

# Land grabbing and its implications on rural livelihoods in Ghana and Ethiopia

– a comparative study

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***Abstract***

The rush for land has escalated the last decade, with Sub-Saharan Africa as the most targeted region. Governments, local elites and foreign corporations are increasingly taking control over large areas of agricultural lands with the aim of creating higher financial returns and achieve food security. This phenomenon, known as land grabbing, has received a lot of attention worldwide, not least from non-governmental organizations and scholars stressing the negative impacts on rural farmers and families. Yet, several international organizations as well as many African governments keep advocating the positive effects that land grabbing can have on poverty reduction and economic growth. The dominating capitalist and neoliberal view on development, focusing largely on the economic part, undermines the social and environmental impacts that these investments bring. The purpose of this comparative study is therefore to examine, analyze and compare these impacts in Ghana and Ethiopia, two countries heavily affected by land grabbing. This is done through the lens of political ecology, where concepts such as environmental justice, accumulation by dispossession and sustainable rural livelihoods will be of particular significance. Based on a systematic literature review, the results show that land grabbing projects, said to aim at stimulating economic and social development, have resulted in dispossessions, injustices and environmental conflicts wherein indigenous communities have been deeply affected. Their traditional livelihoods, based mainly on cultivation, fishing, gathering and hunting, have been threatened by several impacts from the land grabs. These include loss of land, declined access to resources, damaged ecosystems, deforestation and lack of alternative ways to maintain food security.

*Keywords:* Land grabbing, Ghana, Ethiopia, political ecology, environmental justice, accumulation by dispossession, sustainable rural livelihoods.

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## 1. Introduction

This is a comparative study that critically analyzes land grabbing projects in the rural parts of Ghana and Ethiopia, and the ways in which they affect resource-poor, rural populations' possibilities to achieve and maintain sustainable livelihoods. The agriculture sector is a vital part of both the Ghanaian economy (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 3; Kuusaana & Gerber 2015: 856) and the Ethiopian economy (World Bank 2016; Central Intelligence Agency 2016), meaning they are heavily dependent on land for production. However, the countries have increasingly leased out land areas to foreign investors (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 423; Cotula 2012: 656; Alamirew et al. 2015: 1122), which is why they will be the focal point of this study.

The following paper is consciously normative, based on post-marxist thoughts and with a point of departure built on the assumption that land grabbing has far more negative implications than positive on rural livelihoods. Through a critical and systematic literature study, our ambition is thus to examine and analyze these negative implications and by that contribute to the growing debate about negative impacts rising from this current trend. Through a political ecological lens, concepts such as environmental justice, accumulation by dispossession and sustainable rural livelihoods will be essential to the study.

A central part of rural working people's capabilities to achieve decent livelihoods, avoid marginalisation and exclusion as well as escape poverty and hunger lies in the access to and control over land and its natural resources (Transnational Institute 2017: 1). However, the last decade has seen an unprecedented global rush for land, followed by various land deals and investments. In their latest report, Land Matrix announced that the total number of land deals throughout the world since the year of 2000 is 85.5 million hectares, out of which 43.6 million have been concluded by contract. Africa accounts for 42% of the global land deals and is thus the most heavily targeted region (Nolte, Chamberlain & Giger. 2016: 7, 16). Referred to as land grabbing, large-scale land acquisitions (LSLA) or agriculture investments, this phenomenon have since 2007 gained great attention globally amongst media, organizations, researchers and stakeholders. Due to our critical standpoint on this issue, we have chosen to use the term land grabbing.

We define this trend in line with the NGO Via Campesina:

“Land grabbing is the control - whether through ownership, lease, concession, contracts, quotas, or general power - of larger than locally-typical amounts of land by any persons or entities - public or private, foreign or domestic - via any means - ‘legal’ or ‘illegal’ - for purposes of speculation, extraction, resource control or commodification at the expense of peasant farmers, agroecology, land stewardship, food sovereignty and human rights.” (European Coordination Via Campesina, 2016).

Although there is a general agreement regarding the fact that the interest and investment in land has exploded since 2007, no consensus has been reached regarding its causes, character and implications (Edelman, Oya & Borras Jr 2013: 1518). There is, however, a common argument amongst the literature stressing the importance of the international crises in food prices, fuel and finance in 2007-2008. Those crises have, in the context of an increasingly globalized world, triggered a global rush for land (Dell’Angelo, D’Odorico & Rulli 2017: 121). In response to these multiple crises and market volatilities, “finance-rich, resource-poor” countries as well as transnational and domestic corporates and investors started seeking and acquiring arable land for production abroad in order to guarantee their future food and energy security and to create higher financial returns through extended capital accumulation (Cotula, Vermeulen, Leonard & Keeley 2009: 4, Cotula et al. 2014: 911, Zoomers 2010: 429, Braun & Dick 2009: 1, Borras, Franco, Gómez, Kay & Spoor 2011: 209, Lisk 2003: 564).

While these multiple international crises are considered by many as the main drivers for the global land rush, and although they did indeed play an important role, it is nevertheless important to also, when analysing the land grabbing phenomenon, place this within the expansion of capitalism into agriculture (Akram-Lodhi 2012: 126). The multiple, global crises exposed the limits to the market-led appropriation and resource-distribution towards global finance and industrial capital as the basis of accumulation. Accumulation by dispossession thus became forced as the markets’ limits became obvious. To guarantee a way out of this crisis, global capitalism needed to enhance profitability once again. This was to be done by lowering the real cost of food and agricultural products in order to restrain rising real wages and in turn lower labor costs in capitalist countries. By doing this, a basis was created, where relative surplus value was enhanced and profitability increased. A central process to achieve this has been the phenomenon of land grabbing, where production of cheap food and agriculture products for the world markets has increased dramatically (ibid. 138). There also exists a biofuel complex today, meaning fears of rising fuel prices cause’s new forms of resource

extraction for fuel security. In fact, biofuels have started to represent a new sort of profitability frontier for agribusiness and energy sectors (White et al. 2012: 628).

### 1.1 Problem statement

Access to land and its resources is important for many people around the world, but nowhere is land as crucial to livelihood as in Africa (Lisk 2013: 576). Smallholder production is still the backbone of the region's agriculture and many smallholder producers depend heavily on land on which they can produce their food and maintain agricultural productivity. Furthermore, for many communities across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), land is not only important for food production and economic benefits, but their cultural and social identity is also connected to the land (ibid: 576-577). The recent transboundary land investments, e.g. the cultivation of food and biofuel feedstock, have been most prevalent in SSA. This is due to the countries' high endowments with water and land resources, their weaker protection of land rights and their stronger role of public property in rural land administration (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 48). Consequently, agricultural investments in Africa is competing with the existing land uses, which in turn leads to the interruption of traditional production systems as well as dispossession (Schoneveld 2014: 89).

Ethiopia and Ghana are among the countries in SSA which have experienced much investor interest in the recent wave of land deals (ibid.). In background to this, few studies attempt to assess the ongoing and potential effect of land acquisition processes on local communities in Ghana (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4602). In fact, Ghana is not only useful to study for the size of recent land acquisitions, but for their cumulative effects on rural communities whom are already struggling with considerable land commercialization and livelihood stress (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 423).

The views on contemporary land grabbing are polarized. With promoters of environmental and social justice as well as human rights on one side and advanced capitalism on the other, debates concerning this phenomenon are countless. An increasing number of critical studies and literature have emerged in recent years, raising issues regarding the future of small-scale farmers and poor, rural people affected by these deals, where negative consequences such as dispossession, environmental conflicts and increased poverty are highlighted (Hernandez-Arthur & Grainger 2016, Lisk 2013: 564). However, while also recognizing certain risks for small-scale farmers and poor people, international organizations such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Food policy Research Institute (IFPRI) are continuously advocating that agrarian investments are necessary in order to increase

much needed food production for a growing world population and to achieve economic growth to reduce poverty. These may thus offer a win-win situation for both investors and host populations if properly regulated (von Braun & Meinzen-Dick 2009: 2, Cotula et al. 2009: 15). Many African governments are also considering foreign direct investments in the agriculture sector to be an opportunity for a long awaited economic development, where marginalized land is predicted to maximize financial returns and boost the economy (Wolford, Borras, Hall, Scoones & White 2013: 192).

In other words, the capitalist globalization and current prevailing, neoliberal view on development through economic growth are justifying the land grabbing trend while undermining the crucial environmental and social aspects. Considering the importance of land and its resources for rural populations' livelihoods and survival in poor countries, such as Ghana and Ethiopia, this is deeply problematic (Cotula et al. 2009: 17). This trend of overlooking environmental issues and local people's values, traditions and connections to their lands in favor for capital accumulation thus need to proceed being questioned and criticized. Land is central for livelihood and food security in rural areas and thus it is fundamental to examine the impacts of land grabbing in order to understand the phenomenon vis-a-vis development (ibid. 4).

## 1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this paper is to elucidate the land grabbing phenomenon and its consequences on rural populations in Ghana and Ethiopia. The study will scrutinize which underlying factors enable and facilitate land grabbing in these countries as well as analyze the consequences that it entails on sustainable livelihoods and food security for the rural populations. With this approach we aim to contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomenon as well as to the broader debate concerning the negative consequences of global land grabbing. The following research questions have been formulated:

- What negative socio-economic and environmental impacts occur from land grabbing and how are these impacting on the rural populations' livelihoods in Ghana and Ethiopia?
- What underlying, structural factors trigger land grabbing projects in the countries?

### 1.3 Delimitations

Land grabbing is a phenomenon that happens all around the world and both local, national and global processes and policies are involved. Considering the size of this trend, as well as its complexity, we have chosen to limit our study to cover only two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; Ghana and Ethiopia. Within these countries, certain regions are selected as units of analysis, which will be further explained in chapter 2. Furthermore, we will exclusively analyze underlying factors within these countries that contribute to the continuation of land grabbing projects, thus focusing on local, regional and national levels and processes. By limiting the study to only two countries we are able to do a more profound analysis of land grabbing, as opposed to examining a larger number of countries. Additionally, focusing on two countries within the most heavily targeted region is highly relevant for our purpose. Regarding consequences stemming from land grabbing projects in Ghana and Ethiopia, the study will focus specifically on the rural people and their current and future livelihoods and thus adopt a local perspective. We will, however, not conduct a deeper analysis of specific gender dimensions, i.e. the gender perspective falls beyond the principal scope of this study. Studies covering these issues have however been conducted and further reading can be found in Levien (2017), Chu (2011) and Behrman, Meinzen-Dick & Quisumbing (2012) amongst others.

### 1.4 Disposition

After this introduction chapter, where the context of land grabbing and the study's purpose has been described, the disposition of this paper is as follows:

In chapter 2 the methodological approach is presented, which is followed by the theoretical framework and central concepts in chapter 3. In chapter 4 a background history of the countries are introduced in order to set the scene and provide a broader picture of the agriculture sector's importance as well as to highlight the extent of land grabbing in each country. Following this is the results from our in-depth literature review in chapter 5. Chapter 6 covers our analysis based on the study's theoretical framework and finally, the last chapter (7) comprises of a final discussion and conclusions.



## 2. Method

The main purpose of this study is to critically review land grabbing projects and their negative impacts on rural populations in Ghana and Ethiopia. A supplementary purpose is henceforth to analyze structural factors that can explain why these impacts occur in these countries and to make a comparison between them. A comparison is a mode of scientific analysis, with the aim to investigate systematically two or more entities in regards to their differences and similarities. By doing so, one can arrive at understanding, explaining and make conclusions (Azarian 2011: 116). Hence this study has a comparative approach and will be built upon systematic literature review. This chapter starts with a presentation of the specific cases (regions) chosen for the study, followed by a description of our comparative approach and how this will be accomplished. After this we proceed with a presentation of the method of systematic literature review and the research process. We will furthermore discuss the benefits with our choice of methods and do a critical reflection of this.

### 2.1 Cases of analysis

As mentioned before, both Ghana and Ethiopia have been and still are targeted by large-scale land investments, i.e. land grabbing. Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world and has suffered numerous famines since 1960. Many regions suffered from starvation as recently as 2002-2003 (Rahmato 2011: 2). The country has previously aimed for agricultural development based on smallholders, but the government has since 2007 actively promoted large-scale land investments in order to optimize agriculture production, increase food security and reduce poverty (Lavers 2012: 796; Rahmato 2011: 2). This makes Ethiopia a relevant country to study. Similarly, Ghana is relevant to study partly because the scale of recent land grabbing and also due to the fact that rural communities already struggle with considerable commercialization of land, growing inequalities and livelihood stress (Tsikata & Yaro 2014: 203).

