on the answers to be given, (May, 1997).

Semi-structured interviews give the respondent the needed space to answer questions as they think is necessary. They may also come up with issues that are not determined by the researcher. At the same time, the researcher focuses on the research topic as guided by the preset questions.

Questions in the guides sought to solicit information on personal data of respondents such as age, sex, marital status, educational background, farm size and farming experience. Furthermore, information from respondents on the drivers of current land demand by medium-scale investors in the study areas was solicited. A third part of questions addressed



how medium-scale investors negotiate for land in the study areas. Whiles, forth part examines the characteristics/features of land markets. Finally, questions dwelled on the impact on livelihoods available for smallholder farmers in the study as a result of increased land scarcity.

A two-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. Firstly, the villages that were highly affected within the municipality and the district were purposively selected. Secondly, respondents were stratified in three groups: medium-scale farmers, earth priests, and members of smallholder households (male and female farmers, students, wage labourers on plantations) from the selected district. From these three groups about 66 respondents (36 members of smallholder households (smallholders, 24 commercial farmers, 6 traditional authorities (2 chiefs, 4 earthpriests) were purposefully selected according to their knowledge and involvement in the subject matter. Interviews with specific groups of respondents ended when a point of saturation was reached and interviewees did not come up with new information again.

Respondents in each of the four districts were presented interviewed with an interview guide to enhance better understanding of the questions and also for accurate recording of information. In all, 66 respondents were interviewed. With the exception of a few, respondents had completed primary school.

During the interviews notes were taken. These notes form the basis for interpretative analysis.



### **3.4.2 Group Discussions**

Attitudes are better revealed in group discussions. Group discussions come close to everyday life situations (Vogl,2014). This allows the researcher to observe the participants' attitudes and thoughts about the topic. The main interest of group discussion is to reveal collective attitudes rather than individual opinions(Mayring,2002)

In each of the six study villages, a focus group discussion was held with members of smallholder households. For each focus group discussion six participants were purposely selected according to their knowledge and ability to contribute. To reflect the viewpoints of different groups of the local society, two male farmers, two female farmers and two youth were invited to participate in each of the six focus group discussions. The researcher started the discussion with some initial input to set the ball rolling. The researcher followed the discussion and served to occasionally re-focus the discussion, relying on a set of guiding questions he wanted to address. The respondents were asked for feedback and additional comments after the main questions were discussed. Group discussions were recorded and notes were taken for subsequent analysis.

### **3.4.2 Expert and Key Informant Interviews**

Expert interviewees are selected based on their special expertise on a specific topic. An expert interview intends to generate more objective data. It therefore focuses on gathering specific information. Experts interviewed in this research were officials of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and officials from the district and regional offices of land administration. They were interviewed with the help of interview guides that contained the



questions the researcher needed to address. Experts were also asked for additional input they believed would be relevant. During the interviews notes were taken. Furthermore, secondary data on total land size in the four districts and the number and sizes of registered lands were obtained from Districts and Regional Lands Commission offices respectively.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Data processing involves the transformation of data into information by collating, sorting, classifying, retrieving, disseminating information manually or through the use of computer software (Bourque, 2006). The goal is to highlight useful information, suggest conclusions and supporting decision making. After primary data was taken from the field, the data were checked for completeness and accuracy of responses. Were inconsistencies within interviews or in between interviews and observations occurred, information was cross-checked. Relevant parts of interviews recorded have been transcribed and used as integral parts of written text to better understand patterns, and relationships among study concepts. Transcripts and interview notes were coded according to the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Codes were later categorized and the patterns emanating interpreted to develop explanations of the phenomena under study that are based of the rich field material.

### **3.6 Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of qualitative research is that generalisations are not possible. Qualitative case studies are rather designed to draw a holistic picture than to make general statements about the overall society (Schnell,2011). The researcher is aware that land per se is a delicate



issue and responses may not be accurate. The response-errors can be any of the following: Social-desirability-response-sets, interviewer-effects and attendance-effects (Schnell et al,2011)

Social-desirability-response-sets are responses the favor the researcher. For example, a land owner may sell out land tell me he did not sell the land. Interviewer-effects mean reactions from the researcher themselves. As coming from the locality, I could influence responses. Attendance-effects mean a reaction resulting from the presence of a third person.

While these limitations are admitted the use of triangulation has helped to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

As already mentioned in the conceptual framework and the research questions and objectives (see Chapter 3), this research focused on the effects of medium-scale land grabs on local land tenure regimes and the livelihoods of small holders. My first priority is to uncover reasons motivating investors to acquire agro-lands in the study area. Furthermore, the strategies adopted by investors to acquire land are documented. In the following the effect of the sale of lands affects local tenure regimes is discussed. And the finally the impact of medium-scale investments on small-scale farmers' livelihoods will be.

#### 4.1.2 Background of the Study Area

The study area covers two districts, the Kassena-Nankana Municipality and the Builsa North District. Here, the medium-scale investments, mostly mango plantations, are concentrated in villages beyond the capital towns of Navrongo and Sandema. Villages studied include Biu, Kologo, Naaga in the Kassena-Nankana Municipality and Chuchuliga and Sandema in the Builsa-North District.

#### 4.1.3 Rural Livelihoods

The major means of livelihood in the research villages is cultivation of traditional crops such as millet and leguminous plants. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2014), the main occupation of households in the study area is agriculture in the following proportions: Kassena Nankana Municipality: 82.7% and Builsa North District 83.1%. Almost every



person growing up in the study villages involves themselves in subsistence farming and rearing of animals and poultry.

The low populations and dispersed settlements allow for compound farming as well as bush farming.

Compound farming is the cultivation of food crops around the house. Compound farms are poor in nutrient content due to constant usage. Farmers depend on organic fertilizers from the kraal. Since not all households own cattle, not all farmers can come by manure to fertilize their compound lands. Poor soils result in low yields, leading to food shortage and malnutrition.

An alternative to compound farming is bush farming. Bush farming, as the name implies, is the growing of crops in the bush. The farmers acquire fallow land from the earth priests and clear trees and shrubs, using the cutlass. Some fruit trees are left standing on the farms for picking and to provide shade for farmers to rest when they are tired. The shrubs are however burnt. After the land has been worked on for a number of years and crops begin to reduce in yields, the farmer abandons that this piece of land and may acquire another fallow, where he begins the work a. While 20% of the interviewed smallholders said that they exploit the soils completely and abandon old bush farms when they get infertile, 80% of the farmers interviewed stated that they carefully managed the soil fertility by practicing rotational cultivation. They grow different crop on the subsequent years, because different crops need different nutrients. For instance, if millet was cropped the previous year, leguminous plants which restore nitrogen in the soil will be cropped the following year. Though bush fallowing yields desired results to farmers, its long term effect through the



continuous felling of trees without adequate replacement can result in deforestation and the loss of biodiversity.

#### **4.2 Female Livelihood Portfolios**

As already noted, the major economic activity in the study area is agriculture in which mainly cereals such as millet, maize, sorghum and rice, but also groundnuts and pulses such as Bambara beans or cow-pea are cultivated (Tonah, 1994; Laube, 2007). Additionally households rear animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, pigs, as well as fowls.

But households' livelihood activities are also diversified. Empirical findings reveal that all physically fit female combine several economic activities in their livelihood portfolios. Though male and female engage in agriculture, it is mostly the female who engage in petty-trading and agro-processing, particularly in shea-butter extraction and rice part-boiling.

Women are also trading. All the research communities had regular markets, which come on every third day. Every community has a different market day which makes it possible for traders to attend two or more markets in the week. Local women sell mostly foodstuffs. In addition to the existing markets are so-called 'stations'. Stations are places, mostly major stops of public transport, where buying and selling takes place on daily basis. Markets and Stations geographically may be located at the same area or in separate locations. In Kologo, for instance, market and station are at different locations. Most of the people vending at the stations are also women, trying to raise additional income to contribute to household expenditure and to take care of their children.





Poor women and especially female-headed households are often also gathering fuelwood for sale or producing charcoal for the market.

Men, apart from their agricultural activities, may occasionally engage in wage labour, may trade in animals or fowls, and, especially when they are young, are prone to engage in seasonal migration.

Many young household members, female and male, migrate to southern Ghana in seek of labour. Migration may be seasonal, but often results in extended stays.

