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From Subsistence to Commercial Producers

Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana.

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From Subsistence to Commercial Producers

Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics
and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana

SELORM KOBLA KUGBEGA

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY | FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE | LUND UNIVERSITY



The commercialization of smallholder production is viewed as a viable pathway to the economic transformation of sub-Saharan African countries. Using the case of Ghana's Planting for Food and Jobs policy (PFJ-2017) which aims to improve smallholder efficiency through a unitary package of agricultural incentives, the thesis analyses the changes in land tenure and the trajectories of social differentiation as commercialization proceeds. It further provides an exposition of the tensions between customary and state actors regarding the management of customary land for the fulfilment of agrarian change objectives. The thesis takes an empirical starting point from gendered and non-native perspectives in two study communities with contrasting land endowments. Its unique contribution lies in bringing nuanced perspectives to the dominant theories around land tenure, social differentiation, proletarianization, landlessness, de/reagrarianization and de/repeasantization. The linkages between commercialization, social differentiation and land tenure outcomes are depicted as manifesting in non-linear ways often mediated by social, economic and cultural considerations. These nuanced perspectives aim to augment our understanding of the intervening processes of tenure transformation and smallholder adaptations in the context of commercialization.



SELORM KOBLA KUGBEGA is a PhD Candidate at the Department of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden. He is a Rural Geographer working with Smallholder-based Agricultural Transformation, Land Tenure and Agricultural Policy questions in sub-Saharan Africa. He trained as an Urban and Rural Geographer at the Masters level in Lund University and the University of Birmingham, UK.

From Subsistence to Commercial Producers

From Subsistence to Commercial Producers

Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure
Dynamics and Social Differentiation among
Smallholders in Ghana.

Selorm Kobla Kugbega



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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Doctoral dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University to be publicly defended on 28th October 2022 at 10.00 in Världen, Department of Human Geography, Geocentrum I, Sölvegatan 10.

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Abstract Agricultural commercialization is concerned with improving market-oriented production in expectation of maximizing profit. While previous state policies in Ghana favoured commercialization by medium and large scale cultivators, there exists a new national commitment dubbed the Planting for Food and Jobs Policy that seeks to leverage on the cumulative productive potential of small farmers for sustained economic growth. This requires structural shifts away from subsistence towards entrepreneurial modes of production. While exogenous factors such as demographic, infrastructural and technological changes are central to eliciting optimal gains from commercialization processes, the thesis concerns the endogenous aspects relating to intra-household and intra-community land asset distribution, production capacities among different smallholder groups and institutional synergies between land tenure actors. The linkages between commercialization and land tenure outcomes are neither always direct nor tangible on the ground. They are determined by varied factors that may improve the commercialization and land tenure conditions of one group as a result or constrain another. Can we therefore posit that the process of smallholder commercialization relates largely to inevitable processes of social differentiation and related loss of land? This thesis calls into question these issues within an analytical framework of theories of access, property rights, smallholder differentiation, gender dynamics and de/repeasantization and de/reagrarianization. The empirical basis of the thesis is qualitative, utilizing key informant and household interviews, focus group discussions, participatory rural appraisal exercises and document analysis. Findings show how tense interactions between state and customary actors fuelled by narratives of traditionalization, non-interference and replacement reduce the opportunities for synergies in implementing agricultural policies. The thesis further shows how migrant farmers' tenurial rights are weakened by processes of commercialization leading to the development of relational forms of land access depicted by in-kind food crop gifts to land owners. They are further engaged in taungya agreements in which they exchange their labour for "free" land access. These agreements are indicative of labour exploitation and the creation of transactional rather than the theorised landlessness and waged labour in the context of commercialization. The thesis also shows how women's possibilities for commercialization are limited by structural factors and with it their ability to hold cultivation claims over communal land. Men however do not face these constraints and tend to consolidate their hold on customary land. Nonetheless, women are incentivized by the unique nature of cashew cultivation in circumventing structural barriers as well as its proprietary attributes under customary law, to seek land for cultivation. With these outcomes, it is imperative that stakeholders give consideration to the synergies between land tenure actors and the potential polarizing effects of commercialization on the production possibilities of different groups and on land tenure.			
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MADE IN SWEDEN 

Dedicated to my parents Mr and Mrs Kugbega, my siblings Dzifa, Seyram and Sedem, my dear partner Tshepiso Lehutjo, Mrs Enia Lehutjo and in loving memory of Mr Daniel Malesela Lehutjo.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

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I would like to end with the wise words of the great Psalmist “[I will] Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures Forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations” (Psalm 100: 4-5).

Thank you so much! Tack så mycket! Akpe na mi kataaa!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Selorm Kobla Kugbega', written in a cursive style.

Selorm Kobla Kugbega
Geocentrum 1, Lund.
September, 2022

List of Articles

Article I

Kugbega, S., (2020). State-Customary Interactions and Agrarian Change in Ghana. The Case of Nkoranza Traditional Area. *Land*, 9(11), p.458. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/land9110458>.

Article II

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Article III

Kugbega, S.K., Andersson Djurfeldt, A., (Forthcoming- Journal of International Development). Gendered Dynamics of State-led Smallholder Commercialization in Ghana. The Case of Nkoranza Traditional Area.

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List of Acronyms

ASPR- Agricultural Sector Progress Report

AU- African Union

CAADP- Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

ESRI- Environmental Systems Research Institute

FAO- Food and Agriculture Organization

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

FASDEP- Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy

MoFA- Ministry of Food and Agriculture

METASIP- Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan

MTADP- Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme

NEPAD- New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGO- Non-governmental Organisation

PERD- Planting for Export and Rural Development Policy

PFJ- Planting for Food and Jobs Policy

PORL- Public Ownership of Rural Lands

PRA- Participatory Rural Appraisal

PTI- Participatory Tenure Identification

SAP- Structural Adjustment Programme

SSA- Sub-Saharan Africa

List of Legislations

Communal Land Act-1982 (Chapter 20:04)- Zimbabwe

Domaine National Law-1964 (Law number 64-46)- Senegal

Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation (No. 31/1975)- Ethiopia

The Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act, 1975 (Act 21)- Tanzania

Chapter One:

Introduction

“Meeting the challenge of improving rural incomes in Africa will require some form of transformation out of the semi-subsistence, low income and low-productivity farming systems that currently characterize much of rural Africa” (Govere et al. 1999: 1).

1.1 Background

The question of why some countries are poor and others rich and how poorer countries can efficiently tap their economic potentials for sustained growth and prosperity, has remained a lingering one in development economics for many decades (see Sen 2001; Easterly 2006; Collier 2007; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), attempts at achieving broad-based economic development was prominent among newly independent countries whose leaders at the time, focused on development ideologies geared towards changing the structure of their largely subsistence-based economies, to industrialized ones. Resulting, most countries through successive development plans, legislative and constitutional instruments, adopted a state-led development strategy to economic growth, spearheaded by industrialization motives (see Mkandawire 2001; Musamba 2010). The state-led development strategy while seeking to catalyse industrialization, also sought to improve agricultural productivity and ensure equitable economic development. Consequently, there were several attempts by these new post-independence governments to control their country’s most valuable assets, exploit the same and redistribute returns for widespread economic growth. Land was viewed as central to the reinvigorated development trajectory and countries including Zimbabwe (Communal Land Act-1982), Tanzania (through Ujamaa¹-1975), Senegal (Domaine National Law-1964) and Ethiopia (PORK Proclamation No. 31/1975) adopted recurrent land reforms targeted at redefining land ownership

¹ Ujamaa is a socialist ideology introduced by Tanzania’s first post-independence leader Julius Nyerere in his infamous Arusha declaration, that focused on collectivization and a process of villagization to allow communities work together towards a common economic goal, mostly agriculture development.

and positioning the state at the centre of land management. At the time, the prominent ideology of the “*founding members*” of newly independent African countries favoured direct state investment in agriculture (through state farms², produce marketing boards and agro-processing points). The strategy was expected to lead to efficient resource redistribution, engineer a process of enhanced food self-sufficiency, reductions in the net import bill, create employment and increase foreign exchange earnings.

Similarly, in post-independence Ghana, state strategies for economic growth required control of basic factors of production including land however, the idea of nationalization of land resources was vehemently opposed by chiefs and land owners (see Nti 2012). Thus, the nature of state investment and control over rural land in sub-Saharan Africa were two-fold. While in Ethiopia and much of Tanzania, government’s efforts to promote agriculture has taken the form of direct forced control over the country’s most arable lands and encouragement of investor interest in agri-based interventions (Lavers 2012a; Lavers 2012b), in other African countries including Ghana, the state has used its soft power, negotiation strategies and policies in persuading traditional authorities and land owners³ to acquiesce to land demands (Amanor 2009: 105-106). Regardless of the historical intricacies of direct state investment in land for agricultural purposes, there has been a recent upsurge in rural land seizures and tenurial changes towards first, gratifying demands by private actors and secondly meeting state agricultural objectives. The critical literature is replete with research on this recurrent facilitating role sub-Saharan African states play in rural land transactions (Anseeuw et al. 2012; White et al. 2012; Cotula 2013; Peters 2013); mostly favouring medium and large scale cultivation. Meanwhile, due to capital, input, market and labour constraints, agriculture in rural Africa has remained smallholder dominated and labour intensive. With consequent contesting claims between existing smallholder domains and new medium and large scale actors, the critical literature on rural land commercialization paints a dismal picture of rich and powerful groups making investments in communities where the actual land owners remain passive participants or are victims of expropriation (GRAIN 2008; Cotula et al. 2009). The transformations in the traditional subsistence agriculture setup by these new commercial interests, backed by state support, is suspected of throwing the balance of land holdings into disarray and effectively reorganizing the rural land tenure system. These tenurial distortions are attributable to the high purchasing power and productive capacity of commercial interests that

² Post-independence state farms were designed as large scale and technology-oriented models with the aim to reduce import dependence and provide raw materials for industry. In most cases, land was either appropriated by the state through the principle of eminent domain or freely given by chiefs after negotiations.

³ Land owners include persons who exert management control over land resources.

fuels a phenomenon described in the critical literature as *monetization of customary land* (Ubink and Quan 2008).

Alden Wily (2012) and De Schutter (2011) conclude that these historical and recent state-led strategies that seek to engineer agricultural development, constitute a gradual move to legitimize the dispossession of smallholder farmers, restrict rural social relations and at best engender a socially stratified economic transformation. This is because wealthier and more powerful groups and their cronies have historically been the major beneficiaries of land tenure changes to the exclusion of poor and vulnerable groups (Goldstein and Udry 2008; Ubink 2008b; Ubink et al. 2009; Amanor 2010). The engagements by new entrants⁴ (Boamah 2014; Jayne et al. 2014a; Schoneveld and German 2014) in a smallholder-dominated rural agriculture space lends credence to the imminent threats faced by smallholder farmers. Amidst debates around the trade-offs between the socio-economic costs and gains of medium and large scale cultivation, there exists recent consensus on the need for an inclusive business model that integrates both smallholder and medium or large scale interests in a bid to improve synergies and reconcile seemingly contradictory development views. Consequently, Staatz and Dembélé (2007) and World Bank (2007) concluded that agriculture development in SSA requires the incorporation of a smallholder-based model that can catalyse the emergence of smallholder entrepreneurs who can transition to medium and large scale cultivators. In recognizing the need for synergies and equitable opportunities for smallholder agriculture's contribution to economic development, many sub-Saharan Africa states have instituted smallholder targeted policies and two of such in Ghana (the Planting for Food and Jobs and Planting for Export and Rural Development Policies -*Discussed later in the text*) are the subject of this thesis.

1.2 Problem Identification

The African Union's (AU) Maputo Declaration (2003) which was reaffirmed in its 2014 Malabo declaration remains one of the most ambitious continental efforts at stimulating agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa. The declaration, among other things, emphasized the relevance and potential of smallholder agriculture and encouraged AU signatories to allocate at least ten percent (10%) of annual national budgets in support of agricultural development while operating within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) (NEPAD 2003). With renewed focus on smallholder agriculture as essential for agri-based economic development (Lipton 2005; World Bank 2007), modern agriculture initiatives in SSA emphasize encouraging a cadre

⁴ New entrants defined in the critical literature relates to the interest and activities of urban elites and multinational corporations in the rural land space.

of master or emergent farmers⁵ that incorporates smallholders seeking to realign their cultivation methods. Haggblade et al. (2010) find that smallholders are efficient producers hence the commercialization of their production in SSA, as was the case in South East Asia, may catalyse broad-based economic growth. Exploring the latent commercial potential of smallholder farmers is viewed as central to attaining multiple advantages of increased incomes, food security and improved nutrition (Jayne et al. 2011; Wiggins et al. 2011; Carletto et al. 2017). It further allows farmers to leverage on regional synergies and household level spillover effects of producing priority crops, for improving the production of other food crops (Govereh and Jayne 2003).

Although there exist many documented cases of emergent farmer classes (Sitko and Jayne 2014; Anseeuw et al. 2016; Jayne et al. 2016) there is scanty and at best patchy evidence of the implicit role of state policy and interest in the discourse around development of market-oriented smallholder production and consequent land tenure implications. In land scarce and populous countries, some authors while following on Boserup's (1965) theorization of agrarian change and population growth have predicted responses of miniaturisation and subdivision of existing smallholder land parcels to accommodate changes in the rural land space (Place and Otsuka 2000; Holden and Otsuka 2014; Mwesigye et al. 2017). Bernstein (2010) however contends that the focus on smallholder commercialization may rather encourage a process that benefits small scale cultivators who are capable of withstanding market risks to the detriment of more vulnerable farmers who have a lower probability of reinventing themselves to take advantage of the new commercialization drive. Thus, the probability of achieving state objectives of smallholder commercialization, may be primarily reliant on structural differences and intragroup diversity.

Who should be the primary beneficiaries of state-mediated agricultural development incentives and how should factor allocation be done to ensure equitable distribution? These are burning questions that successive governments in Ghana have often given politicized responses to but failed to address on the ground. It is often advocated that the primary beneficiaries of state agricultural incentives should be rural smallholder farmers, rather than large and medium commercial farmers. In policy discussions, the conceptualization of what constitutes smallholder agriculture is however vague and the sector is misconstrued as comprising a homogenous group. These misconceptions disregard socio-economic differentials and obscure inequities that exist within the larger context of households engaged in small scale cultivation. Furthermore, intra-household and intra-community differences (especially gender, age and socio-economic status) that pertain to the access and use of primary factors of production (typically land, labour and capital) are often

⁵ Includes smallholder farmers that are emerging out of subsistence hence occupy the transition space between small scale subsistence or semi-subsistence production and large scale commercial production (see Cousins 2010; Sitko and Jayne 2014; Gwiriri et al. 2019; Sitko and Jayne 2019).

disregarded. Thus, calls for state-mediated agricultural development policies targeted at production increases among smallholders are well placed yet they may be problematic when implementation is done without recourse to intrinsic processes that influence inequality. Though many researchers acknowledge the existence of socio-economic differences among smallholders (see Bernstein 2010; O’Laughlin et al. 2016), their calls for explicit smallholder-targeted techniques that are sensitive to structural differences are either given little consideration in policy planning or prove difficult to implement. As Lund (2008) notes, questions of who benefits or loses and characteristics of persons assuming commercial agriculture tendencies in the rural economy have become especially important. While contemplating these questions, Bernstein (2010), Jaleta et al. (2009) and Govereh et al. (1999) argue that changes in the rural economy, due to smallholder commercialization, leads to either (a) the development of subsistence and semi-subsistence small scale farmers into master small-farmers with an orientation towards commercial production or (b) the development of a rural landless class who either rent or sell their lands due to their inability to cultivate such land, or both.

State efforts in agriculture development have historically been evidenced by direct investments in state farms or through restructuring rural land tenure to support investor or domestic agricultural goals (Amanor 2009; Asaaga and Hirons 2019). The latter process which features a market-led attempt at equitable land distribution is fraught with inefficiencies, inequities and appears counter intuitive to improving smallholder cultivation. It has effectively shifted the balance from state and traditional authorities’ *dejure* control over rural land to *defacto* control by market forces (Ubink 2008b; Ubink et al. 2009). Growing focus on state-mediated agricultural development has nonetheless encouraged states to play a more direct or subtle role in rural land distribution through policy interventions that encourage changes in the pattern of production and are geared towards furthering the country’s economic development agenda (see Alden Wily 2010; Deininger et al. 2011). Still, little debate exists around how rural land tenure interfaces with state agricultural policies and smallholder differentiation. In Ghana, the state’s recent introduction of the smallholder-targeted ***Planting for Food and Jobs policy***⁶ (*hereinafter PFJ*) which seeks to encourage subsistence and semi-subsistence smallholder farmers to transition to commercial smallholder production leaves many questions around implications for rural land tenure and different smallholder groups unanswered. The PFJ actively disregards the earlier large and medium scale investment ideologies of the post-independence state farm enterprise in favour of smallholder commercialization. This may lead to heightened demands on rural lands thus encouraging dispossession and landlessness among poorer smallholder households or a diversion of lands meant for cultivating primary crops (for supporting dietary

⁶ The PFJ’s agricultural incentives include subsidised fertilizers, improved seeds, extension services marketing and IT support. See section 2.7 for further details.

needs), in favour of cultivating selected priority crops that align with the state's food security and agricultural commercialization objectives. With expected tenurial changes, the need for a customarily administered land tenure system that interfaces clearly with statutory and market-based systems and does not present itself as inimical to economic development is vital to contemporary discussions. Additionally, the one size fits all nature of the PFJ policy in the quest to encourage commercial smallholder cultivation, disregards the different types of small farmers as well as the variability of intra-group asset distribution. Such structural variations hold implications for policy uptake, may affect land distribution and may lessen, create new or deepen existing socio-economic differences among smallholder groups (Bernstein 2010; Bernstein and Oya 2014). The thesis investigates how vulnerable smallholder groups are affected and the implications of commercialization on customary land use, ownership and (re)distribution. In doing so, it posits that (a) the subtle encouragement of smallholder commercialization and related adoption of market-oriented cultivation modes, influence rural differentiation and (b) the ways in which smallholder groups interact with customary land tenure institutions in the light of state-mediated agricultural development policies, holds varied implications for land tenure relations among smallholders themselves.

1.3 Justification of the Study

Throughout the colonial and post-independence periods, agriculture has been touted as one of the major sectors in which Ghana holds competitive economic advantage. Nonetheless, the country has not been able to leverage on the theorised latent potential for sustained economic development despite recurrent agricultural sector reforms (World Bank 2018). Recent renewed interest in agriculture as a panacea to poverty reduction, wealth creation, food self-sufficiency and structural change⁷ is evidenced by agricultural incentives provided through the Ghanaian state's planting for food and jobs policy. While earlier efforts favoured the cash crop sector and large scale cultivators, the planting for food and jobs policy seeks to leverage on the cumulative production capacity of smallholder food crop farmers in catalysing structural change. The policy has been described as the most audacious smallholder-targeted policy in Ghana, seeking to reach 1,682,000 households by year 2020 (MoFA 2017b). Nonetheless, the successful implementation of policies of such magnitude requires varied engagements with stakeholders including customary institutions who mediate land access. This notwithstanding, state narratives on

⁷ Also termed structural transformation. It relates to sustained economic shifts from low to high productivity leading to generally higher incomes and improved wellbeing (see Lewis 1954; Mellor 1995).

customary tenure and the disregard of its contributions to present day development creates contentions between customary and state actors. State actors find that customary tenure is archaic, unable to assure land tenure security and a disincentive to economic development hence needs to be replaced with statutory land management processes (see Government of Ghana 2010; Government of Ghana 2014b; Government of Ghana 2014a; Government of Ghana 2017). This view has been interpreted as a gradual move to render customary actors redundant since the basis of their authority is primarily defined by the territorial extent of land they control and the numbers of their subjects. Customary institutions have reacted to the threat of losing land by consolidating their hold and exercising absolute authority over land. Resulting, they have been accused of annexing customary land and treating it as personal property (Ubink and Quan 2008). One effect of such chiefly consolidation of power over land is evidenced by large scale customary allocations of fertile agricultural lands to competing uses without recourse to state policy and objectives. While some countries have used the medium of land banks⁸, agricultural production and specialization zones and negotiated agreements to make customary land available to serve state agricultural objectives, these avenues have not been explored by the Ghanaian state and if at all on a small scale. However, without an underlying agreement on the mechanisms of land management, the objectives of the smallholder-oriented planting for food and jobs policy may be difficult to attain. Thus, the study first investigates the synergies between customary and state actors and the opportunities for collaborations between two seemingly opposing ideologies on land tenure management.

Additionally, while the PFJ policy incentives are available for all smallholder farmers, its implementation fails to recognize the structural differences between smallholder groups. These structural differences are often depicted by land endowments as well as particular socio-cultural and economic differentials in agricultural production. Thus, the effect of commercialization of smallholder production may be the loss of land, proletarianization and acute livelihood vulnerability for less dynamic and poorer farmers (Bernstein 2010). These land use and ownership dynamics are relevant since PFJ has contributed to the growth in crop area for maize⁹ in the study area (Nkoranza South municipality and Nkoranza North district) by 80% and 38%¹⁰ respectively between 2017 and 2020 (GODI 2022; SRID-MoFA 2022). With majority of production being smallholder-based and

⁸ Refers to land holdings that are earmarked for particular purposes. These land banks are often used by states as a mechanism to reduce landlessness and improve food security and competitiveness of agricultural exports.

