

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



The Impacts of Large-Scale Land Acquisition for Communal Landholders: A Case
Study of Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study assesses the impacts of Large-Scale Land Acquisition (LSLA) for communal landholders in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality of Ghana. It employs a combination of Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD) and Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) in analysing the impacts. Using these two frameworks makes it possible to link LSLA to the broader history of neoliberal capital accumulation processes, the dispossession it engenders and how these manifest in the local context to produce impacts. The study argues that the recent LSLA is a neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategy in response to the triple crisis of 2007-2008 that dispossesses communal landholders of their land, worsens their vulnerability, affects livelihood assets and livelihood strategies, and leads to negative impacts. The study employed a mixed method research design in data collection, analysis and presentation of the findings. It relied on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, household surveys, and participant observation in eliciting data. The main finding of the study is that LSLA in the study area has led to loss of income, food insecurity, tension, conflicts, and environmental degradation. Secondly, LSLA has resulted in dispossession and displacement, loss of access to natural resources, restrictions on movement and human rights abuse, without sustainable compensation. Thirdly, LSLA has contributed to some employment opportunities, socio-economic infrastructure, and market access but these benefited only a few community members. Fourthly, the new coping and adaptive strategies of the affected people in response to LSLA has further exacerbated their vulnerability. The study concludes that although LSLA in the study area has generated some positive impacts for local communities, the negative impacts far outweigh the positive impacts. The study also concludes that the customary land tenure system, guidelines for LSLA and new land laws failed to secure the land rights of communal landholders. Beyond confirming findings of studies that reported negative impacts of LSLA, this study demonstrates the differences in impacts at different stages of the investment projects that were missed by studies conducted in the initial stages. Additionally, the study provides further empirical evidence on coping and adaptive strategies of the affected communities, and gender and generational impact dynamics that have received limited scholarly attention in LSLA debate. More so, by combining ABD and SLF theorisation to capture the nuances of LSLA, this study provides new theoretical and conceptual insights. Akin to studies that have reported negative impacts, the findings of this study call for circumspection in promoting LSLA in Africa and beyond, as its long-term outcomes for communal landholders do not look promising.

DEDICATION

In memory of my beloved parents: Kofi Owusu and Mary Sarfowaa

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Atebubu-Amantin Municipality
AAMA	Atebubu-Amantin Municipal Assembly
AAP	Amantin Agro Processing
ABD	Accumulation by Dispossession
APSD	African Plantation for Sustainable Development
AWD	Accumulation without Dispossession
CLS	Customary Land Secretariat
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EJOs	Environmental Justice Organisations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free and Prior Informed Consent
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IMF	International Monetary Fund

LAP	Land Administration Project
LC	Lands Commission
LI	Legislative Instrument
LSLA	Large-Scale Land Acquisition
LSLI	Large-Scale Land Investment
LUSPA	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MP	Member of Parliament
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MW	Megawatts
NLP	National Land Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OASL	Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands
PA	Primitive Accumulation
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
RAI	Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SD	Standard Deviation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SSNIT	Security and National Insurance Trust
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests
1D1F	One District One Factory

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Focus of the Study

The study assesses the impacts of Large-Scale Land Acquisition (LSLA) for communal landholders in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality (AAM) of Ghana. LSLA has received considerable attention in academia, the media, policy circles, development agencies and social movement organisations, particularly after the publication of a report on land deals by the Barcelona-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), GRAIN, in 2008 (Larder, 2015) following the land rush occasioned by the 2007-2008 triple crisis¹ (Cotula, 2013). The proliferation of literature debating LSLA has produced two main perspectives. Whilst some researchers and their findings support the phenomenon, others oppose it. The proponents, hail LSLA as a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that could unlock the potential of rural communities in the global South through technological transfer, provision of better socio-economic infrastructure and social services, employment creation, the opportunity to feed the population using the economy of scale, the perceived comparative advantage of commercial farming over small-scale farming, and the potential for producing win-win outcomes (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). The opponents, on the other hand, see LSLA as the continuation of primitive accumulation,² particularly in Africa, and trace it to the scramble for, and colonisation of, the continent, that has resurfaced as neo-colonialism with neo-liberal tendencies (Amanor, 2012; De Schutter, 2011; Moyo et al., 2019). LSLA has also been discredited for the perceived negative outcomes³ for the host countries, particularly on the livelihoods of the affected communities due to the potential expulsion, loss of land and other

¹ See page 82 for the description of the triple crisis.

² See page 77 for the discussions on primitive accumulation.

³ It is important to note that, in the context of this study, both “outcomes” and “impacts” are used interchangeably and carry the meaning of long-term effects.

natural resources, environmental degradation, and unsustainable compensation for the affected people (Alhassan et al., 2018; De Schutter, 2011).

The study combines Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD) and Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) and argues that LSLA is a neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategy amidst crisis of over-accumulation that dispossesses and displaces communal landholders of their means of livelihood, alters their vulnerability context with repercussions for their available capital assets and livelihood strategies, leading to negative impacts. However, the fulfilment of promised employment opportunities, provision of socio-economic infrastructure and market access, coupled with alternative forms of sustainable livelihood opportunities and appropriate compensation could offset the negative impacts and lead to increased income, food security, peaceful co-existence, and improved environmental conditions and living standards. The adoption of ABD and SLF enables the researcher to situate the study within the broader neoliberal accumulation strategies and the dispossessions and displacement they engender, as well as accounting for changes in livelihood context of the affected communities occasioned by LSLA and outcomes it produces, to provide a holistic appreciation of the phenomenon under study (See Chapter 3).

The impacts of LSLA for the affected communities are subject to contestation as different analysts have arrived at different conclusions involving positive and negative impacts (Alhassan et al., 2018; Bottazzi et al., 2018). Moreover, most studies were conducted when the investment projects were at their initial stages of operation and might not have produced tangible socio-economic impacts for the affected communities (Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld et al., 2011). There is also evidence that some investment projects have been suspended or cancelled, have collapsed, or have downsized operations (Ahmed, 2021; Lanz et al., 2018) with implications for the livelihoods of the affected communities. Relatedly, the

literature has paid limited attention to several aspects of LSLA including coping and adaptive strategies of the affected communities, gender and generational outcome dynamics, climate change, the role of domestic or diaspora investors, and impacts on socio-cultural and indigenous knowledge systems (See Chapter 2). This study follows up on the debate of LSLA after a decade of implementation of investment projects to assess the impacts they have produced for communal landholders in AAM, a site with several operational Large-Scale Land Investment (LSLI) projects but have received limited attention in the LSLA debate in Ghana. This enables the study to address the following questions: What is the state of LSLA in the study area? Does the development of the acquired land lead to dispossession, exploitation and/or incorporation? Has LSLA resulted in employment opportunities, technology transfer, socio-economic infrastructure and rural development, market access, improved income and food security? How do the communal landholders respond to LSLA? How does the response of the affected communities shape the outcomes of the investment projects? How does LSLA contribute to competition and conflicts over land in the study area? How does LSLA impact the environment? By addressing these questions, the study updates the debate on LSLA which has focused on grabbing land from the local communities and its initial impacts, and less on the later developments.

1.2 Problem Statement

The actual size of land acquired by investors in Ghana is still unknown, but it has been estimated that between 2005 and 2013, a total of 2.05 million hectares (ha) of land was acquired by 36 investment companies⁴ (Schoneveld and German, 2014). Similarly, the AAM has attracted several LSLAs due to the agro-ecological conditions, perceived availability of land, and improved infrastructure (Adjei, 2022; Sarfo et al., 2025). Preliminary studies revealed that

⁴ For details on LSLA in Ghana, see pages 35-39.

from 2005 to 2015, an estimated 124,749 ha had been acquired by foreign and domestic investors in the study area. This excludes acquisitions less than 200 ha. It has been estimated that approximately 45,000 people have been affected by LSLA in the AAM in different ways. The over-concentration of LSLA in this territory could have detrimental impacts for communal landholders since such development has the potential to aggravate commoditisation and competition over access to land and trigger land scarcity and land-related conflicts. Coupled with the fact that the land tenure regime prevalent in the territory is communal landholding (Sarfo, 2011), where individuals possess only land use rights that do not offer them tenure security. In the face of increasing contestation, this segment of the population may lose access to their land use right. The transition zone is also considered a ‘breadbasket’ of Ghana (Owusu & Waylen, 2013; Otu et al., 2024), and challenges posed by LSLA in this area may have serious implications not only for the affected communities, but also for national food security since most of the investment projects are not into food crop production, and when they are, their products are not meant for the local market.

Moreover, the livelihood of rural communities is tied to the land (Chitonge, 2019). The land that might not be under cultivation in such societies still plays a significant role. Such lands serve as a source of fuelwood, game, water, herbs, lumber and, in some cases, ancestral graves where sacrifices are made. Losing access to land through LSLA is linked to the loss of these vital natural resources that have sustained livelihoods of affected communities for ages. Commons grabbing weakens the resilience and adaptive capacity of rural people because such resources are particularly important to them in times of crisis (Haller, 2019). The situation becomes precarious when the loss of access to these resources occurs without the provision of alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities and compensation packages.

LSLA could affect communities' access to land and land-based natural resources, employment opportunities, training in, and transfer of, technology, provision of socio-economic infrastructure and market access, and further shape income levels, food security status, peace and tranquillity, health and environmental conditions. Therefore, LSLA may not only affect the host communities, but also has implications for the nation's quest to attain the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 15 (United Nations, 2015). Goal 1 is concerned with ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. Goal 2 talks about ending hunger, achieving food security. Goal 3 deals with healthy life. Goal 5 touches on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, whilst Goal 8 focuses on inclusive sustainable growth, productive employment and decent jobs. Goal 15 addresses issues about sustainable management of forests, combating desertification, and halting land degradation and biodiversity loss. Therefore, the study looks at the impacts of LSLA in AAM.

1.3 Background to the Study

Land expropriation in Africa is not a recent phenomenon. The first wave of land expropriation was initiated through the expansion of colonialism in the African 'reserves', the 'concessionary' economics, and the colonial trade economics for setting up settlements, mineral extraction, agriculture, and trade (Moyo et al., 2012; Wily, 2013). In the aftermath of political independence, several newly formed African states, through the instrument of eminent domain, expropriated large tracks of land per the national planning framework, where the state regulated the allocation of such lands to productive sectors and development projects (Amanor, 2009a). Other states nationalised land after independence (Gagné, 2022; Moreda, 2017; Wily, 2018). The recent LSLA has been argued to have emerged as a response to the convergence of the global food, financial, and energy crises of 2007-2008 (often referred to as the triple crisis), as capitalists attempt to solve the problem of over-accumulation, bridging technological gaps,

development of urban centres, environmental protection, and the demand for FDI in the host countries (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Edelman et al., 2013; Yang & He, 2021).

Africa is by far the most sought-after destination for LSLA globally and Ghana is one of the most preferred host countries in Africa (Moyo et al., 2019; Nolte et al., 2016). This has been attributed to the relative peace the country has experienced and stable political transitions over the past three decades, the implementation of neo-liberal policies, a weak land tenure regime and state regulations governing LSLA (German et al., 2011). The implementation of neo-liberal economic policies initiated in the 1980s under the guise of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) contributed immensely to opening the country up for FDI (Boafo-Arthur, 1999). This has led to the rolling back of the state from the market arena and opened the market space for capitalist competition from citizens and foreigners (Amanor, 2009a; Lanz et al., 2018). The privatisation of state enterprises, institutional reforms, promotion of efficient allocation of resources for growth and campaigns to attract FDI positioned the country for all kinds of investments including investment in land.

Until recently, the Ghanaian state did not have an explicit regulatory legal framework for LSLA apart from the compulsory acquisition by the state (Gyapong, 2021; Schoneveld & German, 2014). The state's intervention in LSLA was limited to registering a company, maintaining land banks of traditional leaders willing to alienate land, linking the traditional leaders to investors through the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), registering the acquired land with a land title deed by the Lands Commission (LC) after conclusion of negotiation with customary authorities and the issuance of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certificate by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Boamah, 2014a; Schoneveld & German, 2014). The negotiation processes for LSLA in Ghana are done between investors and

traditional leaders willing to lease their land. Given the situation described above, it becomes easy for actors, vested with fiduciary roles to abuse the system for their own gains thereby making it easy for investors to acquire land in such areas without proper consultation and adequate compensation for affected communal landholders. This may expose the vulnerability of the affected communities through dispossession and loss of natural resources whilst the promised employment creation, increased income and revenue, socio-economic infrastructure, food security, improved living standard and the alternative forms of sustainable livelihood opportunities may not have fully materialised. The execution of the intended projects may have variegated impacts for the affected communities worthy of interrogation.

The study was conducted in the AAM (See Chapter 4), an area which has attracted interest from investors with several mega investment projects still in operation. Unlike its neighbouring districts, the Pru and Nkoranza, where jatropha cultivation dominated land acquisitions (many of which have since collapsed) and became the focus of LSLA debate in Ghana (Boamah, 2014b; Quansah et al., 2020; Schoneveld et al., 2011), the acquisitions in the study area involve eucalyptus, cassava and other food crops. The AAM has also received limited attention in the LSLA debate, making it an ideal place for conducting this study.

In 2010, the researcher conducted a data collection exercise in the study area for his MPhil thesis when he encountered LSLA. At the time, many of the projects were in their initial phases where investors were taking possession of the acquired lands leading to agitations and protests from affected communities. A visit to the area after a decade revealed that the investment projects were at various stages of implementation. It was observed that new acquisitions had also taken place. The initial protests that greeted the investment projects appeared to have died down, although the affected communities constantly lamented the hardship imposed on them

by LSLA. This motivated the researcher to investigate the impacts of LSLA for the communal landholders in the study area.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The study argues that LSLA is a neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategy that dispossesses communal landholders of, and displaces them from, their land and other means of livelihood that alter their vulnerability context and affect their capital assets and livelihood strategies, producing negative impacts. These negative impacts could be offset with the provision of alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities and appropriate compensation packages. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to assess the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the AAM of Ghana. Based on the main objective, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the developments taking place in the study area regarding LSLA
- ii. Assess how the development of the acquired land leads to dispossession and exploitation at various stages of the investment projects
- iii. Examine the impacts of LSLA on employment, socio-economic infrastructure, markets access, environment, income and food security at different stages of the implementation of the investment projects
- iv. Ascertain the nature of community response to LSLA at different stages of the investment projects

1.5 Research Questions

The main question to achieve the objective of the study is: What are the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the study area? Based on the main question, the following questions were posed:

- i. What developments have occurred in the study area regarding LSLA?

- ii. How does the development of the acquired land lead to dispossession and exploitation at different stages of the investment projects?
- iii. How does LSLA affect employment, socio-economic infrastructure, market access, environment, income and food security at different stages of the implementation of the investment projects?
- iv. How do the affected communities respond to LSLA at different stages of the investment projects?

1.6 Significance and Contribution of the Study

The critical role of land in the agrarian economy of many African countries cannot be overstated. The land factor has been part of numerous agrarian reforms since the 1960s when many African states emerged as independent nations. The recent proliferation of LSLA has impacted global, regional, national, and local communities. Therefore, the significance of a research work that targets the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders, who are in direct contact with investors, will help shape the narratives about LSLA.

The recent LSLA has never lacked academic exposition since its emergence in the academic debate. The period between 2008 and 2016 witnessed the production of several volumes of scholarly articles and books as well as major conferences on the phenomenon. Just as there appears to be a decline in the acquisition of new lands in Africa (Herrmann, 2017), research on the phenomenon has also declined. Whilst the earlier studies of the “making sense” period (Edelman et al., 2013:1520) highlighted the processes taking place (Cotula, 2009; Wily, 2013), subsequent studies attempted to ascertain the outcomes for the affected communities (Bottazzi et al., 2016; Quansah et al., 2020; Schoneveld et al., 2011). The community response to LSLA has also received considerable attention in recent studies (Tafon & Saunders, 2019; Tamura, 2021; Teklemariam et al., 2017) but such studies pay less attention to the impacts. On the other

hand, most studies on impacts were conducted at a time when most investment projects were at their initial stages and did not account for the new developments on the acquired land (Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld et al., 2011). The most recent studies on impacts are overly fixated on finding statistical data to back assumptions of impacts thereby glossing over developments on the acquired land (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Quansah et al., 2020). Relatedly, other studies have focused on reviewing existing literature and do not account for recent happenings (Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld, 2017; Vandergeten et al., 2016). Given that LSLA is an evolving and context-specific phenomenon, following up on what has happened a decade after land acquisition, when investment projects might have made significant socio-economic and environmental impact, is an important aspect of the LSLA debate that has not been adequately addressed in the literature.

The literature has also revealed that some aspects of LSLA debate, such as gender and generational outcome dynamics, coping and adaptive strategies, water, climate change, the role of domestic or diaspora investors, outcomes for socio-cultural systems, and indigenous knowledge systems, have received little attention. Beyond complementing the findings of earlier studies, this study highlights new developments and impact dynamics that were missed by earlier studies thereby empirically updating the debate on LSLA. The study also contributes to aspects of LSLA debate that have received limited attention in the literature as identified above, including coping and adaptive strategies of the affected communities and gender and generational impact dynamics. Therefore, the study empirically updates the debate not only on LSLA but the broader debate about land tenure and agrarian systems in Africa and beyond.

The study also contributes to providing theoretical and conceptual insight about LSLA. The adoption of a combination of ABD and SLF in analysing the results of the study helps in linking LSLA to its broader historical context and the associated dispossession and displacement and

how these unfold in the local context to produce impacts for communal landholders. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study on LSLA that adopts a combination of ABD and SLF to analyse the findings. The identification of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD) as a stand-alone component in the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3) is something new, as studies that rely on SLF often assume the role of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures and usually capture this as part of the national policy, institutional and organisational context. Such analysis neglects the prominent role of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures in shaping national and local processes and structures that paved the way for acquisition of large swathes of land.

LSLA has implications for employment and income, food security, conflicts, socio-economic infrastructure, general wellbeing and environment of not only the affected communities but also the national efforts at attaining the SDGs. Therefore, the recommendations of this study could inform policy makers, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), investors and local community members in future decision-making regarding LSLA.

This is a case study that employs a convergent mixed method research design in collecting, analysing and presenting the results of the study. The field data were collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), household surveys, and participant observation. The qualitative and quantitative data were analysed separately and presented side-by-side (see Chapter 4 for details on research methods). The findings of the study demonstrate that LSLA has dispossessed and displaced communal landholders of their land and natural resources without sustainable compensation; LSLA produced some jobs, socio-economic infrastructure, and market opportunities but these could not offset the impact of land loss; and that overall, LSLA produced negative impacts for communal landholders including loss of income sources, food insecurity, tension and conflicts, and environmental degradation.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Methodologically, the study relied heavily on the qualitative approach and descriptive statistics. This was occasioned by the limited time and financial resources at the disposal of the researcher to carry out baseline and follow-up surveys in a form of longitudinal approach that is necessary to collect data for purely quantitative analysis. This hinders the ability to generalise the findings of the study in different contexts. However, with the focus of the study on the real impacts from the experiences of the communal landholders rather than establishing causality between LSLA and impacts, the adopted approach was appropriate for this study and the absence of complex statistical analysis did not affect the findings of the study. Another methodological limitation of the study is the reliance on the views of community members and environmental experts in gathering data on environmental impacts rather than using environmental impact assessment tools, such as remote sensing and satellite images that may require long term observations and special skill that were beyond the researcher's reach.

Some aspects of LSLA did not receive sufficient attention in this study. For instance, the issues of the sustainability and profitability of the investment projects, particularly from the perspectives of the investors, received limited treatment. This was partly due to the difficulty in obtaining data from the investors. Likewise, differentiated impacts along the lines of gender, generation and origin of the land users did not receive sufficient treatment. As a case study that focused only on one Municipality, the study could not also capture all the nuances of the impacts of LSLA on national scale. Given that these were not the main focus of the study, their limited attention did not in any way affect the findings of this study.

Other challenges include the reluctance on the part of state institutions, traditional leaders and investment companies to make available lease documents on the acquired lands as well as data on the extent of LSLA in the study area. This resulted in discrepancies in the figures quoted as

the size of land acquired by investors as well as the terms of agreements. To address this challenge, the researcher combined different sources of data to arrive at conclusions that reflect the realities on the ground. The investors were not comfortable with the research study and were reluctant to provide some sensitive information. One of the companies only agreed to provide information to the researcher by providing a written response to the interview questions which did not allow for follow-up questions. The investors also appeared to have gagged the workers against speaking to the researcher, or the workers were afraid of being victimised, as they were reluctant to provide some sensitive information, especially about salary and conditions of work. This has the potential to distort the data provided by the respondents. However, the researcher had to spend several minutes explaining to them that the information to be gathered was solely for research purposes and was not going to be used to victimise them nor would the company have access to such information, before they opened-up.

1.8 Thesis Outline

The study is divided into eight chapters, made up of the introduction, literature review, theoretical and conceptual chapter, study area and methodology, two empirical chapters, discussion, and concluding chapter.

Chapter One introduces the study. It provides the focus of the study, problem statement, background of the study, objectives, research questions, significance and outline of the study.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on LSLA. The first part of the chapter discusses the literature regarding issues such as labelling, definition and scope, drivers, actors and places where land deals were occurring, processes of acquisition and the response of affected communities. The second part of the chapter provides an overview of LSLA and land administration and management in Ghana to situate the study within the Ghanaian context. The third part reviews the literature on impacts of LSLA by focusing on dispossession and

displacement, livelihood impacts involving employment and income, food security and environmental impacts. The chapter also discusses the literature on gender and generational impact dynamics. The chapter revealed that LSLA has never lacked academic exposition as various aspects of the phenomenon have been studied. However, the literature has focused on early stages of implementation of investment projects and does not account for later developments, which calls for further interrogation.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study. Drawing from a combination of ABD and SLF, the study conceptualises LSLA as capitalists' attempt at responding to economic crises emanating from over-accumulation, which has the potential of expropriating communal landholders of their land leading to dispossession, exploitation, or incorporation of the peasantry with far-reaching implications for the livelihoods of the affected communities. The chapter discusses ABD as espoused by Harvey, its application in the LSLA literature, the critique of the theory and its relevance to this study. It further presents a modified SLF linking it to ABD, describes the framework and its application in the LSLA literature, and a critique of the framework and its relevance for the study. The deployment of ABD and SLF provides a better framework to effectively assess the impacts of LSLA because, in combination, they provide a broader way of perceiving and understanding LSLA. Whilst ABD is useful in linking LSLA to its historical antecedents and the dispossession it creates, SLF is useful in ascertaining how dispossession unfolds and the outcomes it produces in the local context.

Chapter Four focuses on the overview of the study area and the methodology of the study. The chapter provides information about the location and ethnic composition, demography, vegetation, climate and rainfall pattern, relief and drainage, economic activities, social and political organisation and the nature of land tenure in the study area. It further discusses the methodology of the study by concentrating on the research design, sampling methods, data

collection instruments, data analysis and presentation, research ethical appraisal and security considerations.

Chapter Five is the first of the two empirical chapters and presents empirical data on the manifestation of LSLA in the study area. The chapter touches on themes including an overview of LSLA in the study area, processes of land acquisition, community participation and informed consent, developments taking place on the acquired land and the response of the affected communities. The chapter highlights that the study area has had its fair share of LSLA since the mid-2000s. Even though the state assumes a non-interference posture in customary land management, the legislative framework, investment promotions, land registration, and enforcement of law and order in matters of LSLA reside with the state. Traditional leaders wielded much power in customary land administration and, as a result, played crucial roles in granting land to investors, including negotiating the land deals. Both the indigenous people and the migrants in the affected communities were not actively involved in the land acquisition processes and their informed consent was not sought. As a result, they could not negotiate any terms that could help to alleviate the hardships emanating from the investment projects. The chapter further reveals that the acquired lands had gone through different trajectories, some projects have collapsed, and others are yet to commence operation. However, the two projects that are the focus of this case study have been in operation since the land acquisitions and have gone through different phases of development. Community members adopted several response strategies, however, these appeared not to have yielded the expected results. The appreciation of the dynamics of issues in the chapter provides a useful basis for examining the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders.

Chapter Six is the second empirical chapter and focuses on the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in AAM. The chapter reveals that LSLA has resulted in dispossession and

displacement, land scarcity, and loss of access to natural resources including firewood, charcoal, lumber, grass for roofing buildings, water sources, and loss of hunting and gathering rights. The chapter also demonstrates that LSLA has intensified competition and conflicts over land, human rights abuse and restriction on movements. These occurred with no or inadequate compensation. The promised employment opportunities, training in, and transfer of, new technology, provision of socio-economic infrastructure, access to input and output markets could not offset the negative impacts leading to declining income levels and poverty, food insecurity, tension and conflicts and environmental degradation. Women and the youth appeared to be the worst affected groups in the communities.

Chapter Seven discusses the results of the study by looking at how the main themes of the study relate to the broader debate and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. It highlights the unprecedented levels of LSLA in the study area between 2008 and 2013, confirming the triple crises narrative. The chapter also demonstrates that these acquisitions and later ones occurred without active participation and informed consent of the affected communities confirming the extra-economic coercion argument espoused in ABD. The accumulation processes together with the developments taking place on the acquired land had dispossessed and displaced communal landholders from their land leading to the loss of access to land-based natural resources with reverberating impacts on the vulnerability context, available capital assets, livelihood strategies and, ultimately, the outcomes for communal landholders as illustrated in the conceptual framework. The chapter further highlights that, together with no or inadequate compensation; restrictions on movement; human rights abuse; intensification of competition and conflicts over land; rising land value and absence of alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities; failure to deliver promised massive jobs; lack of provision of socio-economic infrastructure and access to input and output markets, LSLA has produced negative

impacts for the communal landholders. The chapter demonstrates that the study fits within ABD and SLF and the broader debate on LSLA.

Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter of the study and presents the key findings, conclusion and recommendations. Five key findings were established from the empirical data. Firstly, LSLA occurred without active involvement of communal landholders in the acquisition processes. Secondly, LSLA resulted in dispossession and displacement of communal landholders of their land and land-based natural resources without sustainable compensation. Thirdly, the employment opportunities, socio-economic infrastructure, and market access occasioned by LSLA could not compensate for the negative outcomes. Fourthly, community response was unsuccessful in reversing land deals or improving the lot of the affected communities and the new coping and adaptive strategies worsened their vulnerability. Finally, LSLA produced negative impacts for communal landholders involving declining income and rising poverty levels, food insecurity, tension and conflicts, and environmental degradation. The study concludes that customary land tenure system failed to secure the land rights of communal landholders amidst LSLA-engendered land scarcity, rising land value and intensification of competition over land leading to dispossession and displacement. Secondly, the promised jobs, socio-economic infrastructure, input and output market and training in, and transfer of, technology could not offset the negative impacts caused by dispossession and displacement. Thirdly, the negative impacts of LSLA far outweighed the positive impacts in the study area. Finally, the study does not see LSLA in its current form producing sustainably positive impacts on a wider scale in the study area.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study which assessed the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders. The main argument of the study is that LSLA is a neoliberal capitalists'

accumulation strategy in times of crisis that dispossesses communal landholders of, and displaces them from, their land and natural resources, which worsens their vulnerability context, affects their capital assets, livelihood strategies and produces negative livelihood impacts. However, the negative impacts could be compensated with sustainable employment creation, compensation packages, provision of socio-economic infrastructure, and market access. The next chapter reviews the literature on LSLA.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

LSLA has regenerated debate in the agrarian system, particularly in the global South. Scoones et al. (2013:469) observed that the “land rush has been accompanied by literature rush.” The initial studies attempted to make meaning out of what was happening and concentrated on issues such as the meaning, drivers and scale, actors involved, where the deals were taking place and the initial impacts on the host communities (Cotula, 2009; GRAIN, 2008). Several other issues about LSLA have engaged the attention of researchers; among them, the processes of acquisition, impacts on livelihoods and environment as well as the response of the affected communities. This chapter, made up of four sections, reviews the literature on LSLA thematically. The first section presents a general review of themes such as labelling, definition and scope, drivers, actors and places where the land deals were occurring, processes of acquisition and the response of affected communities. The second section discusses LSLA and land administration and management in Ghana. The third section focuses on the impacts of LSLA on affected communities. The final section summarises the literature and identifies the gaps that this study helps to fill. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

2.2 Labelling, Definition and Scope of Large-Scale Land Acquisition

The proliferation of literature on LSLA has been associated with the polarisation of debate about the phenomenon. Toft (2013) identified three distinct positions in LSLA discourse, namely, advocacy, cautious support, and outright resistance. Cotula et al. (2014) also recognised two standpoints: those in support and those against large-scale land investment. Similarly, Borras Jr et al. (2013:168) identified three policy perspectives of LSLA: “regulate to facilitate land deals; regulate to mitigate negative impacts and maximize opportunities; and

regulate to stop and rollback”. Proponents of LSLA hail it as FDI that could unlock the potential of rural communities in the global South (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Zoomers, 2010). The opponents, on the other hand, see LSLA as the continuation of primitive accumulation, particularly in Africa, and trace it to the scramble and colonisation, which has resurfaced as neo-colonialism with neo-liberal tendencies (Amanor, 2012; De Schutter, 2011; Moyo et al., 2019). LSLA has also been discredited based on opportunity cost, governance gaps and tenure insecurity (De Schutter, 2011).

The label used to describe LSLA depends on the individual’s position and viewpoint of the phenomenon. The proponents prefer labels like large-scale land investment, agricultural investment, land deals and ‘FDI in agriculture (Cotula et al., 2014; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). The opponents fancy such labels as land rush, land grabbing or grab, primitive accumulation, common grabbing, new scramble, natural resources grabbing and foreignisation of space (Alhassan et al., 2021; Amanor, 2012; Borras Jr & Franco, 2013; De Schutter, 2011; Moyo et al., 2012; Zoomers, 2010). Those who appear neutral adopt the seemingly neutral term ‘large-scale land acquisition’ (German et al., 2013; Nolte et al., 2016). Despite the differences in labelling, they all refer to the same phenomenon. In this study, preference was given to the use of LSLA, although occasional references to other terms may not be avoided completely. Such references refer to the same phenomenon.

There are some attempts at analytically and conceptually distinguishing between LSLA and land grabbing. In this regard, land grabbing is conceived as involving illegal land acquisition which does not adhere to national laws and international guidelines and leads to the dispossession of communal landholders (Anku et al., 2022; Obeng-Odoom, 2015). LSLA, on the other hand, is considered as land deals that have conformed to laid-down legal regimes and processes and are perceived as legal (Ahmed et al., 2019). This tangent is problematic because

several studies have pointed to non-compliance with statutory regulations and international guidelines (German et al., 2011; Schoneveld & German, 2014). According to De Schutter (2011), land grabbing is interlaced with corruption which manifests in two ways: investors paying bribes to state actors and traditional leaders, and framing of state regulatory framework such that the elite can take advantage of the system. Therefore, compliance with statutory regulations and international guidelines does not immunise land deals against negative impacts. Even LSLA with a good business model and active participation of local community members is not enough to engender positive outcomes (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014).

The FAO study on land grabbing in Latin America and the Caribbean identified three characteristic features or standards for identifying land grabbing or LSLA. These standards were: the scale or the size of land should be big enough and they estimated the minimum threshold to be 1,000 ha; the deal should have direct involvement of foreign government; and finally, the land deal should be seen as having negative effects on food security of the host nation (Borras Jr et al., 2012). Focusing only on these three conditions could lead to narrowing the scope and misinterpretation of the phenomenon. Conceptualising LSLA this way is also problematic because it could lead to underestimating land deals, particularly when aggregating deals in a particular country, region or the world. From the FAO perspective, if any land acquisition, regardless of the size, does not involve foreign investors or government it cannot be considered LSLA (Borras Jr et al., 2012). The concentration on foreign land grabbers may deflect focus from the involvement of the national elite and “capital inflows between overseas and domestic business and political interest” (Scoones et al., 2013:477). Another problem inherent in this proposition is the scale or land size to be considered. Several scholars have used different figures as their minimum threshold: for example, Cotula et al. (2014) quoted

1,000 ha, the World Bank (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011) used 500 ha, Schoneveld and German (2014) cited 2,000 ha, and Land Matrix uses 200 ha (Nolte et al., 2016).

Borras Jr et al. (2012) defined land grabbing as

the capturing of control of relatively vast tracts of land and other natural resources through a variety of mechanisms and forms involving large-scale capital that often shifts resource use to that of extraction, whether for international or domestic purposes, as capital's response to the convergence of food, energy and financial crises, climate change mitigation imperatives and demands for resources from newer hubs of global capital (Borras Jr et al., 2012:405).

They perceived LSLA as 'control grabbing' which connotes power to control land and natural resources. Concerning the scale, they identified two issues of importance: the scale of land acquired, and the scale of capital involved. Their last consideration is that the deals occur within the dynamics of capital accumulation strategies. This study adopts the definition by Borras Jr et al. (2012) because it is broad enough to capture the nuances of LSLA. However, the minimum swathes of land to be considered is placed at 200 ha in order to capture most land deals since the cumulative impact of several 200 ha parcels concentrated in an area could have a more massive implication for local communities than one 1,000 ha deal.

2.3 Drivers, Actors and Places of Land Acquisition

The recent wave of LSLA is said to have emerged as a response to the convergence of global food, financial, and energy crises (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Nkansah-Dwamena & Yoon, 2022), attempts at bridging financial and technological gaps, development of urban centres, environmental protection, (Edelman et al., 2013; Gyapong, 2021; Yang & He, 2021), the demand for FDI in the host countries (Renzaho et al., 2017; Zoomers, 2010), carbon sequestration and the desire by the governments of host countries to embark on mega

developmental agenda (Adjei, 2022). Similarly, Yang and He (2021) identified the desire to meet global food and biofuel needs, production of industrial commodities, protection of the environment and the development of urban centres as the drivers of LSLA. Discussing the recent LSLA in southern Africa, Hall (2011) identified biofuel, mining and forestry as the main drivers. Critiquing the focus on food and fuel niches, Zoomers (2010:430) postulated that the LSLA is too broad to be limited to just one or two processes as drivers and argued that the recent land rush could be explained in the context of “[g]lobalisation, market liberalisation and the rapid increase in foreign direct investment”.

Not all researchers situate the LSLA within the context of the global crisis of 2007-2008. Locher (2016) has discussed how weak governance, plurality and overlapping land tenure systems shape the nuances of LSLA in Tanzania, making countries with such characteristics a soft spot for investors. Peters (2013a) argued that the interest of national governments and domestic actors in facilitating LSLA was kindled by aid and loans that come with the land lease, “private returns in the form of fees or more indirect benefits from foreign investments, and political gains for the different authority figures” (p. 556). Nkansah-Dwamena and Yoon (2022:289), attributed investors’ decision to invest in a particular African country to the perceived “abundance of farmland and water, low cost of business start-up, streamlined legal procedures, government effectiveness and corruption”. Amanor (2012) links resource grabbing to years of liberalisation and integration of African markets into the global capitalist system. Moyo et al. (2012) also conceptualise the recent land expropriation as a new scramble for Africa and the extension of capital accumulation similar to that of colonisation. Whilst this study fits within the 2007-2008 triple crisis narrative, as most of the acquisitions occurred immediately after the crisis or the projects commenced thereabouts, the researcher sees LSLA as part of historical processes of capital accumulation.

Even though the initial debate on LSLA focused on food and biofuel as the main drivers, recent studies have identified the boom in export-oriented crops as a major driver of new investments (Yang & He, 2021). Thus, the earlier-held notion of ‘feeding the world’ (Cotula et al., 2014:914), has been challenged by evidence from Ghana, Tanzania and Ethiopia, which found biofuel and consumer goods in the form of agro-industrial crops as the leading drivers. It is worth noting that, in analysing the drivers of LSLA, one considers the actual use of the land, instead of the intention of the investors (Yang & He, 2021) since evidence abounds about investors who have switched from their original intent for acquiring the land. For example, jatropha plantations in Agogo and Yeji in Ghana have been converted to maize and rice farming, respectively (Ahmed, 2021; Boamah, 2014a). In this case study, the investors were engaged in tree plantation to produce electricity from biomass, cultivation of cassava to produce industrial starch for domestic and international markets and food crop production.

The initial assumptions pointed accusing fingers at China, India and the Gulf states as the leading players in the new land rush (Moyo et al., 2019). However, several empirical studies have identified European countries, the USA, and some middle-income countries like Brazil, South Korea, South Africa and Libya as well as the Gulf countries as dominant players in the LSLA (Moyo et al., 2019; Nkansah-Dwamena & Yoon, 2022). Within these countries, they identified private investors, national governments and multinational corporations as the main actors (Moyo et al., 2019). German et al. (2011) also observed that the actors involved in the LSLA include private investors, state-owned companies from foreign and host countries, and citizens, including diasporans and political elites. Even though, in Ghana, the debate about the actors of LSLA mainly focuses on foreign investors (Abdallah et al., 2023; Ayamga et al., 2023), the role of domestic investors is quite prominent (Anku et al., 2022). This study highlights the role of both domestic and international actors. Although the individual parcels

of land acquired by domestic investors in the study area are not as huge as those of foreign actors, their combined effect cannot be underestimated.

Studies have identified Africa south of the Sahara as the main investor target for LSLA. Adjei (2022) argued that 66.2% of global LSLA covering over 56.2 million ha of land is in Africa. Again, Lay et al. (2021) estimate that, since 2000, over 30 million ha of farmland has been transferred to foreign investors globally and observed that more than a third of the deals occurred in Africa. There are discrepancies in the estimated figures regarding the actual land size acquired by investors in Africa, but this is not surprising given the fact that land deals in most countries are shrouded in secrecy (Anku et al., 2022; Cotula et al., 2014; Schoneveld et al., 2011). However, there is a consensus in the literature that Africa is the leading destination for LSLA globally and Ghana is among the top 20 preferred destinations in Africa (Anku et al., 2022; Moyo et al., 2019). The investors' interest has been attributed to the perceived availability of cheap and abundant fertile and uncultivated, underutilised land and low agricultural productivity associated with the continent's agriculture and land use (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Haller et al., 2019; Lanz et al., 2018). However, the perceived abundant land has proven to be elusive, but this discourse has been used as a camouflage to expropriate land from smallholder farmers (Haller et al., 2019; Lanz et al., 2018).

2.4 The Processes of LSLA

The processes of LSLA are influenced by the land tenure regime and legal framework for investment in a particular country (Anku et al., 2022; Dieterle, 2022; Locher, 2016). Many African countries have legal pluralism in land and natural resources (Amanor & Ubink, 2008; Engström et al., 2022; German et al., 2011). The processes of LSLA in Africa reveal an interesting scenario regarding the role of the various actors. In countries like Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal and Zambia, the state takes a leading role in alienating land to

investors, however, in Ghana, the state appears to assume a non-interference position regarding customary land, particularly in the negotiation processes (Lavers & Boamah, 2016; Teklemariam et al., 2017). Whether the state is at the forefront of expropriation processes or not, studies have shown that the state plays diverse roles in LSLA ranging from investment drives, the establishment of regulatory frameworks, expansion of infrastructure, assisting in negotiation, and technical and bureaucratic support for investors (Nkansah-Dwamena & Yoon, 2022; Schoneveld et al., 2011).

An assessment of the processes of LSLA has demonstrated a disconnect between the legislation protecting the customary rights of the rural population and the rules governing LSLA, and the actual practices on the ground (Schoneveld & German, 2014). The actors vested with fiduciary responsibilities are said to have abused the system by expropriating land for personal gain without recourse to the rights of communal landholders (Schoneveld et al., 2011). By observing the role of chiefs in the processes of LSLA in Ghana, Ahmed et al. (2019) described the LSLA as ‘benefit grabbing’ and argued that it benefits some actors in the local communities more than others and identified the traditional authorities as the major beneficiary. They added that the informal “processes of negotiation, consultation and compensation underlie how the benefits are reaped” (Ahmed et al., 2019:203). Traditional leaders are said to have taken a proprietary position instead of the fiduciary position that the constitution and the customary laws vested in them (German et al., 2011, 2013).

Lanz et al. (2018) discussed the role of the state and chiefs in promoting agricultural commercialisation and LSLA in Ghana. The thrust of their argument was that, while the prevailing development rhetoric frequently portrays LSLAs as part of a state-led effort to modernise agriculture in rural Ghana, customary authorities, especially chiefs, are at the forefront of pushing and negotiating these investments. According to them, LSLA emerges

from the alliance between international donors, state, the private sector and customary authorities. They added that the interaction between chiefs, state and international policy context reinforces and strengthens the powers of the customary institution as chiefs are increasingly working as agents of progress and modernity in the context of globalisation and agricultural modernisation through LSLAs. This reaffirms the critical role that customary authorities play in the land acquisition processes.

The local community participation in the processes of land acquisition has received considerable attention in academia. It has also featured prominently in the international guidelines proposed by international development organisations and land rights activists because of the argument that the nature of incorporation into the LSLA projects influences the gains or impacts of the project on local livelihoods (Alemu & Tolossa, 2022; Mamonova, 2015). Several international voluntary guidelines, such as FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) and FAO, IFAD and World Food Programme's Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (RAI) (Castañeda et al., 2023); regional guidelines like AU voluntary guidelines on LSLAs; and national legislation have laid down the processes of ensuring that local community members are engaged in the land alienation processes and, most importantly, that their consent is sought before granting land lease and that adequate compensation is paid to those who may lose their land, properties and livelihood sources (Kebede et al., 2023).

The processes of seeking free and prior informed consent (FPIC) from land users and payment of compensation are usually not taken care of in the national framework for LSLA and even if they are, those regulations are not followed in practice (Cotula, 2009). It has been argued that, in Africa, the processes of LSLA do not conform to the "global normative standards for consultation, consent, and recompense as framed by the principle of free, prior, and informed

consent” (Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:193). Nolte et al. (2016) opine that the consultation procedures in LSLA are flawed because consultations are often one-off events instead of ongoing processes; that there is elite capture, as discussions centre on the elders of the community; that there is a lack of, or incomplete or vague, records of consultation; and the role of the communal landholders is restricted to expressing concerns instead of making input into the decision to alienate their land. They further argued that consultation usually has a top-down approach and excludes most land users (Nolte et al., 2016). The same observation was made by Ahmed et al. (2019) when they illustrated how a chief of whole village was not informed or aware of a land lease within his territory. Schoneveld (2017:130), has also faulted the consultation processes and argued that consultation in most cases involves “conflicts of interest, co-optation, elite capture, insufficient” and inadequate capacity. The improper consultation creates a vacuum in communication, which could lead to manipulation with its attendant negative outcomes for communal landholders (Alemu & Tolossa, 2022). The challenges associated with community consultation and FPIC are very much observed by this study (See Chapter 5).

2.5 The Response of Affected Communities

The recent scholarship on LSLA since the special publication by the *Journal of Peasant Studies* in 2015 has given prominence to the responses of the affected communities, probably because of the assumption that the local response is an estimation of the perception of the recipient communities and the outcomes of LSLA. However, the local community members affected by LSLA either do not have the capacity to resist or incentives to resist the expropriation of their land and, even if they do, the resistance has been insignificant in most cases (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Schoneveld, 2017).

Several studies have conceptualised peasant response to LSLA by emphasising resistance at the expense of the all-encompassing meaning of a response (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013; Mamonova, 2015). The focus on resistance has been accused of oversimplification of rural agrarian politics. Mamonova (2015:607), has challenged some assumptions inherent in the notion of peasant resistance: that resistance constitutes the only way local communities respond to LSLA; that the peasants are unable to adapt or coexist with LSLI; and that “food and land sovereignty dominates peasant struggle”. She argued that the nature of inclusion of the local communities in the LSLI projects determines the kind of response and that the rural population not only resist LSLA but also adapts and seeks to gain advantages within the new investment. As observed in this study, with the failure of the initial resistance to stop the implementation of the investment projects, community members have adopted coping and adaptive strategies (See Chapter 6).

Borras Jr and Franco (2013) observed that different people are not only affected by LSLA differently, but also different people perceive and interpret experiences differently based on

[a] whole range of variable and relative economic, political, social and cultural factors, conditions and calculations that are often not well understood and, in any case, would require much deeper inquiry than is often given (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013:1724).

Additionally, Moreda (2015) observed that communities in which LSLA is located are highly differentiated socially and politically and for that matter, their response is influenced by the relative power wielded by individuals, the form of land expropriation, historical experience and cultural background. This position has also been emphasised by Tamura (2021) in a study based in central Mozambique where differences in responses were articulated, including adaptive strategy, voluntarily giving up resources, mobilised resistance and everyday resistance. Tamura (2021) demonstrated that two communities affected by the same LSLI

project responded differently. Similarly, Fameree (2016) observed that variations in responses are occasioned by the interaction between capital, land and labour. In instances where capital needs the land but not labour, expulsion occurs, whereas in situations where capital may need both land and labour, incorporation in its various forms results (Fameree, 2016; Mamonova, 2015; McCarthy, 2010) thereby affecting community response. Thus, “social groups’ various political reactions shape and are reshaped by the political opportunity/threat structure” (Fameree, 2016:542) which accounts for the nature and trajectories of the land deal by determining whether the deal will lead to expulsion or incorporation, whether the reaction of the affected people will be to reject the land deal outrightly or over terms of incorporation, and the outcomes that emanate from contestation.

Borras Jr and Franco (2013) identified three levels of peasant struggles and terrains of contestation that demonstrate that there are different levels of response. The three levels are: “poor people versus corporate actors”, “poor people versus the state”, and “poor people versus poor people” (p. 1730). These different levels of conflict and terrains of contestation illustrate the assertion that local communities do not only react to the state and/or the corporate investors, but also to, and among, themselves. With an empirical study from Ethiopia, Moreda (2015), demonstrated a range of responses of local communities against the investor, seasonal immigrant labourers, and the state. These responses are intended to prevent expulsion, improve terms of incorporation, avoid land concentration, and as a call for redistribution and recognition (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013). The response of the communal landholders to LSLA could, therefore, take the form of resistance, acquiescence or incorporation (Hall et al., 2015; Mamonova, 2015; Tamura, 2021).

A closer review of some specific works on community response to LSLA will suffice here. Gingembre (2015) demonstrated that three rural communities affected by LSLA in Madagascar

responded differently. Whilst two municipalities were receptive to the investment project and did not overtly protest it, the third municipality vehemently resisted and succeeded in holding back their lands from appropriation. She argued that the municipality protested the alienation on the grounds of the fear of loss of land and cattle, the investment model and the type of crop to be cultivated, unimpressive social services and the absence of alternative sources of livelihood as well as the negative image painted about the project by the communities where the company had already started operations. The temporary success of the protesting municipality was attributed to effective local mobilisation, formation of alliances with local and regional elites and NGOs and outward linkage with international CSOs (Gingembre, 2015). This network enabled them to adopt “state-legal repertoires” in the form of “letter writing, petitions, press conferences” in their mobilisation, and their opposition was overtly displayed, contrary to everyday forms of peasant resistance (Gingembre, 2015:572; Prause, 2019; Scott, 1986).

On the contrary, Touch & Neef (2015) found that, in Cambodia, the choice of resistance strategies does not align with a clear pattern but appears to correspond to the varying levels and strategies of oppression that government representatives, concessionaires, and the armed forces applied. They observed that peasant resistance was “desperate, sporadic and atomistic” and that the resistance mobilisation hardly transcended village boundaries (Touch & Neef, 2015:9). This contradicts studies that stress the deployment of everyday politics in a repressive and autocratic system (Kerkvliet, 2013; Scott, 1986), as rural peasants of Cambodia adopted varied resistance strategies including overt resistance.

Relatedly, Gagné (2022), in a study based in Senegal, argued that opposition to LSLA does not imply an outright rejection of foreign investment but rather that political factionalism, family pride, intra-lineage disagreement and pastoralists’ grievances over the project due to the

potential dispossession provided the reasons for a dissenting approach towards the investment project. Thus, the project attracts both opposition and supporters (Gagné, 2022) and polarises local communities between opponents and supporters. The opponents of the project framed their discourse around “the content of the project and the approach adopted” citing problems with FPIC, reluctance to share project documents and the immediate impacts of the project on the livelihood of the affected communities (Gagné, 2022:253). On the other hand, the proponents also adopted the popular LSLA discourse of the existence of idle land and/or unproductive use of land, the need for development assistance in the area, and creation of employment opportunities (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Gagné, 2022; Gagné & Fent, 2021). Gagné (2022) also attributed the successful resistance leading to the relocation of the investment project to the ability of the opposition group to scale up the arena of conflict to the national level by roping in national CSOs and elites in their struggle.

Sändig (2021), based on a macro-data analysis of the existing literature on the local community response to LSLA, conceptualised local response around everyday resistance, contentious politics and legal mobilisation. He argued that the affected communities typically employ variegated tactics, reaffirming the argument of earlier studies (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013; Mamonova, 2015). He categorised the frequently occurring repertoires of contestation into three: “everyday resistance, contentious collective action, and rights-based protest” (Sändig, 2021:2). He asserted that the adoption of a particular repertoire is dependent on factors such as the state support for investors and repression, lack of resources such as “land titles, financial means, and legal knowledge”, support from national and international CSOs and NGOs, and the support from local and national elites (Sändig, 2021:10). However, he pointed out that the choice of a repertoire does not follow any pattern, and affected communities could deploy

tactics from all three repertoires of contestation at the same time or at different stages of their struggle (Fameree, 2016; Sändig, 2021).

Dell'Angelo et al. (2021), relying on data from the Environmental Justice Atlas (EJAtlas), provided a systematic synthesis of patterns that characterised the various resistance, social mobilisation and contestation engendered by LSLA. They argued that the mobilising actors include local environmental justice organisations (EJOs), indigenous people, farmers, neighbours, citizens, communities, women, landless peasants, international EJOs, scientists, local and national elites and the wider social movement organisations. They added that mobilisation can occur before the start of the project implementation, at the start of the project implementation, during project operations, and when the project has produced tangible socio-economic impacts (Dell'Angelo et al., 2021). They further observed that actors employed varied actions involving conventional protest, demonstration and appeals, building collaboration and alliances, creation of knowledge and alternatives, non-violent confrontational actions and potentially violent actions. They argued that these forms of protests and contestations are not mutually exclusive. The discussion by Dell'Angelo et al. (2021) on the outcomes of the social mobilisation and contestation involving repression, legislative and institutional changes, and modification of projects, appears to be a novelty. The reaction of the state, investors and customary leaders to the community response, and the outcomes they produce for the community members, the investors and the state has received little attention in the literature. This has been explored further in this study (See Chapter 5). However, the reliance on the EJAtlas which only captures the reported data on environmental conflicts might leave out several social mobilisations and land-related conflicts. Furthermore, the study did not capture information on instances without social mobilisation.

In the case of Ghana, Boone (2015) argued that, due to the prominent role of chiefs in customary land administration, community protest and resistance were mainly directed at the chiefs. This takes “the form of contentious politics of public denunciations; petitioning; public protests and demonstrations; and highly public attacks on chiefs’ palaces or other property” or the chiefs themselves (Boone, 2015:180; Ubink, 2008). Lanz et al. (2018) reported a case in the Volta region where the affected people and their chiefs took up arms and occupied the disputed land threatening to kill anybody who came near. Yaro and Tsikata (2013) also demonstrated how community members in northern Ghana deployed savannah fires as a form of resistance to land alienation. However, Schoneveld and German (2014) observed that, although the projects in their study had resulted in considerable displacement of the communal landholders, there were no incidents where the loss of land rights was formally contested in the law court or the House of Chiefs. They attributed this situation to the limited capacity of the communal landholders to assert their land rights, customary deference to chiefly authority, and the “high expectation of modernisation prospects” (Schoneveld & German, 2014:199). Thus, in line with the broader literature, the community response to LSLA in Ghana is variegated. These dynamics need further exploration as taken up by this study (See Chapter 5) to account for new trends, since LSLA is context-specific and an evolving phenomenon.

2.6 Overview of LSLA in Ghana

LSLA is not a new phenomenon in Ghana. Like many African countries, Ghana has gone through several phases of land expropriation including the precolonial and early colonial, the late colonial and early post-independence, and the era of market liberalisation which culminated in the recent waves of LSLA. Each of these phases has its own characteristics, such as drivers, actors, the purpose of expropriation, and areas where acquisitions took place.

The precolonial and early colonial phase of land expropriation in the Gold Coast, now Ghana, started in the early nineteenth century (Amanor, 2005). Before the establishment of formal colonisation, there were reports of sales of large tracts of land in the oil palm districts of south-eastern Ghana among the Krobo and Akuapem people to enterprising capitalist farmers who engaged in the cultivation of oil palm to take advantage of the palm oil export boom during the period (Amanor, 2010; 2022). With cocoa supplanting oil palm as the leading export crop, the farmers shifted their attention to the wetter high forest region to acquire large tracts of land for cocoa production (Amanor, 2005; Hill, 1997). This phase also coincided with the gold boom, which led to land sales for gold mining. The main features of land acquisitions in this phase were: individual parcels of land acquired were not as large as the subsequent phases, but the cumulative expropriation was huge; the land deals were in most cases between divisional or town chiefs and private investors or individuals, without the involvement of paramount chiefs or the state; the land acquisitions were driven by the export market boom for palm oil, cocoa and gold; the actors involved in the land acquisition were mainly domestic farmers or investors, however, gold mining attracted foreign investors; and the investments targeted the high deciduous forest zones (Amanor, 2010).

The consolidation of colonial power and introduction of indirect rule paved the way for vesting land in paramount stools⁵ or chiefs. The nature of land appropriation changed as the state introduced the concept of eminent domain which allowed the state to acquire land for development purposes in the national interest upon payment of compensation (Amanor, 2022; Ubink, 2008). This phase, described as the late colonial and early post-independence period, was characterised by the state expropriating vast tracts of land. In the 1920s, for instance, the colonial state initiated the acquisition of large swathes of land for creating forest reserves, to

⁵ “A ‘stool’ in southern Ghana symbolises the power of a chief. So, chiefs normally sit on ‘stools’ to signify their power... The corresponding symbol of power in northern Ghana is ‘skin’ (Obeng-Odom, 2016, p. 669).

the extent that “20 per cent of the high forest zone in Ghana lies under forest reserves” (Amanor, 2005:102). Although the colonial state maintained minimal government intervention in agricultural development and the economy in general, this changed after World War II because of the rise in the importation of food occasioned by the expansion of cocoa production and urbanisation (Amanor, 2009b). As a result, the colonial state embarked on large-scale agricultural modernisation projects, like the Gonja Resettlement Programme of the 1950s, which was the first of its kind (Amanor, 2010).