#### **4.3 Education**

The government of Ghana has established basic schools that are within walking distance in all the communities in the study area. This has encouraged children of school going age to attend school up to primary six or even junior high school. Though the aim is a laudable one, both parents and children do not take education serious. The government's 'School Feeding Program' has been extended to the schools in the study villages with the aim of improving pupil attendance. Though this intervention has been put in place, school attendance remains a challenge. There is no significant improvement in attendance. A study conducted in Biu-Sensa primary, a beneficiary of the program, revealed that attendance appreciated by 10%, that is, from 50% to 60%. As for the rate of drop-outs, the same rate of 5% maintained in the 2016/2017 academic year. The later figure results from early marriages and pregnancies.

The Girl-Child Unit of Ghana Education Service (GES) in the two districts has for the past 15 years tried to promote girl-child education. The GES in these districts collaborates with



the World Food Program to distribute food to girls at the end of every month. The only condition needed for a girl to qualify is 85 percent or more attendance per month. Girls who attend school regularly qualify for a take-home ration of maize and oil. The class attendance register is used to verify names of beneficiaries. When interviewed Rita Angaaga, a worker at Biu Health Center says she continued to attend school because of the World Food Program support (Interview, 13/03/2018). But not all girls take advantage of this opportunity. This intervention notwithstanding, girls still find a way not to attend school. Early marriages are a common cause.

#### **4.4 Traditional Land Tenure and Land Commodification**

For the traditional African, the spiritual world is real. All natural resources have spirits residing in them. These resources include water bodies, the earth, rocks, groves and the heaven. To some extent also, man-made objects too have spirits living in them. The spirits in the artificial objects are acquired at creation. That is to say that these spirits co-existed at the time of creation. There is the believe also that man is capable of conjuring spirits into man-made objects. In general, natural as well as man-made spirits exert great influence on the behavior of the African. The African is constantly under the mercy of these spirits. One does not doubt why land is, in the traditional perspective, therefore, inextricably link to the belief in spirits.

Land is again linked to the ancestors, the original owners of the land. The traditionalist in the study area believe that the first settlers establish a special relationship to the gods and spirits of the particular area they inhabit. Over generation the special relationship to the spirit world is nurtured through regular rituals and sacrifices. The clans that originally settle



on formerly vacant land thus become earth priest (sing *tindaana*/ plur. *tindamba* in the local language) and have to pacify gods and spirits and to ensure the health and wellbeing of the humans and animals as well as the fertility of the earth. *Tindamba* are also in charge of land allocation. Traditionally, new settlers could come for land to settle and farm on, and would be allocated such land by the earth priests. The transaction entailed some traditional tokens such as small ruminants, fowl, tobacco, or drink, and necessitated negotiable annual gifts of farm produce for the earth priests after harvest. However, the sale of land for cash was held to be an abomination. Land so acquire became the property of the settlers and could not be reallocated unless the settlers failed to honour their obligations or constantly infringed on local norms or taboos. In the context of agricultural commercialization and the pressure of investors to acquire land the traditional land tenure regime is changing.

Amanor, (2001) gives a documentation on the beginnings of land commercialization in Southern Ghana, particularly in the Eastern Region where investors bought land and prospected for minerals such as gold. Later subsequent investors interested in agricultural products acquired lands for the cultivation of cash crops notably cocoa and oil palm. Until this time, land was under the control of families, clans or traditional authorities such as chiefs. Hence, land was not an individual property. It was not allowed or rather forbidden for any person or group of persons to sale out land either to an indigene or stranger. The chiefs protected the land to be used by the indigenes from generation to generation. However, chiefs are in direct control of lands so selling of land was not too complicated. Furthermore, indigenes wanted to own oil-palm and cocoa plantations but were not prepared to do tedious work on the farm. They contracted northern Ghanaians and Moshi migrants under share-cropping arrangements. However, in southern Ghana large parcels of



land were also acquired by investors and became private property, withdrawn from the realm of smallholder agriculture. Over time this led to the establishment of outright land markets (Amanor, 2001)

#### **4.4.1 Traditional Local Land Tenure**

Land Tenure in Africa varies from country to country. A possible explanation to this variation could be historical. Africa was colonized by European nations each having their own system of land tenure that they tried to impose on their colonies. This has influenced African countries and the way land is owned and managed.

Land tenure, the way land is accessed, administered and the way in which land rights are transferred, have been well examined by several researchers (Amanor, 2001; Laube, 2007; Yaro, 2010). Ghana has two land tenure systems which run concurrently. These land tenure systems are customary and statutory. Eighty percent of Ghana's land is under the control of traditional authority while the rest of the twenty percent is managed by the state. Which means that traditional authorities such as earth priests and chiefs wield a lot of power. It is the duty of these members to hold and protect territorial boundaries for the benefit of community members. In the case study area, as described above land is administered by *tindaanas*. While they maintain the spiritual control over land they have handed over to families is still resting with the earth priests, this land becomes lineage property, with which the earth priests usually do not interfere in matters of profane management. This land is under the jurisdiction of the family head. The family head apportions his land to his household heads.



However, land still not allocated to individual families remains under the direct administration of the *tindamba*. Therefore, two systems of customary land tenure exist in parallel, which are family land and free land. The following describes in detail the different forms of tenure the researcher encountered in the research area.

### Family land

Family lands are lands that the family acquired from earth priests for use by family members. Family land can serve one or two purposes:

- 1) land for the construction of houses and adjacent compound farms (compound land),
- 2) and land meant purely for cultivation of food crops (family farms).

1) On compound land, family members put up houses and cultivate round the compounds. The household head farms on this land.

It is on this same land that the household heads can put up their houses. The household head informs the family head of his intention to construct his own house. His intention to move out may be for personal reasons or a demand from the family ancestors. It could be that he went to consult a diviner who informed of this ancestral decision. Whatever be the case, the family head has to be in the know, for it is he, who goes to inform the tindanna about it.

Though, land here belongs to family members, for a member to contract a new compound permission must be sort from the earth priests. The family head must provide a number of prescribed items, such as tobacco, millet flour, fowl, and drink. These are for the *tindaana* to pour libation and make sacrifices to the gods of the land. The purpose of this sacrifice is basically the protection of the family members who will be residing in the building.



After the earth priest has been informed, a date is fixed for him to come to the proposed site to perform the necessary rituals. First, the owner of the new building provides the earth priest with a fist-full of millet flour mixed with water in a calabash. The *tindaana* then invokes on the spirits of the come and protect the members of the household. While praying to the ancestors, he simultaneously pours little drops of the mixture onto the ground till the mixture is emptied. Next to follow this libation is a sacrifice of a hen. The earth priest slaughters the hen and holds it in a position so that the blood can drip on the ground. While the blood is dripping, similar incantations are made by the *tindaana*. When the blood stops dripping, he hands the hen over to the new compound head or a member of the house for it to be feathered and roasted. A bit of the roasted flesh is again put on the blood amidst prayers of blessings on the new family. After this prayer, the meat is shared among those who have come to witness this sod-cutting ceremony. The earth priest is now done and returns home. He does not demand or expect any form of compensation for his services. After the rituals have been performed construction can start.

Compound land is the place where important traditional crops such as millet, beans, groundnuts are cropped. Also, members rear animals such as cattle, sheep and goats which are on free range during the off-farm season but under control during the farming season. The same applies to the poultry which are also on free range but in their case there is no restriction of movement during the farming season.

2) Family farms, more often than not, are a bit far away from compounds and exclusively used for continuous intensive farming of cereals, groundnuts and pulses – often in mixed cropping systems or in crop rotation rotation. On f the mainstay of the agricultural



production takes place and, if enough land is available, they provide room for the individual farming endeavours of family members such as youth or women.

Family members rely on compound land and family farms for survival. Apart from spiritual oversight, earth priests do not interfere with activities on this type land. Landowners can only interfere when prescribed norms are violated.

Bushlands sometimes called 'free-land' is land that is located in the outskirts of the community, yet under the control of the earth priest. The earth priest protects this land from encroachers. It is the duty of the *tindaana* to protect this ancestral land so that generations yet unborn could have access to it in future. Population is growing but available land remains limited. Bushlands, therefore, play a very important role in the economic lives of the inhabitants of rural communities. People with limited access to family land, such as the youth, or smallholders who need additional farmland can consult the earth priest for more land during the farming season.

Bushland is not only used just for cultivation of crops. Its usefulness cannot be over-emphasized. Bushlands serves several other functions. Shea nut picking is a major economic activity carried out in the area during the fruiting season. Shea nut picking and processing is a female-dominated activity which supplements the income of women.

Firewood picking is also possible in the bush. Cutting of branches is not prohibited. What the earth priests prohibit, though, is cutting full fresh trees wet, especially shea nut tree. Both women and men make a living by cutting firewood and selling to firewood assemblers from neighbouring Navrongo and Bolgatanga.