We will however focus primarily on certain regions within these countries, based on relevance as well as available and accessible data of different projects and their implications. In Ghana, these include Brong-Ahafo region, Ashanti region and The Upper West region, which are the three regions particularly affected by large-scale investments (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4592; Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 424; ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 70). In the Ashanti region there exist large areas of what is called tribal land, located primarily in the Pru District. In the case of the Upper West Region and Brong-Ahafo region, most cases of large-scale land acquisitions have taken

place in rural communities (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 6; Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 424). Since this study focuses on how rural communities are negatively impacted by large-scale land acquisitions, these three Ghanaian regions are all meeting the criterias set by this study. In Ethiopia on the other hand, Benishangul-Gumuz is the region where the largest amount of land has been transferred to investors, totaling up to 600,254 ha. This is followed by Oromia state (458,292 ha) and Gambella regional state (399,491 ha) (Teklemariam et al. 2016: 8). Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz are located in the lowlands of Ethiopia, where the majority of land transfers to large-scale companies take place. These regions have low population densities and thus larger amount of land tracts used for livelihood activities. These two regions were also targeted by the Ethiopian government's villagization program in 2010 (Human Rights Watch 2012: 19). Oromia, representing the highlands of Ethiopia, has much higher population density and thus more people depending on the land. However, the region has also attracted investors and transferred a large amount of land to several companies (Shete & Rutten 2015: 289). Hence, these six regions (three in Ghana and three in Ethiopia) will be our cases of analysis. Considering the different contexts and the various traditional livelihood practices in each of these regions, the empirical evidence will be suitable for comparison.

## 2.2 Comparative Study

Within the field of comparative research there are four main purposes that all coexist and reinforce the study; *contextual description*, *classification*, *testing of hypotheses* and *predictions* regarding future outcomes or outcomes in other countries. However, the researcher usually put more emphasize on some of these, depending on the aim of the study (Landman 2002: 4). In general, the purpose of doing comparative research is thus not only to account for similarities and differences between the units of analysis but also to explain why and how these occur (Perry 2013: 295). The aim of contextual description is to describe the phenomenon that is being studied, while the researcher uses conceptual classifications to effectively organize collected data into well-defined categories and by that simplifying the process of description (Landman 2002: 5, 7). These are the two main purposes that we above all put emphasis on, i.e. our focal point is to describe various negative consequences rising from land grabbing projects in the chosen regions in Ghana and Ethiopia and to use classifications in order to detect similarities and differences between the countries in a simpler way, both regarding consequences and factors enabling these. The categories that will be used during the classification process will partly be predetermined based on our theoretical framework and central concepts; hence this comparative study is based on a theory application process (Deng 2002: 19). Further categories might however be added during the process of data extraction.

## 2.3 (Systematic) literature review

A systematic literature review was conducted in order to gather empirical data about land grabbing in Ghana and Ethiopia. We argue that this method is the most adequate choice for data collection, considering the lack of time and resources for us to directly gather it ourselves. Hence we do not offer new primary data; rather this study aims to collect already published literature in order to form a database from which an analysis can be made. One benefit of doing this is the opportunity to collect as much data from as much relevant research as possible, to justify broader conclusions about the conditions. It is however important to note that even when analyzing several studies, limitations about sweeping conclusions are still there. These constraints are part of the scientific rules of inference which demand causation as well as parsimony (Baumeister & Leary 1997: 313). When conducting a high-quality literature review, it is of great importance to cover relevant material, contribute to the scientific field, describe key concepts as well as describe the research's boundaries (Webster & Watson 2002: 15, 21). Furthermore, a literature review should strive to identify knowledge gaps and thus encourage researchers to close the breach. This in turn means that writing a review not only requires an examination of past research, but also means making a chart for the future of research (Webster & Watson 2002: 19).

### 2.3.1 The literature research process

A systematic literature review is meant to be repeatable and the process should be transparent, it is furthermore imperative to document all the different stages in the research process of a literature review as for any other piece of research (Aveyard 2010: 3). We will initially develop a systematic search strategy which includes formulated research questions and key words as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria's. This will guide the review and allows us to identify relevant literature, thus minimizing the risk of a random and disorganized search process (Aveyard 2014: 74). The inclusion and exclusion criteria's also help establish the quality of data (ibid.).

Google Scholar and SöderScholar are the two databases that will be used for collecting empirical data. The keywords applied are: *land grab*, *large-scale land acquisitions*, *land rush*, *agriculture investment*, *land control*, *control grabbing*, *green grabbing*, *resource extraction* and *resource conflict*. These will all be combined with each of the countries, i.e. Ghana and Ethiopia. The snowball technique will also be used, where references from found material will be followed up and analyzed if relevant (Ridley 2012: 56). Inclusion criteria concern above all the relevance of the topic, i.e. the material must cover land grabbing projects and implications from these. The geographical aspect is another important inclusion criterion. Considering that this study aims to

analyze land grabbing in Ghana and Ethiopia only, studies that do not cover these countries will thus be excluded. We will furthermore only include articles written in English, since we do not have the necessary resources or time to translate foreign language articles. In general, it is preferred to include all languages, but retrieving reports of foreign language articles and translating them requires considerable resources (White & Schmidt 2005: 57) which we do not have. The empirical material will comprise of books, journal articles and 'grey literature' (see Ridley 2012: 45) such as organization reports, conference papers and dissertations. Regarding articles found in Google Scholar and SöderScholar, these must be peer-reviewed in order to be included in this study.

After identifying material selected for inclusion, we will start the data extraction where relevant parts are marked, registered and classified into the different categories. This step will be done individually by both authors, however regular discussions will be held in order to verify differences in interpretation and thus assure the validity. Once all data is extracted and classified, the comparative analysis will take place.

## 2.4 Critical reflection of methods

Literature reviewers have considerably less control over their evidence compared to other types of researchers; this is due to the fact that they are depending on the existing research done by others. Therefore, Baumeister and Leary (1997) stress the importance of the literature reviewers allowing themselves to be led by their evidence much more than other researchers. If failing to do so, the literature reviews risk to fail in fulfilling its scientific function (ibid.).

There are particularly two limitations in the method section of any systematic literature review. The first one is the fact that one cannot always get hold of hard-to-reach articles. Hence, although they might not be critical in answering the research question per se, it is still important to highlight this possible limitation. The second one concerns the process of undertaking a literature review for the novice researcher during a systematic review, since it is common for a team of researchers to undertake each of the identified references and hence review its relevance for the literature review. The novice researcher is disadvantaged because such resources are oftentimes unlikely to be available for them (Aveyard 2014: 96). We also lack the resources and time to translate non-English articles, even if they might be very useful for this study. Due to this, we will, as mentioned earlier, use articles written in English. However, by only including one language we are facing the risk of language bias (Saini & Shlonsky 2012: 153).

*Limitations of an electronic search*

Electronic searching has its advantages, but it should be emphasized that computerized searching tools are not always comprehensive and will not always identify all the relevant literature on the research topic one wants to study. The reasons behind this are that some relevant and useful literature might have been categorized using different keywords and consequently cannot be found by one particular search strategy (Aveyard 2014: 89).

Comparative research method can often be confronted with the problem of what is and what is not comparable (Caramani 2008: 28). However, according to Caramani (2008), from a methodological point of view there are no limits to comparison when it comes to comparative research (ibid.). Most comparative studies often begins with certain, implicit or outspoken assumptions about the chosen comparability of some chosen units, meaning, there is an assumption that propose that there is at some level of analysis, a meaningful purpose to compare these units in some aspects or along some particular dimensions. However, it is crucial to question to what extent these given units are truly comparable. Furthermore it is important to address what conditions are required in order to make any comparison among them meaningful. In background to this, one of the constraints of this method lies in the incapability of safeguarding against the pitfalls of comparing incomparable units belonging to different contexts (Azarian 2011: 121). Another issue with this method is referred to as asymmetrical comparison. If the researcher's choice range is circumscribed, this in turn often leaves the analyst with only a small number of cases determined by factors beyond the researcher's power. Under these imposed research conditions, the analyst is often forced to conduct a comparison from units that he or she does not have equally adequate knowledge from. This, in turn, often leads to undermining and weakening the possibilities of conducting a balanced comparison (ibid.).

### 3. Previous research and theoretical framework

#### 3.1 Previous research

There are several studies highlighting the implications of land grabbing on rural livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa (McMichael 2012; Carmody & Taylor 2016; Ronald 2014; Alamirew 2015; Hules & Singh 2017). Regarding Uganda for example, several studies describe how people were displaced as a direct consequence of land acquisition processes (Carmody & Taylor 2016: 101; McMichael 2012: 693; Ronald 2014: 193). The leasing of land has furthermore caused serious negative effects of ecological alterations in Uganda, which consequently might negate development efforts (Ronald

2014: 204). In the case of Uganda, like the rest of Africa, a large part of the land acquired by foreign investors has been for biofuels, food production and carbon offsetting (Carmody & Taylor 2016: 101).

Hakizimana et al. (2017) examined land and agricultural commercialization in Meru County Kenya, and its effect of rural livelihoods. The case study was conducted in Meru County in which the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with key informants in the commercial farms, farm managers, farm workers and county government. The study concluded that those farmers who became wage workers as a result of the commercialization of land and arrival of foreign-based companies often ended up being part of the low-paid, unskilled working class (Hakizimana et al. 2017:566). Food insecurity in general was found most prevalent amongst outgrower areas (outgrower is a partnership between growers or landholders of a company for the produce of commercial products). Among this group (outgrower areas), one-quarter among household members ( $n = 1261$ ) had skipped meals due to lack of food during the past 12 months (Hakizimana et al. 2017:567). However, unlike the case of Uganda, Hakizimana et al. (2017:569) did not see any cases of dispossessed rural farmers by the estate. In fact, Hakizimana et al. (2017) claims there was no sign of the estate producing landlessness that forced rural people into selling their labor. However, the same authors claimed that new acquisitions of estates may unleash such processes (Hakizimana et al. 2017:569).

### 3.2 Theoretical framework

Our analysis of the underlying factors of land grabbing and its ecological, socio-cultural and economic implications on rural populations' livelihoods in Ghana and Ethiopia will be conducted through a political ecological lens. Hence our theoretical approach is based on political ecology, while our conceptual framework consists of environmental justice, accumulation by dispossession accumulation and sustainable livelihoods. This combined framing, we argue, enables us not only to analyze environmental injustices leading to certain barriers for rural populations' livelihoods but also to review structures and environmental conflicts that lead to these injustices in the first place.

#### 3.2.1 Political ecology

The term political ecology was coined in the 1970s along with a growing environmental movement as a way to conceptualize the relation between ecology and political economy. It seeks to connect social and environmental science in order to address environmental changes, conflicts and problems

(Paulson, Gezon & Watts 2005: 17). Political ecology originates from Marxist political economy and emphasis is largely put on the role of the political economy and capitalism as a cause to instability (Lee 2009: 32, Forsyth 2004: 3). Earlier political ecology approaches combined ‘concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy’ to better understand the interactive effects ‘between society and land-based resources and also within classes and groups within society itself’ (Blaikie & Brookfield 1987: 17) It also has roots in cultural ecology, but did move in another direction. While cultural ecology studies how local cultural groups have adapted to the environmental circumstances, political ecology analyzes how external forces and processes on different levels affect human-environmental interactions (Lee 2009: 37). Political ecology developed largely due to two rising directions during 1960s and 1970s, which examined the impacts of the markets on rural populations, social injustices, political conflicts as well as local communities’ social and cultural fragmentation when they were integrated into the modern world system. These two sources were the spread of peasant studies and the resurgence of Marxism within development studies and social science (Paulson, Gezon & Watts 2005: 23). As a research field, political ecology is vast and comprises of countless studies from a range of different fields, including development studies, political economy, anthropology and environmental history. Consequently, there are numerous diverse definitions of the concept, as well as priorities (Robbins 2011: 13-14). In our study, we have chosen to use Watts’ (2000) view of political ecology as a research field that “seek to understand the complex relations between nature and society through a careful analysis of what one might call the forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods” (Watts 2000: 257).

Within the field of political ecology, much focus is on social justice and resource conflicts in developing countries. Unequal power relations is also a central theme within the field, since this often is linked to the access to, and control over, natural resources and thereby also conflicts (Forsyth 2004: 7, Bryant 1998: 85, Peet and Watts 1996: 2, Paulson, Gezon & Watts 2005: 17). A common view is that injustices stemming from these power relations and conflicts affects poor, local populations as well as the natural resources these people depend on (Forsyth 2004: 8). Hence, within the field of political ecology, there is also a purpose of analyzing and explaining the economic and political factors that cause and maintain socio-ecological burdens for people, thus leading to unsustainable outcomes (Turner & Robbins 2008: 298).