The first post-independence government led by Kwame Nkrumah, intensified agricultural mechanisation and modernisation programmes by setting up several state farms including those at Wenchi, Braman Ejura and Atebubu. In the 1970s the government encouraged “large-scale investments in private farms by capitalist farmers, state bureaucrats, and agribusiness”, as well as revamping state farms and government enterprises (Amanor & Iddrisu, 2022; Amanor & Pabi, 2007:56). Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s, three different types of agricultural mechanisation were in operation: state farms; private estate agriculture where the state provided loans and subsidised inputs; and large-scale development and irrigation scheme, which incorporated small farmers on a contractual basis (Amanor, 2009b; Konings, 1984). These agricultural projects required large tracts of land, to be implemented, and the state expropriated rural communities’ land to embark on these projects. The main characteristics of land expropriation during the late colonial and early independence period include the following: The land alienation was initiated by the state and transactions were between the state and paramount chiefs and in some cases family heads. The land acquisition was driven in the early part of the phase by state infrastructure development, mining, forest reserves, cocoa, coffee and palm oil, which targeted the forest regions. However, food crops (maize, rice, cowpeas and sorghum) production which targeted the savanna woodland in the then Brong

Ahafo and Northern regions later became a major driver. The individual parcels of land were relatively larger than in the earlier phase. The actors involved were mostly the state and domestic investors (Amanor, 2010; Konings, 1984).

The third phase of LSLA is the market liberalisation or neoliberal phase. The economic hardships of the early 1980s, which were climaxed by the 1983 bushfires and the resultant famine, prompted the Ghanaian state to seek support from the Bretton Woods institutions (Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Konings, 2002). This financial assistance came with the SAP and associated World Bank and IMF conditionalities to remove subsidies and privatise state agricultural enterprises (Boafo-Arthur, 1999). This marked the end of the state experimentation in agribusiness and support for a class of commercial farmers (Amanor, 2022; Amanor & Pabi, 2007). As a result of the withdrawal of subsidies, the cost of farm inputs rose high, making farming unprofitable and led to the collapse of many of the mechanised projects whilst others were privatised and taken over by multinational agribusiness corporations. The high cost of inputs prompted the capitalist farmers to look for an alternative way of accumulating wealth from agriculture. The outcome was the emergence of exotic tree plantations (Amanor, 2009b; Amanor & Pabi, 2007). Therefore, large-scale land expropriation was carried out in the late 1980s and the 1990s to establish mango, cashew and teak plantations. The main features of this phase include the following: land acquisitions were initiated by domestic private individuals who transacted land with traditional authorities; the state facilitated the development of plantations because of the perceived positive role of trees in protecting the environment; the individual parcels of land were not as large as that of phase two; whilst some of the old cocoa growing districts were targeted for mango, oil palm and citrus plantation, the majority of the plantation targeted the transitional zone and the savannah regions; and the main crops cultivated on a large-scale were mango, cashew and teak.

The final and the most unprecedented phase comprises the recent waves of LSLA, which many researchers consider to be a continuation of the neoliberal phase (Amanor, 2022; Anku et al., 2022), but has been uniquely identified for purposes of this study because of its unique characteristics and the quantum of land expropriated. Since the mid-2000s, Ghana has received enormous “interest from foreign and domestic agricultural investors and [featured] prominently in academic and journalistic debates” (Lavers & Boamah, 2016:96). The actual size of land acquired by investors is still unknown. However, Schoneveld and German (2014:188) postulated that, from 2005 to 2013, land acquired by investors in Ghana was estimated to be over “2.05 million ha” involving 36 companies, mostly foreign entities (89%) with each investor acquiring more than 2,000 ha for agriculture and forestry plantations. However, this figure might not be the actual size of land acquired during that period as there have been problems with documentation and the fact that land acquisitions are shrouded in secrecy, which creates the possibility of leaving out some land deals (Anku et al., 2022; Cotula et al., 2014; Schoneveld & German, 2014). More so, counting only acquisitions that exceed 2,000 ha may miss out on several other acquisitions that might be less than 2,000 ha, but their aggregation could involve huge tracts of land. This is the category in which many domestic investors find themselves. Again, such figures exclude the acquisitions for mining, residential, industrial, ecotourism and forest reserve purposes (Andrews, 2018; Lawer & Ablo, 2023). As an ongoing phenomenon, new land transactions may have been executed after this estimation (See Chapter 5). There is also evidence that many projects have collapsed (Ahmed, 2021). These make it difficult to know the actual extent of land acquired.

Compared to the previous phases described above, the recent LSLA has unique characteristics. In the first place, the acquisitions were triggered by global economic, food and energy crises and the quest for FDI (Edelman et al., 2013; Zoomers, 2010). Secondly, the phase saw foreign

investors, both private and state-owned enterprises, as well as multi-national companies acquiring land in Ghana by directly negotiating with the traditional authorities (Lanz et al., 2018; Lavers & Boamah, 2016) before the agreement made between them was formalised by the state institutions (Schoneveld et al., 2011). Although the actors included national investors, the involvement of foreign investors has been unprecedented since independence. Thirdly, the quantum of the individual land deals was huge. As indicated in Chapter 5, a single land deal involving 82,000 ha was acquired by foreign investors. Fourthly, the investments were targeted at the forest-savanna transition zone with approximately 65% of the investments located here (Schoneveld, 2017:122). Fifthly, in the agricultural sector, the acquisitions were driven by biofuel, mainly jatropha and eucalyptus, and food crops involving maize, rice, sorghum and cassava (Adjei, 2022; Anku et al., 2022). Jatropha plantation dominated the early period of this phase by far; however, with the collapse of the jatropha sector globally, many of the jatropha projects have been abandoned whilst others have been transformed into food crop production (Ahmed, 2021; Boamah, 2014b). Finally, these acquisitions have dispossessed many communal landholders without compensation (See Chapter 6).

2.7.1 Land Administration and Management in Ghana

In the pre-colonial time, the possession of land was not only for the productive benefit one could derive from it but also the possession of a territory imposed social and political domination over people, therefore “wars were waged to capture territories for the extension of the suzerainty of the victor” (Sarfo, 2020:8). There were also instances where land was acquired by being the first settlers of a territory or through gifts. Irrespective of how a group acquired land, the pre-colonial economic conditions allowed for communities or towns to manage their land around the village subsistence economy (Obeng-Odoom, 2016) under the leadership of town or village chief. However, changes in economic and political imperatives

with the abolishment of the slave trade and subsequent replacement with trade in natural products resulted in greater commercialisation of land (Austin, 2005). The boom in export crops, such as oil palm and cocoa, as well as gold mining, led to the emergence of a land market in the Gold Coast that the colonial administration tried to control with the introduction of the Land Bill of 1894 that sought to vest all forest and minerals as well as ‘waste land’ or vacant land in the British Crown (Amanor, 2005; Hansen, 2023). This move was vehemently resisted by the chiefs, the indigenous educated elites and the nascent Gold Coast merchant class including Africans and Europeans who came together to form the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (Hansen, 2023). The society petitioned the Colonial Office in London because they claimed that all the land in the Gold Coast, whether occupied or vacant had an owner and, their resistance yielded a positive outcome, as the Land Bill was rescinded (Amanor, 2005; Hansen, 2023).

The failure of the Land Bill did not end the Gold Coast colonial administration’s pursuit to control land, which occasioned the introduction of the indirect rule implemented through the native authorities (Amanor, 2005; Lanz et al., 2018). Under the indirect rule policy, the British administered their colonies through customary leaders and, in this context, chiefs. In places where the notion of chieftaincy was alien to the people, as in the case of the acephalous societies in northern Ghana, chiefs were installed by warrant (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Yaro, 2010). Some of these chiefs were recognised as paramount chiefs and were organised into native authorities who carried out rural administration (Amanor, 2010; Obeng-Odoom, 2016). The paramount chiefs were given considerable powers to interpret customary law, “enlist communal labour for public works, to raise revenues, and to control land” (Amanor, 2010:111). Vesting land in paramount chiefs enabled the colonial government to control land speculation, establishment of private land markets and movement of people. The paramount chiefs were

acknowledged as the only social group with the right to sell land or transact concessions with foreign capital (Amanor, 2010).

By this arrangement, the colonial government enacted land policy based on the notion of customary privilege that granted the paramount chiefs allodial titles, whereas their subjects only possessed use rights or usufructuary rights (Lanz et al., 2018; Obeng-Odoom, 2016). However, this evocation of customs was not based on the actual lived experiences of African societies but on “a dogmatic framework of what constituted communal land tenure within the British Empire emanating from the Privy Council in London” (Amanor, 2022:25; Haller, 2019). What constitutes customary land tenure is often the state and the chiefs’ stance (Boni, 2005), as the notion of customary as “timeless traditional society was at variance with the complex and chaotic history of the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century” associated with “fluidity, mobility, accumulation of capital and class divisions” (Amanor, 2022:26).

The post-independent state has not nationalised land but rather reinforced the colonial arrangements. Thus, land tenure arrangement has not changed much since independence, as the current framework for land administration has been largely determined by colonialism (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). The 1992 Constitution and the New Land Act 2020, Act 1036 have given legal backing to the customary tenure arrangement by recognising the fiduciary role of traditional authorities in land matters. This situation has created plurality in land tenure in Ghana, leading to the categorisation of land into three: customary, state and vested (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Kasanga & Kotey, 2001).

The state land was acquired through compulsory acquisition (Kasanga & Kotey 2001; Otu, 2022), vested in the president on behalf of the citizens and administered through land right titling (Amanor, 2009a). Regarding vested land, land belonging to a chiefly stool or skin or landholding community without chiefly authority or, in cases with controversies, was vested

in the president to administer on behalf of the people. In this instance, the state neither pays compensation for the land nor expropriates the land to a third party but only assumes the responsibility of management and collection of revenue on the land (Amanor, 2009a; Yaro, 2010). The customary land which constitutes about 80% of the land in Ghana, on the other hand, is vested in traditional leaders who hold the land in trust for their subjects and administer it according to the customary laws within the specific territory (Antwi-Bediako, 2018; Boamah, 2014a; Kasanga & Kotey, 2001). The customary land includes the stool/skin land vested in the paramount stools/skins headed by the paramount chief in areas with chieftaincy institutions, to be managed on behalf of the subjects of the stool. The land in the study area belongs to the stool land category. There is also lineage or family land which is collectively owned by a social group who are related to each other by matrilineal or patrilineal lineage and claim to have a common progenitor. The family lands were administered on behalf of the members by the family head, *Abusuapanin*⁶ (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Otu, 2022). In some parts of northern Ghana, land was vested in earth priest (*Tindaana*). There are also instances where individuals and corporate groups acquired land either through inheritance or gift and purchase when the land became their bona fide property leading to the emergence of private property in land. It suffices to say that in the case of leasehold, the land reverts to the original owners upon the expiration of the lease, unless the agreement is renewed.

Within these tenure regimes, there exist several interests or rights held by different individuals presented in Table 2.1.

⁶ *Abusuapanin* is the Akan (Twi) word for the head of a family.

Table 2.1 Interest in land in Ghana

Interest	Duration	Held by	Reason
Allodial Title	Infinite	Chiefs, Families, Clans, State	Acting as Custodians of Land
Customary Law Freehold	Absolute Interest: Acquisition of customary law freehold interest by a non-citizen in respect of stool or skin has been proscribed since 22 nd August 1969.	Stool, Skin, Clan, Family	Acting as Custodians
Usufructuary Interest	Infinite	Indigenes	Membership of Landowning Family, Stool, Skin
Leasehold Interest	99 years for citizens and 50 years for non-citizens. Is also dependent on the use of the land. For example, farmland for cereals and poultry is for 10 year-duration	Indigenes and non-indigenes who establish an agreement with allodial right holders	Market-based agreement with allodial right holders
Customary Tenancies/Licences (including <i>Abunu</i> , <i>Abusa</i>)	Renewed yearly after payment of agreed proceeds or money to the landowner	Non-indigenes obtain from Chiefs, Usufructs, Leasehold right holders	Market-based agreement with any of the higher interest holders

Source: Adapted from Otu (2022:111-112).

2.7.1.1 Land Reforms in Ghana

Ghana has had a long history of land reforms to carve out a land administration and management institutional framework that promotes national development and security of tenure for all especially, the most vulnerable in society. This has been done through legislation and the creation of institutions to manage land (Anaafo et al., 2023). The piecemeal approach to land reform did not achieve the intended outcomes, as the land sector was still riddled with numerous challenges. These include general indiscipline in the land market; indeterminate

boundaries of stool/skin lands; problems with the state's compulsory acquisition; land conflicts; inadequate security of land tenure; difficult accessibility to land; a weak land administration system; lack of consultation with landowners and chiefs; lack of consultation, coordination and cooperation among land development agencies; and inadequate coordination with neighbouring countries (MLNR, 1999:3-4). For this study, the researcher focuses on the National Land Policy (NLP) of 1999, the Land Administration Project LAP I & II and the New Land Act, Act 1036 of 2020.

In the context of the above challenges and pressures from international and multinational neoliberal aid agencies to open the agricultural sector for capitalist accumulation, the NLP was formulated in 1999. The NLP became the most comprehensive and ambitious attempt at reforming land administration in Ghana since independence (Anafo, 2015). It aimed at

[t]he judicious use of the nation's land and all its natural resources by all sections of the Ghanaian society in support of various socio-economic activities undertaken in accordance with sustainable resource management principles and in maintaining viable ecosystems (MLNR, 1999:6).

As a vehicle for the operationalisation of the NLP, the Land Administration Project (LAP) was developed in 2002. The NLP and LAP were funded by the World Bank and partner donor organisations (Anafo, 2015).

The LAP was aimed “to provide secure land tenure which is believed to be a sine qua non for growth, economic development, and poverty reduction” (Obeng-Odoom, 2016:669; Soto, 2013). The first phase of LAP comprises institutional reforms, harmonisation of land policies, monitoring and evaluation, rolling back of the state from the management of stool lands, and generally making the LC market-focused (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). Some of the major interventions introduced by LAP relevant to this study include the passage of the Lands

Commission Act of 2008 (Act 767), which merged four previously autonomous land sector agencies under the New Lands Commission (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). The merger of the land sector agencies was partly to ensure speedy registration of land titles by cutting back bottlenecks. Under the LAP implementation, specialised courts to adjudicate land disputes were established. Alternative dispute resolution practitioners were trained on land-related conflicts. In the customary sector, the Customary Land Secretariat (CLS) was also introduced. The implementation of NLP through the LAP and the CLS has strengthened chiefs' administration of land, liberalised the land market, and supported the state's agenda of commoditising land, which is perceived to improve commercial agriculture and land-sector development (Amanor & Ubink, 2008; Lanz et al., 2018). The emerging concern is that "strengthening the position of customary fiduciaries in land alienation has the potential to create insecurity for customary usufructuaries" and tenancies (Anaafo et al., 2023:12). It was within these institutional and administrative frameworks that the recent LSLA emerged. Although the NLP and the LAP might not have anticipated what was coming to enable the state to make provision for it, the land policy and its attendant implementation strategies paved the way for the entry of LSLA (Kuusaana & Gerber, 2015). The emergence of LSLA has also prompted the formulation of policy guidelines in line with the international voluntary guidelines for responsible investments. These guidelines include the *Community/Investor Guidelines for Large-Scale Land Transactions* by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), published in 2015 and the LC's *Guidelines for Large-Scale Land Transactions* of 2012 which was revised and published in 2020. The New Lands Act, Act 1036 might also have incorporated lessons from LSLA.

The Land Act, Act 1036 of 2020 was passed to harmonise all existing land laws to address prevailing challenges in the land sector. The preamble to the Act states:

AN ACT is to revise, harmonise and consolidate the laws on land to ensure sustainable land administration and management, effective and efficient land tenure and to provide for related matters (Republic of Ghana, 2020:14)

Act 1036 merged all land laws that existed before its enactment and made them void, making Act 1036 a go-to place in search of land laws in Ghana. Among the highlights of the Act is the traditional authorities' accountability clause that sought to put checks on the fiduciary right holders to prevent them from abusing their office and mismanaging land in their trust. Again, whilst under the LAP, the establishment of the CLS was based on demand from the allodial rights holders and operated as a pilot project (Amanor, 2022; Obeng-Odoom, 2016). The new land law makes the establishment of the CLS compulsory for all allodial rights holders. At the time of the data collection exercise, the CLS in the Atebubu traditional area was in its formative stage. Whilst this law looks good on paper, the implementation challenges may hinder any gains that could be derived from it. These challenges are beyond the scope of this study except to say that, at the time of the data collection exercise, the legislative instruments (LI) which provide the detailed implementation strategies had not been formulated.

2.7.1.2 Land Sector Agencies in Ghana

Several state and customary institutions play diverse roles in land administration and management in Ghana. In this section, the researcher only lists these institutions, as their respective roles will be made clear during the presentation of empirical data. At the ministerial level, the main ministry that provides policy direction and oversight over land matters is the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), and the other relevant ministries include the MOFA and the Ministry of Energy. The state agencies also include LC, OASL, EPA, GIPC, Forestry Commission, Water Resources Commission, Department of Game and Wildlife, Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA), Physical Planning Department of the

Assemblies, Minerals Commission, Geological Survey Authority, Ghana Irrigation Development Authority, and Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). As the lead agency, the LC coordinates the land acquisition processes and works in collaboration with the respective MMDAs and related agencies depending on the type of land being acquired and the purpose for which the land is acquired (Lands Commission, 2020).

The traditional institutions involved in the land administration include the chieftaincy and clan/family. As indicated earlier, CLS was introduced as part of the LAP implementation. The CLS is formed under the auspices of an allodial right holder and controlled by traditional authorities, although LC provides guidelines and monitors its activities. The CLS is mandated to furnish the LC with reports and information on land transactions made by the Secretariat. This has made the CLS a kind of hybrid institution that serves to bridge the gap between the state and customary land institutions in land management. All the above institutions are involved in LSLA in Ghana in various capacities and ways.

2.8 Impacts of Large-Scale Land Acquisition

The impacts of LSLA on local communities have been documented by several researchers with variegated conclusions. LSLA is said to have the potential to improve the livelihood of local communities through employment opportunities, provision of social amenities and infrastructure, technology transfers, and ensuring food security (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Edafe et al., 2023). However, the potential negative impacts through expulsion, loss of means of livelihood, low wages, lack of or inadequate compensation and environmental degradation (Alhassan et al., 2021; Borrás Jr & Franco, 2012; De Schutter, 2011; Engström et al., 2022) prompted the World Bank and the FAO to formulate the voluntary guidelines to regulate LSLA to achieve a win-win situation (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Alhassan et al. (2018:1337), postulated that developing countries promoting policies to create the enabling “environment

for land grabbing are only developing their own underdevelopment”. They observed that LSLA in Ghana is a threat to development and that the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages in the livelihood outcomes for the affected households. Similarly, Bottazzi et al. (2016) reported how LSLA was creating institutional transformation in customary tenure in rural Sierra Leone, resulting in the creation of conflictual tendencies. However, Bottazzi et al. (2018) observed that, in situations where LSLA followed international guidelines (as they observed in their case study), though it resulted in the reduction of available land for farming, this was offset by an increase in monetary income which increased the food purchasing power thereby improving food security, but they considered this as temporary improvement. This section reviews some works under the following subheadings: overall impacts, dispossession and displacement, livelihood impacts involving employment and income, food security and environmental impacts.

2.8.1 Studies on the Overall Impacts of LSLA

Yang and He (2021) provide a thorough overview of the state of empirically grounded research on LSLA through review of case studies. Reviewing 124 case studies from across the globe drawn from the Web of Science database, they examined the broader patterns of LSLA and identified the conceptual and methodological gaps in the existing literature. They observed that the discussion on the impacts of LSLA focuses on the economic, environmental and socio-cultural outcomes and that most of the case studies highlighted negative impacts whereas others reported both positive and negative impacts. Concerning outcomes, they identified issues that featured prominently in the case studies to include compensation, access to farming opportunities, employment and inequalities. The strength of the work (Yang & He, 2021) lies in its ability to establish the trends in the existing literature. More so, the cases from Africa constituted 55% of the total case studies considered, and Ghana, the site of the current study

had 12 cases, the highest number of cases from a single country. Therefore, their study reflects the dynamics of LSLA in Africa and more importantly, Ghana. However, like any other review study, it suffers from the limitations of the reviewed work. For example, most studies from Africa, particularly Ghana (see Schoneveld et al., 2011) were conducted at the early stages of the land investment projects and do not account for later developments. The reliance on Web of Science might exclude a significant amount of knowledge, since there are journals published by public universities that are not indexed in Web of Science, and theses, dissertations, and government publications or reports are not captured (Cochrane & Legault, 2020). Given that LSLA is an ongoing phenomenon, there is a need to update the literature continuously to capture the unfolding dynamics.

Relatedly, Cochrane and Legault (2020) drawing on 71 publications about LSLA in Ethiopia, evaluated what is known and what is missing in the debate. To ensure they captured data from varied sources, they complemented the Web of Science data with data from Google Scholar. They found that studies reviewed were nearly unanimous that LSLA affected rural Ethiopians negatively and that the impacts were greatly felt on the changes in livelihoods. The negative impacts they identified include “loss of access to traditional lands used for subsistence and animal grazing” (Cochrane & Legault, 2020:6), minimal and transient jobs created, increased food insecurity and loss of food sovereignty, infringement of land and indigenous peoples’ rights, and conflict emanating from the land claim processes. They added that several thematic areas have received little or no attention in the LSLA debate, such as gendered perspectives, water, climate change, the role of domestic or diaspora investors, impacts on socio-cultural systems, and indigenous knowledge systems.

The study by Cochrane and Legault (2020) provides critical information that guided this study. For instance, their analysis of selection bias where case studies tended to concentrate on foreign

land deals at the expense of domestic deals, land investments that are problematic and have generated controversies as well as failed or cancelled deals other than investments that have established peaceful relations with the local communities was instructive. Such information was crucial in the selection of the projects for this case study. More so, their call for revisiting earlier studies given that these projects have been in operation for over a decade since the publication of most of the studies they reviewed is in tandem with this study. However, the dynamics of LSLA in Ethiopia are different from those of Ghana. For example, land in Ethiopia is under the ownership of the state and managed by state institutions at the federal, regional and local levels (Abesha et al., 2022). As observed earlier, land in Ghana is vested in traditional leaders in trust for their subjects and are the actors who alienate land whilst the state provides the legal framework to regulate land tenure relations (Anku et al., 2022; Ayamga et al., 2023). Again, most of the studies they reviewed focused only on foreign land deals and presented only a one-sided view of LSLA.

Vandergeten et al. (2016) also investigated the sustainability or otherwise of agricultural outsourcing through a descriptive meta-analysis. Their analysis of sustainability was conceived from three broad perspectives involving social, economic and environmental sustainability and their outcomes for investors, the government of host countries and the local communities. In the case of social sustainability, they found that the outcomes involved a win-win-loss for investors, the government and the local communities, respectively. On economic sustainability, involving GDP/FDI, hard infrastructure, employment, equity and land value, they argued that transnational land deals resulted in a win-win-loss scenario for investors, host governments and the local communities, respectively. They added that economic sustainability outcomes for local communities appeared to be positive, as employment opportunities increased. However, they argued that the jobs created were “often poorly paid, take place in harsh and sometimes

unsafe environments, with little security (contract) and hardworking conditions” that negate any gains from employment (Benjaminsen et al., 2011; Gyapong, 2020; Vandergeten et al., 2016:1407). Regarding the environment, they identified the sub-indicators such as “biodiversity, ecosystem services, and climate change (Vandergeten et al., 2016:1408) and found win-loss-loss outcomes, respectively. Across the three sustainability indicators, they concluded that transnational land deals produce win-loss-loss outcomes for the investors, host government and local communities, respectively. According to them, the benefits of LSLA accrue mainly to the investors whilst host countries particularly the local communities are negatively impacted.

The study by Vandergeten et al. (2016) provides a useful assessment of the sustainability of LSLA that is important in evaluating the impacts for local communities especially their assertion of loss to the local communities. However, such an assertion did not consider the heterogeneity of the local communities and the fact that some members are able to make gains from such investments (Adams et al., 2019; Mamonova, 2015). More so, the reliance on secondary sources means that the work is prone to suffer from the limitations of the studies they reviewed, including selection bias (Oya, 2013). For instance, their focus on agricultural outsourcing implies no considerations were made for land acquisitions by the national or local actors, which have proven to be a major component of LSLA (Cotula, 2009; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). Additionally, the period when the studies reviewed were published (1992-2013) suggests that the projects on lands acquired in response to the 2007-2008 triple crisis had barely taken off or are at their initial stages of development for their real outcomes to be fully ascertained.

Similarly, Azadi et al. (2013) argued that agricultural outsourcing or land grabbing is likely to produce four possible outcomes: loss-loss; win-loss; loss-win; and win-win for the investors

and the host countries. They described the loss-loss situation as a “red deal” which is unsustainable and must be stopped. The win-loss and the loss-win were referred to as “yellow deals” because one side gains from such investment at the expense of the other and such deals needed to be improved to achieve a win-win outcome which they described as “green deals”, which benefit both the investors and the investees (Azadi et al., 2013:25). They argued that, to appreciate the outcomes of a particular deal, there is the need to assess the political, socio-economic and environmental aspects of such land investment and called for continuous research to produce more evidence on both country and crop cases. The conceptualisation of the four possible outcomes of LSLA provides a broader perspective for assessing the impact of land investments rather than the narrow assertion of win outcomes for the investors and loss for the host country or the local communities. Again, their call for critical examination of political, socio-economic and environmental aspects of land deals serves as an important starting point for evaluating the outcomes of such deals. Recognising only two actors, the investors and the host country, has the potential to downplay the impact of land deals on local communities due to some gains that might have accrued to the state in the form of FDI and tax revenue.

Oberlack et al. (2016:154), through a meta-analysis, investigated the configuration of factors and processes “that generate varying outcomes of LSLAs for livelihoods in different social-ecological contexts”. They argued that case studies reported adverse effects including loss of access to land and natural resources, increased conflicts in livelihood contexts, contested compensation, increased inequalities in the affected communities, ecosystem degradation, adverse labour conditions, food security decline, erosion of social capital and maladaptive livelihood strategies. They added that these outcomes were activated by factors and processes, such as the enclosure of livelihood assets, elite capture, selective marginalisation, polarisation

of development discourse, competitive exclusion, agribusiness failure, and transient jobs (Oberlack et al., 2016:158). They asserted that the interactions between the factors and processes depending on their combinations in different socio-ecological settings produce variegated livelihood impacts in different communities affected by LSLA. Their study did not only ascertain the factors and processes that activate adverse livelihood outcomes but further assessed the conditions and potentials that could enhance livelihood sustainability. The assertion that the conglomeration of factors and processes around LSLA produces variegated outcomes in different contexts and among different groups and individuals is important to the current study. It helps in avoiding the assumption of homogeneous livelihood outcomes. However, the study was preoccupied with developing a framework for analysis rather than conducting empirical field-based study to unearth the dynamics of LSLA. This was evident in their call for the “archetypes to be tested and refined in a new generation of empirical research” (Oberlack et al., 2016:168).

Schoneveld et al. (2011) also analysed the impacts and impact pathways of LSLA by focusing on biofuel feedstock production in Ghana. They found that the immediate negative impacts of LSLA are loss of access to land and forest resources and the limited ability or inability of the affected households to access these resources elsewhere which “directly impacts on their food security and income earning potential” (Schoneveld et al., 2011:10). They argued further that the employment opportunity offered by the plantation contributed to an increase in security and stability of income, increased food purchasing capacity, and overall improvement in the standard of living of those employed. Whilst the observations made by the authors are significant, it should be borne in mind that this study was conducted when the investment was at its initial stage. The authors observed that, only 780 ha out of the total 14,000 ha had been cleared at the time of data collection and the outcomes of the investment might not be fully

felt. Such studies are useful as a preliminary assessment that provides pointers for future studies.

2.8.2 Dispossession and Displacement

The immediate impact of LSLA on the communities into which such investment projects take place is the dispossession of the people of their land and natural resources which, in most cases, leads to displacement (Glover & Jones, 2019; Moreda, 2017). The argument about the abundance of idle or underutilised land, yield gaps and the notion of marginal land in the global South dominated the earlier debate about LSLA (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011). If LSLA was occurring in regions with abundant idle, marginal or underutilised land, the issue of dispossession and displacement would not have been a concern for the communities.

However, this notion has been discredited by later studies that found that LSLA occurs on most fertile lands including forest reserves, fallow land and land used by local community members for their livelihood activities (Tafon & Saunders, 2019; Yaro & Tsikata, 2013). Engström et al. (2022) argued that, contrary to the notion of marginal or idle land, in Tanzania, investors target prime agricultural farmland already used by local farmers and pastoralists and located near water sources and infrastructure as well as areas with good rainfall patterns. Similar findings were reported by Glover and Jones (2019) about Mozambique where investors target accessible areas, the same locations attractive to smallholder farmers. Later studies from Ghana also found that investors target the “forested and transitional ecological zones”, the area that has been described as the breadbasket of Ghana (Lavers & Boamah, 2016:100). The notion of land availability, underutilisation, and idleness was only employed to connote that such lands are not used and do not even belong to rural community members and are subject to expropriation (Moreda, 2015). This “leaves worrying space for discounting existing land use and different categories of users” (Peters, 2013:547; Scoones et al., 2019), leading to “dispossession and

displacement of rural households, and the damaging of local livelihoods, food insecurity and access to key natural resources” (Moreda, 2017:701; Shete & Rutten, 2015).

Targeting the same territories from which rural communities derived their livelihoods has the potential of dispossessing and displacing the host communities, especially when their land rights are based on customary tenure without legal security and protection from the state, leaving their land rights precarious (Locher, 2016; Quansah et al., 2020). Several studies have reported incidences of land dispossession and displacement of local communities from their land and natural resources caused by LSLA. Touch and Neef (2015) have demonstrated how LSLA has engendered dispossession and displacement in Cambodia resulting in conflictual tendencies (See also Jiao et al., 2015). Levien (2015) through his regime of dispossession framework has analysed how LSLA dispossesses and displaces the poor and the marginalised in India. In Africa, countries like Madagascar, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Sudan have all experienced incidents of LSLA-induced dispossession and displacement of the communal landholders (Alemu & Tolossa, 2022; Bottazzi et al., 2018; Engström et al., 2022; Gagné, 2019; Larder, 2015; Moreda, 2017; Osabuohien et al., 2019; Tafon & Saunders, 2019). Studies in Ghana have also demonstrated how LSLA engenders dispossession and displacements (Ayamga et al., 2023; Boamah, 2014b). The incidence of dispossession is also confirmed by this study (See Chapter 6); however, the dynamics of dispossession and displacement are variegated.

LSLA dispossesses smallholder farmers because such acquisitions target lands that are associated with customary land tenure where communal landholding is the prevailing practice with many of the people possessing only land use rights (Peters, 2013; Schoneveld & German, 2014). Under such circumstances, the local community members possess a weak legal status that makes them vulnerable to dispossession and displacement (Ahmed, 2021; Andrews, 2018).

Even though, in some countries, customary land tenure system has been legally recognised and enshrined in the national constitutions, this does not make them “impervious to government interests in centralising land control” (Lavers, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2023:6). This situation has emerged because of the historical “denial of property in land to most Africans through the construction and reproduction of customary tenure” (Peters, 2013b:538; Peters 2013a).

The dispossession and displacement are said to occur with no or inadequate compensation with detrimental impacts on the well-being of the affected people (Adams et al., 2019; Andrews, 2018). Alemu and Tolossa (2022) discussed how the problems associated with the FPIC, and lack of transparency resulted in challenges with compensation for the local communities affected by LSLA in Ethiopia. They observed instances of no compensation, inadequate compensation and delays in payment of compensation (Alemu & Tolossa, 2022; Cotula, 2009; Schoneveld & German, 2014). Andrews (2018) has demonstrated how local community members affected by mining concessions in Ghana received inadequate compensation whereas others received nothing for losing their land. He argued that the issue of compensation is tied to power dynamics, access and capacity to control land by different actors prior to land alienation. The usufructuary rights holders only received compensation based on the prevailing market price for crops on the land but not for the loss of the land itself or the future revenues that would have been accruing from the usage of the land (Andrews, 2018; Yaro & Tsikata, 2013). The compensation for the land and its productive values are paid to the traditional leaders on behalf of the communities, but who, in most cases, use such resources to enrich themselves (Ahmed et al., 2019; Andrews, 2018; Schoneveld et al., 2011). This reflects the dynamics of compensation payment in the study area since most of the affected people were migrants with precarious tenure security (See Chapter 6).

Dispossession and displacement occur through various means, including regulation, legitimation and violence or forced acquisition (Engström et al., 2022). Hiraldo (2018) argued that the dispossession of local communities occurs through coercion, material compensation and normative persuasion. Engström et al. (2022) observed that attempts by the state to formalise land rights of local community members do not, in practice, secure their land rights but rather exacerbate their dispossession and displacement. The formalisation of land rights through land titling does not secure land rights of the local people because such initiatives do not protect the poor against the market forces; the “state and the law in the context of great power asymmetries and economic inequalities”; and do not take into consideration many collective and secondary rights that are likely to be extinguished (Boone, 2019:394). Therefore, the numerous attempts to formalise land rights in Africa only paved the way for the expropriation of communal landholders (Anku et al., 2022; Engström et al., 2022).

Almost all LSLAs entail dispossession in one form or another, but not all engender displacement (Zhan, 2019). There are instances where LSLA takes place, but the rural community members still have access to land and their livelihoods will continue to be dependent on land and natural resources; when the loss of land is adequately compensated for through other forms of income-generating assets; and when expropriation occurs without adequate compensation and peasants are displaced (Zhan, 2019:449). Displacement sometimes entails physical displacement where the communities are expelled from their settlement or resettled in a different location. It could also take the form of economic displacement where the affected people lose access to their land and natural resources and the attendant loss of income and other livelihood assets. There are also instances where both physical and economic displacement occur together (Kebede et al., 2023). In this study, physical and economic displacement have occurred (See Chapter 6).

Dispossession and displacement are at the heart of the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders, as most of the initial response to land investments emanated from the initial dispossession and displacement (Adjei, 2022; Gagné & Fent, 2021; Moreda, 2017). Questions that have engaged the attention of researchers include: What is the extent of dispossession and displacement? Are the affected people well compensated for their loss to restore them to the ex-ante position to enable them to make meaningful livelihoods? How do the issues surrounding dispossession and displacement shape the outcomes of investment projects for communal landholders? Whilst these questions and many others around dispossession and displacement have been answered by several scholars (Ayamga et al., 2023; Boamah, 2014a; Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld, 2013), the current study revisits the field to find out the new developments taking place, since many investment projects have collapsed or down-sized their operations and new ones are also springing up.

2.8.3 Livelihood Outcomes

One aspect of LSLA that has received much attention is the impact on livelihoods, more importantly, employment, income and food security of the affected communities. Studies focusing on livelihood impacts have reported different conclusions. Some authors reported positive impacts, others reported negative impacts and yet others have reported both positive and negative impacts. For instance, in assessing the impact of LSLA by developing and developed countries on the food security of host communities, Santangelo (2018) reported differentiated outcomes based on the origin of the investors by concluding that investment projects involving investors from developed countries produce positive impacts on food security. In contrast, those involving investors from developing countries showed negative impacts. This finding seems to rekindle the age-old dichotomy between the countries of the global North and those of the global South. Similarly, Tuyen (2014) concluded that there is no

significant correlation between LSLA and income level since they observed no change in income levels with the introduction of investment projects in Vietnam. Baumgartner et al. (2015) also found that LSLA has a significant positive impact on the income levels of the affected communities in Ethiopia. Gasparatos et al. (2022) also reported positive livelihood outcomes of sugarcane investment in southern Africa.

On the contrary, Shete and Rutten (2015), in a study based on Ethiopia, found that land grabbing impacts food security negatively. This has been corroborated by Davis et al. (2014) and Alamirew et al. (2015) who concluded that LSLA leads to income loss and negatively impacts food security. Relatedly, a study in Cambodia also postulated that the phenomenon decreases household income (Jiao et al., 2015). Yengoh and Armah (2015) also found that LSLA engenders food insecurity and reduces the income levels of affected households in Sierra Leone and that the local community members would be better served if they produced their own food needs rather than depending on investment companies. Müller et al. (2021) observed that, despite the rise in the cases of LSLA in sub-Saharan Africa and the attendant intensification of agriculture, the food security situation in the sub-region has deteriorated. The negative livelihood outcomes of LSLA in developing countries are attributed to corruption, low transparency and accountability and poor negotiation or land deals which lead to enclosures of major livelihood assets including farmland, water and forest resources (Nkansah-Dwamena & Yoon, 2022; Sullivan et al., 2022) and the high cost of labour occasioned by the LSLA (Hofman et al., 2019).

2.8.3.1 LSLA and Livelihood Impacts

The following discussions present a review of some specific studies on the livelihood impacts of LSLA on the affected communities. Sullivan et al. (2022) discussed how LSLA impacts smallholder agriculture and livelihoods in Tanzania. They specifically focused their attention

on agricultural productivity, income and food security by ascertaining whether LSLA leads to greater agricultural productivity and whether the increased productivity translates to higher farm income and food security. The study found that LSLA increases agricultural productivity and that the affected communities experienced increased agricultural productivity. They attributed this to “differences in crop prices and crop selection rather than improvements in crop yields” (Sullivan et al., 2022:6). However, the linkage between agricultural productivity, income and food security proved to be negative, as the productivity they observed did not translate into higher income and better food security (see also Deininger & Xia, 2016). This calls for circumspection on the assumption that improved agricultural productivity by LSLA engenders greater well-being of the affected households. Their focus on projects that have reached the implementation stage is very instructive since the extent of the utilisation of the acquired land has significant effects on the outcomes for the affected people. However, excluding land transactions between private individuals and those involving vegetable cultivation and forestry may affect the results of the outcome dimensions they assessed.

Quansah et al. (2020) assessed the effects of LSLA on the livelihood assets in the Pru East District of Ghana. They examined how LSLA affects five livelihood assets: natural, physical, social, human, and financial capital. They concluded that LSLA has a “significant positive moderate effect on employment, healthcare and food security but, has a significant negative high effect on income levels of smallholder farming households” (Quansah et al., 2020:81). Similarly, Alhassan et al. (2021) asserted that land grabbing has significant negative effects on the livelihoods of the smallholder farmers in Ghana. They further observed that the farmers' financial capital and natural resources are the most affected assets. The former Brong Ahafo region where the current study site is located was considered the most negatively affected. Therefore, it is important to follow up on the developments taking place in this area.

Similarly, Adjei (2022), through a case study in Ghana involving two LSLI projects, explored how LSLA impacts the affected households' capabilities, assets and activities needed for meaningful living. He examined the nature of trade-offs and opportunities associated with the LSLA concerning water, energy and food dynamics. He asserted that, in most instances, LSLA occurs "with underlying political and/or economic motives" (Adjei, 2022:5362) which breed opportunities and trade-offs that lead to variations in the socio-economic outcomes and responses across different spatiotemporal contexts. The study found that LSLA has a greater proclivity to undermine livelihood sustainability, worsen vulnerability, and deepen poverty traps for most rural households, thereby resulting in retrogressive rural transformation. However useful his study was, he did not interrogate the developments occurring on the acquired land concerning the extent of land under plantation, or the progress of the investment. More so, the study concentrated mainly on outcomes related to water, energy and food without paying attention to some other weightier issues, such as conflicts, employment, changes in farming practices, the commodification of land and emigration, that occur with the intrusion of LSLA, issues picked up by this study.

Some studies consider the project model when discussing the livelihood impacts of LSLA. Matenga (2017), in a study based on outgrower schemes in Zambia, argued that some community members involved in the schemes were able to generate higher income, resulting in the possibility of capital accumulation, compared to those engaged in dryland farming. He also observed that the outgrower schemes for sugar cultivation led to the creation of employment opportunities. Similarly, Herrmann (2017) evaluated the household welfare effects of LSLA in Ethiopia by comparing households involved in rice and sugar-cane projects as outgrowers or waged workers to those not participating in the investment project by focusing on household income and income poverty. He observed positive differences in "income and

poverty levels between participants in sugarcane outgrower schemes compared to the counterfactual” (Herrmann, 2017:305). He added that smallholders involved in the outgrower scheme earned more income than those not engaged in large-scale agricultural investment. Concerning the income earned by waged workers from the agro-industry, he concluded that the results were more nuanced and were influenced by the type of investment involved, as he noted that the waged income from the sugar-cane subsector was marginally higher than the case of the rice. This has been corroborated by Hall et al. (2017) who observed that the impacts of LSLA are influenced by the kind of investment that is carried out on the land. They argued that projects with outgrower schemes or some form of contract farming produce positive effects compared to plantation estate or commercial farming, as the contract or outgrower schemes avoid dispossessing the local people and promote diversified and sustainable livelihoods (Hall et al., 2017).

Yaro and Tsikata (2013) have demonstrated how local communities deploy savannah fires as a weapon of resistance against an outgrower scheme, which ended up putting the investor’s profit in jeopardy and reducing the ability of the investor to contribute to local livelihood outcomes. They further argued that no matter how good a business model is, if it does not take into consideration the pre-existing local inequalities and biases, such projects could have detrimental impacts on the poor and marginalised (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014). Matenga and Hichaambwa (2017), in a study based in Zambia, argued that the outgrower schemes do not always result in the positive outcomes espoused in scholarship. They observed that the block farming model in their case study consolidates smallholdings and creates a peasant-shareholder class. This model, they argued, creates an enclave-like scheme and its outcomes are not different from plantation schemes because of the lack of economic linkages to the local economy (Matenga & Hichaambwa, 2017). Similarly, Matenga (2017) has indicated that even

in situations where outgrower schemes produced positive impacts, these were reaped only by a few community members at the expense of loss of control over land, breakdown in the “extended family system and patterns of mutual support” and the rising intra- and inter-family conflicts (p. 563). In related research, Adams et al. (2019), through a study based on Malawi, observed that contract farming schemes create dependencies through “institutional transformation and redefinition of user rights to customary land” and “redefinition and control of cash flows into local communities” (p. 1438). They further noted that these processes result in the concentration of land and cash in the hands of a few actors thereby exacerbating the plight of the poor and marginalised. They argued that the impact of large-scale agricultural schemes depends on the “institutional arrangements, the levels of capitalisation and mechanisation”, the type of crop and the wider livelihood opportunities in the affected area (Matenga & Hichaambwa, 2017:590).

2.8.3.2 Employment and Income Levels

Employment is one of the most cited positive outcomes of LSLA by the proponents and almost all the studies that reported positive impacts mentioned employment. LSLA is said to offer employment opportunities in communities where the investment projects are located in the form of direct and indirect jobs (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Schoneveld, 2017). The direct jobs involve working for the investment company in various capacities including administrative staff, agricultural extension officers, labourers, mechanics, drivers, and factory hands, and serving as retailers or suppliers of the company either on a temporal or permanent basis (Engström & Hajdu, 2019; Karakara et al., 2021). The indirect jobs take the form of contract or outgrower schemes, engaging the community members in the provision of social and economic infrastructure such as schools, clinics and roads (Karakara et al., 2021). The debate about LSLA and employment has focused on whether it generates adequate employment opportunities in the affected communities to compensate for the loss of land and

natural resources; whether the jobs created are sustainable; whether the wages paid are commensurate with the nature of work and educational level of employees to enable them make a meaningful living; and whether the jobs created are evenly distributed across gender, age, origin and other social, economic, political and religious differentiations (Cotula et al., 2014; Karakara et al., 2021).

Even though most of the studies that have reported positive impacts of LSLA have found that it improves the employment opportunities in the affected areas, their findings have also called into question the sustainability of such job opportunities. Several studies have reported instances where investment projects have collapsed altogether with the resultant loss of jobs (Ahmed, 2021; Gagné, 2019; Larder, 2015; Yaro & Tsikata, 2013); other projects have downsized operations leading to the laying off community members employed by the investment companies (Gagné, 2022; Tafon & Saunders, 2019).

Concerning income derived from wage employment, the findings appear to be inconclusive. Some scholars argued that the income earned from LSLI projects by the local community members is higher than engaging in other jobs or economic activities which improves the livelihoods of those employed (Bottazzi et al., 2018). In a study based in Uganda, Ahlerup and Tengstam (2015) found that large-scale agricultural investments improve the incomes of households in the affected communities especially when they still have some land available to them. Glover and Jones (2019) also found that in Mozambique, LSLA is associated with higher income for the smallholders who reside closer to the investment project. Others argued that income from wages earned for working for investment companies is relatively low because most of the local community members have lower levels of education and, therefore, are employed as menial workers and farm labourers (Adjei, 2022; Gyapong, 2020; Schoneveld et al., 2011). Jiao et al. (2015) in a study based in Cambodia found that there was no evidence in

support of the positive impacts of the investments on the income levels, and estimated that the total household annual incomes were said to have reduced. Those with higher education are usually employed from outside the communities where the investment projects are located and occupy managerial and more technical positions with higher earnings (Adjei, 2022; Gyapong, 2019; Schoneveld, 2017).

Different dimensions of employment and income have also been analysed. For instance, Gyapong (2020) assessed the political-economic context of legislative gaps in the governance framework for wage labour and LSLA in Ghana and argued that the assumption of employment creation linked to LSLA has several challenges. These include lack of hard laws or national regulations that specifically ensure the creation of job opportunities on the transnational large-scale farms; that the regulatory institutions in Ghana have no autonomy and capacity to influence business models adopted by the investors; that large-scale farms may have the potential to generate many jobs, but economic sustainability and social sustainability are not always compatible; and that voluntary guidelines might be useful in implementing responsible investment but they are either too late in coming or not binding. She observed that, even though farm workers may obtain some benefits here and now to improve livelihood outcomes, “long-term benefits from wage work in agriculture [are] questionable” (Gyapong, 2020:7). The analysis of the institutional and legislative framework of wage labour in LSLI provides a useful basis for understanding the impacts of LSLA on employment. However, her study focused only on transnational land deals and ignored domestic investments and their dynamics. More so, her concentration on plantation estate type of investment and oil palm plantation excludes the dynamics of other forms of LSLI.

2.8.3.3 Food Security

Gaps in crop yields and low productivity were said to be the characteristic features of the agrarian sector in low-income countries, especially in Africa. This has led to the dependence on food imports and food aid. This situation partly accounts for why the region has become the preferred destination for LSLA (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Deininger & Xia, 2016; Müller et al., 2021). However, the literature on impacts of LSLA on food security for rural communities does not appear to present a glowing picture. Whilst some studies have reported positive outcomes (Bottazzi et al., 2018), most argued that LSLA increases the vulnerabilities of food security indicators of households in the local community (Guyalo et al., 2022; Kebede et al., 2023). Discussing the impact of LSLA on agricultural intensification and crop yield and their implication for local food security and dietary diversification, Müller et al. (2021) found that the situation of LSLA presents a paradox. Whilst they found no significant impact on agricultural intensification and food security in Eastern Europe and Latin America, the same could not be said of Asia and Africa where they postulated that LSLA accelerates agricultural expansion and intensification. But this has not resulted in improved food security since many African countries are still dependent on food imports (Deininger & Xia, 2016; Müller et al., 2021).

Kebede et al. (2023) also assessed the impacts of LSLA on displaced households' food security in Ethiopia. They found that LSLAs dispossess smallholders of their land and jeopardise farm output and income; unable to produce the promised jobs; do not produce commodities relevant to local demand; and inhibit affected people's ability to produce and meet the food needs of their families on a long-term basis. Focusing on the food security situation of only the displaced people portrays only a part of the broader picture, as several other studies have demonstrated that the communities into which LSLA take place are heterogeneous. Whilst some are negatively affected, others gain from such investments (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Glover & Jones,

2019; Mamonova, 2015). Relatedly, Guyalo et al. (2022) also analysed LSLA's impacts on the food security status of the affected households in the Gambella region of Ethiopia focusing on food availability, access, utilisation and sustainability. They argued that LSLA has negative impacts on the above food security indicators. They added that, in comparison to what they would have been without the investment, LSLA has contributed to the deterioration of local communities' livelihoods and aggravated the food insecurity problems.

The study by Abdallah et al. (2023) examined the impacts of LSLA by foreign and domestic actors on food security in Ghana. They found that, overall, LSLA by both domestic and foreign investors decreased affected households' food security. However, they observed that the negative impacts were more severe in the case of land acquisition by domestic investors when compared to foreign investors. This was corroborated by Ayamga et al. (2023) who also found that, although investments by foreign and local actors reduce the land access indicators of affected communities, the case of domestic investors was very significant and further affected the food security indicators negatively. These kinds of analyses help draw attention not only to the foreign actors but also the domestic ones. However, dichotomising the outcome of LSLA in this manner could be quite problematic since the study did not take into consideration several other factors which could shape the outcomes of LSLA, such as the investment model, investor motives, crops cultivated, utilisation of the acquired land and the nature of the community asset portfolio even before the land acquisitions (Sullivan et al., 2022; Tamura, 2021).

2.8.5 Gender and Generational Impacts

Studies on gender and generational differential impacts of LSLA are limited. However, these studies have argued that LSLA impacts differently on men and women, the youth and the elderly (Karakara et al., 2021; Tsikata, 2016; Behrman et al., 2012). Behrman et al. (2012) identified the factors that account for the differentiated gender impacts to include the position

of women in relation to men prior to the land acquisition, the nature of consultation and negotiation of land deal, the nature of contract and compensation, implementation and changes in production structures and effective monitoring and enforcement of the terms of the agreement. They concluded that, if LSLA is properly executed, and incorporate the gender dimensions, it can “provide transformative opportunities for both women and men through the introduction of new employment and income generation opportunities, new technologies, and new services” (Behrman et al., 2012:71). On the contrary, they asserted that, if LSLA disregards the existing circumstances and gender dimensions, it would lead to resource scarcity, poverty, and conflict and further perpetuate inequalities. Whilst the study by Behrman et al. (2012) is useful in providing possible indicators of gender differential impacts of LSLA, the study was conducted at the initial stages of the investment projects. More so, it relied heavily on existing literature and the only case study from the African continent, drawn from Mozambique could not account for the varied manifestations of LSLA in different contexts.

Tsikata (2016) has argued that, in situations where LSLA contributes to the intensification of competition of land, this greatly impacts “women and other social groups already suffering disadvantages in access to and control over land” (p. 13). She further observed that, beyond the loss of access to land; the loss of commons further impacts women more negatively compared to men. Thus, Tsikata and Yaro (2014) have argued that even good LSLA models that incorporate local communities in production and profit sharing is not enough to guarantee the protection of “women's livelihood prospects if projects ignore pre-existing gender inequalities and biases, which limit access to opportunities” (p. 202). Similarly, Matenga (2017) noted that the positive impacts of outgrower schemes benefited men more than women. He added that women were not only less represented in the outgrower schemes, but they were also less represented in the job opportunities created, as the few women employed were engaged in

highly seasonal and casual jobs with relatively poor wages and working conditions compared to men. The lower involvement of women in the outgrower schemes was attributed to the “historical land ownership between men and women in settlement schemes in Zambia” (p. 560).

Edafe et al. (2023) assessed the effects of LSLA on employment with a specific focus on female-headed households and found that female-headed households earn less income, even though they spend more time working than their male counterparts. However, they observed that female-headed households in communities with LSLI earned higher incomes from agricultural wage labour than their counterparts without LSLI. This is contrary to a study by Osabuohien et al. (2019) in Tanzania who found negative impacts of LSLA on the welfare and income levels of female-headed households.

Karakara et al. (2021), based on a study conducted in Nigeria, ascertained the effects of LSLA on youth employment and found a significant negative effect on youth employment in host communities. They argued that many youths were actively working in communities without LSLA compared to the communities with LSLAs. In terms of the wages earned by the youth, they observed a reduction compared to communities without LSLA. Thus, communities with LSLA comparatively earn lower rates of income with detrimental effects on their livelihoods. The above studies have acknowledged the knowledge gap in gender and generational dynamics of LSLA (see Doss et al., 2014). They called for further assessment of gender and generational impacts since LSLA affects different people differently (See also Chapter 6).

2.8.4 Environmental Impacts

The impacts of LSLA go beyond the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the affected people to encapsulate the environmental impacts. Studies have reported different impacts of LSLA on the environment and climate change involving deforestation, biodiversity and

ecosystem loss, emission of greenhouse gases, destruction of natural habitat, soil erosion, water resource pollution, air pollution, loss of wetlands and depletion of water sources through excessive extraction (Balehegn, 2015; D'Odorico et al., 2017; Degife & Mauser, 2017; Richards, 2013). However, there are reported instances where LSLA has improved soil conservation, reduced carbon emission and preserved biodiversity (Balehegn, 2015; German et al., 2011; Kuusaana, 2017). The adoption of monoculture for large-scale agricultural projects to replace food crops and tropical mosaic landscapes has a detrimental impact on the environment (Aha & Ayitey, 2017). As observed by Schoneveld et al. (2011:4), commercial plantations often support far less “(agro-) biodiversity than the traditional farming system” because commercial plantations are associated with extensive removal of the vegetation, and monoculture that lead to loss of forest and vegetation as well as pest and disease problems in the host countries (see also Vandergeten et al., 2016).