#### 4.4.2 Land Commodification and Changes in Land Tenure

Communities started as assemblages of dispersed compounds, but with time gradually developed into nucleated settlements. This can be seen in the towns and urban centers of the region, where formerly dispersed settlements have become compacted with time. High demand for building plots, but also for the siting of government agencies, educational institutions, churches and so on, has led to the development of urban land markets. Here land can be sold out to interested persons who may or may not come from the family. This is made possible with the assistance of Lands Commission and Town Country Planning Department. Official documentation of the plot is produced, providing relevant information such as title, location, size, names of original and current owners, value of plot, duration of a lease, and above all signatures of the parties involved which include the landowner, the buyer and the chief which. The whole documentation is witnessed by court.

However, while land markets have developed in urban centers, the acquisition of land in rural communities in the Upper East Region has been slow to undergo such transformation. Though the sale of land has increased also in peri-urban communities in recent times, earth priests and landowners (those that obtained land from the *tindamba*) in rural communities do usually not sell land. This is particularly true for family land obtained by families from earth priests for free and with temporal limits. This family land provides the very basis of the livelihood of smallholder families. It is usually highly protected and only the family head controls this piece of land and shares it out to members of the family for use.

However, recently, in the bushland that is under the direct control of the *tindamba* there are changes taking place. Previously, the earth priests kept bushland for use by community





members and small-scale farmers from neighbouring communities. Acquisition of land in this case did not involve cash payment and documentation.

Currently, high demand by commercial farmers, who want to invest in medium-scale farms is transforming traditional patterns of land management and allocation. Nowadays, the acquisition of agrarian land, especially for outsiders, involves both cash and official documentation. Earth priests frequently accept cash payments or a payments in kind (the cash equivalent in kind, for instance in the form of building materials) although earth priests they do not know the value of the farm lands sold. What is also problematic is also the fact that the concrete title and the duration of the contract is often perceived differently earth priests and investors. Investors, on the one hand, often prepare papers that do not include the duration of the contract and, therefore, may be believe that their land has become some sort of freehold. On the other hand, earth priests believe, as the *tindaana* of Namonsa claimed in an interview (Interview, Namonsa, 15.04.2018) that they did not outrightly sell land to the investors, but can take back their land anytime. This is particularly problematic when it comes to long-term investments such as mango plantations, as is the case in the case study communities. These plantations require more than five years before the trees even start fruiting and much longer to recover the investment. In order to understand these processes and dynamics better, the drivers as well as modes of commercial acquisition of agrarian bush land will be discussed in more detail below.



#### 4.5 Drivers of Medium-Scale Investment

The major factor for medium-scale agricultural investment in the case study area is certainly the availability of large areas of bush land. Earth priests control hundreds of hectares of bush in the margins of Kologo and Chuchuliga. It is these same lands that investors are competing with indigenes to use. Reasons include the flat nature of the lands in excess of hundreds of hectares; fertile alluvial soils, and above all, a high-water table that can easily be tapped for irrigation purposes. The flat nature of the land facilitates accessibility. Although there are no roads that directly link farms to the Kologo-Naaga trunk road, the nature of the land allows for easy entry by motorcycles and pickups.

Apart from the availability of land, government investment programmes in agriculture appear to accelerate the expansion of commercial farming in the case study area. Ghana governments from independence in March 1957, have continued to allocate funds to the agricultural sector for the promotion of farming activities and to ensure food security. The governments, through Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) gives out loans for agricultural purposes. This is a major driver influencing medium-scale land acquisition in recent times. In the bid to become an industrialized nation, the government of Ghana established the Export Development Initiative Fund (EDIF) under the Ministry of Trade and Industry on Oct. 4, 2000. The fund aims to provide financial resources (grants and loans) and technical assistance for the development and promotion of the export trade of Ghana. In 2011, EDIF was amended and expanded to include the development and promotion of agriculture, hence the change of name to Export Development and Agricultural Initiative Fund (EDAIF). This fund made it possible for commercial farmers as well as other economic, political or administrative elites to get access loans for



investments in agro-businesses. At my case study area, investors put the grants or loans into the establishment of mango plantations. The first group of investors started as the Kassena-Nankana Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Association. The Kasaena-Nankana Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Association took advantage of land that was initially acquired by government in the 1960s with the aim to rear cattestablish a state cattle ranch. As can be noticed from the sign-post, this farm was established under EDIF but not EDAIF. Agriculture was not inclusive in the package under EDIF, yet support was extended to the group. Mango trees have begun fruiting since 2017.





*Figure 3 Picture of the Kasena-Nankana Fruit and Vegetables Farmers' mango plantation*

The Export Development Initiative Fund (EDIF) provided the group with a tractor and farm implements such as plough, harrow and trailer. The group was also given seedlings. Before the seedlings were transplanted, the tractor operator, who was also engaged by EDIF, ploughed the land, to prepare the land for the easy penetration of roots and to uproot weeds to minimize the likelihood of bush fires that can easily devastate young plantations. Ploughing in between plants has become an annual ritual. To overcome water challenge, EDIF also provided a mechanized bore-hole, water tanks and watering cans. In fact, EDIF/EDAIF did not only support the above group but all the mango plantation investors



in the study area. All the investors, with the exception of one from Eastern Region and one from Northern Regions, come from the Upper East Region of Ghana. The entrance to their farms all bear the EDAIF sign posts.



***Plate 2: Farm Gate of Mango Plantation in Kologo***

Another driving force motivating investors is the ready market for mangoes that had been promised by EDIF/EDAIF. After negotiations with the fund, Blue Skies Ghana Limited, a major fruit processing company in Ghana, has assured investors that they will buy the produce once the plantations start harvesting. Blue Skies is a company that was started in 1998 with the aim of exporting premium quality freshly-cut fruits to supermarkets in Europe before diversifying to supply the local market with freshly-squeezed 100% natural juice. One of the investors, Atiiga in argued in an interview (27.03.2018, Kologo) that





mango – like all fruits – are perishable. Therefore, he would not have ventured into this risky business if Blue Skies would not have given him the guarantee to purchase his mango.



***Plate 3: Picture of Cleared but Abandoned EDAIF Mango Plantation in Akia***

A striking feature of Akia cluster of mango plantation is the destruction of trees without using the land. One would expect to see crops being grown on these fields during the rainy season. Trying to investigate into reasons behind this action, a local farmer who previously cultivated the field said: “These two investors are from the Northern Region. For two years now, they keep sending messages that they are coming to transplant mango seedlings when the rains begin. This deters indigenes from encroaching on their land.” (Interview, 21/04/2018, Akia).

The earth priest responsible for Akia attested to this account. While wondering what is happening, he said that he cannot give the land to someone else. Granting access to use of



the cleared land would require some knowledge and permission from the investors to do so.

Reasons for non utilisation of the lands remains a mystery. What could be the reason for not showing up for two years? Could it be that the land was merely being enclosed for speculative purposes? Could it be that loans meant for mango farms have been misapplied? The only clue leading one to guess that the land is intended for mango is the EDAIF sign boards which contain pictures of mango trees.

Another major factor drawing the attention of investors, even from as far as Eastern Region, is the availability of a large and cheap labour force. More than 70% of the population in the study areas is youth under the age of 24 years. The youths of the study villages are idle during the dry season. The only exception being Biu, where farmers have access to irrigable land in the Tono Irrigation Scheme. The scheme concentrates on the cultivation of rice in the low lands and vegetables at the uplands. Male farmers within the ages of 20 to 35 in Biu are occupied throughout the year. They farm twice a year, making use of water from the Tono Irrigation Dam. But the story is different in the case of the other communities in the study area, where hundreds of young men and women as well as poor women are looking for employment. The ability to draw on cheap and willing labour is a major advantage for the investors. Investors have capitalised on the absence alternative employment opportunities to set up these plantations at low labour cost, because there are more farm labourers available than the plantations can employ (see 4.3.2).

Apart from the availability of virgin and cheap land, it were beneficial governmental funding schemes, which may even enable the misappropriation of funds to be invested in the farms, and the availability of excessive cheap labour which were the major drivers of



the medium-scale agricultural investments in the case study area. In the following the modes of land acquisition will be look at in more detail.

#### **4.6 Agrarian Bush Land and Effects Commercial Acquisitions on Local Land**

##### **Tenure**

Lands in Kologo and Chuchuliga include of hundreds of hectares of rich wetlands in the bush. The vegetative cover is mostly shea trees, which provide additional income to indigenes. Fuel wood, medicinal plants, honey and game is in abundance. Indigenes spend hours during the day trying to bring home items that they can sell in the market the following day.