⁹ Maize is the major crop in the study communities and is used as a proxy in this thesis for depicting crop area and production changes attributable to the PFJ policy.

¹⁰ Between 2017 and 2020, the crop area for maize increased by 12,000 hectares in the Nkoranza South municipality and 7,000 hectares in the Nkoranza North district (see GODI 2022; SRID-MoFA 2022).

average farm sizes ranging from 1-10 acres, (Ministry of Finance 2014; MoFA 2021c) these changes in crop area may bring substantial shifts in land tenure. The thesis places special emphasis on customary land tenure due to its unique communal management and use characteristics and the tendency for local ownership and use domains to dictate the propensity and level of smallholder engagement in agricultural production and vice versa. Besides land factor differentials, the thesis also provides an exposition of varied forms of social differentiation, tied to land tenure and agricultural production and how these affect different farmer groups including women and migrants (see Doss et al. 2015; Sward 2017). Even though there exists literature on the synergies between state and customary actors with regards to customary land management and the implications of commercialization on vulnerable groups, there exists little literature on these aspects within the context of state-mediated smallholder commercialization in Ghana. The study seeks to fill these gaps in literature and contribute towards the formulation of evidence-based, efficient and equitable agricultural policies. In doing so, the thesis provides nuanced theoretical perspectives around the intervening processes related to changing tenurial relations, social differentiation and hybridisation of customary tenure as commercialization proceeds. While keeping the case of Planting for Food and Jobs policy in Ghana in focus, the study recognises that state-led agricultural incentives are a growing phenomenon across sub-Saharan African countries, as encouraged by the CAADP and posits that the lessons herein will provide insights for learning in these contexts.

Though the thesis primarily focuses on the PFJ policy, it also analyses the allied tree crop commercialization policy dubbed Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) that constantly interphases with PFJ (see section 2.7). With parallel implementation, it is difficult to decouple PFJ implications from PERD in some instances however the thesis discusses PERD relative to its implications on PFJ and land tenure.

1.4 Research Aim and Questions

Aim: The thesis aims to analyse how state-led agricultural commercialization policies affect smallholder differentiation and the consequences of this for land distribution and social relations around land. Following the broad aim, the study seeks to answer a set of three (3) research questions as follows;

- How and why does the state's interactions with customary land tenure institutions create opportunities or constrain the implementation of smallholder-based agricultural policies?
- How and why do the consequences of the PFJ policy on rural land tenure dynamics and social relations of resource access vary among different groups of smallholders?
- How do different smallholder groups cope with the changes in land tenure that result from implementation of the PFJ policy?

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

The thesis comprises a “*kappa*” (comprehensive summary of the thesis) and three research papers. The “*kappa*” covers six chapters including the introduction, review of relevant literature, theoretical aspects, methodology, synthesis of key findings and conclusions. **Chapter one** provides an introduction of the study, problem statement, research aim, research questions, study justification and overview of the research papers that make up the dissertation. **Chapter two** reviews literature on SSA and more specifically, Ghana's agricultural development, land tenure, smallholder commercialization and differentiation processes. It further introduces the PFJ policy and the auxiliary PERD policy which interphases constantly with the PFJ commercialization process in influencing native, non-native and gendered land rights. The theoretical aspects which provide the framework for analysis and interpretation of findings are outlined in **Chapter three**. The theoretical discussions focus on property rights, customary land management and access, smallholder commercialization, social differentiation, gendered processes of commercialization, de/repeasantization and de/reagrarianization. The **fourth chapter** details the research methodology including research design and the qualitative methods used for data collection. The chapter further discusses site, household and key informant sampling process as well as the methods of data analysis. It also comprises a reflection on the data collection process including Covid-19¹¹ related challenges, ethical considerations, researcher positionality and study limitations. **Chapter five**

¹¹ A global pandemic caused by the Corona virus.

comprises a synthesis of key findings and a summary of empirical and theoretical contributions. The chapter further incorporates thesis conclusions, key lessons for land tenure and smallholder-based agricultural policies, policy recommendations and directions for future research.

1.6 Overview of the Articles

The dissertation comprises three articles. **Article 1** (published in the Journal-Land) relates to research question 1 which seeks to investigate how and why interactions between state and customary actors with regards to customary land management create opportunities or constrain the implementation of agricultural policies. The article demonstrates how the poor coordination between state and customary actors and the state's treatment of customary land tenure issues as though they have no bearing on agricultural policies, poses risks to agricultural policy implementation. **Article 2** (resubmitted to a peer reviewed journal) relates to research questions 2 and 3 and uses the case of migrant farmers to investigate the consequences of the Ghanaian state's smallholder commercialization policies (PFJ and to an extent PERD) on land tenure dynamics and the related coping strategies. This article reveals the tenurial changes experienced by migrants as a result of increased commercialization interests by resident and absentee natives. **Article 3** (forthcoming in the Journal of International Development) also relates to research questions 2 and 3 and focuses on the gendered dynamics of the Ghanaian states' smallholder commercialization policies. It reveals the differentiated nature of women's opportunities and constraints with regards to land tenure and the structural social challenges they face in the quest to commercialize their agricultural production.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

The literature review provides contextual basis and positions the thesis in relation to existing research. It first introduces land tenure in SSA and shows its market and non-market characteristics. Relatedly, three typologies of land tenure rights in Ghana are discussed. Following on, the chapter highlights the debates around agricultural modernization and smallholder classifications and further shows the literature linkages between smallholder commercialization, land tenure, smallholder differentiation and state policy. A historical overview of land tenure policy and practice and the role of the colonial and post-independence Ghanaian state in these processes is provided. Next, the differential dynamics among smallholders in relation to land tenure rights are highlighted with a focus on women and migrant groups. The chapter further describes the PFJ and PERD policies as attempts at smallholder commercialization by the Ghanaian state. Finally, a conclusion that highlights the major debates and how the thesis relates to the identified bodies of literature is provided.

2.1 Land Tenure in SSA and Ghana: An Overview

Tenure implies the social interactions between people in relation to an object of tenure, in this case land. Land tenure administration therefore relates to institutional structures that regulate how different individuals and social groups access, use, control, exclude and transfer land resources (FAO 2002). It especially denotes social relations of land governance that are defined by an interwoven set of customary or statutory rules. Thus, land tenure systems basically regulate who has access to land resources, how long they have access and the conditions for accessing land. Land tenure rights in Ghana and much of sub-Saharan Africa are defined by a composite overlay of heterogenous and pluralistic tenurial systems comprising customarily derived and statutorily enacted entitlements. Organization of land tenure around a pluralistic socio-legal system (*legal pluralism*) where both customary and statutory tenurial rights operate in parallel, signposts the non-existence of an established hierarchy between both legal regimes (Merry 2017). The consequent contentions leave room for ambiguity, potential disputes and overlapping claims. The customary

landholding system is a product of dynamic evolution of particular socio-cultural, political, economic and religious practices of a group identified by common ancestry and lineage. Due to the multiplicity of ethnic groupings in SSA and the diverse nature of customary rules and culture, customary tenure arrangements are geo-contextually heterogeneous and vary between communities (Lambrecht and Asare 2016).

Even with the advent of statutory land tenure, customary institutions have retained *de facto* rights in land allocation and ownership; an indication that formalized or statutory land tenure is foreign to many traditional African societies (Boone 2014). Accordingly, land tenure in much of SSA has been predominantly organised in a communal manner comprising a constellation of interests, characterized by overlapping primary and secondary rights over land. Land tenure systems in SSA are dynamic and mirror the distinct characteristics of traditional societies hence acquisition may take place either in an individualised or collective context (see Kasanga 2002; Alden Wily 2011; Chitonge et al. 2017; Alden Wily 2018). An estimated 2 to 10 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's land is managed under statutory tenure and about 90% governed under customary tenure arrangements (Deininger 2003; Boone 2017). The Zulu concept of "*Ubuntu*", denoting a sense of communal responsibility remains an enduring aspect of the rural African society and best captures the thinking around customary land ownership. In Ghana, acquisition of customary land occurs through gifting, inheritance, usufructuary (user)¹² access, long-term occupation (*first occupant or right of the axe principle*), rentals and purchases (da Rocha and Lodoh 1999). Kasanga and Kotey (2001) note that 80% of the total land area of Ghana is administered in accordance with customary principles while the remaining 20% are state owned (18%) or administered as vested lands (2%) on behalf of the traditional land owners. Vested lands operate within a dualistic (state and traditional authority) land management system where the state manages the lands in accordance with statutory rules (including exercising legal rights to lease and collect rents) while traditional authorities and natives retain physical ownership and use.

For purposes of clarity, the thesis includes a glossary of key terms that are essential for understanding the unique configurations of African customary tenure (*see table 1*).

¹² Usufructuary rights are held by native groups that have a birth right to use and enjoy customary land by virtue of lineage entitlements. In most cases, natives do not claim absolute individualized ownership rights to land since such allodial rights are often vested in the community and managed by chiefs and traditional leaders (see Amanor 2008: 57; Ubink 2008a: 156).

Table 1: Glossary of Key Land Tenure Terms

KEY TERM	MEANING
Native	Used to define groups that hold bloodline or lineage entitlements to land. Also termed consanguineal land rights
Non-native/ Stranger	Broadly relates to groups that do not hold any bloodline or lineage entitlements to land. These land rights may be affinal (obtained through marriage) or by virtue of Akan or non-Akan heritage
Migrant	Relates to a group that does not have bloodline or marital rights to land and cannot invoke remote Akan relations for land access.
Usufruct	Relates to user rights to communal land whose ownership rests with the community and is managed by chiefs and traditional leaders
Taungya	Land use which involves intercropping of forest trees with food crops and is characterized by varied cultivation responsibilities, as well as land and produce sharing agreements. It is used in this case to depict the intercropping of tree (cashew) and food crops.
Allodial Title	Absolute ownership rights in land from which all other lesser rights are derived
Customary Licence	Relates to land rights that involve free land use often by non-natives in exchange for token cash or in-kind payments in recognition of the superior title
Land Rental	Payment of an agreed fee in exchange for land use over a defined period of time
Share Cropping	Relates to land owners allowing land scarce households to use land resources in exchange for an agreed share (often a third or half) of the farm produce
Statutory/ Formal Land Rights	Land rights that are sanctioned by the state and involve registration of title deeds
Land Tenure Security	An assurance of continued land use over an agreed period with reasonable expectation of enjoying the produce and proceeds that accrue to land.

Source: Author's Construction (2022)

2.2 Market and Non-market Land Tenure

Land tenure may be defined by non-market and market considerations. Non-market customary tenure typifies land access that is granted freely and without cash or in-kind payment requirements. It occurs through settlement, gifting, inheritance, usufructuary access, customary allocation, borrowing and other express or implicit processes (Lambrecht and Asare 2016). Primarily, members of the land-holding group acquire land by virtue of their usufructuary user-rights either through express permission and allocation from the custodian of the collective rights or implied customary access by occupation of parcels owned by the collective. Non-market-based tenure is predicated on the concept of intergenerational ownership of land which perceives land as an ancestral trust in which past, present and future generations hold inherent rights. Thus, it is viewed as a communally treasured heritage, meant for the benefit of existing and unborn generations (Ollennu 1962; Kidido et al. 2018).

In Ghana, non-market land access may also occur through customary inheritance practices; either patrilineal or matrilineal. With patrilineal inheritance land succession occurs along the male kinship line thus, passing from father to son. However matrilineal inheritance is characterized by land succession through male

members of the maternal lineage with land often passing from maternal uncle to nephew. Additionally, non-market access by strangers who do not belong to the land-owning group occurs through gifting or customary licenses. Land gifting is considered irrevocable in customary law and allows recipients to exercise user rights similar to the usufructuary rights (Ollennu and Woodman 1985; Amanor 2001: 71-72). However, with customary licences, the land owner reserves the right to request for land to be reverted to the communal pool (Ollennu and Woodman 1985; Kuusaana and Eledi 2015). Non-market allocations of customary land are often done without documentation of the transfers (Lambrecht and Asare 2016). Instead, public customary allocation ceremonies are used to mark the land transaction. Witnesses are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping mental memories of the ceremony and passing on the same knowledge to future generations. The reliance on mental memories coupled with inadequate recollection issues, challenges of distortions in reportage, witness partiality and death of primary witnesses creates recurrent contestations over land (Bentsi-Enchill 1964; Mireku et al. 2016).

Market-based land tenure typifies the commodification¹³ of land access primarily through direct purchases, rental markets and share cropping agreements¹⁴ and may be documented or undocumented. It broadly relates to the outright or temporal transfer of land rights in expectation of payment of an agreed consideration which may be monetary, payable through labour services or share of farm harvest (Colin 2018). Chimhowu and Woodhouse (2005) and Colin (2018) note that the commodification of land tenure and access in SSA, occurs primarily within the ambit of customary law through vernacular land markets¹⁵ which has sometimes forced natives to purchase lands at predetermined market rates (see Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2006; Colin and Woodhouse 2010). Some authors (see Chitonge et al. 2017; El-Ghonemy 1999) have argued that land tenure security is assured when market forces are allowed to allocate land resources to productive users who hold high purchasing power and capacity for efficient farming. However Sjaastad (2003) contends that market-based land allocation may encourage elite capture and be disadvantageous to poor rural households. Ubink and Amanor (2008) ascribe this to a gradual breakdown of the fiduciary or caretaker ethos that is historically innate to customary land tenure; thus, changing the egalitarian characteristic of customary land which holds implications for smallholder differentiation. They further note that the payment of a market premium to indigenous land owners may only benefit

¹³ Commodification indicates a process by which the factors of production are owned and controlled through their transformation into marketable goods.

¹⁴ Depending on the geographical context and existing tenure arrangements, share cropping agreements usually require in-kind payments of half (*abumu*) or a third (*abusa*) of farm produce after harvest (see Kasanga and Kotey 2001).

¹⁵ Vernacular land markets are responsible for market-based land transactions that occur within customary tenure.

present generations to the detriment of future ones since such outright sale of communal land curtails their inherent intergenerational land use rights.

2.3 Customary Land Tenure Practice in Ghana: Chieftaincy-based Tenure in Focus

In the case of Ghana, three (3) typologies of customary tenure practices dominate depending on the unique cultural dynamics, political structure and historical settlement patterns of the group (Bentsi-Enchill 1964; Ollennu and Woodman 1985). Though land is mutually owned by kin groups, it is vested in fiduciaries typically family/clan/lineage heads, earth priests or chiefs whose positions are grounded in socially recognised hierarchies and upheld by lineage entitlements (Berry 2017). The resulting typologies of customary tenure practices in Ghana differ in accordance with the customary unit which is entrusted with the primary fiduciary role over land and the hierarchy of tenure administration. Though customarily diverse in the mechanisms and hierarchy of land control, the fiduciary positions of traditional authorities in exerting control over resources are statutorily recognised under article 36(8) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The provision stipulates that “... the State shall recognize that the managers of public, stool, skin¹⁶ and family lands are fiduciaries charged with the obligation to discharge their functions for the benefit respectively of the people of Ghana, of the stool, skin, or family concerned and are accountable as fiduciaries in this regard”(Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992). The tenure typologies defined by fiduciary roles include (a) land ownership and control that revolves around chieftaincy institutions (b) land ownership and control that revolves around the clan, lineage and family unit and (c) land ownership and control by earth priests and chiefs. In the context of this thesis, chieftaincy-based tenure takes centre stage.

Chieftaincy-based Tenure (stool or skin lands): Customarily managed stool or skin lands are vested in traditional rulership to be held in trust for members of the land-owning group (Ollennu and Woodman 1985). The mandate of traditional rulership (comprising chiefs, council of elders, community leaders) over the land emanates from ancestral ties of kinship. The ownership structure is common in societies where political sovereignty rests with centralized traditional structures. Chiefs and traditional authorities therefore act as trustees and hold the allodial title on behalf of the entire community. They reserve the power to guarantee access to land resources

¹⁶ Stool or skin lands are identified by the symbol of authority of the land custodian. Stool lands are common in the Akan and Ga ethnic dominated areas of Ghana where the symbol of a chief's authority is the stool. Meanwhile skin lands are common among the northern tribes of Ghana where the chief's authority is symbolized by the skin of usually wild animals including, lions, tigers, among others.

and exercise allocation and regulation rights within the group. Beyond the community level, there exists communal land holdings by native groups (family/clan/lineage). Historically, land holdings by these sub-groups arise from socio-economic convenience of undertaking arduous tasks of land clearing and cultivation which requires collective effort from kinsmen (Kasanga and Kotey 2001). The sub-groups, through precepts of usufructuary entitlements, reserve verifiable rights to exercise exclusive control over actively and previously cultivated parcels of communal property. Commonly, cultivated or occupied lands are primarily held by the family unit while the remaining unoccupied, undeveloped, uncultivated, deserted and unallocated territories are those that are held in trust by fiduciaries on behalf of the land-owning group (Gnoumou and Bloch 2003). In many cases, the exercise of land rights by chiefs overlaps with family, clan and lineage land rights since the political designation of chiefs often derives from families, clans and lineages.

Generally, the typologies of land tenure do not preclude individualised land use and ownership. While observing individualisation of the commons, Gyekye and Wiredu (1992) disapproved the use of Hardin's (1968) thesis on "the tragedy of the commons", which connotes a systematic depletion of commonly shared resources, to variously theorize customary land tenure. They instead show that communal land tenure rights intrinsically incorporate individualised tenure. Still, Amanor (2010) and Mwangi (2016: 18) observe the absence of absolute exclusivity and existence of fluidity which allows individually cultivated land to periodically serve communal purposes (for instance, after the farming season). In a related development, Kingwill (2016) supports the fluidity between communal and individual property in customary land tenure. She perceives that the succession of communal land does not imply absolute transfer of the lands to individualised holdings per se but rather denotes individual inheritance of a family asset, accessible across present and future generations by related kin.

2.4 Agriculture and Land Tenure Policy and Practice in Ghana

Ghana's agricultural sector holds high promise yet it has consistently operated below its potential. Agricultural policy has been historically used as the vehicle to tap the latent potential of the sector which is the second largest employer (38.3%) of the country's active workforce (Ghana Statistical Service 2019: 77; MoFA 2021b: 25). Notably, Ghana's economic policy direction has consistently shaped the outlook of its agricultural policies. Resulting, the country's agricultural policies have oscillated mainly between export-based and domestic food security objectives (see Dzanku and Udry 2017). Regardless of the policy orientation of colonial governments and

the post-independence state, agricultural commercialization remains a definitive characteristic of Ghana's agricultural policies. Commercialization is touted as the mechanism for modernizing¹⁷ agriculture and abandonment of rudimentary cultivation methods. However, the approach to modernization varies based on the development ideologies of political leadership. Al-Hassan (2018) notes that agricultural policies have shown a chequered nature with swings between two extremes of inward (nationalist/interventionist) and outward (market-oriented) looking intentions. Nationalist tenets were for example evident in the first republican state's Five-Year (1951-56) and Seven-Year Development Plans (1964-1970) which focused on import substitution and industrialization through production organized around state farms, input subsidies and market price controls (Killick 2010). The same state interventionist strategies were stressed between 1972-1978 when the ruling military government introduced a two-pronged agricultural self-sufficiency programme dubbed "*Operation Feed Yourself*" and "*Operation Feed Your Industries*"; first to improve food self-sufficiency and secondly to provide the raw materials needed for industrial development. Nonetheless, food staples grown by smallholders were often disregarded while priority crop production and related credit and input interventions favoured medium and large scale cultivators (Dapaah 1995). The expected agro-industrial revolution therefore sidelined small scale farming as mere appendages to medium and large scale cultivation.

Statist developmentalism however lost its lustre in the 1980's leading to the introduction of economic liberalization policies through the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1983. This ushered in a new era of dependence on markets and encouragement of private sector investment in agriculture. The SAP consequently reverted Ghana's economic development trajectory from domestic self-sufficiency to export-based cash crop agriculture in consonance with market demands (Killick 2010). This market-oriented focus has since remained, with governments focusing on creating an enabling environment and providing intermittent incentives to encourage sectoral growth. Although some agricultural policies in the era of market liberalization including, Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme (MTADP-1991-2000), Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP I & II- 2002-3008) and Medium-Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP I & II- 2009-2017), have encouraged some domestic food crop production among smallholder farmers, their potential production capacity far exceeds recorded annual volumes.

The commercial inclination of Ghana's agricultural policies has had long lasting implications on rural land tenure albeit in varied ways. Successive governments

¹⁷ Agricultural modernization broadly relates to process of transforming the traditional, low yielding agricultural sector to a technology-oriented and high yielding one (see Diao et al. 2008; Van der Ploeg 2010).

have stressed the need to modernize the dominant customary land tenure system to allow for state-led privatization and individualization of land in support of large scale agro-production (see Government of Ghana 1995: 41; Government of Ghana 2003: 40). While these views are expressed in national land legislations and development plans (see Government of Ghana 1963; Government of Ghana 1995; Government of Ghana 2003), implementation has proven difficult with mounted resistance from traditional rulers (see Ubink and Quan 2008; Nti 2012). Resulting state policy that encourages privatized tenure contrasts with the dominant communal practice of customary land management on the ground. Though narratives of land tenure modernization are explicit in national development plans, state agricultural policies remain oddly silent on the linkages between customary tenure and the attainment of agricultural development objectives. Thus, land tenure concerns are often not addressed in the letter of Ghana's agricultural policies and left as a domain that needs to be negotiated with land owners or one that will eventually (re)organize itself in support of the policy objectives of improving the country's agricultural outcomes. The former is evident in state land negotiations for the establishment of block farm projects implemented between 2008 and 2012 (see Donkoh et al. 2016: 350). Meanwhile the latter reveals a subtle and indirect influence of state agricultural policies in reorganizing rural land use and ownership. Thus, two issues relevant for Ghana's agricultural development namely land tenure and agricultural policies have few overlaps leading to the implementation of agricultural policies as though they have no bearing on land tenure (Kugbega 2020: 16).