### 3.2.2 Environmental justice

In its initial phase, the concept of environmental justice referred to a social movement that developed in the U.S during 1980s. This movement derived out of studies demonstrating how low-income populations, in comparison to people that were better off, suffered greater harm from transport infrastructure and waste sites (Martinez-Alier, Anguelovski, Bond, DelBene, Demaria, Gerber & Ojo 2014: 21). With its roots in human rights and social justice thoughts, the term environmental justice has since spread throughout the world, mainly focusing on environmental conflicts and problematizing the ways in which certain social groups are exposed to environmental costs, risks and benefits (Bebbington 2009: 9). Despite that it is called environmental justice; it is not only addressing environmental issues. Rather, there are several aspects of justices that are being questioned and opposed, including social, economic, cultural and political. The definition of environmental justice that this study uses in line with Lee's (2009: 10) is:

“The right to a safe, healthy, productive and sustainable environment for all, in which “environment” is viewed in its totality, and includes ecological (biological), physical (natural and built), social, political, aesthetic and economic components”

It is important to note that there are two types of justices that are equally important to review - distributional and procedural. Distributional justice concerns equal environmental rights and burdens while procedural justice refers to self-determination through participation in environmental decision-making policies. When analyzing justice, it is crucial to review both of these. By doing this, it is possible to problematize unequal distributions of benefits and burdens as well exclusion, isolation and disempowerment of certain population groups leading to injustices (Lee 2009: 21).

Environmentalism of the poor (or indigenous populations) is, because of its rural focus, a concept within the field of environmental justice that is particularly important in this study. The term coincides with environmental justice approaches on resource extraction conflicts but emphasize to a larger degree that these conflicts frequently involve poor and/or indigenous populations fighting to preserve their livelihoods against the state and corporations. The focal point is thus social justice, including rights to recognition and participation, while also emphasizing that environmental struggles and human rights are inseparable (Anguelovski & Alier 2014: 241-241). Similarly to this, Escobar (2006) emphasizes that the number of environmental conflicts worldwide has escalated in recent years, which primarily affects poor people. However, he stresses that struggles involving indigenous or ethnic minorities are notably poignant considering the cultural contrast between the



locals and the new models of development that are established (Escobar 2006: 7). Furthermore, he argues, there is always some kind of defense of, or mobilization by, local cultures questioning capitalist models of development in the struggles. Where social justice is a prime focus within environmentalism of the poor, Escobar thus underlines that environmental conflicts, particularly the ones regarding natural resources, involves three interrelated aspects - cultural, economic and ecologic - and thus should be considered in light of these (ibid.).

### 3.2.3 Accumulation by dispossession

Accumulation by dispossession is a concept developed by David Harvey and is an extension of Marx's writings on 'primitive accumulation' (Marx 1867). In *The new imperialism: Accumulation by dispossession*, Harvey illustrates how the neoliberal capitalist policies among many western nations from the 1970s to present day have led to a centralization of wealth and power in the hands of a small elite (Harvey 2003: 157 - 158), a process that occurs when dispossessing people from their wealth as well as land. In short, accumulation by dispossession is the process in which somebody is being dispossessed from their assets or rights (Harvey 2003: 184-185). One example of dispossession could be privatizations of common property, a process in which the state usually plays a crucial part, either by promoting privatization or supporting it (Harvey 2003: 67; 148). Harvey emphasizes how the corporatization and privatization of public assets, water, land and other public utilities constitute a new wave of "enclosure of the commons". An example is how the power of the state is being implemented to enforce such processes of dispossession, even if it goes against the public opinion (Harvey 2003: 148).

A similar concept is the one of accumulation by displacement, which similarly to accumulation by dispossession refers to the process in which self-reproducing peasantries are being dispossessed from their land (Hall 2013: 1597). Araghi (2009) explains accumulation by displacement as the great global enclosure of modern times. The current processes of large dispossessions of peasantries around the world and the appropriation of migratory surplus labor power combined with the accumulation of (the spaces of) 'surplus nature' are two vital aspects in the understanding accumulation by displacement (Araghi 2009: 114).

#### 3.2.3.1 Accumulation by dispossession and land grabbing

By looking at the concept of dispossession, Hall (2013) claims one can clearly see how it relates to land grabbing, a process in which land and other valuable resources are enclosed, and previous

users of these resources are dispossessed. Much research frames land grabbing as a direct result to crisis (Hall 2013: 1583, 1587).

Harvey (2003) argues that overaccumulation, that is, the surplus of capital that cannot be disposed of without a loss, instead becomes absorbed by a) temporal displacement through investment in long-term projects, b) spatial displacement, a process where you open up new markets as well as new resources and social and labor possibilities, c) a combination of a and b (Harvey 2003: 109). Overaccumulation is interconnected with the concept of accumulation by dispossession, where the latter might work as a way to deal with overaccumulation. Market liberalization will inevitably create chronic crises of overaccumulation, which in turn will require continuing release of new assets that over-accumulated capital can take over and create profit from (Hall 2013: 1587).

### 3.2.4 Sustainable rural livelihoods

The term sustainable livelihood (SL) might be seen as a buzzword within development studies and has come to represent and emphasize different things for different people. It has been used as an approach on development based on assets while it for others functions as a multidimensional view on poverty. The term has also been adopted to shed light on empowerment, participation and institutions (Scoones & Wolmer 2003: 4). Two main aspects can however be seen throughout the formulations on sustainable livelihood, including a focus on varied assets (economic, social, natural, human) and a focus on how people's' access to assets is affected by institutions and policies (ibid. 5). Following Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway, we use the following definition about livelihood:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term”

(Chambers & Conway 1992: 6).

The three components, namely, resources (i), claims (ii) and access (iii), are all vital for livelihood. *Resources* include a variety of resources such as land, water, trees as well as other important resources such as farm equipment, tools and domestic utensils (Chambers & Conway 1992: 8). Claims and access are both intangible assets of a household. *Claims* concerns demands and appeals that can be made in order to receive moral, material or other kinds of support or access. The support

can take several forms such as implements, loans, gifts, work or food. Such claims are usually made in times of shock or stress, or when other contingencies arise (ibid.). *Access* is about the opportunity in practice to use resources, stores or services, or to obtain information, material, technology, employment, food income. Technology could include techniques of cultivation and new seeds (ibid.).

Another view on livelihood is the one from Hebinck and Bourdillon (2002), who divide into it two main objectives. The first one links holistically to the variety of rural peoples' capabilities in managing a living for themselves within the specific context in which they operate. The second one concerns the processes which shape these endeavors (Hebinck & Bourdillon 2002: 1). In order to attain sustainable livelihood, one need to achieve five 'capitals'. Human capital (i), includes labor, skills, creativity, education and a social network. Natural capital (ii) refers to one's access to natural resources such as land, water, minerals, forest, pastures and crops. Physical capital (iii) is about food stocks, livestock, tools or machinery. Financial capital (iv) refers to money, loans, credit, remittances, state transfer or saving. The last 'capital' is social capital (v), which mainly concerns the quality of relationships among different people and the extent to which one can rely on support from the family or perhaps a mutual assistance (ibid. 4).

#### 3.2.4.1 Food Security

Food security is a vital part of what is referred to as sustainable livelihood, however the concept food security have many definitions. This study will use the definition of The World Food Summit of 1996:

“When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life” (Yahaya et al. 2018: 469).

By using this definition of food security, one can cover both the economic and physical access to food that meets people's food demand and their food preferences (Yahaya et al. 2018: 469). Food security is in general based on three main pillars; *food availability*, *food utilization* and *food access*. In regards to food availability, this refers to the amount of food that is available on a regular basis. Food utilization primarily emphasizes the dietary quality which is related to the inadequate intake of necessary minerals and vitamins for a healthy life. Lastly, food access refers to one's capability and resources to access and receive appropriate food for a nutritious diet (ibid.).

### 3.3 The application of the theoretical framework

This constructed framework, building on political ecological and focusing on concepts such as environmentalism of the poor, accumulation by dispossession, sustainable livelihoods and food security, provides us with an adequate theoretical basis for analyzing land grabbing projects and their implications on rural livelihoods. By examining and analyzing power relations and injustices stemming these, different aspects of conflicts, access to and control over natural resources, participation as well as diverse capital assets in regard to different land grabbing projects in Ghana and Ethiopia, we thus expect to fulfill the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions.

## 4. Setting the scene

Before presenting our findings it is necessary to set the scene and provide some further information about the countries' historical background regarding land rights and land grabbing. This chapter will therefore paint the picture necessary to capture the context by presenting the agriculture's role, development strategies, laws and policies about land ownership as well as the scale of land grabbing in the countries.

### 4.1 Historical background, Ghana

Since the mid-1980s, Ghana experienced a period of a stable and growing economy, which in turn has further committed the country to liberalization policies (Choi 2018: 5). In fact, Ghana ranked as the fifth largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in sub-Saharan Africa in 2014, where the majority of the investments have been in the oil and mining sector as well as in farmland (ibid.). The agriculture sector has been and still is a vital part of the Ghanaian economy, accounting for approximately 34% of the GDP whilst employing 55% of the population. Smallholders are estimated to account for about 90% of landholdings and 80% of the agricultural output (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 3, Kuusaana & Gerber 2015: 856).

#### 4.1.1 Land Ownership in Ghana

Customary land tenure, meaning land which is owned by indigenous communities and administered in accordance to their customs, is still the dominant system of land use and ownership in Ghana. In general, land ownership in Ghana can be classified into three broad categories, namely: land under customary ownership, which constitute 78 percent of the total land area of Ghana; land controlled by the state, which constitute 20 percent of the total land area; and lastly land which is under some form of shared ownership, this accounts for about 2 percent of the total land area of Ghana (Schoneveld & German 2014: 192).

It is often traditional laws and norms, rather than the national Constitution that guide the ownership and use of customary land (ibid. 63). In Ghana, the Constitution vests in the President public lands whereas private lands, by large, are vested in the Stool, i.e. tribal land or land controlled by chiefs. In fact, the Constitution of Ghana recognizes the chiefs as fiduciaries and land managers on behalf of their communities (Constitution of Ghana, 1992, Article 36.8.). The chiefs are the ones who have the ultimate responsibility for the allocation and use of land, which in turn is the result of a robust position originating from a history of resistance against the colonial attempts to nationalize land. In fact, the chiefs were already during the British Colonial time recognized as the only social group who could transact land. During that time, as in postcolonial time, land is being vested in the chiefs to manage on behalf of their own communities (Amanor and Ubink 2016: 60).

In spite of the fact that the Ghanaian government recognizes customary land tenure, it has acquired land by compulsorily methods, and thus land rights are consequently still a source of conflicts, disputes and litigation (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 63, 66). To understand why the Ghanaian government still acquires land by force, one must look at the Constitution of Ghana, Section 20 (1 and 2) which declares four conditions under which private land can be acquired. The first is that the land being acquired must be in the public interest. By ‘public interest’ it means that the land acquired must satisfy the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public health, public mortality, town and country planning or the improved living conditions for the poor. The second condition states that merely proclaiming that the land acquisition is in ‘public interest’ is insufficient; there must be an explanation of what that interest is. The third condition declares that compulsory acquisitions are allowed only if it takes place in accordance with “fair and prompt payment of adequate compensation”. The fourth and last condition that must be met is that the expropriated person shall have opportunity and liberty to question the decision of acquisition in a high court in Ghana (ibid. 70). However, it is important to note that this process of compulsorily land acquisition by the state is not unique for Ghana, this process is often referred to as ‘eminent domain’, and is practiced by most countries around the world (Cypher & Forgey 2003: 255).

#### 4.1.2 The scale of land grabbing in Ghana

Ghana has been a target for land grabbing since the global peak of oil prices in 2006, during which foreign companies started acquiring large tracts of land for plantation agriculture. Concerning food crop investments these mainly targets the cultivation of grain crops, such as rice and maize, for the domestic market (Choi 2018: 6). About 36 companies have each acquired land which exceeds over 2000 ha of land in Ghana for agriculture and forestry plantation, covering a total of 2.05 million ha

of land. Furthermore, 88 percent of all the 36 projects and 93 percent of all the areas acquired can be directly attributed to companies where the majority shareholder investors are foreign-based (Schoneveld & German 2014: 188). The majority of the farmlands have been acquired in rural parts of northern Ghana, an area that already suffers from high levels of food insecurity and poverty (Choi 2018: 6).

Land grabbing processes in Ghana are driven by the government, traditional chiefs and large foreign corporations taking the land of farmers and rural poor (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 72). For example, in Tarkwa located in Western Ghana, 70 percent of the land is dedicated to mining activities. Another example can be seen in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions where seventeen companies, out of which fifteen were foreign-owned, acquired a total of 1,075,000 ha of land in 2009, mainly for the cultivation of *jatropha* (*jatropha curcas produces seeds that are used in the production of biodiesel*). These land acquisitions are often justified by arguing that they are meant for investments and development, even though they oftentimes lead to displacement of local farmers and rural dwellers (ibid. 72-73).