Like in many communities in the Upper East Region, bush lands are under the control of earth priests and is released for use on the principle of first come. Land is seen as the property of the ancestors. Furthermore, all bush lands have gods who protect users. These gods are physically represented by animals or reptiles. These animals/reptiles are the totems on the land. A totem is a spirit being, sacred object or symbol that serves as an emblem of a group of people, such as family, clan, lineage or tribe. The earth priest takes his time to educate land users on dos and don'ts of the land. The python, for instance, is the totem of Kologo. Therefore, people acquiring bush land in Kologo are warned not to harm pythons. During my visits to the mango farms in Akia, I came across a farmer who said that children mistakenly killed a python on his farm. Accordingly, he was working on his farm when he saw children chasing a rat which took shelter in a nearby hole. The children started digging for the rat. Realizing that the children were not strong enough to dig he offered a helping hand. Apparently, he helped them to kill the rat and drag it from the whole. But he did not realize that he had also killed a python that also hid in the whole.





After some time his crop yields started reducing drastically. He consulted a diviner who revealed to him which abomination he had committed. So he had to send a goat to the earth priest be sacrificed to appease the gods.

As can be seen, earth priests keep and protect these lands on behalf of the ancestors and the gods. The earth priest shares plots of land to families so that they can farm on and make a living. But to acquire bush land is not a simple venture. It is a complex endeavor, with multiple visits to the earth priest. It is time consuming and no quick way to go round it. Land acquisition begins by getting a link, a middle person. It has to be one who knows the land lord. Then in the accompaniment of this middleman, you make your maiden visit to the earth priest. This, you do not do with empty hands. You go with cola and drink to officially greet the earth priest. There is no known or prescribed amount of cola or drink. It is based on affordability. The use of cola and drink is traditional and was meant for indigenes with no rich investor in mind. It is at this visit that you declare your intention to acquire some farm land. You tell him for what crop you need the land and what size of land. The type of implement you will use to prepare the land will determine the cost of sacrifice to be made. For the indigenes who rely on traditional implements such as the hoe, cutlass and bullocks, the requirements are: 2 fowls, 1 guinea-fowl, flour, tobacco, cola and pito. Pito is a locally brewed beer consumed by natives.

According to Apaala (Interview 28/04/2018, Kologo-Tangabisi) the earth priest of Tangabisi, the sacrifice of chickens is for small-scale farmers. Those farmers who use simple farm implements such as the traditional hoe and cutlass. Those who use a bullock to plough their farms fall under the same category. But for farmers who intend using tractor to plough their field, it is mandatory to include a ram for the scarifices.



The size of the farm is not taken into consideration. Mark Atingkong (Interview 23/03/2018, Biu), a commercial maize farmer from Biu, for instance, acquired a 20 acre piece of land in the 2017 rainy-season. The earth priest asked him how he was going to plough the land. He answered: “I am going to use bullocks”. The earth priest then asked him to bring two fowls, and a guinea-fowl for the sacrifice. Under no circumstance can Atingkong use a tractor to plough this field in future, unless he provides a ram to be sacrificed before.

The areas are called bush land because there are no human settlements. The settlements found there are hamlets built by indigenes and migrant small-scale farmers. Akia and Tangabisi, on Chuchuliga and Kologo lands respectively, have been often used by migrant small-scale farmers from neighbouring villages such as Doba, Mirigu, Kandiga and even Chibeli in Burkina Faso, which lack sufficient land reserves for the expansion of smallholder agriculture. These farmers arrive at the on-set of the rainy season, spend days to clear the fields, plant their crops and return home. When it is time for weeding they return, stay and weed. After weeding they return home to take care of the compound farms. They resurface when the crops are ready for harvesting. Some of the produce is given to the earth priests as sign of gratitude and to increase the likelihood to be allocated land in the future. There is no prescribed quantity; it depends on one’s yield and discretion. However, one’s chances of maintaining his parcel of land is influenced by how much one offers to the earth priest.

Nevertheless, the land tenure security, even with regard to bush land is high. In the remote parts of the southern Kassena Nankana Municipality and Builsa North District the fallowing of land is still practiced. Farmers can afford to let lands lie fallow for years. One



farmer by name Oldman stated that parts of his acquired bush land has been lying fallow for 5 years now. Chief Abeebe of Tampola recounted how his father's land in Kologo that has been bequeathed to him, was lying fallow for more than 15 years by the time the research was conducted. According to him, the earth priest re-allocated it to a migrant farmer. When word got to him, he went to the earth priest and got his land back. He says he cannot work on this land this year. Nevertheless, he does not want a farmer to get used to his land because retrieval comes with conflicts.

Despite the commitment that giving out bush land for farming entails, earth priests were willing to allocate such land to farmers. They are hesitant however to allocate land for settlement in the bush. Having interacted with six earth priests in the study area, all of them stated that it is much easier to allocate bush lands to farmers, because when the farmer stops farming, the land reverts to the them. The same cannot be said of land for settlement. The earth priest has limited influence on settled lands. If an earth priest needs a portion of land in areas he has given for human settlement, he will have to ask the family or household head for permission.

Though earth priests sell lands for building construction, tradition of free access of agro-lands is still observed. No earth priest is ready to admit that he sells farmland. Earth priests are custodians of the land and one of their duties is to protect the territorial boundaries of his communities for use by future generations. The commitment to safeguard for future generations is the underlying factor behind the "no farmland sale principle".

With the exception of one investor who acquired family land, all investors targeted bush lands. Bush lands are lands that are far from the community and in the direct control of the earth priest. Anyone who is interested in bush land has to go to the earth priest. For an



investor, the requirements are more demanding. An investor comes with 1 animal (ram) in addition to the above. Where the sacrifice is offered depends on the situation. The sacrifice can be made on the farm or in the earth priest's house. Interestingly, investors and earth priests agree on the total cost of these items and offer money which the earth priest then uses to buy the needed items for the sacrifice. Yet, this is not the end of the story. There is more to it than this.

Medium-scale investors come to earth priests with alluring offers. In addition to the animals presented to the earth priest for the sacrifice, investors also give large amounts of money. I have tried to find out details on the exact amounts, but neither earth priests nor investors are usually prepared to disclose it. Only in one case, the largest investor from Eastern Region (prestige Farms), the chief of Chuchuliga had a contract specifying the payment signed. For about 1000 ha that were leased for 50 years the investor paid 11,000 Cedis. While these is cheap as compared to the cost of land in other environments, 11,000 Cedis is a huge amount in the local context.

The introduction of lease in the research zone is a recent phenomenon. *Tindaanas* are not well educated on its consequences. A lease is a document authorized by government to use the land for 50yrs and can be renewed for another 50 yrs. Earth priests say they are not willing to sell off their land. But often being ignorant on the value of land, *tindaanas* accept and appreciate the payments in cash or kind handed to them.

Earth priests also consider the employment opportunities often promised by investors to their close relatives as additional incentives to grant access to land. In Tangabisi, the earth priest's son, Apaala, is the security man for the plantation. He receives a hundred Ghana Cedis a month, way below the minimum wage, but enough to convince the earth priest,



who allegedly also obtained building materials in addition. The investor, Davis, has testified to this fact. Davis also employed Jonas as foreman on the farm. He is another close relative of the earth priest. The tindaana of Akia, Mr. Nyaaba, said in an interview (10.03.2018, Namonsa) that he has also been promised a cement block room. This promise was made six years ago; has not yet received it, nevertheless, he is hopeful the promise will be fulfilled.

Being tempted by such promises and offers, earth priest often set aside their traditional roles and can easily disobey the very traditional rules they are meant to protect. This goes so far that individual earth priest tend to sell land not even belonging to them. This was the case in Akia as can be seen from the conflict reported below.

Right at the beginning of medium-scale agricultural investment in Akia, a major conflict occurred. Apparently, led by local middlemen, a commercial farmer acting for a group of investors looking for land for mango plantations to be supported by EDAIF, visited the research area.

According to one key informant, Awepuga from Nogsenia a suburb of Navrongo (Interview 24.04.2018, Navrongo) Francis from the chief's palace in Navrongo came to the acting chief of Kologo in March 2010 and asked for land to grow mangos. Although chiefs cannot allocate lands themselves, they are often the local middlemen facilitating access to the earth priests or individual landowners. Francis was by a middleman called Franklin, a native of Kologo, and member of the extended family of the acting chief of Kologo. Franklin is a high ranking public servant, businessman and above all, a large scale rice and maize farmer.