2.4.1 Customary Land Tenure and State Interactions in Ghana

Ubink and Amanor (2008) find that customary tenure systems are (re)shaped by close alliances with the state (see also Lund 2008). This is evident in legislations and policies that have implied or direct implications for the (re)negotiation of customary rights and asset (re)distribution. Resulting, Amanor (2009) views the customary system in Ghana as far removed from what it was conceived to be and its current nature as a reflection of the alliance between traditional authorities and the colonial and post-independence state. These state-customary relations are historically shown in three distinct ways that are tied to changes in economic policy orientation. First, the colonial period up till 1940 was characterized by private production and state focus on taxation and export of primary goods. Though state direct intervention in production was minimal, they indirectly influenced the means of resource control and related production through chiefs. In the process, the colonial administration created chieftaincies that arrogated to themselves exclusive powers to manage, distribute and alienate land even in places where the indigenous basis of resource control did not rest with these institutions (see Benning 1996; Lund 2006). With time, land access became increasingly defined by market-based transactions rather than customary practices (Amanor 2009).

In the 1940's the colonial government introduced elected local councils as a mechanism for checking chiefly power over land. In this period through to 1983, state intervention in production as shown through import substitution policies was viewed as the panacea to economic development. With the state leading economic development, the constitutional avenue of eminent domain was created to sanction access to land for whatever activity that constitutes "public purpose". Thus, an alliance between state and customary actors was created with chiefs mounting little resistance to state access to land in exchange for state non-interference in control and management of customary land (Amanor 2009: 97-112). Both chiefly authority and the exercise of the state's eminent domain over land have been subject to abuse (Amanor 2009). Such abuse is evident in redefinitions of what constitutes public purpose or reinterpretations of customary law to accommodate land grants to elites and the political class at the expense of natives (see Boni 2008; Goldstein and Udry 2008; Amanor 2009). The influences of dominant political and elitist interests that reshape tenurial relations rely on the definitive characteristics of fluidity and dynamism within customary tenure (Ubink and Amanor 2008).

With the adoption of an initial approach of non-interference (Ubink 2008a: 213), and collusions between the state and customary authorities for mutual gain (Amanor 2009), the state became complicit in the myriad of challenges that accompany chiefly reinterpretation of customary laws for private gain. Still today, the state does not concern itself with improving tenure security for natives who hold birth right claims to land (Amanor 2009) Instead, it advocates for land reform aimed at enhancing linkages between customary institutions and state interests and the creation of an accountable, harmonious and transparent land management system (see Lund and Benjaminsen 2002). Such advocates for land reform have heightened since the Structural Adjustment period in 1983 where market liberalization and privatization were encouraged. Practically, earlier land reform attempts involved the replacement of customary tenure with formalized titles mainly for securing the tenure rights of urbanites and private owners of large agricultural estates (see Government of Ghana 1995: 41; Government of Ghana 2003: 40). Further displacement of native groups through sale and alienation of customary land, accompanied the emphasis on land rights formalization (see Schoneveld et al. 2011; Boamah 2014): a telling indication of how contemporary approaches to tenure management are constantly redefined by power relations vis-a-vis the appeal of pecuniary, social or political benefit.

2.5 Agricultural Modernization and Smallholder Commercialization

A pertinent question on agriculture's role in economic development relates to how to overcome the traditional subsistence mode of production and adopt a modernised mechanism of cultivation that is capable of sustaining economic growth. A modernised agriculture is touted as important for attaining structural agricultural transformation and often involves the integration of local production into national and international produce markets (World Bank 2008; World Bank 2018). Commercialization is viewed as a plausible mechanism for obtaining optimal returns from land and labour leading to rising incomes for more dynamic farmers and job creation for landless and less dynamic semi-proletariat farmers (Wiggins et al. 2011). It may further encourage technological diffusion among farmers, provide spillover advantages to improve production for non-priority crops while also supporting the development of a rural non-farm economy as returns from commercial farms are invested locally (Wiggins et al. 2011).

The primary aim of agricultural modernization is to attain efficiency in production which often occurs through mechanization, adoption of agro-chemicals, technological innovation and crop specialization (Jaleta et al. 2009). This requires capital investments that disproportionately favour large scale cultivators (Sender and Johnston 2004; Bernstein 2016). Thus, subsistence and semi-subsistence smallholder cultivators that face capital constraints and are not easily amenable to scientific and technological innovation are often treated as adversaries of modernized modes of production that need to be replaced. Following on, some scholars predicted the inevitable demise of the smallholder production system citing reasons of their non-market nature, the influence of neoliberal market systems and globalized nature of commodity value chains (see Bernstein 2001; Ioffe et al. 2006; Rigg 2006; Bernstein 2010).

However, Van der Ploeg (2008) and Hazell et al. (2010) debunked conceptions of inefficiencies and the eventual demise of smallholder cultivation. They instead found that smallholder production systems are resource efficient and hold the potential to provide higher returns and employment per unit of farmland than large scale cultivators (see also Chamberlin 2008; Wiggins et al. 2010; Graeub et al. 2016). This requires commercialization of smallholder production characterized by changing the mode of cultivation from subsistence and semi-subsistence to commercial or entrepreneurial cultivation. According to (Jayne et al. 2011: 1) smallholder commercialization connotes... *“a virtuous cycle in which farmers intensify their use of productivity-enhancing technologies on their farms, achieve greater output per unit of land and labor expended, produce greater farm surpluses (or transition from deficit to surplus producers), expand their participation in markets, and ultimately raise their incomes and living standards”*. With profit

motives and integration into wider market systems, smallholder commercialization can stimulate optimal returns from land, labour and capital invested and contribute substantially to structural economic change (Von Braun and Kennedy 1994; Pingali and Rosegrant 1995; World Bank 2007). Nonetheless, commercialization raises the relative cost of production for small farmers due to the high dependence on inputs, technology and financial capital (Van der Ploeg 2008) and may be accompanied by processes of accumulation, dispossession and social differentiation (Harvey 2005; Bernstein 2010). It may also encourage diversification out of agriculture and reductions in the proportion of household income emanating from agriculture (Bryceson and Jamal 1997; Kilic et al. 2009).

2.5.1 Smallholder Classification

Commercialization among smallholders is measured in the literature by degree of participation in produce markets (volume of surplus marketed by the household) (Pingali and Rosegrant 1995) or extent of input use (Von Braun and Kennedy 1994). While measuring commercialization by output market engagement evolves along a continuum from traditional subsistence motives to a profit motivated logic, measurement by input markets involves the extent of fertilizer use, improved seed adoption, hired labour or mechanized services. A different approach argued by Jaleta et al. (2009) and Jayne et al. (2010) is based on the degree of smallholder farmers' commercial orientation; how smallholder households determine what to produce, how to produce and marketing possibilities. Smallholder classifications inspired by Marxist perspectives stem from distinctions in modes of reproduction¹⁸ and accumulation with Cousins (2010) and Bernstein (2010) identifying 3 groups of smallholders. These include:

- (a) small scale farmers who cultivate for their own consumption and occasionally sell food crops to supplement their income (semi-subsistence/ poor/ marginal farmers). Primarily, semi-subsistence smallholders produce staple food crops as a means of sustenance rather than a tactical business solution. They occasionally hold semi-proletariat traits (sale of their labour) and have poor access to finance (Christen and Anderson 2013).
- (b) small scale farmers who regularly sell food surplus for income after meeting household consumption needs (semi-commercial/ middle farmers). They produce with both subsistence and commercial motives in mind; hence, they generate higher surplus volumes for market sales.

¹⁸ Reproduction is a continuous process in which a society converts its economic assets including labour, land and capital into consumer goods to sustain their economic survival and capital accumulation (see Marx 1961: Chapters 23-25).

- (c) Small scale farmers whose production decisions are influenced by a market-orientation with a profit or loss logic and a focus on profit reinvestment for capital accumulation (commercial-focused/ rich/ master/ emerging farmers). They may periodically or permanently hire waged labour in addition to, or in place of family labour. Entrepreneurial smallholders occupy the highest end of the smallholder productivity continuum and may engage in micro agricultural enterprises including processing, retail, transport and microcredit for sustained accumulation (Hart 1994; Kilic et al. 2009).

Though not an exhaustive list of smallholder segmentation, Cousins (2010) and Hall (2009) noted that the afore-mentioned smallholder groupings tend to be characterized by how land tenure relations, labour (household or hired labour), capital, mechanized technology and skills as factors of production, are organized within households. These views resonate with those of Von Braun (1995) and Jaleta et al. (2009) who found that smallholder commercialization is influenced by several endogenous and exogenous factors including household asset endowments, agro-climatic factors, market access, population, agricultural policies as well as socio-cultural and political factors.

2.6 Commercialization, Land Tenure Changes and Smallholder Differentiation

The literature on the nexus between agricultural commercialization, differentiation and land tenure relations derive mainly from political economy and sociological perspectives. Hall and Paradza (2012) note that the modification of land tenure due to commercial pressures of production exerted on land alters the social connections that define resource access. These social connections are often non-homogenous and delineated in line with structural differences within and between households or groups (Tsikata 2015). Resulting, changes in social relations engender commensurate changes in land rights. With this, the nexus between agricultural modernization and land rights is defined by constantly renegotiated and coevolving social relations (Berry 1993; O'Laughlin 2002; Bernstein 2010). Peters (2004) and Berry (1993) view the related ambiguity and uncertainty of customary land rights which allows for tenure renegotiations as central to their ability to adapt to changing trends. Nonetheless, they contend that ambiguity may be used as a mechanism for excluding some groups and creating new or deepening existing inequalities. However, Wiggins et al. (2011) notes that smallholder commercialization processes rarely involve drastic changes to smallholder production structures and are instead slow, incremental and take place within the confines of prevailing farming methods. This includes capital and labour utility remaining at the household level, land tenure

systems remaining organized in a communal manner and adherence to prevailing social norms that dictate the varied roles household members play in agricultural production. These factors contribute to limiting households and the individual members to land areas that they have the labour and capital capacity for or are customarily allowed to cultivate. In view of these land and labour limitations, Sabates-Wheeler et al. (2022) finds that small farmers seeking to commercialize their production remain within a consumption pathway by first producing to fulfil their home consumption needs and leaving little for market sales. A major debate on commercialization and related investments in land bothers on statutory titles and customary land rights. While some authors have argued that statutory titles encourage investments through an assurance of a right to draw benefits (see De Soto 2000; Deininger 2003), contrary evidence has shown that customary land rights are secure entitlements in the context of local communities, allowing farmers to make considerable investments in land (Platteau 2000; Kasanga 2002; Lawry et al. 2017).

Empirically, Amanor (2007) and Whitehead and Tsikata (2003) have documented how the adoption of commercial production modes has stimulated changes in the egalitarian principles that form the foundation of customary law and mediate land access and the distribution of productive assets at the household level. By extension, smallholder commercialization holds implications for the (re)organization of social relations around land. The resulting socio-economic inequities encourage polarization of rural land resources (see Cotula et al. 2009; Schoneveld and German 2014). The polarization process typically involves land ownership by privileged groups at the expense of others and may be exemplified by the reinterpretation of customary law in favour of the self-seeking objectives of land owners and their cronies (Berry 1989; Goldstein and Udry 2008). While drawing inspiration from Marxist perspectives, Bernstein (2010) notes that the effect of social differentiation arising from commercialization may be the creation of a rural landless class of proletariats. Such differentiation often occurs along already existing inequities (Wiggins et al. 2011) and may be defined by kinship, power relations, gender, age and social status. For underprivileged groups, access to land then becomes redefined by individualized market purchases or rentals rather than communal non-market access. These tenurial changes often alter non-native and gendered land relations; presenting severe implications for women and migrant groups who hold already tenuous rights in customary land (Amanor 2010).

2.6.1 Women

While Deere and Doss (2006) and Goldstein and Udry (2008) have found that structural productivity gaps are disproportionately biased against females and female-headed households, they observe that access to factor markets including land resources remains one of the key variables contributing to the variance. Customary norms that dictate land access rights and the institutional actors that regulate and

enforce these customs are patrilineal or matrilineal in nature and often exclude women. Though subject to contextual variations (see Peters 2010), women generally have access to communal land through their husbands, father, maternal uncle, nephew or son and their user rights remain secondary to the male kin (Tsikata and Yaro 2014; Doss et al. 2015). In instances of divorce, widowhood, lack of a male heir or demise of a father, such secondary claims to land become significantly weaker especially when the surviving widows or daughters are not natives (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014). Thus, for female natives, land access rights are often not explicit but rather viewed as an embedded part of the household's land holdings, held in trust by the male kin. Doss et al. (2015) conceive this as problematic as it neglects the crucial detail that even at the household level, men and women have varied productive capacities and user rights in customarily administered land. Resulting, Negin et al. (2009) and Bergman Lodin (2012) note gendered struggles over property leading to exclusion of women in cash or tree crop commercialization (see also Schroeder 1993: 360; Andersson Djurfeldt 2018b) Women's land tenure rights are also embedded within labour constraints. These constraints partly explain why female-headed households tend to cultivate smaller farm sizes: placing a limitation on their land claims in systems where expansion into uncultivated areas and continued use of land is needed to defend tenure rights (see Andersson Djurfeldt 2018a: 80; Andersson Djurfeldt et al. 2018a: 14-15). The relationship between women and land in customary systems makes them especially vulnerable to commercial interests that have the capacity to incite changes in tenurial relations in favour of male kin and market actors.

Though commercialization processes and consequent commodification of customary land may weaken women's already tenuous relations with land, it has also been viewed by some as a mechanism for resolving the gender inequalities of land access associated with customary systems (Lambrecht 2016). It provides an avenue for women to have easier access to land through formal or vernacular land markets and effectively improve their tenurial positions (see Hayami and Otsuka 1993; Deininger and Mpuga 2008; Holden et al. 2011). However, Razavi (2007: 1486) finds that men rather than women are disproportionately favoured in market-based access to land since they control the means of production and have higher earning potential. Nonetheless, securing women's land rights reduces vulnerabilities, improves household food security and increases women's bargaining power and contribution to decision making in the household (Quisumbing 2003; Deininger et al. 2010).

2.6.2 Migrant Farmers

Migrant farmers' land access is largely defined by patron–client relations. Thus, their tenure in customary land emanates from gifting, customary licences, land purchase, rental, borrowing, taungya¹⁹ and share cropping arrangements (Sward 2017). With dependency relations, tenure insecurity is high among migrant farmers; preventing many from making long term investments in land (Amanor 2008). They are considered to be among the first easily expropriated groups in instances of land constraints (Boni 2006; Sward 2017) and remain unfavoured in customary land transactions due to their purported goals of eliciting immediate gains from land (Adjei-Nsiah et al. 2004). Except explicitly agreed (as shown by Hill 1963; Boni 2008), migrants are often limited to the cultivation of bi-annual and annual crops and prevented from growing perennial tree crops that may limit land access and use by natives (see Sward 2017). In some cases, migrants have received land as gifts however, their consequent tenurial rights have often been contested by natives looking to leverage on the communal pool to expand their farms (Boni 2008; Goldstein and Udry 2008). With tenure renewal discretion, land owners who had originally sold, rented or gifted substantially large land parcels to migrant farmers have often sought to renegotiate or reinterpret the original contracts when land becomes scarce (Boni 2006; Quan et al. 2008). These renegotiations by land owners in favour of perceived profits from land repossession are common as rural land commodification occurs and this further weakens migrants' tenurial rights (Adjei-Nsiah et al. 2004; Amanor 2008; Boni 2008). Customary tenure arrangements with migrants therefore reflect a dynamic co-evolving relationship determined by social and economic conditions that reshape the nature of land commodification in the rural economy (Sward 2017).

2.7 The Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) Policy

Agriculture remains the mainstay of Ghana's economy, contributing 19% to GDP and employing 38.3% of the total active workforce (Ghana Statistical Service 2019: 77; MoFA 2021b: 25, 104; World Bank 2022). However, smallholder agriculture which contributes up to 80% of Ghana's total agricultural output (MoFA 2016) has historically faced policy implementation challenges. Notably, the food-crop subsector has only been given token recognition in policy plans aimed at promoting agriculture. Ghana's Agricultural Sector Progress Report (ASPR) (MoFA 2017a)

¹⁹ Agroforestry farming system where farmers agree to tend forest trees in exchange for cultivating undergrowth (see Brookman-Amissah 1984; Kalame et al. 2011). In the context of this study, the taungya agreement transcends its initial agroforestry motives and is related to mixed food and tree crop farming in which land poor households exchange their labour (in terms of cultivating tree crops for land owners) for the right to access land for food crop cultivation.

and Seini and Nyanteng (2003), revealed that production of staple food crops has declined continually since the periods of major neoliberal reforms (1983-1998). Their surveys identified the lack of improved seeds, poor fertilizer uptake, infrastructure bottlenecks, inequities in input and resource access, lack of extension services and weak market linkages as the major constraints of agriculture. To address these challenges, the Ghanaian state in 2017 introduced the ***Planting for Food and Jobs policy*** as its flagship agriculture programme to be implemented over an initial four-year period²⁰ (2017-2020). The policy seeks to engineer an agro-revolution for sustained economic development and envisions nationwide food self-sufficiency and employment creation. It is especially an effort to modernize agriculture and catalyse agri-based structural change through encouraging smallholder-market linkages and adoption of yield improvement and mechanized technologies. With a smallholder focus, the policy seeks to improve farmer's access to both input and output markets as a means of encouraging crop productivity, job creation and value chain development.

The policy is anchored on five pillars of (i) certified and improved seed provision (ii) fertilizer supply (iii) extension services (iv) produce marketing and (v) automated monitoring. While the major components of seed and fertilizer provision are subsidized by 50% of the agreed fair market price, the technical advice and extension service provision component comes at no cost to farmers. Furthermore, it targets produce marketing through establishing linkages among value-chain actors and encouraging produce processing and value addition. The aim is to improve incomes through reducing smallholder farmer's vulnerability to price volatilities and improving their bargaining power. Also, the automated monitoring system component, is an electronic agriculture database platform, aimed at monitoring activities among farmers to improve beneficiary targeting and profiling, timely input supply, information exchanges and input cost recovery.

In an attempt to ameliorate farmers' production cost burdens and encourage uptake among even the poorest farmers, the policy allows for an instalment payment system for the subsidized inputs thus, allowing farmers to make an upfront payment of 50% and the remaining 50% after harvest. This is expected to spur productivity gains across the broad spectrum of farmers and farm holdings. While theorizing the interlinkages of the policy to an overarching economic goal, MoFA (2017b) perceives that increased productivity will raise farm incomes, increase farmer capacity to accumulate assets, create jobs and investments in the non-farm sector and ultimately lead to the attainment of agri-based structural transformation. *Figure 1* below shows the pillars of the PFJ policy and the logic for attaining structural transformation.

²⁰ The policy period has since been reviewed to include years 2021 and 2022.