The granting of concessions in the Brazilian Amazon forest has received worldwide renunciation and criticism because of the raging havoc through deforestation (Ferrante et al., 2021; Jiao et al., 2017). The deforestation caused in the Amazon forest has been described as reaching a “tipping point” such that the situation is leading to environmental collapse (Ferrante et al., 2021:1). LSLAs for oil palm cultivation in Indonesia and Malaysia are said to be engendering biodiversity loss, as land in the rainforest is leased to investors (Balehegn, 2015). In Indonesia, the emissions from peatland burning and oil palm plantations are estimated to have negatively affected more than 100,000 people across the country (D'Odorico et al., 2017). There are also reported cases in Cambodia where, aside from forest destruction caused by investment projects, local communities displaced by LSLA for mega projects have also been relocated to the rainforest with the attendant unsustainable exploitation of the forest resources and land cover changes (Drbohlav & Hejkrlik, 2018). Water contamination, and soil and land

degradation occasioned by excessive use of pesticides, fertilizer and plastics for banana cultivations in Laos have also been reported (Friis & Nielsen, 2016).

Adam and Agegnehu (2023) argued that irrespective of the model adopted, LSLA in Ethiopia is characterised by an increasing trend of environmental degradation due to continuous deforestation and land clearing. A study based in Liberia found a possible correlation between forest fragmentation, biodiversity loss and the transfer of zoonotic diseases from wildlife to human beings (D'Odorico et al., 2017; Rulli et al., 2017). In Tanzania, water pollution caused by industrial farms was noted to have endangered the lives of some 45,000 people who depended on the polluted water for their livelihood (Richards, 2013). Tafon and Saunders (2019) highlighted how a rainforest concession in Cameroon led to ecosystem loss. The allocation of 7,100 ha of Uganda's Mabira Forest for sugar cane cultivation is estimated to threaten the existence of tree species, birds and butterflies endemic to the forest (Senelwa et al., 2012). However, in situations where land acquisition is purposely for conservation, such as establishing national parks and reserves, such initiatives preserve and improve the environment by preserving biodiversity (Aha & Ayitey, 2017).

Studies based in Ghana have also reported environmental impacts of LSLA on the host communities. According to Nyantakyi-Frimpong (2020), LSLAs create a social barrier to climate change adaptation by increasing farmers' uncertainty and fear, which influence climate risk management decisions. Adams et al. (2019) reported intensive use of fertilizer and other agrochemicals as well as wastewater for large-scale irrigation which led to water and air pollution. LSLA for biofuel has also contributed to the "wanton destruction of large tracks of economic trees even when such large parcels are not needed for immediate production" resulting in land cover changes and de-vegetation (Adjei, 2022; Kidido & Kuusaana, 2014:174). The pressures imposed on local communities because of LSLA have made them

abandon sustainable farming practices, such as land fallowing, and rather adopt continuous and intensive cultivation (See Chapter 6) that exacerbates the already volatile environmental conditions leading to loss of soil fertility (Adjei, 2022). However, Kuusaana (2017) reported an instance in Northern Ghana where the investment company allocated part of the acquired land to be used as a forest and game reserve and trained community members in biodiversity conservation, especially the protection of economic and medicinal tree species.

The environmental impacts of LSLA are shaped by a wide range of factors including the type of investment, the location of the project, the type of crops cultivated, the extent of cultivation, the prior status of the acquired land, the institutional and regulatory mechanism in place, effective and transparent EIA and the willingness of the investors to comply with the findings of the environmental assessment report (Cotula et al., 2014; Edelman et al., 2013). Degradation of natural resources, such as forests, water, and land, exposes local and indigenous populations to food insecurity and loss of other livelihood assets (Degife & Mauser, 2017). The call for continuous assessment of the environmental impact of LSLA in different contexts and periods (Hufe & Heuermann, 2017) to effectively ascertain the real outcomes of LSLA for communal landholders is in line with the current study.

2.9 Summary and Gaps in the Literature

This chapter has demonstrated that LSLA has never lacked academic exposition after the triple crises of 2007-2008. (See Chapter 3 for discussion on the triple crisis.) The literature produced in the early stages described by Edelman et al. (2013) as the “making sense period” was geared towards understanding what was unfolding and provided information about the definition, drivers, size of land acquired, the actors involved, where the deals were taking place, processes of acquisition, immediate outcomes of investments projects and response of local communities (Cotula, 2009; De Schutter, 2011; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; GRAIN, 2008; Zoomers, 2010).

These sets of studies were followed by the proliferation of case studies investigating several aspects of LSLA including acquisition processes, community resistance and impacts (Cotula et al., 2014; German et al., 2013; Larder, 2015; Obeng-Odoom, 2015; Schoneveld & German, 2014). This helped to dispel some erroneous conclusions made by earlier studies. The period between 2016 and 2021 saw the decline in case studies on LSLA and the proliferation of macro-data analysis of the literature to understand the trends in existing knowledge (Cochrane & Legault, 2020; Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Sändig, 2021; Schoneveld, 2017; Vandergeten et al., 2016; Yang & He, 2021).

The literature reviewed has illustrated that several studies have reported that LSLA, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara, takes place in areas with plurality of land tenure or weak tenure system. Land acquisition processes occurred without active participation and informed consent of affected community members, shrouded in secrecy and involved in elite capture (Ahmed et al., 2019; Cotula, 2009; German et al., 2013; Nolte et al., 2016), resulting in the formulation of guidelines to regulate LSLA (Castañeda et al., 2023; Paoloni & Onorati, 2014). However, Bottazzi et al. (2018) and Kuusaana (2017) reported instances in Sierra Leone and northern Ghana, respectively, where land acquisition processes were said to be transparent and actively involved the affected community members. Studies on community response and contestation have found that affected community members have resorted to several mechanisms including overt resistance involving protest, demonstration, petitioning and lobbying, and destruction of companies' properties (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013; Hall et al., 2015; Lanz et al., 2018; Yaro & Tsikata, 2013), whilst others remained acquiescent (Schoneveld & German, 2014). However, some studies reported that community resistance strategies were successful in reversing land deals, leading to cancellation or suspension of projects (Gagné, 2022; Gingembre, 2015), whilst

others reported instances where projects survived community contestation (Boamah, 2014b; Lanz et al., 2018).

Regarding the impacts of LSLA for livelihoods of communal landholders involving employment and income, food security, socio-economic infrastructure, market access, peace and tranquillity and the environment, the literature is inconclusive (Guyalo et al., 2022; Yang & He, 2021). Most studies have argued that LSLA has dispossessed and displaced communal landholders from their land and natural resources without adequate compensation (Ayamga et al., 2023; Larder, 2015; Moreda, 2017). On the contrary, others argued that LSLA was occurring in areas with abundant underutilised or idle lands with yield gaps and did not dispossess and displace community members especially when projects are involved in outgrower schemes (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Hall et al., 2017). There is also evidence that LSLA has created employment opportunities that have improved the earnings of those employed thereby enhancing their food security situation and general well-being (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Schoneveld et al., 2011). However, other studies observed that only a few community members gained jobs in the investment companies and even that most were engaged as casual or temporary workers and earned meagre wages leading to declining incomes with trickle-down effects on food security (Adjei, 2022; Gyapong, 2020). Studies have also postulated that dispossession and displacement of community members had negatively impacted income and food security of households in the catchment areas (Abdallah et al., 2023; Guyalo et al., 2022; Kebede et al., 2023), resulted in land scarcity, rising land value, and competition and conflicts over land (Boamah, 2014b). Additionally, studies have argued that LSLA has resulted in access to input and output markets, technology spill over and socio-economic infrastructure (Alhassan et al., 2021; Deininger & Xia, 2016; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021), although other studies have reported limited technology spill over and

market access (Ahmed, 2021; Lavers & Boamah, 2016). Similarly, studies on environmental impacts have demonstrated that LSLA has made some positive impacts, such as improvement in soil conservation, reduction in carbon emission and biodiversity (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Kuusaana, 2017). The negative environmental impacts, on the other hand, include environmental degradation due to continuous deforestation and land clearing, water pollution and biodiversity loss (Adams et al., 2019; Adjei, 2022; Kidido & Kuusaana, 2014; Richards, 2013). It suffices to say that most studies on impacts of LSLA in Africa have recorded negative impacts for livelihoods and the environment in the affected communities as opposed to positive impacts.

These studies have provided useful insight into the debate of LSLA. However, the contested nature of the phenomenon due to its context-specific and evolving nature (Cotula et al., 2014; Guyalo et al., 2022) makes it imperative for constant searches for new empirical evidence from different contexts and times to update the debate. Moreover, most of these studies were conducted when the investment projects were at their initial stages of operation and could not account for later developments (Borras Jr et al., 2012; Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld & German, 2014; Schoneveld et al., 2011). For instance, the extent to which the introduction of guidelines on LSLA and new land laws have shaped the processes of land acquisition have received minimal consideration. Likewise, most studies on outcomes were conducted when most of the investment projects had not made tangible socio-economic impacts (Dell'Angelo et al., 2021) and these studies do not account for how the impacts unfold overtime. The most recent studies, on the other hand, have focused on meta-analysis without providing new empirical evidence and are also susceptible to the weaknesses of the studies they reviewed (Cochrane & Legault, 2020; Dell'Angelo et al., 2021; Schoneveld, 2017; Vandergeten et al., 2016; Yang & He, 2021). Others have focused on isolated elements, such as employment,

legislative gaps and wage labour, income and food security (Adjei, 2022; Edafe et al., 2023; Gyapong, 2020; Karakara et al., 2021) without providing a comprehensive assessment of the nuances of impact dynamics.

Several aspects of LSLA have also received limited attention in the literature. For instance, studies on community response have paid little attention to what happens when investment projects survived community contestation, and the new coping and adaptive strategies employed by communal landholders and how these strategies further shape the outcomes of LSLA. The literature reviewed also shows that issues of gender and generational outcome dynamics, water, climate change, the role of domestic or diaspora investors, impacts on socio-cultural systems, and indigenous knowledge systems (see also Cochrane & Legault, 2020) have received limited treatment in the literature. By employing a case study that relies on empirical field data to capture the nuances of LSLA in the AAM, where investment projects have been operating uninterrupted since 2010 to assess the impacts for communal landholders, the study seeks to fill the gaps identified above.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of the literature on LSLA thematically, focusing on labelling, definition and scope, drivers, actors and host countries, processes of land acquisition, community response, outcomes, summary and gaps in the literature. The chapter also provided an overview of LSLA and land administration and management in Ghana. The conclusions from these studies are significant because they point to the fact that LSLA is a context-specific and evolving phenomenon that requires regular empirical studies. The literature also revealed that the impacts of LSLA are variegated, as studies reported both negative and positive impacts. Many of the earlier case studies reviewed were conducted at the time when most of investment projects were either about to start implementation or were in the initial stages of operation. The

most recent studies have focused on meta-data analysis by reviewing the existing literature without conducting any empirical studies of their own and suffer from the limitations of the studies they reviewed. These studies may not capture recent developments occurring on the acquired land and holistically account for how these developments are shaping the impacts of investment projects for communal landholders. The chapter also revealed that issues, such as coping and adaptive strategies of affected households, gender and generational outcome dynamics, water, climate change, the role of domestic or diaspora investors, impacts on socio-cultural systems, and indigenous knowledge systems, have not received sufficient attention in the literature. This study helps to fill these gaps. The next chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The widespread attention given to LSLA has generated numerous theoretical and conceptual frameworks offering valuable insights into this global phenomenon. Scholars have adopted different approaches, such as the political ecology (Borras Jr et al., 2011), new institutionalism of social anthropology (Haller, 2019; Lanz et al., 2018), land grabbing (Yang & He, 2021), primitive accumulation (Adnan, 2013; Hiraldo, 2018), accumulation by dispossession (Gellert, 2015; Lawer & Ablo, 2023; Traldi, 2021), regime of dispossession (Levien, 2015) and political economy (Borras Jr et al., 2012; Krieger & Leroch, 2016; Lavers, 2012) either as a stand-alone or in combination, to study LSLA. This study adopts the theory of accumulation by dispossession (hereinafter referred to as ABD) proposed by Harvey (2003) in his work, *New Imperialism*, alongside the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) proposed by DFID, to analyse the study. It argues that LSLA is capitalists' attempt at responding to economic crises emanating from overaccumulation by finding a new arena for expansion through extra-economic coercion and that such developments expropriate communal landholders of their lands, leading to dispossession, exploitation, or incorporation of the peasantry. This alters the vulnerability context of the affected communities and shapes the available capital assets and livelihood strategies, which leads to negative impacts. This chapter has been devoted to discussion of the theory of ABD, how it has been applied in the LSLA literature, and critique of the theory and its relevance to this study. The SLF has also been thoroughly discussed and the link between ABD and SLF and their relevance to this study has also been established. The chapter ends with a conclusion that summarises key issues discussed.

3.2 Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD)

The theory of ABD as articulated by Harvey (2003) is premised on primitive accumulation (PA) espoused by (Marx, 1967) in *Capital I*. According to (Marx, 1967), PA is the process of divorcing the direct producers from their means of production and subsistence and transforming them into “proletarians who needed to sell their labour for wage to survive, while ownership of the means of production was concentrated in capitalist hands” (Glassman, 2006; Hall, 2021:515; Marx, 1967). The process of divorcing is varied and could take the form of “forcible usurpation of common property through individual acts of violence,” parliamentary acts of enclosures of the commons, theft by the state, expropriation of self-supporting peasants, and the “extirpation, enslavement and entombment” of the indigenous population (Glassman, 2006:610; Marx, 1967). PA has several aspects including the proletarianisation it creates, the transformation in property relations, and “consolidation of capital it affects, and the changes in human-environment relations that are its by-product” (Glassman, 2006:611).

Critics of PA have confined Marx’s exposition to a historical phase that marked the emergence of capitalism, as illustrated in the case of 16th-century England. They argued that such a framework does not account for the developments taking place in the current neoliberal globalised world (Glassman, 2006). Harvey (2003) observed that Marx’s conceptualisation of capital accumulation assumed the existence of

freely functioning competitive markets with institutional arrangements of private property, juridical individualism, freedom of contract and appropriate structures of law and governance guaranteed by a ‘facilitative’ state which also secures the integrity of money as a store of value and as a medium of circulation (Harvey, 2003:143).

He argues that the role of the capitalist as producer and exchanger of a commodity has long been established and labour power has become commoditised. Therefore, the “accumulation

based upon predation, fraud, and violence” cannot operate under a closed economy characterised by peace, property and equality thereby relegating PA to an ‘original stage’ that is considered no longer relevant (Harvey, 2003:144). Such an interpretation of Marx’s PA prompted Harvey (2003) to formulate ABD to demonstrate the evolving nature of capital accumulation and dispossession in the era of neoliberalism (Traldi, 2021).

ABD is, therefore, the reformulation of Marx’s PA to update and “incorporate new mechanisms and institutional arrangements” (Adnan, 2013:95) that have evolved in the era of neoliberal globalisation to explain how capitalism responds to crises and to highlight dispossession, as capitalists attempt to solve the problem of underconsumption and/or overaccumulation. Harvey (2007) observed that the classical debate is not empty of contemporary importance. He argued that a careful examination of PA will reveal a wide range of processes involved, including:

the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights; suppression of rights to the commons; commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; slave trade; and usury, the national debt and ultimately the credit system (Harvey, 2003:145).

He added that for these processes to continue requires the backing of a state that has the monopoly of violence and power to determine what constitutes legality and that the transition into capitalist development is practically contingent upon the stance of the state. Harvey (2003) recognises that all the mechanisms of capital accumulation that Marx (1967) outlined have “remained powerfully present within the capitalist’s historical geography” (Harvey, 2003:145). He also identified new mechanisms, including intellectual property rights systems, biopiracy,

commodification of nature through capital-intensive modes of agricultural production and depletion of the global environmental commons, “commodification of cultural forms, histories and intellectual creativity, corporatization and privatization of hitherto public assets” (Harvey, 2017:75). He further observed that ABD becomes more apparent when “crises of overaccumulation occur in expanded reproduction” to the extent that there appears to be no solution in sight (p. 76) Therefore, ABD is the dominant form of capital accumulation under neoliberalism (Harvey, 2017; Traldi, 2021). ABD processes release public assets or common pool resources as well as labour power at a far lower cost and allow the over-accumulated capital to seize possession of those assets to make profitable use of them through expanded reproduction (Harvey, 2017; Traldi, 2021). Thus, through ABD, capitalism seeks to create an opportunity for expropriating the existing capitalist space and/or expanding exploitation to new frontiers to invest the surplus capital, a situation described as capitalism's inside-outside dialectic (Harvey, 2017).

Although Harvey (2003) agreed with most of Marx’s exposition on primitive accumulation, he emphasised that primitive accumulation did not only constitute a transition to capitalism but a continuous and dynamic process of capital accumulation under neoliberalism. He further emphasised the critical role of extra-economic means in the accumulation processes (the issues of extra-economic and economic means of capital accumulation are discussed later in this chapter). He observed that a key feature of ABD entails the deprivation of small producers and workers of the assets of subsistence such as “land, housing and factories, or control of these assets, often by the use of extra-economic means in which the state serves as the controller of the means of coercion (Levien, 2018; Zhan, 2019:44). These new emphases by Harvey (2003) inspired the adoption of ABD for analysing this study.

3.2.1 Application of Accumulation by Dispossession to LSLA

The concept of ABD encapsulates broader capital accumulation mechanisms under neoliberalism. Several aspects have been deemed useful in analysing the recent waves of LSLA in developing countries globally. The literature on LSLA deploys PA and ABD in three ways: as a “dispossessory response to capitalist crises, the use of extra-economic means of capital accumulation, and the creation, expansion and reproduction of capitalist social relations” (Hall, 2013:1598). For instance, Moyo et al. (2012:182) observed that the ‘new scramble’ consists of the “geopolitical escalation of an ongoing process” of PA. Borras Jr and Franco (2012) perceive the massive enclosures of public and private land engendered by LSLA as ABD, likewise, Wolford et al. (2013:8) observed that the “contemporary land deals are productively analysed through the lens of” ABD. Similarly, Chitonge (2024) described capitalist exploitation in the global South as occurring through absolute surplus extraction and direct and open process of ABD. Margulis et al. (2013:1) “situate land grabbing in an era of advanced capitalism, multiple global crises, and the role of new configurations of power and resistance in global governance institutions”. Akram-Lodhi (2012:138) also argued that the “extensification of intensification is most reminiscent of the ‘so-called’ primitive accumulation” and that the process of dispossession is not just based on the normal workings of the imperfect market but through extra-economic imperatives.

The crucial role of the state in this endeavour manifests in legal reforms to alter existing property rights, declaration of certain lands as state or public property, and the deployment of violence to ensure compliance (Adnan, 2013; Levien, 2018). In this case study, the Ghanaian state is not directly involved in negotiating land deals but provides the legal framework that facilitates LSLA through legislative and institutional reforms, investment drives, and compliance (See Chapters 2 and 5). The state also deploys security personnel to protect the investors and their investments in times of contestation or when their investments are in danger

(See Chapter 6). Hall (2013) argued that ABD has gained attention in the LSLA literature because of the following: the mechanisms by which resources including land are expropriated and former users are dispossessed in the name of capital accumulation is central to both, “the resemblances between many current land acquisitions and the enclosures of land and dispossession of peasants” in 16th-century England (Hall, 2013:1583) and centrality of the state in capital accumulation and dispossession in both ABD and LSLA.

3.2.1.1 Crises of Over-accumulation Thesis

Literature on LSLA employs the crisis thesis of ABD and argues that LSLA is a capitalist response to the crises of over-accumulation, which is mostly traced to the triple crisis of food, fuel and finance that peaked in 2007-2008 (Larder, 2015). This is a confirmation of Harvey's argument that, faced with the crises of over-accumulation in the neoliberal era, assets (including labour) are released through the processes of ABD “at very low (and in some instances zero) cost”, which are utilised by surplus capital to generate profit (Harvey, 2003:149). This is done by expropriating land through enclosures, expelling the inhabitants and bringing the asset into the domain of privatisation and capital accumulation. Scholars hardly discuss the recent land rush without reference to this triple crisis even if their analytical framework is not based on ABD. Akram-Lodhi (2012) situates the contemporary LSLA within the context of rising food prices, and argues that the recent corporate farmland acquisition constitutes a process that “facilitates a broadening and a deepening of an industrialised capitalist agriculture as ‘intensification’ is ‘extensified’ on a world scale” (p. 120). Relatedly, Deininger and Xia (2016), in their opening statement, linked LSLA to the food price-hike of 2007-2008. Likewise, Borras Jr and Franco (2012:49) link global land grabbing to the global crisis and argue that it is “driven by the imperatives of capitalist development and expansion in the context of converging food, energy, financial and environmental crises”. McMichael (2013) also argued that, irrespective of the variations in its manifestation in terms of origin,

destination and impacts, LSLA is “symptomatic of a crisis of accumulation in the neoliberal globalisation project” (cited in Hall, 2013:1587). This study also links LSLA to the triple-crisis thesis, as many acquisitions occurred around the 2007-2008 crisis.

Even studies that do not premise their argument on the recent crisis still link it to historical processes that had been set in motion over many years, which manifested through colonisation, liberalisation, SAP and associated institutional and legal reforms of property relations, particularly in Africa (Moyo et al., 2019; Moyo et al., 2012). Such analytical approaches could still find ABD useful. For instance, Amanor (2012:732), argued that agribusiness companies’ involvement in LSLA started some 30 years before the recent crises and LSLA should be viewed as emerging “internally from the logic of agribusiness accumulation rather than from exogenous developments”. Similarly, Zoomers (2010) situates LSLA within the context of the evolution of liberalisation policies that resulted in the creation of land markets and new avenues for international investment. Although Lawer and Ablo (2023) recognised the triple crisis, they argued that LSLA was made possible by neoliberal reforms that have been implemented since the 1980s which began as SAP. Even though such expositions trace LSLA beyond the 2007-2008 crisis, their analysis could still be situated within the broader concept of ABD in what Harvey (2003) described as “spatio-temporal fixes”.

3.2.1.1.1 The Triple Crisis

This study situates the recent surge in LSLA in the global South within the narratives of the triple crisis involving finance, energy and food of 2007-2008. The crisis of over-accumulation resulted in the capital market plummeting and affecting the profit margins of the capitalists leading to commodity price volatilities, which manifested in unprecedented food and oil price hikes. Rising prices of food made investing in land more promising because of the possibility of generating higher profit margins by growing food. Similarly, LSLA became an opportunity

for investors to hedge their assets against inflation leading to financialisation and speculation in land (Lawrence et al., 2015). As the financial crisis of over-accumulation induced the search for higher returns, land offered the greatest prospects.

The food price-hike led to the adoption of protectionist measures by countries with food production capacities and expansionist strategies by those without (White et al., 2012). This exposed food importing and land-poor countries to food price volatilities convincing such states and private commodity buyers of dangers of depending on international market for food supply (De Schutter, 2011). Such states and their corporate entities embarked on agricultural outsourcing by acquiring land in countries with arable land to produce their own food. Additionally, agribusiness companies were exposed to the vagaries of the economic recession that threatened the vertical integration of the global supply chain. This caused them to look for land in places they perceived to have abundant cheap land to develop large-scale plantations to ensure a better security of supply, respond to the requirements of their food industry clients, and maximise profit (Amanor, 2012; De Schutter, 2011).

More so, the fuel price hikes and calls for climate change mitigation measures resulted in diversification of energy sources. The campaigns for bioenergy development and biodiversity conservation measures led to the emergence of green grabbing and carbon credit market (Haller et al., 2019) pushing investors to acquire land to grow jatropha, eucalyptus and sugar cane to produce methane, biomass and biodiesel. The convergence of financial, food and energy crises of 2007-2008, therefore, explains the intensification of demand for land by transnational actors in the global South including Ghana with domestic capitalists also joining in the land acquisition (see also Chapters 2 and 3 on the extent of land acquired by investors).

3.2.1.2 Extra-economic Means of Capital Accumulation

Another aspect of the ABD employed in the literature on LSLA, is the extra-economic coercion for capital accumulation. Capital accumulation proceeds on two fronts: economic and/or extra-economic means (Akram-Lodhi, 2012). In the case of the economic means of capital accumulation, there is the assumption of perfect market conditions that operate on the principle of willing seller and willing buyer (Akram-Lodhi, 2012) where economic transaction is free from coercion and is usually voluntary. However, the argument contained in the ABD framework is contrary to this, as it entails situations where acts of force, predation, manipulation and threats are employed in the capital accumulation processes (Harvey, 2003). The extra-economic means of capital accumulation involves “legal or political power and/or (the threat of) force” (Hall, 2013:1592). Levien (2012) stressed the critical role of extra-economic coercion in capital accumulation and particularly highlighted the significant position of the state by virtue of its monopoly over violence in what he described as the regime of dispossession. He defined the regime of dispossession as “a political process in which states—or other coercion wielding entities—use extra-economic force to help capitalists overcome barriers to accumulation” (Levien, 2012:941).

In an era of technological advancement, participatory democracy with strong advocacy for the rights and liberties of people, especially the marginalised, the existence of sovereign states and strong CSOs that constitute the context within which the LSLA unfolds (Roudart & Mazoyer, 2015; Sassen, 2013) makes it difficult to accept the proposition of extra-economic coercion for capital accumulation. Whilst this observation seems accurate, the literature on LSLA as captured in Chapter 2 and the empirical evidence in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study, portray that the processes leading to land deals and their aftermath do not follow the workings of a perfect market. The economic liberalisation and legislative reforms that promoted land titling, especially in Africa, subsidies and tax exemptions that were the precursor to the LSLA

(Roudart & Mazoyer, 2015; Tsikata & Yaro, 2011) belong to the realm of extra-economic coercion. The fact that the processes of land deals are shrouded in secrecy and land transactions only occur between the investors and state actors and/or local elites and not those to be dispossessed, and the FPIC is improperly conducted, problems with payments of compensation, and the state's deployment of security agencies to evict former users of the land as well as quelling potential resistance fit within the domain of extra-economic coercion. Moreover, in situations where the smallholders voluntarily give up their land, this is done under the condition of indirect duress, as land markets in the global South are rarely 'ordinary' spaces of straightforward 'economic' relations (Hall, 2013:1593; Touch & Neef, 2015). The power asymmetry between the actors in the transaction (Boamah, 2014a) could harbour some implicit threats. The violence of ABD does not lie only in the acts of force during "expropriation but also in the fact that the capitalist class survives by systematically shaping workers' use of time, effort, and space as well as their relations with other humans and nature" (Hiraldo, 2018:531).

3.2.1.3 Creation, Expansion and Reproduction of Capitalist Social Relations

The creation, expansion and reproduction of capitalist social relations in the face of resistance and obstacles are central to the classical exposition of PA and ABD. The same has been employed to study the LSLA (Hall, 2013). The assumption is that the expropriation of land and related common-use or communal resources dispossesses the former users leaving them landless and vulnerable. Once alienated from their main source of livelihood, they must sell their labour power to make a living thereby creating two classes of people, the landless proletariat who serve as wage workers and the capitalists who are the controllers of the means of production, a process that has been described as proletarianisation (Glassman, 2006; Marx, 1967). Thus, Wolford et al. (2013) conceptualise LSLA in line with Harvey (2003) as a process where "direct producers were separated from the means of production, common property rights were privatized and non-capitalist modes of production were either harnessed or destroyed"

(Wolford et al., 2013:8) making it possible for capitalists to “colonise [a] new sphere of life and social relations” (Hiraldo, 2018:518). For LSLA, this process involves the extraction of natural resources, land privatisation for agricultural production, conservation and carbon sequestration, and tourism development, as well as the privatisation of public services, urban spaces, and knowledge (Benjaminsen et al., 2011; Hiraldo, 2018; Yang & He, 2021). The creation, expansion and reproduction processes of capitalist social relations raise two critical issues that need further clarity. In the first place: Does LSLA lead to dispossession and, if so, are those dispossessed compensated adequately for their loss? Relatedly, if dispossessed and not adequately compensated, how do they respond? The other issue has to do with whether those who were dispossessed have become proletarians and work for investment companies. These issues have been discussed in the literature review chapter and their manifestation in the study area has been captured in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study. A brief comment that draws on the work of Zhan (2019) will suffice here.

Zhan (2019), based on PA and ABD, conceptualises LSLA as “accumulation without dispossession” (AWD) to demonstrate the dynamics of LSLA in China. Even though Zhan (2019) recognises the potential of LSLA leading to dispossession, he acknowledges that there are instances where the compensation from such expropriation has made the owners of the alienated land better off. He identified four scenarios of change in peasants’ land rights and livelihoods occasioned by LSLA to determine whether the accumulation occurs with dispossession or without dispossession, by examining “whether the land is expropriated” and/or “whether peasants are able to derive livelihoods from various kinds of assets” (Zhan, 2019:449). The first scenario is where, despite accumulation, peasants still hold on to their land and their livelihoods are still dependent on land, leading to AWD. This is similar to the DUAT system in Mozambique and other forms of outgrower schemes (Bae, 2019). The second

scenario presents a situation where peasants resort to migration to make ends meet but still hold on to their land in the countryside, and in this case, AWD occurs. The third situation is where the loss of land and other assets are adequately compensated for by other forms of income-generating assets, a situation he referred to as “proprietyization” (Zhan, 2019:449). In the final scenario, expropriation occurs without adequate compensation and peasants are displaced leading to dispossession (Zhan, 2019). The situation in the study area reflects the final scenario, although some community members were employed in the investment company. He sees dispossession and “proprietyization” as two ends of a continuum and that “ABD does not constitute a binary with AWD but one of the possible outcomes of land expropriation” (Zhan, 2019:449-450). His description of dispossession as an outcome of land use rather than an “act of taking land or other forms of assets” (Zhan, 2019:449), aligns with this study, however, this study demonstrates that ABD rather than AWD has taken place as the community members have experienced both physical and economic displacement (see also Kebede et al., 2023).

Despite the recognition of the current land rush as reminiscent of the classical modernisation approach (Amanor, 2012; Peters, 2013), the proponents invoke the accompanying implementation measures that are considered to be compensatory, such as payment of compensation to affected people and corporate social responsibility (CSR), employment opportunities and spillover effects that are noted to be gender-sensitive, participatory, or even sustainable, to justify these investments (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Deininger & Xia, 2016). However, these ‘so-called’ “redistributive measures hide the politics of enclosure and accumulation by dispossession” and perpetuate the legitimisation of the “neoliberal order of which LSLA are a direct manifestation” (Gerber & Haller, 2021:1306). Hiraldo (2018) has demonstrated how the privatisation of mangroves in Senegal for capital accumulation through tourism development continuously “alienates workers by separating them not necessarily from

the land, but, more generally, from the conditions of their labour including time and effort, even when these are already commodified” (Hiraldo, 2018:517). This points to the fact that even in situations where communal landholders still have access to land and their livelihoods depend on land after the land deal, as is the case of contract farming, they continually experience exploitation and lose control of their livelihood assets as demonstrated by the contract farming scheme in Malawi that resulted in the concentration of land in the hands of few wealthy farmers (Bae, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature on LSLA has shown that LSLA creates dispossession in several ways and these dispossessed people become surplus labour and only a handful are employed by the investment company. Even those employed face the challenges of poor working conditions, low wages and delays in paying wages (Gyapong, 2019; Schoneveld, 2017; Tafon & Saunders, 2019). This has been demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study.

3.2.2 Critique of Accumulation by Dispossession

Despite its usefulness in different fields of study for analysing diverse phenomena, ABD has received several criticisms. Some of these objections are discussed in this section. ABD has been accused of harbouring contradictions and ambiguity in its original exposition (Hall, 2013), leading to many different interpretations and applications. This stems from the fact that Harvey (2003) did not explicitly define what he meant by ABD apart from delineating its broader boundaries in the foundational text, leaving it too broad and subject to different interpretations (Glassman, 2006; Hall, 2021). Levien (2012) criticises ABD for being too abstract and speculative, which makes it difficult to capture the variegated and unequal impacts of dispossession for the affected people and the nature of their response. Therefore, applying ABD to LSLA could lead to mischaracterising a phenomenon with variegated manifestations (Borras Jr & Franco, 2012). The researcher acknowledges the vagueness associated with ABD.

However, as demonstrated earlier, several of its elements, such as the use of extra-economic means of capital accumulation, the role of the state, the dispossession and displacement it engenders and the creation, expansion and reproduction of capitalist social relations, are useful in analysing the recent rush for land. The manifestation of these elements has also been confirmed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study. Although ABD does not account for the dynamics of dispossession in the local communities and their implication for the livelihoods of the affected people, this void is filled by linking it to the SLF.

Critics also questioned what they perceive to be a “forced demarcation between what is capitalist and what is not” (Hiraldo, 2018:518) in the conceptualisation of ABD. It has been argued that such distinctions make the application of ABD in studying LSLA problematic because of the inherent assumption that some people and their territories are outside capitalism or have had minimal contact and that such territory and its people need to be continually exploited and brought into capitalist means of production to sustain capitalism. Scoones (2015:35) argued that the “myth that isolated, remote places were uninfluenced by colonialism, structural adjustment, changing trade regimes or the state is absurd and dangerous”. Such an assumption is at variance with the current neoliberal globalisation era where capitalism’s footprints can be found almost everywhere including most of the former socialist countries. This critique appears to have lost sight of the fact that Harvey’s exposition of ABD also highlighted that capitalist accumulation through expanded reproduction can take place at “home and abroad” (Harvey, 2003:158). This suggests that ABD even occurs in the so-called ‘advanced capitalist states’ and not just in territories outside of capitalism. Therefore, the presence of a capitalist footprint across the globe does not prevent further capitalist accumulation, as evident in LSLA.

The ABD has also been criticised for the assumption of dispossession and displacement in analysing LSLA since empirical studies have shown that not all LSLAs involve dispossession (Hall, 2013; Zhan, 2019). However, the fact that not all LSLAs engender dispossession does not also mean that all LSLAs do not lead to dispossession, as this study reported instances of dispossession (See Chapter 6). More so, the concept of dispossession, taken broadly, does not only entail physical displacement or expulsion but could also involve control over the use of resources because dispossession could occur through a transformation in access and use of resources rather than outright alienation of property rights (Hall, 2021; Mondal, 2021; Zhan, 2019). As indicated in Chapter 2, even the projects involved in contract or outgrower schemes that have been touted for not dispossessing local communities ended up redefining land use rights and control of cash flows leading to the consolidation of smallholdings in the hands of a few (Adams et al., 2019; Matenga & Hichaambwa, 2017).

The application of ABD in studying LSLA has also been accused of overconcentration on global drivers. This leads to focusing on the international at the expense of the national and local drivers and actors (Smalley & Corbera, 2013). Situating the LSLA within the context of the global crises has also been accused of limiting its manifestation and leaving out some important aspects of the phenomenon. Whilst LSLA has been driven by global capital accumulation, the desire by nation-states to attract FDI, transform the agricultural sector and fulfil other goals in the host countries, cannot be overlooked, as the understanding of national and local context is very much necessary in conceptualising LSLA (Adjei, 2022; Zoomers, 2010). This overconcentration on foreign investors and global drivers constitutes part of what has been described as “selection bias” (Oya, 2013:507; Scoones et al., 2013). Recent studies have also emphasised the prominent roles played by domestic actors who are acquiring large tracts of land (Abdallah et al., 2023; Ayamga et al., 2023). More so, perceiving LSLA as a

response to capitalist crises calls into question “the balance between global and domestic forces in driving land grabbing and about the agency of (global) capital, states and smallholders” (Hall, 2013:1583; Lanz et al., 2018). Regardless of the critique against associating LSLA with the global crises of 2007-2008, one thing is clear: the rush for land and related resources in the developing world skyrocketed to unprecedented levels in the post-independence era in the aftermath of the crises (Wolford et al., 2013). This has also been observed in this study (See Chapter 5). Although the global crises might have started from the so-called ‘advanced capitalist states’, their impact on the economics and livelihoods of the countries in the global South was not much less brutal (see also Chitonge, 2024). Domestic capital was equally affected by global crises and is “likely to respond to the multiple transnational crises” by domestically triggering its own capital accumulation (Hall, 2013:1587). Moreover, the fact that the products from these investments targeted external markets (Abesha et al., 2022; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021) also give credence to the crisis argument.

3.2.3 The Relevance of ABD to the Study

ABD is a useful theoretical framework for analysing this study because the processes of capturing land and natural resources for capital accumulation and its attendant dispossession and displacement of the communal landholders are core to this study. Furthermore, the role of the state in capital accumulation is clear in both ABD and LSLA. The use of extra-economic means of land expropriation, a characteristic of African countries, where a formal land market has not fully developed, was confirmed by this study (see Chapters 5 & 6). Again, situating LSLA within the post-2008 crisis is in tandem with ABD as the capitalists’ response to crises in the neoliberal globalisation era. Conceptualising ABD as an ongoing phenomenon also makes it an ideal theory to analyse LSLA. However useful ABD is in conceptualising LSLA, especially in drawing attention to the political and economic forces behind the dispossession,

the theory on its own is incapable of accounting for the political contingencies or how the dispossession materialises in unexpected and unique ways on the ground (Kenney-Lazar, 2018). The theory of ABD is also incapable of explaining the manifestation of LSLA in places with complex histories and diverse dynamics (Gellert, 2015). These shortcomings and the desire to ensure a better understanding of the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders made the researcher combine ABD with SLF.

3.3 Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) and LSLA

The SLF provides a useful analytical framework for studying the local manifestation of LSLA and the outcomes it produces for communal landholders. The SLF is an analytical framework that gained currency in the late 1990s in development studies to interrogate the interactions between household livelihood systems and the external environment including both “the natural environment and the policy and institutional context” (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021:246). The SLF was developed to illustrate the linkages among five crucial concepts to provide a better appreciation of how interventions shape the livelihoods of rural communities: vulnerability context; livelihood assets; policy, institutional and organisational context; livelihood strategies; and livelihood outcomes. For the purposes of this study, a sixth component, neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD), has been added to the framework.

Drawing on the definition given by Chambers and Conway (1992) that was later developed further by Scoones (1998), livelihood is defined as:

compris[ing] the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, [and] maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base (Scoones, 1998:5).

Sustainable livelihood is the “level of wealth and of stocks and flows of food and cash which provide for physical and social wellbeing” and includes security against death, sickness, and becoming poorer (Chambers, 2011:5). Sustainable livelihood, however, may mean different thing to different people, as some people may be satisfied with just the ability to provide adequate food, shelter and security to the members of the household, others may have higher standards and expectations (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). Irrespective of the differences in standards and expectations, livelihood is simply the means to achieve and sustain well-being (Messer & Townsley, 2003; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021).

3.3.1 Description and Application of the Framework

The framework, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, is made up of six important interacting concepts: neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD); policy, institutional and organisational context; vulnerability context; livelihood assets; livelihood strategies; and livelihood outcomes.

3.3.1.1 Neoliberal Capital Accumulation Pressures (ABD)

As discussed earlier in the chapter, ABD is a neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategy that exerts pressure on territories and nations. The interaction between the national circumstances and these neoliberal pressures shapes institutional processes and structures, paves the way for the introduction of LSLA, alters the vulnerability context, and affects capital assets and livelihood strategies to produce outcomes. Contrarily to the original framework that limited the discussions to national and local institutions, policies and processes on the assumption that international influences are embodied in the national and local institutions (Scoones, 2015), the researcher explicitly identifies the neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD) that triggered LSLA amidst global economic crises. The literature review chapter has demonstrated how years of implementation of SAP and associated privatisation and market liberalisation, together with other institutional reforms (including land tenure reforms) sponsored by

neoliberal aid agencies shaped institutions and structures at national and local levels for easy entry of LSLA (see also Chapter 5). More so, the national guidelines for LSLA were couched along the lines of international voluntary guidelines and good governance.

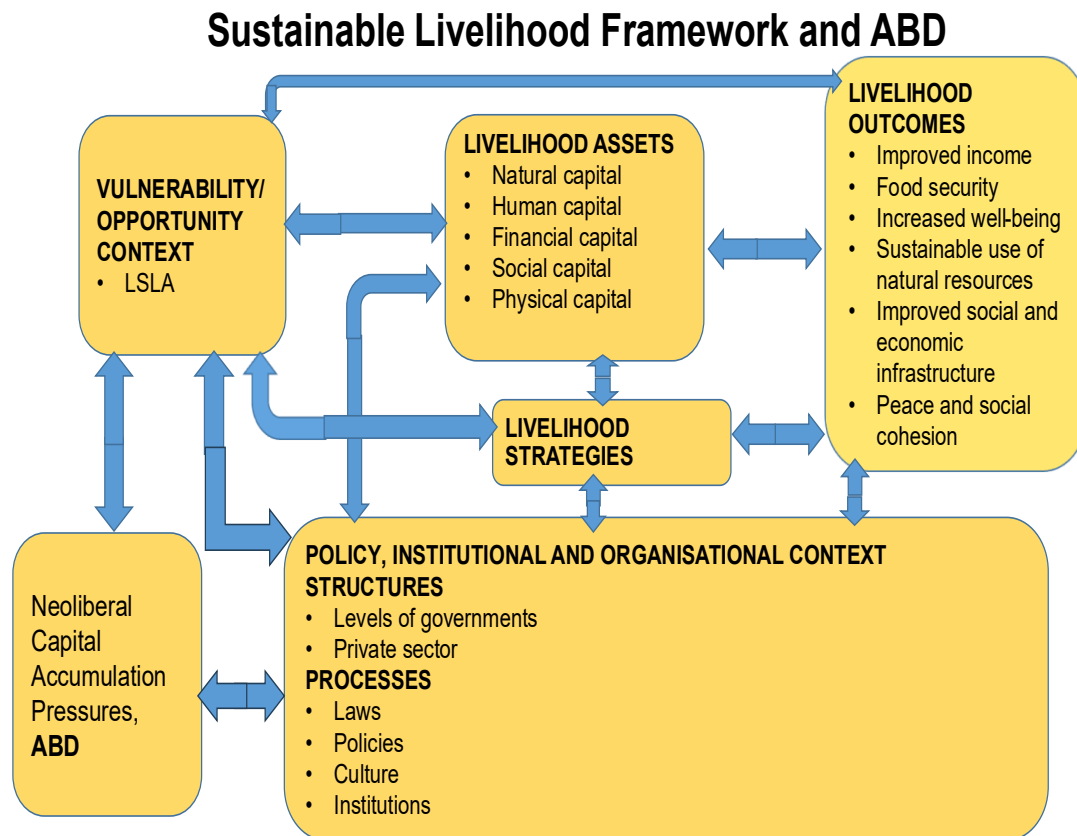


Figure 3.1 Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) and ABD

Source: Author’s conceptualisation based on the Department for International Development (DfID) (1999). Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets: Overview, 1.1, p.1 and the literature on LSLA, 2023.

3.3.1.2 Policy, Institutional and Organisational Context

The policy, institutional and organisational context establishes the processes and structures for mediating assets deployed, strategies pursued, and outcomes attained for various people (Scoones, 2015). Institution refers to formal and informal organisations (structures), policies and processes (arrangements) at national and local levels which “mediate the ability to carry out such strategies and achieve (or not) such outcomes” (Haller, 2019; Nkansah-Dwamena,

2021; Scoones, 2015:34). Whereas formal institutions are well-structured with explicit rules and regulations, informal institutions are said to be invisible, unstructured and have no written statuses (Haller, 2019; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). Institutions include all the state agencies and departments across all levels of the state, CSOs and activist groups, investors and corporations, socio-cultural institutions, such as kinship, inheritance and marriage, ethnicity, religion, and the ever-powerful chieftaincy institution in the case of Ghana. The policies and processes may include the laws, guidelines, proclamations, and customary norms that govern resource access, control and utilisation. These influence households' vulnerability context, livelihood asset portfolio, livelihood strategies, and, ultimately, livelihood outcomes. As time elapses, the institutions and processes could also be shaped by the livelihood context, capital assets, strategies and outcomes.

3.3.1.3 Vulnerability or Opportunity Context

The vulnerability context here refers to occurrences in the community that household members have little or no control over but have the potential to alter the livelihood circumstances. These factors include economic shocks (drastic changes in the market), weather-related shocks (drought and floods), seasonal stress (famine and food insecurity), structural vulnerability (lack of voice or power in decision-making or stake claims), environmental stress (land degradation and soil erosion), civil strife (destruction of property and displacement) (Messer & Townsley, 2003; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021:246). In the case of this study, the livelihood context has been altered by LSLA with associated dispossession and displacement that could create further shocks, trends and seasonality. Even though the original framework focused mainly on the vulnerabilities, the researcher argues that the introduction of LSLA creates both vulnerabilities and opportunities, as the literature and the findings from this study confirm. The transforming structures and processes shape LSLA and influence the extent to which the investment projects will alter the local context to create vulnerability or opportunity. Likewise, assets available to

the household and their livelihood strategies impinge on the vulnerability context. As a phenomenon that has operated for over a decade, the livelihood outcomes from the investment projects could also shape the vulnerability context.

3.3.1.4 Livelihood Assets

Livelihood assets are a set of capital crucial for individuals, households and communities to embark on livelihood strategies to enable them to attain their goals or livelihood outcomes (Flora, 2018). These livelihood assets are human, social, natural, financial, and physical capital. The human asset embodies people's active labour, education, training and skills, health, leadership qualities, and the knowledge and experience that enable them to earn a living (Flora, 2018; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). The level of human capital determines the "quantity and quality of available labour or the workforce" (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021:247). Social capital encompasses the interconnectedness that exists among community members which manifests in reciprocity, social obligation and mutual trust and support; these features are necessary to ensure coordination and cooperation for the benefit of all community members especially in times of emergency (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). Natural capital refers to nature-endowed resources, such as land, forest, water, pasture and wildlife, that people rely on directly or indirectly to support their livelihoods (Scoones, 1998). Financial capital in rural communities is generated by selling surplus produce for money, engaging in off-farm activities or both, and saving money for further investment or dealing with an emergency. Scoones (1998) observed that financial capital includes income, savings, cash, credit, bank deposits, loans, gold, jewellery etc. Finally, the physical capital comprises infrastructure, facilities, services, and structures that support society, including roads, buildings, equipment, vehicles, irrigation, health care, energy and communication technology (Flora, 2018; Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). The conceptual framework shows that households' capital assets are shaped by the livelihood context and the institutions, structures and processes that determine the rule of access. The

livelihood assets at the disposal of the household also shape the livelihood strategies they will adopt that will lead to the attainment of goals thereby producing livelihood outcomes. Conversely, the kind of livelihood strategies adopted by the household could lead to dwindling or maximisation of the livelihood assets that households possess, the same way that the outcomes could also affect the household's livelihood assets.

3.3.1.5 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies refer to the combination of activities and choices deployed to exploit livelihood assets to realise livelihood goals or outcomes. As observed by Nkansah-Dwamena (2021:247), “these strategies include how households combine their revenue-generating activities, such as using, investing, or preserving their assets”. The strategies include farming, fishing, raising livestock, hunting and gathering, trading, off-farm employment, beekeeping and migration. Livelihood strategies also include the resistance or response of community members to avert or ameliorate the negative impacts of investment projects on their livelihoods as well as coping and adaptive strategies. The combinations of these strategies vary widely and there are also varieties of strategies within each, which usually shape livelihood outcomes. If you consider farming, for instance, one will consider the type of crop to cultivate, the farming methods or practices (land fallowing, crop rotation or permanent tillage) to engage in, agriculture intensification and the use of agrochemicals. The livelihood strategies are influenced by the vulnerability context, the asset portfolio of the household and the transforming structures and processes to arrive at livelihood outcomes. Conversely, over time, livelihood strategies could also influence households' asset portfolios, institutions, structures and processes as well as the vulnerability context.

3.3.1.6 Livelihood Outcomes

Finally, livelihood outcomes are what households achieve through their livelihood strategies, such as improved income, enhanced food security, improved well-being, health, asset accumulation, sustainable use of natural resources, socio-economic infrastructure, peace and social cohesion, and high status in the community (Abdallah et al., 2023; Scoones, 2015). The outcomes can also entail worsening poverty levels, deteriorating socio-economic infrastructure, loss of income, food insecurity, environmental degradation (soil erosion, water and air pollution), tension, and conflicts (Adjei, 2022; Ayamga et al., 2023; Ferrante et al., 2021). Livelihood outcomes can be positive, negative or both depending on the other factors in the framework, as the literature on LSLA has reported variegated outcomes. They could also be short term or long-term impacts. Adequate access to livelihood assets, the right transforming institutions and structures, reduced vulnerability and the adoption of appropriate strategies will produce positive outcomes and the inverse also holds. Similarly, the outcomes could also shape livelihood assets, strategies, vulnerability context and policy, institutional and organisational context as the phenomenon unfolds.

3.3.2 Critique of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework

The researcher is not oblivious to criticisms against the application of SLF in assessing the livelihood outcomes of an intervention, especially LSLA. The SLF has been accused of “an unremitting focus, almost a reification, of the local and by extension of community” leading to the tendency to forget that local livelihoods are increasingly embedded in, and reproduced by, networks and relationships that transcend the local (Natarajan et al., 2022:4). Thus, relegating the analysis of structures and processes, such as the power of business interests, the role of the state and elites, “the influence of neoliberal capitalism, the forces of globalization or the terms of trade, for example - to a simple “context” box is clearly limiting” (Scoones, 2015:38). By reconstructing the framework, this lacuna is cured not only by demonstrating the links between

policy, institutional and organisational context to the other components in the framework but also by adding the role of the macro forces. More importantly, employing the framework alongside the theory of ABD helps not only bridge the gap between the macro forces and micro processes and outcomes but also helps to ascertain “how particular forms of globalisation and associated processes of production and exchange – historically from colonialism to contemporary neoliberal economics – create both processes of marginalisation and opportunity” (Natarajan et al., 2022; Scoones, 2013:188).

Scholars have also objected to some assumptions and terms adopted in the framework (Natarajan et al., 2022; Scoones, 2015). For example, the term “capital” used to describe livelihood assets as well as the categorisation of those assets into five have received some opposition. Scoones (2015:39) argued that this has more trouble than any other aspect of the framework because the use of the “term ‘capital’ reduces the complexity of livelihood processes to economic units, and in turn suggests that these are both comparable and measurable”. Limiting livelihood assets to five capitals does not encapsulate all the diverse and complex sets of resources available to the household, for example, political and cultural “capital” have no explicit role in the framework. Again, the definition of the five “capitals” especially, social “capital” is problematic since the boundary between what it is and what it is not, is difficult to draw (Scoones, 2015). Whilst this critique is valid, the identification of the capital assets provides a useful way of analysing the impacts of LSLA in the affected communities.

Finally, SLF has been accused of not being sufficiently ‘political’ (Natarajan et al., 2022; Scoones, 2015). Even though politics was not entirely rejected, the instrumental tone of the framework consigned it to the background. For instance, the approach glosses over the power dynamics in the local community context that differentiates community members along the

lines of class, gender and generational differences (Natarajan et al., 2022). This critique is also addressed by bringing into the frame ABD that emphasises the role of the state in capital accumulation processes.

3.3.3 The Application of SLF to the Study

The application of SLF in conjunction with ABD to this study was presented alongside the description of the framework. However, a summary of how the framework applies to this study is provided in this section. LSLA as a means of capital accumulation to address the global crises of 2007-2008 was made possible through years of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD) that shaped national and local institutions, structures, policies and processes that set up the livelihood vulnerability context. Depending on the vulnerability context created and the structures and processes in place, the household's asset portfolio will either be enhanced or undermined. The kind of asset portfolio available to the household, the vulnerability context and the structures and processes shape the livelihood strategies deployed. Finally, the adopted strategies, together with the prevailing vulnerability or opportunity context, capital assets, institutions and processes influence the livelihood outcomes. Thus, through legislative reforms and land titling programmes sponsored by the World Bank and other multinational organisations, setting up of new state agencies and departments, and changes in the customary tenure system created the enabling environment for foreign and domestic investors to appropriate land for capital accumulation that dispossesses the affected communities, altering the vulnerability context.

The dispossession of the communities will negatively affect the livelihood assets available to them including loss of access to fertile land, forest and non-forest products, water, and fishing rights that will further shape other livelihood capital assets. This situation will limit strategies available to the community members; for example, the loss of access to land may leave the

household with no option but to abandon farming, reduce farm size or cultivate crops that ordinarily they would not cultivate. This scenario will produce negative outcomes including food insecurity, low income and poverty and environmental problems. On the contrary, with appropriate compensation mechanisms, involvement of the community members in the processes of LSLA through FPIC, appropriate CSR and alternative livelihood activities, community members' livelihood context could be enhanced, asset portfolio improved, and a repertoire of livelihood strategies will be available to them to choose from, which can lead to positive outcomes.

Another way of applying the framework involves the use of reverse arrows to highlight that the reverse flow analysis is equally valid. The literature on LSLA that uses the SLF hardly employs the reverse flow analysis. In the framework used by Nkansah-Dwamena (2021), the reverse flow occurred only once – between livelihood assets and policy, institutional and organisational context. Likewise, in the framework by Abdallah et al. (2023), there was no reverse flow analysis. The researcher argues strongly that, given the fact that the recent LSLA has been unfolding for over a decade and what is known from the literature and empirical data, the reverse flow analysis should also be perused vigorously to unravel the complexities of the LSLA phenomenon. There are instances where the negative outcomes generated by LSLA create a vulnerability context and erosion of livelihood assets that trigger responses and resistance. This has led not only to the suspension or termination of land deals but also changes in institutions, procedural reforms and even the overthrow of governments (Gagné, 2022; Gingembre, 2015; Tafon & Saunders, 2019). The various international and national guidelines on LSLA formulated in response to CSOs bashing and rural communities' cries for help further indicate how the reverse flow occurs. The researcher is convinced that incorporating flow reversal in the framework for analysing LSLA is critical to providing a holistic understanding

of the developments taking place on the acquired land and their outcomes for communal landholders.