Being a native of Kologo and knowing the tradition, Franklin facilitated Francis' land acquisition. After the acting chief of Kologo was greeted with kola nuts and drink the same was done at the earth priest's house, where the acting chief of Kologo had pointed them to. The following day the *tindaana* accompanied by a family member, Mr. Akanfanaaba, led Franklin and the investor to show him the land available at Akia. They were accompanied by the acting chief of Kologo. After the field visit the group returned to the earth priest's house to conclude negotiations. Francis openly expressed his interest in acquiring the site, since the land was suitable for a substantial agricultural investment. Having earmarked Akia bush lands as target area the earth priest of Kologo, allegedly for a healthy compensation, allocated vast areas in Akia to the group of commercial farmers Francis represented. After the allocation the investors entered Akia with chain saw gangs and bulldozers and started clearing vast stretches of land. They cut down all trees, even fruit trees of high economic value, such as shea and dawa dawa trees.

This was noticed by a group of hunters from Chuchuliga. They went home and informed the local earth priest and chief of what they had seen. These were not amused. For them Akia, since times immemorial, had been under the control of the earth priests of Chuchuliga.

Earth priests protect the integrity of the territory bequeathed to them by their ancestors. Usually they allocate land to members of the community, unless, as in the case of smallholders from neighbouring villages, permission is sought. In case of encroachment earth priests keep off intruders by rallying round community members to fight encroachers. And this was indeed what happened.



The following day, the earth priests from Namonsa, in the company of his sons, went to the bush to verify the information. After having seen what was going on, the earth priest then went to the Chuchuliga chief, Naaba Asangalisa, to inform him about what was happening in the bush. The chief in turn informed the acting chief of Kologo and the district police commander at Sandema that there was danger of serious conflict looming. The district commander ordered the investors to suspend work.

According to the chief of Chuchuliga, the earth priest from Namonsa organized his community members to fight Kologo for claiming ownership and selling Namonsa land in Akia. This could have been a bloody clash, but for the chiefs timely intervention. According to him, he organized series of meetings between Kologo and Namonsa with police protection. These meetings all took place at a site within the plantation zone, called Ayaga-Peilim. Ayaga-Peilim is a specific area that has historical significance. This spot is an open valley extending about ten (10) or more acres between Biu and Chuchuliga. It has few dotted shrubs. Grasses grow in the field during the rainy season. It is a place where disputes were settled in the olden days. Disputes could be between Biu and Chuchuliga or even between two individuals from the same community. It is here that combatants met to settle their differences either through the use of weapons (bows and arrows) or wrestling.

First of all, the chief needed to cool down tempers and to find out the true owners of the disputed land. The chief of Chuchuliga organised several meetings with the two factions. Community members came out in their numbers to listen to the discussions. Each earth priest, the ones from Chuchuliga and Kologo, said the land was theirs. They also said they got the land from Biu earth priest. The chief then adjourned the meeting to a later date. In the meantime, the chief consulted earth priest from Biu whose ancestors had given the land



to Chuchuliga and Kologo. The earth priest from Biu said that he knows the boundary. But a field visit with the earth priest of Biu, who was ready to lead the two factions along the boundary, has never happened. Therefore, no concrete solution has been arrived at. Both factions continue to claim ownership of the land.

Though a final solution was not arrived at, the chief of Chuchuliga is of the view that he has succeeded, as a possible bloody confrontation was avoided. Furthermore, compensation payments have now also been made to earth priests in Chuchuliga. Nevertheless, this sparked further conflicts in between the earth priests of Chuchuliga's sections of Jaata and Namonsa, who both claimed ownership of Akia.

Namonsa and Jaata are interrelated communities. They carry out communal labour and there is no clear boundary between these two communities. This suggests how united the communities were before the conflict arose.

According to oral tradition people from Jaata were the first to settle at Akia in times immemorial. Later, the people of Jaata had to move from Akia to their present location because of some fighting between family members. As the story goes, the males of the compounds were sitting on logs in front of the house, when they were greeted by a pregnant lady from Kologo passing to her father's house in Sandema. As she continued her journey the men started quarreling. One of the men claimed that he believed that the woman was going to deliver a male, while another one said that she would deliver a female baby. As they quarreled, they got so aroused that they followed the women, killed her, opened her belly and pulled out the child to prove its sex. Afraid that the husband of the women they killed may find out what they had done, the people from Jaata fled from Akia and resettled in the current location of Jaata.





However, while Jaata community was still at their former location, a hunter came to the Jaata people and begged for permission to live with them. They agreed and later on the hunter even married one of their daughters. He was also given land to farm and take care of his wife and children. His family became known as Namonsa.

This oral tradition supports the claims of Jaata to be the original settlers and rightful owners of Akia. And the official contract, which documents the lease and fixed the compensation payment, was finally signed between the investors and the earth priest of Jaata.

As can be seen from this example, the commodification of land and the commercialization of land relations is already beginning to strain traditional land tenure and the underlying rules and regulations. If even earth priests, the very guardians of traditional land tenure and the proponents of a spiritual interaction with nature fall victim to the temptations of short term monetary gains, it is likely that in the long run local land tenure will be truly commercialized. In that case, land will no longer benefit the neediest but those who are able to turn it into the largest profit. What has also become clear is that the investments and the opportunities for rapid enrichments they offer undermines social cohesion in between and within affected communities.

#### **4.7 Effects of Medium-Scale Investment on Local Livelihoods**

In the following, the way in which the medium-scale agricultural investments affects local communities in the case study area will be discussed. Initially negative impacts especially on the economic activities depending on bush land resources will be discussed. Thereafter, positive aspects of the investments and local coping strategies will be analysed.



#### 4.7.1 Effects of Medium-Scale Investments on Smallholder Livelihoods

Prior to the acquisition, clearing and cultivation of the bush land by medium-scale investors, these areas served as important resources supplementary sources of income and helped households in the area diversify their livelihoods activities. Smallholders in the area mainly farm in the rainy season. During the dry season, they spend the day in the forest in search of resources that are of economic importance to them. These include shea, dawa dawa, straw, medicinal plants and game. The indiscriminate felling of economic trees negatively affects the indigenes' incomes. Women can no longer go to these bush lands and pick shea nuts or harvest dawa dawa fruits, to process and sell.

In various interviews, women from Kologo, for instance, claimed that it was the income from shea nut that kept the household moving. Income from shea is used to pay children's school fees, pay hospital bills, buy food for the family during the lean season, and to performance of funerals, among other things. Women rely bushlands for the bulk of their shea nut picking. Women in Kologo and Tangabisi said that though shea trees are allowed to grow on family lands, the number of trees there is too little to match their their picking and processing capacity. The shortage of shea nuts on family land is even more severe during years with little fruiting. Especially, in polygynous families where many women are entitled to access to shea trees, and who usually pick in turns, end up not having enough shea nuts at the close of the fruiting season. Therefore, apart from picking shea nuts from family land, most women use the opportunity that access to shea nuts is unrestricted on bushland, to gather additional fruits. The earth priests do not control the picking of shea nuts in the bush and women have free access here. When to go for nuts and the quantity of nuts one is able to pick depends entirely on the capacity of individual women. Since,



nowadays large parts of the bush land in the vicinity of the case study villages has been converted into mango farms, this important source of income has significantly reduced.

The incomes of all those who collect firewood are also negatively affected. After an initial boom, during which abundant wood was available due to the indiscriminate felling of trees, which created something like a fuelwood bonanza, the areas from which wood can now be gathered from has been drastically reduced.

Many herbalists depended on the forest on the bush land. Here they collected medicinal plants. A female herbalist by name Dam-Achali (Interview, 22/04/2018) talked about the good old days when she could harvest a basin full of herbs in a day. She used the proceeds from the sales to educate all her children. Since large parts of the bush land have been cleared herbs are hard to come and she cannot make ends meet although now she has only one grand-child living with her.

The medium-scale investments have also led to reduction in the availability of elephant grass (*pennisetum purpureum*). This has negatively affected those who harvest and sell grasses. Especially elderly women, who retired from active farming are engaged in the harvesting and sale of grass. They harvest straw and bring it to markets such as Fumbisi, Sandema and Navrongo for sale. Thus, the unavailability of sufficient straw is impacting negatively their income.

As can be seen from the examples above, it is often female economic activities that are affected by the investments. This is particularly affecting poor women and female-headed households, who relied the most on bush resources to supplement their livelihoods.



However, men who often engaged in hunting during the dry season are also affected. Especially, Akia was an area rife with game that was famous with local hunters. Since the bush has been cleared the animals have vanished.