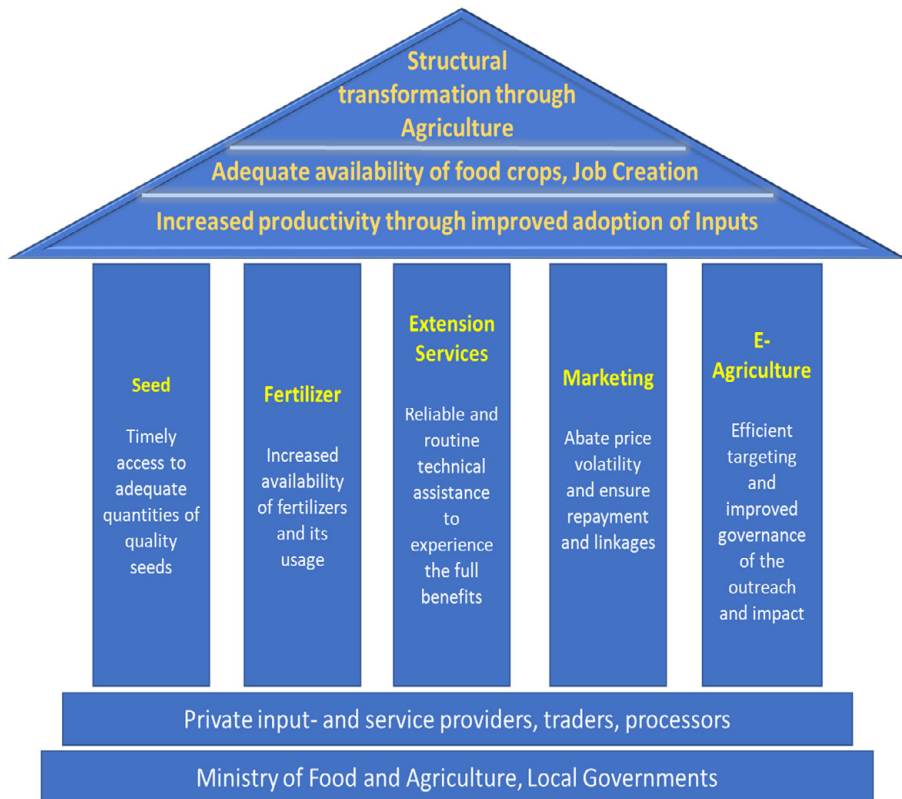


Figure 1: Pillars of the PFJ Policy
Source: MoFA (2017b)

Regarding staple crops, the policy aims at motivating farmers to cultivate Maize, Rice, Soya beans, Sorghum, Vegetables- Tomato, Onion and Chili pepper as priority crops that serve both domestic food security, industrial and export purposes. With an estimated cost of \$717,548,101 over the implementation period, the programme is expected to dispense benefits to cover 2 million hectares(ha) of cropped land, reach 1.682 million smallholders and create 768,311 jobs (MoFA 2017b). The policy implementation is required to be spearheaded by local government offices in conjunction with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and the private sector. It is earmarked to be implemented in all 216 districts of Ghana with voluntary participation among smallholders. While attempting to avoid elite capture, a maximum limit of 2Ha (5 acres) worth of subsidized inputs is available per beneficiary household. Registration for the policy is therefore open to all farmer households who cultivate up to a maximum of 2ha (5 acres) of land and commit to cropping one or more of the PFJ priority crops (MoFA 2017b; CARITAS Ghana 2018). Medium and large scale farmers (ie those who cultivate more than 2ha of land) willing to partake in the policy and receive allocations of more than 2ha worth

of inputs are encouraged to make an application for consideration by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Additionally, the policy aims to reach productive yet resource poor farmers even though the definition of resource poor is not provided (Pauw 2021: 6). It further aims to reach at least 40% of women and youth beneficiaries (MoFA 2019b) however the practical implementation is lacking. Instead, the focus is on allocating the maximal 2ha worth of inputs on a first come first served basis which often benefits older male farmers more than women and youth (Pauw 2021: 6, 21).

2.7.1 Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) Policy

While the thesis focuses primarily on the PFJ policy, the processes of smallholder commercialization and consequent land tenure changes and social differentiation are also impacted by the allied Planting for Export and Rural Development Policy (PERD). The policy aims to reduce Ghana's economic volatility to changes in world market prices by diversifying the country's cash crop exports away from cocoa. It encourages the cultivation of selected non-traditional tree crops including coconut, cashew, coffee, rubber, shea, mango and oil palm (MoFA 2018; MoFA 2019a). The policy further aims to provide the raw material base for Ghana's industrial sector and create employment. The policy initiatives include provision of free seedlings, extension services, agricultural information management, business and marketing support, post-harvest processing as well as establishment of a non-traditional tree crop regulation authority (MoFA 2018). Though the policy focuses on the cultivation of tree crops, it is implemented alongside the PFJ and has the propensity to influence land availability for the cultivation of priority PFJ food crops. It may also affect taungya relations characterized by mixed food and tree crop cultivation and the dynamics of resident natives, absentee natives and non-natives' tenurial rights. Unlike the PFJ, PERD does not explicitly target smallholders but incorporates them as potential beneficiaries.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter provides a summary of the varied nature of customary land tenure and how it interphases with agricultural commercialization processes. Emphasis is placed on the differential nature of smallholder cultivation and the propensity for deepening and creating new factor-based (in this case land) differentiation as processes of commercialization occur. In these expositions of differential commercialization and land tenure implications, the chapter is heavily weighted towards women and migrant groups that are considered vulnerable in terms of their customary land tenure rights. Further debates on the propensity for smallholder agriculture to lead structural economic change as well as the potential of land

markets to improve or constrain opportunities with regards to land use and ownership rights are provided. The chapter also outlines the case of PFJ and PERD policies as the Ghanaian state's attempt at engineering an agricultural transformation that leverages on the combined productive capacity of smallholder farmers. In this thesis, the reviewed literature proves relevant for positioning the arguments around market and non-market tenurial outcomes of state-mediated agricultural modernization as well as the hybridisation of customary tenure. It further shows how land tenure policy and practice interphase with agricultural commercialization processes, which may in turn engender differential outcomes not least for customarily vulnerable women and migrant groups.

Chapter Three:

Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical aspects summarize the major arguments that constitute the analytical lens of the thesis and are useful for situating the empirical results. The thesis takes a theoretical starting point from macro-level theories around processes of *structural transformation* which underpin state-led agrarian change. Structural transformation is tied to theories of *agricultural modernization* which requires raising productivity as well as increasing commercialization. These aspects are inspired by literature that emanates from the field of economics. This is contrasted with broad social responses, inspired by critical agrarian political economy literature, that mediate processes of agricultural modernization and structural change. In doing so, the chapter conceptualizes the modifications that land tenure undergoes in response to commercialization and relates these responses to *social differentiation* and *gendered dynamics* among smallholders. Secure *property rights* are theorised as central to the process of agriculture modernization. This contrasts with the emergence of new forms of land relations theorized as “*the new customary tenure*” and typified by market processes and interactions within vernacular land markets. The chapter follows with an account of the varied mechanisms of resource *access* and the related mediating factors. The consequences of commercialization and social differentiation are depicted through theories of *de/repeasantization*²¹ and *de/reagrarianization* with many farmers returning to or abandoning smallholder modes of cultivation and agriculture entirely. The related land tenure and labour implications of de/repeasantization and de/reagrarianization processes in the rural economy are presented.

²¹ The thesis recognizes the often-cited use of the word peasant by Marxist and neo-Marxist scholarship as a class of farmers within the capitalist system of production. While the author does not engage in descriptions or analysis of class systems, the words peasant and smallholder are used interchangeably in this context in consonance with established theoretical terminologies.

3.1 Smallholder-led Structural Transformation

Raising productivity among smallholder farmers is touted as a vital stimulus for rural poverty reduction, improving food security, tackling rapid urbanization, jumpstarting agro-based industrialization and attaining wider structural transformation (Mellor 1995; Govereh et al. 1999; World Bank 2007; Diao et al. 2010). Such transformation involves long term increases in general well-being. The narratives around smallholder agriculture as a pathway to structural transformation are inspired by modernist perspectives and exemplified by the productivity and economic gains of the Asian green revolution. The literature identifies mechanization, input use (typically fertilizers and improved seeds), vibrant markets and favourable state policies as integral components of the toolkit for attaining smallholder-led structural transformation (Djurfeldt and Jirström 2005; Holmén 2005; Jirström 2005). Theoretically these factors relate to the two proximate triggers of smallholder-led structural transformation namely productivity increases and favourable market conditions. Productivity increases transcend on-farm activities for generating surpluses such as input use and mechanization and includes post-harvest crop management. Besides generation of surpluses, commercialization requires favourable output markets with low transaction costs (Barrett et al. 2001; Fafchamps and Minten 2001) that allow small scale farmers to obtain profits and remain incentivised to produce. Though production increases and markets are the major enablers of the smallholder model, the state and agriculture related institutions play an intervening role by creating an enabling policy environment and providing public goods, technology, research and other incentives that improve production and markets (see Jirström 2005).

More dynamic smallholders are theorised to expand their farms and consolidate existing rural land holdings (Bernstein 2010) as part of the process of smallholder-based structural transformation. Nonetheless farmland expansion among smallholders in SSA rarely involves the aggregation of land holdings of previous farmers (see Houssou et al. 2018). Instead, smallholder farms are being increasingly fragmented due to population pressure on finite land resources (Andersson Djurfeldt and Jirström 2013; Jayne et al. 2014a). Still, size of land holding is shown to be inversely proportional to poverty reduction possibilities (Ali and Pernia 2003: 3). However, as structural transformation proceeds and income earning opportunities in the rural non-farm sector improve, land becomes a less significant predictor of wealth and poverty reduction (Rigg 2006). The smallholder-led model is further criticised for raising the barriers of entry by requiring small farmers to meet the quality and production demands of agribusiness and international markets (Bernstein and Oya 2014: 4). Thus, less dynamic farmers that may not have the capacity to compete in output markets are excluded. Though smallholder commercialization is viewed as a viable pathway out of poverty, this may not be the case for all households (Staatz and Dembélé 2007). The most marginal households

may be better off benefiting from social protection policies (Masters et al. 2013) as well as investments in education and health (Staatz and Dembélé 2007). An alternative perspective to the smallholder model is presented by Collier and Dercon (2014) who challenge the notion of smallholder efficiency in comparison with large scale producers and maintain that large farmers, given new technological improvements, are better placed to bring economic change and related poverty reduction (see also Collier 2008; Chapoto et al. 2013; Del Prete et al. 2019).

Proponents of structural transformation favour an ideology of intersectoral and institutional growth involving the transition of rural economies from agriculture as the dominant economic activity towards development of a rural non-farm economy (Timmer 2009). Practically, this involves the development of modern industrial and service sectors (see Lewis 1954; Chenery and Syrquin 1975). At the household level, this transition away from agricultural livelihoods while obtaining a large share of incomes from the non-farm sector, constitutes diversification (Winters et al. 2010; Davis et al. 2016). Such diversification is a vital determinant of processes of structural transformation and acts as a catalyst of growth in the rural non-farm economy (see Timmer 2009). Due to a weak industrial sector (Losch et al. 2012) and general lack of viable economic opportunities outside agriculture however, the potential for long term diversification among small farmers across SSA is low (Davis et al. 2016). Instead, smallholder farmers move continuously between farm and non-farm activities (Winters et al. 2010; Losch et al. 2012; Davis et al. 2016).

3.2 Agricultural Modernization, Differentiation and Land Rights

Bernstein (2010) notes that the adoption of a market orientation and commercial modes of cultivation holds differential implications for smallholder groups. Differentiation comprises a recognition of inherent distinctions that exist within societies and an acknowledgement that societal homogenization and standardized solutions are inadequate for defining societies and their interactions (Hall and Paradza 2012; Scoones et al. 2012). Thus, societies need to be recognized as non-static, incorporating a composite mix of variations that are embedded in norms, culture and social values. Smallholder differentiation thus denotes the recognition of structural variations among smallholders. It depicts differential realities and outcomes among smallholders that are mediated by structural inequities in productive resources including land endowments, market access, labour and finance (Oya 2007b; Scoones et al. 2012). Differentiation brings in its wake variations in the ability of different smallholders to sustain their farm production and the extent of their accumulation potential. These variations in accumulation processes are

central to agricultural transformations and may comprise various forms of land enclosures²² by wealthier and privileged farmers (see Bernstein 2010; Hall 2013).

Bernstein (2010) notes that the transition to commercial agriculture may occur through *accumulation from below*²³ processes where more efficient and entrepreneurial smallholders change their subsistence and semi-subsistence modes of production and become *petty commodity-producers*²⁴. These petty commodity producers are integrated into commodity value chains and have the capacity to withstand competition in land, labour and produce markets while pricing out vulnerable smallholders. The drawback of such accumulation processes is the marginalization of poorer farmers by wealthier and more efficient ones and polarization of households' land resources through reallocation from weaker to more efficient smallholder households (Bernstein 2010; Andersson Djurfeldt 2012). While Marx (1961) calls this process primitive accumulation and describes it as inevitable in the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist modes of production, Harvey (2005) considers it to be a gradual and continuous process of capital formation that continues unabated within the capitalist system of production. Harvey (2005) calls this process accumulation by dispossession and theorizes that it includes people, processes and state dynamics that explain the contemporary nature of capital. Both authors find common grounds in an underlying enclosure of land and expropriation of its former users for purposes of capital accumulation (Hall 2013). Thus, inefficient small farmers are dispossessed from their land, forcing them to become landless proletariats who do not own nor control the means of production, may abandon farming or become waged labour. Accumulators from below may benefit from positive differential characteristics and relative privilege in status and land holdings (gained from pre-capitalist systems), to become smallholder capitalists (Oya 2007b; Jayne et al. 2014a).

The commercialization of agriculture holds implications for socio-economic differentiation that creates wealthier, middle, poorer and landless farmers. Bernstein (2010) conceives that such differentiation basically denotes a process of development of complex stratified social structures among smallholders resulting from their connection to a resource, in this case land. Cousins (2010) observes a similar trend and opined that the adoption of commercial production modes creates internal differentiation which changes the intra-group dynamics of small scale

²² Relates to appropriation of land in a manner that deprives its utilization by communal users (see White et al. 2012).

²³ Accumulation from below denotes a micro-scale process of accumulating capital leading to transition from poor to wealthy along an economic continuum.

²⁴ Petty commodity producers are essentially productive smallholder enterprises that depend primarily on family labour with intermittent engagement of waged labour, hold adequate tenurial rights in land to support their production and draw their livelihoods from both agricultural and non-agricultural sources (Bernstein 2010: 104-108).

farmers. First wealthier small farmers transition into commercial commodity producers with an emphasis on market-oriented production and the capacity of accumulating from below through reinvestment of profits. Middle farmers produce for both subsistence and market sale purposes on a semi-commercial basis. Poorer farmers continue to produce primarily for subsistence, may sell their labour intermittently and do not get integrated into commodity value chains. Landless farmers do not hold any direct agricultural production claims and often sell their labour in exchange for wages in the farm and non-farm economy. While important for understanding smallholder differentiation, accumulation from below processes in SSA are incremental and slow (Lu and Horlu 2019). They comprise little dispossession or enclosure and instead involve consolidation of family and individual farms which is quickened by capital injection from non-farm employment sources rather than reinvestment of farm proceeds (see Berry 1993; Bernstein 2010; Djurfeldt 2016; Lu and Horlu 2019).

Furthering rural capitalism through entrepreneurial smallholder cultivation and their consequent incorporation into international produce markets reduces the autonomy of smallholders over their own production. Decisions regarding resource use, crop type and quality are increasingly made within the domain of national and international actors who are far removed from the particular context of production yet determine the livelihood trajectories of small farmers (Van der Ploeg 2010; Van der Ploeg 2018). While the implications of this are far reaching for social differentiation, the processes and patterns of differentiation remain context specific because different factors influenced by local dynamics mediate smallholder livelihood outcomes. One such context specific outcome of smallholder incorporation into formal commodity markets relates to gendered land rights.

3.2.1 Gendered Perspectives of Commercialization

Women in SSA primarily draw and maintain access to resources through the social relations they hold (see Kabeer 1994) and this is critical to their economic production and survival. Nonetheless, they are theorized to have lower access to land, maintain smaller parcels or control land of less value (Deere and Doss 2006). Meanwhile assets are a form of livelihood insurance, providing a vital buffer against economic shocks. By controlling less assets and assets of lower value, women are susceptible to shocks while their economic production capacities and bargaining power within the household are limited (Kabeer 1994; Quisumbing 2010). Asset distribution and women's mode and capacity for production are intertwined within a complex overlay of structural determinants (Jackson 2003; Razavi 2003; Razavi 2009; Peters 2013). These structural factors are often embedded in social interactions that produce, reproduce and entrench gender inequities around production (Kabeer 1994). The social relations place men at a considerable advantage in ownership, control and access to basic resources for production

(Lambrecht 2016; Andersson Djurfeldt et al. 2018b). The consequent differences in production possibilities define the related commercialization potential between men and women and with it their request and control of communal land (Lambrecht 2016: 191). Relatedly, women are shown to be excluded from the commercialization of high value crops typically cash or tree crops as well as food staples (see Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Schneider and Gugerty 2010; Andersson Djurfeldt 2018b). These production barriers often dictate the related commercialization possibilities for women (Andersson Djurfeldt 2018b).

This notwithstanding, women tend to invest more in land in which they hold secure tenure (Quisumbing et al. 2001). By extension, women's commercialization possibilities are enhanced when their land tenure rights are secured however, their access to input markets, labour and capital also play a significant role (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Lambrecht 2016). Andersson Djurfeldt et al. (2018b) find that households, communities, markets and states as well as the collaborations between them are the institutional vehicles for the reproduction, reinforcement and actualization of gender inequities (see also Kabeer 1994; March et al. 1999). These institutions and how they function are determined by their rules, practices, activities, people and the power they wield (March et al. 1999). They specify and entrench gendered narratives including differential allocation of resources, gendered responsibilities and capacity to partake in community and intra-household decision making (Kabeer 2005). They for instance determine the mechanisms and processes for executing tasks and the responsibility for these tasks (Lambrecht et al. 2018). Commonly, domestic and nurturing tasks, arduous and risky tasks as well as resource management and control tasks are a few of a myriad of social responsibilities that are accorded gendered determinations.

3.3 Theories of Property Rights

Attaining production efficiency through state interventions that include input subsidies and market development takes inspiration from concepts of a modernised agriculture and involves eventual liberalization of the rural economy (see Jayne et al. 2002; Holden and Lunduka 2013; Jayne and Rashid 2013). Following on, neo-classical property rights theories claim that raising productivity requires secure property rights characterized by private individualized tenure (see Demsetz 2002). Thus, mainstream property rights concepts have a neoliberal leaning and are predicated on a narrative of land tenure modernization. Central to the modernization attempts is an ideology of land rights formalization and outright or gradual replacement of customary tenure with "more efficient" statutory processes (Deininger 2003). Statutory and formalized land rights recognition involve the assurance of privatized tenure through registration and records of land parcels, delineation of boundaries, assurances of exclusivity and statutory protection of

registered interests (see Benjaminsen et al. 2009; Meinzen-Dick and Mwangi 2009; Ubink et al. 2009). Benjaminsen et al. (2009) described formalization processes as a move from outmoded customary tenure management practices upheld by weak institutional remnants of a past civilization to a more modernized approach with assurances of tenure security that is worthy of the 21st century. These thoughts were previously espoused by Platteau (1996) in the **evolutionary theory of land rights** where he theorised that a gradual and inevitable process of replacement of customary tenure practices and institutions with statutory and formal processes is likely to occur over time. He observes that demographic changes and associated pressures on land and technological advances will catalyse the changes to customary tenure systems. These changes will make customary tenure systems incapable of assuring tenure security, hence creating the conditions for its replacement with statutory tenure systems safeguarded by the state (Platteau 1996; Platteau 2000). De Soto (2000) argues that secure property rights attained through statutory titling processes are essential for poverty reduction and the stimulation of economic development. Without formal titling processes that encourage collateralization and securitization, the latent capital potential of land assets remains dormant; a situation described by De Soto (2000) as dead capital. De Soto (2000) further posits that the focus of customary tenure on group rights creates ambiguities in the land use and ownership domain, leading to an inability to assure security of land tenure. This risk of tenure insecurity is viewed as a disincentive to private sector investment in agriculture (Besley 1995). Demsetz (1967) and De Soto (2000) emphasize the need for individualized and private property rights as the panacea to assuring tenure security, attracting investment to agriculture and raising investment capital through land collateralization.

These mainstream models of property rights recognition have been criticised as idealistic and impractical for the African context because they are embedded within economic narratives and do not reflect local realities of socio-cultural attachments as well as complementary and overlapping land use claims (see Oya 2007a; Toulmin 2009). They may also lead to polarization of land assets in favour of more powerful and wealthier groups and exacerbate the weak tenure position of vulnerable groups by extinguishing their secondary land use rights (Migot-Adholla and Bruce 1994; Benjaminsen et al. 2009). More so, the emphasis on property rights formalization as a panacea to attracting investment in agriculture has not materialized as envisaged (Olukoshi 2004). For instance, formal titling does not automatically translate into collateralization and access to credit (Gilbert 2002; Joireman 2008). Financial institutions consider other factors beyond land collateral in calculating borrower risk; making the poor statistically disadvantaged and often at a high risk of loan default. The claim that customary land tenure systems cannot provide adequate security of tenure, are insecure and a disincentive to investment has been debunked by Kasanga (2002) and Migot-Adholla and Bruce (1994). They find that tenets of exclusivity and individualization during the cropping period have long existed within customary tenure (see Amanor 2010; Mwangi 2016: 18). Additionally, what

may be perceived as weak and insecure tenure may be secure land rights in the particular context of rural communities (Platteau 2000; Kasanga 2002; Lawry et al. 2017). Though logically appealing, the theorized relationship between statutory titling and agricultural investment is empirically inconclusive. Statutory formalization may be limited by experiences of perceived tenure insecurity often arising from contestations over rightful land ownership raised by customary institutions and natives (Platteau 1996).

The quest for instituting individualized and formalized tenure has led to experiments with land reforms and statutory legislations in SSA (see Lund and Benjaminsen 2002). The reach of land reforms has however been limited on the ground hence one of the major influences on tenure relations actually emerges from commercialization and processes around commercialization (see Goldstein and Udry 2008; Amanor 2010; Hall et al. 2017b). The consequences of commercialization on land tenure are however not always straight forward and cannot be considered as linear processes that manifest in similar ways with same intensity. They are partly mediated by the trajectories of depeasantization, deagrarianization, repeasantization, reagrarianization, robustness of small farmers and other related agricultural commercialization processes and outcomes (Hebinck 2018). Nonetheless, there exists some evidence of the outcomes of these complex interactions between commercialization and land tenure as shown for example by the emergence of new forms of land tenure and adaptations of relevant characteristics of neoclassical property rights systems into customary tenure systems (see Chimhowu 2019).