<b>GHANA</b>	
<b>Areal:</b>	238,533 sq km
<b>Population:</b>	27,499,924 (2017)
<b>Population growth rate:</b>	2,17% (2017)
<b>Urban population:</b>	56,1% (2018)
<b>GDP per capita:</b>	\$ 4,600 (2017)
<b>Population below poverty line:</b>	24,2% (2013)
<b>Land use:</b>	Agriculture land: 69,1% Arable land: 20,7% Permanent crops: 11,9% Permanent pasture: 36,5% Forest: 21,2% Other: 9,7%
<b>Agriculture products:</b>	Cocoa, rice, cassava, peanuts, corn, shea nuts, bananas
<i>Source: CIA Factbook, Ghana (2018)</i>	

## 4.2. Historical background, Ethiopia

The agriculture sector is also crucial in Ethiopia, employing 85% of the population and accounting for 37% of the country's GDP (World Bank 2016). Agriculture is also an important element in the export sector as it stands for 85% of the country's total export (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). Yet, the (lack of) efficiency of the agricultural sector is not providing enough food or wealth for rural populations. This has created an urge to invest in agriculture, which is seen as a necessity in order to fight poverty and meet the development goals

(Alamirew, Grethe, Siddig & Wossen 2015: 1123). Ethiopia has a total of 73 million ha of arable land, but only 15 million ha is being cultivated, in which the majority of the cultivated land is under the control of smallholder cultivation.

### 4.2.1 Land ownership in Ethiopia

The Constitution of Ethiopia, formerly known as the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), deals with 'Right to poverty' under article 40, which provides important details about land rights in Ethiopia. Article 40 (3) of the constitution emphasizes what could be seen as the core question of land ownership in Ethiopia:

"The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange" (Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 1995).

Article 40 (6) concerns land investments. It deals with the right of investors to acquire land and declare that private investors may get land on the basis of payment arrangement (Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 1995). Similarly, article 5 (4) in the The Federal Rural Land proclamation, declares that investors are allowed by law to acquire rural land for agricultural investment:

"Private investors that engage in agricultural development activities shall have the right to use rural land in accordance with the investment policies and laws at federal and regional levels." (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Rural Land 456/2005).

According to the Ethiopian constitution, all land in Ethiopia, both urban and rural, is owned by the state, which certainly facilitates allocation to investors (Keeley 2014: 13). Cultivators and pastoralists, i.e. the land users, have use rights over the land which they care for, yet they are not allowed to sell or exchange this. Hence, land holders only have limited rights without security of

tenure (Rahmato 2011: 6). The Regional authority has by law been given the power to administer land, including allocation, use, disposal and registration. This administration must however correspond to the federal constitution from 2005 as well as federal laws from 2005 (ibid.). In Ethiopia the state thus has the ability to decide and determine what the land should be used for and for what purpose, as well as the power to decide who gets to use the land (Moreda 2017: 701). This means that the state has the power to remove existing land users if anticipating that the particular land will be more beneficial when utilized by investors, or if the land is seen as needed for public purposes. The government is then supposed to compensate the people being displaced due to land expropriation (Rahmato 2011: 6). Today, similarly to the past, land rights in Ethiopia defines power relations between smallholder and local communities on the one hand, and the state on the other (ibid.). The state's power over land is justified by its development mission. Moreover, the achievement of economic development is seen as best under the state (ibid. 7).

From the mid-1990s, agriculture was seen as the driving force for the national economy, particularly regarding smallholder farming and crop production. The rural-centered strategy expected the peasants to provide surplus for food security as well as stimulate economic development. Increased support through donor assistance and resources were given to the smallholder farmers during this time, hence the land system was peasant friendly (Rahmato 2011: 8). In 1996, the Ethiopian government launched a development plan called 'Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI). The ADLI strategy aimed to promote foreign and domestic investments into the agriculture sector. The purpose was to support smallholders in the highlands by supplying them with fertilizers and new technologies for irrigation and at the same time heavily promote foreign investment in the lowlands (Hules & Singh 2017: 345).

In the beginning of the 2000s, however, this focus started to shift. Small farmers' roles in development were still emphasized, but there was also a growing view on the important role of foreign investors and large-scale agricultural companies (Rahmato 2011: 8). The latest document on poverty reduction by the state (from 2004) presents the government's development strategies comprising of eight pillars. One of these stresses the need for stimulated growth and is built upon, *inter alia*, the commercialization of agriculture. Furthermore, the federal and regional governments were from 2007 and forth actively seeking foreign investors and promoting large-scale investments, during which time several documents were prepared in order to achieve this. The documents emphasized the large amount of available land and water resources as well as promised favorable conditions for the investors (ibid.). These documents further stated that the lands offered were



unused and that investments in these would not have any effects on local livelihoods (Regassa 2018: 4; Rahmato 2011: 9)

In 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MOARD) was set to be the lead agency for large-scale land deals. Its responsibilities include to attract investors, signing contracts and transfer land, as well as to engage in follow-ups of the projects. MOARD receive and administer lands of minimum 5000 ha for investments from the different regions, which are put into a federal land bank. Although all management of land deals is concluded through MOARD, the concerned regions are the receiver of the transaction incomes such as rent and income tax (Rahmato 2011: 10). The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in Ethiopia did previously hold the power to review environmental impacts assessment reports, after which it approved or dismissed the application for investment. Without approval given by EPA, no project was to be undertaken according to the law. This authority by EPA was however given to MOARD in 2009, even though the latter lacked both necessary institutional and technical capacity to perform the responsibilities and duties (ibid. 11).

#### 4.2.2 The scale of land grabbing in Ethiopia

Land grabbing in Ethiopia, both by domestic and foreign investors; have taken place in the country over the last decade, mainly in the lowland regions. The Ethiopian government has already allowed millions of hectares of land to be commercialized for agricultural investments. (Moreda 2017: 699). The promotion of land investments mainly focuses on four specific regional states, Gambella, Oromia, SNNPR and Benishangul-Gumuz (Hules & Singh 2017: 345).

Between 2004-2009, domestic investors accounted for 60% of the acquired land areas in Ethiopia. However, foreign investors have increased and recent data shows that Ethiopia has assigned 2.4 million ha of land to international investors. This puts Ethiopia amongst the top countries in Africa in terms of the amount of land leased out (Cotula 2012: 656, Alamirew et al. 2015: 1122). The government of Ethiopia wanted to increase the large-scale commercial farming to 3.4 million ha by 2015 (Hules & Singh 2017: 345).

## ETHIOPIA

<b>Areal:</b>	1,104,300 sq km
<b>Population:</b>	105,350,020 (2017)
<b>Population growth rate:</b>	2,85% (2017)
<b>Urban population:</b>	20,8% (2018)
<b>GDP per capita:</b>	\$ 2,100 (2017)
<b>Population below poverty line:</b>	29,6% (2014)
<b>Land use:</b>	Agriculture land: 36,3% Arable land: 15,2% Permanent crops: 1,1% Permanent pasture: 20%  Forest: 12,2% Other: 51,5%
<b>Agriculture products:</b>	Cereals, coffee, oilseed, cotton, sugarcane, vegetables, khat, cut flowers

*Source: CIA Factbook, Ethiopia (2018)*

## 5. Land grabbing and its implications on rural livelihoods

In this chapter the empirical evidences regarding land grabbing in the different regions in Ghana and Ethiopia are presented, as well as the structural factors triggering this. Table 5.1 and 5.2 provide an overview of some of the projects in each country. While the number of projects in both Ghana and Ethiopia is far more than what these reveal, the projects displayed are the largest and most relevant ones.

### 5.1. Evidence from Ghana

Both the government and the traditional council (local chiefs) in Ghana have encouraged the current development of large-scale agriculture and cooperation with foreign investors, stressing that it will develop the agriculture sector and increase food security (Schoneveld et al. 2011: 3, 6).

They expect that foreign-based land investments will promote rural development through 1) modernization, 2) diversification of agriculture and 3) the creation of job opportunities for the youths (Schoneveld et al. 2011: 3, 6).

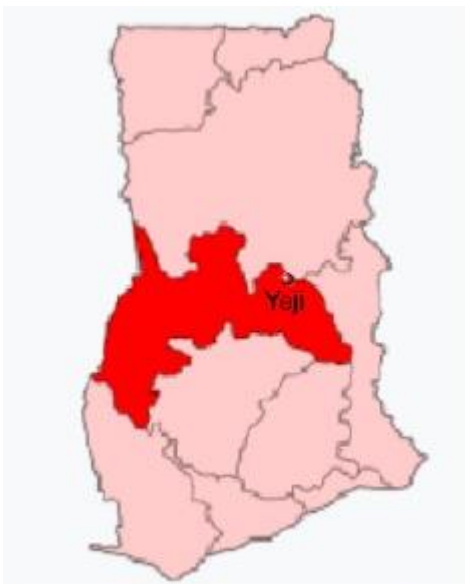
In 2004, Ghana implemented the Land Administration Project (LAP) which ultimately seeks to “stimulate economic development, reduce poverty and improve social stability by enhancing security of land tenure, simplifying the process for accessing land and making it fair, efficient and transparent, further developing the land market as well as promoting prudent land management” (Anaafo 2014: 539). Ghana’s choice towards neoliberal land reforms has been criticized however, mainly for its potential to create insecurities among various customary usufructuaries (Anaafo 2014: 541). In the last decade the numbers of land disputes, land grabs and land conflicts have all increased. This in turn is a result of Ghana’s unprecedented expansion of capital commitment to the large-scale commercial plantation sector (Schoneveld & German 2014: 188).

The regions in Ghana who have experienced the largest shares of compulsorily acquired lands are Ashanti region, Brong Ahafo region, Western region and Greater Accra (Elhadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 70). However, most land in Ghana is still under customary ownership. In general, land ownership in Ghana can be classified in three broad categories, namely: land under customary ownership, which constitute 78 percent of the total land area of Ghana; land controlled by the State, which constitute 20 percent of the total land area; and lastly land which is under of some form of shared ownership, this accounts for about 2 percent of the total land area of Ghana (Schoneveld & German 2014: 192). The state can however reclassify the customary land to state land through the

use of the state's Constitutional right to eminent domain, which in turn enables expropriation of customary land for 'public interest' (Schoneveld & German 2014: 192). The expropriation of land and land grab processes has consequently give rise to land disputes, in fact, 15,000 land cases were pending before the court in Accra, 9214 cases pending before courts in Kumasi and 74 land cases pending in court in Tamala. Overall, the total amount of land cases in Ghana was 60,000 in 2003. The reasons to why these land conflicts arise are not, however, merely due to the Governments acquisition of land by force, but also involve cases with unregistered land and multiple sales of land by tribal Chiefs (ibid. 66, 68).

The land acquisition by foreign investors continues to escalate in Ghana. Regions such as Brong-Ahafo have banked more than 54,000 ha of land ready to be leased to investors (Anafo 2015: 545). The same trend can be found in Agogo, located in the Ashanti region where foreign-based companies have established large-scale food-crop investments. Another Ghanaian region highly affected by rising large-scale land acquisitions is the Upper West region, where a foreign-based mining company has acquired 416,400 ha of land (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 424). Both the Government and local Chiefs have actively promoted such foreign-based land investments, hoping that it will develop the agriculture, infrastructure and increase food security (Schoneveld et al. 2011: 3, 6).

### 5.1.1 Implications on rural populations in Brong-Ahafo region



Source: CIA Factbook, Ghana (2018)

The Pru District in the Brong-Ahafo region consist of four traditional areas, namely Yeji, Abease, Konkoma and Prang, all of them being located in the so-called 'yam-belt'. The name 'yam belt' derives from the fact that yam cultivation is the most important activity in this district, followed by cultivation of cassava. Prior to large-scale land acquisitions taken place after the financial crisis of 2007-2008, some of the land in Pru district was tilled for yam and maize, but only at subsistence levels (Obeng-Odoom 2017: 30). Approximately 66 percent of the population in the Pru District is dependent of agriculture as their main source of livelihood (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 5). Prior to 2007, there was no evidence of any large-scale

commercial farming businesses in the area. However, between 2007 and 2009 agro-businesses

acquired considerable land masses in the district, approximately 152,500 ha of land (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 6). According to Anaafo (2015: 545) another 54,231.8 ha of land have been banked in Brong-Ahafo ready to be leased out to investors.