The clearings have also reduced the area on which the communities' cattle can graze. Especially during the rainy season, when most of the compound and family land is under cultivation, the cattle is driven to the bush to graze. While the immediate effect of the significant reduction in pasture is not easy to measure, it has the potential to negatively livestock production in the long run.

As argued above, there is significant negative impacts on the livelihoods of local smallholders. Those who formerly relied on bush land resources are affected the most. These are especially poor and elderly women, female-headed households.

What is unclear, is the future impact of the investments. Currently, there is no land scarcity in the study area. Bush farm lands even remains fallow. But available bush land continues to diminish as land is static in nature, while the number of investors interested in arable land rises. While the population of the case study villages is constantly rising the local demand for farm land will also increase. However, the potential farm land reserve that the bush land provided has largely vanished and future generations will find it difficult to greatly expand farming activities-

#### **4.8 Economic Opportunities Offered by the Medium-Scale Investments**

The negative effects on smallholder livelihoods is partially compensated for by the economic opportunities that the investments offer. These come mainly in the form of wage



labour. Youths with ages between 10 and 25 years from the surrounding communities of Kologo, Naaga, Biu, Namonsa, Jaata, Chuchuliga, Sandema and Wiaga are the casual workers during this period. The youth, but also women from poor smallholder households from Kologo, Naaga, Jaata, Namonsa nowadays rely on the mango plantations for employment in the dry season.

As the trees are young, investors crop cereals such as maize, groundnuts and soya in in between the mango plants during the rainy season. Hundreds of youth both male and female hang around the plantations hoping to be employed. They are more than the plantations can employ.

Farm labourers are employed as contract workers to weed the farms. For the weeding of 10-by-10 meter plot, they get 3.00 Ghana Cedis. While the payment is low, the jobs are in high demand. This can be seen by the fact, that during this period teachers of basic schools do experience a high degree of pupil absenteeism. In interviews, some of the students justified their action. While some said they needed money to buy food for the family (lean season is March to June), others needed money to buy school uniforms or take part in end-of-year school meetings. Because of absenteeism schools in these communities record poor performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).

Labour is not just needed in the rainy season, but also in the the dry season. Young mangos trees have to be watered to survive the harsh climatic conditions in the area. Each plant receives 15 to 20 litres of water per week. At prestige farms, one of the major investments of up to 1000 ha, a heterogonous group of 50 permanent workers water the plants. Ninety percent of these workers come from Namonsa, Jaata and other sections of Chuchulkiga while the remaining ten percent from come Biu and Kologo. A tractor transports workers



from Chuchuliga to the plantation while their colleagues from Bui and Kologo have to find their own means to the farm. The supervisor has his accommodation in Chuchuliga. However, he has a motor-bike, he often goes by tractor to the farm.

Watering begins in December through to May. Monday to Friday are working days. Each day begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:00pm with a lunch break of one hour at 12:00 noon. The daily wage for 2016, 2017, and 2018 was 7, 8 and 9 Cedis respectively. One cedi per labourer is deducted at source. This is meant to cover for their lunch, which is always a mixture of boiled beans and gari. Workers receive their wages at the end of the month. Although wages are low, just at the level of the Ghanaian daily minimum wage, many the labourers expressed content. Assibi, a female farm labourer from Namonsa, expresses it as follows: “This is the time of the year when there is no food at home. I use my money to buy food for my family. My children go to school in clean uniform. Last year, I was walking to work. This year I bought a bicycle.”

As can be seen, the labour opportunities medium-scale investments offer – despite quite exploitative conditions – have, an important component in the livelihoods of local smallholders, especially benefitting the youth. Others like elderly women or poor women, who were heavily depending bush resources and may not be considered as farm labourers are still negatively affected. The full employment potential of the farms is also not realized. The fact that some investors have cleared their acquisitions but never started farming has destroyed local economic opportunity while failing to offer alternatives.

Another significant coping strategy adopted by rich indigenes is the setting up additional income generation activities in the form of shops and shop bars. All the communities benefiting from proximity to the mango plantations, one can find several kiosks. Women,



who either own the stores or run them on behalf of their husbands, usually run these kiosks. The kiosks are stocked with basic needs of employees of the plantations. These include among others, rice, beans, ingredients and local gin. Closely associated with the opening of kiosks is the establishment of restaurants popularly known as ‘chop bars’. Employees patronize at these centers in the morning to have their breakfast before proceeding to the plantations. Because employees are paid at the end of the month, chop bar owners see them as better creditors than the ordinary non-workers. Debt rate in local communities is quite high. Repayment is uncertain. There is a popular but local adage in Buli which says, ‘dam yila gam bu nyuka’. The literal translation is, ‘hoping to have drink, is better than drinking it’. What it means is expectations are better than bad debt’. Non-workers in the study area are noted for not paying back items that they credit.

However, many of those young people who were not lucky and did not get employed as farm labourers are migrating to Southern Ghana for casual work. Some work in the gastronomy sector where they for instance sell chicken and wash chop bar utensils. Others work as porters in markets. This group of These are called ‘Kayayoo’ and hang around city centers to carry heavy loads for a fee.

One of the migrants, Azong, a respondent from Jaata in Chuchuliga (Interview, 12/03/2018, Chuchuliga) gave following account:

“I used to sell honey from the forest to sell. I was getting about 100 Ghana Cedis in a month during the dry season from the sale of honey. When the investors started clearing the trees my income sources reduced drastically. Therefore, in 2012, I started going to Brong Ahafo every Christmas to engage myself as a loading boy. I go in a KIA lorry to the farms and load yams, which are transported to the city center. I do not receive a constant daily wage.



Wages depend on the quantum of work carried out in the day. However, I receive between twenty (20) and thirty (30) cedis each day. I return home in May to prepare for rainy season farming.”

According to Azong, twenty (20) young men from Jaata and Namonsa are doing the same in Brong Ahafo. As can be seen the negative impact and benefits that the medium-scale investments have brought about in the local community are distributed unevenly. While smallholders, especially women and female-headed households, who heavily depended on bush resources in the diversified livelihood strategies are hardest hit. Others, particularly young men and women, who are employed by the commercial farmers seem to benefit, despite poor wages and the lack of social security. Furthermore, wealthier members of the communities are able to reap additional opportunities offered by the influx of workers from the outside and the influx of cash into the local economy as they open shops and restaurants.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusions

This study focused on analysing the impact of medium-scale agricultural investments and the commercialization of rural lands on local land tenure regimes and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the Kassena-Nakana Municipality and the Builsa-North District of the Upper East Regions of Ghana. This chapter presents the summary of key findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

The study was guided by four specific objectives:

1. To examine the reasons for the acquisition of farm lands by medium scale farmers.
2. To investigate strategies that medium-scale investors use to acquire land in the Upper East Region of Ghana.
3. To establish how the commercialization of land relation affect local land tenure regimes in the Upper East Region?
4. To find out how medium-scale investments and changes in local land tenure affect smallholder farmers.

In the following the results with regard to these objectives will be summarized, discussed, and the conclusions drawn along these lines.

The study was able to show that there are several drivers that cause medium-scale investors to acquire land and establish mango plantations in the case study area. One main diver of the investments was the availability of supportive govern programmes, such as



EDIF/EDAIF, which provided loans and grants to investors to engage in the production of exportable agricultural products. Apart from funding, these programmes also provided technical assistance and helped to connect farmers to potential buyers, in this case the fruit-processing company Blue Skies Ghana Limited, who would be able to absorb the future production. Of course investment was only possible because the case study communities still possessed enough virgin and fertile bush land that could be converted into and local traditional authorities willingly cooperated in the acquisition of this land. The availability of cheap and ample labour was another factor that encouraged the investors to acquire significant portions of bush land in the area. Planting, weeding, and watering are labour-intensive activities that cannot easily be mechanized under the local conditions, therefore the availability of cheap farm labour was important. The importance of the availability of cheap labour for agricultural investors has been reported for many large- and medium-scale agricultural investments in developing countries in Africa and beyond (Cotula, et al. 2009; Kay, 2015, Hall et al. 2017).

In the Upper-East Region of Ghana, most lands are in the hands of earth priests, who are perceived to be the descendants of the first settlers. Earth priests keep and protect these lands on behalf of the ancestors and for the benefit of the living and future members of their communities. Traditionally they are not selling or leasing land out. This situation has somewhat changed in urban area or in the peri-urban areas that are experiencing urban sprawl.