3.3.1 Changing Nature of Customary Land Tenure

Customary land tenure has previously been regarded by states and allied development partners as obsolete, disruptive and inimical to larger agricultural development objectives, due to its purported inability to assure secure and permanent individualized tenure (World Bank 1975; Besley 1995; Deininger and Binswanger 1999; De Soto 2000). This notion was partly birthed from neo-classical thinking which considered indigenous tenure arrangements as structurally hostile to the conditions for capitalist development. Nonetheless, customary tenure has been lauded for its non-static nature, adaptiveness and dynamism in acclimatizing to contemporary changes and demands (Berry 2001; Juul and Lund 2002; Ubink and Amanor 2008). It is further regarded by Kasanga (2001) and Platteau (2000) as advantageous in ensuring equitable distribution of land assets. In view of this, Berry (2001) asserted that the fluid, adaptive and resilient nature of customary land tenure is attributable to the continuous redefinition of customary rules through negotiated agreements within social networks. The inherent ambiguity of customary rules which allows for varied interpretations, renegotiations and re-enactments contributes to such fluidity and adaptivity advantages (Berry 2001).

Recent developments in rural areas are observed to be effectively changing the nature of customary land tenure in SSA, creating what Chimhowu (2019) theorized as “the new African customary tenure”. Chimhowu (2019) posits that the adoption of tenets of neoliberal philosophies typically privatization, commodification, professionalization and de-regulation in rural land tenure institutions have altered the traditional interactions between people and the land. These developments in the rural land space are changing the dynamics of rural land rights through allocations by market forces characterized by monetary exchanges (Goldstein and Udry 2008). Chimhowu (2019) further notes that these changes are stealthy, adopting a gradual and imperceptible nature and hold implications for development of new forms of differentiation along lines of rural landlordism²⁵, land inequality, as well as changes in rural farm structures. The adoption of neoliberal tendencies in customary land tenure proves especially relevant in understanding recent re-configurations of traditional institutions’ hold on land which is changing to accommodate effective vernacular land markets that allow land re-allocations to the most efficient uses. Practically, the development of land markets allowed chiefs to sell and lease land while natives were treated as mere tenants at sufferance²⁶ whose permission was not required before expulsion. Customary ownership by natives was reinterpreted to mean mere use rights evidenced by cultivation for subsistence yet without the right to dispose land off themselves (see Amanor 2009: 127-128). Boni (2008: 82) agrees and notes that the discourse around customary tenure needs to move away from narratives of traditionalization in which land tenure is treated as though it has not changed substantially from its original prehistoric conceptualization. In general, the adoption of neoliberal tenets in customary land management has engendered the reshaping of institutional roles and alteration of power relations between and within traditionally organised institutions (Cotula and Chauveau 2007; Goldstein and Udry 2008). These aspects of commercialization and consequent changes in land rights hold implications for land rights among customarily vulnerable women, youth and migrant groups (Amanor 2008; Amanor 2010). Alternative perspectives are presented by Chitonge et al. (2017) and Colin (2018) who note that the development of rural land markets presents opportunities for land scarce households and vulnerable groups to improve their rural land holdings through purchases, leases and rentals. Nonetheless, their engagements in land markets may be limited by capital constraints (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997: 1327) and other social-economic dynamics that mediate the modes of resource access (Deere and Doss 2006; Boni 2008).

²⁵ Rural landlordism is characterized by the influx of new speculative landlords who acquire large parcels of rural land in anticipation of future demands. They are essentially land brokers who hold land for rent or sale without an innate desire to cultivate themselves.

²⁶ These natives were treated as though they stayed on the land after their use rights had been deemed to have expired.

3.3.2 Theory of Access

Ribot and Peluso (2003) theorize access to mean the capacity to benefit from material and non-material resources. The theory goes beyond mere rights to a resource which may remain dormant and centralizes the practical factors that constitute active use and extraction of benefits. In doing so, it brings into focus a myriad of socio-cultural and economic impediments that may constrain an individual's use of resources (in this case land). The authors identify the web of power relations that define the ability to benefit from a resource, the extent of the benefit, when to benefit and in which ways benefits can be extracted (Sitko 2010: 52). Institutions and social relationships between people often sanction access. Ribot and Peluso (2003) further theorize access in connection with property and the related bundle of rights (Schlager and Ostrom 1992: 249) including ownership, use, control, exclusion and disposition. Access is however used to denote a bundle of powers. Akin to Marxist perspectives on people who produce with their own capital or labour and those who utilize other's capital or labour, access may be directly controlled or controlled through others. Ribot and Peluso (2003) conceptualize four broad mechanisms of access though they concede that the categories are neither exhaustive nor fixed. These include rights-based legal access, rights based-illegal access, structural access and relational forms of access.

Rights-based legal access relates to an ability to benefit that emanates from legal precepts including statutory legislations, customs and conventions. Legal access rights safeguarded by the state manifest in title deeds and statutory permits while those forms of access that are defined under the ambit of customary law manifest primarily in terms of community recognition of the related land use. Within customary law however, enforcement of access rights over property are negotiated and hence rarely directly coercive. With rights-based legal access, ambiguities, contradictions and conflicts are common due to the different rights to property that are claimable within different periods and legal domains. These ambiguities are exemplified by overlaps in land rights, existence of pluralistic legal systems (statutory and customary tenure) that operate in parallel and undefined property boundaries. Meanwhile, rights-based illegal access concerns benefits that are gained without recourse to legal processes and are often defined within the realm of criminality. Practically, access may occur through theft, coercion, deception, corruption and violence and may be maintained by keeping relations with legal access holders or threatening them. Powerful state and customary actors may exhibit illegal access by virtue of their authority and the abuse of the same.

Access may also be defined by structural factors which may be influenced by social, cultural, economic and political considerations. These structural factors may be mediated by technology and tools that improve the capacity to extract benefits from a resource. Access is further determined by capital and the related capacity to put resources into service for optimal gains. In another vein, capital allows for

investments that constitute long-term claims to a resource. In terms of land use, this is exemplified by investments in the cultivation of long maturity tree crops for instance (see Sjaastad and Bromley 1997). Structural access is also defined by market access and the ability for persons or groups to maintain exchange relations. Such access to markets improves an individual's interest and capacity to extract benefits. With access to markets, forest resources can for instance be sold to commodity markets. Additionally, persons who control labour may benefit from resources that require the exertion of labour or leverage on such labour as part of patron-client relations. Thus, labour surplus or scarcity may define the extent of access and related benefits individuals may extract. Relatedly, kinship and gender as defined through cultural precepts, determine structural access to resources and the extent of their use and control.

Relational access is evidenced by social identity and group membership. It is for example depicted by how persons and groups exercise the privilege of access by virtue of their closeness to institutions of power that influence, define and enforce rules pertaining to a resource. Relatedly, access may be gained or constrained by membership of a group (typically tribe) or identity as chiefs, community, spiritual leaders or persons who have the ability to muster and command a following. Relational access further develops along lines of friendship, dependence, reciprocal treatment, trust and obligations. It often involves investments in social relations to improve negotiation capacity and ensure continued long-term use of a resource (Berry 1993: 15). Changes in the political economy are central to creating new types of social relations that can be leveraged on for improved access or render hitherto access rights obsolete. While considering the case of customary property, Berry (1993: 15) notes that these changes reflect constant ongoing power struggles over access that are mediated by continuous (re)negotiations. The varied forms of access constantly overlap and are best understood in relation to each other.

3.4 De/reagrarianization and De/repeasantization

Deagrarianization and depeasantization processes are complex and influenced by varied factors including urbanization, population increases and related land fragmentation²⁷, climate change, migration, decreasing productivity, deteriorating rural conditions and general monetization of rural livelihoods (Bryceson 2018b; Bryceson 2019). However, processes of agrarian transformation and commercial interests in the countryside are theorized to be among the major factors that encourage deagrarianization and depeasantization (Bryceson 1996; Bryceson and Jamal 1997). Depeasantization is viewed as a natural and inevitable outcome of

²⁷ Land fragmentation in this case relates to subdivision of agricultural land parcels into smaller and often non-economic parcels due to population increases (see Blarel et al. 1992).

agricultural modernization (Eastwood et al. 2006) and is characterized by displacement and a decline in the share of smallholder farmers often resulting from their inability to compete.

Meanwhile deagrarianization relates to a decline in agricultural output relative to other economic sectors, abandonment of farming and emigration away from agrarian settlement patterns, shrinking rural populations and livelihood reorientation (Bryceson 2018b). The deagrarianization process is quickened by the adoption of neoliberal policies which encourage distress sales of customary land to avert imminent livelihood risks (Bryceson 2018a: 10). While deagrarianization can bring in its wake extreme impoverishment and rural food insecurity it may also lead to lower pressure on land (Bryceson 2018a). Both processes lead to occupational shifts and reductions in the scale and intensity of small scale agricultural production. The quintessential smallholder farmer disappears by leaving agriculture or changing their production to entrepreneurial farming and becoming petty commodity producers (Bernstein 2001). In line with this shift, Van der Ploeg (2003) identified three groups of smallholders in the context of commercialization namely, smallholders who stay in farming by readapting or changing their modes of production, leavers who stop farming and the in-betweens who eventually either stay or leave agriculture. These dynamics hold implications for the restructuring of smallholder farming systems including transfer of land assets and mobilization of family labour. While using the case of Northern Ghana, Yaro (2006) shows how land scarcity or abundance in combination with processes of commercialization leads to different patterns of deagrarianization. One pathway involves weaker farmers being pushed out of agriculture by more successful neighbours. The other pathway involves low demand for lands due to farmers' inability to bear the capital and labour costs of commercialization and with it the inability of agriculture to sustain market-based livelihoods.

Smallholder agriculture, despite its many challenges remains resilient and the theorised deagrarianization in the global south has not occurred nor proceeded as rapidly as previously predicted (Hebinck 2018). Van der Ploeg (2018) noted that as farmers become increasingly displaced by more efficient and entrepreneurial cultivators, the reproduction of their modes of production are supplemented by engagement in secondary activities on nearby farms or rural and urban non-farm sectors where they exert labour in exchange for wages or other benefit. They may further maintain simple reproduction²⁸ through dependence on savings, pensions, remittances from migrant family members and other emoluments. Thus, farmers use reinvestment strategies to maintain their subsistence and semi-subsistence modes of production. Underlying these reinvestments is the logic of supplementing farmer's

²⁸ Relates to production processes which involve replacing used goods, absence of accumulation and creating the conditions for continued production at the same subsistence level.

livelihoods and ensuring their subsistence due to the uncertainty of returns from other income earning activities (Ellis and Freeman 2005; Bryceson 2018b).

Besides, the logic of livelihood insurance, a myriad of social and material relations with land, that are hardly quantifiable in economic terms, explain smallholder transient livelihoods and related control of land in the context of commercialization (Makonese and Sukalac 2012: 65; Rasmussen and Reenberg 2015). These non-economic relations with land and adaptations by weak and poorer smallholders that prevents them from totally losing attachments to their land within the context of commercialization contributes to what Berry (1993) describes as a process of *accumulation without dispossession*. This is partly explained by dynamic farmers' unwillingness to hire and supervise waged labour and the limitations that household labour availability places on decisions surrounding how much land to cultivate (Wiggins et al. 2011: 18-19). Thus, accumulation processes driven by commercial interests do not automatically translate into a total disconnect by small farmers from the rural base (Dzanku 2015; Rasmussen and Reenberg 2015); instead, labour displacement is common (Bryceson 2018a). In the context of capitalism, these behaviours that allow smallholders to survive strenuous conditions are considered irrational. Bernstein (2004) describes this seeming irrationality as an indicator of a different rationality, unrecognizable to capitalists, where the market system is one of many sets of tools that define the complex web of social relations and power structures that shape traditional non-capitalist communities. While theorizing the logic of the peasant economy, the sociologist Alexander Chayanov writing as early as 1923 described the persistence of smallholder farmers as a function of their embeddedness in a family-based economy characterized by low cost and expansive labour capacity (Chayanov 1986). He described this capacity as self-exploitation which allows smallholder farms to adapt to the household's consumption needs and bear the cost of production losses or market challenges that commercial cultivators are unable to bear. Beyond such self-exploitation for family sustenance, small farmers remain non-entrepreneurial and have no incentive to produce for accumulation and related profit maximization. Chayanov (1986) also assumes a continuous and assured access to land resources in the conceptualization of the expansive nature of household labour for self-exploitation (see also Ioffe et al. 2006).

The resistance or eventual demise of smallholder production raises theoretical predictions of reagrarization and repeasantization which depicts a return to agriculture and small scale forms of cultivation. This leads to growth in the numbers of smallholders including new entrants. Van der Ploeg (2008) theorised that the development of "new peasantries" with autonomy over their own production process and allied resources is typical of the process of repeasantization and reagrarization. Though these smallholders often depend on family labour, they do not limit their incomes to returns from agricultural produce nor the spatial configurations of the rural countryside. They transcend the rural-urban divide and

combine agriculture in strategic ways with other income earning activities such as creating multifunctional farms for agricultural tourism, educational modelling and ecological production (Van der Ploeg 2008; Van der Ploeg 2010; Van der Ploeg 2018). These smallholders can assert their autonomy and resistance against dispossession and incorporation into capitalist systems that dictate their modes of production. They adopt new forms and responses that deviate from theoretical prescriptions of vulnerability and eventual extinction of smallholder agriculture. They do so through creating new economic relations with society including engaging in non-commodity aspects of agricultural production. This brings to light aspects of ecology and biodiversity that take centre stage in contemporary discussions on sustainable agriculture (Van der Ploeg 2008).

The theoretical predictions of reagrarization and repeasantization may occur in tandem with changes in land tenure and the entire smallholder sector. These changes are often met with resistance from local communities and smallholders themselves (Hall et al. 2017a; Diepart et al. 2019). However, there also exist incremental adaptation to new realities as depicted for instance by the rise in outgrower schemes in which (re)incentivised small farmers operate as appendages to medium or largescale scale plantations (Hall et al. 2017b) and investments by new entrants in the rural farm sector (Jayne et al. 2014a; Jayne et al. 2014b).

3.5 Conclusion

The interactions between commercialization, differential outcomes, land tenure and processes of de/reagrarization and de/repeasantization are often complex and cannot be entirely explained by a single theory. Together, the different theories herein elucidated provide the general analytical frame of the thesis. Smallholder commercialization is linked to a logic of structural transformation²⁹ typified by processes of land consolidation, diversification, intersectoral linkages and a general growth in the non-farm rural economy. Modernizing agriculture however brings in its wake deepened and new forms of social differentiation for varied smallholder groups. This is shown in terms of the differential nature of land tenure rights and their linkages with production capacities in rural communities. Differentiation that emanates from commercialization processes is also known to constrain customarily weak groups including women.

While the theories of access and property rights depict the mechanisms that individuals use to gain and maintain access to resources, such access rights are

²⁹ While transformation broadly connotes positive economic change, the theorised signals of transformation including land consolidation and diversification may be indicative of general structural changes either positive or negative.

practically exercised within the domain of customary or statutory tenure in SSA. Statutory tenure is promoted by the property rights school which favours land rights formalization and related replacement of customary tenure as the mechanism for improving agricultural investments and outcomes. In contrast, the adaptive capacity of customary tenure is shown through the development of a new customary tenure that co-opts many characteristics of statutory tenure and gives a semblance of formalization to land transfers occurring within vernacular land markets. The implications of land tenure outcomes, social differentiation and the opportunities that accompany commercialization are viewed through processes of de/reagrarianization and de/repeasantization which typify a return or move away from agrarian livelihoods.

The research questions are treated primarily on the basis of the theories of property rights, land access, changing nature of customary land tenure and social differentiation (including gender). The theories of property rights and new customary tenure are relevant for analysing empirical material around the relationships between customary and state actors regarding the question of land and its role in the attainment of smallholder-based agricultural policy objectives as detailed in research question 1. Theories around access to resources, differential outcomes of commercialization and gendered perspectives concern research questions 2 and 3 and are relevant for framing the narratives of changing social relations of resources access and how different groups (in this case women and migrant farmers) cope. While the analytical frames provided by these theories are useful for analysing the empirical material, the theoretical linkages between land tenure and commercialization are neither direct nor easily discernible. They are complex and characterized by cyclical linkages in which commercialization affects tenure while tenurial possibilities also determine commercialization outcomes. Still, these cyclical interactions are mediated by varied social, economic and political determinants. The theoretical perspectives of de/reagrarianization and de/repeasantization and structural change concern the macro-level and embody the general underlying notions of a smallholder-based model of economic development and the implications this may hold for rural farmers. These perspectives are relevant for situating the entire thesis and also depicting the land tenure and general smallholder-based agricultural policy lessons that can be gleaned from the empirical material.

Chapter Four:

Methodology

This chapter presents the research strategy and an in-depth description of how it was implemented. It first outlines the research design including the choice of case study sites. It further describes the sampling and data collection methods and how they were used. This is followed by a section on data analysis to depict how research findings were established. The chapter concludes with a reflection on research ethics, researcher's positionality, research validity, limitations and methodological adaptations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.1 Research Design

Major disparities exist in landholding among smallholders across Ghana (Chamberlin 2008). Using landholding size (0-2ha) as the basis for smallholder classification (MoFA 2017b), this study empirically examines the varied ways small farmers are affected by commercialization initiatives. It further investigates the institutional synergies between customary and state actors in the management of customary land. The ontological underpinning of the study is constructivist as it aligns with a subjective reality of the social world. Constructivist ontology asserts that social phenomena are neither pre-given external facts nor emanate from a pre-constituted world (Bryman 2016: 29). Instead, they are emergent realities that are co-constructed and undergo constant changes depending on the interactions among actors. The ontology has close ties with culture and social order and allows for meanings to be adapted in the light of new evidence. Nonetheless, constructivist ontology often holds non-static but persistent aspects that serve as a point of reference (Bryman 2016: 26). Epistemologically, the thesis uses an interpretivist lens adapted with iterative methods, moving constantly between data transcripts, methods, theory and literature, for interpreting multiple and relative realities. Interpretivism provides an avenue for knowledge creation where the world is viewed through the eyes of actors and the subjective meanings they attach to social phenomena (Bryman 2016: 26). Researchers are integral to interpretivism as they provide an interpretation of the empirical evidence by placing these within the framework of social theories (Bryman 2016: 28). In this thesis, the interpretivist

epistemology is used alongside deductive reasoning; allowing meanings to be gleaned from empirical evidence and related to theory. Thus, the ontological and epistemological aspects allow for analysis of potentially varied individual constructions of truth.

The study is primarily set within an exploratory research design which allows researchers to interrogate and provide a better understanding of unfolding and inadequately researched social phenomena, in this case, the nexus between state-led smallholder commercialization, differential outcomes and land tenure (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 162). It however utilizes relevant aspects of explanatory research design including causal narratives and explanations to expose cause and effect dynamics (Maxwell and Mittapalli 2008: 324). These however cannot constitute a basis for generalizations common with positivist methodologies. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, utilizing different qualitative data tools, to interrogate the implications of smallholder commercialization on land tenure. The qualitative approach is useful for exploring in-depth meanings of personal experiences and life history narratives (Bryman 2016: 488-489). It further employs a multiple case study approach in order to explore the contextual and nuanced aspects of the phenomenon and depict how and why a theoretical explanation fits the empirical evidence or otherwise (Flyvbjerg 2006; Yin 2014). The strength of the case study approach lies in providing a mechanism for in-depth study of complex processes hence it uses both analytical and descriptive tools for presenting results.

4.2 Study Communities

I purposively chose two study communities in one of the major agro-ecological zones in Ghana- the forest transition zone (*see figure 2*). The forest transition zone hosts the Techiman municipality which is a major market hub for agricultural products and has one of the largest produce markets in West Africa. It is an international market that attracts traders from Togo, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali (Ghana Statistical Service 2014c). The volume of trade in agricultural produce and other related market activities in Techiman holds implications for the agricultural and economic life of surrounding communities. The communities chosen are located in the Bono-East region, and cut across the maize, vegetable and rice value chains. The study communities namely Nkwabeng in the Nkoranza South municipality and Dromankese in the Nkoranza North district were primarily chosen to depict firstly, similar typologies of land tenure organized around chieftaincy institutions and secondly the proximity to markets. Thirdly, land availability was used as a distinguishing factor based on the premise that rural land demands resulting from commercialization are likely to have direct implications on customary tenure, more so in areas that experience land scarcity (see Ubink and Quan 2008; Chitonge et al. 2017). Thus, one case study community that is close to

reaching its community land frontier (Nkwabeng) and another that has a perceptible land buffer (Dromankese) were chosen (Ministry of Finance 2014; Ministry of Finance 2015).

(a) Nkoranza South Municipality

The Nkoranza South Municipality covers a land area of 920 square km and its capital is Nkoranza. It is dominated by the Akan-bono ethnic group however other tribes including Ashanti, Dagomba, Frafra, Grusi and Konkomba are significantly represented. The municipality receives bimodal rainfall with mean annual averages of 800-1200mm (Ghana Statistical Service 2014b). Thus, it has two major cropping seasons and the major food crops cultivated include maize, rice, yam, and cassava while cashew is the dominant tree crop. With a predominantly rural population (64%) and population density of 109.3 persons/square km, the municipality's main economic activity is agriculture which covers 75% of the land area and employs over 66% of the active population (Ministry of Finance 2014). The municipality produces the highest volumes of maize in the Bono East region and is consistently ranked among the top three highest maize producing areas nationwide (MoFA 2016). With low fertilizer adoption, land rotation and shifting cultivation remain the dominant agriculture land use pattern both aimed at improving soil fertility. Similarly, mechanization rates are generally low with farmers' continual dependence on simple farm implements (hoe and cutlass). According to Ghana's poverty mapping report (Ghana Statistical Service 2015) the municipality has a high poverty incidence rate (36.1%); a telling indication of its inability to equitably leverage on its agricultural strengths. With majority smallholder-based crop cultivation, about 80% of land holdings are less than 1.0 hectare (2.5 acres); lower than the national average of 2 hectares (5 acres) and an indication of exhaustion of the district's land frontier (Ministry of Finance 2014). The land tenure system in the district is organized around customary ownership by chiefs and families. Nkwabeng is located in the north-western part of the Nkoranza South municipality. It holds a population of 7,453 and is approximately 10km away from the district capital Nkoranza (Ghana Statistical Service 2014a; MoFA 2016).