3.4 The Relevance of Combining ABD and SLF

The debate around LSLA has demonstrated how complex and diverse it has manifested itself globally. Assessing the impacts of LSLA with its complexities and context-specificity requires a broader theoretical and conceptual framework to holistically capture all the nuances. The combination of ABD and SLF is ideal for this pursuit. Again, the epistemological differences between the two, with ABD espousing a top-down perspective and the SLF focusing on the bottom-up perspective, make their combination necessary to holistically assess the niceties of LSLA with its complexities and wide tentacles reaching towards the local, national, and international arenas. Whilst ABD helps situate the phenomenon in its broader historical and political context, SLF is useful in understanding how LSLA unfolds in the local context. Thus, the ABD and SLF are broad enough and possess several assumptions (as discussed earlier) that make them useful theoretical and analytical frameworks to study the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in Ghana.

3.5 Conclusion

This study sees LSLA as capitalists' attempt at responding to economic crises emanating from over-accumulation with the potential of expropriating communal landholders of their lands leading to dispossession, exploitation, or incorporation of the peasantry with far-reaching implications for the livelihoods of the affected communities. To effectively assess what has happened on the acquired land since acquisition, and the impacts of those developments for communal landholders, the researcher employed the theory of ABD in conjunction with the SLF to help achieve the aim of the study. The chapter has discussed ABD as espoused by Harvey, its application in the LSLA literature, the critique of the theory and its relevance to

this study. The chapter further presented a modified SLF linking it to ABD, described the framework and its application in the LSLA literature, and a critique of the framework and its relevance for this study. The deployment of ABD and SLF provides a better framework to effectively assess the outcomes of LSLA because, in combination, they provide a broader way of perceiving and understanding LSLA. The next chapter is devoted to the presentation of information on the study area and the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Study Area and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study area, and the research methods adopted for data collection, presentation and analysis. The chapter has been divided into two: the study area and the methodology sections. The first section focuses on the features of AAM, the site for this study, by describing the location and ethnic composition, demography, vegetation, climate and rainfall pattern, relief and drainage, economic activities, social and political organisation and nature of land tenure. The second section presents detailed information about the research approach adopted for this study. The issues presented in this section include research design, sampling methods and size, data collection instruments, data analysis, research ethical appraisal and security considerations. The detailed description of the research approach is geared towards ensuring the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the findings of the study. In composing this chapter, the researcher drew on data from field interviews, focus group discussions, household surveys, and reports from state institutions, including national census reports, reports from the Municipal Assembly, and existing literature.

4.2 Study Area

This section provides detailed information about the study area to provide the background information to foster an appreciation of the environment and context in which LSLA unfolds and produces impacts for the affected communities.

4.2.1 Location of the Study Area

The AAM, the site for this study, is in the newly created Bono East Region of Ghana. The Municipality was formerly part of the then Brong Ahafo Region until the Bono East Region

was carved out on February 13th, 2019 (RCC) through the regional re-organisation programme (Van Gyampo, 2018).

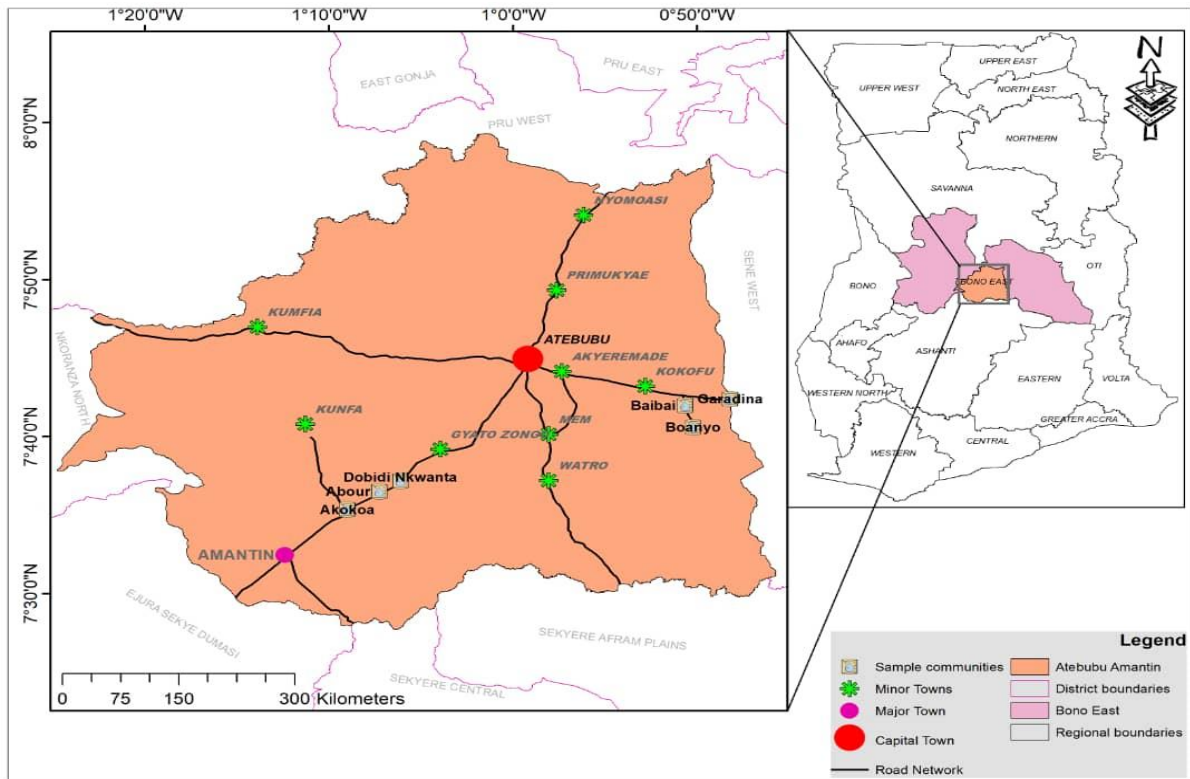


Figure 4.1 Map of the study area⁷

Source: Author construct (2024).

AAM is located in the middle belt of Ghana and lies at the heart of the transitional zone on latitudes 7° 23” N and 8° 22” N and longitudes 0° 30” W and 1° 26” W (GSS, 2014). It shares a boundary to the north with the Pru West District, to the east with the Sene West District, and to the west with the Nkoranza North District all in the Bono East Region. In the southernmost part, the Municipality shares a boundary with three districts in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

⁷ From the map, the major road in the study area is the one that connects Atebubu to Amantin. It is also the same road that links the study area to Kumasi, the second-largest city in Ghana, and Accra, the national capital to the south. The road also connects the area to the northern part of Ghana.

including the Ejura Sekyedumase, Sekyere Central, and Sekyere Afram Plains. The Municipality occupies a total surface area of 2,571 square kilometres (GSS, 2021).

4.2.2 Demographic and Ethnic Composition of the Study Area

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census of Ghana, the population of the AAM stood at 144,947 with 72,993 males and 71,954 females and a population density of 56.4 persons/km² with 43.01% of the population living in rural communities (GSS, 2021). The Municipality also had a total number of 31,552 households with an average household size of 4.5 persons (GSS, 2021). It is home to the Bono and the Asante people, branches of the dominant Akan ethnic group. However, the history of the place is replete with records of immigrants who have now made the Municipality their home. The migrant groups were mostly from northern Ghana and beyond, as well as other Akan people from southern Ghana (Sarfo, 2011; Tonah, 2002).

Whilst the Bono and Asante people are considered autochthonous, all other groups are regarded as migrants, even though some of these migrants were born and have lived in the Municipality for ages and, in some instances, are third and fourth generations of their forebears who first settled there. The Municipality has a high population of migrants from the northern regions due to its proximity, favourable weather conditions that allow for two planting seasons, and relatively better socio-economic infrastructure in comparison to the regions to the north (Sarfo et al., 2025).

4.2.3 Vegetation and Soil of the Study Area

The vegetation is made up of Guinea forest- savannah woodland, with many sparsely distributed small trees and grassland, and “transitional environments consisting of mosaics of high forest” (Amanor, 2009b:137; Wongnaa & Awunyo-Vitor, 2019). The nature of the vegetation is ideal for large-scale commercial agriculture because the Municipality does not

have big trees and thick forests, which makes land preparation easy. The soil in the AAM ranges from fine sandy loams to clayey loams, which are amenable to ploughing with tractors and other farm machinery.

4.2.4 Climate and Rainfall Pattern

As part of the transitional zone, the Municipality is characterised by semi-equatorial climatic conditions. The AAM experiences two rainy seasons, the first starts in May and ends in July whereas the second season runs from September to October, with the total annual rainfall ranging between 1,400 mm to 1,800 mm (GSS, 2014). The Municipality also experiences the influence of the Northeast Trade Winds (Harmattan) between November and March/April which makes the place dry and susceptible to bushfires. The average monthly temperature is between 26.5°C and 27.2°C but could rise to as high as 40°C during the warm period (GSS, 2021).

4.2.5 Relief and Drainage

The AAM has a plain landscape with a rolling and undulating land surface with a general elevation of between 60-300 metres above sea level (GSS, 2014). There are no significant mountains and hills in the Municipality, which also makes large-scale agriculture feasible. The area is mainly drained by the Pru River, a tributary to the Volta Lake which flows across the western and northern parts of the Municipality. Some other important rivers and streams in the area include Sene, Bresuo and Nyomo rivers. Geological information indicates that the Municipality has a low water table which makes water bodies, wells and boreholes dry up during the dry season (GSS, 2014).

4.2.6 Economic Activities

The people of AAM engage in various economic activities, both formal and informal. The formal sector economic activities include health, education, security services, civil service, and

NGOs (GSS, 2014; Sarfo, 2020). Activities in the informal sector include agriculture, trading, tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, masonry, driving, repairing electronic devices etc. Agriculture is by far the mainstay of the economy and employs some 66.1% of the working population, with an even higher percentage in the rural communities (GSS, 2014). Many people employed in both the public sector and private ventures also supplement their income with farming. The Municipality is considered part of the breadbasket of Ghana because several food crops that are staples of Ghanaians thrive in the area (Owusu & Waylen, 2013; Otu et al., 2024). The main crops cultivated include yam, maize, cassava, vegetables, groundnut, legumes, and rice. In recent times, tree crops, such as cashew, mango, and coconut, are also cultivated in the area (GSS, 2014; Sarfo, 2011; Sarfo et al., 2025). Yam used to be the dominant crop in the Municipality, but maize is now taking the mantle. There is an emergence of some form of mechanised agriculture in cultivating cereals, vegetables and sorghum (Amanor & Iddrisu, 2022; Sarfo et al., 2025). Commercial agriculture has also become a major feature of the Municipality, as many domestic and international investors have acquired several hectares of land for commercial farming and plantation development, a phenomenon which is creating a class of agricultural waged workers. Aside from crop production, households also engage in livestock-keeping in complementing their income and nutritional needs. The main animals kept are: goats, sheep, pigs, local fowl, cattle (by the well-endowed households), and poultry by a few households. Fishing, hunting and gathering, charcoal making, and beekeeping are other economic activities in the Municipality.

4.2.7 Social Organisation of the Study Area

The basic social organisation of the Municipality is the family, *Abusua*.⁸ The family organisation is extended and made up of both remote and close relatives, such as children,

⁸ *Abusua* is a generic term used to describe a group of people who relate to each other by blood, marriage or adoption. They believe to have come from a common ancestor or ancestress who is either known or an

parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and other relations, although the nuclear family system has also gained attention in recent times. The life of the people in the Municipality revolves around the *Abusua* which sees to the organisation of traditional politics, social, economic and religious activities. The expansion of the extended family over a period creates a lineage which refers to a group of people who trace their descent to a known ancestor and, in this case, through a maternal line. Settlements are not strictly organised based on clan or lineage. However, the migrants from northern regions of Ghana settle based on their origin, as people from the same ethnic group prefer settling together. Therefore, villages in the Municipality are associated with ethnic groups, as such ethnic groups dominate some villages. The system of inheritance and succession among the indigenous population is based on the matrilineal system and that of the migrants from the northern part of the country is based on the patrilineal system. Under the matrilineal system, children do not have the jural right to inherit the property of their father or his siblings but, where the mother's siblings are concerned, the sister's child could inherit the property and succeed to some of the traditional statuses or offices that they held in their lifetime (Awedoba, 2005).

4.2.8 The Political Organisation of the Study Area

The traditional political organisation of AAM can be described as a centralised system “where power and authority [are] vested in the paramount stool headed by the paramount chief” (Sarfo, 2011:45), the *Omanhene*.⁹ The Municipality has two paramount chiefs, the *Omanhene* of Atebubu and the *Omanhene* of Amantin, who are independent of each other. The basis of

imaginary figure. The same term is used to refer to both family and lineage; however, a clan is referred to as *ntɔn*.

⁹ *Omanhene* is the Akan word for the paramount chief. *Oman* literary means state or nation and *Ohene* which sometimes rendered *Hene* literary means chief. Therefore, *Omanhene* could be rendered as the chief of the nation.

traditional political organisation is the family. In each family or lineage, there is the family or lineage head, *Abusuapanin*. The family heads from various families in a village constitute the council of elders for that village which functions as advisory board to the *Odikro*.¹⁰ The *Odikro* and his council of elders, traditionally have oversight responsibility over the village. At the level of the division is the divisional chief, the *Asafohene*¹¹ and his courtiers, who are responsible for several villages within the division. Each *Asafohene* has his council of elders, the *Ohemaa*¹² and *Abusuapanin*, who serve as a check on the powers of the divisional chiefs. There is also a court for each divisional chief where disputes between individuals and between villages in the division, including land disputes, are settled.

At the apex of the political authority structure of the traditional area is the *Omanhene* whose authority is symbolised by a ‘black stool’ or ‘ancestral stool’. The paramount chiefs have their queen mothers and councils made up of divisional chiefs. “Disputes between divisional chiefs are settled at the court of the [*Omanhene*] as well as disputes between individuals in which the oath of the traditional area has been invoked” (Sarfo, 2011:47). The *Omanhene* was the commander-in-chief of the traditional army and led his people in the times of inter-ethnic wars. However, in recent times, the *Omanhene* collaborates with the central and local government in promoting development within his traditional area. The *Omanhene*, “in the olden days, was the social, economic, religious, and political head of the state” (Sarfo, 2011:47; Antwi-Bediako, 2018).

¹⁰ *Odikro* refers to the village head. The plural of *Odikro* is *adikrofoɔ*

¹¹ *Asafohene* is made up of two Akan words: *Asafo* which refers to the youth group who were organised for war in the past. *Hene* or *Ohene* is a term used to refer to a chief. *Asafohene* could be rendered as the chief of the warring party or troops, usually a branch of the forces of the state.

¹² *Ohemaa* is usually rendered as the queen mother but she not necessarily the mother of the chief though she could sometimes be, she could also be a sister, maternal niece or aunt of the chief. In this context, the *Ohemaa* is the female counterpart of the *Odikro*, *Asafohene* or *Omanhene*.

Administratively, the Municipality is headed by the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), who is an appointee and the representative of the President of Ghana and responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Municipality. The Municipality has 31 electoral areas, and “each electoral area elects an assembly member who represents the area in the [Municipal Assembly]” (Sarfo, 2011:47). The elected members, together with government appointees, constitute the highest decision-making body of the Municipality. Each electoral area also elects a 5-member unit committee responsible for the day-to-day administration of the electoral area. The unit committee constitutes the lowest organ in the decentralisation system in Ghana. With the introduction of the above structures, the powers of chiefs have been “reduced to the administration of stool lands, religious roles and administration of disputes related to tradition and custom, as well as ceremonial functions” (Sarfo, 2011:47-48). However, both the traditional and the modern systems of administration operate side-by-side in the study area.

4.2.9 Land Tenure in the Study Area

As discussed in the literature review section, land in Ghana is categorised into three: namely, state, vested and customary land. The customary land is also categorised into two depending on the ownership system involving stool and family or lineage land. The land in AAM is classified as stool land vested in stools and managed by chiefs under the customary norms of the two traditional areas. In the study area, land ownership, management and administration follow the hierarchical order of the traditional authority structure described earlier. The *Omanhene* is vested with allodial or ultimate or absolute rights over the land in each traditional area. The allodial rights grant the *Omanhene* the sole authority to alienate land by leasehold or sale upon consultation with the elders or traditional council members. The *Asafohene*, on the other hand, possess derivative rights that enable them to carry out the day-to-day administration of customary land as caretaker chiefs who operate through the village heads. The *Asafohene*

are responsible for allocating land to individuals in their respective divisions for farming but have no power to grant land leases or sell the land without the consent of the *Omanhene*. *Asafohene* are responsible for settling land-related disputes and performing rituals and sacrifices on the land in their respective divisions. Many respondents in the study area refer to the *Asafohene* as their “landlords”¹³ due to the prominent role they play in customary land administration, although such a term is mainly reserved for the *Omanhene*. Village heads administer land within the village boundaries and report to the divisional chiefs. Individuals’ access to land depends on their origin and/or their relationship with the various levels of the traditional hierarchy.

In the study area, three identifiable groups of land users in the agricultural sector are encountered: the autochthons, the migrants and the emerging medium- and large-scale commercial enterprises. Access to land was determined by the group one belongs to and the use of the land. Whilst the natives to the traditional area access to land was mostly based on usufruct or inheritance, the migrants’ access to land is through tenancy or leasehold. The medium- and large-scale commercial ventures mostly access land through leaseholds and tenancy irrespective of whether they were migrants or natives. About 73.36% of the respondents, access land through tenancy arrangement, 22.71% through usufruct, and 1.75% and 0.81% through leasehold and inheritance or gift, respectively. The higher percentage for the tenancy is not surprising because the study communities are dominated by migrants. More so, changes in tenure relations (see Chapter 6) have eroded the land access right of the natives making many of them access land through tenancy arrangement or leasehold rather than

¹³ The landlord here does not mean that the person owns the land as a personal property but in the context of the customary land tenure, the land is vested in that person on behalf of his or her people. Such a person is responsible for major decisions on the land. In the case of this study the *Omanhene* was considered the landlord.

enjoying their usufructuary rights. It suffices to note that, with the advent of agricultural mechanisation and LSLA, land renting has become an emerging trend in the study area.

The usufructuary rights are bestowed on the indigenes of a traditional area as birthrights that grant them free access to the use of land for farming, in most cases, under the system of shifting cultivation and land fallowing which does not require continuous control over a plot of land. Migrants are considered strangers, although not foreigners, because most are citizens of Ghana, and their access to land is based on tenancy arrangements operated through some form of client-patron relationship or landlord-tenant relationship. They are required to pay annual tributes to the chiefs and render some services to their landlords. Both usufructuary and tenancy rights under the system of shifting cultivation and land fallowing were not tied to specific plots of land (Sarfo et al., 2025) which expose such right-holders to serious vulnerabilities in times of land alienation (See Chapter 6).

4.3 Research Design

This study employs a convergent mixed method research approach involving qualitative and quantitative designs to ascertain the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in AAM. This approach involves concurrently “collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, analysing both datasets and then integrating the two sets of analyses to cross-validate or compare the findings” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017:175). The strength of mixed method research design lies in its complementarity, as the approach draws on the strength of both qualitative and quantitative methods to address the inherent weakness in adopting one approach over the other. For instance, the qualitative approach is useful for understanding how different people act in their real-world settings, and also enables a researcher to “conduct in-depth studies about a broad array of topics” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:6). The qualitative approach could be used to capture the understanding of people, their lived experiences, perceptions,

worldviews and beliefs, the meaning they attach to issues, actions, and the reasons behind such actions that the quantitative approach is incapable of eliciting. On the contrary, the quantitative approach is useful in undertaking a study that requires quantification or placing numerical values on variables that the qualitative design is incapable of doing (Leavy, 2017). Since this study elicits information about peoples' way of life, their lived experiences with LSLA, land tenure relations, opinions and perceptions on what has been unfolding with the intrusion of LSLA, conflicts and related variables that are descriptive in nature as well as information on employment rate, income levels, extent of land loss and other related variable that are quantifiable, made the adoption of mixed method design an ideal method for conducting this study. Employing the mixed method approach enabled the researcher to holistically and comprehensively assess the phenomenon under study.

The researcher adopted the convergent mixed method design because, as a PhD study, the researcher did not have the luxury of time and financial resources to embark on sequential data collection associated with other types of mixed method approaches. This study focuses on the real impacts of LSLA from the experiences of the affected people rather than establishing causality between LSLA and impacts, and, as a result, the mixed method adopted tilts towards the qualitative approach, as this is useful in extracting data involving experiences of the affected community members. In addition, the inclusion of the quantitative methods (descriptive statistics) in this study allowed for capturing many variables, expanding the scope of the study to capture the views of many respondents and complementing the data from the qualitative sources.

The study employs a case study which is effective for conducting in-depth studies of a phenomenon. Simon (2014:457) describes a case study as “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives on the complexity and uniqueness of a specific project, policy, institution

or system in a real-life context.” The primary focus on ensuring an in-depth understanding of LSLA in the context of AAM to generate knowledge and inform policy development, and civil or community action (Thomas, 2021) made the case study an important research design for this study because it made it possible for a thorough investigation to be conducted. In the context of the complexities of the LSLA and its contextual nature, adopting a case study allowed for digging deeper to understand the unfolding phenomenon better.

4.3.1 Sampling, Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

This section discusses sampling, data collection, analysis and presentation approaches. The first part presents the processes for selecting the study area, investment projects, study communities and categories of respondents. The second part presents the sampling processes and data collection approaches. The third part focuses on the data analysis and presentation. Given the complexities of the mixed method design, this study employs a multistage sampling in selecting the study area, investment projects, study communities and respondents. This draws on purposive sampling and systematic random sampling methods along different stages of the sampling processes to ensure that data was elicited from respondents who were in the position to provide information to answer the research questions.

4.3.1.1 Selection of the Study Area, Investment Projects and Communities

The researcher purposefully selected the AAM for this study. The area was selected based on the researcher’s prior research experience in the district and information gathered from reviewing the existing literature. Between 2010 and 2011, the researcher investigated land tenure dynamics and yam farming in the Municipality as part of his MPhil study when he encountered several LSLAs. A visit after a decade revealed that some of these projects were still actively operating; however, the literature review showed that LSLA in the AAM has not received much systematic study. The AAM is host to some of the mega LSLA projects in

Ghana. Several of these projects have been in operation uninterruptedly since the acquisition of the land, although some never got started whilst others have collapsed altogether. The Municipality continues to receive interest from investors who require large tracts of land for their activities. Given the presence of several LSLA projects, the growing interest for more acquisition, and the scant attention paid to the Municipality in terms of systematic academic study, AAM offered an ideal place to assess the developments taking place on the acquired land after a decade since implementation of the investment projects.

Within the AAM, the study focused on two investment projects that were selected using the purposive sampling method. These investment projects are the African Plantation for Sustainable Development (APSD) and the Amantin Agro Processing Company Limited (AAP). The selection was based on the following criteria: the land acquisition fits within the 2007-2008 crisis narrative in that the land was acquired or the project commenced during or after the 2007-2008 triple crises; the project has been in operation uninterruptedly since its commencement; that one of the projects should be domestic company and the other a foreign company with different models of operation; the land size involved should be 200 ha and above. These projects were also selected because they are the largest in the Municipality and are easy to obtain information on. The researcher is also convinced that the two projects encapsulate all the dynamics of LSLA in the study area. However, occasional reference to developments on other acquired lands may not be completely avoided. Once the investment projects were identified, three (3) communities within the catchment area of each company were purposively sampled and included in the study. Thus, three (3) communities were selected among the communities within the catchment area of APSD and another three (3) from the catchment area of AAP, making a total of six (6) communities. These communities were selected based on their proximity to the acquired land. Proximity in this context is defined as within a 3 km radius

of the acquired land. In the APSD catchment area, Garadima, Byebye (Biabia) and Boanyo were selected and, in the AAP catchment area, Akokoa, Dobidi Nkwanta and Abour were selected.

APSD Ghana Limited was founded in 2007 by a Norwegian citizen based in Brazil. The company is funded “by the African Development Bank’s initiative, the Africa Renewable Energy Fund, managed by Berkeley Energy, a pan-African equity fund on renewable energy infrastructure.”¹⁴ APSD secured 82,000 ha of land in 2009 from three traditional areas including Atebubu, Wiase and Bassa in the Atebubu-Amantin, Sene West and Sene East districts, respectively, to establish eucalyptus plantation. An estimated 24,000 ha of the acquired land is located within the Atebubu traditional area, much of which was covered by eucalyptus plantation at the time of the data collection exercise. The land deal was for a period of 50 years subject to renewal for another 50 years. The company intended to use the trees from the plantation as biomass to generate electricity. The target was to produce 600 MW of electricity at peak production.

AAP, on the other hand, is a fully indigenous and Ghanaian-incorporated limited liability company. The company acquired an estimated 41,600 ha of land in 2005 from the Amantin traditional area in AAM to cultivate cassava to produce industrial starch for the local and international markets. The land lease was for a 50-year term, subject to renewal for another 50 years. The project involved the establishment of a nucleus cassava farm and the installation of a starch processing plant. The company also proposed to engage community members as outgrowers to augment the supply of cassava to feed the starch processing factory. Operations of the project commenced in 2010, and the processing factory was set up in 2022. Due to the

¹⁴ <https://landmatrix.org/investor/40002/>

starch processing component, the state has absorbed the project under the One District One Factory (1D1F)¹⁵ initiative introduced in 2017.

4.3.1.1.1 Outsider or Insider: Creating Positional Spaces in the Study Area

The researcher's position concerning the research environment and research participants as to the best possible position to ensure quality data collection and analysis is a major concern for a study of this nature. A dichotomy has been drawn between insider and outsider. The insider is perceived as a researcher who has a prior intimate knowledge of the study community and its members, and the opposite of this description of the insider is true of an outsider (Greene, 2014). It has been argued that an insider researcher has prior knowledge of the study site and its people and does not need to re-orient him/herself as would be the case of an outsider; the insider may be familiar with the culture of the social group being studied which promotes smooth interaction between the researcher and the participants; and the insider may have easy access to the study site compared to an outsider (Greene, 2014). The insider researcher also faces the challenge of becoming too subjective and biased, which could compromise objectivity and validity (Greene, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Therefore, the identification of the position of a researcher and how to address the challenges associated with being an outsider or insider is integral to the integrity of the study. Instead of perceiving the position of the researcher as insider or outsider, the researcher conceptualises it as a continuum, as the position of the researcher could be shifting throughout the study (Greene, 2014).

It is within this outsider-insider continuum that the researcher finds himself. As a Ghanaian and a member of the *Bono*, a sub-group of the dominant Akan ethnic group indigenous to the study area who has worked in the capital of AAM, the researcher could be considered an

¹⁵ 1D1F is a presidential initiative introduced in 2017 to boost industrialisation in the country by supporting the private sector to establish processing factories in each district. <https://1d1f.gov.gh/about-us/>

insider. This enabled the researcher to draw on the advantages of being an insider especially accessing the community and ensuring smooth communication as there was no language barrier and at the same time being mindful of the threats associated with being an insider. In the sampled communities within the study area, the researcher had limited knowledge and relationship with participants. In those communities, the position of the researcher changed to an outsider. To address the problems inherent in the researcher's positionality, the researcher practised reflexivity by constantly reminding himself of his position as a researcher (Greene, 2014). More so, employing the mixed method approach enabled the researcher to minimise personal biases.

4.3.1.1.2 Categories of Respondents

LSLA involves a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, respondents for this study included a wide range of actors, as presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Categories of respondents

Category	Mode of Engagement	Number of Respondents	Information Elicited
Communal Landholders (farmers/non-farmers dependent on land for their livelihoods) in local communities	Household survey	248	Land tenure; land acquisition processes; developments on the acquired land;
	In-depth interview	12	dispossession and displacement; payment of compensation; impacts of LSLA; community response
Workers of investment companies	In-depth interview	10	Developments on the acquired land; payment of compensation; employment and working conditions; impacts; community response
Traditional authorities	In-depth interview	7	Land tenure; land acquisition processes; developments on the acquired land; compensation; impacts of LSLA; community response
Representatives of investment companies	In-depth interview	2	Information about the company; land acquisition processes; compensation. project operations; impacts of LSLA; community response
Representatives of state institutions (Municipal, Regional and National levels)	In-depth interview	14	Land policies and LSLA; involvement in LSLA; dispossession; payment of compensation; developments on the acquired land; impacts of LSLA; community response
CSOs	In-depth interview	2	Involvement and knowledge about LSLA in the study area; impacts of LSLA; community response
Researchers/ Academics	In-depth Interview	2	Their experiences on land tenure issues and LSLA in Ghana

Source: Author construct (2024).

It is worthy of note that the national level state institutions included LC, EPA, GIPC and MLNR. Similarly regional level state institutions were made up of LC, EPA, MOFA, LUSPA and OASL. The municipal level state institutions involved OASL, MOFA, EPA, AAMA and

District Court. The views of these varied actors are crucial in unearthing the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the study area.

4.3.1.2 Sampling Methods and Processes

As the study employed a mixed method research design, the sampling methods, processes and procedures involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative sampling approaches. The participants for qualitative interviews and FGDs were sampled through the purposive sampling method, whereas the respondents for the household survey were sampled through systematic random sampling.

The purposive sampling method was used to select participants to elicit information to answer qualitative-related questions. Participants who were sampled through the purposive sampling method included the representatives of relevant state ministries and agencies, traditional leaders, representatives of CSOs, researchers/academics, selected communal landholders, workers and representatives of investment companies. A purposive sampling process was also used in selecting the participants for the FGDs. These groups of participants were selected based on the positions they occupied and/or in-depth knowledge they have about the phenomenon under investigation. It enabled the researcher to include key stakeholders in the land sector in Ghana whose ideas, experiences, knowledge and involvement in LSLA enabled them to offer critical perspectives to the study. In all, 49 participants were sampled through a purposive sampling process for in-depth interviews.

In the case of quantitative design involving a household survey, a systematic random sampling process was adopted in selecting households to be included in the study to ensure each household had an equal chance of being included. The total number of households in the

sampled communities according to the 2010¹⁶ Population and Housing Census was 1074. Out of this, 248 households were selected for this study. The number of households selected from each community was proportionate to the number of households in that community (see Table 4.2).

To sample respondents from each community, the researcher located the centre of the community with the help of community members. Standing at the centre of the community, the researcher spun a pen and when the pen settled down, the researcher observed the lane that the pen pointed towards, since the communities were built in a linear formation. The researcher numbered the buildings in that lane and made paper cuts equalling the number of buildings in the selected lane, numbered the paper cuts, folded them and shuffled them vigorously before asking one of the research assistants to pick one. The number picked became the sample interval for that community. For instance, in Boanyo, 2 was picked implying that after every 2 houses, the next house was to be included in the sample until the buildings in the lane were exhausted. In the situation where more than one household were found in a house, balloting was used to determine which household was to be included in the study. The decision about whether to move to the left or to the right after the houses in a lane were exhausted was also determined by balloting. In each of the communities, this procedure was followed until the number of households to be selected had been obtained. This process was used by the researcher to randomly sample households to avoid personal biases and to make the sampling process representative. Table 4.2 presents information on the number of households in the selected communities and the number of households sampled.

¹⁶ Even though there was a population and housing census in 2021, the data on community level indicators had not been made public at the time of data collection exercise, which accounts for the use of 2010 census data.

Table 4.2 Sample communities and number of households sampled

Community	Number of Households	Number of Sampled Households
Abour	60	14
Akokoa	334	77
Dobidi Nkwanta	137	32
Boanyo	32	7
Byebye	38	9
Garadima	473	109
Total	1074	248

Source: Author construct (2024) based on 2010 Population and Housing Census.

The problem with this approach is that, if not handled well, the respondents will be selected from only one section of the community, especially in large communities. To avoid this challenge, the researcher divided the bigger communities, like Garadima and Akokoa, into 4 separate sections before the sampling was done in each of the sections.

4.3.1.3 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study used different data collection methods and instruments in eliciting information from respondents. The data collection methods included in-depth interviews, FGDs, household surveys, participant observation and secondary sources. These methods and their respective data collection instruments are discussed below.

4.3.1.3.1 In-depth Interviews

The first of the qualitative data collection methods employed by the researcher was the in-depth interview involving an interaction between the researcher and a participant on a one-on-one basis, eliciting comprehensive information from the participants covering their experiences, knowledge, beliefs and values about the subject under discussion. In conducting the interviews, the researcher took cognisance of the hints provided by Yin (2016) to ensure that data collected

through the in-depth interviews were of high quality. These include speaking in modest amounts, being nondirective, maintaining rapport and staying neutral. Observing these guidelines enabled the researcher to create a conducive and natural environment that enabled the participants to express their thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere devoid of intimidation. This was very necessary because issues surrounding LSLA are controversial and political in nature. The in-depth interview technique enabled the researcher to tailor the interview questions to specific participants, and this allowed the researcher to pose some questions to participants based on their capacity to speak to such issues.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to keep him on track during the interview sessions. The semi-structured interview guide was made up of open-ended questions which made room for probing for further details when the researcher felt that more information could be elicited or to clarify some points. Most of the interviews were done on a face-to-face basis in the physical presence of the participants; however, a few of them were done online through Zoom meetings for respondents who had a very tight schedule and were also residing far away from the study site. This was done at the convenience of the participants. The participants who engaged in in-depth interviews included representatives of state agencies, traditional leaders including paramount chiefs, divisional chiefs and village heads, representatives of investment companies, NGOs/CSOs, researchers/academics, workers of the investment companies and communal landholders including local community leaders such as assembly members and unit committee chairpersons. The data elicited through in-depth interviews included land tenure issues, the nature of involvement in the land acquisition processes, the developments on the acquired land, land dispossession and displacement, payment of compensation, employment conditions, impact of the investment for livelihoods and community response. The interview guide attached as an appendix provides the detailed

information elicited from each group of participants. *Twi*¹⁷ or *Bono* were the main languages used for interviewing respondents. English was used to interview participants who were fluent and insisted on being interviewed using it. The interview sessions lasted about an hour and were recorded using an audio recorder after obtaining the participant's consent.

4.3.1.3.2 Focus Group Discussion

FGD is a method of data collection in qualitative research involving interviewing a group of people who are believed to be knowledgeable on the topic under study, with the researcher serving as the moderator (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A major distinguishing feature of FGD is the interaction generated within the discussion sessions. This enables participants to share and compare ideas or opinions, allowing the researcher to observe the convergent and divergent opinions and conclusions arrived at by the group (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018). These kinds of exchanges provide the researcher insight into what participants think and why they think the way they do. Given that the impacts of LSLA are variegated, the adoption of FGD provided a platform where the experiences of the participants and their thoughts about LSLA were shared and crystallised.

In each of the sampled communities, two (2) FGDs were held. The first group was made up of local community leaders and the second was made up of women and the youth. The FGDs targeted communal landholders at the local community level. In all, 12 focus group discussions were conducted. Within each of the communities, there were sub-groupings based on ethnicity and each sub-group had their group leader. These leaders, together with elected local leaders and the traditional leaders, constituted one group for FGD. The second group was made up of women and the youth which enabled the researcher to elicit responses from them. As a

¹⁷ *Twi* is the language spoken by the Akans of Ghana and there are several dialects within the *Twi* language that are mutually intelligible, one of such dialects is *Bono* spoken by the indigenous people of the Atebubu Traditional Area.

patriarchal society, women and youth might have limited representation if not deliberately targeted since few women and youth were in leadership positions or were heads of households. The women and the youth were combined in FGDs because feasibility studies in the study area had revealed that both were comfortable engaging each other without fear or intimidation. This was also confirmed by the FGD sessions as both groups expressed themselves freely. Each focus group session was made up of between 7 and 12 participants and lasted for about an hour. The discussions were recorded with an audio recorder and notes were also taken by trained research assistants.

4.3.1.3.3 Household Survey

The study employed household surveys to elicit quantitative information from communal landholders. The household survey was adopted because of its potential to elicit quantifiable information as well as its propensity to reach out to a wider number of respondents and to cover a wider range of variables at a go (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The household survey was used to gather data on land acquisition, dispossession and displacement, employment, income, food security, compensation issues and community response from the communal landholders.

The household surveys were conducted with a closed-ended structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to gather the requisite data. The instrument had several skip patterns embedded to ensure that respondents responded to questions that were applicable to their experience with the LSLA. Due to low literacy levels in the study communities, the questionnaire was administered by the researcher and his research assistants. The research assistants were university graduates who had had prior training in data collection which made them trainable for the administration of the questionnaire. They were fluent in both English and the local language of the communities and capable of translating the questions into the local language, an exercise that was done together as a research team. The research assistants

were trained to ensure that they had a deeper understanding of the data collection instruments as well as the protocols for administering the household questionnaire to ensure consistency in the data collection exercise. A pre-test of the instrument was conducted in selected communities that were not part of the sampled communities. The analysis of the pre-test data enabled the researcher to refine the instruments and provided a hands-on experience for the research assistants before the actual data collection commenced. Within the household, the household survey targeted the household head; however, in the absence of the household head, any member of the household who was well-versed in the developments within the household was engaged. In most cases, the replacement for the household head was either the spouse or a child of the household head and such replacements were recorded on the instrument.

4.3.1.3.4 Observation

The researcher also engaged in participant observation which involved taking part in everyday activities, attending traditional dispute resolution sessions, visiting project sites, and having informal discussions with people in the study area. This enabled the researcher to collect data on how the people relate to LSLA in their daily activities, community resistances, distances to farms, employment conditions and performance of investment companies. It enabled the researcher to elicit useful first-hand information that ordinarily would have been difficult to elicit through household surveys, interviews or FGDs. Where necessary, the researcher used a camera to take pictures of the scenes and things observed. To enable the researcher to keep track of the observations made, he engaged in daily reflections where the researcher and research assistants reflected on what transpired on the day and documented the major observations on paper.

4.3.1.3.5 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources provided useful information right from the conceptualisation of the study through to the data analysis and presentation phases. The secondary sources used included official reports, journals, books, students' theses, newspaper articles, minutes of meetings, videos on the Internet and social media and other related documentary materials. These secondary data sources provided the background information to the study and enabled the researcher to appreciate the scholarly work that had been done in the field and the gaps that existed and needed to be filled. The secondary sources also provided some documentary evidence to back some of the claims made through household surveys, in-depth interviews and FGDs.

4.3.1.4. Data Analysis and Presentation

To make meaning from the data collected from the field, the quantitative and the qualitative data were analysed separately. The data collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs and observations were transcribed into English. The transcribed data were coded and keyed into NVivo, a qualitative software, and run to generate themes and sub-themes that were analysed through thematic analysis in producing narration, inferences, discussions, and examination of various themes.

Regarding the household survey data, the completed questionnaires were thoroughly verified and coded. The coded data were run on Statistica Version 14.0 to generate statistical analysis, such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages. Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis of the quantitative data which was presented using tables, bar charts and related charts and graphs. The analysed quantitative and qualitative data were presented side-by-side to allow for comparison and validation of the findings. The presentation and discussion of the

findings were also done by continuously engaging the theoretical and conceptual framework as well as the academic literature on LSLA.

4.4 Research Ethical Appraisal

This study involved human beings as participants, and the researcher was not oblivious of the ethical implications of conducting a study of this nature. Therefore, ethical considerations were of prime importance to the researcher throughout the various stages of the research process. Some of the ethical issues considered included ethical clearance, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, credibility, trustworthiness, triangulation, validity, generalisability, and reliability, as well as security considerations.

4.4.1 Ethical Clearance

The researcher complied with the ethical guidelines of the University of Cape Town for conducting a research study. He obtained clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities with ethics clearance certificate's number, CAS/260422/KS/15, before commencing field data collection. The study did not need any permission from the Ghanaian state, but the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town before going to the field for data collection.

4.4.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent involves providing the research participants with sufficient information about the study, including the objective of the study, the usage of the data, what would be required of the participant, and what the participant stood to gain from participating in the study. This information was to be provided to the respondents in a non-threatening environment to enable them to make informed decisions as to whether they voluntarily wished to participate in the research. Participants were provided sufficient information about the study and allowed

to decide whether to take part or not. The consent was given verbally and participants who took part in the study did so of their own volition. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to opt-out at any stage of the process if they so desired. Since the study involved participants who were 18¹⁸ years and above, the researcher did not have the problem of dealing with the guardians of minors. Before the informed consent was sought at the individual level, the researcher sought consent and permission from community leaders as part of the community entry protocols.

4.4.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The question of confidentiality and anonymity is central to a research endeavour and has a strong relationship with the kind of data that could be obtained from the field. To ensure that participants felt relaxed and confident in providing information on land and LSLA, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher was mindful of this assurance throughout the research process to safeguard the safety of the participants. For instance, in the presentation of the findings, when quotations were attributed to participants, their real identities or names were not disclosed. Such quotations were presented with phrases such as a senior officer, a worker of the company, a farmer, a community leader, a traditional leader, a state official etc. to conceal the real identity of participants. This was done to forestall any potential threat that might be occasioned by divulging sensitive information about the phenomenon.

4.4.4 Research Credibility

A study is considered credible when it provides assurance that data was properly collected and interpreted to the extent that the “findings and conclusions accurately reflect and represent the world that was studied” (Yin, 2016:85). To ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher

¹⁸ In Ghana, an individual is legally qualified to give consent when such an individual attains 18 years, otherwise, such an individual is considered a minor and, in this case, consent will be given on his or her behalf by a guardian.

employed Yin's considerations involving trustworthiness, triangulation and validity, as well as generalisability and reliability. It suffices to say that these terms are not mutually exclusive, as they sometimes overlap.

4.4.4.1 Trustworthiness

Creating a sense of trustworthiness in research is one of the crucial ways of ensuring the credibility of the study. Trustworthiness is about instilling confidence in the methods adopted to generate data rather than engaging in "debate over the inherent truthfulness of the data" (Yin, 2016:86). To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher explicitly made available information regarding the choice of the topic, study sites and participants, as well as detailed descriptions of the approaches to data collection, analysis and presentation. The researcher also made references to statements made by the research participants by quoting verbatim, as well as reporting in respondents' language and providing translation when necessary. The researcher also embarked on sustained and prolonged engagement in the field lasting about 12 months, which enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the study area and its people. This prolonged and sustained field engagement is also useful for addressing some distortions that might have occurred in the information provided by participants.

4.4.4.2 Triangulation

Another way of ensuring the credibility of a research study is through triangulation which is conceived as "seeking at least three ways of verifying or corroborating a procedure, piece of data, or finding" (Yin, 2016:87). Triangulation is very often limited to the adoption of different methods and instruments of data collection (methodological triangulation). However, the researcher draws on the work of Patton (2002) to extend triangulation to include data triangulation and investigator triangulation (Patton, 2002:247; Yin, 2016). In the case of data triangulation, the researcher elicited data from varied sources and actors. As part of investigator

triangulation, the researcher made use of similar works by other scholars on the topic under investigation. As a mixed method research, methodological triangulation is displayed in the adoption of several methods of data collection, analysis and presentation of findings. The researcher also kept the principles of triangulation in mind throughout the study, always looking for an opportunity to triangulate.

4.4.4.3 Validity

Validity has to do with the determination of the fact that the findings of the study are accurate from the viewpoint of the researcher, the participants or the readers of the account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To deal with a threat to validity in qualitative research, Maxwell (2013) proposed an eight-point checklist including intensive long-term involvement in the field, collection of rich data, respondent validation, using the presence of the researcher to corroborate field patterns, checking for discrepancies, comparison, use of real numbers instead of adjectives and triangulation (p. 126-129). In addition to fulfilling the items on the checklist, the researcher also used thick descriptions of the findings to improve validity. The quantitative validity was ensured through a critical examination of the data collection instruments to ensure the questionnaire was internally valid at face value. There was also pre-testing of the data collection instrument. The pre-test data was analysed, and challenges associated with the instrument that could pose a threat to validity were addressed. Coding and entering household survey data into the Statistica and NVivo software were meticulously done to minimise potential errors. The use of software in running the data analysis also reduced the human involvement, accompanied by manual analysis. Again, the side-by-side presentation of findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data sources enabled the researcher to compare the findings and address any inherent contradictions.

4.4.4.4 Generalisability

Generalisability refers to the degree to which the findings from a study of a sample population can be extended to cover the broader population or situation as well as contexts outside of the study area. As observed by Creswell and Creswell (2018), the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of those under study, as the importance of the qualitative study lies in the detailed description of themes that are context-specific. However, as a study that employed a mixed method approach with associated rigorous sampling, data collection, analysis, and presentation, the findings could be accurately generalised to the population in the study area. However, given the context-specific nature of the manifestation of LSLA across the globe, there is a need to be cautious in generalising the findings to contexts and populations outside of the study area.

4.4.4.5 Reliability

The reliability or dependability of a study concerns the ability to produce similar results when a study is repeated under identical conditions (Abbott & Bordens, 2018). To ensure the reliability of the study, the researcher provided detailed information about the focus of the study, the researcher's positionality, the research participants and reasons for their inclusion in the study as well as the context within which data was collected. Additionally, the researcher provided detailed and step-by-step descriptions of data collection, analysis and presentation strategies thereby providing a clear and accurate picture of the study's methodology. With the availability of such detailed information about this study, the researcher is convinced that, if the research approach is followed rigidly in repeating this study in identical conditions, the probability of producing similar findings would be very high.

4.4.5 Security Consideration

The researcher has prior research experience in the study area and was aware of the security architecture. Therefore, the necessary steps were taken to ensure the safety of the researcher, research assistants and participants. The researcher ensured that the interviews and questionnaire administration were done in an environment devoid of third parties to ensure that information provided by respondents remained confidential. In the case of FGDs, the researcher took time to explain to participants the need to keep issues discussed within the confines of the FGD and urged participants not to bring up information that they deemed very sensitive which could jeopardise their safety. More so, the researcher did not include names of participants in the research report in order not to expose them to attacks. To ensure the safety of the researcher and the research assistants, proper community entry protocols were observed. This made all those who mattered and could ensure the safety of the researcher and his team aware of the research project and the presence of the research team in the Municipality. Again, the researcher always visited the study communities in the company of his research assistants.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the background information of the study area and the methodology of the study. The chapter provided information about the location and ethnic composition, demography, vegetation, climate and rainfall pattern, relief and drainage, economic activities, social and political organisation, and the nature of land tenure in the study area. It further provided information about the research approach to the study by discussing the research design, sampling methods, data collection instruments, data analysis and presentation, as well as research ethical appraisal. This chapter serves as the bridge between the theoretical and the empirical chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

Large-Scale Land Acquisition in Atebubu-Amantin Municipality

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data on the manifestation of LSLA in AAM. It proceeds with data on trends in LSLA, processes of land acquisition, the developments taking place on the acquired land, changes in the implementation of investment projects, community response, and conclusion. The chapter addresses the study's first and fourth objectives. The first objective sought to assess the state of LSLA in AAM and the fourth objective is to ascertain the nature of community response at various stages in the operations of investment projects. This is to help deepen our appreciation of what has happened after a decade of implementation of investment projects and how the community members have received LSLA. The information presented here is based on the qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the field data collection exercise.

5.2 Trends in LSLA in the Study Area

The historical trajectory of LSLA in the study area aligns with that of the country discussed in the literature review (See Chapter 2). In this section, the discussion focuses mainly on the recent acquisitions. Although there were earlier land acquisitions preceding the 2000s, those acquisitions in the study area were relatively smaller parcels of land. The largest and the most common land size acquired during that period was one-mile-square, approximately 259 ha. In line with the surge in LSLA globally since the 2000s, the study area has had its fair share of land rush. The main features of LSLA during this period include the share size of land involved, involvement of foreign actors with foreign capital, domestic private actors and, to some extent, state institutions (Lands Commission, 2020; See also Chapter 2). Describing the recent spate

of LSLA, the Executive Secretary of Ghana's Lands Commission in the preface to *Guidelines for Large-Scale Land Transaction in Ghana* observed the following:

The magnitude of land sizes demanded for such ventures are inconceivable and unprecedented in our history apart from a few acquisitions in the past for palm and rubber cultivation by the government (Lands Commission, 2020).

The acquisitions during the mid-2000s were mostly for the cultivation of jatropha to produce biofuel but the jatropha project was largely unsuccessful. Many projects collapsed or switched to different crops and others never started (See Ahmed, 2021; Alemu & Tolossa, 2022; Gagné & Fent, 2021). Despite the failure of the jatropha project, several hectares of land were transferred from the common pool to private investors. It suffices to say that land acquisition for jatropha cultivation did not receive much attention in AAM.

The intensification of LSLA in the study area was reflected in the household survey data which revealed that 246 respondents, representing 99.19%, indicated that they were aware of the presence of LSLA in the Municipality with only two (2) respondents, representing 0.81%, indicating they were not aware of any such acquisitions. Views from the in-depth interviews also highlighted the increasing incidences of LSLA in the aftermath of the triple crises. A community leader at Akokoa in the AAP catchment area commented:

Even though we had experienced some isolated cases of land acquisitions in the past, we have never experienced anything like what we have been experiencing since 2005. When you turn left, they are there and when you turn right, they are there. The chiefs have sold all the land to rich people, politicians and foreigners (Field interview, 23rd January 2023).

The above assertion was also corroborated by the discussants during a FGD at Garadima, who unanimously lamented:

Until APSD acquired land in this area in 2009, we had no idea of LSLA. We used the land for our farming, but, since APSD acquired land here, other well-to-do individuals from the cities have been acquiring land for commercial agriculture (FGD, 10th February 2023).

Similarly, a senior regional officer of the OASL observed:

I haven't done any study, but I remember that LSLA trends started in the mid-2000s when there was this need for other sustainable ways of energy. A lot of large-scale acquisitions occurred during that time. Indeed, some lands have been acquired but they are not used for the purpose for which they were acquired (Field interview, 1st November 2022).

The information gathered from the field data on LSLA in the Municipality has been tabulated in Table 5.1.

According to Table 5.1, domestic investors dominate the number of individual acquisitions as 9 out of the 12 acquisitions were made by Ghanaian investors. Regarding the land size of individual deals, the foreign acquisitions were relatively larger than the domestic ones. Except for AAP, none of the domestic acquisitions with a known size of land acquired exceeded 300 ha. The land acquired by APSD, owned by foreign-based investors, alone is larger than the aggregated domestic acquisitions. Only one acquisition occurred before the triple crises and the implementation of the investment project even commenced only in 2010, after the crises. Table 5.1 further reveals that the peak of LSLA in the Municipality was between 2008 and 2013, as 9 out of 12 acquisitions occurred during this period. Although the rate of acquisitions declined after 2013, there are still some incidences of new acquisitions. As indicated in Table 5.1, the land acquired by Samatex occurred in 2019. During the data collection exercise, there was an ongoing negotiation regarding 24,000 ha of land for sugar cane plantation.

Table 5.1 LSLA in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality since 2000

SN	Name of company/Owner	Origin of Investor	Size of Land Acquired (Hectares)	Year Acquired	Crops cultivated
1	APSD	Norway/Brazil	82,000	2009	Eucalyptus
2	AAP	Ghana	41,600	2005	Cassava
3	Gambilir Farms	India	230	2010	Cowpea/Maize/ Rice
4	Ohemeng Farms	Ghana	222	2013	Maize/Cashew
5	Ajarisco Farms	Ghana	210	2009	Cashew/Mango
6	Preference Farms	Ghana	205	2012	Cashew/Mango/ Coconut
7	Duabone Farms	Ghana	Data not available	2011	Cassava
8	Smatex Farms	Ghana	282	2019	Maize/Cassava
9	WAC Farms	Ghana	Data not available	2012	Soya Beans/Rice
10	Mpianim Farms	Ghana	Data not available	2009	Maize/Cashew/ Mango
11	Akati Farms	Ghana	Data not available	2008	Maize/soya beans Rice
12	Sugar Plantation	Nigeria	24,000	Negotiating during data collection	Proposed sugar cane cultivation

Source: Author's construct (2024) based on field interviews.

With the 12 acquisitions, only 3 (APSD, AAP and Sugar company) had proposals to establish a processing factory and process the produce from the plantations, and only 1 (AAP) had been able to set up a processing factory. Concerning crops cultivated, 4 of the acquisitions were meant for producing raw materials (eucalyptus, cassava and sugar cane) to produce industrial products. These 4 acquisitions were the largest. The remainder of the acquired lands were targeted at a mix of food and cash crops.

Table 5.1 provides just a glimpse of LSLA in the study area, since the data were based on field interviews and not on records from the land registry because such records were non-existent or extremely difficult to obtain. This accounts for the lack of data on the land sizes involved in some acquisitions. The lack of comprehensive statistics on LSLA at the Municipal Assembly, regional or national LC and other state institutions charged with land administration and management responsibilities makes it difficult to ascertain the exact extent of LSLA in the study area. This lack of comprehensive records was evident during field interviews when the researcher's request for data on LSLA from state institutions proved futile. This was highlighted by a comment from a senior regional officer of the OASL that they did not have the right information about several of the acquisitions and implored the researcher to report to them about the new acquisitions he would discover during the data collection exercise. The officer further asserted:

We are trying to build up data on land acquisitions. We have not been able to do much because, as I speak to you, there are companies we have no information about their acquisitions at the LC. When we go to the LC, they do not get us anything. For *Nananom*, they will tell you that their predecessor made the agreement and therefore, they do not have any records on the acquisition. We are not getting records from the government institutions or the traditional leaders. As part of the Land Administration Project, Customary Land Secretariat has been introduced and *Nananom* are supposed to set up the secretariat with the help of the LC to coordinate and keep records of land acquisitions. This may help us generate accurate records on land (Field interview, 1st November 2022).

The challenges with the record-keeping on land acquisition prompted the introduction of CLS, which was made compulsory by the New Land Act, 2020 for all customary allodial rights holders. However, this approach does not seem to have made the needed impact.

The challenges of obtaining reliable information on LSLA in Africa have been documented (Cotula et al., 2014; Kuusaana & Gerber, 2015; Lavers & Boamah, 2016). Several reasons have been adduced to explain the situation, including the fact that such acquisitions are shrouded in secrecy, lack of proper record-keeping, failure to register the acquired land, and the prominent role of the customary institutions in granting land to investors or ambiguities in land tenure arrangements (see Chapter 2). A senior official of Atebubu-Amantin Municipal Assembly (AAMA) commented, “I have heard that *Nananom* have been selling large tracts of land to investors, but we do not have their documents with us. They do not report to us” (Field interview, 1st February 2023). Similarly, a senior regional official of the OASL noted:

Because there was no regional office of the LC in the Bono East, only one or two companies that may be foreign-oriented or international would come to Sunyani LC to register their land. That is why we have a lot of these land acquisitions with no documentation on them, but I believe that now that the LC office has been established there, gradually all those who have not even registered their lands will do so (Field interview, 1st November 2022).