However, before the arrival of the medium-scale investors, bush land in the study area was not yet commodified and was not sold. The bush lands were given out by the *tindaanas* for tokens such as fowl, cola, and drink which were mainly used in the necessary sacrifices



going along with the acquisition of bush land and which are meant ensure the success of the farming activities to be carried out. While for small-scale farmers, the old tradition of fowls, kola and drink was still sufficient, small-scale commercial farmers that had entered the area mainly to engage into irrigation farming of pepper or tomato along the Tono River had to add a ram.

But the land acquisition strategies of medium-scale investors differ. Because of their type of investment – tree crop plantations that need a long time to produce returns – and because of the prescriptions of funding agencies, they need to obtain land on a permanent basis and ideally even need to formalize the acquisitions. Usually, they are led by local meddle men from the districts who introduce them to the chiefs of the area where they intend to acquire lands. The chiefs send the investors to the local *tindaanas*, who show them bush land available. However, because of the size of the land targeted (usually hundreds of hectares) and the need to document the land transactions, the investors are willing and asked by the earth priests to pay for the land they are obtaining. Earth priests may sometimes be shy to ask for cash – but rather ask for building materials or other payments in kind instead – somehow pretending not to engage in land sales. Furthermore, earth priests may also be tempted by investors' promises to generate employment for their family members. But apart from individual profit it is also the potential benefits for the community, such as infrastructure development, employment and business opportunities, as well as enhanced market access, that lets chiefs as well as *tindaanas* to willingly agree into land sales. While not all land deals become formalized, the number of titled agricultural landholdings documented by the Regional Land Office has increased. But even in cases, in which official titling is not completed informal lease agreements are often signed by commercial farmers,



earth priests and chiefs – the latter witnessing the transactions. Once the agreement by the earth priests has been reached the commercial farmers are quick to clear and till the land acquired to clearly stake their claim. When this is done, as could be seen from the example given above (see 0), the land virtually becomes the property of the investors, and cannot easily be reclaimed, even when putting the land under cultivation is deferred.

The commodification of land, turning it from a spiritually charged resource managed for the benefit of all members of the local community into a mere productive resource for the economic endeavours of commercial farmers has had strong repercussion on the local tenure regime. While communal benefit and consensual land management were principles underlying the traditional land tenure, commodification and land sales are promoting the individualization of interest and conflict. From the case story of Akia (see 0), it could be clearly seen, how the financial prospects that the sale or lease of land to medium-scale investors offered led to personal enrichment and conflict about land ownership and the proceeds from land transactions. Although land for bush farming has been allocated in the case study area since generations, conflicts between earth priests over land ownership has not been heard of. Traditional territorial borders were known to the respective earth priests families and the regional earth priests that allocate the land to them in the first place. Trespassing of responsibility was not common and – in the absence of tangible interest – of rather ritual importance. However, the fortunes – at least that is how the local earth priests perceived the payments by medium-scale investors, which look rather negligible to people familiar with land process elsewhere – that the land acquisitions made available eroded local institutions and consensus. The earth priest from Kologo claimed ownership and got compensation from the investors. However, he definitely allocated lands far



exceeding the area of his responsibility, thereby causing encroachment on Chuchuliga land. So as earth priests from both communities started fighting about rightful land ownership in Akia, this conflict, if not for the swift and smart intervention of the local chief in Chuchuliga, almost turned into violence. The issue has not yet been resolved – and may be left pending forever to avoid serious conflict – but the investors also had to settle the earth priests of Chuchuliga in order to be allowed to continue clearing the land. However, in turn, the medium-scale acquisition in Akia also led to conflicts between different earth priest families in different sections in Chuchuliga about the rightful ownership of the land sold. While traditionally the wrongful claiming of land ownership was a serious abomination that could be easily punished by the spirits inhabiting the land, nowadays even earth priests – the very custodians of traditional land tenure – are quick to forget about tradition, when it comes to monetary gains. But they do not only quarrel over land, thereby putting neighbouring villages or even sections of the same village, which have a long history of peaceful collaboration, at loggerheads. But they also ignore the very interest of their living and future community members they are meant to protect.

The commodification of land in areas where commercial agriculture is expanding is being globally reported. Attention has been directed to so-called ‘frontiers’ where processes of ‘territorialization’ unfold and they have been the center of recent scientific debates about agricultural change and rural transformation. Like in the case study communities the “territorialization of resource control is a set of processes [...] fundamentally challenging and replacing existing patterns of spatial control, authority, and institutional orders.” (Rasmussen et al. 2018: 388).



Turning bush land into plantations, the investors are reducing the availability of natural resources forests, wetlands and pastures, which are highly important for local small-scale farmer households with their diversified livelihood strategies. As has been argued for many smallholder households worldwide, in Africa and also Ghana (Chambers 1995, Bryceson 2002, Yaro, 2006, Oviedo 2011) the diversification of livelihood strategies is crucial to adapt to economic and environmental changes and to decrease the vulnerability to crises.

Therefore, although no bush farms of local small-scale farmers were acquired, the medium-scale investments still have negative impact on smallholder livelihoods, because they curtail the possibility of smallholder households to diversify their livelihoods. The impact on female livelihood strategies is most severe, as is also argued elsewhere (Cotula, 2012; King et al., 2013, Action Aid, 2014). In the traditional division of labour, it is the women who are responsible for gathering of firewood and the collection of fruits such as shea nuts and dawa dawa. These activities have an important role in female livelihoods and the livelihoods of the small-scale farmers per se. Firewood is an important source of energy, but it is also sold on local and district markets. Especially for the very poor and often female-headed households the sale of firewood provides important supplementary income that provides cash income and can cushion household consumption in the lean season or in times of crises. The collection, processing and sale of fruits such as shea nuts and dawa dawa is important for almost all smallholder households. Especially, shea nuts that are fed into global value chains provide a very important additional income source for small-scale farmers. Gathered, processed and sold by the female members of the households the income is often used to supplement consumption and to obtain scarce cash resources used for hospital bills or educating the children. Since fruit trees on family land



are scarce for many women access to shea or dawa dawa trees in the bush is crucial for many women. The indiscriminate felling of trees on thousands of hectares land of land has largely reduced the availability of fruit trees, but also firewood, in the bush land of the case study communities. Therefore, the medium-scale investments have greatly reduced female incomes and female contributions to the overall small-scale farmer livelihoods. This especially problematic for the poor, elderly and female-headed households.

Also average stallholders are affected. The plantations have greatly decreased the availability of pasture for livestock and devastated the hunting grounds of village farmers. Likewise, those depending on the collection of herbs and grasses have lost their forage.

What is also worrying is the dramatic decrease of potential farmland for the future expansion of smallholder farming within the communities. The bushland that has been turned into plantations could be seen as a farmland reserve for future generations. As has been stated above (see 0) the communities have a large degree of population growth and a very youthful population. Since alternative employment opportunities, even in Ghana's south, are getting increasingly scarce, many youngsters may want to engage into agriculture to make a living. This would only be possible, if a major expansion of farmland would take place. Furthermore, extensive local farming practices greatly depend on the naturally existing soil fertility. Therefore, regular fallowing is important to maintain the soil fertility. This puts additional demand on farmland. Since large parts of the bush land surrounding the case study communities has been sold/leased to medium-scale investors, future expansions and a continuation of fallowing practices on expanded farms will no longer be possible, with potentially devastating effects for smallholder agriculture and the youth. A dynamic that is not only typical for the case study communities but has been



documented in a larger scale for Ghana as well as other African countries (Jayne et al. 2014a, Jayne et al, 2014 b).

All these losses is not directly been compensated for. Direct compensations are being paid in cash and kind to the earth priests and to a lesser degree to chiefs and intermediaries. However, these compensations are individualized and do not benefit the communities as a whole.

Nevertheless, like some of the literature on large-scale agricultural investments claims (Cotula, 2012, Vermeulen, 2010; World Bank 2010), there is also positive impacts from medium-scale investments. The main benefit that the case study communities get from the medium-scale investments are employment opportunities. The farms are in sporadic need of labour when it comes to weeding and watering and the jobs being offered by the plantations are in high demand. However, payments are meager, social security contributions are not being paid, and employment is usually seasonal. Nevertheless, in the absence of hardly any other local employment opportunities, those who get employments by the commercial farmers are glad to gain this additional income to supplement their households' livelihoods.

However, by the fact that it is mainly the youth and women from poor households who work on the plantations, rather than for instance male smallholders and those better off, shows the significance of this form of employment. The situation is somewhat better for those people who are permanently employed, for instance, as security guards, however these are few and often members of earth priests' families. However, generally rather exploitative labour relations – low wages, the absence of permanent employment, and the lack of social security – are not only to be encountered in the case study communities, but





are also the hallmark of many large- and medium-scale agricultural investments, which are termed ‘land grabs’ (Cotula, et al. 2009; Oya, 2013; Kay, 2015).