(b) Nkoranza North District

The Nkoranza North District covers a total land area of 2,322 square km and its capital is Busunya which is approximately 20.3km away from Nkoranza. Demographic estimates indicate a total of 82,836 inhabitants, population density of 30.6 persons per square km and 64.9% of the economically active workforce employed in agriculture (Ministry of Finance 2015). Agriculture is dominated by the smallholder sector with maize and yam being the major food crops and cashew as the dominant tree crop. The district has a double- maxima rainfall regime

averaging 855-1500mm; implying the propensity for year-round cropping over major and minor seasons (Ghana Statistical Service 2014a; Nkoranza North District Assembly 2022). The district lies in the geographical interface between the forest transition zone and the semi-deciduous forest zone. The land tenure system is dominated by usufructuary access through chieftaincy, family or kin relations. With primary dependence on family labour, crop production is not mechanized and depends on rudimentary tools. Though the district is dominated by the Akan-bono ethnic group, other migrant ethnic groups including the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Frafra, Konkomba and Ashanti have a significant presence. With a lower population density and relative land abundance, farm sizes average 3-10 acres (MoFA 2021c). The Dromankese community is located in the central part of the Nkoranza North district and has a population of 9,226 (Ghana Statistical Service 2014a).

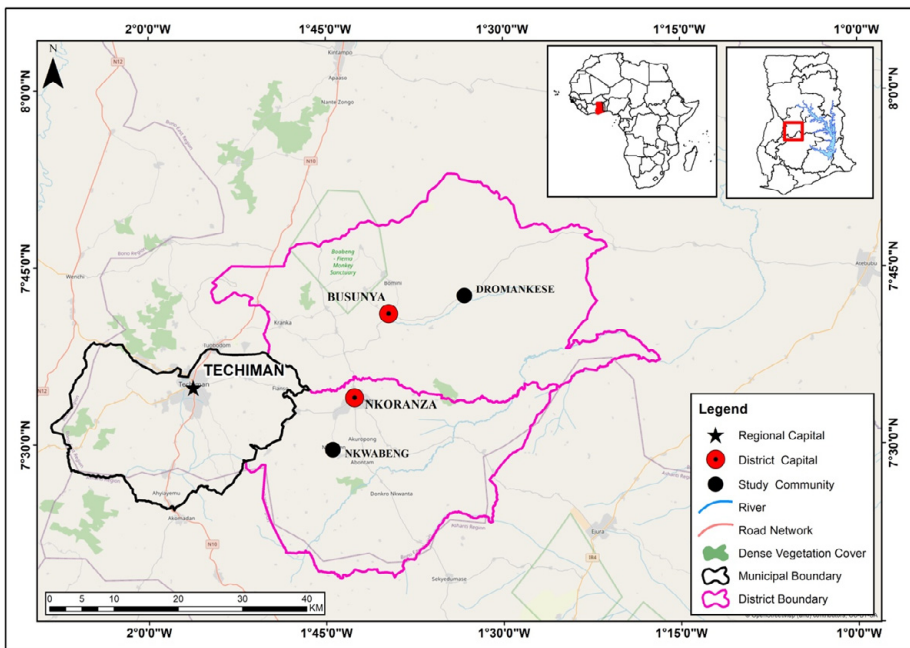


Figure 2: Map Showing the Location of Study Communities.
Source: Author's Construction using ESRI's ArcGis Pro (2020)

4.3 Community Entry, Sampling and Data Collection

I used a multi-stage sampling procedure for site selection (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 212). First, two districts with high production volumes of PFJ priority crops were selected. In each selected district, one PFJ priority food crop production community was chosen³⁰. Since few studies have used the selected communities as case studies the site selection provides an opportunity for expanding the geographical coverage of agricultural research in Ghana. A pre-test evaluation with the aim of testing the data collection tools was conducted for two days in a third PFJ beneficiary community (Ejura) similar in tenurial arrangements and farming systems as the study communities. A total of five households were selected using convenience sampling techniques and the feedback allowed for rewording of some contextually sensitive, unclear, repeated and double-barrelled interview questions. Additionally, some aspects of the theoretically informed and earlier envisaged process of conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises were re-adapted to include descriptive aspects, voting and more practical and time efficient approaches that suit the research context. The changes in conduct of PRA exercises were due to some respondents feeling uncomfortable with household wealth ranking and lengthy disagreements on location of some homesteads, farms and their ownership. Other reasons included time constraints in conducting what was described during the pre-test period as a tiring mental exercise of mapping and wealth ranking. The researcher thus elected to use transect walks with a selected community member in drawing a preliminary map of the community showing major features and allowing the PRA participants (chiefs, community members and local government officials) to suggest changes and fill in additional information during the mapping exercises.

In the chosen study communities, a five-day reconnaissance survey aimed at achieving study area familiarization objectives was conducted. The preliminary survey is important for identifying the unique socio-political and cultural characteristics of the study communities as well as locating gatekeepers and key informants (Bryman 2016: 471). The reconnaissance survey also led to community-wide announcements of the research project and encouragement of community members to show cordiality to the researcher. Data collection was conducted in two cycles. Data was first collected over a period of six (6) weeks between February and April, 2020 and later for 3 weeks in January 2022. The interviews often took place between 9am and 5pm due to transportation, accommodation and cultural considerations. After 5pm, both communities got dark and residents associated the darkness with family time hence it was not socially conducive to receive the researcher for data collection purposes.

³⁰ Both communities have high production volumes of maize and vegetables.

I used qualitative methods to collect diverse opinions and to reveal the subjective and nuanced aspects of the phenomenon under study (Bryman 2016; Moses and Knutsen 2019). This allows for the views of vulnerable and marginalized groups to be sought while signposting how individual or group sentiments and perceptions influence attitudinal responses, behaviours and choices. Qualitative methods keep in focus social processes and responses to a study phenomenon hence they are suitable for studying the social relations of land access and responses to processes of smallholder commercialization. An integrated mix of qualitative data collection methods including individual and key informant interviews (conducted face-to-face or via telephone³¹), focus group discussions and participatory rural appraisal exercises were used as data collection methods. While the thesis does not include participant observations as a method, observations are nonetheless made to supplement the chosen methods and to navigate different topics depending on their sensitivity and the responses received. The multi-method approach is a reflection of the historical and present complexities of land tenure and how different groups interact with tenurial issues given considerations of geography, state policy, customs and market factors. The use of multiple data collection tools is advantageous for data triangulation to spot contradictory responses, ascertain the concordance or deviation of findings from existing research and for elucidating a variety of responses to test theoretical conceptions.

I used a mix of purposive, systematic, snowball and convenience sampling techniques for selecting households, key informants as well as PRA and FGD participants. Using systematic sampling techniques, a total sample of sixty-one (61) households engaged in PFJ priority food crop cultivation were selected. Additionally, a total of twenty-five (25) persons were selected as key informants through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Focus group participants were selected using a mix of purposive and convenience sampling and a total of 12 FGD's were conducted (*see table 2*). The qualitative sample size selection follows recommendations by Bowen (2008) to avoid choosing predetermined sample sizes hence a finite number of interviewees was adopted after data collection had reached the saturation point. Though the thesis depicts the household as the basis for analysis due to the joint nature of consumption and production in both study communities, it does not seek to present a unitary perspective of the household. Instead, it recognizes intrahousehold dynamics including negotiations for land and labour and the varied opportunities, limitations and trajectories of commercialization among individuals within the household. These intrahousehold dynamics are however better understood vis-à-vis considerations of the social, economic and institutional dimensions within which households and the nature of production and resource distribution operate (Agarwal 1997).

³¹ Refer to section 4.9 for reflection on Covid-19 and adaptation of research methods.

4.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Punch (2013:144) describes interviews as a prominent and potent mechanism for data collection due to its advantages in highlighting “*people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality*”. Accordingly, a semi-structured interviewing technique was adopted for the study. Semi-structured interviews allow for varied responses without seeking to limit respondents to a selected set of answers (Bryman 2016: 468). It includes open ended questions and affords interviewees the opportunity to actively construct their life stories. This enriches data by elucidating new themes that may serve as theoretical exceptions, deviations or additions (Punch 2013). The dual advantage of providing structure while maintaining flexibility is vital for ensuring cross case comparisons associated with multiple case study research (Bryman 2016: 469). Interview guides for different groups including farmers, key informants within the customary sector and key informants representing NGO's and state institutions were developed based on the research questions (*see Appendix B*). While being sensitive to social relations that may hinder interviewees from speaking freely, the researcher sought to create an atmosphere of trust and in some cases, rescheduled the interview place or time to ensure that the best unhindered responses are received. All interviews were conducted in the local language- Twi- that the researcher has the advantage of speaking and understanding. They were also conducted at the convenience of interviewees and in local settings such as homes, community and religious centres and farm houses. Such time and place convenience provides the advantage of familiarity that makes interviewees comfortable and allows them to recall aspects that they may otherwise have taken for granted. As much as possible, the researcher used conversational questions and small talk to create a sense of familiarization before interviews (Krueger and Casey 2015: 123-125). This involved sharing everyday experiences however divisive topics including religion and politics were avoided. The approach is known to make interviewees more comfortable and allows them to enjoy the dialogue. In some instances, interviewees also asked the researcher some questions as part of the conversation. This prevented a one-dimensional dialogue where the researcher only asked questions and the interviewee provided answers.

(a) Key Informant Interviews

One of the fundamental aspects of qualitative research is the identification of informants who possess the relevant knowledge and experiences of the phenomena being studied and a willingness to disclose the information. To ensure proper targeting and elicitation of relevant information, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used for the selection of key informants. This helped in identifying interviewees that may hold relevant information (Bryman 2016: 188,419) and receiving referrals to persons who may possess further knowledge on issues

pertaining to the research. Key informants also constituted partners in the research and helped in validating or clarifying questions beyond the research theme or period (Schensul 2008: 524). While using snowball sampling, the researcher adopted reflexive methods to reduce the risk of narrative replication that arises from referrals to like-minded people (Morgan 2008: 816). A total of 25 key informant interviews were conducted. This comprised one paramount chief (Akyeamehene³²) of the Nkoranza Traditional Area, one divisional chief and four subchiefs³³ of Nkwabeng, one paramount chief and two subchiefs of Dromankese and one representative each of the National Development Planning Commission, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the National House of Chiefs, Ghana Chamber of Agribusiness and the Peasant Farmer's Association of Ghana. Furthermore, three native-only (two in Nkwabeng and one in Dromankese) and two migrant-only (one in each study community) cooperative heads, two agricultural extension officers, two local government officers and two district officers of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) were interviewed.

(b) Household Interviews

A total of sixty-one (61) household interviews were conducted. Specifically, 30 selected farmer households were interviewed in Nkwabeng while 31 household interviews were conducted in Dromankese. These interviews incorporate the views of traditionally vulnerable women and migrant groups in order to examine their tenurial positions since the outset of the PFJ policy. The sample frame of farmer households was sought from the district or municipal agriculture office. While there was no already existing compiled register of total farmers, the existing records were organised based on cooperative name, beneficiary lists and type of crop cultivated. For the purposes of the research, the lists were sorted on the basis of relevant indicators including PFJ and PERD³⁴ beneficiaries, farmers who had registered their interest in PFJ and PERD inputs, farmers cultivating priority PFJ and PERD crops and active farmer cooperatives. A total list of 193 farmers for Nkwabeng and 247 farmers for Dromankese was compiled from these records using Microsoft excel tools and shuffled to prevent stratification of data. All households were selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. A systematic random sampling procedure was first used in selecting 30 respondents in each study community. This was conducted by first selecting a random starting point and then identifying a fixed sampling interval for selecting the remaining households to be included in the

³² Due to the demise of the paramount chief of the Nkoranza traditional area, the chief linguist was interviewed.

³³ In Nkwabeng, 2 of the 4 sub-chiefs also acted as family heads while in Dromankese, the two sub-chiefs were also family heads.

³⁴ PERD beneficiaries who were also engaged in priority PFJ crop cultivation.

sample. Therefore, all members of the sampling frame had an equal opportunity of selection for inclusion in the sample. The sampling interval is obtained through division of the targeted respondents per community by the sample frame to gain the *n*th household chosen to be interviewed. Cleaning techniques including telephone calls and cross-checks with the aim of reducing duplication and unreachable households were used for preparing the sample for data collection. This was necessary since some originally sampled individuals belonged to the same household yet the sample frame was not compiled based on a household indicator. Purposive selection techniques were then used for choosing additional households to complete the sample based on considerations of age, gender and status in the community.

While data saturation was attained after interviewing all sampled 30 households in Nkwabeng, it was deemed to have been attained after interviewing 23 households in Dromankese. However due to challenges of data collection presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on gathering by the government of Ghana (see section 4.9) a further 8 interviews of migrant households instead of previously planned FGD's were conducted. The sampling frame of migrant households was compiled based on the available records of migrant farmer households engaged in priority crop production at the Nkoranza North district office of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The records revealed a list of migrant farmer households (totalling 47) that were organized into three ethnic-based cooperatives (Dagomba, Konkomba and Grusi ethnicities). A systematic sampling procedure was used in selecting 10 households from each cooperative. The resulting list of 30 households was compiled and shuffled in Microsoft excel to avoid stratification. From this, a sample of 8 households was drawn and purposively adapted based on the local knowledge of the agriculture extension officer as well as availability of interviewees.

Most interviews were conducted early in the morning (between 6-9am) or after 4pm. This was true for all days of the week except Tuesdays and Sundays when in accordance with cultural and religious precepts, residents do not visit the farm and if at all they do not stay long or engage in work tasks.

(c) Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

A total of 12 focus group discussions were conducted with farmer households (*see figures 3 & 4*). This method provides the advantage of co-construction of knowledge around social phenomena rather than the construction of knowledge in isolation that is common with individual interviews (Bryman 2016: 502). It includes probes between participants which allows varying viewpoints to be challenged and points of consensus to be noted. With this, FGD participants tend to think more about their views and may even revise them in the course of the discussion. The researcher also placed emphasis on encouraging participation to avoid the problem of group effect which arises from domination of interviews by more vociferous persons and implicit

acceptance of their positions by relatively quiet people (Krueger and Casey 2015: 259; Bryman 2016: 502). While a definite number of FGD's is not encouraged when planning data collection, the research aligns with Bryman's (2016: 505) notion for a finite number to be decided when narratives become repetitive and the researcher can predict responses. All FGD's were pre-planned with purposively selected participants while other participants were encouraged by the researcher to join at their convenience. Participation in the FGD's overlapped variously with household and key informant interviews depending on the unique position or depth of information a participant possesses. In many cases (7 out of 12 FGD's), it involved invitation and attendance of often early morning (between 5-6:30am) farmers' cooperative³⁵ meetings. The meeting times allowed farmers to undertake their daily farm tasks which they acknowledge is best to perform before noon and when the sun starts to set around 3pm. The cooperative leaders often announce the agenda of the FGD in previous meetings and encourage the target group to stay and join the discussions when the day arrives. With many FGD's cooperative-based, the views of farmers who are not members of cooperatives are mostly shown in the household interviews.

All but two of the FGD's comprised between 4 to 12 participants each in concordance with Krueger and Casey's (2015: 33) recommendations, to allow diversity in opinions, encourage all participants to share their views and prevent difficulties in data analysis. However, in some cases including the wealth ranking sessions, the FGD's were open to numbers above 12 to allow for richer narratives and better categorization. FGD participants were selected using a mix of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. While purposive selection was vital for ensuring gender, migrant, native and key informant representation, convenience sampling allowed for other easily accessible persons that fit the research category to be invited to join the discussions. The researcher explained the purpose of the research, sought verbal consent from participants and set ground rules for the discussions. The discussions were moderated with little intrusion (Bryman 2016: 501) and in an iterative manner to prevent participants from deviating from the central research themes. In Nkwabeng, one FGD each was conducted for migrant men and migrant women. Additionally, two FGD's were conducted for women only (both natives and non-natives), another two comprised migrants (both men and women) and two more comprised a mixed sample of native and non-native farmers. In Dromankese one FGD comprised migrant farmers (both men and women), another comprised women only (both natives and non-natives) while two more

³⁵ The farmer cooperatives in both study communities are self-organized groups that seek improvements in well-being of their members. Though these cooperatives are open to anyone to join, they operate based on trust hence most members have strong social relations with each other. While the cooperatives are private groups, they are open to working with state interests that align with their own. Also, resources (eg PFJ inputs) are not accessed on the basis of cooperatives though most members suggested that it was a better way of improving access and monitoring progress.

comprised a mix of native and non-native male and female farmers. The two FGD's in each study community that comprised all farmers regardless of gender or status included wealth ranking exercises.



Figure 3: A Focus Group Discussion in Nkwabeng
Source: Fieldwork (2020). Courtesy: Adom farmer's cooperative



Figure 4: A Women-only Focus Group Discussion in Dromankese
Source: Fieldwork (2022)

(d) Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are a cheap and quick mechanism of data collection. The method has the advantage of reducing the Hawthorne effect which relates to modifications in an interviewee's behaviour and responses in reaction to their awareness of being observed (Bryman 2016: 203). Nonetheless, the use of telephone interviews means the researcher loses the capacity to observe interviewees' behaviour and make related adaptations to the interview style (Bryman 2016: 203). Additionally, certain groups that do not own a telephone cannot be interviewed while both interviewees and researchers cannot utilize physical artefacts and visual aids to explain their views. Telephone interviews were used as part of the adaptation to data collection challenges presented by the covid-19 pandemic (see section 4.9).

With this, three out of the eight planned interviews with migrant households in Dromankese (see section 4.3.1b) were conducted face-to-face while the remaining five were conducted via telephone. These telephone interviews proved difficult to organize due to the spatial nature of migrant settlements and technological

challenges. Migrant farmers tend to live and farm in small settler villages that are far from the centre of Dromankese (see figure 5) and have poor infrastructure and cell phone connection. They often travel to the centre once a week on market days (Saturdays) to buy or sell farm and non-farm produce. The interviews were arranged on these market days (often after 5pm when the market has closed) through the district agricultural extension officer. Nonetheless, migrants dedicated less than 30 minutes on average to the interviews. Among several varied excuses, their main reason bordered on the lack of electricity on the road leading to their homesteads; hence they needed to return home before nightfall. Again, due to the lack of physical connection, social embeddedness and related low trust of the researcher, some interviewees hesitated in providing information that they deemed sensitive. In some instances, the interviews were unsuccessful and had to be rescheduled for the next market day because interviewees were easily distracted and did not want to have lengthy telephone conversations.

Ten (10) key informant interviews were conducted via telephone. These were much easier to conduct due to the already established relationship between the researcher and some key informants during the first round of data collection. Key informants also owned cell phones, live or work in well served cellular service areas and agreed to pre-set interview times.



Figure 5: A Typical Migrant Farmer's Homestead
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents

Number of interviewees Type of Data	Nkwabeng	Dromankese	Outside study community	Total
Household Interviews	30	31**	0	61
Focus Group Discussions	2 mixed gender migrants only 1 migrant men 1 migrant women 2 mixed status*** women only 2 mixed status and gender	1 mixed gender migrants only 1 mixed status women only 2 mixed status and gender	N/A	12
Key Informant Interviews	One divisional chief Four subchiefs Two native cooperative heads One migrant cooperative head One local government officer Nkwabeng agricultural extension officer*	One paramount chief Two subchiefs One native cooperative head One migrant cooperative head One local government officer* Dromankese agricultural extension officer*	One paramount chief (Akyeamehene) of the Nkoranza Traditional Area Two district officers of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)* One representative each of the: National Development Planning Commission* Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources* National House of Chiefs* Ghana Chamber of Agribusiness* Peasant Farmer's Association of Ghana*	25

* Includes telephone interviews. **Includes 8 separately sampled migrant households as part of covid-19 adaptation. 5 of the 8 interviews with migrants were conducted via telephone *** Status relates to migrant or native (Akan). See Appendix C for further details

Source: Author's Construction (2022)

4.4 Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory rural appraisal comprises sampling and data collection tools that are vital for shared learning, co-production of data and building context-specific knowledge of local communities (Chambers 1994a). It comprises a range of methods that enable stakeholders to undertake self-categorization, definition of their lived realities and actively participate in problem analysis and proffering solutions. PRA centralizes local expertise since local people themselves have capacities and detailed knowledge about subjects that affect their lives (Pretty 1995; Johnson et al. 2004). Rather than imposing theoretically motivated meanings, PRA identifies locally defined constructions of a phenomenon (Van Campenhout 2007). Its assessment toolkit holds the advantage of qualitatively defining socio-economic stratification from the viewpoint of community members (Wealth 2014). By generating data alongside local stakeholders, PRA tools deepen and validate the results of traditional methods without imposing an outsider view of social realities (Chambers 2008). It does so through moving away from extractive methods of data collection and empowering local people to take ownership of the modes of data collection (Chambers 1994a: 953). Among the varied PRA tools, the research uses a mix of transect walks, social and resource mapping, wealth ranking³⁶ and participatory tenure identification³⁷. The use of participatory visualization tools allows for open discussions and wider participant engagements towards consensus building. Furthermore, social and geographical studies including such on tenure are well suited for spatial visualization methods associated with PRA (Catley et al. 2008).