Almost all of the rural people living in the traditional area are engaged in traditional bush-fallow agriculture, where yam cultivation is the key income earning. The companies process of acquiring land was accomplished through negotiations with the traditional authorities (Chiefs) rather than any government intermediaries (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011:6; Williams et al 2012: 249). In fact, the traditional council was often very receptive to the companies acquiring land in Brong-Ahafo, since it would bring development and create jobs for the youth (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011:6; Williams et al 2012: 255). This was for example the case of Kimminic Corporation who acquired 43,000 ha land in Brong-Ahafo region through negotiating with local Chiefs (Williams et al 2012: 254). In the case of the land grab by Kimminic Corporations, the most common negative impacts on rural livelihood involved displacement, lack of compensation to farmers who lost land and lack of access to important water resources since these resources were in the hands of the foreign-based company. There was also a complete lack of consultation with farmers prior to land acquisition (Williams et al 2012: 255; 262).

The monetary compensation have in some cases been non-existing since the Chiefs believes that the employment prospects of, for example, the jatropha plantation in Brong-Ahafo could be regarded as a compensation in itself (Ahmed, Kuusaana & Gasparatos 2018: 573). The relationship between the Chiefs and rural people have sometimes sparkled tensions due to land disputes. For example, in the Pru District there have been violent protests between laborers and Chiefs due to land disputes. In fact, one laborer was shot dead as he was trying to clear land for Jatropha cultivation, land that had been subject of a long dispute between the chief and locals (Obeng-Odoom 2017: 33).

The land grabs in Pru district led to land loss for many rural households. None of the households were part of any land negotiations; neither did they receive any form of compensation for their loss (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 7). In average, household landholdings had reduced by 61 percent by 2009, where the average total household landholdings decreased from 26,1 acres to 8,5 acres in the end of 2009. In response to loss of land, and to cope with lower agricultural incomes, some households managed to expand the scope of their livelihood activities by including livestock rearing and off-farm activities. For example, one common off-farm activity was salaried employment at the plantation or trading of consumer goods (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011:9). However, livelihood diversification was often constrained by lack of skills and financial

capital among the studied households (*ibid.*). In fact, the effects of land loss and inability to adapt to new livelihood strategies resulted in a decline in living standards for 73 percent of household, figures based on a host of locally salient indicators (*ibid.*). The most common changes to rural livelihoods in traditional areas affected by companies were, in order of frequency, losing access to vital forest products, losing access to land, increased time spent gathering firewood and loss of income (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 9). The extensive conversion of existing land uses to plantation monoculture has also led to widespread environmental degradation (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 5). In Ghana, 74 percent of forests are under no legal protection, which is also the case of the Brong Ahafo region. The largest areas of land classified as forests are in fact located in the zone between forest to savanna transition zone (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 5).

In Yeji, located northwest of Brong-Ahafo, there have been cases of biofuel-related land grabbing that have led to the displacement of indigenous farmers as a direct result of foreign biofuel projects (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 53-54). Findings of Schoneveld and German (2014) also confirms that there has been displacement of local farmers as a result of biofuel projects by foreign companies. According to a study by Aha and Ayitey (2017) the local farmers in Yeji, whom are indigenous to their land and farms, were not involved nor consulted in the negotiations leading to the land acquisition (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 54). The same study claims that 93 % of the farmers who lost their land were not consulted prior to the leasing of their lands to the biofuel companies. The dispossession of the farmers land occurred without the consent or inclusion of the local community. The process of land acquisition and dispossession of land in Yeji was a process led mainly by the community chief and his traditional council, as well as the biofuel companies (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 54). According to Aha and Ayitey, the local farmers view the chiefs as the ultimate owner of the land; hence, little action is taken when farmers are being dispossessed from their land. The reduction of indigenous farm size is a result of foreign and domestic investment and land acquisition, which in turn creates implications for food security as the farming in these areas is not intensified and the acquired land is often being used for non-edible crops (*ibid.*). The farmers in Yeji and other parts of rural Ghana are nowadays skeptical in regards to large-scale farming, mainly due to the increased fear of expropriation (*ibid.*). The compensation to the farmers who lose their land due to land-acquisition is usually poor, and in some cases, there is a complete lack of compensation, which affect the livelihoods negatively (Bugri 2012: 23; (Ahmed, Kuusaana & Gasparatos 2018: 576).

Being part of the biofuel companies, the global economy is sensitive to shocks from global markets. This might in turn cause an acute implication on the livelihoods of rural communities across Ghana where land acquisitions by, *inter alia*, transnational biofuel companies have taken place (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 57). A number of biofuel companies in Ghana have already gone bankrupt, which has put pressure on the sustainability of livelihoods in rural parts of Ghana targeted by biofuel projects. One biofuel company, employing 400 workers, went bankrupt which consequently led to unemployment for the workers. This resulted in that the former farmers neither had their farm nor were they wage labors any longer (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 57).

### 5.1.2 Implications of rural populations in Ashanti region



Source: CIA Factbook, Ghana (2018)

In Agogo, located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, a study by Acheampong & Campion (2014) showed how 54,3 % of 234 respondents reported that they have lost land to a Jatropha company called ScanFarm, a norwegian based company that had acquired 400,000 ha of land. The Jatropha Company (ScanFarm) primarily deals with Jatropha and food-crop investments. However, the belief that Jatropha does well on marginal lands does not reflect reality, since the land given by the chiefs to the Jatropha Company was a productive and fertile land which had previously been used by local people to cultivate crops such as maize, plantain, cocoa and yam (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4592). The dispossession of

land caused the local farmers to move into much more marginal lands, which are often unproductive or infertile (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4592). A majority (93,5% of 123 respondents) of the farmers who were part of the study conducted by Acheampong and Campion (2014) claimed there were never consulted by neither the Chief/traditional authority or by the Jatropha Companies. The same study shows that 85,3 % of 116 respondents did not receive any compensation for their land loss (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4593). The loss of land and the reduced areas under cultivation and increasing cropping intensity, have a significant impact of both food security and household incomes. The increasing cropping intensity which shortens the fallow period has also been reported to cause land degradation and a reduced carrying capacity over time (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4595). Jatropha projects and companies are not only causing negative impacts on rural people's livelihood, but they also have

negative impacts on the environment. For example, the quality of water and soil worsens as a direct consequence of the jatropha plantation, as well as causing deforestation (Ahmed et al 2017: 138).

The majority of farmers in the study conducted by Acheampong and Campion (2014: 4596) responded that their households had a surplus of food prior to the arrival and establishment of Jatropha plantation. After the establishment of Jatropha plantations however, only a minority of 16,3 % of 215 respondents indicated that their household had food surplus. From a socio-economic perspective, although the Jatropha companies generated new job opportunities for the local communities, such jobs have successively disappeared as most of the Jatropha companies have collapsed. Those companies who are still active, do not attract the farmers to work there, since the farmers often express an unwillingness working for the same company that stole their land (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4597). The arrival and establishment of Jatropha plantations has caused scarcity among non-timber forest since the Jatropha plantations have taken up their lands. The Jatropha companies has also polluted rural peoples source of drinking water (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4600). The ScanFarm project in Agogo have according to some residents caused negative livelihood impacts, for example the ScanFarm has caused the destruction of indigenous plants and trees important for livelihood (Boamah 2013: 330). The establishments of foreign based companies, as well as domestic ones, outcompete and buy up land from poor farmers and peasants. In fact, a study conducted by Yaro et al. 2017 showed that those with no access to land are often located in the commercial farming areas, followed by the plantation area, and is lowest in the outgrower area. In areas where there are either commercial farms or plantation, there exist a significant number of local landless workers and migrant landless workers whom seek employment (Yaro et al. 2017: 543).



Source: CIA Factbook, Ghana (2018)

### 5.1.3 Implications on rural populations in The Upper West region

A study conducted by Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) examined 316,400 ha of land in the upper west region in Northern Ghana that had been given to Azumah Resources Limited (foreign based mining company) as a concession. In other words, the Ghanaian state had enclosed multiple farmlands for the purposes of gold mining. The concessional area had been enclosed and its boundaries had been



demarcated, which meant access to the land was completely prohibited and considered as trespass onto company territory (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 424). Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) suggested that farmland dispossession led to an emerging class of landless households (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 430). Approximately 60 percent of households ( $n = 155$ ) reported that they did not own any land, the most common reason being they had lost all their agricultural fields to the mining projects. Yet another group of household, accounting for 39 percent ( $n = 155$ ) were partially dispossessed of their landholdings. In general, the land was barely sufficient for subsistence production. Overall, the food insecurity was significantly higher among the landless class. Out of the 93 household who were landless in the study conducted by Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017), a majority of 64 household (69 %) were previously land 'rich' while 29 households (31 %) were near-landless before the enclosure of land was established due to foreign and domestic companies arrival to the community areas (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 431). As a result of the marginal landholdings, rural people consequently cultivate a smaller diversity of crops, with around 90 percent of the field planted consisting of hybrid maize. Not only was the rural farmers harvest marginal, but their diet as well, as it mainly consisted of carbohydrates. Some farmers reported that their harvest was only able to last for about two month in a year, which meant that many households chose to cut their meals from two to one per day (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 433-434). Faced with land scarcity and negative impacts on livelihood, most household who had lost all their land saw migration as the only solution to their situation. In the study conducted by Nyantakyi and Bezner (2017) only 2 out of a dozens household remained in their communities after being dispossessed, the rest migrated to other parts of Ghana in search of earning an income (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 434). As a result of increased loss of land and farmland scarcity, much of the agricultural labor force has been made redundant as well as pushed into distress labor migration. The household labors were in other words negatively restructured in compley way, for example, several household chose to migrate to locations where they were either further exploited and their class inequalities entrenched (Nyantakyi & Bezner 2017: 440).

Table 5.1 Some of the grabbing projects in Ghana

Location	Investor	Origin of investor	Size in ha 1 ha=0,01 km <sup>2</sup>	Production	Impacts on local people and their livelihoods	Sources
Brong Ahafo Region	Smart Oil	Italy	46,000	Biofuels	Displacement of farmers, decreased income, food insecurity	Aha, B., & Ayitey, J. Z. (2017).
	Natural African Diesel Ghana Limited	South Africa	50,000	Biofuels		

	Multiple Foreign-based biofuel companies	Europe and North America	152,500	Biofuels, Jatropha, Food crop	Losing access to vital forest products, access to land and loss of income.	Schoneveld, G., German, L., & Nutakor, E. (2011); Ahmed, Kuusaana & Gasparatos 2018); Obeng-Odoom (2017).
	Kimminic Corporation	Norway, Canada	43,000	Biofuel	Displacement, lack of access to water, No consultation prior to land grab	Williams, T. O., Gyampoh, B., Kizito, F., & Namara, R. (2012)
Ashanti Region	ScanFarm	Norway	400,000	Jatropha plantation	Local farmers were dispossessed from their land, Increased food insecurity.	Acheampong, E., & Campion, B. B. (2014).
The Upper West Region	Azumah Resources Limited	Perth, Australia	316,400 ha	Mining company (extracting gold)	Farmland dispossession, enclosure of land previously belonging to the local community, Lack of food and migration due to land loss.	Nyantakyi-Frimpong, H., & Bezner Kerr, R. (2017).

## 5.2 Evidence from Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, much of the land grabs has been part of a longer history of coercive agrarian politics. In fact, the Ethiopian state has created a state-mediated-commercialization in the pastoral lowlands, meaning the agribusiness deals have provided mechanisms to increase state presence in the pastoralist lowlands, rather than to decrease it (Regassa et al. 2018: 2). In Ethiopia, all land is under the ownership of the State; hence land claims based on traditional and spiritual meanings are often ignored. The government categorizes such land as “unused land”, ready to be leased out or sold (Hules 2015: 346). The expansion of agricultural investments in peripheral regions strengthens the state’s capability to control resources, revenue streams and the people living there (Regassa et al. 2018: 2).

In 2005, Ethiopia announced a new plan called ‘Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty’ (PASDEP), which was a plan to commercialize farms, which in turn would

commercialize smallholder agriculture (Abbink 2011: 516). The whole process of agricultural development was strongly top-down, i.e. state-dominated, where the main investors were either party affiliated companies or powerful individuals. The promotion of state-owned farming and large-scale private owned farming was an initiative by the ADLI. The 2003 Rural Development Policy and Strategies document as well as current large scale land acquisitions should be seen as part of the same type of agricultural strategy (ibid.). The current rush to lease out arable land to foreign and domestic investors cuts local people a raw deal, and in addition the long-term negative economic and environmental effects of the land acquisition are not taken into consideration (ibid.).

As mentioned earlier, the Federal Rural Land proclamation (456/2005), article 5(4) allows investors to acquire rural land for agricultural investment. The intent of such laws are designed to attract investors who have capital and technology to involve themselves in both small and large-scale agriculture, primarily in the lowland areas of the country. The lowland regions in Ethiopia, where the majority of land grabbing takes place, suffer from poor infrastructure and hostile environmental conditions (Osabuohien 2014: 173). Because of this, investors often hesitate about making investments in these regions. Yet, in order to raise the attractiveness, the federal government as well as the regional governments in the lowlands offer tax ‘holidays’ and other significant incentives (ibid.).