To a certain degree, permanently employed farm managers and tractor operators residing in the case study villages, who all have been employed from outside, as well the incomes obtain by the casual farm labourers have increased local demand for provisions and food stuffs and have increased the patronage of bars and chop bars. However, it is usually the well to do, those who rely on the lost bush resources the least, who are able to profit from these economic opportunities. It is unclear, in how far the little benefits that the local case-study communities are able to derive from the medium-scale investments are able to outweigh the current and future cost the case study communities incur.

This is even more so, other potential benefits, such as the provision of infrastructure, the transfer of modern agricultural technology and enhanced market access for smallholders, which have been frequently claimed to be associated with large-scale agricultural investments (Vermeulen et al. 2010; World Bank, 2010), have not materialized in the case of the case study communities. Investing in mango plantations, which require large stretches of land, need considerable investment to establish, and necessitate considerable labour input to maintain, but which only start giving returns after several years, is beyond the capacity of local smallholders: This is especially so as they do not benefit from government programs targeting commercial investors. Therefore, there is no technology transfer and the market for mango that is potentially created in years to come, will not benefit the local farmers.

As a result, medium-scale investment in the case study area seems to do little to enhance local livelihoods and to improve local smallholder agriculture. While those commercial



farmers who take their investment serious, may in future contribute to Ghana's agricultural export economy, possibilities of the expansion of smallholder agriculture, of enhancing local food security, and creating meaningful employment for the local youth are rather diminished.

## 5.2 Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions drawn from the research in the case study communities, the following recommendations can be made to government, to medium-scale investors, to earth priests and chiefs and to stallholders:

### *Government:*

- Design programs for agricultural commercialisation and exports focusing on crops that can be also easily cultivated by local farmers, so that they may benefit from technology transfers and enhanced market access.
- Design programs for agricultural commercialization and exports in a way that they entail components that also benefit local smallholders, by promoting group farming and/or out grower schemes.
- Promote forms of agricultural commercialisation and export that focus on staple food crops, which will also contribute enhancing national and local food security.
- Assess the potential socio-economic impact of accumulated government promoted medium-scale land acquisitions on local smallholders and do not promote investments that deprive affected communities of their (future) livelihoods.



- Ensure broad communication of projects to be supported to for local stakeholders to be informed and able to engage in decision making processes, in order to avoid deprivation and conflicts
- Make sure that grants and credits given under programs promoting agricultural commercialization and exports are actually invested for the purpose that are meant to serve and not deviated into other economic or political enterprises.

*Medium-scale investors:*

- Thoroughly research into the use and ownership of land to be acquired in order to avoid land conflicts, local smallholder resistance, and delays in investment.
- Provide meaningful local employment that matches at least official minimum standards and provides social security and safe working environments for the farm labourers.
- Invest in crops and technologies that can be replicated by local smallholders in order to create local economies of scale, reducing transaction costs and enhancing market access for commercial as well smallholder farmers.
- Spare local fruit trees when clearing farmland to maintain biodiversity and support diversified local livelihoods.

*Earth priest and chiefs:*

- Take into consideration the multiple benefits and future opportunities that local smallholders derive from community land.
- Abstain from selling or leasing out land with unclear ownership or which is owned by others, in order to curb land conflict and the erosion of the legitimacy of traditional authorities.



- Require investors to protect local fruit trees and allow access to crucial natural resources such as water bodies and wet lands enclosed by their land holdings, in order to continue to support diversified local livelihoods.
- Reallocate land that is not used for the intended purpose to local smallholders to enhance local incomes and food security.

*Smallholder farmers:*

- Be alert about government programs and investor initiatives potentially diminishing access to crucial natural resources.
- Organise into groups to be able to benefit from larger-scale support programs that exceed the implementation capacity of individual farmers.
- Demand transparency and accountability from local authorities.
- Engage into the preemptive acquisition of land for future agricultural needs.
- Develop alternative livelihoods for the rural youth by investing in education and professional training.



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**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Personal Interview to Small Holder Farmers

**Interview guide:**

Code..... Name of Community... ..

**A: Background of Respondents**

1. Sex of respondent? 1= Male [ ] 2= Female [ ]
2. Age of respondent? 1= Below 30 [ ] 2=30-45 [ ] 3= 46-60 [ ] 4=Above 60[ ]
3. Marital status? 1=Married [ ] 2=Single [ ] 3=Divorced [ ] 4=widowed [ ]
4. Religion? 1=Christianity [ ] 2=Islam [ ] 3=Traditional [ ] 4=None [ ]
5. Educational status of respondents? 1= No formal education [ ] 2=Basic school [ ]  
3=Primary school [ ] 4 = JHS/Middle [ ] 5=Secondary/SHS [ ] 6=Tertiary [ ]
6. How long have you being farming? (In years).....
7. What major economic activity do you engage in as your main source of livelihood? 1- Agriculture [ ] 2=Petty trading [ ] 3=Agro-processing [ ] 4=Service [ ]
8. What are the others economic activities that you engaged in? .....

**B: The Effects of Medium-Scale Land Grab on the Livelihoods of Smallholder**



9. Are you aware of any medium scale acquisition of land in or within this community? 1=

Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

10. For how long have these land deals been in existence? (In years)

.....

11. If yes, to Q9, who released the land to the investor? 1= Landlords [ ] 2= Chiefs [ ]

3= District assemble [ ] 4= others

(specify).....

12. Which of the following land have been acquired by medium scale investor? 1=Bush

(but arable) [ ] 2=Fallowed [ ] 3=Cultivated lands [ ] 4=degraded land [ ]

13. Have you or any member of your household personally lost farm land as a result of

medium land deals? 1= Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

14. If yes (in Q0) how much of your farm land has been lost to the deals? .....Acres or

.....ha

15. Has medium land scale acquisition affected your ability to farm? 1= Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

16. Before these medium land scale acquisition took place, what was the size of your farm

land? .....Acres or .....ha

17. Now that these medium land scale acquisition are place what are the size of your farm

land? .....Acres or .....ha

18. Before these medium land scale acquisition took place, what was the quantity of your

harvest? (Bags/Kg).....



19. Now that these medium land scale acquisition are in place, what was the quantity of your harvest? (Bags/Kg).....

20. Do you save money for future use? 1= Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

21. Before these medium land scale acquisition took place, how much were you saving? (GHC).....

22. Now that these medium land scale acquisition took place, how much were you saving? (GHC).....

23. What are some of the perceived effects of medium scale land deals on your livelihood?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

**C: Alternatives Livelihood Strategies Adopted By Smallholder Farmers to Mitigate the Effects of Increased Land Scarcity**

24. Has there been a shift in your livelihood activity? 1= Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

25. When did you change your occupation/livelihood activity? 1=Less than 1 yr [ ]  
2=Between 1 and 3 years [ ] 3=Between 3 and 5yrs [ ] 4=Above 5 years [ ]

26. What used to be your livelihood activity? 1=Farming [ ] 2=Petty trading [ ] 3=Food vendor [ ] 4=Civil and Public servants [ ] 5=Artisan [ ] 6=others (specify).....



27. Are you happy with your current occupation? 1= Yes [ ] 2= No [ ]

28. If no,Q0 do you have intention to change your current livelihood activity? 1= Yes [ ]

2= No [ ]

29. What alternatives livelihood strategies exist for you adopt as a result of increase land scarcity?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

30. What are the reason why you intends to adopt the livelihood strategies?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

**Thank You**



Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Personal Interview to Landlords and Investors

**Interview guide:**

**A: The Drivers of Current Land Deals by Medium-Scale Investors**

1. What are the various land deals in the area?

| Types of land deals | Name of investor | Size of land acquired | Amount of money involved | Least Period |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |
|                     |                  |                       |                          |              |

2. What are the motive/drivers influencing investor decision to engage in these land deals in the area?

A: .....



B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

E: .....

F: .....

**B: How Medium-Scale Investors Negotiate For Land**

3. What are the conditions that investors meets before lands are release to them?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

E: .....

F: .....



4. How leads these investors to acquire lands in the area?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

5. How does/do land investors negotiate for land in the area?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

E: .....

F: .....

**The Characteristics/Features of Land Markets**

6. What are the features of land market in the area?

A: .....

B: .....

C: .....

D: .....

E: .....





F: .....

7. Other relevant information on land negotiation and land features in the area?

.....  
.....  
.....

D: .....

.....  
.....