I first used transect walks with a selected member of the community, incidentally a member of the divisional or paramount chief's family in both study communities, to construct a preliminary social and resource map of the community. The preliminary map was then presented for correction and verification to two PRA mapping groups first comprising chiefs, community members and local government officers and the second group comprised the agricultural extension officer and some well-known, respected and knowledgeable community members. PRA's are designed as open meetings hence the views of other community members who are present but have not been purposively selected as primary participants were taken into account. The social and resource maps produced depicts visualized sketch locations of households, land uses and community infrastructure including schools,

³⁶ Wealth ranking is essentially a mechanism of wellbeing grouping where local definitions of relative economic standings are ranked (see Chambers 1994b; Adams et al. 1997).

³⁷ Participatory tenure identification is coined for the purposes of the thesis to describe a process where land rights are jointly defined by the group. The method takes inspiration from the field research on farming systems and participatory land use planning methods (see Chambers 1994a; IFAD 2014; Snapp et al. 2019).

clinics and markets. The map is also a visualization of the community's resource base (*see figures 6, 7 & 8*). The primary concern is not to develop an accurate cartographic map drawn to scale but to gather useful information on local perceptions of resources. Thus, resource maps allow researchers to gain an overview of land resource scarcity or abundance, forest and woodlands, how land resources are allocated and resource access and governance methods. Practically, the social and resource maps helped in the purposive selection of some key informants, migrant and female-headed households. Additionally, descriptive wealth ranking exercises where PRA participants described the relative wealth characteristics of different groups and their propensity to benefit equitably from PFJ initiatives was conducted. A voting system was introduced in instances where views were varied and consensus was difficult to reach. The process allows for inclusion of socially relevant meanings ascribed to wealth beyond pecuniary considerations. Finally, a participatory tenure identification (PTI) exercise comprising present and historical description of tenure, superior or sub-titles, group categorization and visual field inspection was conducted. PTI is coined for this thesis to denote a series of participatory processes with tenure classification outcomes. It starts with self-reported tenure, then focus group discussants that are selected on the basis of a cooperative hence hold high levels of familiarity between members, describe the tenure type held by members and agree on its unique characteristics. Then, a final group-based field inspection is conducted to ascertain the physical attributes of the tenure form described. The PTI's were developed to align with Chamber's (1994b) suggestion that participatory processes need to involve triangulation of narratives, seeking out exceptions, knowledge emanating from locals and the researcher acting as a facilitator. While it was easy to describe, build group consensus and mentally visualize land rights that did not have significant physical attributes, it was important to visually inspect the developing taungya arrangement and its physical manifestations.

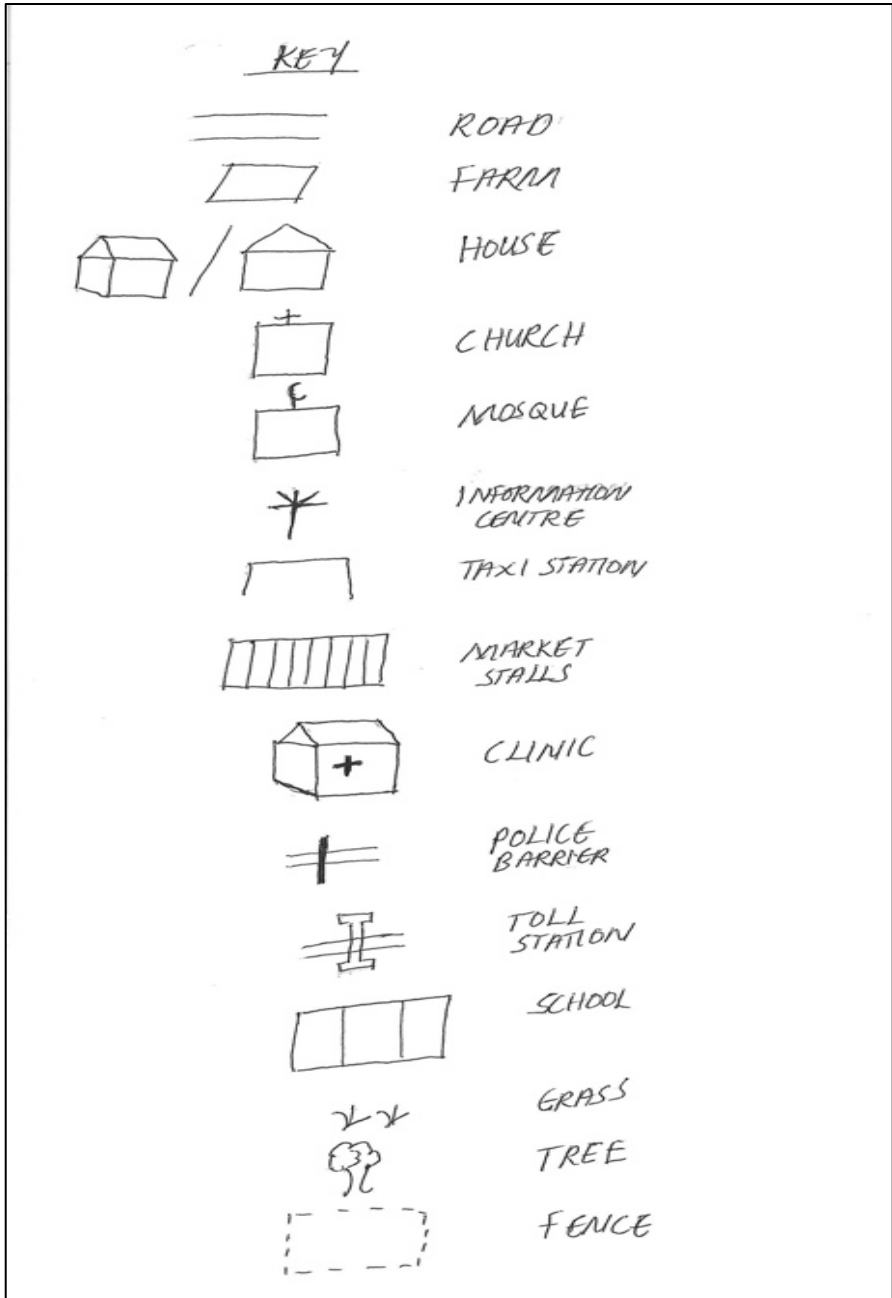


Figure 8: Key
Source: Author's Construction (2022)

4.5 Gender Dimensions

Men and women often have different perspectives, sometimes influenced by their traditionally defined roles and differences in their lived realities. In a patriarchal society, the researcher recognises the probable reluctance for men to encourage women to express their views and women themselves may sometimes be unconvinced about the worth of their views. Furthermore, men are likely to depict their land tenure rights based on primary ownership while women are likely to show secondary use rights (Pujara 2016: 12). Thus, purposive approaches with iterative interview moderation techniques were used to encourage women inclusion and active participation. Also, a neutral location that is convenient and allows for both men and women to freely express their opinions was chosen for interviews, FGD's and PRA exercises. The research further integrated gendered aspects by conducting women only FGD's, inclusion of female-headed households and encouraging women to join the discussions during the individual household interviews. With the consent of husbands, short follow-up interviews with some wives who were unable to join the household interview were conducted separately. Nonetheless, such interviews with married women were difficult to conduct due to the nature of their household chores after they return from their farms. It was easier to conduct the interviews on days when women did not go to the farm and between 3-5 pm when they return from their farms alone to prepare the family meal before the husband arrives. In other instances, the interviews were conducted during weekends or on days when there was heavy rain or bush fires. In the latter instance husbands often encouraged their wives to stay home while they navigate the storm or fires to inspect the state of their farms and make necessary adaptations to save the crop. Thus, 17 out of the total 30 household interviews conducted in Nkwabeng included women's views. While 12 of these interviews included women in dual-headed households another 5 comprised female-headed households. In Dromankese, 11 out of the 31 household interviews conducted comprised women's views with 9 women from dual-headed households and 2 from female-headed households.

4.6 Document Analysis

The thesis incorporates analysis of varied types of documents. Document analysis involves a systematic review of documentary text for purposes of eliciting meanings and interpretations (Bowen 2009; Corbin and Strauss 2015). It is characterized by a rigorous process of selecting, analysing and reporting findings on the basis of documentary text (Bowen 2009: 28). With characteristics of examining information from different texts, document analysis serves as a methodological tool for triangulation of primary data, reducing bias and increasing credibility of findings. Its primary advantage lies in data availability, cost effectiveness and absence of

interviewee reactivity that may lead to skewed responses (Bowen 2009: 37). Regardless of these advantages, document analysis faces challenges of biased selectivity which may skew findings, retrievability difficulties due to deliberate restrictions and insufficient details since most documents are not designed for research purposes (Bowen 2009: 31-32). The thesis uses purposively selected agricultural policy documents, national development plans, land tenure policy documents and legislations in Ghana to depict the narratives by state actors on the mechanisms of customary land management. Document selection cut across different time periods and governments in Ghana.

4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

Much of the data collection was conducted in the local language (Twi) of the study communities, digitally recorded and supplemented with field notes. While useful for all data collection exercises, the field notes were particularly useful in instances where interviewees were uncomfortable with digital audio recording. An analytical approach comprising summaries and reflections was adopted in parallel with data collection to ensure essential details are not lost during the fieldwork. This method offers the advantage of preliminary linkages between essential themes, preliminary thoughts and observations on the field. Data was transcribed with related annotations of observed behaviours that prove relevant to the study. Following on, it was coded in multiple stages and analysed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software (Saldana 2009). The data was descriptively coded by assigning umbrella terms and descriptions within each transcript for purposes of exploring patterns within the data. Further, a thematic approach where frequently emerging descriptive codes are organised into themes and further defined by categories and sub-categories was employed. Both descriptive and thematic coding involved an iterative back and forth process between data, literature, methods, theory and research questions. The resulting themes and categories were theoretically tested using the deductive logical model (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 257-258). This involved observing patterns within the data and relating these patterns to established theoretical explanations while noting points of convergence and divergence. While data analysis was based on deduction, the data collection process itself involved consistent interactions between empirics and theory; allowing the researcher to utilize a dynamic mix of deductive and inductive reasoning processes (Bryman and Burgess 2002: 1-3). With this, some data collection activities departed from theoretical propositions while others were informed by empirics on the ground.

4.8 Study Limitations, Ethics and Researcher Positionality

The study is primarily limited by scope, methodological and practical constraints. First, even though commercialization holds varied implications for domestic and export markets, food security, nutrition and environmental resources (see Von Braun and Kennedy 1994; Pingali 2001; Carletto et al. 2017), the thesis does not concern these aspects and is limited to land tenure relations and social differentiation. Again, while the thesis seeks to investigate land tenure implications of PFJ, the situation on the ground brought difficulties in decoupling ongoing parallel processes of tree crop commercialization (encouraged by PERD) which constantly interphases with PFJ in terms of land tenure outcomes. The qualitative methods used were also limited by time constraints that prevented me from conducting detailed observations and descriptions common in ethnographic studies. While these descriptive aspects are important for studying processes, the use of personal and life history narratives as well as previous literature helped to properly situate the narratives within contemporary discussions. Again, while the researcher seeks to be objective in reporting findings, absolute objectivity is difficult to attain hence the results are interpretive and dependent on the researcher's integrity. Nonetheless, the findings are triangulated with existing research and theories and can be viewed as robust. The findings of the study are contextual and limited in applicability. The use of two comparative cases and related time constraints also reduced the propensity to provide a complete picture of both communities. Nonetheless, the study focuses on the relevant land tenure, agricultural commercialization and differentiation aspects which can be analysed without depicting a complete picture of the study communities.

The study emphasized informed consent which involved informing interviewees and FGD participants of the purpose of the data collection. Their willingness to partake in data collection without any form of duress or harm was stressed at the beginning of each data collection session. Interviewees were required to give verbal consent (due to literacy challenges) or sign printed consent forms detailing their willingness to partake in the interviews, understanding of the purpose of the interview and rights to withdraw from and review interview transcripts. The consent forms also gave assurances of confidentiality and anonymity (*see Appendix A*). With verbal consent, I explained the contents of the consent forms to respondents and sought their permission before the interviews proceeded. This approach was also used during telephone interviews however signatures were common with key informant interviews that were conducted face-to-face.

Consent was sought for digital recording from all interviewees and FGD participants. While a few people preferred not to allow digital recording due to their status, the nature of local land politics and related chieftaincy disputes or other fears,

most people consented to the digital recording. While no interviewee left the interview or terminated the same, it was common for them to be distracted by household and social concerns leading to short temporal breaks in the interviews. In other situations, the interviewees were joined by friends, family or other curious household member(s) during the interviews. Though I tried to accommodate the unsolicited comments of these unsampled individuals, their views were only accommodated to the extent that they did not disrupt the entire interview and the purpose it sought to attain. Due to my awareness of the social and cultural context in Ghana I was able to politely ask some detractors to reduce their interruptions without risking being touted as disrespectful. In accordance with ethical considerations of reducing risk and doing no harm, generic characteristics (such as occupation, gender and age) are used throughout the thesis to protect respondents' identities. As much as possible, the thesis conceals the personal designations of key informants by using generic terms such as chiefs, cooperative heads and extension officers. In rare cases, the position and designation of some key informants are mentioned albeit with their consent. Again, the data is disaggregated in line with pre-existing native and non-native status to depict the related manifestations of land rights.

No pecuniary reward was given for participation in interviews or focus group discussions. However, I was presented with two situations that concerned cultural precepts, socialization and gratefulness and the dilemma of bribery. In the first instance, focus group participants elected to buy a local drink made from millet (*pito*) as refreshment during the focus group discussion. Given the cultural context and the protracted length of the FGD, I offered to reimburse for the cost of the drink as a sign of gratefulness. This act is also in alignment with cultural precepts which avoids equal cost sharing among beneficiaries of food or drink and encourages showing often token gratitude to others for helping in the fulfilment of a task from which they (participants) do not gain tangible benefits. Nonetheless, I only elected to pay after the focus group discussion ended to avoid any possibilities of favourable or negative reactions that may accompany the gesture. Additionally, I observed cultural principles of gifting that accompanies requesting the presence of a chief. The Akan adage “*y3nfa nsa pan enko nana nan ase*” literally meaning you do not go empty handed to the chief's court captures the essence of the gifts. Furthermore, the Akans believe that a chief carries the spirit of the ancestors and holds the mandate of the gods when he sits to perform official duties. Hence, these gods and spirits now embedded in the person of the chief need to be given an offering that cannot be returned regardless of the outcome of the planned discussions. This is done in appreciation of the chief's authority and the wisdom of the gods and ancestors. The gifts presented include one or two bottles of schnapps and an amount of 50 or 100 Cedis depending on the hierarchy of chieftaincy. Requesting a chief's presence was an integral part of community entry and provided a legitimate basis for the research to be conducted. It was followed by announcements of my presence and the purpose of the research to the entire community. With this, I was often well-

received by community members and when asked, I was able to leverage on the authority of the chief to explain the legitimacy of the research and dispel any suspicions.

While I had the advantage of being Ghanaian which allowed for easy blending in, I was still recognized as an outsider by community members. With this comes power dynamics between the researcher and research participants (Desai and Potter 2006: 13-14). These power dynamics may be defined by education level, discernible economic differences (for example in the simple clothes I wore), residence in the capital city, education abroad and gender. I used continuous reflection processes to reduce these power dynamics. These were for instance evident in small talks before interviews where the interviewee(s) and I shared some common experiences with each other as well as drinking water and eating local snacks offered when possible while giving considerations to my own preferences and health. This encouraged participants not to view me as detached from them and their everyday realities. I also actively tried to reduce notions of a dominant position (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 150) in comparison with interviewees. This was done by encouraging the research participants to speak freely and sharing my own personal experiences that may aid the dialogue. As a Ghanaian who partly grew up in a rural farming community, I recognized that my position may be skewed in favour of smallholder farmers. Also, as a male and non-Akan, I may unconsciously favour men and immigrants. With this realization, active steps were taken in reflecting continuously on how my positionality may affect the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes. Practically, this involved making intermittent mental or written notes on what my own views on a phenomenon are. These views were compared with emerging themes during data collection while sometimes deliberate questions that depict contrary narratives to the emergent themes were posed.

I was also careful in navigating sensitive issues around interviewing women in dual-headed households. While some husbands were amenable to having their wives join the interviews, others and women themselves preferred to reschedule interviews and continue with their planned household chores. Some husbands viewed the planned or rescheduled interviews with their wives with suspicion and asked several questions for purposes of clarification but they nonetheless did not oppose it.

In light of the covid 19 pandemic, I adhered to ethical principles to avoid risk of harm to research participants hence the first round of fieldwork was halted and postponed. In the second round of fieldwork, I arrived in the community after a negative covid-19 test, wore masks, used hand sanitizers and encouraged research participants to also wear masks.

Due to the contextual nature of the research, it cannot be replicated in other settings without possibilities of significant variations. However, it can be considered to be internally valid on the basis of the appropriateness of the research tools used for eliciting responses and the use of respondent validation methods where preliminary

results from previous interviews are tested in subsequent ones or focus group discussions. This allowed me to understand how widespread a previously described phenomenon was and elicit contrary views if any. The research sought to attain reliability through methodological rigour as shown with the multiple methods of data collection and related triangulation, constant comparison between interview transcripts, explanations of points of theoretical and empirical coherence or divergence as well as systematic coding and analysis of documents and interview transcripts.

4.9 Reflections on Covid-19 and Adaptation of Research Methods

Fieldwork was conducted in two rounds. While the first round of fieldwork was planned for 14 weeks, it was limited to 6 weeks due to the announcement of a nationwide lock-down and a ban on gathering in an attempt to reduce Covid-19 infections in Ghana. The data collection was also truncated in accordance with health and ethical risks presented by the Covid-19 pandemic to me and to the research participants. I resorted to using telephone interviews for data collection. Thus, 5 household and 10 key informant interviews were conducted via telephone. These interviews were possible because I maintained active contact with some key informants and gatekeepers throughout the fieldwork period and beyond. After covid restrictions were lifted both in Ghana and Sweden, a second round of data collection primarily focused on Dromankese was conducted. During this period, I observed Covid-19 protocols and encouraged respondents to do same. In many instances, respondents themselves required me to wash my hands, use hand sanitizers and wear a face mask before the interview or FGD proceeded. Observing these protocols were especially important to locals because they perceived that visitors and travellers from cities and abroad had a higher risk of carrying the virus than their colleague rural farmers.

Chapter Five: Synthesis of Key Findings and Conclusions

The chapter first provides a summary of the three papers that comprise the thesis. The first paper has been published, the second one has been resubmitted with revisions for publication while the third one has been accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal. The chapter further provides some reflections on key land tenure and agriculture policy related lessons that can be gleaned from the entirety of the empirical material³⁸. Additionally, a summary of the theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions of the thesis is provided. These contributions are tied to the policy implications of the thesis and recommendations for future research. Finally, a conclusion which signposts the land tenure implications of smallholder-based agricultural policies in SSA for the wider agrarian political economy literature is provided.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

5.1.1 State-Customary Interactions and Agrarian Change in Ghana. The Case of Nkoranza Traditional Area

“The tribal system is an elastic system. To try to crystallize and codify it by an artificial and repugnant statutory form of Government interference, and rent, will only result in intense dissatisfaction among those whom it is intended to benefit, and will be as doomed to failure as putting old wine in new bottles.”(Geary 1913: 246)

The first paper provides a contextual background for the thesis and sets the tone for further analysis on efficient implementation of agricultural policies within the

³⁸ This includes lessons from the empirical material that are relevant for smallholder-led agricultural development but are not the subject of the three papers presented in the thesis. Its relevance lies in situating the thesis within the general framework of structural change models that depend primarily on smallholder efficiency.

context of customarily controlled land resources. It discusses the relationships between state and customary actors and the reasons for the existence or absence of synergies between the two actors on land tenure issues. It further discusses how land tenure issues are conceptualized by state actors with respect to agricultural development, how customary land tenure relationships are evolving, why customary land tenure actors continue to exercise influence and how such influence affects land tenure modernization. The paper shows that state actors vilify customary tenure by considering it archaic and a disincentive to agricultural investment. Nonetheless, the development of vernacular land markets characterized by marketization, professionalization, privatization and individualization of customary tenure depict the evolutions in customary tenure and its adaptation to contemporary agricultural commercialization interests. While the statutory formalization narratives of the state have been spearheaded through land reform programmes, customary institutions have remained resilient due to precepts of non-interference, fear of redundancy, political expediency, lack of trust in the state's ability to equitably manage land resources, resurgence of the chieftaincy institution and chiefs acting as better local government representatives of the people. These factors affect the modernization of land tenure hence the paper admonishes state actors to eschew the vilification narratives around customary tenure and consider leveraging on the opportunities that vernacular land markets present for coordinated customary land management.