The Ethiopian government’s five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), starting in 2010, has also played an important role, as this was when the government made trade-oriented, large-scale commercial agriculture the main strategy for agricultural industrialisation and growth (Schoneveld & Shete 2014: 4). It was declared that this would contribute to both rural development and poverty alleviation through off-farm employments, technology transfer, infrastructure, and new markets channels for farmers as well as to macro-economic benefits (ibid.). This plan involved privatization of state farms as well as different forms of investor support, in particular to investors that were export-oriented and capital-intensive and whose purpose were to cultivate cash crops such as oil palm, sugarcane and cotton (Schoneveld 2014: 96-97).

The federal government in Ethiopia started a villagization program which ran between 2010-2013 in four Ethiopian regions - Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Somali and Afar (Human Rights Watch 2012: 19). Although there previously have been different villagization programs in the country, this one is of particular importance to this study, considering its connection to land grabbing projects. The villagization program included resettlement of nearly 1,5 million people in the regions, out of which 225,000 were in Gambella and 225,000 in Benishangul Gumuz (ibid.). According to a letter

sent to Human Rights Watch from the Ethiopian minister of federal affairs, the purpose of the programs in Gambella was “efforts to tackle poverty and ignorance” and also “to provide efficient and effective economic and social services (safe drinking water, optimum Healthcare, Education, improved agronomy practices, (market access etc.), create an access to infrastructure (road, power, telecommunication etc.) and ensure the citizens’ full engagement in good governance and democratic exercise.” (Human Right Watch 2012: 20). The government’s intention was that at the end of the program, all indigenous populations such as the Anuak and the Nuer were to be converted from small and scattered settlements, regardless of their livelihood practices, into larger communities of 500-600 household each (ibid. 22). According to the government, the villagization process was voluntary, yet evidence has shown that this is not the case. For instance, residents have described that questioning or refusing the process was met with arrests or beating from the army (ibid. 25-26). While the villagization program was claimed to run in favor of rural populations, evidence have made it clear that a major purpose of the program was to be able to generate available land for commercial agriculture and foreign investors (ibid. 54). Besides the fact that government officials told targeted villages that this was the underlying reason for the process, it is also possible to see the correlation between the villagization program that focused, and current land grabbing projects mainly focusing, on the four regions, i.e. Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Somali and Afar (ibid. 54-55). Moreover, the Ethiopian government stated that land certificates were to be provided in the lowlands during the villagization program. Yet, evidence have shown that many of the communities in the regions never gained formal user claims over their lands. Because of this, they were not protected against allocation and thus neither consulted during processes nor compensated when resettled (Schoneveld & Shete 2014: 10)

### 5.2.1 Implications on rural populations in Gambella regional state



Source: CIA Factbook, Ethiopia (2018)

In Ethiopia, much land allocations affects the lowland areas where pastoralism is still an important part of livelihood strategies. This is particularly the case in Gambella (Cotula et al 2014: 919). Gambella is thus one of the regions in Ethiopia that have been and still is attractive in terms of land investments. By 2011 more than fifteen domestic and foreign large-scale investors were holding a minimum of 2000 ha each, totaling up to 535,000 ha of land (Rahmato 2011: 18).

Gambella region state's population is estimated to be less than half a million and comprise mainly of three indigenous minorities, each with a long and rich history of certain uses of land for survival (The Oakland Institute 2013: 10). The *Nuer* are agro-pastoralist who practice mixed crop-farming and fishing around Akobo and Baro rivers, the *Anuak* depend on cultivation of crops, forest resources, hunting, gathering and fishing for their livelihood and the *Majanger* heavily rely upon forest resources and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) (Bekele 2016: 13). Additionally, the rich ecosystems in the region provide many other important resources, such as wild food, medicinal plants, water and wood for tools (Rahmato 2011: 20). The different population groups have all been affected due to different land grab projects, including Karuturi Agro Products PLC and Basen.

Karuturi, the biggest investor in Ethiopia, was given a 50-year leasehold on 300,000 ha of land from Gambella Region state in 2008 for production of palm oil, cereals and pulses, which two years later was reduced to 100,000 ha by the federal government (Bekele 2016: 13; Keeley 2014: 18). The land transfer to Karuturi was made without local community's awareness or consent; neither did they receive any compensation from the government or the company (Rahmato 2011: 21). However, Karuturi only managed to cultivate about 5,000 ha of land of maize before going bankrupt in 2014 (Hules & Singh 2017: 347; Bekele 2016: 158). Yet, they had several implications on the rural populations' livelihoods during the years of operating. In spite of earlier promises that Karuturi's intervention would not affect forest-based livelihoods of the Anuak, Karuturi cleared and enclosed thousands of ha of indigenous forest and land in Gambella region, resulting in many locals losing of their cultivation plots (Bekele 2016: 100, 122, 255). The clearing of the forest also forced the locals to travel extra distances in order to collect wood and medical plants as well as hunt (Gill 2016: 712). Furthermore, the indigenous trees that were cut down had important economic and cultural value for the locals (Abbink 2011: 520). Overall, land is intimately connected with the identity of the indigenous populations and is not only seen as an economic resource; hence invasion of their territory is seen as disrespecting (The Oakland Institute 2011: 42). One Anuak elder explains amongst other things that the forest, besides providing necessary resources, also was important during times of conflicts (ibid.) Furthermore, since the Anuak and the Majanger heavily relied upon forest-based livelihood practices, this clearance worsened the already existing situation of food insecurity in the area (Bekele 2016: 255; Gill 2016: 708). The land use change also had environmental impacts. With the forest gone, the protection against windstorms, floods and erosion decreased. The deforestation, in turn, resulted in declined groundwater level and abnormal flooding amongst other things, which affected locals stated posed a threat to their livelihoods (Bekele 2016: 193). Normal flooding, a common feature on the floodplains is required for traditional agricultural

practises by the indigenous populations since it generates soils that are moist and rich in nutrients to the farms (ibid.). However, when these flooding patterns changed, so did the possibility to continue with their traditional livelihood strategies. Another environmental impact that arose after Karuturi's arrival was the chemical waste from the company, contaminating plants, animals and water according to the locals (Adeto & Abate 2014: 174). To compensate the local peoples' loss of materials and food supplies, they were initially promised food from the Karuturi farm by the promoters. However, considering that Karuturi cultivates cash flex crops intended for regional and international markets, this was not seen as an adequate compensation by the locals who preferred the traditional maize and sorghum crops (Gill 2016: 712).

Basen, another Indian company, got leasehold of 10,000 ha of land for cotton farming in Gambella regional state. The transferred land, which comprised of open and closed forests, bushes and shrublands was soon cleared in order to start the cultivation. The company did however only manage to cultivate 3,569 ha out of this (Shete et al. 2015: 692; Bekele 2016: 15). Before the clearance, the land was used for livestock grazing and food crops cultivation and was mainly inhabited by immigrants from highland Ethiopia (Bekele 2016: 15). The land use change that followed the arrival of Basen meant that access to important resources such as grazing land, trees and land for cultivation decreased for the settlers. This access was further limited by the fact that they were immigrants and thus marginalized by the local administration. This has resulted in them not being granted better access since the land is said to belong to the Anuak, which in its turn have led to conflicts between the two groups (ibid. 151). Besides from an increased number of conflicts, both income levels and food security status have, due to land shortage, changed to the worse for the settlers (ibid. 151, 185). Overall, the local economic returns have declined by 24-66% after the land transfer, compared to previous contributions by small-scale farmers (ibid. 80). Since wage labor is used for the picking of cotton on Basel farm this has created a huge demand for labor. Yet, in spite of greater employment opportunities (up to 0.38 jobs per ha) after the company's arrival, labors are imported from an area in Southern Ethiopia (ibid. 80, 149). Consequently, the level of food security worsened for the locals since they no longer had access to farmlands and no wage employment. Neither among the settlers who were not directly affected by the cotton farm, did the level of food security increase, in spite of the aim of minimizing challenges of food insecurity that was widespread in the district (ibid. :151).

In 2008, a Saudi company called Saudi Star Agricultural Development Plc, owned by the Saudi-Ethiopian billionaire Mohammed Al-Amoudi, acquired a total of 10,000 ha of land in Gambella region. The lease is set for 60 years and the Saudi Star company will use the land for rice

production as well as an irrigation project using water from the Alwero River. The irrigation project is in fact funded by the government of Ethiopia (The Oakland Institute 2011: 1-2 ). Saudi Star intends to build a canal to transport water from the Alwero river to its fields, a canal that will be about 30 kilometers (ibid. 2). This mega-project by the company in collaboration with the Ethiopian state has resulted in deforestation, loss of farmland and decreased access to water for the local communities. Furthermore, many of the communities inhabiting the particular land were targeted for forced relocation and had no or little land tenure security over what had been their ancestral land for thousands of years (ibid.). The majority of the villagers did not want to be relocated, primarily because of the fear that there will be a lack of food at the new locations. However, villagers claim they were enforced to move by the Government (ibid.). The villagers also complained about the lack of consultation during the land deal between Saudi Star and the government. Villagers were only notified once their land had already been leased out (ibid. 3). In some cases, the large-scale mechanized agriculture in Gambella has caused deforestation which in turn has led to abnormal flooding (Gill 2016: 711). The flooding in turn reduced the water absorption capacity of the land (ibid.).

### 5.2.2 Implications on rural populations in Benishangul-Gumuz



Source: CIA Factbook, Ethiopia (2018)

Benishangul-Gumuz is a low-lying peripheral region located between the Ethiopian highlands and South-Sudanese border (Teklemariam et al. 2016: 313). For the majority of the population in the region, the production of sorghum, maize, sesame and pumpkin through a rain-fed agriculture based on shifting cultivation is the main livelihood activity. This is often combined with hunting, honey production, gathering of wild foods, charcoal-making and traditional gold mining, which are all threatened by

land grabbers (Teklemariam et al. 2016: 314; Moreda 2017: 701; Bekele 2016: 100). In spite of the region's huge potential for livelihood activities, both agricultural and non-agricultural, food insecurity and high prevalence of poverty is a large challenge and the region is one of the least developed states in the country (Bekele 2016: 159).

Only half of the total arable land in the area has been cultivated, which led to the assumption that large sizes of unoccupied land was available. The region thus supplied 457,068 ha of land to the

federal land bank, making this available for transfer to investors (Teklemariam et al. 2016 :5, 316). The exact number of land grabbing projects in the region is unknown; however data from 2012 established that 306 investors, out of which 70% were transnationals, have been given access to a total of 600,254 ha of land (ibid.). The assumption by the regional state, however, was wrong. The peripheral lowlands were not unoccupied or underutilized; rather there was large demand for land and competition between various users with conflicting interests (ibid. 321).

The land in the region has been under customary tenure systems for generations, yet these types of landholdings are by the statutory laws from 2010 not recognized. Consequently, customarily held land by the indigenous people in the region is considered as illegal as long as no official request to local administration are presented by the holders. This in turn means that local communities who have inhabited the land for ages do not have any more rights to the land than the arriving investors (ibid. 317).

One of the companies that have gained access to land in Benishangul-Gumuz is S&P Energy Solution. In 2010, Benishangul Gumuz regional state assigned 50,000 ha of land to the company, a lease with a duration of 50 years. This was for farming of pongamia as a biofuel feedstock as well as production of other food crops. S&P have so far only cultivated 1,863 ha of the total (Bekele 2016: 18). The Gumuz, the indigenous groups residing on the land leased out to S&P, still have access to the land not yet cultivated by the company. They do, however, perceive the project as harmful to the local livelihoods and the environment (Bekele 2016: 163; Moreda 2017: 704). Some customary land use practices by the Gumuz involve not cultivating their fields intensively. Instead, they cultivate a given plot of land for about three to five years; when a decline in yield is perceived they then leave it fallow. Once this process has been done, they clear and cultivate new land in the same way within their clan territory. The Gumuz do not move to new places every time, rather, they move around and usually end up returning to the abandoned lands that had been left to regenerate in the first place (ibid. 705). Given that the Gumuz are shifting cultivators, they have strong psycho-social connections to fallowlands as well as their former villages. Investors' occupations of these lands have thus threatened traditional land use practice and have resulted in disputes and conflicts between the Gumuz and the companies (Teklemariam 2017: 320, Moreda 2017: 705). Furthermore, the honey production has declined heavily since the arrival of S&P. The Gumuz, who previously collected 80-90 kg of forest honey each year, is now unable to collect more than 10 kg, a 700-800% decline. This is a result of the S&P's land clearing, which included forest. The clearance resulted in loss of important livelihood resources, declined forest-based incomes, shortened fallow periods and decreased food sources (Bekele 2016: 100, 127, 161). The clearance of trees, usually done by



cutting down and burning, further release carbon into the atmosphere and the deforestation results in declining biodiversity and loss of ecosystem services that the community depend on (Teklemariam 2017: 320; Keeley 2014: 49). The Gumuz also states that the soil quality, as a result of the shortened fallow periods, have declined (Bekele 2016: 189).