Irrespective of the challenges associated with estimating the exact size of land involved in LSLA in the study area, the evidence from the field data points to an unprecedented rise in such acquisitions since the turn of 2000, as the two mega projects that are the focus of this study were acquired during this period.

5.3 Processes of Acquiring Land in the Study Area

The processes that investors go through to access land and the nature of involvement of the local community members largely shape the vulnerability or opportunity context of the communities where these investments occur. In Ghana, the first step for individuals or corporate entities to operate a business is to register with the Registrar General Department to

become a legal entity after which the investor is also required to register with the GIPC, A representative of the GIPC stated:

When you are done with the Registrar General Department, the next step is to come to GIPC to register and if you have a regulator in the sector, you must also register there. If you are in the petroleum sector for instance, after your registration with GIPC, you must go to the regulator, GNPC, for certification since they also have requirements you must meet before you can operate (Field interview, 18th October 2022).

GIPC is an agency of the state responsible for encouraging and promoting investments in Ghana, creating “an attractive incentive framework and a transparent, predictable, and facilitating environment for investments in Ghana and related matters” (Republic of Ghana, 2013). GIPC is a kind of one-stop-shop for investors needing information about doing business in Ghana. The main role of GIPC in the LSLA processes is facilitation. They have created a land bank comprising allodial rights holders with available land to lease. Such information was made available to investors, especially, foreign investors unfamiliar with the Ghanaian terrain. Commenting on the role of GIPC in LSLA, a senior officer in the research department noted the following:

When the investors come, they wouldn't know where to go so one of the things we do to facilitate the smooth integration of the investors into the country, especially during feasibility studies when the investors are doing research is that, as a centre, we have what we call the land bank. It is a database where individuals with land to lease are registered. They provide detailed information about the land, and we give the information to investors for their consideration and due diligence (Field interview, 18th October 2022).

Unlike countries that have nationalised land where the state controls much of the land and can set aside specific territories for LSLA, the land bank in Ghana is just a collection of information about traditional leaders who have intentions of giving out land, as they control about 80% of

land in the country (See Chapter 2). The land bank is an estimation of available land and not the actual existence of land since such lands might be in use by the usufruct and other rights holders. This land bank is scattered across the country. Once the GIPC introduces the investor to the allodial rights holders, the role of the GIPC ends there. The negotiations of the land deal are basically between the investor and the traditional leaders even though other state institutions may have different roles to play in the acquisition processes, land registration and project execution. When the investors register their companies and are looking for land, the state institutions direct them to the traditional authorities who are the custodians of land and leave the investors and customary leaders to negotiate without state interference. However, the state creates an enabling environment through legislation, tax exemptions, investment promotions and maintenance of law and order to attract foreign investors.

The processes of negotiating land deals for LSLA revolve around traditional leaders. Commenting on the acquisition of land for the AAP project, a senior management member of the company stated:

In 2004, I was with my friend who happened to be the DCE (District Chief Executive) of Atebubu-Amantin District in Atebubu when one man [name withheld] and a lawyer came to his office looking for land to do commercial farming. The DCE asked me to lead them to the then *Amantinhene*. We were assured by the *Omanhene* of the availability of land but were asked to come back in two months to enable him to consult his elders. On our next visit, we met the *Omanhene* and his council and they agreed to grant the investors land. They gave the investors the go-ahead to engage surveyors to survey the land. After the surveyors finished their work, they told us that the surveyed land was 41,600 ha. The investors then started negotiations with *Nananom* in which I was not involved. I don't know how much they paid to *Nananom* (Field interview, 10th January 2023).

An attempt at confirming the above assertion with the Amantin Traditional Council proved futile, as the current *Omanhene* had barely been on the stool. A prominent chief indicated that, though he was not involved in the land acquisition processes, he had obtained documents on the acquired land which he was studying. He further noted:

From the documents I have in my possession, the size of the land acquired is 21,000 ha. They acquired the land for 50 years. They indicated that they were going to build schools, clinics, and other social amenities but we have not seen any meaningful thing they have done apart from supporting the building of the palace. The company has an option of renewal after 50 years, but it depends on their good work or their ability to fulfil the terms of the agreement (Field interview, 21st February 2023).

Surprisingly, the elders and divisional chiefs in the traditional area indicated they were not involved in the land acquisition processes. This was probably because most of them were new in their respective positions.

In furtherance of the role of the traditional leaders in LSLA, a divisional chief, who was a member of the Atebubu Traditional Council and a caretaker chief of the section of Atebubu land involved in the APSD project, described the land acquisition process in the following words:

One day, the *Omanhene* invited us to his palace and informed us that a company had expressed interest in planting trees as biomass to generate electricity. He indicated that the government had given them the go-ahead to talk to us to release land for the project. We agreed to the proposal because we thought they would create jobs for our youth. I chaired the committee formed by the council because I was the caretaker chief. The investors prepared their indenture, but I was not very pleased with some of the terms in the document. I expressed my concern about the indenture, but this did not go down well with the *Omanhene* and the investors, and I was kicked out of the negotiation committee. I was part of the initial consultation and land identification but was not involved in the

financial negotiation, so I do not know how much the investors paid to *Nananom*. The *Omanhene* and some few chiefs he trusted executed the agreement (Field interview, 13th February 2023).

The other members of the traditional council who were interviewed also indicated that they were not chiefs at the time of the land acquisition and therefore could not confirm or deny the above assertion. The paramount chief was recently enstooled and was not involved in the acquisition. Accessing documents on the land acquired by APSD proved futile, as none of the stakeholders was ready to make the document available to the researcher. Even the EIA report the researcher obtained from the headquarters of EPA did not have the land lease document attached. This was not the case with the AAP projects, as the researcher was able to obtain the lease agreement.

The representative of APSD, through a document submitted to the researcher through e-mail, indicated that, in acquiring the land they exhausted all the necessary procedures by engaging several institutions including the OASL, LC and MLNR as well as the traditional councils. They added that the selection of the location of the project was based on the feasibility studies that showed that the study area was best suited. Similar assertions were made by a representative of AAP during field interviews. Whilst the representatives of relevant state institutions, such as the LC and the EPA, indicated their involvement in the land acquisition processes, they all claimed that this came after the investors and traditional leaders had agreed on the terms of the transaction.

5.3.1 Community Participation and FPIC in Land Acquisition Processes

The allodial right holders, in this case, the paramount chiefs, were at the centre of the land expropriation as they, together with some of their divisional chiefs and elders negotiated the land lease with the investors. As usufructuary right holders and tenants on the land, the indigenous communal landholders and the migrant farmers who use the land for their livelihood

activities had a limited say in the land alienation processes. Data from the household survey on the involvement of the local community members in the land acquisition processes found that only 25 households, representing 10.08%, indicated that they were involved in the land acquisition processes leaving a whopping 223 households, representing 89.92%, who said they were not involved in the acquisition processes. Concerning the FPIC of the local community members, the household survey data show that out of 219 valid responses, only 26 respondents, representing 11.87%, affirmed that the FPIC of the community members were sought whilst 193 households, representing 88.13%, said there was no FPIC.

This was also supported by the field interviews, FGDs, and document review. One village head in the AAP catchment community said, “We did not do anything in the acquisition processes, not even in the identification of the land to be acquired. Before we realised, the company was working on the land” (Field interview, 18th January 2023). A community member at Byebye added: “We only heard of the acquisition after the company had already secured the land” (Field interview, 12th January 2023). Similarly, a 66-year-old farmer at Garadima also stated:

We were not informed about the land acquisition and did not participate in any way. The chiefs have more power than us. The land belongs to them so what they say is what we obey. The chiefs negotiated with the investors (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

To buttress this assertion, a statement by a prominent chief in the Amantin Traditional Area is instructive:

The land that the farmers were farming on did not belong to them. They sought permission from a caretaker chief to use the land. If a company comes and requests land, we only make the farmers aware that a company has expressed interest in the land, and they should not farm on the land the following season (Field interview, 21st February 2023).

The assembly members who represent the local communities in the Municipal Assembly also lamented the non-involvement of community members in the land acquisition processes during interviews. During a FGD at Garadima, the consensus was that a meeting on the project was held at Byebye involving the investors of APSD, representatives of state institutions, the traditional authorities and the representative of the local community members, but this meeting, they claimed, occurred after the agreement had been finalised. A similar observation was also made in the case of the AAP catchment area where a meeting of a sort was organised at Amantin.

Contrary to the view expressed by the community members, the representatives of the investment companies and the state institutions insisted that the land acquisition processes followed the laid-down procedures of FPIC and that community consultations were exhausted. However, this appeared not to be the case, as the state institutions' involvement in the land acquisition occurred long after the agreement between the investors and the chiefs. For instance, the land for the AAP project was acquired in 2005. However, the land title registration and the EIA certificate issue by LC and EPA that considers community participation and informed consent was done in 2013, almost a decade after the land acquisition.

Despite some evidence of meetings involving investors, state institutions, traditional leaders and community leaders, whether such meetings constituted FPIC is debatable. In the case of AAP and APSD, meetings were held once in each catchment area. The meetings were organised in one community and all other community members had to travel to the meeting venue. Only a few community leaders were invited to the meeting and not all of them were able to attend due to the distance involved. The meetings were more informational with community leaders being informed of the land acquisition, what the companies were coming to do, and how the communities stood to benefit from the implementation of the projects rather

than seeking the community members' approval. In the case of the meeting organised in Amantin on the AAP project, the meeting attendance list attached to the EIA reports demonstrates that only a handful of the attendees were from the affected communities. The attendance list was dominated by chiefs and elders and the representatives of state institutions.

It is clear from the field data that those community meetings did not constitute FPIC and that community members were not allowed to decide whether to accept or reject the project. They were not provided comprehensive information about the projects or a fair assessment of the likely impact of the projects on their livelihoods. This situation, characteristic of LSLA in the study area, was occasioned by the land tenure system that grants only land use right to migrants and autochthons. The limited community participation and associated lack of FPIC in the LSLA processes in this study confirm the observations made in earlier studies (See Chapter Two). This situation probably occurred due to the absence of a regulatory framework to regulate the LSLA processes, as many of such frameworks were enacted after these acquisitions. There was non-compliance to laid-down regulations, and lack of transparency because of the failure to monitor the acquisitions due to the non-interference position of the state. The limited community participation and lack of FPIC have the potential to alter the vulnerability or opportunity context of the communities where these acquisitions occurred. For instance, the community members did not have a say in the site for the project, the model or the kind of crops to be cultivated. They also had no opportunity to negotiate the rights they would enjoy over other natural resources after the acquisition and were unable to negotiate meaningful compensation packages. All these have far-reaching consequences on the impacts of the investment project for the affected people.

To address these lapses in the LSLA processes, the LC issued guidelines for large-scale land transactions in Ghana in 2012, revised in 2020. Commenting on the need for the guidelines, a Divisional Director of the MLNR in an interview in Accra observed:

Previously, people would go to the chiefs with some drinks, schnapps or whisky and the chief would grant them land. I hear some people will go and stand somewhere and throw a stone to indicate the extent of land they were giving out. Sometimes a document will be prepared and a chief knowing nothing will go and sign it. It got to a point where we were anticipating that, if these things were allowed to continue, a time would come when we would create a situation of landlessness in the country. Therefore, there was a need for a system where certain LSLAs must be subjected to certain processes to ensure the community knew what was happening. This was to avoid a situation where the chiefs would sell the source of the community's livelihood to a third party without the community members' consent (Field interview, 4th November 2022).

The guidelines were formulated in line with good governance practices, as well as other global voluntary guidelines, such as the VGGT and RAI. Among the aims of the guidelines were to establish “a means for informed, fair, inclusive and transparent decision-making by all stakeholders involved in large-scale land disposition by customary landowners” (Lands Commission, 2020:2); outline the standard procedures and minimum responsibilities regarding LSLA by stakeholders; and to ensure that “investors, state institutions, and communities recognise the various impacts of land-based investments on different categories of people in affected communities” (Lands Commission, 2020:3).

Whilst the guidelines were formulated to ensure effective administration and management of LSLA in Ghana, the data from this study revealed that the aims do not seem to have been achieved. Although most of the lands were appropriated before the guidelines were introduced, recent acquisitions appear to only partly employ the guidelines. The guidelines and the New Land Act, Act 1036 have empowered the customary landowners and sensitised them on their

roles as allodial rights holders. For instance, the establishment of CLS, made mandatory by the New Land Act for all allodial rights holders, was within the ambit of chiefs. Likewise, the provision in Act 1036 that seeks to ensure accountability of allodial rights holders has received open criticism from prominent chiefs in the country. More so, the processes and conditions for seeking accountability under the Act are cumbersome, as the person seeking accountability must exhaust all established customary procedures, prove his qualification and be a subject of the landholding stool (Republic of Ghana, 2020). Not much has been done to sensitise and empower communal landholders or the usufructuary right holders.

The divisional chiefs indicated that the guidelines have enhanced their capacity to negotiate with the investors to obtain value for money from the land they leased out recently. They lamented that the investors short-changed them in past acquisitions because of their eagerness to promote development in their communities and their ignorance about LSLA. Some even argued that, in the past, the land was given out to investors for just a token. A divisional chief compared the terms of past land lease agreements to a proposed investment under negotiation at the time of field interviews as follows:

Not long ago, a Nigerian investor expressed interest in land within our traditional area to develop a sugar cane plantation to produce sugar. His team came with the representatives of MOFA, the Regional Director of Agriculture and the MCE. The *Omanhene* allowed them to go around the traditional area to search for ideal land for the project. They were looking for 96,000 ha but, after survey work, we found 24,000 ha in our territory. A negotiation committee of the traditional council was formed and concluded that, if we would grant them the land, it would be for 30 years subject to renewal. We demanded 48 billion Ghana cedis as drink money before we agreed to sign the document, and the investor also offered 36 billion Ghana cedis. We are on course to reach an agreement. The proposal also included a clause for resettling the project-affected communities and providing them the requisite infrastructure including

schools, clinics and access roads. The company was also mandated to reserve 10% of the acquired land to be used by the local community members to produce sugar cane to be sold to the company as outgrowers. With jobs to be created, the company was to give priority to the local people when the expertise they require can be found locally. This kind of agreement never happened in past acquisitions (Field interview, 13th February 2023).

Another divisional chief confirmed the above assertion and added, “We are interacting with LC to see how best to go about it” (Field interview, 22nd February 2023).

The discussions above illustrate how lessons from past acquisitions have shaped the institutional framework governing LSLA as espoused in the SLF. Thus, the introduction of LSLA into the local community alters the vulnerability or opportunity context depending on the nature of the intrusion. In cases where the vulnerability created exceeds the opportunities, the outcomes of the projects become negative leading to a rethink of the rules governing the processes through the introduction of guidelines (See Chapters 3 and 7). Whilst these guidelines have enhanced the opportunities of the customary leaders, the same could not be said of the local community members who hold usufructuary rights and tenancies. In the case of the proposed acquisition described above, the traditional leaders were all informed about the acquisition. They were also fully involved in the processes, but no community member indicated his or her awareness of the land acquisition, although negotiations had reached an advanced stage. Therefore, despite how well the guidelines for LSLA in Ghana were crafted, they have not addressed the concern of involving all classes of people in the acquisition processes and safeguarding the interest of all, especially the most vulnerable, such as the migrants, youth and women.

5.4 Developments Taking Place on the Acquired Land

The issues of what has happened on the acquired land, the use of the land, the extent of the land used by investors and related concerns are at the core of this section. As illustrated in Table 5.1, many of the acquisitions were for food crop cultivation; however, the two largest acquisitions in land size (APSD and AAP) were for tree plantation and cassava cultivation for industrial starch production, respectively. In the case of acquisitions involving food crop production, some of the investors had not started operations and even in those in operation only a fraction of the acquired land had been developed. On the contrary, APSD and AAP have been operating since the land was acquired and have developed a substantial portion of their acquired land. Therefore, the discussions in this section rely heavily on these two projects.

5.4.1 Implementation of the Investment Projects

The land acquired by investors was mainly used for agriculture; either for food crop cultivation or tree plantation development. The two investment projects (APSD and AAP) that are the focus of this study had developed an extensive area of their respective land. These were the first investment companies to be mentioned by respondents when asked about LSLA in the study area probably because of the share size of land acquired or the extent of development taking place. Table 5.2 presents the view of respondents on the extent of acquired land developed by investors

Table 5.2 Views of respondents on extent of acquired land developed by investors

Extent of Development	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 30%	28	11.29
30%-50%	74	29.84
Above 50%	146	58.87
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 5.2 demonstrates that most respondents (146), representing 58.87%, were of the view that above 50% of the acquired land had been developed, with only 28 respondents, representing 11.29%, stating that less than 30% had been developed. The high number of respondents who indicated above 50% of the acquired land had been developed was contrary to the information gathered from the investment companies and state institutions. For instance, a representative of the AAP indicated that the company had developed only 20% of the acquired land. Likewise, the APSD had developed approximately 15,000 ha of the 82,000 ha. In the case of APSD, a representative revealed that the company had devoted 70% of its acquired land to plantation development whilst reserving the remaining 30% as a conservation area. Most of the representatives of the state institutions interviewed observed that less than 30% of the land acquired by respective investors had been developed.

The observation by respondents that over 50% of the acquired land had been developed could be attributed to lack of clearly defined boundaries for these acquired lands. Community members were unaware of the exact extent of the land acquired by investors, which creates room for investors and traditional leaders to manipulate the boundaries. For instance, there was contradictory information about the size of land acquired for the AAP project. Whilst the chiefs indicated 21,000 ha, the company's representative quoted 41,600 ha. On the other hand, the indenture on the acquired land the researcher obtained from the EPA headquarters attached to the EIA report indicated 10,696.21 acres, approximately 4,328.60 ha. A village head of one of the catchment communities observed that the company was claiming areas not part of the originally acquired land. He said, "My son was involved in the initial demarcation and showed me the boundary of the company's land but now the manager is also saying something different" (Field interview, 19th January 2023).

Table 5.3 provides information on what the undeveloped acquired land by investors is used for.

Table 5.3 Views of respondents on the use of acquired land undeveloped by investors

Uses of the Land	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Lying idle	176	71.00
Used by the community members	57	23.00
Buffer zone	8	3.20
Conservation site	3	1.20
Other	4	1.60
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

The data in Table 5.3 reveal that 176 respondents, representing 71%, said the remaining acquired land undeveloped by investors was lying idle, and 57 respondents, representing 23% indicated, it was used by community members. The other uses, such as buffer zones and conservation sites, received minimal endorsement. This illustrates the respondents overwhelming endorsement of the fact that they do not have access to companies' acquired land even when such lands were not used by the investors. It is instructive to note that the company-acquired land used by the community members referred to the land surrounding settlements within the concessions reserved for community livelihood activities to avoid resettlement or payment of compensation, but this ended up dispossessing and displacing the communal landholders (See Chapter 6).

The issue of whether the undeveloped land was lying idle or being used by the community members was contentious and hotly debated during in-depth interviews and FGDs. The representatives of the investment companies argued that community members were using the companies' undeveloped land. However, community members vehemently insisted that apart from the land surrounding settlements within the concessions, the undeveloped land was lying

idle and even if it was being used, it was not by people from the catchment area. Participants in FGD at Akokoa, a community within the AAP catchment area, were unanimous that they no longer had access to the acquired land. This was captured by a participant in the following words:

At the beginning of the company's operations when they had not developed much of the land, we were allowed to farm there. But now they have evicted all of us from the land. No one from this community is still farming on the acquired land. Those fortunate to get the opportunity to farm on the company's acquired land were either workers of the company or rich people from outside the immediate catchment area. People come from Atebubu, Amantin and even Ejura to farm on the company's land (FGD, 28th March 2023).

A participant at Abour also lamented that some of the investors did not acquire the land for farming as they had indicated but rather to rent the land out to people to make money. She opined:

A politician acquired a large tract of land where I was farming. His nephew came to develop just about 50 acres of the land but evicted all the community members who were farming there. The nephew is now renting out the land to people, but the hurtful thing is that he refused to rent to those of us who were using the land prior to the acquisition (Field interview, 19th January 2023).

Communities within the APSD catchment area were also emphatic that, apart from the few acres surrounding villages within the concession area reserved for the villagers, they did not have access to the remaining land not developed by the company. This resonated throughout the FGDs and in-depth interviews and was best expressed by participants during a FGD at Garadima. One person put it thus:

When the company started operations, we were still allowed to farm on the portion of the land they were not using. But now they have constructed roads along the boundary of their concession. Woe betides anyone who trespasses to their land, they will destroy your farm. Either the company is using the land, or the land is lying idle (FGD, 10th February 2023).

A worker of APSD confirmed the above assertion when he stated:

Initially, the company allowed the community members to farm on the unused land but when the company's activities reached their farms and they were asked to move away, they resisted. So now the company does not allow the community members to farm on the acquired land (Field interview, 31st March 2023).

A representative of AAP, however, insisted that community members still have access to the company's undeveloped land. This was reiterated by representatives of state institutions during in-depth interviews. Field observations revealed that companies that had been able to secure the boundary of their acquired land did not allow community members to farm on such lands even if they were lying idle. However, with concessions where the boundaries were not clearly demarcated, community members sometimes had access to such lands unaware that the land was part of the company's acquired land. More so, in cases where the projects have collapsed or are yet to start operations, community members still use such lands. This situation makes the land tenure security of communal landholders precarious because they could be evicted at any time.

5.4.1.1 Changes in Activities of Investment Companies

Understanding the changes occurring in the activities of the investment companies is important for appreciating the impacts of the projects on the affected communities. Whilst some projects have collapsed, others have not begun operation, whereas still others are progressing steadily irrespective of the challenges they are experiencing. As indicated earlier, AAP and APSD have been operating since 2010 and have experienced several changes in their activities. Table 5.4 presents the views of respondents about changes observed in the activities of investment companies.

According to Table 5.4, the two main changes that have occurred in the implementation of the investment projects are changes in crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation, with

107 respondents, representing 43.15%, and 100 respondents, representing 40.32%, respectively. These changes can be better illustrated with the developments taking place on the land acquired by APSD and AAP.

Table 5.4 Views of respondents on changes in activities of investment companies

Changes in project implementation	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Crops Cultivated	107	43.15
Size of Land under Cultivation	100	40.32
Size of Land Acquired	22	8.87
Project Collapsed	2	0.81
Change in Ownership	3	1.21
Other	14	5.65
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

The APSD plantation was dominated by exotic trees in the initial phase, with eucalyptus and acacia being the main trees planted. However, the researcher observed a switch to domestic tree species. During the field data collection exercise, the seedlings on the nursery beds were dominated by domestic trees, such as the fast-growing giant ceiba tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), mahogany (*Khaya Senegalensis*), rosewood (*Dalbergia nigra*), *papaa* (*Afzelia Africana*) and *senya* (*Daniellia oliveri*). The change from the cultivation of exotic trees to domestic ones was due to a change in the focus of the company, as there appears to be a shift from energy generation to the production of plywood. A senior regional official of OASL indicated that the company had been experiencing difficulties because of the state's reluctance to guarantee a market for the electricity to be generated because of the price advantage the state enjoys from other sources of the generation-mix, such as hydro-electric and thermal plants. This was

confirmed by a senior officer of the AAMA, However, the representative of the company refused to comment on the situation described above.

The failure of the state to buy the electricity to be generated by the company leaves them with no market within the country. This may explain the shift from electricity generation to plywood production and the planting of indigenous trees. There were also reports from the community members regarding the company venturing into food crop cultivation. Although the researcher confirmed the presence of maize farms within the concession through field observation, he could not confirm whether those farms belong to the company or the workers. Even though some respondents, including workers of the company, indicated that there had been a change in ownership of the company, this could not be confirmed.

The dilemma regarding the use of the trees appears to have slowed down the company's activities. As stipulated in the EIA report, they were to commence the installation of a power plant in January 2013 and by 2016, the first 60 Megawatts (MW) plant was to be completed. This was to be upgraded to 300 MW by December 2024¹⁹. However, at the time of the field data collection exercise, there was no sign of the power generation plant or the wood processing factory. The plantation, however, has grown beyond maturity and is at the mercy of the weather and bushfires.

In the case of investment projects that had proposals for value-addition by processing their produce, the inability to set up the processing factory component impacts on the company's contribution to the wellbeing of the affected communities. For example, the installation of the power-generating plant, and its capacity were linked to employment creation. Land Matrix reported that APSD had employed 1,000 workers, both permanent and casual, as of 2016. This

¹⁹ This information was contained in the EIA report of the investment project obtained from the EPA.

figure could rise to 2,500 if the company were to start generating electricity at the capacity of 60 MW, 5,000 workers at 300 MW and ultimately 10,000 workers at 600MW.²⁰ However, during the data collection exercise, the company's workforce was estimated at 200 workers comprising 80 permanent and 120 casual workers. Many workers were laid off during the period of uncertainties as the company's operations almost ground to a halt. It is worth noting that, at the time of the data collection exercise, the company had started revamping its activities and recruiting new workers. The employment dynamics are further explored in Chapter 6.

In the case of AAP, the company started operations with trial farms aimed at developing high-yielding varieties of cassava. This was done on relatively few hectares of land. According to a representative of the company, during the initial stages, the harvested cassava was chopped into chips. The chips were dried and sold to pharmaceutical companies and breweries. They also sold raw cassava to some local community members for *gari*²¹ processing. At that stage, the company employed only a handful of community members and did not also cause much dispossession and displacement. However, the company has now built a processing factory to process the cassava into industrial starch. According to the company's representative, the factory started operations in July 2022. The processing factory has an installed capacity of 300 metric tons of cassava per day which could be expanded to 600 metric tons. With the factory in place, the company has intensified cassava cultivation on its nucleus farm. This has opened employment opportunities for the community members. A senior officer of the company indicated that, at the time of data collection, they had employed about 70 permanent workers. He added, "At the peak of operations, we engaged about 200 to 300 people daily as casual

²⁰ <https://landmatrix.org/deal/6057/#employment>

²¹ Gari is a local staple made from cassava by roasting or frying in a pan with a little oil after milling the cassava into cassava dough and squeezing the water and starch from it.

workers” (Field interview, 15th March 2023). The expansion in the cultivated area has also dispossessed community members who were still using the company's acquired land.

The EIA report of the AAP indicated that the company intended to reserve part of its acquired land to be used by community members as outgrowers. The outgrower scheme has been praised for its potential to improve the well-being of the people in the study area. In an interview, a senior officer of the company argued that they were working with 1200 outgrowers. However, in all the field interviews and FGDs in the catchment area, no participant indicated their involvement in the outgrower scheme. In a FGD at Dobidi Nkwanta, the participants noted that, in 2022, the company approached them regarding their intention to engage community members as outgrowers. However, instead of reserving part of the acquired land for the outgrower scheme, they wanted the community members to use their limited available land. Community members were sceptical about the company’s intention, as they perceived the outgrower scheme as an attempt to dispossess them of the little land they had left. If the company has outgrowers as indicated by the representative, they may not be within the immediate catchment area. Probably, with the installation of the starch processing factory, the company may pursue the outgrower scheme vigorously to generate enough raw material to feed the factory.

Research participants also observed that AAP has added the cultivation of other food crops, such as maize, beans and rice, to their core mandate of cassava. However, a representative of the company refuted the above claims. He argued that the company is not engaged in the cultivation of other crops. He added:

We use the other crops to regulate the cultivation of our cassava. You know after harvesting the cassava, there will still be some traces of leftovers on the plot. It is not advisable to cultivate cassava on the same plot immediately after harvesting. What we do is that we allow our workers and interested community

members to use the land to cultivate other crops for one or two seasons before we go back to cultivate our cassava after the land has been cleared of old cassava plants to avoid a situation where the old cassava interferes with the new ones. We plough such plots free of charge for interested people. The maize, rice and beans you see do not belong to the company. We are focused on our mandate, but they help us to regulate the land (Field interview, 10th January 2023).

This form of crop rotation was considered good news to the community members considering the cost of land preparation was borne by the company. However, respondents insisted that the company preferred granting such opportunities to wealthy farmers from outside the catchment area. Some even accused the farm managers and supervisors of exploiting the arrangement for personal gains.

5.5 Response of Communal Landholders to LSLA

Given the developments taking place on the acquired land discussed above, the response of the communities affected by LSLA provides useful insight into the impacts of the investment on their livelihoods. This section presents data on community response by focusing on response strategies, nature of mobilisation, reasons for reaction, and state's, investors' and customary leaders' reaction to community response.

5.5.1 Community Response Strategies

Communities affected by LSLA adopted several response strategies. Table 5.5 presents the views of the respondents on the response strategies they deployed.

Table 5.5 highlights that the dominant response strategy adopted by the affected communities was petitioning or lobbying people in authority, with 133 respondents, representing 53.63%. However, these petitions did not transcend the borders of the Municipality, as those appealed to were leaders of the Municipality, including paramount chiefs, the Member of Parliament (MP) and MCE.

Table 5.5 Community response strategies

Response strategies	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Petitioning or lobbying people in authority	133	53.63
Street protest or demonstration	49	19.76
Land occupation	13	5.24
Judicial action	12	4.84
Boycott	10	4.03
Violent attack on the company workers	8	3.23
Destruction of the company's property	1	0.40
Road blockade	1	0.40
No action	19	7.66
Other	2	0.81
Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

The data from FGDs and in-depth interviews are consistent with the data from the household survey. A woman in her late 60s at Akokoa succinctly captured the community response in the following words:

We approached the *Omanhene* who told us that no farmer could give him a cow during his annual festival celebrations so he had sold the land and there was nothing he could do for us. We went to the MCE for help but received no help. We also went to the MP who told us that he does not get involved in land matters. This issue even got national television coverage with the help of an NGO, but nothing happened. We thought the government was going to help us. The company's owner is a leading member of a major political party in the country, and they are causing us a lot of problems. I no longer vote in elections because of what they have done to us (Field interview, 23rd January 2023).

The views expressed during a FGD at Garadima also corroborated the above statement as follows:

The land does not belong to us. When the company started operations, we appealed to the *Omanhene* of Atebubu who told us that the land belonged to him, and he had sold it so anyone uncomfortable with the sale should go to his or her hometown. It is not like we are not doing anything. We are still fighting hoping to get some help from somewhere. The issue is about power. If you talk about it and you are not careful, you will be accused of speaking ill against the *Omanhene* and you will be charged a sheep to pacify him. When we go to the chiefs, there is some fear, so we are hoping to get some NGOs to support us. We have also gone to our MP who assured us that he would talk to the managers of the company but still things are getting worse. For the MCE, he told us that if someone has built his house and fenced it, why would you want to stretch your neck to look inside the house? (FGD, 10th February 2023).

The issues of power and ownership of land were common issues raised by the respondents, as most of the affected people were migrants and were considered strangers who did not own land in the study area. This was captured perfectly by a participant in the following words: “We are unable to resist the land acquisition because we are strangers. Strangers do not have power in somebody's town” (Field interview, 16th January 2023). Another participant added, “When the company started operations, we battled it at the law court which cost us a lot of money. However, our case was dismissed on the grounds that chiefs have power over land” (Field interview, 18th April 2023).

Contrary to the household survey data, the destruction of the company’s property received much attention during in-depth interviews, especially among the workers and representatives of the investment companies, traditional leaders, state actors and some community members. For instance, respondents described a case where community members poured salt solution into an engine of a company’s tractor damaging it beyond repair. There were also isolated cases in the AAP catchment area where community members were accused of spraying agrochemicals on crop farms of investment companies and destroying the crops. In the case of

the APSD plantation area, there was mistrust between the community members and the company over the use of bushfires. The company suspects community members of deliberately setting portions of the plantation ablaze as a resistance strategy hence the deployment of soldiers during the dry season. Community members, on the other hand, felt that the company's use of fire to protect their plantation by creating fire belts sometimes escalated to destroy farms and villages. A reported incident where a bushfire purported to have been started by the company led to the destruction of a village in 2020 was confirmed by a senior officer of AAMA. The destruction of companies' property probably received less mention in the household survey data because such activities are considered clandestine and carried out by individuals or groups of people in secret, and community members were reluctant to talk about it.

5.5.2 The Nature of Community Mobilisation

The nature of community mobilisation partly determines the success or otherwise of the response strategy. Figure 5.6 illustrates the views of respondents on how communities in this study organised themselves in their struggles.

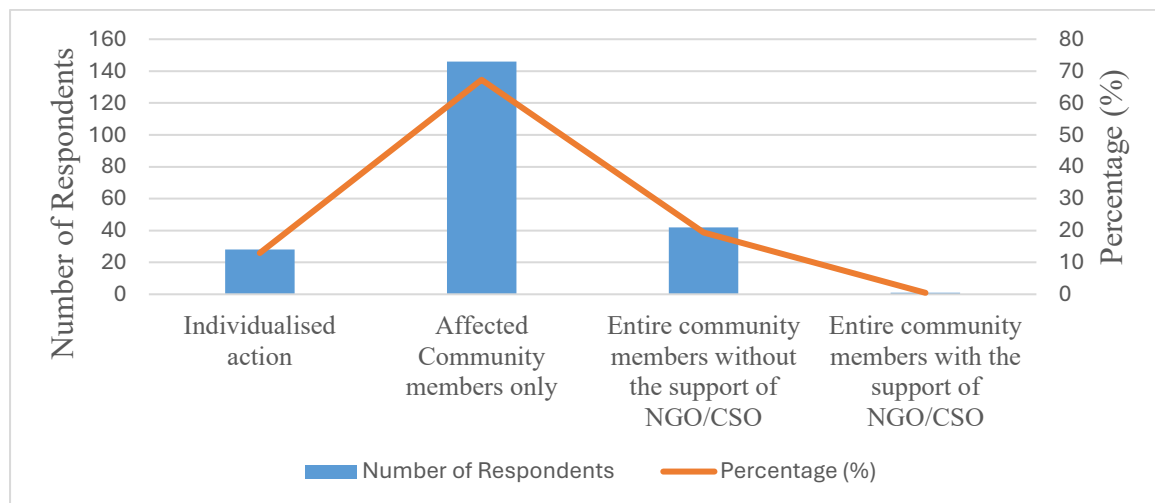


Figure 5.1 Nature of community mobilisation

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Figure 5.1 illustrates that community contestation was organised mainly by the affected community members only, as 146 respondents, representing 67.28%, opted for that option. Mobilisation by members of the entire community with the support of NGOs/CSOs was endorsed by only 1 respondent, indicating the absence of support from NGOs/CSOs.

The fact that the community mobilisation was mainly organised by the affected members was echoed during a FGD at Akokoa. A participant opined:

Our leaders were not affected so when you raise the issue, they do not mind you. Even for those affected, the chief will give them land elsewhere, so they don't want to help us. We are left to fight our own battle. In this town, we are made up of different ethnic groups and it is difficult to bring all of us together to fight the land acquisition (FGD, 28th March 2023).

Information gathered revealed that community mobilisation was community-specific. Even though several communities were affected by the investment projects concurrently, there was no mention of any two communities coming together to resist their land loss, making their mobilisation weak. As indicated earlier, some respondents mentioned the support they received from NGOs/CSOs. However, this appeared to be short-lived, as the CSOs mainly engaged in sensitisation activities rather than supporting community mobilisation. Civil Society Coalition on Land and Civic Response confirmed that they have been operating in the study area but indicated that their focus was on sensitising community members on their land rights rather than mobilising to contest land loss.

5.5.3 Reasons for Community Response

Respondents attributed community response to the investment projects to several reasons, presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Reasons for community response

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Negative impact of investment projects	49	22.58
Issues related to land acquisition processes	44	20.28
Displacement	41	18.89
Expansion of the acquired land	32	14.75
Human rights violation	26	11.98
Unfulfilled promises	20	9.22
Compensation issues	4	1.84
Changes in the project execution	1	0.46
Valid responses	217	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 5.6 reveals that reasons for community mobilisation were fairly distributed, as 49 respondents, representing 22.58%, identified the negative impacts of projects as the main reasons for community reaction; 44 respondents, representing 20.28%, argued for issues related to land acquisition processes; 41 respondents, representing 18.89%, dispossession and displacement; 32 respondents, representing 14.75%, expansion of the acquired land.

Data from FGDs and field interviews confirmed the results of the household survey. The issues related to acquisition processes and changes in project execution have been presented earlier in this chapter. Similarly, the negative impacts of investment projects, compensation issues, displacement, human rights violations and unfulfilled promises are presented in Chapter 6. Therefore, the views of respondents from FGDs and field interviews on reasons for community response will not be repeated here.

5.5.4 Reaction of State, Investors and Customary Leaders to Community Response

Whilst the community response strategies were unsuccessful in reverting the land to community members, they elicited reactions from the state, customary leaders and investors that further shape the impacts of LSLA for affected communities presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Reactions to the community response

Reactions	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Threatened with jail sentences and eviction	63	29.03
Legal action against community members	48	22.12
Acts of repression ²²	29	13.36
Dialogue with community members	29	13.36
Fulfilling promises to the communities	3	1.38
Bribing community mobilisation leaders	3	1.38
Changing policy direction	1	0.46
Making modifications to the project	1	0.46
Doing nothing	36	16.59
Other	4	1.86
Total	217	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 5.7 revealed that 63 respondents, representing 29.03%, said community members were threatened with eviction and jail sentences; 48 respondents, representing 22.12%, mentioned legal action against community members; 29 respondents, representing 13.36%, acts of repression; and another 29 respondents, representing 13.36%, dialogue with community members. The fact that community response has not generated decisive reaction from the state,

²² Acts of repression in this context involve the deployment of security personnel including the military to forcibly crush community mobilisation through beatings and manhandling community members.

investors and traditional leaders, as illustrated by the low endorsement of the options in Table 5.7, further highlights the weakness of community mobilisation.

The claim of threatening and bribing community members could not be confirmed by the researcher, as the representatives of state agencies, traditional leaders and investors rejected such claims during field interviews. However, data from FGDs and field interviews corroborated that legal action, acts of repression, dialogue, modification in project implementation and changes in policy direction had taken place. As discussed in Chapter 6, the deployment of the military in the area has a major implication for the livelihoods of the affected communities.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of LSLA in the study area, processes of land acquisition, community participation and FPIC, developments taking place on the acquired land and the response of the affected communities. The AAM has had its fair share of LSLA since the mid-2000s. Even though the state assumes a non-interference posture in customary land management, the legislative framework, investment promotions, land registration, and enforcement of law and order in matters of LSLA reside with the state. It was clear that traditional leaders wielded much power in customary land administration and, as a result, played crucial roles in granting land to investors, including negotiating the land deals. Both the indigenous people and the migrants in the affected communities were not actively involved in the land acquisition processes and their informed consent was not sought. As a result, they could not negotiate any terms that could help alleviate the hardships emanating from the investment projects. The chapter further revealed that the acquired lands had gone through different trajectories: some projects have collapsed, and others are yet to commence operation. However, the two projects that are the focus of this case study have been in operation since the

land acquisitions and have gone through different phases of development. The latter part of the chapter presented data on community response and highlighted that the community members adopted several response strategies, however, these appeared not to have yielded the expected results. Understanding the above dynamics provides a useful basis for examining the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders, the subject matter of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

The Impacts of LSLA for the Communal Landholders

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented data on how LSLA unfolds in the AAM and the dynamics occurring on the acquired lands. It also highlighted the various factors and processes that combine to produce impacts for affected communities. Drawing from the unfolding dynamics, this chapter presents data on the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in AAM.

Proponents of LSLA, representatives of state agencies, traditional leaders and investors were hopeful that LSLA could have positive impacts for the affected communities. They promised community members that the investment projects would transform their livelihoods. The EIA report of investment projects highlighted the potential for employment creation, increased income and revenue, provision of electricity and other socio-economic infrastructure in the local communities, optimal use of land, increase in rural development, improved living standard and improved security. However, in an agrarian society like the AAM, access to land and related natural resources is central to the livelihood and survival of the people and any intervention that limits community members' access to these resources without introducing alternative sustainable forms of livelihood opportunities could increase the livelihood vulnerability of the people thereby creating negative impacts. The fulfilment of the potentials of LSLA in addition to appropriate compensation could offset the negative impacts.

The chapter addresses the second and third objectives of the study. The second objective was to assess whether the development of the acquired land leads to dispossession and exploitation of the communal landholders at different stages of investment projects. The third objective examines the impacts of LSLA for the livelihoods of the communal landholders at various stages of investment projects. The chapter is based on empirical data. The remainder of this

chapter is divided into six sections. The first section presents data on the positive impacts of LSLAs for communal landholders by ascertaining the extent to which LSLA has delivered the promised positive impacts. The second section presents data on the negative impacts. The third section focuses on environmental impacts. The fourth section addresses the coping and adaptive strategies of the affected communities, whilst the fifth section considers gender and generational outcome dynamics. The final section focuses on respondents' overall assessment of LSLA. The chapter ends with a conclusion which recaps the main issues.

6.2 Positive Impacts of LSLA

This section presents data on the extent to which the promised positive impacts of LSLA, such as, employment creation, improved income level, food security, access to socio-economic infrastructure, and input and output markets manifested in the study area.

6.2.1 Creation of Employment Opportunities

The state promotion of LSLA hinges on its perceived contribution to employment opportunities. This was evident during field interviews where all the representatives of state institutions quickly mentioned employment creation as the main positive impact of LSLA. The EIA reports of the investment companies also highlighted employment creation as the major contribution of LSLA to the local and national economy. During community engagements, community members were promised that the projects would create employment opportunities for the youth in the area. Some investors explicitly indicated the number of workers to be employed with timelines (see Chapter Five). However, other investors only indicated they would create massive employment opportunities in the catchment area through direct and indirect jobs and outgrower schemes. For instance, in the EIA report, APSD projected to employ 5000 workers by 2022. The ultimate question is: Have the investment projects been able to deliver their promised employment opportunities?

During the field data collection exercise, employment creation was identified as a major positive impact of LSLA. The household survey data revealed that 205 respondents, representing 82.66%, said LSLA has resulted in employment creation, whereas 44 respondents, representing 17.74%, said it has not created employment opportunities. The jobs created were twofold: direct and indirect. Direct jobs involved engaging community members to work for the companies and draw salaries or wages from the companies directly. On the other hand, indirect employment included opportunities created for people to be employed because of the presence of investment companies. In the case of indirect jobs, there were instances where the companies sub-let some of their operations to other companies to perform on their behalf. Some private entrepreneurs also engaged individuals to provide vital services for investment companies, such as, food vending, transportation, and other related activities. It is difficult to access data on the indirect employment opportunities created, but data from the household survey provided useful information on direct employment.

Table 6.1 provides information on the number of households with a household member employed in the investment companies.

Table 6.1 Household member worked/working for investment company.

Employed in LSLA Operations	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	102	41.13
No	146	58.87
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Regarding households with a member employed in investment companies, Table 6.1 illustrates that 102 households, representing 41.31%, had a household member working or who had ever worked for an investment company, whereas 146 households, representing 58.87%, noted that

no member had ever worked for any investment company. Information gathered from the investment companies revealed that, at the time of data collection, together, APSD and AAP had employed 150 permanent and over 300 temporary workers altogether (See Chapter Five). Even though the number of people employed by the investment companies during the field data collection was relatively few, respondents during in-depth interviews highlighted the massive employment opportunities created during the initial stages of some of the investment companies. Describing its role in employment creation, a representative of the APSD observed:

At the peak of our operations in the initial phase, our company was one of the largest employers in the Bono East Region and paid the most taxes to the government of Ghana. Our positive impact on the local economy of the surrounding communities cannot be underestimated (Email correspondence, 23rd June 2023).

The representative also added that about 95% of the employees were members of the surrounding communities and all hired logistics, including buses for transporting employees to and from work, are sourced from owners within the surrounding communities. Describing the boom in employment opportunities created by APSD, a community member at Garadima said:

When the company started its operations, this place was like a marketplace. The cars conveyed workers from Atebubu and Kwame Danso and, together with the people from the nearby communities, this place was always busy. You could hardly count the number of people working for the company at the time and many of our youth were employed in the company (Field interview, 13th April 2023).

A senior officer of EPA at Atebubu estimated the number of people employed during the initial stages of the APSD's operations at 1,500. She quickly noted that "now the workers are few" (Field interview, 22nd December 2022). The company's workers also supported the view that APSD had recruited many workers.

The people employed were engaged in building and road construction, land preparation, nursing seedlings, and transplanting. Some were also engaged as drivers, mechanics, field officers, administrative staff and supervisors. Although the number of workers recruited by the company at the various stages of operation was not made available to the researcher, it was clear from the field interviews, FGDs and household survey data that APSD recruited most workers in the first five years of its operation than any other period. When the one-off activities were completed, the workers involved in those activities lost their jobs. Moreover, the challenges posed by the confusion about the usage of the trees (See Chapter Five) almost brought the company's activities to a halt, leading to the laying-off of many employees. The rampant dismissal of the employees of APSD earned the company the nickname "Go Home" by the local community members (FGD at Garadima, 10th February 2023). The company has still not set up the proposed power plant that could enhance employment opportunities and the expansion of the plantation area progressed slowly after the explosive start.

On the other hand, AAP started with few employees and the number of workers kept increasing as the company expanded its operations. As indicated in Chapter 5, with the building of the starch processing factory, the company has recruited additional workers. However, the researcher observed that the company had started automating some of the farming practices that were previously done manually. For instance, the researcher witnessed the company experimenting with the planting of cassava with tractors, an activity usually done manually. Commenting on this development, a representative of the company stated:

Our concern is about efficiency, to be competitive you must be efficient that is why we are leveraging technology to enhance our efficiency. Of course, the deployment of machines may reduce the number of people doing the same job, but this will also lead to an increase in the labour needs in other areas as we expand production (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

The number of people engaged by the respective companies has gone through periods of highs and lows depending on the stage of the company, the kind of operations embarked upon and their ability to introduce the processing components in their plans. Although investment companies have employed some community members, it is nowhere near the massive employment opportunities promised. For instance, APSD was to employ 5000 permanent workers by 2022 but, at the time of data collection, only 80 permanent workers were working for them.

Figure 6.1 presents data on the nature of engagement of the community members in the investment companies.

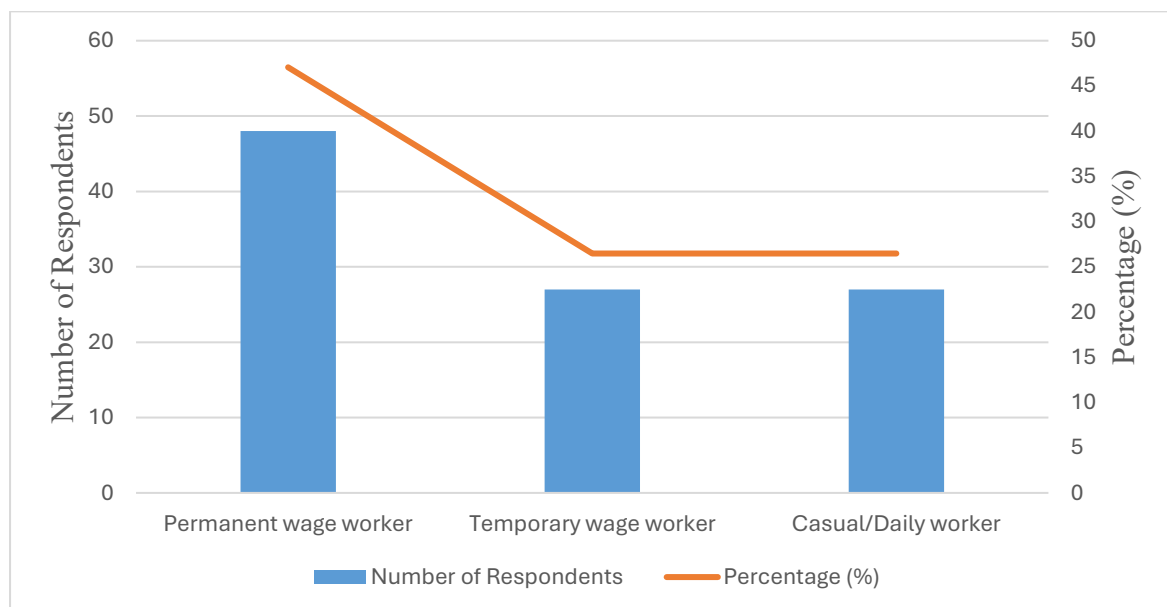


Figure 6.1 Nature of work

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Figure 6.1 revealed that, out of the 102 households with a household member working or ever worked for the investment companies, 48 representing 47.06%, were permanent wage workers, 27, representing 26.47%, were temporary wage workers and another 27, representing 26.47%, were casual/daily workers. The permanent wage workers were those employed on a long-term

basis and their engagement was done through the issuance of an appointment letter. This category of workers includes those engaged to perform specialised tasks including mechanics, administrators, managers and drivers. Most of the workers in this category were not from the immediate catchment areas of the investment companies. The temporary wage workers were engaged during the peak of activities of investment companies for a specified period, usually two to three months. For instance, APSD has been employing community members during the dry season as firefighters. The casual or daily workers were those the researcher refers to as “pay as you go”. Their engagement was on a daily basis as and when investment companies needed a helping hand. They were paid after the day’s work and were not guaranteed an opportunity the next day. The temporary wage workers and the casual or daily workers were recruited verbally without any appointment letters. Most of the workers in these categories were from the immediate catchment areas of investment companies. The data in Figure 6.1 imply that most of the employees of the investment companies were temporary workers, constituting approximately 52.9% and made up of temporary wage workers and casual/daily workers with short security of tenure. The short tenure of the workers is illustrated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Duration a household member worked for the investment company in years

Duration worked for investment company in years	Mean	3.84
	Minimum	1
	Maximum	18
	SD	3.42

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

According to Table 6.2, the mean number of years household members had worked for an investment company was 3.84, with SD²³ (standard deviation) of 3.42 and the minimum and

²³ SD is the measurement of how a group spread out from the mean.

maximum duration of 1 and 18²⁴ years, respectively. The fact that the SD is less than the mean illustrates that most household members' number of years worked for the investment companies were fewer than the mean years. Given that the companies have been in operation for almost two decades, the mean number of 3.84 years highlights the precarious nature of their security of tenure as they could easily be dismissed without compensation.

6.2.1.1 Condition of Work in the Investment Companies

Data on the condition of work in the investment companies in comparison to similar jobs outside the investment project is useful in ascertaining the contribution of LSLA to employment creation. The data on wages earned from the investment companies by 98 respondents are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Salary/Wage per month in Ghana Cedis (Ghc)

Salary/wage per month in Ghana cedis (Ghc) (at the rate of Ghc13.69 per \$1 at the time of data collection exercise)	Mean	781.4 (\$57.08)
	Minimum	150.00 (\$11.00)
	Maximum	4000.00 (\$292.18)
	SD	701.54 (\$51.25)

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

The household survey data presented in Table 6.3 revealed that the mean monthly wage was Ghc781.40 (\$57.08) with a standard deviation of Ghc701.53 (\$51.25) and minimum and maximum wages at Ghc150.00 (\$11.00) and Ghc4,000.00 (\$292.18), respectively. The implication of SD of Ghc701.54 lower than the mean wage is that most of the workers earned a lower wage than the mean. Although the mean daily wage of a by-day worker (Ghc20.00=\$1.46) at the time of the data collection exercise was far higher than the national

²⁴ The 18 years is considered an outlier as only one person had worked with the investment companies for such a long time.

minimum wage of Ghc14.88 (\$1.09), respondents lamented that the income they earned from working for the companies was woefully inadequate.

It is worthy of note that the researcher was sceptical about the data on the salaries and wages of the employees as many respondents were reluctant to provide information on wages, and the attempt at obtaining it from the companies also proved futile. Therefore, the data on the income may not be the true reflection of the realities on the ground, however, it provides the basis for assessing the information provided during in-depth interviews and FGDs.

The household data on the wage earned from working for investment companies compared to doing similar work elsewhere has been presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Household earned higher income from working for investment companies than doing similar jobs outside the company

Household earned higher income	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	7	6.86
Agree	26	25.49
Neutral	8	7.84
Disagree	39	38.24
Strongly disagree	22	21.57
Valid responses	102	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.4 revealed that most respondents (59.91%) made up of those who disagree and strongly disagree, did not support the assertion that workers of the investment companies earned better income than those doing similar work outside the company.

The responses from in-depth interviews with the workers of the investment companies on income earned were not unanimous. Some respondents argued that doing similar work outside the company fetches better income. A worker of APSD observed:

As an electrician, the income I earn from doing my own work in the community is higher than what I get from working for the company, but the job in the community is not regular which is why I work for the company (Field interview, 3rd April 2023).

Similarly, a worker of AAP added:

If the by-day work in the community is always available, it would have been better than the wages we receive from the company. The company does not pay us well at all and the payment is also not regular (Field interview, 29th March 2023).

Other workers argued that the salary they received from the company was better. A worker at Garadima noted: “The salary I receive from the company is very good for me. I have even built a house with my savings” (Field interview, 17th April 2023). Similarly, a female worker added:

The pay is good. I have gotten many things for working for the company including a house, fridge, bicycle and cooking utensils. I also use part of the money to support my brother's Senior High education (Field interview, 15th March 2023).

The differences in opinions about the salary and wages of the workers could be attributed to different factors, including the following: the status of the worker (whether permanent or temporary); the level of education and skills; the type of duties performed; and the investment company one works for. It was observed that the permanent workers earned a higher income than the casual workers, as they enjoyed some incentives that the casual workers did not enjoy. The educated and skilled workers also enjoyed higher incomes than the menial workers, as the highly educated and skilled personnel occupied strategic positions in the companies. However, most educated and highly skilled workers came from outside the catchment communities. More so, the salary paid by the APSD was relatively higher and more regular than that of the AAP.