### 5.2.3 Implications on rural populations in Oromia region



Source: CIA Factbook, Ethiopia (2018)

Oromia, representing the highlands of Ethiopia, is one of the regions that have leased out the largest amount of land (Lavers 2012: 805). The region have a statutory land tenure system and comprises of dense settlements dominated by smallholders, where peasant farmers rely on family plots as well as common lands and its resources for their livelihoods. Livestock raising is another important factor for incomes and thanks to the extent of grazing land available the livestock population is large (Rahmato 2011: 23). Investments in the area

have mainly focused on agro-pastoral areas with fewer inhabitants, former farms that were state-owned as well as flood plains (Schoneveld & Shete 2014: 5).

Bako Tibee woreda (hereafter referred to as Bako) is one of the district in Oromia targeted by land deals. The Indian company Karuturi (which already had been assigned a large area in Gambella region) obtained a leasehold from Oromia regional state to access the Bako plain for crop farming in 2008 (Bekele 2016: 11). The leasehold on the 11,000 ha of land in the district included access to Abuko river, on which local farmers used to depend partly because of the water resources but also in order to grow vegetables along its bank. Moreover, the Bako plain was traditionally used by indigenous people for cattle grazing and thus an important site for livestock-based livelihoods. There was in addition no community consultation before the land transfer, which resulted in numerous conflicts between the local people and the investor (ibid. 4).

Three communities, with more than 1,500 households in total, were at first supposed to be resettled due to Karuturi's arrival. However, the district government found the costs too high and changed the plan. This certainly prevented loss of certified farmland in the area, yet the development of the plantation displaced the communities' cultivation plots on the floodplain which was not certified.

The farmers did no longer have access to the river and its banks. This was in addition done without any compensation to the locals (Schoneveld & Shete 2014: 11; Rahmato 2011: 24). Furthermore, Karuturi cleared the land prior to its operations. The black soil, traditionally covered with open woodland and used for both grazing and farming, was now unavailable for the local farmers and in addition, old and valued trees were uprooted. In Oromo culture, these trees were meaningful for various reasons. They were used as sites for peace-making and gatherings, had religious significance and supplied shade for both humans and animals (Rahmato 2011: 24).

Karuturi farm provided some employment for the locals, the majority of these were however casual and did not benefit largely. The employees only had a small amount (if any) of employment security and no further benefits other than daily wage was provided. The number of casual laborers can, during peak season, reach over 600, which heavily declines during low seasons. In addition to the casual workers, the farm has about 30 permanent and 60 regular non-skill employees (Rahmato 2011: 25)

Table 5.2 Land grabbing projects in Ethiopia

Location	Investor	Origin of investor	Size in ha 1 ha=0,01 km <sup>2</sup>	Production	Impacts on local people and their livelihoods	Sources
Oromia regional state,	Karuturi Agro Products PLC	India	11,000	Maize mono-cropping	Displacement of farmers, clearing of fruit trees and culturally important trees, lack of compensations, isolation, reduced incomes,	Shete, Rutten, Schoneveld & Zewude 2015; Bekele 2016; The Oakland institute 2015; Hules & Jit Singh 2017; Gill 2016; Aga 2014; Shete & Rutten 2015;
BeniShangul Gumuz Regional State	S&P Energy solution	India	50,000	Pongamia cultivation and production of food crops	Loss of land and access to resources, shortened fallow periods, worsen soil quality	Bekele 2016; Moreda 2017; Teklemariam et al. 2016

Gambella regional state	Karuturi Agro Products PLC	India	100,000	Large-scale rice production.	Declined land access, important trees were cut down, deforestation, abnormal flooding	Bekele 2016; Hules & Jit Singh 2017; Baumgartner, von Braun, Abebaw & Müller 2015; The Oakland institute 2011  The Oakland Institute (2011).
	Basen	India	3,567	Cotton farming	lost access to important resources, increased food security	
	Saudi Star Agriculture Development Plc	Saudi Arabia	10,000	Rice Production	Relocation of rural populations by force, loss of land, water scarcity	

## 6. Analysis

As our findings evidently show, the different regions with their inhabitants in Ghana and Ethiopia have all been negatively affected by land grabbing projects in various ways. In spite of national/regional intention of improvement in regard to food security and poverty reduction in the countries, and despite promises made from investors, the local people are now worse off than before. In order to better analyze the various outcomes for the rural populations, and the ways in which they affect their traditional livelihoods, this chapter comprises of different subheadings. These are focusing on different themes, based on the study's purpose and theoretical framework and the categorizations made from these. It is, however, important to note that even though we divide certain outcomes into different sections, they are all interconnected with each other in the sense that they all are affected by, and affect, other outcomes while often occurring alongside one another. By subdivide we will however be able to break down the whole picture into smaller pieces and analyze how these in their own regard affect traditional livelihoods. Moreover, this will simplify our comparative purpose of the study, i.e. to compare the implications on the rural people in Ghana and Ethiopia.

### *The role and strategy of key actors*

In Ghana, the State as well as chief leaders of local communities have played important roles in the processes of land dispossession and the establishment of large-scale land investments projects. For instance, the processes of land grabbing in Yeji (Ghana) were largely enabled by the community chief, the traditional council and biofuel companies (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 54). In the case of land grabbing in Ethiopia, the main actor besides the foreign investors is the Ethiopian state. In fact, the expansion of agricultural investment deep inside the peripheral regions have been suggested to strengthen the state's capability to control these areas better, e.g. the control of resources, revenue streams and the people living there (Regassa et al. 2018: 2; Cotula et al 2014: 910). These two examples from Ghana and Ethiopia coincides well with the argument provided by Hall (2013) whom suggests that demand for land is not only generated by exogenous forces but also by the state priorities (Hall 2013: 1590). Indeed, the advocacy of large-scale farming for agricultural growth is linked to the perception that this will lead to comparative advantages in a globalised economy, which in turn is often at the center of justification for large-scale corporate land deals (White et al 2012: 625).

*Procedural injustice and unequal power relations: the starting point*

The negative outcomes that land grabbing result in for the observed rural populations are mainly stemming, we argue, from unequal power relations and what Lee (2009) refers to as procedural injustice, which begin long before the investors even arrive. The chain of actions, such as formulation and implementation of policies and laws, creates social structures that is unequal and where the socially weak are not considered (Lee 2009: 22), which certainly can be seen in the case of Ethiopia. The State, owning all land in the country and thus the most powerful actor, has actively promoted large-scale agricultural investments since 2007. It falsely states that a large amount of land is unoccupied or underutilized, thus stresses the need to attract investors in order to streamline agriculture production. Even though the state's declared intention is good, i.e. to reduce poverty and increase food security, this top-down policymaking neglect the indigenous populations' entitlements and their traditional ways of living by not consider these in the implementation of laws and policies.

Hence, the locals become disempowered and no longer enjoy self-determination regarding their livelihoods. Furthermore, local farmers and families are largely excluded from discussions and decisions in the initial phase of projects, leaving them powerless and not able to be heard. This can certainly be seen in Ethiopia. For instance, the Saudi Star's land acquisition in Gambella never involved the villagers in the decision making process, nor were they ever consulted (The Oakland Institute 2011: 2). Consultations with the locals were never made during the Karuturi project in Oromia (Bekele 2016: 4) either. In Ethiopia, there is thus a clear power imbalance, where the superior power of the state determines the ways in which the locals ought to live, which often forces them to abandon their traditional livelihoods practices.

Unequal power relations and lack of procedural justice are also evident in Ghana. In contrast to Ethiopia however, the state is not the only powerful actor in processes regarding agricultural investments and land transfers in the country. This authority also belongs to community chiefs who have the rights to land administration and decisions (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 63; 66). Thus, the power imbalance leading to procedural injustice are not only between the state and the indigenous people; the local farmers and families are also powerless against the community chiefs. For instance, in Pru district (Brong-Ahafo region), the households that ended up losing their land to investors were never part of any negotiations, nor were they consulted in the land deals. Instead, it was the local chiefs who negotiated with the companies and made the decisions alone (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 7). This lack of consultation with farmers and affected families were also

evident in the ScanFarm case in Agogo in the Ashanti Region (Acheampong & Champion 2014: 4593).

The unequal power relations and procedural injustices, in both Ghana and Ethiopia before and in the initial stage of different land grab project, affect local communities whose lands are the targets for investments. These are furthermore of great importance as they are a starting point for subsequent injustices.

*Enclosure and dispossession of the locals: loss of land and access to resources*

The Ethiopian government's promotion of large scale investments has caused displacement of rural populations, for instance in the case of Gambella where the Ethiopian government relocated rural poor and farmers to give room for the Saudi Star company and their rice production (The Oakland Institute 2011: 2). Likewise in Ghana, farmers have been dispossessed from the land they have used for centuries, due to companies' arrival. Yet, the governments in both Ghana and Ethiopia insist that agriculture investments will lead to economic growth and that the lands being allocated are underutilized, unused and unproductive (Moreda 2017: 699; Regassa 2018: 4). This can be connected to Harvey's concept of 'accumulation by displacement', a process in which the state or a powerful actor creates financial gain on the expense of, usually, poor and powerless actors such as rural farmers or peasants. As Harvey argues, the power of the state can be implemented to enforce dispossession, even if it means going against the public opinion (Harvey 2013: 148). In Ethiopia for example, relocations of rural poor, peasants, pastoralists and indigenous people by security forces have often been marked with assaults, threats and arbitrary arrest for those who resist the move. The rural poor are oftentimes being moved to areas that lack viable farmland, adequate health and educational facilities, transportation infrastructure and access to drinking water (Schiffman 2013: 245).

A key element in accumulation by dispossession is the privatisation of land (Harvey 2013: 66; Araghi & Karides 2012: 1). The dispossession of farmers in both Ghana and Ethiopia is indeed a consequence of the privatisation of the land by the state or the community chiefs, where former common lands have been allocated to foreign or domestic companies. As a consequence of privatization and enclosure of land, dispossessed rural people are occasionally forced to shift to diversify incomes and complementing food production from often small farms. This process is a form of semi-proletarianisation, which in turn leads to livelihood and food insecurity (Yaro et al.

2017: 548). Both livelihood and food insecurity in rural parts of Ghana are highly influenced by employment conditions and access to land. Most plantation workers without access to land are hence more vulnerable to, for example, food insecurity. Although the plantation workers receive wages, these are often too low and are not able to meet the food needs of families. Families relying on their own farms however, are oftentimes more able to self-provision (Yaro et al 2017: 548-549). Similarly in Ethiopia, indigenous populations are heavily dependent on the land for their livelihoods for various reasons. The access to land provide the rural people with resources, plots for cultivation of food crops and opportunity to graze their cattle, all of which are highly important for food production and incomes for the locals. Moreover, their cultural and spiritual connections to their lands make it even more valuable (Human Rights Watch 2012). Hence, to lose access to land and resources and be forced to change the lifestyle which they have been practicing for decades or centuries are not only resulting in the indigenous people facing the risk of food insecurity and lower incomes, but it also forces them to abandon their cultural identity and customs.

Even though the governments in Ghana and Ethiopia stresses that investments in agriculture by foreign companies aim to achieve food security and boost the economy, it is apparent that loss of land and access to resources for the locals, as a result of land grabbing and thus dispossession, in actuality intensify poverty among the rural populations (Bush et al. 2011: 189). The *Jatropha* plantations in Ghana, or the reduction of indigenous farm size in Yeji (Ghana), have caused a decrease of household surplus of food (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 55; Acheampong and Champion 2014: 4596). This can be linked with the idea that food security is strongly interconnected with land rights. Lack of secure land rights is oftentimes a particular problem for many poor communities. In times of rising food and land prices, these same poor communities are the most vulnerable to displacement by more powerful interest groups (Godfray et al. 2010: 814).

### *Conflicts*

There have been up rises in the number of conflicts due to land grabbing projects in the countries, both between indigenous people and the companies and between different ethnic groups within the regions where projects have been implemented. In all regions, land grabbing projects have enclosed land, i.e. making the land and its resources unavailable for the locals depending on it. This coincides with the term environmentalism of the poor (and indigenous people), i.e. the poor and/or indigenous populations in both Ghana and Ethiopia are fighting to preserve their land and their traditional livelihood activities against the state, chiefs and companies (Anguelovski & Alier 2014: 241-241).