Table 6.5 provides the view of respondents on general condition of work.

Table 6.5 Condition of work

Indicator	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Condition of work	Good	53	51.96
	Bad	49	48.04
	Valid responses	102	100
Payment of social security contribution	Yes	34	34.69
	No	64	65.31
	Valid responses	98	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.5 illustrates that most of the respondents were satisfied with their condition of work in the investment companies with 53 respondents, representing 51.96% indicating that the condition of work was good and only 49 respondents, representing 48.04% stating that the condition of work was bad. The working condition was considered bad when people worked in deplorable conditions, received poor wages and not paid promptly and regularly, not provided with requisite equipment and tools, work overtime without commensurate remuneration and experienced harsh treatment. The reverse of the conditions described above meant that the condition of work was good. The data from in-depth interviews and FDGs presented a contrary picture from what was presented in Table 6.5, as many lamented the poor working conditions.

Table 6.5 further revealed that only 34 respondents, representing 34.69%, were on the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT),²⁵ and their social security contributions were paid by the companies, whereas 64 respondents, representing 65.31%, were not on the SSNIT

²⁵ SSNIT is the state institution mandated to manage the social security contributions of workers in Ghana.

scheme. The greater number of respondents who were not on the social security scheme is also a testament to the fact that most of the workers were temporary workers.

Table 6.6 presents data from the household survey on the reasons that community members work for investment companies, given that they do not offer better conditions of work.

Table 6.6 Reasons for working for the investment company

Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Loss of access to land	36	35.29
Absence of alternative job	30	29.41
Desire to meet livelihood needs	25	24.51
Alternative to main job	6	5.88
Attractive pay	4	3.92
Conducive working condition	1	0.98
Valid Responses	102	100

Source: Author construct based on household survey data.

Table 6.6 shows that the main reasons community members worked for investment companies were threefold: loss of access to land, absence of alternative job and the desire to meet livelihood needs, with loss of access to land topping the list with 36 respondents, representing 35.29%. Other reasons were acknowledged by only a handful of respondents. These data demonstrate that the decision to work for investment companies was not based on superior working conditions or salaries paid by the investment companies.

6.2.2 Improved Income Levels

Another aspect of LSLA that proponents highlight, and that state actors, investors and traditional leaders promised communities, is the general improvement in income levels. Table 6.7 illustrates the views of respondents regarding their income situation with LSLA.

Table 6.7 Views of respondents on household income situation.

Indicator	Income situation	Number of Respondents	Percentage %)
LSLA has improved household income levels	Yes	44	17.74
	No	204	82.26
	Valid Responses	248	100
LSLA has led to a decline in household income levels	Yes	158	63.71
	No	90	36.29
	Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.7 demonstrates that 44 respondents, representing 17.74%, said LSLA has resulted in improvement in their income levels whilst 204 respondents, representing 82.26%, said it has not improved income levels. On the contrary, 158 households, representing 63.71%, said LSLA has led to a decline in income levels and 90 respondents, representing 36.29, said their income level has not declined. This implies that some households neither experienced improved income nor decline in incomes levels. The data from Table 6.7 are an indication that some communal landholders benefited from the intrusion of LSLA at the expense of others. The beneficiary households include those employed by the investment companies or had an opportunity to provide some services to the company.

Figure 6.2 presents data on the stage of the operations of investment projects when households earned higher income.

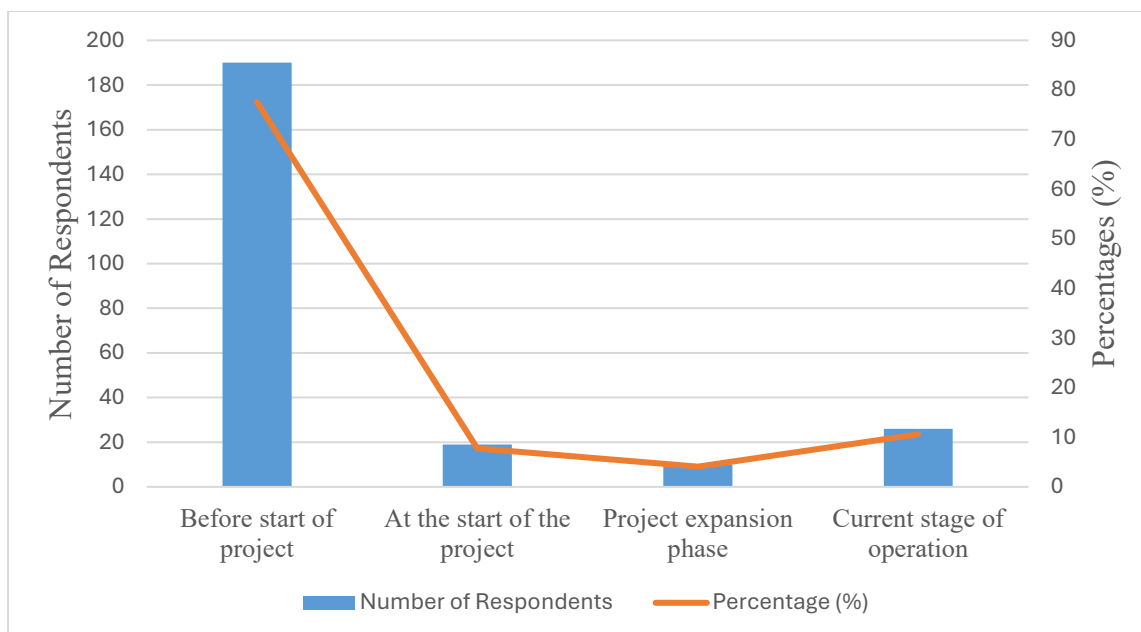


Figure 6.2 Stage of the investment project households earned higher income

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Figure 6.2, demonstrates that LSLA has rather led to declining household income levels as 190 respondents, representing 77.55%, indicated they earned higher income before the commencement of the investment projects; 19 respondents, representing 7.76%, opted for the start of the project; 10 respondents, representing 4.08%, argued for the project expansion phase; and 26 respondents, representing 10.61%, argued for the current stage. The significance of this data is that the number of respondents who claimed to earn higher income during the current stage of operations is higher than in the previous two phases (at the start of the project and the project expansion phases) indicating a probable improvement in income levels over time.

Some respondents who lost access to their farmlands were employed by the investment companies, but they were later laid-off, making life difficult for them. However, during the data collection exercise, some of these community members had been re-engaged thereby improving their income situation. The above observation was captured succinctly by a participant at Garadima in the following words:

When the company took over the land and people were struggling to find land elsewhere, I did not bother myself because I was working for the company. But when the company began facing challenges, some of us were laid-off. At that time, I had no job or land. I had to depend on family and friends. Several of us have now been re-engaged and things are better (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

However, many respondents expressed concerns about the decline in income levels attributed to LSLA. They argued that their income was better when they had full access to land for farming and related activities. This was captured by a respondent at Byebye as follows:

Before the company took away my land, I had a “Motorking” (a motorised tricycle) and a motorcycle I used for farming activities. I bought them with the money I got from farming. But now I have no land to farm on, where would I get money? As I sit here, I don’t have even a bicycle. Even money to buy food for my household is an issue. Why should a farmer buy food from the market? (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

This concern was echoed during FGDs and in-depth interviews, especially by participants who directly lost access of their farmlands to investment companies. As will be discussed later in this chapter, LSLA dispossessed affected communities not only of their land but also other land-related natural resources. Therefore, community members did not only lose income from farming but also the loss of access to land-based natural resources impacted the income they generated from this vital source. Likewise, some of the new coping and adaptive strategies negatively affected the household income.

Regarding revenue for the AAMA, data presented later in the chapter on compensation revealed that the assembly receives part of the stool lands revenue from the OASL. After the OASL had deducted 10% of the accrued amount for administrative expenses, the MMDA received 55% of the remainder. Commenting on the revenue generated from the land lease, a senior regional officer of OASL stated:

The District Assembly within the catchment area is getting something for development purposes. The stool is also getting something to benefit the community. The traditional council also gets its share. So, there is also a consistent source of revenue generated by the LSLA for the beneficiaries that I have mentioned (Field interview, 1st November 2022).

However, respondents argued that the revenue derived from the stool lands was insignificant. A senior officer of the AAMA observed that “unlike the mining areas where the revenue accrued from the stool lands was substantial, we are not receiving much from the OASL as land rent” (Field interview, 1st February 2023).

An examination of some lease agreements revealed that the land rent payable by investment companies was insignificant, and others never paid the ground rent. Some clauses in the agreement also enabled the companies to evade the payment of those revenues. A land lease of an investment company signed over 10,696.21 acres (4,328.60 ha) revealed that the company was to pay an annual rent of Ghc8,209.00 (\$599.64) subject to revision every three years. Thus, the company was to pay only Ghc0.77 (\$0.056) per acre annually and the rate or terms of revision were not specified. Whilst the land was acquired in 2005, the lease agreement indicated that the 50-year lease commenced on 1st January 2012. The payment of the ground rent was also contingent on substantial development of the acquired land. However, what constituted a substantial development was not clearly stated. A senior regional officer of OASL mentioned that many companies and individuals were reluctant to pay the rent. As a result of the above situation, the amount generated from the ground rent was insignificant.

Whilst the AAMA does not receive substantial revenue from the investment companies, they spend much to provide infrastructure for these companies. A senior officer of the assembly argued thus:

Apart from the income tax the investment companies pay as part of the salary of their workers to the Ghana Revenue Authority which goes to the national treasury and the stool lands revenue that the assembly has a share, the assembly receives no other financial support from the companies. Rather, the assembly spends on these companies hoping they will create jobs for our youth. Recently, when one of the companies completed the installation of their processing factory and they needed electricity, the assembly financed the extension of electricity to the company's site (Field interview, 1st February 2023).

Whereas only a handful of community members experienced improvement in their income levels with many experiencing declines, the AAMA appears to spend much more on providing socio-economic infrastructure for these companies than the revenue they receive. This is contrary to the promises made to the community members that LSLA would improve household income and revenue for the Municipal Assembly.

6.2.3 Food Security Situation

According to the household survey data, only 7 respondents, representing 2.82%, indicated that LSLA has improved their food security situation. However, 55 respondents, representing 22.18%, said they have been experiencing food insecurity due to LSLA. Respondents who claimed to have experienced an improvement in their food security situation were mostly workers of investment companies who hold strategic positions in the firms. These workers argued that they were not only receiving enough salary to enable them to purchase adequate food for their families, but they also invested some of their income in farming to produce food for household consumption and sold the surplus for more income. Although many community members had lost access to their farmlands, some workers said they had access to the company's land where they do their own farming. This view was succinctly summed up by a research participant at Abour:

I have access to the company's land for farming and they plough it for me free of charge. Because of this, I produce enough food for my household. Since I started working with the company, I have not experienced any problems with my household food supply (Field interview, 26th April 2023).

The food security situation becomes clearer when consideration is given to the stage of investment projects when households experienced insufficient food supply, as presented in Figure 6.3.

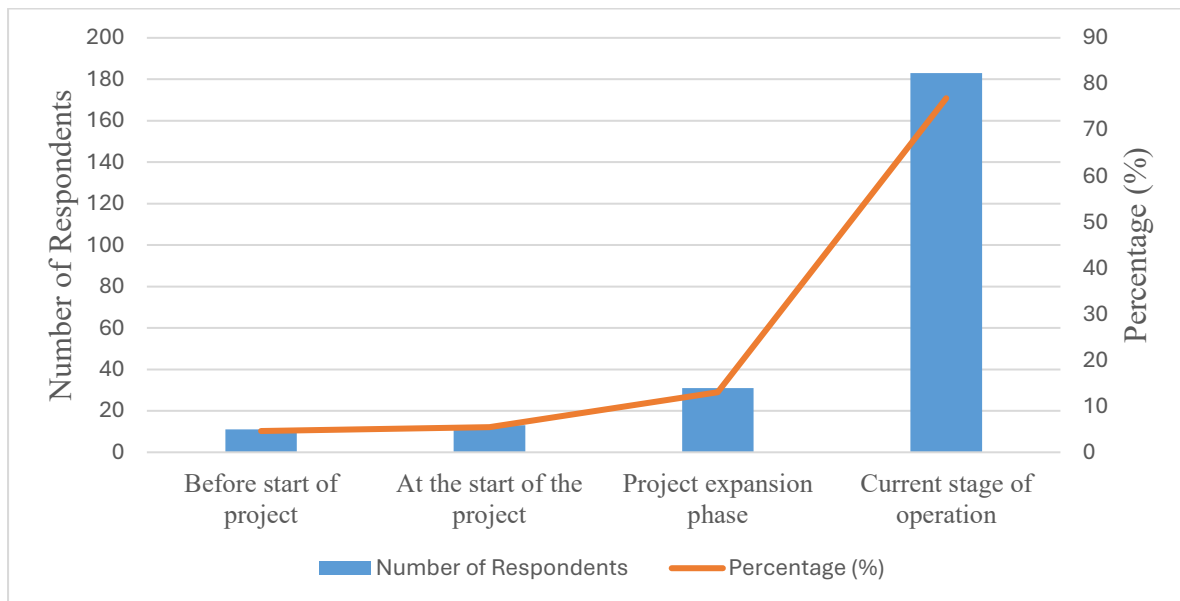


Figure 6.3 Stage of investment project households had insufficient food

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

According to Figure 6.3, most households (183 respondents, representing 76.89%,) were experiencing insufficient food supply in the current stage of operation of the investment projects than any other stage. This implies that the number of households that have experienced insufficient food has increased with the expansion of the investment project, supporting the argument that LSLA hampers household food security situation rather than improving it.

Not only did the food availability decline, but accessibility, diversity and utilisation were also affected. As demonstrated later in the chapter, land dispossession and the apparent scarcity

have made community members give up the farming of favourite staples like yam and cassava. Relatedly, many households had given up farming altogether and others had downsized their farms. As a result, they are now dependent on food from the open market. This affects their food accessibility and utilisation. Respondents at Abour, Dobidi Nkwanta and Akokoa claimed they had been major yam-producing centres in AAM. However, they now buy yam from the Atebubu market to cater for their household needs because they no longer have access to fertile land to cultivate yam. Moreover, the restrictions on hunting and loss of access to forest and non-forest products that complemented households' nutritional needs hampered their food accessibility and diversity.

A significant concern was that the major investment companies were not engaged in food crop production and even if they were, it was a minor part of their operations. Therefore, converting such a huge tract of land that hitherto was used for food crop cultivation has altered the food security situation of the affected communities detrimentally. Commenting on the effects of LSLA on food security, a representative of a CSO opined:

The impact of LSLA is not felt by only the affected community members but the whole country. The Atebubu area is part of the food basket of Ghana and since these projects started, I have been telling people that Ghanaians should not be surprised to experience food shortages in 5 to 6 years. Now people are complaining about food price hikes in Accra. They are not linking it to what is happening in Atebubu, but it is. Farmers were using the land acquired by companies for food crop farming. Do you think it will not affect food security? It does (Field interview, 23rd March 2023).

Although the food security situation might have improved for a few households, most respondents complained of food insecurity due to LSLA. Overall, the promised improved food security has not materialised yet.

6.2.4 Access to Socio-economic Infrastructure

As a rural district, many communities lack some basic socio-economic infrastructure and LSLA offered hope and opportunity to improve the situation. However, the household data revealed that only 10 respondents, representing 4.03%, indicated that LSLA had led to provision of new socio-economic infrastructure. Data from field interviews and FGDs demonstrate that the investment companies have developed some infrastructural facilities. For instance, the respondents observed that the companies had constructed mini-dams that they used for their activities, and community members sometimes used the water from the dams during the dry seasons when access to water was challenging. It suffices to say that the dams were not built purposefully for the affected communities, who sometimes face restrictions from the companies in accessing the dams.

Concerning health and educational facilities, a representative of AAP observed that the company had supported the Akokoa Clinic with medical supplies and renovated their building. He added that they also renovated a school building when a rainstorm ripped off the roof. However, these assertions were not corroborated by the community members. At a FGD in Akokoa, participants were unanimous that they had not benefited from any socio-economic infrastructure from the investment companies. This position was summed up by a participant, who was also a community leader, in the following words:

Apart from the small dams they have constructed, they have not done anything for us. They have not supported our schools or clinic. They have not provided an irrigation facility, and we still rely on a rain-fed farming system. Apart from the AAMA and World Vision, we have not received any infrastructural support from any company (FGD, 13th December 2022).

However, a worker of the clinic confirmed the supply of medical equipment but denied the renovation claim.

A village chief also lamented that they had received no infrastructure support from the investment companies:

They have come to live with us but have done nothing for the community. We lack several basic amenities, but they have not sat with us to discuss the possibility of supporting us. I am the chief of this town, but I have never met the company's owners. They have never asked about our problems. The community has not received any support in terms of health or educational facilities (Field interview, 23rd January 2023).

A woman in her late 30s at Dobidi Nkwanta added:

Look at the school building we have in this community. I attended school here and the building is almost the same as when I was a student. Nothing has changed about the school building. It does not look like a school that has received support from an investment company. The JHS people sit under a shed (Field interview, 18th January 2023).

Similar observations were made in the APSD catchment area. As will be seen later in the chapter, the company had constructed roads across its concession, however, most of these roads were inaccessible to the community members. The roads linking communities had also not been upgraded. During a FGD at Boanyo, a participant opined:

The company has not provided any infrastructure in this community. They have not supported our school nor drilled a borehole for us. They promised to repair a stretch of our road that links our community to the Atebubu-Kwame Danso trunk road which is in deplorable condition. When you were coming here you used that stretch. Does it look like a road that has been upgraded? (FGD, 17th February 2023).

A worker of one of the companies observed, "The only thing I have seen that the company has provided for my community is a noticeboard where information is posted" (Field interview, 26th April 2023). However, the two traditional councils in the study area indicated receiving

support from the investment companies in constructing their respective palaces. There was no provision for CSR in the land lease. This was left to the discretion of the respective companies.

There was also no evidence that the AAMA has provided any social amenity funded from the stool lands revenue. A senior municipal officer of OASL noted:

I have not seen any project funded with revenue from stool lands in this Municipality. In my previous duty post, they used the revenue from stool lands to build roads, schools, and teachers' quarters and bought trucks for the assembly. These were labelled as being funded by revenue from stool lands (Field interview, 13th December 2022).

As indicated earlier, the revenue generated through the ground rent was not enough for the assembly to embark on infrastructural development. Thus, the promised rural development through the provision of socio-economic infrastructure is yet to materialise. The ability of the companies to provide meaningful socio-economic infrastructure and other CSRs depends on the profitability of projects. However, as discussed in Chapter 5 and judging from developments on the acquired land, the investment companies do not seem to be making significant profit from their investments to enable them to embark on any major CSR project.

6.2.5 Access to Input and Output Markets

Market access received less endorsement from the respondents of this study, as only 9 respondents, representing 3.36% of the household survey, indicated that they have benefited from access to input and output market opportunities created by LSLA. This situation arose because the investment companies' activities differed from the community members'. Even with the AAP, which was into cassava cultivation with a starch processing factory, there was no evidence of community members selling cassava to the company. This was because the company's variety of cassava was different from what the community members cultivated and the promised outgrower scheme was not operational at the time of the data collection exercise

(See Chapter 5). A community leader at Garadima succinctly expressed the above situation in the following words: “What they need is different from what we cultivate, they are not serving as a market for our farm produce” (Field interview, 19th January 2023). With some investment companies venturing into food crop cultivation, input and output markets could emerge between the companies and the communities. For instance, during one of the researcher’s visits to APSD, he encountered a community leader who had gone to buy an improved maize variety. Aside from direct market access between the community members and the investment companies, some respondents observed that the presence of the workers of the investment companies in the area has provided market opportunities for their farm produce and other services they provide in the communities. A respondent at Garadima observed:

When the company had many workers, whenever they were returning from work, they stopped and bought foodstuffs, such as yam, beans, groundnuts and other produce from our farms. Those selling cooked food in the mornings also received their fair share of buyers. This place was like a marketplace but is no longer like it used to be (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

At Akoko, respondents also mentioned that the investment projects had resulted in a rise in the patronage of food sold by food vendors due to the presence of the workers. One respondent said, “There has been improvement in the sales I make” (Field interview, 11th April 2023). Commenting on opportunities created for food vending in the area, a representative of AAP stated, “Previously you wouldn’t find good chop bars (restaurants) in this area but now there are good chop bars around and patronage has gone up (Field interview, 10th January 2023). These opportunities are linked to the level of operation of the investment companies. When the companies were operating at peak levels and recruited many workers such opportunities were created but, when the operations of the companies declined, the opportunities also dwindled.

6.3 Negative Impacts of LSLA for Communal Landholders

Aside from the failure of LSLA to live up to the promised massive employment creation, improved income, food security, provision of socio-economic infrastructure, and market access, discussed above, it also impacted negatively on the communal landholders through dispossession and displacement, loss of access to natural resources, intensification of competition and conflict over land, human rights abuse, and restrictions on movement. All these occurred with inadequate or no compensation, and worsened the vulnerability context in the affected communities. The succeeding presentation delves deeper into these impacts.

6.3.1 Dispossession and Displacement

Considering the extent of land acquired by investors in the study area, many of the communal landholders in the affected communities have lost access to the land they had been using for ages, leading to dispossession and displacement. The household survey data revealed that 165 respondents, representing 73.66%, indicated that they had lost access to their farmland due to LSLA, whilst 59 respondents, representing 26.34%, said they did not lose any land. Regarding the size of land that households lost to the investment companies, the household survey data indicate that 165 households lost a total of 2,446 acres (989.86 ha). The average land loss of a household was 14.81 acres (5.99 ha) with minimum and maximum land loss at 2 acres (0.81 ha) and 50 acres (20.23 ha), respectively. The comparison of land available to the households before and after the land acquisition, presented in Table 6.8 buttresses the argument of land loss.

Table 6.8 indicates that, before the land acquisition, the total land size available to the 165 households was 3,324 acres, this reduced to 1,441 acres after the acquisition. Similarly, the mean land available to the households reduced from 14.77 acres before the acquisition to only

6.40 acres after the acquisition. The maximum land available declined from 50 acres during pre-acquisition to 35 acres post-acquisition.

Table 6.8 Land available to 165 households before and after land acquisition in acres

Indicators	Before	After
Total	3324	1441
Mean	14.77	6.40
Minimum	0.00	0.00
Maximum	50.00	35.00
SD	10.26	5.49

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

The minimum land available to the households before the land acquisition was zero because some households did not engage in livelihood activities that required land. On the contrary, the minimum land available to the households after the land acquisition was zero because, in addition to households that were not engaged in land-based activities, others genuinely lost access to their land due to the LSLA. The implication of this data becomes clearer when one considers that, before LSLA, in addition to the land available to the farmers, they still had access to fallow land.

Data from in-depth interviews, FGDs and field observations also support the household survey data that LSLA has created a situation of land dispossession and displacement. A 60-year-old farmer at Byebye whose original village, Oboasi Akura, was located within the APSD concession lamented:

I have lost all the land I was farming on. I had more than 20 acres but the land they gave me was not up to 5 acres. I was living in Oboasi Akura situated in the middle of the concession. They reserved a small parcel of land around our village for our farming activities; however, due to land scarcity, many of the

villagers left the place leaving a handful of us. Last year, the company told us to vacate the place because they claimed it was no longer safe for us to live in the plantation given the few villagers left there. I now depend on friends to access land (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

Similarly, an assembly member from the APSD catchment area stated:

Access to land is now a challenge to my people. Because, for those enclosed within the plantation, when they exhaust the little land granted them within the concession, they travel beyond the concession area, sometimes 6-8 miles away to access land (Field interview, 24th January 2023).

A 35-year-old female respondent in an interview at Dobidi-Nkwanta added:

As I was growing up, my people did not have problems with farmland access. Access to farmland was dependent on your ability to cultivate. It was dependent on your financial ability: if you wanted 10 acres, 20 acres or even 100 acres, it was dependent on your ability to develop the land. But now, they have sold the land to investors, it is difficult to find land for farming. The companies have taken over the land in this area leaving us with virtually nothing (Field interview, 18th January 2023).

In all the FGDs, the consensus was that LSLA has led to the dispossession of the community members. In a FGD at Akokoa, one of the AAP catchment communities, a participant succinctly summed up the case of land dispossession in the following words:

The investors have come to cause us problems. Farming has become a profitable venture, but where can you find land in this area? The chiefs do not want us to make a living from the land. They have sold all the land we used for farming to investors. I can count about seven companies and individuals who have acquired large tracts of land in this area. They have taken our land and now if you want to acquire land for farming, you have to travel far away into the hinterland, sometimes into different districts or regions. I pity the youth, where would they get land to do farming? (FGD, 28th March 2023).

In areas where mechanised farming was practised, the community members had gone through the laborious and cost-intensive process of “stumping” trees on the land to pave the way for mechanised farming only to lose such lands to the investors. Commenting on the loss of already developed land, an opinion leader at Dobidi Nkwanta observed:

The investors acquired large tracts of land and portions of their land in the hinterland were lying idle, yet they did not start their activities from the undeveloped areas. They started from the land community members had spent time, energy and money to prepare. They chased the farmers away and started ploughing (Field interview, 18th January 2023).

Some traditional leaders also confirmed that community members had lost access to their farmland because of LSLA. However, they justified the land loss on the failure of the migrant farmers to perform their obligations regarding the payment of annual tribute. A divisional chief said:

From what I know, those farming on the land were informed to leave. The issue is that they were not paying anything to the traditional council. They were using the land freely. The farmers who are now farming outside the concession are not even paying the annual tribute. There was no way to take legal action against them for non-payment because there was no formal agreement to bind them. Why won't the traditional leaders lease the land to somebody who could pay them a substantial amount? (Field interview, 22nd February 2023).

A traditional leader at Amantin also observed:

The land the migrant farmers were farming on did not belong to them. If a company comes and requests land, we make them aware and tell them not to farm on the plot the following season. After all, how much are they paying to the traditional council? (Field interview, 21st February 2023).

Even though the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the New Land Act, Act 1036 recognise and guarantee customary tenancies, the fact that these rights were not documented

made the holders of such rights vulnerable amid competition over land. It was not only the migrants who bore the brunt of land dispossession but also the indigenous people who possessed usufructuary rights.

The representatives of the investment companies and some state institutions did not share the view that the land acquisitions had dispossessed the local community members. Their argument was premised on the fact that, in cases where villages were located within the concession area, like About and Boanyo, the investors reserved land around such settlements for local community livelihood activities. In an e-mail correspondence from APSD, they observed that the leased land belonging to the Atebubu stool only “contains a few farmhouses and, the company allocated lands around these farmhouses to people living there” (E-mail, 7th June 2023). Similarly, a representative of AAP said in an interview:

All communities on the land before the acquisition are still with us. They have not been displaced. We have reserved parcels of land around the villages for their usage. We also allow them to farm on part of the company’s acquired land that was not utilised at the time (Field interview, 10th January 2023).

The idea of reserving land for communities located within the concessions instead of resettling the people appeared to be a ploy to avoid the cost of resettlement and payment of compensation to the affected people. As observed during the field data collection exercise, some villages in the concessions that were granted land had collapsed or were on the verge of collapsing. The people in these villages, faced with the harsh realities occasioned by the plantation development, fled these areas. The system of reserving land for the communities also led to the emergence of mechanised farming in communities that hitherto had no such experience, as they had abandoned land fallowing for continuous cultivation on the same plot of land. The limited land allocated to the farmers also hampered their ability to expand their farms commensurate with the expansion of their households (See the section on coping and adaptive strategies later

in this chapter). Additionally, the land reservation did not involve communities outside the concession who were farming in the concession areas before the LSLA.

The communities on the fringes of the acquired land who lost their farmland had to look for land elsewhere. This involved moving beyond the acquired land which prolonged the distance to their farms and increased travelling time. The household survey data that compared the distance between the place of residence and farms clearly illustrate this point. The average distance increased from 2.24 km to 3.40 km, likewise, the maximum distance increased from 15 km to 35 km. The new places to which the displaced people relocated their farms were already used by some other communal landholders. Therefore, communities not directly affected by the investment projects have also experienced land loss, as those who lost their land were rushing to these areas to access land. A farmer at Dobidi Nkwanta noted: “Although I did not lose my land directly to the company, the people who lost their land are now competing with me for land” (Field interview, 17th January 2023). Thus, land dispossession and displacement as a result of LSLA occurred in two ways, directly and indirectly.

6.3.2 Loss of Access to Natural Resources

In AAM, the livelihood of the rural people revolves around farming and exploitation of natural resources. Therefore, dispossessing the people of their land has a trickle-down effect on their access to land-based natural resources. Respondents identified natural resources they had lost access to, including forest and non-forest products, such as fuel wood, lumber, grass for roofing, hunting and gathering grounds, water sources, medicinal plants, and ancestral graves. This section presents data on these resources to which households had lost access.

6.3.2.1 Loss of Access to Fuel Wood and Charcoal

Aside from farming, charcoal production was one of the major livelihood activities in rural communities in AAM. This fact was acknowledged in the EIA report of both the APSD and

AAP. The AAM was among the top three charcoal-producing districts in Ghana (Nketiah & Asante, 2018). Charcoal production was not just for household consumption but also for commercial purposes. However, respondents argued that the charcoal business had collapsed due to LSLA. As illustrated in Table 6.9, households have lost access to fuel wood (firewood or wood for charcoal production).

Table 6.9 Household has lost access to fuel wood

Lost access to fuel wood	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	218	87.90
No	30	12.10
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.9 revealed that most households, 218 respondents, representing 87.90%, had lost access to fuel wood. This was corroborated by in-depth interviews and FGDs.

Respondents attributed this situation to the “stumping” of trees for mechanised farming and restrictions imposed by some investment companies. For instance, in the APSD plantation area, the company destroyed all the indigenous trees community members had been using for charcoal production before planting exotic ones. The company also prevents community members from accessing the 30% of land reserved for conservation. More so, because of fears of wildfire destroying the plantation, coupled with the company’s concerns for climate change mitigation measures, they banned charcoal burning around the plantation. Additionally, many farmers have shifted from land fallowing to mechanised farming because of pressures on the land occasioned by LSLA. This has resulted in a decline in the availability of wood for charcoal production. Although the APSD attempted to introduce an improved method of charcoal production in its catchment area with the construction of kilns, this initiative was short-lived

because of non-availability of wood and lack of interest on the part of the community members.

Figure 6.4 is a picture of an abandoned kiln at Byebye.



Figure 6.4 A picture of an abandoned kiln (Source: Author)

Community members did not only lose the opportunity for charcoal production but also access to firewood. Respondents expressed their views about their loss of access to firewood and wood for charcoal production. An assembly member indicated that charcoal production has declined in the villages in his electoral area. He added:

When the company was preparing the land for their plantation, they had machines they used to clear the trees on the land. Sometimes, they gathered the logs together and burnt them. They did not even allow the community members to harvest the trees. Now they have destroyed all the indigenous trees. Where can one find wood for charcoal production, even for firewood? You have to travel to far places to access some (Field interview, 24th January 2023).

A respondent at Byebye added, “They do not allow us to burn charcoal, and one cannot even find wood for charcoal making” (Field interview, 6th January 2023). Relatedly, a 64-year-old farmer at Garadima stated: “We are not allowed to burn charcoal nor carry charcoal on our bicycles or motorbikes. This was considered a grievous offence because they believe charcoal

production could spread bushfires” (Field interview, 16th January 2023). Participants in FGDs also confirmed their difficulty in accessing wood for charcoal production as well as the restriction on charcoal production imposed by the company. Although communities in AAP catchment areas did not complain about restriction on charcoal production, they lamented their loss of access to wood for charcoal production caused by LSLA.

Women also expressed worry about the difficulties they face in obtaining firewood for domestic use. They argued that, under land fallowing, they could easily obtain firewood from their farms. During land preparation for yam cultivation, farmers selectively killed some trees to allow for sunlight to reach the crops. These dead woods became a source of firewood and charcoal. With the rapid expansion of mechanisation, women are losing access to this valuable element of their daily lives. More so, the relocation of farms to far places also limited the ability to carry firewood from such a far distance. A woman in her 50s at Abour stated:

Before the company came to this area, I could pack enough firewood during the dry season that could last for the whole year but now where can I find such firewood? Previously, you could obtain enough firewood just around our village, but the company has uprooted all the trees on the land. We have relocated our farms to a far place which makes it difficult to carry firewood from such a distance. I am forced to use a gas stove although I do not have money to buy gas always (Field interview, 27th May 2023).

This was a common concern expressed by the respondents during the field data collection, especially the female respondents. This also illustrates how the new coping and adaptive strategies negatively impact the livelihoods of affected communities.

6.3.2.2 Loss of Access to Lumber and Grass for Roofing

The AAM located in the transitional zone of Ghana had been rich in wood for lumber, as the place had been home to several tree species, such as mahogany, rosewood, *senya*, *papa*, and

odum (*Milicia excelsa*) that were useful for lumber production. Lumber from these trees was used for various purposes including building construction and furniture. Even though the activities of chainsaw operators and the invasion of the Ghanaian timber industry by Chinese companies, especially in the exploitation of rosewood, had contributed significantly to the depletion of timber products in the transitional zone (Baidoo et al., 2023; Kansanga et al., 2021), respondents argued that the activities of large-scale agricultural investment could be blamed for exacerbating the situation.

In Table 6.10, respondents provided information on their situation regarding loss of access to lumber and grass for roofing buildings.

Table 6.10 Households’ access to lumber and grass for roofing

Indicator	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Household has lost access to lumber	Yes	200	80.65
	No	48	19.35
	Valid Responses	248	100
Household has lost access to grass for roofing	Yes	186	75.00
	No	62	25.00
	Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Regarding the loss of access to lumber, 200 respondents, representing 80.65%, said Yes, and 40 respondents, representing 19.35%, said No. Again, 186 respondents, representing 75%, said they had lost access to grass for roofing buildings, and 62 respondents, representing 25%, said they had not lost access.

Supporting the assertion of the loss of access to lumber caused by LSLA, a respondent at Garadima observed that “there were mahogany, rosewood and other commercial trees on the land, but the company destroyed them all. They did not even allow us to harvest those mature

timber nor did they harvest them. They just wasted the trees” (Field interview, 24th January 2023). The companies did not exploit nor allow the community members to exploit the timber. Respondents argued that the development of the acquired land led to loss of indigenous trees at various stages of maturity that could have been exploited at different times. They added that, under the past farming system, farmers were selective in the trees they destroyed as part of land preparation. They preserved trees they considered economic trees and that could be harvested as lumber. The investment companies, on the other hand, never spared any tree on the land. With their bulldozers and chainsaw machines, they cleared all the trees to allow for the deployment of farm machinery. Describing the removal of the tree cover from the concession area, a participant at Abour observed:

The company has cleared all the trees on the land. They did not care whether it was mahogany that could be used as timber or whatever. They have destroyed all the trees to the point that their workers hardly find trees to provide them shade in the afternoon when the sun is scorching (Field interview, 19th January 2023).

This assertion was confirmed by field observation. Respondents added that the widespread adoption of mechanised farming occasioned by the LSLA has also affected the availability of timber products, as the land was not allowed to regenerate.

Community members also lamented their loss of access to thatch for roofing their houses. In the rural settlements where the financial resource base of people was not strong, thatch was an important roofing material. However, with the implementation of large-scale investment projects, community members said they had lost access to this vital element of their livelihood. This was expressed by a participant at Byebye in the following words:

We no longer have access to thatch for roofing. Thatch was abundant in the past because we could allow the land to fallow. But now the company has taken over

all the land and we don't have any land anywhere, so we have been farming continuously on the same piece of land. People are now struggling to access thatch to roof their buildings. I hope that everyone in this community will be able to buy aluminium sheets, else sooner than later it will be difficult to find thatch for roofing (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

Respondents blamed the situation on agricultural intensification and mechanisation occasioned by LSLA, and the application of agrochemicals that had destroyed the type of grass used for roofing.

6.3.2.3. Loss of Hunting and Gathering Rights

Hunting and gathering were important aspects of livelihoods of rural communities in the AAM. During the off-farm season, especially the dry season associated with bush burning, community members went to hunt wild animals for game. The game was used to supplement their nutritional needs, and the surplus was sold to raise income to cater for other financial needs. Likewise, women in the rural communities in the study area were noted for gathering fruits and nuts from the wild to supplement the household's nutritional needs and boost their income levels. The women also gathered mushrooms and leafy vegetables. More so, herbal medicine has been an important feature of the health care of rural communities. The herbal medicine was derived from leaves, roots, stems, bark, fruits and nuts of trees, shrubs and other wild products, and was used to treat several illnesses. However, respondents lamented that LSLA has led to loss of access to hunting and gathering grounds as highlighted in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11 Household has lost access to hunting and gathering grounds

Lost access to hunting and gathering grounds	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	177	71.37
No	71	28.63
Valid responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.11 indicates that 177 respondents, representing 71.37%, had lost access to their hunting and gathering grounds. Participants during FGDs and in-depth interviews also argued that LSLA has led to loss of access to hunting and gathering grounds, and decline in the population of wild animals, fruit-bearing trees and medicinal plants. Commenting on the loss of hunting rights, a participant at Byebye stated:

In the past when we were done with our farm work and the bush was burnt, we went hunting for game that we used for food and sold the surplus for our upkeep. Sometimes, when someone is sick, we use money from the sales of bush meat from hunting to take care of the person. If I take you to Atebubu and show you the project I have done with the money I got from hunting, you won't believe me, but now they are not allowing us to hunt anymore (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

Discussants at a FGD at Boanyo confirmed the loss of hunting rights. This was captured by a participant as follows: "We are surrounded by the concession now, but we are not allowed to do hunting here. If a farmer is found in possession of bush meat, there is trouble" (FGD, 17th February 2023).

The traditional leaders, representatives of state institutions and the investment companies confirmed restrictions on hunting. However, they attributed this restriction to the preventive measures to avoid burning the plantation since the area was volatile to bushfires. A senior officer of the AAMA noted:

I have received several complaints. The investors are afraid that if they open their concession to community members, they will destroy it with fire. You know they have invested a lot in that area. They are afraid of fire and if they do not put in place the necessary measures, the community members will burn the plantation (Field interview, 1st February 2023).

A senior officer of the MLNR at Accra added that the land acquisitions were such that “the community members can no longer enter that area for any other activity. Even the community's right to firewood, snails, hunting and those things are extinguished” (Field interview, 4th November 2022).

Respondents also lamented the loss of access to fruits, nuts, medicinal plants and related items they had gathered from the wild. A participant at Byebye observed:

There were several fruit-bearing trees in the place where I was farming including shea nuts and *dawadawa* which we eat when they are ripe. The women were also using the shea nut to produce shea butter. But now we cannot find these trees anymore. The trees the company has planted too do not bear fruits even for birds to eat (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

A female participant at Akokoa, describing their loss of access to wild fruits and medicinal plants, noted:

In this community, if you are sick and you are asked to bring shea nut or *dawadawa* to be used to prepare medicine for you, then you are likely to die because where are you going to find these fruits? You have to travel to a far place to get some. The companies have cleared all these trees from the land (Field interview, 25th April 2023).

In areas with no restrictions on hunting and gathering, agricultural intensification and mechanisation had destroyed the trees and shrubs on the land and driven the wild animals far from the communities, thereby limiting their availability.

6.3.2.4 Loss of Access to Water Sources.

Respondents observed that access to water was a major challenge, especially during the dry season, as they depended on streams, boreholes, dugout wells and small dams for water. Therefore, any activity that limits the opportunity for rural dwellers' access to water could aggravate the existing challenge. According to the household survey data, 32 respondents,

representing 21.77%, said they had lost access to their water sources, whereas 223 respondents, representing 89.92%, indicated they had not lost access to water sources. Despite fewer respondents indicating the loss of access to water sources, participants in in-depth interviews and FGDs stressed that the investment companies had hampered their access to water. A participant at Byebye opined:

We had two boreholes constructed for us by World Vision before APSD acquired the land. Now the boreholes are located within the company's concession, and they are preventing us from accessing the boreholes. There is nowhere else to access water during the dry season, so sometimes we travel to Kokofu, about 4 km away to fetch water (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

The above assertion was confirmed by opinion leaders and participants of FGDs at Byebye and Boanyo.

Besides the loss of access to community boreholes, respondents also bemoaned the fast rate at which the streams and rivers in the area dry up due to the activities of the investment companies. Even though the climate change imperatives might have affected the environment and the water bodies in the area, respondents believed that the activities of investors had worsened the already precarious situation. They attributed the problem to the construction of small dams and the refusal to leave buffer zones along the banks of these streams and rivers. The investment companies had constructed small dams on streams and rivers to enable them to access water for their activities. This has blocked the flow of the rivers downstream affecting water access of communities around such areas. A senior officer of EPA at Atebubu stated:

There is one project that has constructed some dams, and the people have been complaining that the dams have blocked the streams that flow into their communities. However, those around the dams do not have challenges accessing water as the communities use those dams as their source of water. (Field interview, 22nd December 2022).

Access to dams built by companies was emphasised by a representative of APSD in e-mail correspondence to the researcher that the company had improved community access to water rather than limiting it. Whilst this could be true in cases where the dams were located within the reach of community members, those located downstream of these rivers lamented their loss of access to water during the dry season.

Another way the activities of the companies had affected water access was the disregard for the buffer zone policy of Ghana that bans physical development within 300 metres of surface water bodies (Amuah et al., 2022). A traditional leader at Akokoa noted:

The companies have destroyed our water sources by levelling the streams we used to fetch water from. Instead of leaving a buffer zone along the banks of rivers and streams, the company disregard this resulting in the drying up of our rivers and streams (Field interview, 23rd January 2023).

A similar opinion was shared by a participant at Garadima:

The smaller streams flow into bigger rivers, and now they have blocked the path of these streams by ploughing too close to them and covering their flow path with soil. There was one stream here called *Kwae Akyi*. It used to supply us water all year round but now when you go there you cannot even find the stream (Field interview, 24th January 2023).

This disregard for the buffer zone policy was not limited to the investment companies. Community members have also stopped observing the buffer zone policy because of land scarcity highlighting how LSLA has led to wrong choices by community members. This has intensified the rate at which the streams dry up, limiting community members' access to water, especially during the dry season. The disregard for the buffer zone policy illustrates the failure of state institutions mandated to monitor investment companies to ensure compliance.

6.3.3 Intensification of Competition and Conflicts over Land

As demonstrated earlier, LSLA in the AAM has resulted in dispossession and displacement, as land was transferred from communal landholders to investors, leading to land scarcity in the study area. Amidst scarcity, land, considered abundant in the past when access was granted at almost next to nothing, has become a commodified resource thereby intensifying competition, altering tenure relations and leading to conflicts. Respondents' views in a household survey on changes in land tenure relations wrought by LSLA are presented in Figure 6.5.

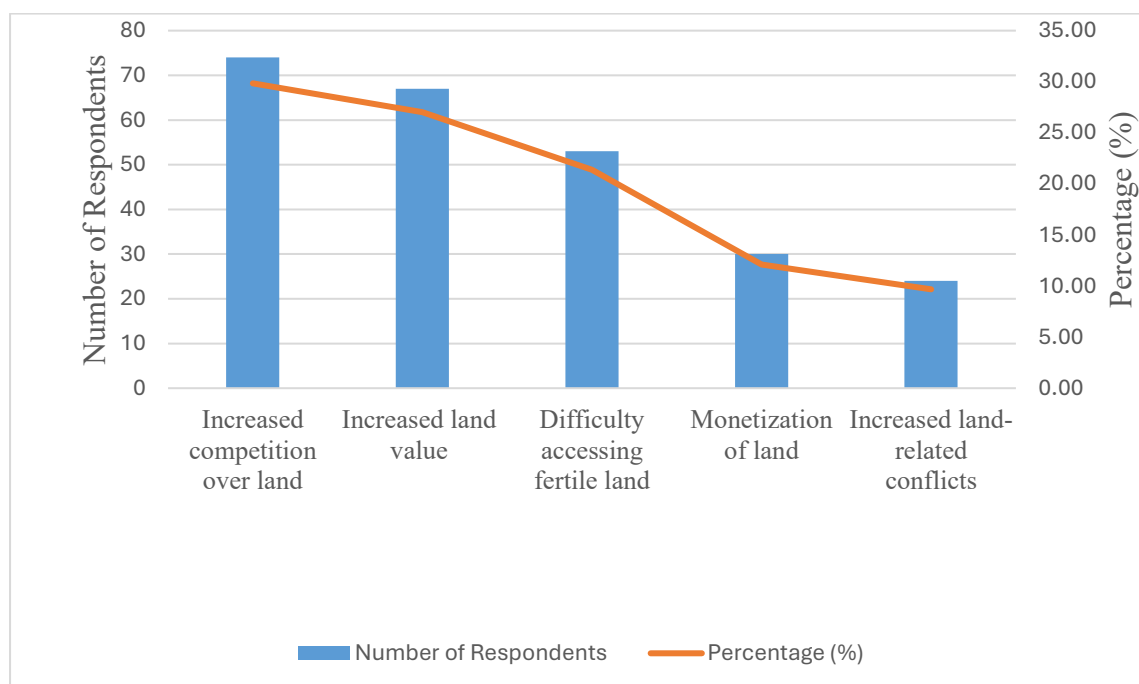


Figure 6.5 Changes in land tenure relations

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Figure 6.5 illustrates that LSLA has resulted in changes in land tenure relations as 73 households, representing 29.44%, said LSLA has led to increased competition over land; 67 respondents, representing 27.02%, indicated an increase in land value; 53 respondents, representing 21.37%, argued for difficulty accessing fertile land.

The consensus from FGDs and in-depth interviews was that LSLA had intensified competition over land, increased land value as land became monetised, reduced the availability of fertile land, and increased land-related conflicts. This was echoed by a participant in a FGD at Garadima:

The project has brought hardship to us in this community because we do not get land for farming. It has also brought about conflicts and litigations over land. We are fighting each other over a limited space (FGD, 10th February 2023).

A representative of a CSO also observed that, because of LSLA, peoples' livelihoods and social cohesion have been affected. He illustrated how this occurred with a scenario.

Someone comes from community 'B' but stays in the community 'A'. When the land acquisition affected the people of community 'A', he returned to community 'B'. He competed with those in community 'B' to access land. This has led to intense contestation and fighting over land because everyone needed to survive so it has put pressure on the limited land, leading to conflicts (Field interview, 23rd March 2023).

LSLA in the study area has resulted in intense competition for land. As an inelastic resource, leasing large tracts of land to investment companies and individuals reduces land available to the community members. All those who lost their land to the investment companies relocated to areas outside the concession leading to overcrowding and scrambling for land. The intense competition over land has led to the rising value of land and land commodification. The emergence of LSLA has transformed the traditional social relations between allodial right holders and the usufructuary and tenancy right holders. The indigenous people, whose access to land had been free are now required to pay to access land for mechanised farming. Likewise, the migrant farmers, whose land access was predicated on tenancy, are now required to pay a substantial amount to access land. There were also reports of the emergence of land renting in the study area where individual farmers pay annual and sometimes seasonal rent to access land

for mechanised farming. Due to the rising land value, respondents claimed that chiefs now prefer granting land to investors and outsiders who could pay huge sums of money. This development, coupled with the intense competition over land, places the land rights of the poor, women and youth in a precarious situation (see also Sarfo et al., 2025).

The increased competition and rising land value had increased land-related conflicts in the study area. The common forms of conflict include those between local community members and investors usually over encroachment; between community members and traditional leaders over double sales of land, and non-payment of royalties on the part of community members; among the traditional leaders over land ownership and boundaries; among local community members over who has the right to farm on a particular piece of plot, and boundaries between farmlands; and, sometimes, between migrants and the indigenous people, men and women, youth and the elderly.

A participant at Garadima observed:

There is no single day that a land dispute will not be settled at *Odikro*'s palace. People are now scrambling for the limited land left. Now, the “strongest people” get access to land to the detriment of the weak (Field interview, 24th January 2023).

A chief confirmed the above observation that conflicts over land had increased in the area and any time there was a dispute to be settled at his palace, it was about land. These conflicts had created tension in the study area and sometimes led to open confrontations with the attendant destruction of crops and properties. Other conflicts found their way into the law court and the court of the traditional leaders. There was a reported case in the Municipality where LSLA-related conflict resulted in one human casualty, but this occurred outside the sampled communities for this study.

6.3.4 Human Rights Abuse and Restrictions on Movement

Infringements on the fundamental human rights of communal landholders through restrictions on movement and harassment were reported during field interviews. From the household survey data, 73 respondents, representing 29.67%, said they had experienced abuse of their fundamental human rights due to LSLA. This was mostly reported in the APSD catchment area. The company had constructed or upgraded feeder roads in and around the concession (See Chapter 5). Some of these roads were paths and earth roads created by the community members many years ago to link various communities and farms. The company has upgraded these roads and gated them with security personnel stationed at entry points. Access to these roads was regulated and community members were restricted to some specific roads, especially the roads that go around the plantation. There were also dos and don'ts for community members when using the designated roads. For example, community members were not allowed to carry matches with them. These restrictions respondents observed affected their livelihoods.

A community leader at Garadima stated: “The major problem we have with the company is the restrictions imposed on the use of roads” (Field interview, 16th January 2023). A 53-year-old farmer at Byebye summed it up in the following words:

We had our roads that they have now gravelled but do not want us to use them anymore. Because of land scarcity here, we have relocated our farms beyond their concession. The shortest route to our farms is through their plantation but they prevent us from using those roads. We have been directed to use a particular route which prolongs the distance we travel to our farms. They have also stationed soldiers along the road who have been harassing us (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

He further narrated an ordeal he went through a day before the interview:

I was returning from my farm after a day's work. I realised I did not have enough petrol in my motorbike, so I risked using the shorter route that passes through

the company's plantation. Unfortunately for me, I met the soldiers on the way. They stopped me, switched off the engine of my motorbike, took away the key and made me push it for about three miles. I got home around 10 o'clock in the night.

This was not an isolated case, as many participants also shared their experiences. At Boanyo, a community member at a FGD lamented how those restrictions were collapsing the primary school in the community. They argued that some communities were located on the other side of the concession and children from those villages were commuting daily to attend school at Boanyo. Due to these restrictions, those children have stopped attending school leading to low enrolment. Respondents complained about the interrogation their guests had endure before they were allowed to visit the community. One participant lamented how the labourers he had hired to work for him were detained for hours at the security post because of their inability to mention the name of the person they were going to work for. A divisional chief at Atebubu added:

The company has brought military personnel to protect their plantation. If a farmer is found using the company's road, he will be arrested, molested, beaten and asked to go back and use a different route. Sometimes the route they will direct them to use could be about 18 miles instead of a shorter route of about 2 to 4 miles (Field interview, 13th February 2023).

The restrictions hindered movement and led to a loss of productive hours due to the long distances they had to travel to farms and other places. Some community members had to buy motorbikes for easy access to their farms. This requires capital not only to buy the motorbike but also for maintenance and fuelling.

A member of the Security Council of AAMA confirmed that the company engages the services of soldiers from the Ghana Armed Forces to provide security for the plantation during the dry season. This further reinforces the household data on the use of repression in response to community contestation (see Chapter 5). Community members recounted the excesses of the

soldiers in the discharge of their duties including the unlawful seizure of guns, molestation and other forms of harassment. Commenting on the seizure of guns, a divisional chief noted:

As farmers, cutlasses, hoes, matches and guns are the implements they use for their activities. When the soldiers meet a farmer with a gun, whether licensed or not, there is trouble for that farmer (Field interview, 13th February 2023).

He added that the soldiers seized the guns of some farmers and kept them in the company's yard rather than giving them to the rightful institution, GPS. According to him, it took the intervention of the MCE, the National Investigation Bureau and the GPS to release the guns.

A local leader at Garadima described the seizure of guns in the following words:

Recently, the soldiers seized guns belonging to community members. When the report got to the Municipal Police Commander, he queried them. They were directed to send all the guns to the Municipal Police Station. The police invited the affected community members to come with their licenses for identification and collection (Field interview, 24th January 2023).

Some respondents described how the soldiers made a farmer eat the flesh of an uncooked grasscutter. Another respondent said the soldiers forced a community member to lift a motorbike single-handedly into a truck. Some were made to run after a moving car. Detaining community members in the company's yard for perceived infractions was noted to be a regular practice. A complaint that sounded funny, but was corroborated by senior academics who had written extensively on land tenure relations in Ghana and had visited the study site, was that the soldiers sometimes went to the extent of stirring the soup of community members to ascertain if there was bush meat in it. Civic Response has done a documentary narrating some human rights breaches that community members raised.²⁶ The community members stated that

²⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_-MscnBTHE&t=6s

the harassment was a recent occurrence, as they did not experience such things in the initial stages of the project.

In the AAP catchment area, respondents were silent about human rights abuse and restrictions on movement. However, the researcher encountered an incident on one of his field visits. In the researcher's presence, an elderly man in his late 50s came to kneel before a young officer of the company begging for mercy. His crime was that he allowed his flock to destroy a portion of the company's cassava farm. The officers of the company threatened to report the case to the police for his arrest. This man had lived in this village long before the land was acquired, and the company reserved some land around his village for his livelihood activities but now he cannot keep livestock to support his household needs.

The report of harassment was corroborated by the representative of state institutions at the municipal level. These harassments hinder the ability of the community members to go about their livelihood activities without fear. It also goes a long way to affect their social asset as the societal cohesion was affected.

6.3.5 Compensation

LSLA is a form of capitalist neoliberal accumulation strategy that has dispossessed and displaced communal landholders and altered the livelihood context of the affected communities by creating vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities could be ameliorated if the investment projects introduced alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities and adequate and sustainable compensation were paid. However, data from the household survey indicated that, in most cases, no compensation was paid, and where compensations were paid, they were inadequate. Table 6.12 highlights the kind of compensations received by affected community members.

Table 6.12 Compensations received by affected households

Compensation	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Given land elsewhere	16	9.70
Financial compensation for loss of crops	2	1.21
Given employment in the investment company	3	1.82
Received nothing	142	86.06
Other	2	1.21
Valid Responses	165	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

According to Table 6.12, out of the 165 households who reported loss of access to land, most (142 households, representing 86.06%) received no compensation from the investment company, the state or the traditional leaders.

Participants in in-depth interviews and FGDs reinforced the notion of no or inadequate compensation. In the case of the APSD catchment area, participants indicated that, in the initial stages, the company prepared similar acreage for community members who lost their ‘tractor land’.²⁷ However, those still practising land fallowing, who had not ‘stumped’ the trees on their farmland did not receive anything. They were just asked to leave the land. Articulating this at a FGD at Garadima, a participant said:

For farmers who had ‘tractor land’ located within the concession, the company ‘stumped’ a ‘tractor land’ somewhere for them. If one had 10 acres in the concession, they ‘stumped’ 10 acres at a new place for him or her. The company did not pay any financial compensation to any farmer for the land. Those

²⁷ ‘Tractor land’ is the term used by the community members to refer to the land prepared for mechanised farming by ‘stumping’ the trees to allow them to use tractors and other farm machinery. They sometimes refer to it simply as ‘plot’.

cultivating yam under land fallowing received no compensation (FGD, 10th February 2023).

Whilst other participants at FGDs and in-depth interviews agreed that some land was prepared for some categories of farmers who lost access to their farmland, they argued that this occurred only during the initial stages of the project and that those who lost their land in the later stages received no compensation. They further observed that the land prepared for them was not the same size as the land they lost. An opinion leader at Byebye noted that only two people benefited from the company's land preparation initiative from his community. "Nothing was done for the rest. No compensation was given unless it was given in secret that I did not hear about" (Field interview, 12th January 2023). Likewise, a participant at Boanyo argued:

If you had 10 acres, they would 'stump' 2 acres for you. They told us they had bought the land and that the land preparation initiative was out of sympathy. They did not pay any financial compensation (Field interview, 10th January 2023).

The practice described above does not constitute a replacement for the land lost. The company only recompensed the investment made in land preparation. This was also dependent on the ability of the affected person to obtain land elsewhere. Some community members were fortunate to be granted land in areas the company designated as buffer zones. Usually, the alternative land was unsustainably small plots and lacked the quality of soil fertility required for sustainable farming.

Some respondents also argued that no compensation was paid to them despite the investments made in land preparation. A 55-year-old woman at Akokoa stated:

My father bought a 50-acre parcel of land from *Amantinhene*, and 40 acres were under effective cultivation at the time AAP acquired the land. They took over our land and destroyed the crops on it without paying any compensation for

either the land or the crops destroyed. I have no one to fight for me (Field interview, 19th March 2023).

Similarly, an assembly member argued that no compensation was given to the farmers who lost their land.

You only cry and find your way out, you have nothing to say. They have not given them any land anywhere. When you go to the chiefs, they will tell you that they didn't make any arrangements with you (Field interview, 18th January 2023).

The only exception to this was when the researcher encountered a farmer who had registered title to a parcel of land. He indicated that World Vision supported him in registering his land under leasehold.

This plot became part of the concession acquired by an investor who destroyed my crops on the field. After lengthy litigation in the law court, the company was made to compensate me for the crops destroyed and the chiefs were made to allocate a new parcel of land equivalent to what I lost (Field interview, 19th January 2023).

This illustrates how communal landholders were short-changed when their land rights were not documented but rather based on customary usufructuary and tenancies, as those with such rights lost out on compensation when their lands were acquired through LSLA.

The above data contradict compensation principles outlined in LC's Guidelines for Large-Scale Land Transactions in Ghana. The guidelines stipulate that compensations were to be paid to affected people for crop loss and deprivation of use of natural resources on the land. Regarding crops, the guidelines stipulate that compensation be paid for loss of expected income based on the kind of crop and their life expectancy, as well as other disturbances suffered as a result of the acquisition. In the words of the Lands Commission Report: "loss of earnings or sustenance suffered by the farmer under any customary tenancy or any other interest the farmer may hold

in the land” (Lands Commission, 2020:26) must be compensated. The guidelines also stated that compensation must take into consideration the disruption of the socio-economic activities of the affected people; the “duration of the lease; severance from any part of the land or any surface rights or access” (p. 26). Commenting on the guidelines, a senior officer of the LC at Accra said:

If the affected people can engage professionals to advise them, then they will be compensated for even the loss of future revenue. They project over, say the next 15 years the revenue they were going to lose based on the assessment of the current crops on the land. But in some cases, they will give the farmers anything not based on any analysis especially when they do not have formal title to the land (Field interview, 18th October 2022).

The guidelines were introduced after much of the land had already been acquired. It also remained only guidelines without the backing of the law in their enforcement. Additionally, the ability of the affected people to demand sustainable compensation depended on their knowledge of the existence of the guidelines as well as the capacity to engage experts to negotiate on their behalf.

Whilst the local community members were not compensated for the loss of access to land and natural resources, the customary leaders and the state, through the MMDAs, benefited from the money accrued from the land lease. The traditional authorities collected ‘drink money’²⁸ before they would agree to lease out the land or sign the lease agreement. In the era of land abundance, bottles of Schnapps were sufficient. However, in the era of land scarcity, rising land value and

²⁸ Ubink (2009:175) succinctly captured the essence of the ‘drink money’ when he argued that it refers to the custom of bringing “some drinks to the chief when acquiring land from him as an acknowledgement of the ownership of the land, to show allegiance towards the chief, and for the customary pouring of libations on the ground to seek the gods’ blessings for the transaction”.

land commodification, cash is collected as ceremonial drinks. For LSLA, the ‘drink money’ charged was substantial, as illustrated by a proposed LSLA alluded to in Chapter 5, where the traditional leaders were negotiating for 48 million Ghana cedis (equivalent to \$3,506,208.91, see Table 6.5 for the exchange rate). The ‘drink money’ goes to only the traditional leaders who, in most cases, were not accountable to the state nor their subjects.

The traditional leaders and the MMDAs also benefited from a share of the ground or farm rent. The investors were required to pay annual ground or farm rent specified in the lease and adjusted periodically. A senior regional officer of the OASL observed that the farm rent per acre per annum at the time of field data collection was Ghc30.00 (\$2.19). The stool lands revenue was distributed by the OASL based on a revenue-sharing formula stipulated in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. According to Article 267 Clause 6, 10% of all the revenue generated was to be retained by the OASL to cover administrative expenses. For the remaining amount, 55% was paid to the MMDA within the area of authority of which the stool lands are located, 25% was paid to the stool through traditional authority meant for taking care of the stool and the remaining 20% was paid to the traditional authority. What is clear from the above discussion is that communal landholders were, in most cases, not directly compensated for the loss of access to land and natural resources, loss of income, and destruction of crops. In cases where they received compensation, it was woefully inadequate.

6.4 Environmental Impacts

The state of the environment is important for the sustenance of livelihoods of rural communities and any deterioration in the environmental condition could have negative implications for affected communities. The respondents asserted that LSLA has produced both positive and negative impacts on the environment and climatic conditions. Table 6.13 presents data on the views of respondents on the positive impact of LSLA on the environment.

Table 6.13 Positive environmental impacts of LSLA

Positive Impacts	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Reduction in the incidence of bushfires	54	21.66
Stable rainfall pattern	54	21.66
Reforestation of degraded forest	38	15.37
Stable atmospheric temperature	36	14.36
Improved quality of air	20	8.06
Reduction in incidence of soil erosion	16	6.55
Improved quality of water	14	5.79
Improved soil fertility	12	5.04
Other	4	1.51
Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.13 illustrates that the key positive environmental impacts include reduction in the incidence of bushfires with 54 respondents, representing 21.66%; stable rainfall pattern also with 54 respondents, representing 21.66%; reforestation of degraded forest with 38 respondents, representing 15.37%; stable atmospheric temperature with 36 respondents, representing 14.36%.

The data from the field interviews and FGDs also reinforced the views that LSLA has improved some aspects of the environmental conditions. Commenting on the environmental impact of the investment project, a senior regional officer of OASL at Sunyani argued that the environmental impacts depend on the usage of the land. She added:

The APSD project has improved the climate and the ecosystem of the area. As they are into sustainable agriculture, they have improved the environment because you now have a chunk of the area under forest cover. This has even improved the flora and fauna (Field interview, 1st November 2022).

Likewise, a senior officer of EPA at Atebubu also stated:

The rainfall pattern in the plantation area has improved. The plantation has also improved the biodiversity as you can now find animals classified as endangered and at the point of extinction there. The plantation could serve as an ecotourism site as you can find different species of birds and butterflies (Field interview, 22nd December 2022).

A senior regional officer of EPA at Techiman noted:

We have monitored the projects at every stage, as each stage has its environmental challenges. Though there have been some disturbances to the environment, in terms of land preparation, they are within the limits. We have not gotten to the stage where much damage has been caused. It has not improved the environment, but the environment has not been degraded. [The] APSD project, for instance, has helped to control bushfires (Field interview, 21st November 2022).

Some traditional and community leaders also identified with the views shared by the representatives of state institutions on the positive impacts of the investment projects on the environment. Supporting the rainfall argument, a representative of the *Omanhene* of the Atebubu Traditional Area stated, “The truthful community members will tell you that now it rains there often, and they also know it is because of the trees” (Field interview, 22nd February 2023). However, in all the FGDs with the local community members, there were serious disagreements about the positive impacts of LSLA. Whilst a few participants indicated that there had been improvement in the environmental conditions, the majority discredited such views. This reflects the data from the household survey, as none of the indicators of the positive impacts received above 22% endorsement.

Respondents claimed that the improvement in the environmental conditions observed was associated with the investment projects involved in tree plantation. For instance, they attributed the reduction in bushfires to APSD’s stringent measures that prevent community members from engaging in activities that could trigger bushfires. Additionally, as an investment project

involving tree plantation, it generates environmental benefits associated with forest development. Most of the positive impacts observed were confined to the plantation area because the emergence of LSLA has forced community members to adopt livelihood strategies that are destructive to the environment.

The data from the household survey also identified some negative impacts of LSLA on the environment presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 Negative impacts of LSLA on the environment

Negative Impacts	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Loss of soil fertility	82	32.91
Destruction of vegetative cover	63	25.53
Soil erosion	43	17.51
Unpredictable or low rainfall pattern	16	6.33
Air pollution	18	7.17
Rising temperature	17	6.75
Water pollution	7	2.95
Increasing incidence of bushfires	2	0.84
Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

According to Table 6.14, the negative environmental impact identified by most respondents was loss of soil fertility with 82 respondents, representing 32.91%. This was followed by the destruction of vegetative cover and soil erosion that generated responses from 63 respondents, representing 25.53%, and 43 respondents, representing 17.51%, respectively.

The negative environmental impacts arise in two ways. In the first place, direct activities of the investment companies, such as land clearing with earth-moving machines and ‘stumping’ of trees directly impacted the environment by destroying the vegetative cover and exposing the

land to soil erosion. More so, the application of agrochemicals affects the micro-organisms in the soil thereby affecting soil fertility. In manufacturing, the emissions from the factory and waste disposal pollute the air and nearby water bodies as was observed in the AAP project. Secondly, the impact on the environment was also experienced due to changes in the activities of community members occasioned by the impact of LSLA on their access to natural resources and other livelihood opportunities. For instance, land scarcity resulting from LSLA has transformed the farming practices in the study area, as many farmers have adopted mechanised farming associated with intensive and continuous cultivation. This has resulted in an extensive removal of the vegetative cover, application of agrochemicals and fertilizers, soil erosion, and loss of soil fertility in areas outside of the concession.

Commenting on the environmental impacts, one *Odikro* of a community within the AAP catchment area said:

In the days of my parents, there were areas that you could describe as forests with many trees. The rainfall pattern was good. Our buildings were also protected from strong winds and storms but now the companies have destroyed all the trees leading to a decline in rainfall. When you move beyond the immediate surroundings of this village, you cannot find a cluster of trees anywhere. Our buildings are at the mercy of rainstorms (Field interview, 19th January 2023).

Similarly, a farmer at Byebye observed:

We are now farming on the same piece of plot continuously because we have lost our land to the company. We have to apply fertilizer and other chemicals and yet we do not get a meaningful harvest compared to what we were getting before the company came here (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

From the views expressed above, LSLA has destroyed the vegetative cover leading to low or unpredictable rainfall patterns and low fertility of the soil. As a farming community, the soil

quality and rainfall patterns were of paramount importance, as the livelihood of the communities depended on them. No wonder, loss of soil fertility was the number one negative environmental effect respondents identified in the household survey.

Even with projects involved in plantation development which climate scientists argued to have a positive impact on the environment, respondents expressed misgivings about their impact on the environment. An opinion leader at Garadima noted:

The company told us that the trees they were planting would improve rainfall. But it is now that we are experiencing low rainfall. When they came, they destroyed all the big trees that attracted rain and planted trees that could not grow big enough to attract rain (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

Responding to the above assertion, a senior officer of the Environmental Assessment and Management Department of the EPA at the national office in Accra observed:

They were right because removing the indigenous trees will change the rainfall pattern. The flagship project will come with the residual impact, the impact you cannot mitigate, and you must live with. Those are some of the issues. I tell you, no matter what you do, communities will be worse off including the environment (Field interview, 8th March 2023).

Whilst water and air pollution in the study area were not a major concern for the affected communities, the researcher observed a case of air and water pollution at the site of AAP starch processing plant where the waste from the plant was not disposed of properly. This observation was confirmed by the company's representative who indicated that they had a challenge with their liquid waste disposal and were working to resolve the problem. A senior officer of EPA at Atebubu also confirmed the observation. Some community members also observed that the liquid waste from the plant leaked into a stream that community members depended on for water, leading to diseases among, and death of, domestic animals. Even though the issue of the environment falls within the broader global climate change imperatives and LSLA cannot be

wholly blamed for the climatic and environmental changes observed in the study area, its role in accelerating the process, either directly or indirectly, cannot be ignored.

6.5 Coping and Adaptive Strategies

Since the community contestation was not strong enough to reverse the land deal, community members had to live with the investment projects and their associated dispossession and displacement and other negative impacts (see earlier discussions in this chapter). To do this, community members had to adjust their livelihood strategies. Table 6.15 highlights the new coping strategies employed by community members.

Table 6.15 Coping strategies

Coping Strategies	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Application of agrochemicals	77	31.02
Reduction in farm sizes	70	28.08
Go to farm very early	47	19.06
Reduced the number of days of visits to the farm	27	10.75
Engaged in casual work	23	9.36
Obtains financial support from family and friends	4	1.73
Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

Table 6.15 demonstrates that the most identified coping strategy was the application of agrochemicals which received responses from 77 respondents, representing 31.02%. This was followed closely by reduction in farm sizes with 70 respondents, representing 28.08%. These results were also confirmed during FGDs and field interviews. The ways in which LSLA caused community members to adopt these coping strategies have been highlighted earlier in this chapter.

Table 6.16 presents data on the adaptive strategies of the households affected by LSLA.

Table 6.16 Adaptive strategies

Adaptive Strategies	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Relocated farms	60	24.25
Adopted new farming practices	51	20.60
Engaged in keeping livestock	37	14.81
Bought motorbike	34	13.73
Engaged in backyard farming	15	6.22
Migrated for greener pasture elsewhere	15	6.22
Engaged in petty trading	11	4.29
Cultivation of cash crops	8	3.22
Changed occupation	6	2.36
Other	11	4.29
Valid Responses	248	100

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

From Table 6.16, the adaptive strategies popular among the respondents were farm relocation, with 60 respondents, representing 24.25%; adoption of new farming practices, with 51 respondents, representing 20.60%; keeping livestock, with 37 respondents, representing 14.81%. It is significant to note that respondents who opted for “Other”, mentioned adaptive strategies, such as land renting, changes in crops cultivated, and moving residence to the farm. These adaptive strategies were reiterated during FGDs and field interviews (see comments of respondents under income, food security, dispossession and loss of access to natural resources). As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, these new coping and adaptive strategies have implications for the environment and livelihoods of communal landholders.

6.6 Gender and Generational Impact Dynamics

In rural communities of AAM, gender and generational role differentiation permeate all facets of society. Therefore, the impacts of LSLA for men and women as well as the youth and the elderly were not even. This section briefly highlights the outcome dynamics of gender and generation by focusing on access to land and natural resources, employment and income.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, LSLA has led to dispossession and displacement and contributed to land scarcity, intense competition and conflicts over land leading to rising land value. Amidst competition, the land rights of vulnerable groups, such as the poor, women, youth and migrants, whose existing land rights prior to land expropriation were precarious, worsened. In the past, women's access to land was linked to their relationship with men, either as a wife, sister, mother, aunt, niece etc. The men did the arduous task of the initial land clearing for yam cultivation whilst the women obtained the right to either intercrop with 'female crops' (cassava, vegetables, groundnuts etc.) or use the land for 'female crop' cultivation after the man had harvested the 'male crops' (yam, maize, rice etc). This arrangement provided an opportunity for women to support the livelihood needs of the household and their upkeep. The independent women could also access fallow land for their livelihood activities, provided they could sponsor land preparation. However, the recent changes in farming practices (from land fallowing to mechanised farming) and land relations occasioned by LSLA have affected women's access to land. Firstly, the initial land preparation for mechanised farming is labour- and capital-intensive. Women may not have the physical strength to do it nor the requisite capital to engage labourers. Secondly, because mechanised farming is not amenable to mixed cropping, women lost access to land use through mixed cropping. Thirdly, landowners prefer to grant land to men than women because men are considered more effective. Lastly, women are now required to pay to access land, which limits their access rights, because women in the study area are relatively less resourced financially.

Women lamented the loss of their land rights due to intense competition and the rising land value during field interviews and FGDs. A woman in her late 30s at Byebye described the loss of access to farmland in the following words:

In the past, when men prepared the land for yam farming, women could intersperse it with female crops such as cassava, pepper and okra. When men harvest the yam, the women use the plot as the men move to a fallow land. But now the land is finished, there is no place for the men to move to. Previously women were not paying land tribute but now whether you are a man or woman the moment you start farming, you are required to pay for the land (Field interview, 20th March 2023).

Another woman at Dobidi Nkwanta expressed concern about the challenges women face in accessing land for farming, especially when the woman is independent or unmarried. She stated:

Now that land has become scarce because of LSLA, people are not willing to give their plots to women to rent because they think women are weak and cannot do any meaningful farming on their own. Women, particularly single women struggle to access farmland (Field interview, 18th January 2023).

These were common concerns raised by women during field interviews regarding their land access.

The farming population in Africa is said to be ageing (Kidido et al., 2017) and the situation is not slowing down either in the AAM. LSLA and the resultant changes in land tenure relations are exacerbating the youth's access to land. A young man in his mid-twenties remarked:

Not that we are lazy or not interested in farming. Many of my colleagues could not pursue education to a higher level where they could be employed in state institutions. They want to farm, but where is the land? The company has taken over the land in this area and we have to struggle to access land for farming (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

The youth's limited access to land is attributed to the apparent land scarcity and agricultural mechanisation. This has altered land relations leading to the emergence of individual landholding. Many of the youth were much younger when the land acquisitions occurred. Therefore, they were not involved in the scramble for land outside the concession area that ensued at the time. Those employed in the early stages of the investment companies were later laid-off, making them suffer a double jeopardy, as they had also lost access to their farmland. Even though there are still some areas with available farmland, the youth are now required to pay a substantial amount to landowners to access such lands unlike in the past when the youth had free access to land as natives or, in the case of migrants, paid a token. They also need to engage in the costly venture of land preparation for mechanised farming. More so, as indicated earlier in the chapter, these areas are far from the main communities, and farmers visit their farms using motorcycles, which is beyond the capacity of a young man or woman starting a farming enterprise. Additionally, the changing tenure relations have resulted in the emergence of atomistic nuclear family holdings (see Amanor, 2010). Therefore, the youth depend on their parents to access land for farming when they do not have financial resources to secure fallow land in the hinterlands from chiefs or rent an already developed farmland. The youth's dependence on the nuclear family for land has created a condition of subdividing plots to accommodate them, leading to the miniaturisation of farmland (see also Chimhowu, 2019; Sarfo et al., 2025). Given the limited land available to the family, the youth's (most especially female youth) right to land is considered a secondary matter. This has created a situation where many youths are without access to farmland. This bulge of youth not employed by investment companies usually travels to urban centres to seek non-existent greener pastures.

Equally important is the loss of access to natural resources and water sources, and their rights to hunting and gathering. This loss affects women and youth more than elderly men since these

activities are regarded as the preserve of women and youth. Whilst hunting in the study area was done by the male youth, gathering fruits and nuts was a major income source for women, especially the poor independent women. As indicated earlier in the chapter, the availability of these natural resources has been constrained by LSLA. For instance, distances to sources of water and firewood have increased, thereby increasing the travel time to access these vital resources. Also, the diminishing population of wild animals and fruit-bearing tree species as well as restrictions imposed on hunting and gathering and charcoal production affects women and the youth. However, the elderly men had to grapple with how to access lumber and roofing materials for building or maintaining houses for the household. The unmarried or independent women face all these challenges associated with loss of access to natural resources on their own.

The gender and generational breakdown of community members working with the investment companies was not available to the researcher because most of them were engaged as casual labourers (see Figure 6.1) and the investment companies did not have records on them. However, the data from in-depth interviews, FGDs and observations highlighted differentiated outcomes. Employment is the most cited positive outcome of LSLA by respondents and this benefited the youth in general more than the elderly. A senior officer of AAMA stated:

When it comes to employment, the youth, both male and female, are the ones who benefit the most. The companies do not employ people over 40 years old unless they possess special skills. The older community members are also not interested in working for the companies even if they have the requisite skills and energy (Field interview, 1st February 2023).

This was corroborated by a representative of a CSO, who argued that community members above 35 years who lost their farmlands through LSLA were the most negatively impacted. He added that they did not have the strength or skills to work for the company. “But most youth

were employed in the company, especially at the initial stages which partly compensated for the loss of their land and source of income” (Field interview, 23rd March 2023).

In a FGD at Dobidi Nkwanta involving women and youth group, a female participant in her early 40s opined:

The company employ the youth who have completed school. The old ones can work for the company, but they will not engage us. They say if you have a baby, they will not hire you. They are selective so the young boys and girls are those they engage to work for them. Sometimes we walk to their place in search of a by-day work, and they will tell us they do not need us (FGD, 18th January 2023).

This was a common view expressed by many female respondents above 35 years or who were nursing mothers. The above statement also highlights challenges women face in the labour market because of child-bearing responsibilities. However, in terms of jobs created by the investment companies, female youth appeared to enjoy considerable opportunities. Commenting on the differentiated outcomes of LSLA on employment along gender lines, a senior officer of the EPA at Atebubu argued:

When it comes to gender-based benefits, it depends on the sector under consideration. When it comes to nursing seedlings, most of the people employed were women. Regarding land preparation, operation of farm machinery and related activities, men dominate (Field interview, 22nd December 2022).

Many of the companies’ activities aligned with some traditional roles of women, making it easier for women to be employed to perform such tasks. For instance, the researcher observed that all the people working in the APSD nursery station were women. The company had provided special training for two women, and they are now supervisors of the nursery unit. In the case of AAP, traditionally, cassava was considered a female crop, therefore, women were employed to perform several tasks, such as planting, conveying harvested cassava into trucks, and related activities that aligned with traditional roles of women. The men, on the other hand,

were engaged in the most arduous tasks and operation of farm machinery. Coupled with their limited access to land many women took advantage of the employment opportunities in the investment companies. However, most women were engaged as casual workers to perform seasonal activities compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, women earned less income than men (see also the section on employment and income).

Although the elderly men may not have the strength and required skills to work for investment companies and might not be attractive to investors, they were also reluctant to work for the investment companies because of the dispossession and displacement caused. Some do not even want to set eyes on the land they lost to the company because they feel hurt anytime they visit such lands, let alone, working for the company. A man in his 50s at Byebye summed up the situation illustratively in the following words:

They have not employed anyone from this community and we do not even like to work for them. If another man takes your wife away from you, do you go to eat his food? You won't take my wife, and I will come and eat your food or be laughing with you (Field interview, 12th January 2023).

Others also argued that they preferred to do their farming activities because they earn higher income from farming than working for investment companies. A respondent stated:

We do not work for the company because we were farming before they acquired the land. It is better to do farming than to work for the company. But I sometimes allow my wife and children to work for them (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

Thus, the elderly men were still able to access some farmlands compared to the women and the youth. Left with limited access to land and other natural resources women and the youth take advantage of the few employment opportunities created by the investment companies.

Although the outcomes of LSLA appeared to be negative for all, women and the youth seem to bear the brunt.

6.7 Overall Assessment of the Impacts of LSLA

Respondents made their overall assessment of the impacts of LSLA on their livelihoods and the environment, as presented in Figure 6.6.

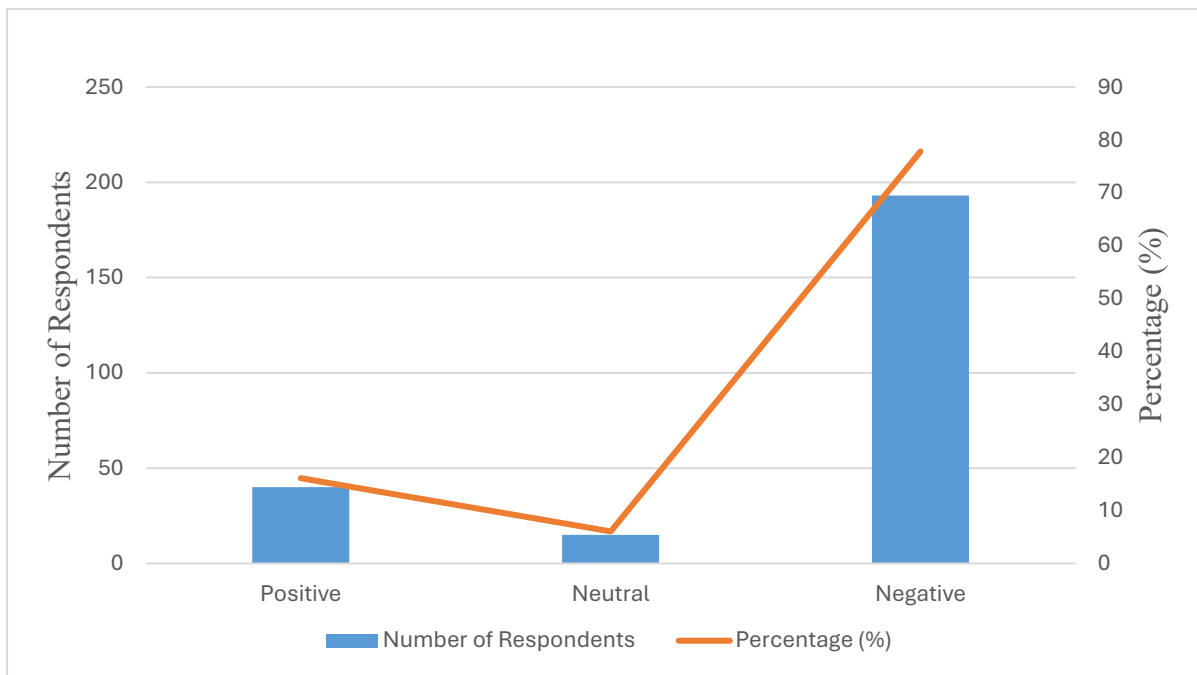


Figure 6.6 Respondents' overall assessment of the impacts of LSLA

Source: Author construct (2024) based on household survey data.

According to Figure 6.6, 40 respondents, representing 16.13%, indicated that the impacts of LSLA in AAM were positive; 193 respondents, representing 77.82%, said the impacts were negative; and 15 respondents, representing 6.05%, remained neutral.

The data from in-depth interviews and FGDs also reaffirmed the household survey data. A participant at Garadima said:

This company did not come to help us because the young ones growing up will not find a work to do. Those who cannot go to school and would have depended on land will no longer have access to land (Field interview, 16th January 2023).

An opinion leader at Garadima added, “The land acquisition has not helped us at all. My business is farming, and I can no longer find land for my farming activities” (Field interview, 18th January 2023). Relatedly, one assembly member rated the positive impacts of APSD at 20% and added that “this is because of some positive impacts on the environment in mitigating climate change and the initial employment they created for the communities” (Field interview, 11th February 2023). A divisional chief at Atebubu also added:

The expectations we had that the companies would bring development to our communities and create employment opportunities for the youth, in my estimation has been a flop. The farmers are now vacating the catchment area because of dispossession and the youth have not been employed (Field interview, 13th February 2023).

However, a prominent chief at Amantin was still optimistic about the impacts of the investment projects. He said:

So far so good. Some of my subjects have been employed. As the company has started the processing factory, it will transform our community, and people may travel from different places in search of jobs here (Field interview, 21st February 2023).

Most of the respondents concluded that LSLA had done more harm than good in the study area. As a result, at the end of the interview sessions, respondents pleaded with the researcher to help them resolve the problems confronting them, despite the explanation that the data was purely for research purposes.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented data on the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the study area. The chapter demonstrated that LSLA has produced some positive impacts, including employment creation, improved income, food security, provision of socio-economic infrastructure and access to input and output markets. On the other hand, LSLA resulted in dispossession and displacement, land scarcity, and loss of access to natural resources, including firewood and charcoal, lumber, grass for roofing buildings, and water sources, as well as their rights to hunting and gathering. The chapter also revealed that LSLA has intensified competition and conflicts over land, increased land value, perpetrated human rights abuse, and imposed restrictions on movement. These negative impacts have not been compensated for, as the affected people received inadequate or no compensation. The employment opportunities, provision of socio-economic infrastructure and market access could not offset the negative impacts to improve income, food security and ensure peaceful co-existence. The new coping and adaptive strategies of communal landholders further exacerbated their vulnerability. Women and the youth appeared to be the worst affected group of people in the communities. Similarly, the negative impacts on the environment far supersede those of the positive impacts observed. Finally, most of the respondents concluded that the overall impacts of LSLA were negative. The next chapter synthesises the findings of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion of the Results of the Study

7.1 Introduction

The two previous chapters presented the analysis of the empirical data and highlighted developments occurring on the acquired land and the impacts they produce for communal landholders. This chapter discusses the main issues raised in the empirical chapters and how they relate to the broader literature and theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The study assesses the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the AAM of Ghana. In doing so, the study draws from ABD and SLF theoretical frameworks and argues that LSLA is a neoliberal capitalist accumulation strategy in response to the triple crisis of 2007-2008 that dispossessed communal landholders of, and displaced them from their land and natural resources thereby altering their vulnerability context, capital assets, livelihood strategies and producing negative impacts. However, if the loss of land and related natural resources were adequately compensated and sustainable alternative forms of livelihood opportunities were introduced together with the promised employment opportunities, training in, and transfer of, new technology, provision of socio-economic infrastructure and access to input and output market, LSLA could offset the negative impacts. The discussion links key issues raised in the study to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. This is done by discussing how LSLA fits within the crisis narratives, extra-economic means of capital accumulation, the dispossession and displacement it engenders and the vulnerability it creates. The chapter also discusses the effects of LSLA on capital assets, livelihood strategies and finally, the outcomes it produces for communal landholders as presented in the conceptual framework and debate on LSLA. The chapter ends with a conclusion that recaps the main themes discussed.

7.2 The Extra-Economic Coercion and Crisis Argument

The empirical data revealed unprecedented levels of LSLAs in the study area between 2008 and 2013, both in the number of acquisitions and the size of land acquired. Except for a land deal acquired in 2005 and its development commenced in 2010, the remaining acquisitions occurred from 2008 and beyond. This makes it plausible to link the recent land rush to the global financial, food and energy crises of 2007-2008 (see Chapter 3 for discussions on triple crisis) and consistent with the argument that the recent surge for land globally could be traced to the triple crisis (Aha & Ayitey, 2017; Borras Jr & Franco, 2012; German et al., 2013; Nkansah-Dwamena & Yoon, 2022). More so, the deployment of the acquired land for the cultivation of food crops, cassava (to produce industrial starch for domestic and international markets), and the development of tree plantations to produce biomass to generate electricity are probably geared towards tackling the food, financial and energy crises. Although several states, particularly in Africa have been implementing measures to attract FDI, including setting up investment promotion agencies and offering tax exemptions, the immediate trigger for the land rush appears to be the 2007-2008 global crisis.

This is in tandem with ABD, which argues that capitalists look for new avenues of accumulating wealth amidst crises of over-accumulation. This could occur within the so-called ‘advanced capitalist states’ or elsewhere where the potential for accumulation exists (Harvey, 2003); however, developing countries have suffered the worst forms of capitalist exploitation (Chitonge, 2024). In the case of this study, international and domestic capitalists turned their attention to acquiring land in areas they perceived to have abundant idle, underutilised and unused land, mostly in Africa (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011).

The study also links the emergence of LSLA to changes in policy, institutional and organisational structures at the national and local levels that paved the way for capital

accumulation through several years of neoliberal capitalist accumulation pressures including SAPs and aid conditionalities that culminated in land tenure reforms such as NLP, and LAP, as well as the New Land Act 1036 of 2020. Thus, these neoliberal pressures shaped national and local structures and processes that prepared the grounds for expropriating vast swathes of land. This corroborates the argument that LSLA emerges from the alliance between international donors, the state, the private sector and customary authorities (Lanz et al., 2018). This also aligns with the illustration in the conceptual framework that neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD) influenced national policies, institutions and structures, paving the way for LSLA. Therefore, LSLA could be seen as part of a long history of capital accumulation processes (Amanor, 2012; Moyo et al., 2019; Moyo et al., 2012).

Additionally, communal landholders affected by the LSLA did not participate in the land acquisition processes and their consent was not sought. Whilst the state provided legislative and policy frameworks, registered the acquired land, and enforced law and order, the actual negotiation of land deals was between chiefs vested with allodial rights and the investors. The community meetings considered by representatives of state institutions as constituting FPIC appeared to fall short of the true sense of informed consent. This is because the affected communities were not provided with comprehensive information about the projects or a fair assessment of the likely impacts on livelihoods. They were also not allowed to decide whether to accept or reject the land deals. These meetings were mostly informational where community members were informed about the land acquisition, told to leave the acquired land and informed about what the land would be used for and the benefits they stood to gain. In most cases, these meetings were held after the deals had been finalised and only involved a few community leaders. The local community members did not have a say in selecting the site for the project, the kind of crops to be cultivated or the project model. They also had no opportunity

to negotiate the rights they would enjoy over other natural resources after the acquisition or meaningful compensation packages. Thus, the acquisition processes were shrouded in secrecy and most cases involved only the paramount chief and a few of his elders. This is consistent with the broader debate regarding the processes of LSLA that the processes are shrouded in secrecy, open to elite capture and do not conform to the “global normative standards for consultation, consent, and recompense as framed by the principle of free, prior, and informed consent” (Ahmed et al., 2019; Nolte et al., 2016; Vermeulen & Cotula, 2010:913). This also feeds into the broader argument on dispossession as the non-involvement of the communal landholders in the land acquisition process expose them to dispossession.

This situation probably occurred because the communal landholders in the study area possess only land use rights but not the right to control and alienate land vested in traditional leaders. Most of the acquisitions also occurred in places dominated by migrant farmers considered strangers who do not own land in the study area. More so, until more recently, the land use right of the communal landholders in the study area was not tied to specific plots of land, as they practised land fallowing where fallow land reverts to the entire community (Sarfo, et al., 2025). Again, the relationship between the allodial right holders, on one hand, and the usufructuary and tenancy rights holders on the other, was based on an oral agreement making it easier to be revoked. This was made easy because most community members in the AAM were engaged in non-perennial crop cultivation and could be asked to leave the land without compensation after harvesting their crops. These highlight vulnerabilities existing in the affected communities even before LSLA, as communal landholders’ precarious land rights paved the way for their land loss and further worsened their vulnerability context as espoused in the conceptual framework. As discussed in Chapter 6, this situation affected the women and the youth more than the elderly in society, confirming the argument that the pre-existing

inequalities and the nature of land acquisition processes have gendered and generational implications for the affected communities (Tsikata, 2016; Tsikata & Yaro, 2014; Behrman et al., 2012). This partly accounts for the introduction of guidelines to regulate LSLA.

The guidelines for LSLA in Ghana drawn up in 2012 and streamlined in 2020 and the New Land Act, Act 1036 of 2020 sought to place the affected communities at the centre of land acquisition processes to ensure they are not unduly disadvantaged. However, these guidelines and the new land law seem to empower the customary leaders to transfer land to investors rather than strengthening the land rights of communal landholders. This corroborates the argument that land tenure reforms in Africa strengthen state and customary leaders' control over land and enable them to expropriate the land of their subjects rather than empowering and ensuring the land tenure security of land users (Anaafo et al., 2023; Boone, 2019; Ubink, 2008). More so, the most recent acquisitions only partially employed the guidelines as communal landholders are still not actively engaged in the acquisition processes and their FPIC is not sought.

The above discussions are consistent with the argument of extra-economic coercion espoused in ABD theorisation. Harvey identified extra-economic means as involving acts of force, predation, manipulation and threats employed in capital accumulation processes backed by the state through legal and political power (Hall, 2013; Harvey, 2003; Levien, 2012) rather than economic means of willing seller and willing buyer. This happened in the acquisition processes regarding the communal landholders who were directly affected by LSLA but had no say in the alienation of their land (see comments from respondents in Chapter 5). Although the customary leaders were not necessarily forced to lease the land, the state's role in shaping institutions and structures and deploying security personnel to ensure compliance and maintaining law and order could not be regarded as an economic means of capital

accumulation. This contradicts the argument by critics of ABD that, in the era of technological advancement, participatory democracy with strong advocacy for human rights, the existence of sovereign states and strong CSOs make it difficult to accept the proposition of extra-economic coercion for capital accumulation (Roudart & Mazoyer, 2015; Sassen, 2013). However, it affirms the argument that, in Africa where land markets have not been fully developed, situations where the smallholders voluntarily give up their land are done under the condition of indirect duress, as land markets in the global south are rarely 'ordinary' spaces of straightforward 'economic' relations as power asymmetry between the actors in the transaction could harbour some implicit threats (Boamah, 2014a; Hall, 2013; Touch & Neef, 2015).

7.3 Dispossession and Displacement of Communal Landholders

Another theme prominent in this study is the dispossession and displacement of communal landholders of their land and related land-based natural resources. The dispossession and displacement occurred in several ways. Firstly, community members whose villages were located outside the concession but were farming in the concession area lost their land at the commencement of the investment projects. Secondly, communities within the concession area were granted land around their villages. However, many abandoned these areas due to the harsh conditions they endured subsisting alongside the investment projects. Thirdly, dispossession and displacement occurred when those who directly lost their lands through LSLA rushed to areas outside the concession to compete for land with those already using such lands. Thus, both direct and indirect dispossession occurred in the study area. The issue of dispossession and displacement feeds into the broader debate in LSLA literature (See Chapter 2), especially among the critics who argue that LSLA leads to incidences of land dispossession and displacement across the globe (Alemu & Tolossa, 2022; Ayamga et al., 2023; Mamonova, 2015). However, it contradicts the argument of proponents who cite the abundance of idle or

underutilised land, yield gaps and the notion of marginal land in the global South to justify LSLA and discredit the dispossession and displacement it causes (Deininger & Byerlee, 2011).

Dispossession and displacement caused by LSLA is an evolving phenomenon that coincides with the developments occurring on the acquired land. In the initial stages of the projects, land dispossession and displacement were not visible since there was no mass resettlement or eviction of the local community members from the concession areas because of the land reservation arrangement (See Chapter 6). However, the study found that such arrangements later resulted in further displacement. Women and the youth were the first to lose their land, since they possessed secondary rights to the land (see Chapter 6). More so, the expansion of the activities of investors on the acquired land led to the incorporation of the community members who still had access to land and further dispossessed them. These dynamics hardly feature in the LSLA debate, since the debate has focused more on dispossession that occurred at the initial stages of the investment projects (see Boamah, 2014a; Gagné, 2022; Larder, 2015; Schoneveld, 2013; Shete & Rutten, 2015) and could not account for later developments, a gap this study addresses.

The dispossession and displacement affirm the argument by ABD that LSLA is a form of neoliberal capital accumulation that dispossesses the local community members with detrimental outcomes for the livelihoods of the affected people. This contradicts the argument by critics of ABD that not all LSLA engenders land dispossession and displacement (Hall, 2013; Zhan, 2019). The study has revealed that even projects that do not dispossess the affected communities in the initial stages, may do so at later stages. Therefore, there is a need for continuous empirical studies at various stages of the investment projects to thoroughly ascertain how dispossession and displacement evolve.

Additionally, the dispossession and displacement of communal landholders mostly occurred with no or inadequate compensation, as payments made for the acquired land mostly went to the customary leaders. It has been argued that chiefs enjoy the right to payment of compensation in times of land expropriation contrary to the farmers who were only compensated for the crops on the land unless land users had registered title over their land (Amanor, 2009a; Andrews, 2018; Haller et al., 2019; Ubink, 2009). However, in the study area, most farmers were not compensated for even the loss of crops (See Chapter 6). This is contrary to cases involving surface mining concessions where farmers engaged in perennial crop cultivation and mining companies' activities required complete resettlement, and financial compensation paid to the affected people was substantial (Andrews, 2018). Whilst issues around compensation in such a context were around fairness, one-time payment and the ability of the recipients to make a sustainable investment, this study was confronted with no, or inadequate compensation. This is contrary to the provisions in the New Land Act 1036 of 2020 and the LC's guidelines for LSLA that compensation shall be paid regarding crop loss and deprivation of use of the natural surface of the land.

The compensation issues are tied to the broader debate that LSLA is associated with no or inadequate compensation; compensations paid are only for improvements made on the land; lack of clear provision for compensation in the lease agreement; lack of legal and political knowledge; and lack of information and financial means which hinders communal landholders' ability to fight for sustainable compensation (Ahmed, 2021; Kebede et al., 2023; Sändig, 2021; Schoneveld & German, 2014; Zoomers, 2010). However, this study recorded a case where an affected community member had registered title on his land and was able to fight his land loss in the law court to recover his land and was compensated for crop destruction (see also Boamah, 2014a). This further illustrates how communal landholders suffer from LSLA because their

land rights are not documented. The absence of sustainable compensation packages when LSLA led to the loss of land and land-based natural resources negatively altered the vulnerability context, available capital assets and livelihood strategies with implications for overall outcomes as demonstrated in the conceptual framework (See Chapter 3).

7.4 Effects of LSLA on Livelihood Assets

As presented in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter, LSLA could impact communal landholders' capital asset base including natural, financial, social, physical and human capital. The themes from the empirical data that have a relationship with these capital assets include access to land and natural resources, employment, socio-economic infrastructure, competition and conflicts over land. These themes also resonate in the broader debate on LSLA as they (except competition and conflicts over land) are touted as the positive impacts of LSLA in the affected communities (See Chapter 2). Since issues related to access to land and land-based natural resources have been discussed earlier in the chapter under dispossession and displacements this section focuses on the remaining themes.

One of the main themes that came up from the empirical data was employment creation. This was the first positive impact of LSLA that respondents identified. Employment creation also features prominently in the debate on LSLA among proponents, national governments and traditional leaders who promote LSLA as an opportunity to create jobs for the teeming youth (Bottazzi et al., 2018; Deininger & Byerlee, 2011; Schoneveld, 2017; Schoneveld et al., 2011). The empirical data indicated that the investment companies had created direct and indirect employment opportunities (see Chapter 6). However, relatively few community members were employed by the investment companies, and the jobs created were mostly temporary, as most community members were employed as casual workers and earned lower wages with poor working conditions (see Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6). This is linked to the argument by critics of

LSLA about employment outcomes (Adjei, 2022; De Schutter, 2011; Gyapong, 2020). In this study, employment opportunities created, benefited women and the youth more than elderly men; however, women earned relatively less income for working for investment companies than men, highlighting gender and generational dynamics in the employment debate (Edafe et al., 2023; Tsikata & Yaro, 2014) that have received minimal consideration. Thus, LSLA failed to improve the financial capital assets as the income earned from the investment companies could not offset income loss due to dispossession. This has ripple effects on other livelihood components, as illustrated in the conceptual framework.

Another theme in the study that has received considerable attention in the LSLA debate and has implications for infrastructure of communities (See Chapter 3) is rural development or provision of socio-economic infrastructure. The study has revealed that investors have not done much to provide socio-economic infrastructure to boost the households' livelihood within the catchment areas (see Chapter 6). Although some investment companies have constructed feeder roads, these roads were within the concession area or linked the concession sites to main trunk roads, and community members' access was regulated. Neither has the Municipal Assembly generated enough revenue from land rent to provide social amenities for the affected communities. This is contrary to the popular debate by proponents of LSLA that it could lead to rural development by improving road networks, providing health facilities, irrigation schemes, and access to farm input (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). The physical assets of the affected communities have not improved as anticipated by the state actors, investors, customary leaders and the affected community members. This aligns with the conceptual framework of the study.

From the empirical data, LSLA has negatively impacted the social capital of the affected communities through increasing competition over land occasioned by scarcity and the rising

value of land. As discussed in Chapter 3, social capital embodies the interconnectedness among community members which manifests in reciprocity, social obligation and mutual trust and support. Due to LSLA, the social relationship between allodial rights holders and usufructuary rights holders who enjoyed land use rights free of charge has been replaced with monetary considerations (see also Sarfo et al.,2025). Likewise, migrants who had access to land through a tenancy arrangement and were required to pay tribute in kind or a token, now have to pay a substantial amount for land access. More so, the emergence of land renting in the study area is a testament to traditional social relationships being replaced with capitalist social relations. The intense competition for land has led to conflicts over access to scarce land (see Chapter 6). As a result, the sense of reciprocity, social obligation, mutual trust, and support among community members is waning. However, these features are necessary to ensure coordination and cooperation for the benefit of all community members, especially in times of emergency (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2021). Issues around competition for land, tension and conflicts over land have received considerable attention in the LSLA debate, especially in debate around community response (Bottazzi et al., 2016; Gagné, 2022; Gingembre, 2015; Tafon & Saunders, 2019).

Overall, the affected communities' capital assets were negatively affected. This is consistent with the conceptual framework which illustrates that LSLA exacerbates the vulnerability context of the affected communities and negatively impacts the available capital assets, which alters the livelihood strategies.

7.5 Effects of LSLA on Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies refer to the combination of activities and choices deployed to exploit livelihood assets to realise livelihood goals or outcomes (see Chapter 3). The exposition by PA, also inherent in ABD, that capitalist accumulation will lead to proletarianisation of the

peasantry (see Chapter 3) did not materialise in the case of this study. Only a handful of dispossessed community members were employed by the investment companies, as most were still dependent on the land for their livelihood (see also Chitonge, 2024). Therefore, as LSLA exacerbated the vulnerability context and negatively impacted the capital assets of catchment communities, the livelihood strategies available to the communal landholders declined, leading to community response to the investment projects and adoption of new coping and adaptive strategies.

According to the empirical data, community members resorted to several response strategies to reverse the land deal, ensure proper incorporation and/or ameliorate the negative impacts (See Chapter 5). This is linked to the debate about political reaction that affected communities adopt variegated responses including various forms of resistance, incorporation and acquiescence (Borras Jr & Franco, 2013; Gingembre, 2015; Tamura, 2021). However, the debate about community response to LSLA has focused on instances where community mobilisation was supported by CSOs and escalated to national and international levels, leading to the termination of some land deals, reduction of land sizes and re-negotiation of land transactions (Gagné, 2019; Gingembre, 2015; Tafon & Saunders, 2019). In this study, community mobilisation revolved around individualised actions, mobilisation by affected community members and, to some extent, the members of the entire community, and hardly transcended the borders of the study area. The community response in this study could not reverse the land deals nor ameliorate the hardship imposed by LSLA but elicited reaction from the state and investors with repercussions for the livelihood of affected communities. As illustrated in Chapter 6, the community response to the APSD project resulted in regular deployment of the military to enforce compliance, accompanied by associated abuse of human rights, and tensions in the catchment area. Likewise, the new coping and adaptive strategies

(See Chapter 6) further impacted the vulnerability of communal landholders. For instance, abandoning farming or reducing farms sizes due to LSLA had implications for household food security and income. Moreover, relocating farms far away from the communities also increased travelling time and negatively impacted farmers' work output. Similarly, the change from land following to mechanised farming was also detrimental to the environment, as this was associated with excessive use of agrochemicals. Community members who took up jobs in investment companies also worked under poor working conditions, were poorly paid, and their security of tenure was precarious.

7.6 Impacts for Communal Landholders

The main theme of this study is the impacts of LSLA which is also the main debate about the phenomenon, variously described, including outcome, effects and implications. As discussed in Chapter 3, the outcomes could be positive or negative, as the debate on LSLA has been polarised. According to the empirical data, LSLA in the study area has failed to deliver improved income, food security, sustainable use of natural resources, socio-economic infrastructure, peace and social cohesion and well-being. However, it has resulted in worsening poverty levels, loss of income, food insecurity and environmental degradation.

As demonstrated earlier in Chapter 6, the dispossession and displacement caused by LSLA and the associated loss of access to land-based natural resources not only worsened the vulnerability of the affected communities but also limited their available natural capital assets that served as main sources of income for rural agrarian communities, and this negatively affected their income levels. Those employed by investment companies also did not earn enough income from wages to compensate for the loss of income from land-based activities. Similarly, livelihood strategies adopted also negatively impacted the income levels of households in the affected communities. In most cases, these activities increased households' expenditure on

livelihood activities which were hardly compensated for by the returns from these activities. Other adaptive strategies employed also led to a reduction in income earned by households. This aligns with the broader debate that LSLA impacts the income levels of affected communities (Adjei, 2022; Gyapong, 2020; Schoneveld et al., 2011; Ahlerup & Tengstam, 2015; Gasparatos et al., 2022; Glover & Jones, 2019; Jiao et al., 2015)

The food security concern was one of the main themes highlighted in the empirical chapters and the broader debate. Food security is also considered a driver of LSLA (see Chapter 2). As presented in Chapter 6, LSLA hampered households' ability to produce their own food, made them give up the cultivation of some staple food crops, reduced farm sizes and crop yields, and resulted in land degradation and soil fertility loss. Therefore, households had to rely on the open market to access some local staples with income earned from off-farm activities that, in most cases, were insufficient to cater for households' food needs. Significantly, most investment projects in the study area were not involved in food crop production. Additionally, the loss of hunting and gathering opportunities also had detrimental effects on household food security, as households lost access to some vital ingredients (See Chapter 6) they obtained from the wild free of charge, which complemented household nutritional needs. Generally, households' food availability, access, utilisation and diversity are adversely impacted. This reflects the argument that LSLA affects food security indicators negatively (Ayamga et al., 2023; Deininger & Xia, 2016; Guyalo et al., 2022; Kebede et al., 2023; Quansah et al., 2020).

The data also revealed that LSLA has had variegated impacts, both positive and negative, on the environment (See Chapter 6). However, the negative impacts appeared to outweigh the positive in the study area, leading to unsustainable use of natural resources. The positive environmental impacts, in most cases, were associated with investment projects engaged in tree plantation and conservation and were confined to the concession area. On the contrary, most

households claimed that LSLA has led to the loss of soil fertility, destruction of vegetation cover, soil erosion, unpredictable or low rainfall patterns, air pollution, rising temperature and water pollution. This reflects the argument about the negative environmental impacts of LSLA (Adam & Agegnehu, 2023; Friis & Nielsen, 2016; Richards, 2013). However, the debate mostly focuses on the direct impact of the activities of investment companies, but this study extended the analysis to include how the activities of the affected communities impact the environment (see Adjei, 2022; Drbohlav & Hejkrlik, 2018). For instance, changes in farming practices, especially the adoption of mechanised agriculture and associated intensive cultivation and application of agrochemicals led to extensive removal of the vegetative cover, soil erosion, land degradation and depletion of natural resources. As espoused in the conceptual framework in Chapter 3, LSLA has implications for the sustainability of natural resources, including the environment.

7.7 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the main themes of the study by linking them to the broader debate and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. It highlighted the unprecedented levels of LSLA in the study area between 2008 and 2013 confirming the triple crises argument. The chapter also demonstrated that these acquisitions and later ones occurred without active participation and informed consent of the affected communities, confirming the argument espoused in ABD that neoliberal capital accumulation occurs through extra-economic coercion with the backing of the state. These accumulation processes, together with the developments taking place on the acquired land, had dispossessed and displaced communal landholders from their land, leading to the loss of access to land-based natural resources with reverberating impacts on the vulnerability context, available capital assets, livelihood strategies and, ultimately, the impacts for communal landholders. With no or inadequate compensation,

restrictions on movement, human rights abuse, intense competition and conflicts over land, rising land value, and the absence of alternative sustainable livelihood activities, LSLA produced negative impacts for the communal landholders. Although LSLA delivered some promised jobs, provision of socio-economic infrastructure, and access to input and output markets, these served only a few households compared to the extent of land acquired and dispossession caused and unlikely to offset the negative impacts. Most households claimed to have been experiencing worsening poverty levels, food insecurity, environmental degradation, tension and conflicts, and declining general well-being which they attributed to LSLA. Finally, the study fits within ABD and SLF and the broader debate on LSLA.

The chapter also demonstrated the mechanisms of the reverse flow analysis for studying LSLA. For instance, the negative outcomes of LSLA altered the livelihood strategies leading to the adoption of unsustainable livelihood activities and the deterioration of capital assets which worsens the vulnerability context of the affected communities and engenders community response. Community resistance and the negative outcomes of LSLA partly contributed to the formulation of guidelines for LSLA and new land laws that incorporated lessons learnt from the previous acquisitions. Thus, the kind of outcomes, changes in the livelihood strategies, diminishing capital assets and deteriorating vulnerability context together shape the policy, institutional and organisational context and the implementation strategies of investors. The reverse flow is useful in analysing the nuances of LSLA.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is the concluding chapter of the study and provides an overview of the findings of the study. The study assesses the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in the AAM of Ghana. The main finding is that LSLA produced negative impacts for communal landholders manifested in declining income and rising poverty levels, food insecurity, tension and conflicts and environmental degradation. This was occasioned by the dispossession and displacement and loss of access to land-based natural resources with no, or inadequate compensation, human rights abuse and restrictions on movement. The study also found that LSLA could not deliver the promised massive job creation, socio-economic infrastructure, and input and output markets to offset the negative impacts. The chapter proceeds with a description of the focus of the study and the research questions, followed by the presentation of key findings. The study's conclusion, contribution to scholarship and recommendations constitute the final part of the chapter.