In regard to the three dimensions of environmental conflicts, in line with Escobar (2006), these can be detected as follows; concerning the economic aspect, local, diversified economies in both Ghana and Ethiopia are being converted into a joint, market-based economy. Traditional agricultural practices are being neglected in favor for modern monocropping for export markets, both in terms of food crops and crops for biofuels. The ecological aspect is identified in the local ecosystems and environments that have been damaged due to the land use changes in the countries. In all the observed regions in Ethiopia, the land use changes following the land grabbing projects have resulted in environmental disadvantages such as deforestation, abnormal flooding, decreased soil quality and soil compaction (Shete et al. 2015: 696-701; Gill 2016: 711). Similarly in Ghana, deforestation, reduced water availability and quality as well as biodiversity loss are environmental impacts stemming from the biofuel plantations (Ahmed et al 2017: 138). Finally, the cultural aspects concern the lack of consideration of traditional livelihood practices and the indigenous populations' cultural and social connections to the lands they have been used for ages. This is evident by the fact that indigenous trees and forests have been cleared by Karuturi in both Gambella (Abbink 2011: 520) and Oromia (Rahmato 2011: 24), without any consideration of their meaning and significance for the locals. Enclosure of lands which indigenous populations have depended and still depend on, which have been done by all observed companies, violates in itself their cultural history and identities, and thus forces them to abandon these in order to subsist.

*Benefits, compensations and fulfilled promises - or lack thereof*

The current foreign land investments in Ethiopia mainly benefit the central government and the investing actors. The government has among other things chosen to promote large-scale agricultural investments to produce crops which often are exported to the country of the investor origin. This causes a paradox since one of the reasons that the Ethiopian government allowed foreign investors in the first place was to increase food security and agricultural productivity for domestic consumption (Abbink 2011: 519; Tura 2018: 253-254). In spite of the fact that land investments generates some economic benefits to the country overall, such as rental costs and taxes, this only benefits people on a higher level, while simultaneously leading to increased food insecurity and poverty to the rural people on the ground. This can be connected to the distributional injustice that Lee (2009: 21) highlights, i.e. the unequal distribution of benefits and burden. The powerful actors in the countries, such as the state, investors and traditional chiefs, benefit, while the local community members pay the price in terms of lower incomes, food insecurity and environmental damage, without any compensations.



The observed projects in Ethiopia, i.e. Karuturi, Basen and S&P, did certainly generate wage employments, yet these did not benefit largely to the local communities since these were either offered to labourers from outside, or did not provide equivalent incomes compared to when the locals still had land for production and income activities. Likewise in Ghana, wages from employments on the farms were considered low and inadequate. Furthermore, the shift from farming to wage employment leads to higher food prices due to the declined amount of producing farmers and to the farmers' loss of control over their lands and crops (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 57). This is problematic since the poverty levels in rural regions in both countries are large, meaning that many people might no longer afford to buy food while simultaneously not being able to produce it themselves any longer. Many farmers do actually prefer to be farmers, although the earnings might be lower compared to certain wage employments (ibid.). This partly stems from the fact that an overwhelming majority of the farmers and peasants lack the skills necessary to become eligible for the newly created employment opportunities generated by the foreign and domestic land investment projects (Zoomers 2010: 441). Another reason lies in the cultural value of traditional livelihood practices and of the land. Considering that land is not only seen as an economic asset for the indigenous populations but also is deeply connected to identity and spirituality (Lisk 2013: 576; The Oakland Institute 2011: 42), the opportunity to become a wage employer is thus not tempting for these people.

In many cases land is grabbed by governments and justified by the reason that it is of national interest. The government, however, often refuse to pay fair compensation to those whose land is being appropriated (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 68), although this usually is required. The Constitution of Ghana for instance, states that adequate compensation must be paid promptly to those who lost land to the state or companies (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 71). Yet, households in Pru District were never compensated for their loss of land (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 7), compensations for farmers' land loss in Yeji were either lacking or not adequate (Bugri 2012: 23) and the majority of locals in Agogo did not receive any compensation for the land they lost (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4593). The same goes with Ethiopia, where inadequate or absent compensations were observed in Gambella (Rahmato 2011: 21) and Oromia (Schoneveld & Shete 2014: 11; Rahmato 2011: 24). The fact that the indigenous ethnic minorities are weakly organised and have little power, makes it difficult for them to negotiate or secure adequate compensation from corporate investors or state actors (Moreda 2017: 701).

## 6.1 Similarities and differences

As mentioned, the agricultural sector plays a vital part not only for the economy in Ghana and Ethiopia, but also for rural livelihoods. Access to land and resources plays a central role for rural livelihoods in both countries, overall land is deeply embedded in rural societies and identities, and represents the main source of livelihood (Cotula et al 2009:17). Yet, the traditional authority (chiefs) of Ghana and government of Ethiopia both argue that large-scale land investments are important measures to increase food security, development of the agricultural sector, employment and income for rural communities (Aha & Ayitey 2017: 54; Schoneveld et al 2011; 3; 6). It seems paradoxical, and contradictory, that the governments of Ghana and Ethiopia who both claim that land deals and agricultural investments are put in place for public interest and improvements for rural living standards, remove the most central part of their rural livelihood, which is access to land and resources. Besides agricultural land investments, land grabbing due to biofuel production are also very common in both countries. Both Ethiopia and Ghana have leased out land for biofuel projects, which has caused yet more cases of land loss and dispossession of rural communities. The biofuel projects have moreover a direct negative impact on the environment in both countries, for example pollution of water sources and soil degradation. The consequences of land grabs have shown to be the same whether land is being leased out for biofuel or agriculture, in both cases rural poor becomes dispossessed. The farmers who lose land must either migrate or become wage laborers, which has been the case in both Ghana and Ethiopia. In the cases where farmers lose parts of their land, the size of the farm is no longer large enough to meet the households' food needs. In such cases livelihood strategies such as income diversification becomes the key solution to meet the food demand, which once again is observed in both Ghana and Ethiopia.

The Ghanaian Constitution states that those who lost land to the state or companies are entitled to adequate compensations from the state (ElHadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012: 71). Similar laws exist in Ethiopia, however, this study has shown that both countries fail to provide sufficient compensation, in some cases no compensation at all (Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 7; Tura 2018: 253-254; Bugri 2012: 23). The negotiation processes regarding land leasing which directly affects rurals are often made without the consent or in some cases, even without the knowledge of the rural communities (Gill 2016: 711). In both Ghana and Ethiopia, rural population who lost part of their lands or all of it, claimed they were never consulted, neither did they participate in any negotiation process during the land leases (Acheampong & Campion 2014: 4593; Gill 2016: 711; The Oakland Institute 2011:2).

Overall, the impacts of land grab on rural populations in both Ghana and Ethiopia have shown to be very similar, yet this study has also managed to discover some differences between the countries. One of the perhaps biggest differences is related to our research question, namely, what underlying factors trigger land grabbing projects in Ethiopia and Ghana. In the case of Ethiopia, the state is the main driving force behind the land leases; they believe the country will benefit from foreign investors. The main reason why farmers and rural communities lose land is thus a consequence of the policies set by the Ethiopian government, which promotes and invites foreign investors and companies to acquire land (Abbink 2011: 519). Land grabbing in Ethiopia is therefore, state-driven. However, in the case of Ghana, the Chiefs are the main administrators of land in rural communities. Most land deals in rural areas have in fact been between Chiefs (traditional authority) and the land investors (Amanor & Ubink 2016: 60; Schoneveld, German & Nutakor 2011: 6; Aha & Ayitey 2017: 54).). In the case of Ethiopia, as mentioned, it is the State, the Government who make land deals with foreign and domestic investors in rural areas.

However, there is another dimension to the state-driven land grabbing in Ethiopia, which has not been found in Ghana. Some argue that the Ethiopian government's expansion of agricultural investments deep into peripheral rural areas strengthens the state's capacity to control and access important land and resource materials (Regassa et al 2018: 2). Yet, the impacts that the rural population experience from land grabbing, seems to be identical in both countries. Most cases brought up in this study in fact shows that there are very little if any differences at all.

## 7. Final discussion and conclusions

The aim of this comparative study was to critically analyze land grabbing in certain regions in Ethiopia and Ghana, and to compare the ways in which local livelihoods are negatively affected by these. Our standpoint was consciously normative, built on post-marxist thoughts and an assumption that land grabbing results in far more negative consequences than benefits for rural populations, regardless of the investors' and targeted countries' intentions. We furthermore conducted this study through a lens of political ecology, where concepts such as environmental justice and environmentalism of the poor, accumulation by dispossession, sustainable rural livelihoods and food security were of particular importance.

Although we did not have the time or the resources to conduct field studies and gather primary data, we argue that the secondary data collected by our systematic literature review provided us with enough relevant material to answer the research questions. The first one concerned what negative implications land grabbing projects in the countries result in for the rural populations, and in what

ways their livelihoods are affected. The empirical findings, i.e. our results, show that in both Ghana and Ethiopia, socio-economic and environmental implications have occurred due to land grabbing projects, which have negatively affected the rural populations' livelihoods. The populations in the six regions - Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and The Upper West region in Ghana and Gambella regional state, Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia in Ethiopia, although different in the terms of livelihood activities, density, cultural background and surroundings, share many similar experiences from the various investors arriving to their lands. First of all, they have all experienced procedural injustice, i.e. they have been excluded both from considerations before the investments took place as well as consultations in the initial phase of implementations. In Ethiopia, this stems above all from the unequal power that the locals have in relation to the state, which owns all lands in the country and which sees large-scale agriculture as more effective than traditional smallholding. In Ghana, the rural populations are subordinated to the community chiefs and the government, who both have the authority to decide what the land ought to be used for and who do not consult the locals during decision processes. These unequal power relations are resulting in procedural injustices, which in turn result in other injustices and conflicts to the disadvantages for the local, indigenous populations.

Both in Ghana and Ethiopia, enclosure of large tracts of lands have increased due to investors' arrival, which have resulted in dispossession of many farmers and families and posed a direct threat towards their livelihoods and survival. Even for those people that were able to stay on their land, this enclosure restricted their access to resources on which they depend for various reasons and consequently threatened both food security as well as reduced household incomes. Wage employment opportunities have certainly increased in several districts where projects have been implemented, yet these are not always given to the people that have lost their land and thus need it the most. In addition, the wages are often low and not sufficient to feed the families of the laborer, if given at all. Also, even in the case of adequate wages, becoming a wage labor is not always tempting due to cultural connection to the land as well as lack of necessary skills. Yet, clearance of forest and enclosure of land and water resources which have happened in all regions, are forcing the indigenous people to abandon their traditional ways of living. This is because several of the key activities becomes harder to persist, both because of declined access to important lands and resources but also due to environmental damage following land use changes, such as declined quality of soil and water, flooding, deforestation and biodiversity loss. The process of the large-scale agricultural investment policy has further been lacking transparency, excluding the local community and the indigenous rural population from taking part of the negotiations and decision-making process of the land that is being leased out. This does not only neglect the livelihood of the

rural population, but also the environment. Other concern relates to the displacement of local communities from their lands without any reasonable or just compensation which further undermines their livelihoods and increases food insecurity (Tura 2018: 253-254).

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## Appendix I

### Log of the study

We did not have many physical meetings during this thesis; instead we mainly worked in a shared document and had regular written contact with each other. Thus, even though we (physically speaking) were not jointly writing the study, we had a great collaboration where we continuously knew what the other one was doing as well as how the work in progress were going. We also continuously commented and discussed directly in the document when something was unclear or in a need for a change, and tried to solve this immediately.

Regarding the distribution of the written work, both of us have been part of every chapter of the study. We agreed that this was the most adequate way of doing it since all the elements are equally important and we both wanted to contribute to each one. However, we decided to divide certain parts of a few chapters to increase the efficiency of our work. This was for instance done with the theoretical framework and concepts, where Vincent had the main responsibility for the theoretical concepts of accumulation by dispossession and sustainable rural livelihoods (+ food security), while Emma was responsible for the sections about political ecology and environmental justice. This division means that it especially is the person in charge that have written the sections, there have however been opportunities for the other one to add information that he or she argued was needed. Thus, in spite of the division, we have interacted in the theory chapter as well. The other chapter we divided is the one concerning the historical background as well as the results from the countries, where Vincent mainly focused on Ghana and Emma on Ethiopia. Due to the fact that much information was available we chose to focus on one country each in order to get a better overview, but also for the work to proceed smoothly and efficiently.

Besides the certain divisions mentioned above, we have both had a high level of activity and contributed equally to all parts and sections of the study, and it is almost impossible to determine exactly how much each person has contributed. Surely there are elements where one of us has written a bit more, yet these differences are being equalized in the end. For instance, Emma has written more in the method section that explores the comparative method and the process itself, while Vincent is the one who wrote a bit more about the critical reflection of the method. Similarly, Vincent started earlier with the analysis and thus wrote a little bit more under this section, while Emma wrote most of the abstract and disposition. On the whole, we both agree that we have been equally involved in this paper; hence we do not feel that one of us has contributed neither more or less than the other.