8.2 Focus of the Study

The study broadly set out to assess the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in AAM of Ghana, after a decade of implementation of investment projects by drawing insights from a combination of ABD and SLF. As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2 of this study, LSLA has not lacked academic exposition, however, the literature has presented variegated results involving positive and negative impacts. Additionally, LSLA is a context-specific and evolving phenomenon and the impacts over time and space might not be the same. In this regard, this study sought to assess the developments taking place in the study area regarding LSLA; examine how the development of the acquired land leads to dispossession and exploitation at

various stages of the investment projects; assess the impacts of LSLA on employment, socio-economic infrastructure, markets access, environment, income and food security at different stages of the implementation of the investment projects; ascertain the nature of community response to LSLA at different stages of the investment projects.

The study addressed these objectives by posing the main question: What are the impacts of LSLA for communal landholders in AAM? Drawing from the main research question, the following sub-questions were posed:

- What developments have occurred in the study area regarding LSLA?
- How does the development of the acquired land lead to dispossession and exploitation at different stages of the investment projects?
- How does LSLA affect employment, socio-economic infrastructure, market access, environment, income and food security at different stages of the implementation of the investment projects?
- How do the affected communities respond to LSLA at different stages of the investment projects?

In addressing the research questions, the researcher deployed a mixed method research design that relied on varied data collection methods, involving household surveys, in-depth interviews, FGDs and observations, to gather empirical field data at AAM. The AAM, located in the middle belt of Ghana in the forest-savannah transitional zone attracted interest from several investors acquiring large tracts of land for commercial agriculture. Despite some mega investment projects still operating in the study area, the Municipality has received limited attention in LSLA debate, which made it an ideal place to conduct this study.

The study answers the research questions by demonstrating that AAM has witnessed unprecedented levels of LSLA in the aftermath of the triple crises of 2007-2008 and these acquisitions occurred without active involvement of communal landholders in the acquisition processes, exposing them to vulnerabilities. The evidence from the study also shows that the acquired lands have gone through different trajectories of development, whilst some projects never started, were suspended or collapsed, others were progressing steadily. The developments on the acquired lands have resulted in dispossession and displacement of communal landholders due to the precarious nature of their land rights. There was also evidence of investment project producing some positive impacts, such as job opportunities, provision of socio-economic infrastructure, market access and improvement in the environment, however, these could not offset the negative impacts of land dispossession and displacement and associated loss of land-based natural resources, land scarcity, intensification of competition and conflicts over land, and human rights abuse. This has made communal landholders adopt several response strategies to ameliorate the negative outcomes of LSLA, including resistance, and new coping and adaptive strategies that have caused further deterioration of the livelihoods of affected communities. The overall impacts of LSLA in the study area have been negative as they have resulted in declining income and rising poverty levels, food insecurity, tension and conflicts, and environmental degradation.

8.3 Key Findings of the Study

This section presents the key findings of the study by drawing from the empirical data presented in Chapters 5 and 6 and discussed in Chapter 7. The key findings are presented under the following sub-themes: impacts for communal landholders; dispossession and displacement; failure to deliver the promised goods; non-involvement of communal landholders in acquisition processes; and the failure of community response to achieve the intended purpose.

8.3.1 Impacts for Communal Landholders

The study's main finding is that LSLA has negative impacts for communal landholders, evident in declining income and rising poverty levels, food insecurity, tension and conflicts in the affected communities, and environmental degradation. In the first place, the study found that the loss of access to land and land-based natural resources worsened the vulnerability of the affected communities by limiting their available natural capital assets that served as main sources of income for rural agrarian communities. Secondly, it revealed that LSLA negatively impacted the food security of most households in the study area as they experienced food insecurity. Thirdly, the study asserted that LSLA produced both positive and negative environmental impacts; however, the negative impacts far outweigh the positive impacts. Finally, the study highlighted that LSLA has contributed to heightened tension and conflicts in the affected communities, and altered peace and tranquillity in the study area.

8.3.2 Dispossession and Displacement

The study established that the developments occurring on the acquired land had led to dispossession of communal landholders of their land and land-based natural resources and displacement from them with no, or inadequate compensation. The study reported that land dispossession and displacement are evolving phenomena that coincide with the extent of developments occurring on the acquired land. The study further found that the dispossession of communal landholders of their land and displacement from it resulted in the loss of access to land-based natural resources. Regarding compensation, the study demonstrated that communal landholders were not adequately compensated for losing access to land and land-based natural resources, contrary to the provisions in the LC's guidelines for LSLA and the New Land Act, Act 1036 of 2020.

8.3.3 Failure of LSLA to Deliver the Promised Goods

The study revealed that LSLA delivered some employment opportunities, socio-economic infrastructure, and market access, but these were far from being as massive as promised to the affected communities. Regarding employment, the study reported that investment companies have created some jobs. However, the jobs created were mostly transient and most local community members were employed as casual workers, earned lower wages and worked under relatively poor working conditions. The study further demonstrated that women and the youth benefited more from the jobs created than the elderly men, however, women earned relatively less income from working for investment companies than men. LSLA could not produce the promised goods to offset the negative impacts resulting from land and natural resources loss.

8.3.4 Non-Involvement of Communal Landholders in Land Acquisition Processes

Another finding that emerged from the study is that communal landholders were not actively involved in the land acquisition processes and their informed consent was not sought. This stemmed from the fact that communal landholders in the study area possessed only land use rights but not the right to control and alienate land which was vested in traditional leaders. Land acquisitions occurred in places dominated by migrant farmers, considered strangers who did not own land in the area. Moreover, the land use rights of communal landholders were undocumented and not tied to specific plots. The study further revealed that the acquisition processes were shrouded in secrecy and mostly involved only the paramount chief and a few of his elders, sidelining the communal landholders.

8.3.5 Failure of Community Response to Achieve the Intended Purpose

Another significant finding is that community resistance failed to achieve the intended purpose of stopping the land deals or improving the nature of incorporation of communal landholders into the investment projects. Unable to reclaim their land, community members resorted to new

coping and adaptive strategies to survive the negative outcomes of LSLA. However, most of these strategies further worsened their vulnerability, as they led to further depletion and destruction of natural resources, increased household expenditure, and reduced household income levels.

8.4 Conclusion

As a case study that draws insight from a combination of ABD and SLF to assess the impacts of LSLA in the AAM, the following conclusions were arrived at. Firstly, the study concludes that LSLA in the study area has resulted in dispossession and displacement of communal landholders. The customary land tenure system, described as egalitarian and capable of securing the land rights of the vulnerable members of society, failed to secure the land right of communal landholders in the advent of LSLA. Likewise, the introduction of guidelines and new land laws to regulate LSLA failed to secure the land rights of the affected people, involve them in the acquisition processes, and secure their interest. The intensification of competition amidst rising land value and scarcity made those charged with fiduciary responsibilities take advantage to alienate the land of their subjects to investors exposing them to dispossession and displacement with no or inadequate compensation. As a rural agrarian Municipality, access to land and natural resources forms the main source of livelihood, as most community members were engaged in farming and natural resource exploitation. Therefore, losing access to these important livelihood sources without sustainable compensation packages or alternative livelihood opportunities worsened the vulnerability of the affected communities.

Secondly, the study highlights that some job opportunities were created, socio-economic infrastructure provided, and input and output markets were made accessible through LSLA. However, these could not offset the vulnerability created by dispossession and displacement, human rights abuse and restrictions on movement. This was because the community members

who benefited from these opportunities were relatively few compared to the extent of land acquired and the number of people dispossessed, in addition to loss of access to land-based natural resources.

Thirdly, the study demonstrates that LSLA produced positive impacts for some communal landholders involving improved income, food security and general wellbeing; however, the overall outcomes were negative, as most of the respondents lamented declining income, food insecurity, tension and conflicts, environmental degradation, and declining general wellbeing. The study concludes that women and the youth bear the brunt of the negative impacts. LSLA has implications not only for the affected communities, but also the nation's quest to attain the SDGs as outlined in Chapter 1.

Finally, the study concludes that the impacts of LSLA are shaped by the land tenure security of community members, their involvement in the land acquisition processes, developments occurring on the acquired land, the ability of investors to establish the proposed processing factory component of the investment project, the investment model and type of crops cultivated, the stage of operations, and sustainability and profitability of the investment project. However, the study does not see LSLA in its current form in the study area producing sustainably positive impacts on a wider scale.

8.5 Contribution to Scholarship

The study followed up on the debate on LSLA after a decade of implementation of investment projects to assess the impacts for communal landholders thereby empirically updating the literature not only on LSLA, but the broader dynamics of land tenure and agrarian systems in Africa. Although the study reported that the overall impacts of LSLA on income and food security, conflict and environmental degradation were negative, confirming the findings of other studies, the demonstration of how these unfold over time is a novelty as studies conducted

in the initial stages of investment projects were unable to account for these dynamics. For instance, the study demonstrated the differentiated impacts of LSLA on employment, income and food security at different stages of the operations of investment projects (See Chapter 6). No matter how small these differences, they are significant because they highlight that the outcomes of LSLA are not static. The study also contributes to aspects of LSLA literature, such as gender and generational impact dynamics, and coping and adaptive strategies of affected communities, which have not received much scholarly attention. For instance, the study demonstrated the coping and adaptive strategies that communal landholders employed to deal with LSLA, including the adoption of mechanised farming and associated continuous cultivation and application of agrochemicals, reduction of farm sizes and land fallow periods and how these shape the outcome dynamics. Thus, the study contributes not only to the debate on the impacts of LSLA, but also community response that has mainly been focused on resistance and less on coping and adaptive strategies.

The adoption of a combination of ABD and SLF contributes to providing theoretical insights, as studies hardly employ the two frameworks together in analysing LSLA. This is the only study that employs the combination of ABD and SLF to study LSLA. Highlighting neoliberal capital accumulation pressures (ABD) as a stand-alone component in the conceptual framework is also a novelty. Studies that employ SLF often assume the role of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures and usually capture this as part of the national policy, institutional and organisational context. Such conceptualisation may neglect the prominent role of neoliberal capital accumulation pressures in shaping national and local processes and structures that paved the way for acquisition of large swathes of land and the resultant dispossession and displacement, which this study has highlighted.

8.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study calls for circumspection in promoting LSLA as its long-term outcomes for the affected communities do not look impressive. Therefore, the study specifically recommends strengthening the land tenure security of communal landholders. This could be done by documenting the various land rights held by communal landholders whether usufructuary or tenancies rather than maintaining oral agreement between customary leaders and land users. This document may not necessarily be a leasehold title but acknowledges the interest individuals or communities hold over the land. The documentation could be done on individual or community levels. This recommendation aligns with Article 37 of the New Land Act, Act 1036 of 2020, regarding recording customary transfer. However, what is proposed here considers the existing interests in land and not only new transfers. Securing the land rights of communal landholders will enable them to prevent the expropriation of their land or gain compensation for such expropriation.

Secondly, the study recommends enforcing laws and regulations related to LSLA to ensure compliance. Ghana has beautiful laws and guidelines regarding land tenure and LSLA, however, the study found a gap between theory and practice. Therefore, there is a need to enforce these regulations and guidelines to protect vulnerable rural communities from losing their land without adequate compensation. Particularly, the EPA, mandated to monitor the activities of investors to ensure environmental and socio-economic compliance, needs to be resourced to enable the institution to carry out its mandate effectively.

Thirdly, given that the investment companies in this study had developed less than 30% of the acquired land after a decade of operations, the study recommends renegotiating the land deals to reclaim part of the acquired land for affected community members. This could be done with stakeholders, including the LC, the Municipal Assembly, the EPA, chiefs, investors and

community members. Investors could be compensated for the land to be reclaimed by extending the lease period for the remainder of their acquired land. This will free part of the investors' acquired land lying idle for the use of the community members and ease the pressure on the limited land available. This recommendation originated from comments by respondents when asked to give their final comment after interviews. They urged the researcher to help them recover part of the acquired land not used by investors at the time. Similarly, the study recommends that future land grants to investors should follow a graduating approach. In this case, an investor is granted a parcel of land smaller than requested. Any further grants should be subject to investors' ability to utilise the land granted earlier and compliance with the laws, regulations and guidelines.

Finally, the study recommends that customary leaders charged with fiduciary responsibility over land must be made accountable for their stewardship in line with the customary leaders' accountability clause in Act 1036. However, as per the empirical data, the accountability clause and the introduction of CLS are unlikely to ensure accountability regarding LSLA, unless communal landholders are given a voice in future land grants.

8.6.1 Recommendations for Further Study

Given that LSLA is context-specific and an evolving phenomenon, the study recommends more case studies in different contexts. These case studies may employ a mixed method research design that tilts towards a quantitative approach that goes beyond descriptive statistics. This will allow for comparing findings from different contexts. Secondly, the study recommends a macro-level assessment of the impacts of LSLA. This may be done by focusing on a national or sub-regional level to capture the nuances that a micro-level study may not capture. Thirdly, interrogating the sustainability and profitability of investment projects might not be out of place. This is because any positive impact of LSLA largely depends on how sustainable and

profitable these projects are. Fourthly, future studies should focus on the differentiated impacts along the lines of gender, generation, and origin of the land users. Finally, environmental and climate scientists may be interested in assessing the impacts of LSLA on the environment after a decade of implementing investment projects, using environmental impact assessment tools.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Guide

I am, a PhD Student at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa. I am conducting research on issues related to *the outcomes of large-scale land acquisition for communal landholders* and I would like to ask you some questions on these issues. This interview will take approximately I will ask a number of questions about the topic of my study.

All the information gathered during this interview is confidential and will be solely used for the intended purposes of this study. I will not reveal to anyone your name or any form of your identity without your permission. I will conduct this interview with the understanding that you have freely accepted to take part in this study, and that you are not under any obligation to answer the questions that I will be asking. You are free to discontinue the interview at any time.

There are no direct personal benefits that you will get by participating in this study. However, the study will enhance our knowledge on the subject and the findings may be used by the community to engage with policies and programmes that are relevant to the community. Feel free at any time to ask questions to clarify anything related to this interview or study.

Consent

I freely consent to take part in this study. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not wish to continue. I also confirm that the purpose of the study has been fully explained to me. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term. I also understand that my participation will remain confidential. Name of Interviewee

Date:

Interview Guide for Communal Landholders

1. Would you please tell me about yourself? (Probe: Your hometown, age and how long you have been living in this community?)
2. What do the people in this community do for a living? (Probe: What are the main livelihood activities in the area? What do you do for a living?)
3. What is the importance of land to the people in the area? (Probe: How useful is land in the social, economic, political cultural and religious life of the people?)
4. What are the different categories of land in this area? (Probe: Is it customary, state or vested land? Who owns the land? How do landowners come to own the land? What do they use the land for? What roles do different categories of chiefs and the stakeholders in land play?)
5. What policies govern land tenure in Ghana? (If familiar, probe for policies at the national, regional and local levels. What policies govern LSLA in Ghana and how are these policies implemented? What are the challenges faced with the implementation of these policies?)
6. What do you know about the new Land Act 1036 of 2020? (Probe: If familiar with the Act, probe for highlights of the Act. What does the Act stipulate in respect of LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
7. What are the processes people go through to access land for their livelihood activities? (Probe: Whether is through usufructuary, tenancy, lease, purchase etc. Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership? How did you access the land you are using? What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)
8. Are you aware of any large-scale land investment projects in this area? (If the response is affirmative, probe for the location of the project and the owner of the land)
9. What do you know about this LSLA or large-scale investment projects in your community? (Probe: When was the land acquired? Who are the owners of the

investment? What is the size of the land acquired? How close is this investment to your community?)

10. Were you involved in the processes of alienating land to the investment company? If involved, describe your involvement in the land acquisition processes. (Probe: Were you involved in the land identification and negotiation? Was your consent sought before the land was leased?)
11. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and the company? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers? Is the relationship between them cordial? What is the nature of your personal relationship with the company?)
12. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
13. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
14. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
15. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
16. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers? If the company took over your land, what happened to you?)
17. What are the positive impacts of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, region and national levels. Probe for information on

employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA for you as an individual?)

18. Are the positive impacts of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
19. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect the individual, community, district and region? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
20. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
21. What are the effects of LSLA (named project) on the environment? (Probe for evidence of destruction of forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
22. By comparing the first five years of the company's operations to what is happening currently, what differences have you observed in the outcomes of LSLA for the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences)
23. How do communal landholders respond to the project? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Do you receive support from any civil society organisation in your struggle with the company? If any, what kind of support do you receive? How successful are you in your actions or demands

from the company? What coping and adaptive strategies have you employed to deal with LSLA?)

24. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?

25. Is there any document on the land deals or land tenure in this area that you would like to share with me?

Interview Guide for Traditional Leaders

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe: Your position in this traditional area and how long you have occupied this position?)
2. What is the importance of land to the people in the area? (Probe: How useful is land in the social, economic, political, cultural and religious life of the people?)
3. Who owns the land in this territory? (Probe: How did the landowners come to own the land? What do they use the land for? What roles do different categories of chiefs and the stakeholders in land play?)
4. What policies govern land tenure in Ghana? (If familiar, probe for policies at the national, regional and local levels. What policies govern LSLA in Ghana and how are these policies implemented? What are the challenges faced with the implementation of these policies?)
5. What is the legal framework governing land relations and LSLA? (If familiar, probe for legal framework at the national, regional and local levels. What are the legal categories of land in Ghana? Which of these categories is found in the study area? What are the implications of the legal categorisation of land for LSLA?)
6. Are you familiar with the new Land Act 1036 of 2020? (Probe: If yes, what are the highlights of the Act? What does the Act stipulate in respect of LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
7. What are the processes for accessing land in this traditional area or community? (Probe: Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership? What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)

8. Could you tell me about LSLA or large-scale land investment project(s) in this community? (Probe: Who is the owner of the land acquired by the investors? Who are the investors? How did they come to the area? When was the land acquired? How large is the land involved? What are the terms of the agreement?)
9. What was your involvement, the involvement of other traditional leaders and community members in the LSLA processes? (Probe: Were you involved in the consultation, land identification or negotiation processes?)
10. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and the company? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers? Is the relationship between them cordial? What is the nature of the relationship between you and the company?)
11. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
12. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
13. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in, employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
14. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers? If the company took over your land, what happened to you?)
15. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)

16. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA for you as an individual?)
17. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
18. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively impact the individual, community, district and region? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, food insecurity, cultural and religious rites etc.?)
19. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
20. What are the effects of LSLA on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
21. By comparing the first five years of the company's operations to what is happening currently, what differences have you observed in the outcomes of the LSLI for the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences?)
22. How do the communal landholders respond to the LSLI? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Are civil society organisations involved in the community's struggle with the company? If any, identify

those organisations and the kind of support they offer. What is the level of success in the demands of the community? What coping and adaptive strategies have you or the community employed to deal with LSLA?)

23. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?

24. Is there any document on the land deal or land tenure in this area that you would like to share with me?

Interview Guide for Workers of Investment Companies

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe: Your hometown, age, how long you have been living in this community and what you do for a living?)
2. What do people in this community do for a living? (Probe: What are the main livelihood activities?)
3. What are the different categories of land in this area? (Probe: Who owns the land and who uses the land? What do they use the land for? What roles do different actors link to land play?)
4. What is the importance of land to the people in the area? (Probe: How useful is land in the social, economic, political cultural and religious life of the people?)
5. What are the processes people go through to access land for their livelihood activities? (Probe: Whether is through usufructuary, tenancy, lease, purchase etc. Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership? What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)
6. Tell me about the land investment company you work for? (Probe: Who is the owner of the land acquired by the investors? Who are the investors? How did they come to the area? When was the land acquired? How large is the land involved? What is the amount of money involved in the agreement? What is the duration of the agreement?)
7. What was your involvement and the involvement of other company workers in the company's land acquisition processes? (Probe: Were you involved in the consultation, land identification or negotiation processes? Was free prior informed consent sought?)

8. What is the nature of your work in the company? (Probe: Are you a casual or permanent worker? What work do you do in the company? How long have you been working with the company? What work were you doing before you were engaged by the company? Aside from working for the company what other work do you do?)
9. Could you please tell me about your condition of work? (Probe for salary or wage levels and working hours. Are you provided with the requisite equipment, tools and protective clothing to work with? How do you compare working with the company to the work you were doing previously?)
10. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
11. What changes have occurred in the project implementation since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in, employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
12. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers, contract farmers or outgrowers? If the company took over your land, what happened to you?)
13. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
14. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other

livelihood outcomes. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA for you as an individual?)

15. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
16. How does LSLA (named project) negatively impact the community, district and region? (Probe: How LSLA (named project) negatively affects access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
17. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
18. What are the effects of the project on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
19. By comparing the first five years of the company's operations to what is happening currently, what differences have you observed in the outcomes of the LSLA? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences?)
20. How do the workers of the company and the community members respond to the LSLA? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Are civil society organisations involved in the community's struggle with the company? If any, identify those organisations and the kind of support they offer. What is the level of success of the response? What coping and adaptive strategies have you or the community employed to deal with LSLA?)
21. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?

22. Is there any document related to your appointment, land deal or land tenure you would like to share with me?

Interview Guide for State agencies: Lands Commission/GIPC/EPA/Customary Land Secretariat/ the Administrator of Stool's Land/ MOFA/ Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe for position and roles in the organisation. How long have you served in this organisation and position?)
2. What is the mandate of your organisation? (Probe: How are you or your organisation's involvement in land administration in Ghana? What is the role of your institution in LSLA?)
3. What policies govern land tenure in Ghana? (Probe for policies at the national, regional and local levels. How are these policies implemented? What are the challenges faced with the implementation of these policies?)
4. What is the legal framework governing land relations and LSLA? (Probe for legal framework at the national, regional and local levels. What are the legal categories of land in Ghana? Which of these categories is found in the study area? What are the implications of the legal categorisation of land for LSLA?)
5. What are the highlights of the new Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036)? (Probe: What does the Land Act say about LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
6. What are the trends in land use changes in Ghana and the Atebubu-Amanten Municipality? (Probe for the opinion of the respondent on how the trend in land use is shaping land tenure relations.)
7. How prevalent is LSLA in Ghana? (Probe for information on the size of land acquired by investors at the national, regional and municipal levels. How is LSLA distributed across the country? What are the timelines for the acquisition of these lands? What is the origin of the investors? What are the acquired lands used for?)
8. What do you know about (named project) in the Atebubu-Amanten Municipality? (Probe: Who are the owners of the project? What is the company model? What is the

size of land acquired by the investor? Did the investors go through all the required processes? Has the investment been registered by your organisation? Was there free prior informed consent from the community members? What are the terms of the contract? What is the amount of money involved in the lease agreement?)

9. Was there an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before the commencement of the project or at any stage of the project? (Probe: If yes what goes into the EIA? What were the findings of the assessment? What have the investors done to mitigate the adverse impacts on the affected communities? Has there been a follow-up EIA? What were the findings of the follow-up EIA? **NOTE: The first part of question 9 can be posed to all the respondents in this category but the probing should be directed at the representatives of EPA)**
10. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and the company? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers? Is the relationship cordial?)
11. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
12. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
13. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in, employment levels, income and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
14. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the new investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers?)

15. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
16. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes. Probe further for figures if available to back the responses.)
17. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
18. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively impact the community, district and region and state? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rites etc.?)
19. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
20. What are the effects of LSLA on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
21. By comparing the first five years of the operations of the company to what is happening currently, what difference have you observed in the outcomes of the LSLA for the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences)

22. How do the communal landholders respond to the LSLI? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Are civil society organisations involved in the community's struggle with the company? If any, identify those organisations and the kind of support they offer. What is the level of success of the community demands or agitations? What coping and adaptive strategies have the community employed to deal with LSLA?)
23. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?
24. I would be glad if you could provide me with documents on land policy, legal framework, investment contracts, EIA report, the Land Act 1036, and any other official documents that will be useful for my study.

Interview Guide for Representatives of Investment Companies

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe for the position and roles of the respondent in the organisation. How long have you served in this organisation and position?)
2. Tell me about your company or investment entity (Probe: What is the name of the company? Who is the owner of the company? Who are the partners? When was the company established? When was the company registered in Ghana in the case of foreign entities? What is the model of operation? What is the sector of operation?)
3. What processes did the company go through to access land in the study area? (Probe: How did the company come to the area? Who is the owner of the land acquired by the investors? When was the land acquired? How large is the land involved? How much did the company pay for the land? What is the duration of the agreement? Does the company have a title deed? Has EIA been conducted on the acquired land?)
4. In what ways do the company engage the community members in the company's activities? (Probe: Whether work for the company as waged workers or outgrowers? What is the nature of the relationship between the company and the community members?)
5. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?

6. What activities have taken place on the land since its acquisition? (Probe: Is the land been used? What is it used for? If it is for the cultivation of crops, what kind of crops are being cultivated on the land? What model of operation has been adopted? What percentage of the acquired land has been used? What is happening on the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation? Do the communal landholders have access to the remaining land?)
7. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the land acquisition? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in, employment levels, income and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company? What changes have occurred in the fortunes of the project?)
8. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the new investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers?)
9. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
10. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes. Probe further for documents and figures if available to back the responses.)
11. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)

12. What negative outcomes do your project have on the community, district and region and state? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
13. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
14. What are the effects of LSLA on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
15. By comparing the first five years of operations to what is happening currently, what difference have you observed in the project's output and its effects on the communal landholders? (Probe: When did the project produce the highest output and why? Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences)
16. How do the communal landholders respond to the LSLI? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Are civil society organisations involved in the community's struggle with the company? If any identify those organisations and the kind of support, they offer them. How does the company handle the demands from the community? What is the level of success in the demands of the community? What coping and adaptive strategies have the community members employed to deal with LSLA?)
17. What is your overall assessment of LSLI?
18. I would be glad if you could provide me documents on the land transaction, company strategic plan, company registration certificate and any other documents that will be useful for this study.

Interview Guide for Representatives of CSOs/NGOs in Land

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe for the position and roles of the respondent in the organisation. How long has the respondent served in the organisation and position?)
2. Tell me about your organisation? (Probe: What is the name of the CSO/NGO? Is it a local, regional, national or international organisation? Who are the founders? When was it formed? Is it registered in Ghana? What are the areas of interest of the organisation? Who are the collaborators or affiliates?)
3. What is the nature of the organisation's operation in the study area? (Probe: How did it get involved in the area and the issue at hand? How are you involved? How long has it been operating in the area? What is the focus of the operation in this area?)
4. What do people in this community do for a living? (Probe: What are the main livelihood activities?)
5. What policies govern land tenure in Ghana? (Probe for policies at the national, regional and local levels. How are these policies implemented? What are the challenges to the implementation of these policies?)
6. What is the legal framework governing land relations and LSLA? (Probe for legal framework at the national, regional and local levels. What are the legal categories of land in Ghana? Which of the categories is found in the study area? What are the implications of the legal categorisation of land for LSLA?)
7. Are you familiar with the new Land Act 2020 (Act 1036)? (Probe: If yes, what are the highlights of the Act? What does the Act stipulate in respect of LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
8. What is the importance of land to the people in this area? (Probe: How useful is land in the social, economic, political cultural and religious life of the people?)
9. What are the processes people go through to access land for their livelihood activities? (Probe: Whether is through usufructuary, tenancy, lease, purchase etc. Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership?)

What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)

10. What do you know about LSLA in this area? (Probe: Who is the owner of the land acquired by the investors? Who are the investors? How did they come to the area? When was the land acquired? How large is the land involved? What is the amount of money involved in the agreement? What is the duration of the agreement?)
11. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and investors? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers?)
12. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
13. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
14. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
15. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers, contract farmers or outgrowers? If the company took over your land, what happened to you?)
16. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
17. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community and district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new

technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes.)

18. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
19. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively impact the community, district and region? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
20. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
21. What are the effects of the project on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
22. By comparing the first five years of the operations of the company to what is happening currently, what difference have you observed in the outcomes of the project on the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produced more positive outcomes? What accounts for these differences?)
23. How do communal landholders respond to the LSLI? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? How is your organisation involved in the community struggle with the company? What other organisations are involved in the struggle? What kind of support do your organisation and others offer to the communal landholders? How does the company handle the demands of the community? What is the level of success in obtaining the demands of the community?)

What coping and adaptive strategies have the community members employed to deal with LSLA?)

24. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?

25. Is there any document on the land deals, land tenure, community resistance and any other related documents you would like to share with me?

Interview Guide for Academics/Researchers

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Probe: What institution are you affiliated with? How long have you been with the institution? What is your area of research interest? If your interest includes land tenure and LSLA, how long have you been writing on this topic? Have you ever conducted a study in Atebubu-Amanten Municipality? Are you familiar with the land tenure system in the area?)
2. What policies govern land tenure in Ghana? (Probe for policies at the national, regional and local levels. How are these policies implemented? What are the challenges to the implementation of these policies?)
3. What is the legal framework governing land relations and LSLA? (Probe for legal framework at the national, regional and local levels. What are the legal categories of land in Ghana? Which of the categories is found in the study area? What are the implications of the legal categorisation of land for LSLA?)
4. Are you familiar with the new Land Act 2020 (Act 1036)? (Probe: If yes, what are the highlights of the Act? What does the Act stipulate in respect of LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
5. What are the trends in land use in Ghana and the Atebubu-Amanten Municipality? (Probe for the opinion of the respondent on how the trend is shaping land tenure relations.)
6. How prevalent is LSLA in Ghana? (Probe for information on the size of land acquired by investors at the national, regional and municipal levels. How is LSLA distributed across the country? What are the timelines for the acquisition of these lands? What is the origin of the investors? What are the acquired lands used for?)

7. What are the processes people go through to access land for their livelihood activities? (Probe: Whether is through usufructuary, tenancy, lease, purchase etc. Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership? What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)
8. What processes do investors go through to acquire a large tract of land in Ghana? (Probe: Was there free prior informed consent sought from the community members? What roles do the state institution and traditional leaders play in the acquisition processes? What are the terms of the contract?)
9. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and investors? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers?)
10. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
11. What happens on the acquired land after its acquisition? (Probe for general information if the respondent is not familiar with the project under study but specific information if familiar. What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
12. What changes occur in the project execution after the land acquisition? (Probe: Changes in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and size of land? What changes have occurred in employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes occur in the relationship between the community and the company?)
13. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the new investor(s)? (Probe: Are they been expelled from the land? Are they given land elsewhere? Are they adequately compensated for the loss of land? Are they incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers?)
14. How successful or profitable are the investment projects? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)

15. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, regional and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes)
16. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What are the dynamics for the distribution of the benefits along the lines of gender, age, origin etc? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
17. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect the community, district and region and state? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
18. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What are the dynamics of how the negative effects are distributed along the lines of gender, age, origin etc? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
19. What are the effects of LSLA on the environment? (Probe for evidence of effects on forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
20. By comparing the first five years of the operations of a company to after five years of operation, what differences do you observe in the outcomes of the LSLA for the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences)
21. How do the communal landholders respond to the negative effects of the LSLI? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Are civil society organisations involved in the community's struggle with the company? If any, identify those organisations and the kind of support they offer. What is the level of success in the demands of the community? What coping and adaptive strategies have the community members employed to deal with LSLA?)

22. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?
23. Could you please share with me documents related to land policy, legal framework, investment contracts, publications and any other documents that will be useful to my study?

Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. What do the people in this community do for a living? (Probe: What are the main livelihood activities in the area?)
2. What is the importance of land to the people in the area? (Probe: How useful is land in the social, economic, political cultural and religious life of the people?)
3. What are the different categories of land in this area? (Probe: Is it customary, state or vested land? Who owns the land? How do landowners come to own the land? What do they use the land for? What roles do different categories of chiefs and the stakeholders in land play?)
4. Are you familiar with the new Land Act 2020 (Act 1036)? (Probe: If yes, what are the highlights of the Act? What does the Act stipulate in respect of LSLA? What is your assessment of the Land Act?)
5. What are the processes people go through to access land for their livelihood activities? (Probe: Whether is through usufructuary, tenancy, lease, purchase etc. Are the processes the same for all lands irrespective of the size of land, usage or ownership? How did you access the land you are using? What changes have occurred in these processes? How are these changes shaping the relationship between the chiefs and their subjects?)
6. What LSLAs have taken place in this area? (Probe for the location of the projects and the owner of the land)
7. What do you know about (named project) LSLA or large-scale investment projects in your community? (Probe: When was the land acquired? Who are the owners of the investment? What is the size of the land acquired? How close is this investment to your community?)

8. What was the involvement of your community in the land acquisition processes? (Probe: Were you involved in the land identification and negotiation? Was the consent of the community sought before the land was leased?)
9. What is the nature of the relationship between the community members and investment companies? (Probe: Do they work for the company as waged workers, casual workers, or outgrowers? Is the relationship between them cordial?)
10. If engaged as outgrowers or contract farmers, what are the terms of the contract?
11. What has happened and/or is happening on the acquired land since its acquisition? (Probe: What is the land used for? What kind of crops are cultivated on the land? What is the size of land under cultivation? What is happening to the remaining land acquired by the company that is not under cultivation?)
12. What changes have occurred in the project's execution since the acquisition of the land? (Probe: What changes have occurred in project ownership, usage of the land, operation model, crops cultivated and the size of land under cultivation? What changes have occurred in employment levels, and wages of those employed by the company? What changes have occurred in the relationship between the community and the company?)
13. What happened to those who were using the land before it was leased to the investor(s)? (Probe: Have they been expelled from the land? Have they been given land elsewhere? Have they been adequately compensated for the loss of land? Have they been incorporated as waged workers or outgrowers?)
14. How successful or profitable is the investment project? (Probe: What factors account for the success or otherwise of the project? What are the challenges of the company?)
15. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA (named project)? (Probe for answers at the individual, community, district, region and national levels. Probe for information on employment opportunities, income levels, access to social infrastructure, new technology, food security, access to input and market, irrigation facilities and other livelihood outcomes. What are the positive outcomes of LSLA for you as an individual?)

16. Are the positive outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed among different groups? (Probe: Which group of people are the major beneficiaries? What dynamics shape the distribution of the benefits? How does gender, age, origin, education etc. affect gains derived from the project by individuals? What factors account for the differences in the share of gains from LSLA?)
17. How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect the individual, community, district and region? (Probe: How does the LSLA (named project) negatively affect access to land and other natural resources, employment, destruction of crops, income levels, food security, competition and conflict over land, the commodification of land, cultural and religious rituals etc.?)
18. Are the negative outcomes of LSLA equitably distributed? (Probe: Which group of people are the most negatively affected? What dynamics shape the distribution of the negative impact? How does gender, age, the origin of the person, education etc. affect how the project negatively impacts individuals? What factors account for the differences in the negative effects on different groups?)
19. What are the effects of LSLA (named project) on the environment? (Probe for evidence of destruction of forest cover, soil erosion or degradation, soil fertility, pollution and climate change.)
20. By comparing the first five years of the company's operations to what is happening currently, what differences have you observed in the outcomes of the LSLI for the communal landholders? (Probe: Which stage produces more positive outcomes? What accounts for those differences)
21. How do communal landholders respond to the project? (Probe for overt and covert responses. What accounts for the kind of response adopted? Do you receive support from any civil society organisation in your struggle with the company? If any, what kind of support do you receive? How successful are you in your actions or demands from the company? What coping and adaptive strategies have your community employed to deal with LSLA?)
22. What is your overall assessment of LSLA (named project)?

23. Is there any document on the land deals or land tenure in this area that you would like to share with me?

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire

I am, a student in the African Studies Unit of the University of Cape Town, South Africa. I am conducting research on issues related to *the outcomes of large-scale land acquisition for communal landholders* and I would like to ask you some questions on these issues. This interview will take approximately ...One (1) hour..... I will ask a number of questions about the topic of my study.

All the information gathered during this interview is confidential and will be solely used for the intended purposes of this study. I will not reveal your name or any form of your identity to anyone without your permission. I will conduct this interview with the understanding that you have freely accepted to participate in this study, and that you are not obligated to answer the questions that I will be asking. You are free to discontinue the interview at any time.

You will get no direct personal benefits from participating in this study. However, the study will enhance our knowledge on the subject and the findings may be used by the community to engage with policies and programmes that are relevant to the community. Feel free at any time to ask questions to clarify anything related to this interview or study.

Consent

I freely consent to take part in this study. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not wish to continue. I also confirm that the purpose of the study has been fully explained to me. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term. I also understand that my participation will remain confidential. Name of Interviewee

Date:

QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

SECTION	Name	Page Number	Number of Question	STATUS [TICK COMPLETED SECTIONS]	COMMENTS
1	Household Roster				
2	Land Access/Acquisition				
3	Project Implementation				
4	Impacts of LSLA				

METADATA

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER

Visit No.	Interviewer ID	Date	Time		Respondent Code ID	Language of Interviewee Twi/Bono.....1 English.....2 Konkomba...3 Gonja.....4 Guan.....5 Dagaare.....6 Other.....7 Specify-----)	Translation needed? Yes.....1 No.....2	Roster	Land Access	Project Operations	Outcomes of LSLA	Community Response	Coping/Adaptation Strategies
			Start	End									

Section1.0 HOUSEHOLD ID NUMBER (hhid)

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Section1.0 Household Contact History

	1 st Visit	2 nd Visit	3 rd Visit	4 th Visit
Interviewer ID				
Date				
Time.....Start				
Time.....End				

Section1.0 Household Reference Details

Name of Household Head	
Origin of the Household Head (hhorigin) Native.....1 Immigrant.....2	
Area (hharea) Rural...1: Urban...2: Other.....3	
Location: (hhloc) Farm....1: Town....2: Village....3 Other....4	
Name of community	
Name of District	
Contact (Cell No.)	

ENUMERATOR'S CONFIRMATION

This questionnaire is completed by:

(Enumerator's signature).....

Date.....

Checked by (Controller)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOUSEHOLD ROSTER

FOR THIS SECTION INTERVIEW THE HOUSEHOLD HEAD.

IF THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD IS NOT PRESENT, FIND A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT, WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON BEHALF OF ALL MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSEHOLD. THE PERSON SELECTED AS THE MAIN RESPONDENT IN THIS SECTION MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD WHO IS ABLE TO GIVE INFORMATION ON THE OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS.

ONCE ALL THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY PRESENT ARE LISTED, ASK FOR OTHER PERSONS NOT PRESENT WHO NORMALLY LIVE AND EAT IN THIS HOUSEHOLD. FOR EXAMPLE, PERSONS STUDYING, VISITING OR WORKING ELSEWHERE.

START WITH THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD FIRST, AND THEN THE SPOUSE AND CHILDREN. IF THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE WIVES, START WITH FIRST WIFE AND HER CHILDREN, THEN OTHER WIVES AND THEIR CHILDREN. FOR EACH PERSON LISTED IN Q1, COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS (2-9) FOR ONE PERSON BEFORE GOING TO THE NEXT PERSON.

DECEASED PERSONS AND LOGERS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE LIST IN Q1. HIRED AND DOMESTIC WORKERS SHOULD NOT BE LISTED IN Q1 IF THEY HAVE THEIR OWN PLACE. GUESTS WHO ARE VISITING FOR LESS THEN THREE MONTHS SHOULD NOT BE LISTED.

A HOUSEHOLD IS HERE TAKEN TO REFER TO PEOPLE (RELATED OR NOT) WHO:

a) Live together, b) Share meals from a common source, and c) pull or share their resources or money together.

Note: THIS DEFINITION OF A HOUSEHOLD IS A GENERAL GUIDELINE. THERE MAY BE CERTAIN CASES WHICH MAY NOT FIT THIS DEFINITION. INTERVIEWERS SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF ANY UNIQUE CASES.

SECTION 2: HOUSEHOLD ROSTER

Respondent ID CODE	
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SECTION 1.1: Household Members

In this section, I would like to make a complete list of names of the people who usually live and have their meals in this

dwelling, even those who are away at this moment

PERSON ID CODE	Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q.4	Q5.	Q6.	Q7.	Q8.	Q9.
	FOR EACH LISTED HOUSEHOLD MEMBER BEFORE GOING TO Q10	Sex Male.....1 Female... 2	Relation to Household head Resident Head1 Absent head.....16 Wife/Husband2 Child/adopted child3 Parent of head.....4 Grand Child.....5 Grand Parent.....6 Sister/brother.....7 Son-/Daughter-in-law.....8 Mother-Father-in-law9 Brother-/sister-in-law.....10 Nice/Nephew.....11 Great-grand Child.....12 Other Relatives.....13 Workers/Relative.....14 Other.....15 (specify -----)	How old is [...] Today Years	What was his highest educational attainment? Never Attended.....1 Primary.....2 JHS/MLSC.....3 SHS/O'Level.....4 A' Level.....5 Diploma.....6 Degree.....7 Postgraduate.....8 Other.....9 (Specify-----)	What does [...] do for a living? Formal job.....1 Casual Work.....2 Self-employed...3 Unemployed.....4 Own Farm.....5 Farmworker.....6 Studying.....7 Government.....8 Retired.....9 Housewife.....10 Other11 Specify_____)	Which of the following activities is [...] engaged in if livelihood activity involves exploiting the land and natural resources? Food crop farming.....1 Cash crop farming.....2 Livestock.....3 Hunting/fishing...4 Gathering fruits...5 Other.....6 (Specify-----)	Does [...] come from the study area? Yes...1 No.....2	How long has [...] lived in this community?
Pcode	Name	Sex	Relhhd	Age	Education	Occupation	Activities	Origin	Duration
1									
2									
3									
4									

Respondent ID Code	
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SECTION 3: LAND ACCESS AND THE PROCESS OF LSLA

In this section, you are required to answer the questions as they pertain to your household’s access to land as well as involvement in the LSLA process

ID Code	Q1. Who is the owner of the land you use for your livelihood activities? Self.....1 State.....2 Paramount chief.....3 Divisional Chief.....4 Village head.....5 Lineage.....6 Private individual.....7 Investors.....8 Other.....9 (Specify-----)	Q2. If self-owned, do you have title over the land? Yes.....1 No.....2	Q3 How do you or your household members access land for your activities? Usufruct.....1 Leasehold.....2 Tenancy.....3 Sharecropping...4 Gift.....5 Allodial right-holder.....6 Other.....7 (Specify-----)	Q4 Are you aware of any LSLI project in this area? Yes.....1 No.....2	Q5 If YES to Q4, was your household involved in the land acquisition process? Yes.....1 No.....2	Q6 If YES to Q5 how were you involved? Land identification.....1 Community consultation.....2 Negotiating land deal.....3 Negotiating compensation...4 Signing lease agreement.....5 Other.....6 (Specify-----)	Q7 Was the consent of the community members sought before the land was leased? Yes.....1 No.....2	Q8 Did any member of your household lose his/her land to LSLA? Yes.....1 No.....2	Q9 If Yes to Q8, what was the size of land your household lost to the company? (Acres)															
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Respondent ID Code	
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SECTION 3: LAND ACCESS AND THE PROCESS OF LSLA (CONT.)

10. If YES to Q8, what was done for you for losing your land?

- Financial compensation for losing land.....1
- Financial compensation for loss of crops/property...2
- Financial compensation for loss of income.....3
- Given land elsewhere.....4
- Resettlement.....5
- Employed in the company.....6
- Engaged by the company as an outgrower or contract farmer.....7
- Received nothing.....8
- Other.....9

(Specify-----)

11. If your household received financial compensation for the loss of land, how much was received per acre in Ghana Cedis?

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12. If you lost your crop or property on the land, how much in Ghana Cedis was given to you as compensation?

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13. What is your overall assessment of the compensation you received for the loss of land and/or property?

- Highly satisfactory.....1
- Satisfactory.....2
- Less satisfactory.....3
- Not satisfactory.....4

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Section 4: Project Implementation and Changes

1. What is the land acquired by the company used for?
- Plantation /Agriculture without factory.....1
 - Plantation/Agriculture with factory.....2
 - Housing.....3
 - Processing factory.....4
 - Forest / Game Reserve.....5
 - Other6

(Specify -----)

2. If plantation/agriculture, what crop is being cultivated (Tick as many as applicable)?
- Cassava.....1
 - Eucalyptus.....2
 - Cashew.....3
 - Mango.....4
 - Maize.....5
 - Yam.....6
 - Other.....7

(Specify-----)

3. In your estimation, what percentage of the acquired land has been utilized?
- Less than 30%.....1
 - 30%-50%.....2
 - Above 50%.....3

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4. What is the remaining land not under cultivation used for?
- Lying ideal.....1
 - Use by community members.....2
 - Use as a conservation site.....3
 - Use as a buffer zone.....4
 - Other5

(Specify-----)

5. What change has occurred in the project implementation since the acquisition of the land?
- Change in Ownership.....1
 - Change in crops cultivated.....2
 - Size of land acquired.....3
 - Size of land under cultivation.....4
 - Project has collapsed.....5
 - Other.....6

(Specify -----)

6. What is the size of land your household has access to currently?

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Section 4: Project Implementation and Changes (Cont.)

1. What was the size of land your household had access to before the LSLA?

2. What is the average distance from your house to your farm now?

3. What was the average distance from your house to your farm before the LSLA?

4. What changes have occurred in land access since the emergence of the LSLA?

- Increase in value of land.....1
- Increased competition over land.....2
- Monetization of land.....3
- Increased land-related conflicts.....4
- Difficulty accessing fertile land... ..5
- Other.....6

(Specify-----)

5. What changes have occurred in the land use practices in the area due to the LSLA?

- Emergence of mechanized farming.....1
- Increased incidence of cash crop cultivation.....2
- Continues cultivation on the same piece of plot...3
- Reduction in the fallow period4
- Increased incidence of crop rotation.....5
- Other.....6

(Specify -----)

6. What natural resources have you lost access right of due to the LSLA (Choose at most 5)?

- Water source.....1
- Forest products.....2
- Hunting and gathering rights....3
- Passage to and fro.....4
- Grass for roofing.....5
- Medicinal plants.....6
- Ancestral groove.....7
- Other8

(Specify-----)

Respondent ID Code	
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Section 5: Impacts of LSLA

1. Has any member of your household worked for or with the investment company?

Yes.....1

No.....2

2. If Yes to Q1, What is the nature of the engagement?

Permanent wage worker.....1

Temporal wage worker.....2

Casual/daily labourer.....3

Contract/Outgrower farmer.....4

Other (Specify -----)

3. If YES to Q1, how long have you been engaged by the company?

4. If outgrower/contract farmer, who does the land you use for the contract farming belong to?

Company acquire land.....1

Communal land.....2

Self-acquired3

Other.....4

(Specify-----)

5. Which of the following have you benefited from the investment company (Choose as many as applicable)?

- Improved seeds.....1
- Farm implements.....2
- Agrochemicals.....3
- Irrigation facility.....4
- Training in new technology.....5
- Extension services.....6
- Other.....7
- (Specify-----)

Q6-Q13 are to be answered by the household whose member works or has worked with the investment company. If no member is or was an employee of the Company, Skip to Q14

6. If your response for Q2 is 1, 2 or 3, what work do you do?

- Manager.....1
- Office Assistant.....2
- Accountant.....3
- Land clearance4
- Sowing5
- Spraying.....6
- Mechanic.....7
- Driver.....8
- Security.....9
- Factory worker.....10
- Other11
- (Specify-----)

7. How much were/are you paid per month?

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Respondent ID Code	
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Section 5: Impacts of LSLA (Cont.)

7. The income derived from working for the company compared to doing similar work outside the company is higher.

- Strongly agree.....1
- Agree.....2
- Neutral.....3
- Disagree4
- Strongly disagree.....5

8. How would you describe the working conditions at the investment company?

- Very good.....1
- Good.....2
- Bad.....3
- Worse.....4

9. How do you compare the working condition in the company to similar jobs outside the company?

- Better working conditions.....1
- Same working conditions.....2
- Poor working conditions3

10. What motivated your decision to work for the company (Tick as many as applicable)?

- Attractive pay.....1
- Conducive working conditions.....2
- Loss of access to land3
- Absence of alternative job.....4
- Desire to meet livelihood needs...5
- Alternative to main job.....6
- Other.....7

(Specify-----)

12. What are the benefits of working with the company (Choose as many as applicable)?

- Increased stability and security of income....1
- Increased ability to cover medical expenses...2
- Increased ability to take care of children.....3
- Increased income levels.....4
- Increased food security.....5
- Increased ability to save and/or invest....6
- Increased social status.....7
- Other.....8

(Specify -----)

13. Does the company pay your SSNIT contribution?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

Section 5: Impacts of LSLA (Cont.)

The following sets of questions are to be answered by all households

14. At what phase of the project did you earn much income from your livelihood activities?
 Before the start of the project.....1
 At the start of the investment.....2
 During the project expansion phase.....3
 At the current stage of operation.....4
 Other.....5

(Specify-----)

15. At what phase of the project did you spend much money on your livelihood activities?
 Before the start of the project.....1
 At the start of the investment.....2
 During the project expansion phase.....3
 Current stage of operations.....4
 Other5

(Specify-----)

16. At what phase of the project did you have enough food to feed your household?
 Before the start of the project.....1
 At the start of the investment.....2
 During the project expansion phase.....3
 Current stage of operations.....4
 Other5
 (Specify-----)

17. At what phase of the project did you have insufficient food to feed your household?
 Before the start of the project.....1
 At the start of the investment.....2
 During the project expansion phase.....3
 Current stage of operations.....4
 Other5

(Specify-----)

18. What positive impacts does the investment project have for you and your community (choose as many as applicable)?
 Employment opportunities.....1
 Increased income.....2
 Access to social infrastructure.....3
 New technology.....4
 Food security.....5
 Access to input.....6
 Access to Market for produce.....7
 Improved standard of living.....8
 Other.....9

(Specify-----)

Section 5: Impacts of LSLA (Cont.)

19. What negative impacts does the LSLA have on you and your community (Choose as many as applicable)?

- Scarcity of land.....1
- Reduced income.....2
- Loss of access to natural resources.....3
- Loss of employment opportunities.....4
- Conflicts over land.....5
- Food insecurity/Famine.....6
- Displacement.....7
- Loss of access to cultural and religious sites.....8
- Abuse of the rights of the community members.....9
- Violence in the community.....10
- Other.....11

(Specify-----)

20. What are the positive effects of the LSLA on the environment (Choose as many as applicable)?

- Reforestation of degraded forest cover.....1
- Reduction in the incidence of soil erosion...2
- Improved soil fertility.....3
- Reduction in the incidence of bushfires.....4
- Stable atmospheric temperature.....5
- Improved quality of Water.....6
- Improved quality of Air.....7
- Stable rainfall pattern.....8
- Other.....9

(Specify-----)

21. What negative effects does the LSLA project have on the environment (Choose as many as applicable)?

- Destruction of the forest cover making the land bear....1
- Soil erosion.....2
- Loss of soil fertility.....3
- Increasing occurrence of bushfires.....4
- Rising temperature.....5
- Water pollution.....6
- Air pollution.....7
- Unpredictable/low rainfall.....8
- Other9

(Specify-----)

Section 6: Community Response

1. How do you or your community respond/react to the activities of the LSLA project (Choose not more than 5 most common responses)?

Street protest/ demonstrations.....1
 Boycott.....2
 Petitioning/lobbying people in authority.....3
 Violent attacks on the company’s workers..... 4
 Destructions of the company’s property.....5
 Land occupation.....6
 Road blockade.....7
 Judicial action.....8
 Do nothing.....9
 Other10

(Specify-----)

2. What form does the response/reaction of the community take?

Individualized action.....1
 Collective mobilization of affected community members...2
 Collective mobilization of the entire community without the support from NGOs/CSOs.....3
 Collective mobilization of the entire community with the support of NGOs/CSOs/local and national elites.....4
 Other.....5

(Specify-----)

3. What reasons account for the response of the community to the investment project (Provide at most 5 reasons as applicable)?

Issues related to the land acquisition process.....1
 Unfulfilled promises.....2
 Displacement3
 Issues of Compensation (No, inadequate or delayed compensation).....4
 Changes in project execution.....5
 Expansion of the acquired land.....6
 Negative impact of the project.....7
 Violation of human rights.....8
 Disregard for local culture/religion.....9
 Other.....10

(Specify-----)

4. How does the company or the state react to the concerns of the community (Pick at most 5)?

Engage the community in dialogue.....1
 Policy change2
 Fulfil the demands of the community.....3
 Modification of project.....4
 Initiate legal action against the community members...5
 Threaten members with jail sentences.....6
 Repression.....7
 Bribing community mobilization leaders.....8
 Do nothing.....9
 Other.....10

(Specify-----)

Section 7: Coping and Adaptive Strategies

1. What coping strategies do you adopt to cope with the effects of LSLA (Pick NOT more than 5 as applicable)?

- Leave to farm very early.....1
- Reduce the number of days of visits to farm.....2
- Get medicinal plants from family and friends.....3
- Engage in casual work.....4
- Get financial support from family and friends.....5
- Application of agro-chemicals.....6
- Use treated water from the city.....7
- Reduced farm size.....8
- Other9

(Specify -----)

- Migration for greener pastures elsewhere.....12
- Other.....13

(Specify-----)

3. What is your assessment of the overall impacts of the LSLA for your livelihood?

- Positive.....1
- Neutral.....2
- Negative.....3

2. What adaptive strategies do you adopt to mitigate the impact of the LSLA

- (Pick at most 6 as applicable)?
- Keeping backyard garden.....1
 - Fish farming.....2
 - Petty trading.....3
 - Gathering from the wild.....4
 - Brewing and shea processing.....5
 - Keeping livestock.....6
 - Cultivation of cash crops.....7
 - Adopting new farming practices.....8
 - Bought motorbike.....9
 - Relocated farm.....10
 - Change in occupation.....11