The current nature of engagements between chiefs and the state on land tenure issues presents risks to the implementation of agricultural policies. In many countries agrarian change is hinged on land policies that prescribe the development of specialized production zones and land banks to protect the country's most fertile agricultural lands and allied agricultural resources. Though an agricultural land use policy that affords these advantages and serves as a bedrock for agri-based structural change in Ghana has only been paid lip service without implementation, it is worthy of consideration. However, the envisioned agricultural land use policy needs to consider the changing nature of customary tenure in order to harmonize land tenure practice with agricultural policy objectives. Until then, the ideology of smallholder-based agricultural development as the basis for structural economic change in the Nkoranza traditional area as envisaged by the Planting for Food and Jobs policy may be difficult to attain.

5.1.2 Smallholder Commercialization and Changing Land Tenure Relations among Migrants in the Nkoranza Traditional Area, Ghana.

“The ambiguity [surrounding migrant’s land rights] lies in ever-shifting, multiple, and unclear normative sets tolerated by the state, promoted by the....Traditional Council of chiefs, and reshaped and applied locally by chiefs and elders.”(Boni 2008: 107)

The second paper investigates how the mechanisms of land use and access have changed (if any) for migrant groups as a result of smallholder commercialization. Migrants are theorised to hold secondary land use rights under customary tenure (see Boni 2006; Boni 2008). Thus, the encouragement of smallholder commercialization may affect their already weak tenure rights. Findings showed that migrants’ tenurial rights are affected by both food and cash crop commercialization. Their land tenure rights have been significantly weakened and many have been dispossessed off lands hitherto accessed through rentals. In a bid to secure long term land use, some migrants prefer to rent marginal or farther lands while others rely on relational forms of access by sending seasonal food crop gifts to induce tenancy renewal. The empirical contributions herein illustrated relates to how market-based land access in land constrained areas may be accompanied by tenets of reciprocity that are common to non-market relational forms of land access.

A new development in the study communities is the resurgence of taungya agreements where migrants gain access to land by agreeing to intercrop within native’s (often absentee natives) cashew farms for 3 years. While some migrants relish the opportunity for “free” cultivation without land rental, others feel exploited by the taungya agreements since they do not retain any rights to the proceeds from the cash crop. This notwithstanding, the trajectories of migrant vulnerability during commercialization are different between the two study communities that are differentiated by land factor endowments and vegetative landscapes. In the land abundant study community, migrants who are dispossessed from fertile forest lands have the option of freely cultivating the less fertile savannah grassland areas in a customary licence agreement which enjoins them to make token food crop or cash contributions to chiefs during annual festivals. However, in the land constrained community, migrants do not have the option of free cultivation through customary licences and instead seek other rental avenues often far from their homes. Thus, land scarcity or abundance and vegetation differentials (semi-deciduous forest or savannah grassland) influence the land tenure outcomes of migrant farmers in the context of commercialization.

Theoretically, the taungya arrangement further reveals aspects of labour exploitation and transactional³⁹ rather than waged labour relations as a mechanism of securing tenure. In some instances, migrants with taungya agreements are prevented from applying fertilizers to the food crop thus their ability to equitably benefit from the PFJ policy component of subsidised fertilizer is significantly diminished. This situation poses a threat to the productivity and food self-sufficiency objectives of the Ghanaian state since migrant farmers constitute a significant proportion- approximately 9.36%⁴⁰ of the total farmer population in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service 2013b; Ghana Statistical Service 2014d). While Bernstein's (2010) theoretical prediction of the development of a rural landless class in the context of commercialization has not been observed, the paper uses the case of migrants to show how secondary land use groups experience deepened differentiation on the basis of their land rights. The paper concludes by encouraging state actors to design legislative instruments that address migrant farmer's vulnerabilities and allow them equitable access to land. State actors are further encouraged to examine the relationships and implications of allied agricultural incentives on the PFJ policy and land tenure dynamics.

5.1.3 Gendered Dynamics of State-led Smallholder Commercialization in Ghana. The Case of Nkoranza Traditional Area.

“No country can every truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women [intentionally or unintentionally] and deprives itself of the contribution of half its citizens.” (Michelle Obama 2014)

The third paper discusses the gendered dimensions of state-led smallholder commercialization and related tenurial outcomes. These aspects are important since women's access to land is traditionally constrained. The paper shows how women's interest and ability to engage in commercial smallholder production relates to their differential access to land. The analysis revealed that the structural preference for men in terms of land sharing and inheritance, limits non-native women's capacity for commercial cultivation in land scarce communities since such cultivation requires them to bear the added cost of land rental. Additionally, the paper shows how auxiliary demands that accompany the PFJ policy limits women's interest and capacity for commercialization. These auxiliary factors include cost of land preparation (since commercialization is locally related to extensification) as well as pesticide and weedicide application to which men can apply their own physical

³⁹ Termed as transactional because of its *quid pro quo* nature in which labour services are offered in exchange for land use.

⁴⁰ Author's calculations based on statistics from Ghana Statistical Service (2013b), Ghana Statistical Service (2014d) and Ghana Statistical Service (2013a).

strength while women are limited by the same. With an added requirement to engage waged labour for activities that men undertake themselves, women's cost of production is significantly higher. With this, they prefer to invest their monies in quick turnover economic activities rather than commercial farming. Other constraints relate to the prevailing social context of the study communities and how this sanctions gendered production and related commercialization. The mechanisms through which the prevailing social context influences commercialization are evident in the prioritization of the male-managed family farm, gendered division of labour with many women performing reproductive and domestic tasks and cultural (mis)conceptions that depict men as dominant and women as subservient. With these challenges, men and women have different levels of participation in commercial cultivation and their related demand for communal land to support such cultivation efforts are different with women demanding less land. Men therefore consolidate their hold on communal land because the mechanisms and norms around commercialization of food crops favour them.

The paper further shows how tree crop commercialization as encouraged by PERD can significantly improve women's interest in commercialization and with it their tenurial rights. Such improvements revolve around the nature of cashew cultivation which neither requires exertion of much physical strength, capital nor daily attention that prevent women from performing reproductive and household tasks. Relatedly, the nature of cashew as a crop whose cultivation is customarily viewed as individual annexation of communal land, also encourages women to request land and avoid the risk of losing their inherent rights to male kin. With annual crop cultivation, women perceive that their land rights are not at risk since they can request for and be granted land at any time. Nonetheless, the establishment of cashew constitutes a proprietary claim to land since the crop may subsist on the land for over 50 years before the land becomes available for communal cultivation. Thus, women are incentivised by the proprietary nature of cashew cultivation and related potential of perpetual loss of land tenure (to their male kin) to exercise their own hitherto dormant rights in land. With this, the commercialization of low maintenance tree crops that also present risks of long-term annexation of communal land by men, significantly raises women's interest and participation in commercialization. This in turn improves their claims to customary land.

5.2 Commentary: Does Differential Land Endowment Make any Difference?

The comparative case study approach is useful for depicting how the processes of commercialization differ, the role of land tenure and land endowments in such commercialization process and the modes of adaptation among small farmers. Results show how the differences in land endowments in the two study communities manifest in terms of the food and tree crop commercialization possibilities available to women and migrants and the related tenure rights they hold. With land abundance, most women who hold consanguineal and affinal claims to land in Dromankese are able to cultivate food and tree crops commercially as long as they seek the express permission of land owners or they receive implicit permission from their husbands. They do not need to engage in land rental markets which constitutes an added cost to their production. Migrants in the land abundant community (Dromankese) do not need to rent land as long as they seek to cultivate grassland areas. By virtue of customary licences and related token gifts to chiefs for use of land, they can cultivate as much land as they wish and have reasonable expectations of continued cultivation. Thus, tenure security is higher among these migrants with few incidences of eviction from grassland areas. However, those who prefer to rent and cultivate the fertile forest areas in Dromankese experience tenure insecurity defined by demands for upfront payments and risk of expropriation.

In the land scarce community, women's possibilities are limited to smaller land areas and non-native women often have to engage in land rental. Similarly, migrants have the option of land rental but they are easily expropriated due to increased interest in farming by resident and absentee natives as well as increased competition for land. With no option of free land access through customary licences, migrants in the land scarce community (Nkwabeng) are more likely to engage in taungya agreements to improve their access to "*free*" land. Meanwhile, migrants in Dromankese often engage in taungya when they seek to cultivate fertile forest lands. Though customarily barred in both study communities, women in Dromankese have a higher possibility of cultivating cashew on affinal family lands while most women in Nkwabeng can only do so on their consanguineal family lands or through share cropping agreements with the affinal or consanguineal family. Thus, the extent of land endowment determines the consequent tenurial rights that different groups claim and the associated levels of vulnerability.

Having synthesised the papers that make up the thesis and provided a commentary on the relevance of land endowments to the findings, the thesis now utilizes the full scope of the empirical results to provide a reflection on the key land tenure and agricultural policy lessons for smallholder-based agrarian change.

5.3 Key Land Tenure and Agricultural Policy Lessons

5.3.1 Land Tenure Related Lessons

Much different from the intensification focus of agriculture witnessed in South East Asia, many authors have resolved that in the case of land-abundant SSA countries, increases in farm output is predominantly a factor of farmland expansion (Schoneveld et al. 2011; Dorosh et al. 2012; Ali and Deininger 2015). Empirically, Jirström et al. (2018) find that smallholder farm sizes have increased from 1.98ha to 2.30ha on average in six African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Ghana; 2002-2015) through bringing fallow land into cultivation. Exceptions exist with some authors noting farmland fragmentation and related miniaturization (Headey and Jayne 2014; Holden and Otsuka 2014; Ali et al. 2019). Still, Al-Hassan (2018) argues that farmland expansion has long been used as a strategy to mitigate food insecurity and as a response to a conducive economic environment. This observation, also shown in this thesis, manifests in the case of Ghana where farmland expansion takes precedence over intensive cultivation in the attempt to increase agricultural productivity (see Dapaah 1995: 5; Zimmermann et al. 2009: 85). To this extent, smallholder commercialization has not brought significant land saving advantages nor has it improved land productivity as advocated in the intensification literature (see Hazell et al. 2010; Jayne et al. 2014a). Instead, labour saving aspects are emphasized at the local level (see Houssou et al. 2018). Despite the centrality of land and related extensification to the commercialization process in Ghana, states and customary actors hold two contrasting views on the debate around land and its availability for supporting national development. States view customary tenure systems as archaic, unable to provide tenure security and inimical to agricultural development hence need to be replaced with statutory tenure rights. However, customary actors resist the narratives of replacement claiming that customary tenure is adaptable to market interests and provides sufficient tenure security for agricultural development. While the contentions continue, agricultural policies are nonetheless being implemented. The result is a *laissez-faire* approach that revolves around a policy of state non-interference (see Ubink 2008a: 213) in making land available for supporting its objective of agrarian change. The approach is prominent partly because Ghana is a land abundant country with a total land area of 24 million hectares out of which about 60% (14 million hectares) comprise arable agricultural land (MoFA 2012; Al-Hassan 2018). Presently, states can only hope that the incentives they provide are attractive enough for smallholder farmers to apply their land resources in support of efforts to attain food self-sufficiency and catalyse structural economic transformation. This is however not always the case. For instance, many farmers convert lands suitable for food crop cultivation to cultivating tree crops or turn it over to non-agricultural land uses. There is the need for a middle ground to be advocated while the centuries old contentions (see Nti 2012) between state and

customary actors remain unresolved. This middle ground as shown for example by negotiated agreements for preserving agricultural land, creation of land banks and dedicated agricultural zones⁴¹ should be further explored for making land available for Ghana's agricultural development objectives. This requires Ghana to develop an agricultural land use policy in conjunction with chiefs and land owners. Such policy will also prove useful in a multiple policy environment where implementing institutions need to consider land related synergies between for instance food and cash crop commercialization and avoid instances of competition for land for varied agricultural uses.

A critical assumption made by the Ghanaian state is that the blanket implementation of incentive programmes would invariably encourage commercialization among smallholder farmers and with it, improved incomes, a rise in national food security and increased food self-sufficiency. This impact chain however does not reflect local realities around land resource distribution and the differentiated nature of production by vulnerable rural groups including women and migrants. The related social and economic factors that determine production possibilities and encourage commercialization among one group and subtly discourages the other need to be critically evaluated. Policy implementation needs to be preceded by a social and economic analysis of production capacities of various groups including how critical assets such as land are distributed at the local level and how these distributive patterns within and between groups align with commercialization policies. Without this, groups that hold weak land rights may be demoralized by tenurial changes occasioned by state commercialization policies. These changes include dispossession and related land tenure insecurity, exploitive land-labour exchanges (for example, taungya agreements), development of relational tenure forms within market-based land systems and consolidation of male hold over land to the detriment of women. This may encourage depeasantization, intermittent landlessness and maintenance of exploitive tenure relations which together constitute further weakening of often already tenuous land rights. Houssou et al. (2018) note that labour and capital constraints rather than land scarcity, limits production capacities in communities where natives maintain unrestricted access to communal lands. However, this thesis shows in papers 2 and 3 that such inability to cultivate resulting from labour and capital constraints loops back and influences who controls land resources and how much they control. Thus, a reciprocal relationship with similar outcomes is observed in which land abundance does not translate into commercial production yet the inability to cultivate translates into less control of land resources.

⁴¹ Involves the use of scientific evidence to depict the best areas for growing particular crops.

5.3.2 Agricultural Policy Lessons

While agricultural incentives dominated by input subsidies hold considerable transformation potential, they should not be viewed as a quick fix solution for SSA's complex agricultural challenges. Alone, they can at best reduce production cost but are unsustainable, costly and inadequate for addressing the entirety of challenges that African agriculture faces (Wiggins et al. 2011: 67). The use of what is at best terminable teaser subsidies has been shown to encourage smallholder production efficiency through yield improvements however weaknesses in produce value chains and markets have prevented such gains from translating into consistent profit maximization (see Dorward and Chirwa 2011). The effect is a significantly changed smallholder sector with an overreliance on input subsidies, low threshold for risk mitigation and high risk of impoverishment when subsidies are withdrawn (Chirwa and Dorward 2014: chapter 12). Again, agricultural incentives may not be consistent with farmer's rationalization of the particular and adaptive cropping strategies that they have long relied on for profit maximization and risk management. With little evidence of consistent smallholder graduation⁴² out of subsistence (Sitko and Jayne 2014), agricultural policies that aim to engender structural change have been limited to providing short term benefits and remain merely demonstrative of the productive potential of commercialization.

Agricultural incentives also have a disproportionate focus on production which leaves little room for investment in allied infrastructure such as functional markets, value addition and storage. In the case of Ghana, investments in allied infrastructure including storage facilities and state parastatals such as the envisaged grain development authority (see Owusu 2022), has been reactive rather than proactive and follows periods of high grain productivity. The effect of all these is a cyclical pattern of booms and busts characterized by cascading periods of high and low agricultural productivity (Makonese and Sukalac 2012: 65). Such periodic boom and bust primarily related to weak output markets and price suppression is a disincentive to smallholder investments in agriculture. Investments are often dictated by a reasonable expectation of receiving acceptable prices for farm produce and to a lower extent the price of inputs (Poullisse 2007). Relatedly, the disproportionate focus on the input subsidies component of PFJ without giving commensurate considerations to the marketing component (a major complaint during fieldwork) makes it difficult for the promised profits for smallholders to be attained. Marketing deficiencies are explained by the absence of a competitive crop value chain with consumers ready to pay a premium for farm produce. Instead, what is common is a cabal of local aggregators who monopolize control over crop (maize) harvesting and produce carting equipment without which the risk of crop loss among small farmers is significantly high. These aggregators often prefinance cultivation

⁴² Graduation in this sense is used to denote the potential for resilient and improved livelihood sustainability without reliance on social protection (Chirwa and Dorward 2014: 248-251).

due to poor farmer integration into finance and credit markets (especially for migrant farmers) and set low prices at the farmgate while citing reasons of poor road infrastructure and high transport costs. Farmers also criticised the use of large local packaging sacks for produce purchases by aggregators instead of standardized weights; a phenomenon commonly termed “bush weight”⁴³ (weighing between 150-170kg). While questioning the logic of variations in produce weights between the farm gate and markets, farmers noted that aggregators earn profit by repackaging and selling farm produce at standardized weights (100-110kg); a telling indication that much of the value of farmers’ crops remains with middlemen in the value chain (see figure 9).



Figure 9: Repackaging Bags of Maize Bought at “bush weight” in Dromankese
Source: Fieldwork (2022)

⁴³ Non standardized maize measurement that relates to how much farm produce an aggregator can stuff into a sack. In both study communities, aggregators often employ strong young men and operators of maize shelling machines to help in stuffing maize bags at the farm gate.

Meanwhile, smallholders themselves do not have the entrepreneurial capacity nor bargaining power to compete in volatile international and domestic output markets; eventually making them price takers (Otsuka et al. 2013). Their production is more aligned with a default economic activity for sustenance of their livelihood rather than a deliberate choice. Hence, they tend to move constantly between full, partial and non-entrepreneurial production and are described by Collier and Dercon (2014: 99) as micro-entrepreneurs. With this, the PFJ policy's ability to stimulate and sustain interest in production while improving farmer's financial capacity for continued production remains limited.

Smallholders are often marginalized in agricultural policy formulation hence policies do not always reflect the challenges they face. Such marginalization is characteristic of populist strategies around the use of agricultural subsidies for political gain. Prominent examples include Ghana's planting for food and jobs policy, Uganda's prosperity for all and operation wealth creation programmes and Malawi's agricultural input subsidy programme (see Dorward and Chirwa 2011: 243; Makoba and Wakoko-Studstill 2015). In many instances these subsidies are objects of political sloganeering and reflect ideas that top political officers consider important rather than ideas borne out of consistent and broad stakeholder engagements (Dorward 2009; Kugbega 2020). Furthermore, policies are implemented as though soil, vegetation, climatic, ecological and livelihood conditions are similar across a beneficiary zone. In practical terms, some areas require more inputs than others. Still in other areas, inputs may not provide financial rewards worth the effort and monetary investment for the individual farmer. Thus soils, markets, spatial, climatic and livelihood dynamics of beneficiary zones need to be given high considerations to ensure optimal gains from agricultural incentives (Dorward 2009: 12). Relatedly, it is essential that policies are not developed as a vehicle for political gain. Instead, they need to be developed in consultation with stakeholders and for their benefit.

The nature of smallholder targeting has also gone through three different changes since the implementation of PFJ commenced. In 2017, the inputs were lodged at district agriculture offices which allowed distribution to registered farmers by agricultural officers. This was done to ensure easy tracing of farmers and allow for payment of 50% of the subsidised fertilizer cost before planting and recovery of the remaining 50% after harvest. Nonetheless, challenges of smallholder default in repaying the remaining amount, cost of transporting fertilizers from district offices to remote locations, storage inadequacies, allegations of favouritism and corruption among agricultural officers and general staff shortages encouraged a review of the implementation mechanism. Thus, a coupon-based system which included beneficiary registration and receipt of a chit for purchase of subsidised fertilizers from local input outlets was favoured in 2018. The coupon system also presented challenges where some registered farmers did not receive their planned quantities of inputs. This further fuelled allegations of corruption and favouritism with some

farmers claiming their inputs had been diverted to wealthier farmers or transported across national borders for sale in neighbouring countries (see Asante and Mullard 2021).

By 2019 and onwards, the coupon system was replaced with a first come first served system where beneficiaries simply presented their identification cards for purchase of the inputs without registration. With this, the initial aim to restrict inputs to productive poor smallholders with at least 40% women and youth beneficiaries became difficult to attain. Narratives from the fieldwork showed how the first come first served mode of implementation allowed medium and large scale farmers to benefit from inputs. Their benefits are further improved through encouraging their wives and children to claim and purchase up to the maximal 2ha worth of inputs each for the benefit of the medium or large farm. The related challenges of late arrival of fertilizers meant that small farmers who had already spent monies on land preparation and planting are unable to buy and store inputs while wealthier farmers are able to do so. Vulnerable small farmers either allow the crops to fail or get themselves into debt spirals with outrageous profiteering conditions. The farmers borrow money for non-subsidised fertilizer purchases from local aggregators who in turn equate the number of fertilizers bought to the number of bags of maize to be paid back as long as the cost of the bag of maize is higher than the cost of a bag of fertilizer. Practically the equation translates into repayments that yield 30% to 100% profit for lenders. If the bag of maize costs less than the bag of fertilizer, the maize aggregators tend to demand their monies rather than the agreed bag of maize. In the unfortunate instance of crop failure, the debt is carried forward to the next season. Besides wealth dynamics, migrant farmers made allegations of nepotism detailing how subsidised fertilizers were often reserved by the local input dealers for their friends and family. In some cases, migrant farmers travelled to urban areas such as Techiman where inputs were often in abundance to make purchases. The lesson herein is to ensure that input subsidies arrive on time for purchases by all smallholders and to reduce debt spirals exacerbated by the purchase of inputs on the open market. Additionally, targeting needs to be done in a manner that reduces the capacity of wealthier farmers to benefit while ensuring that incentives are enjoyed by the targeted productive poor small farmers.

Again, it is not clear whether the input subsidies are focused on social protection and general poverty reduction or reducing food insecurity and net food imports or both. First, a 50% subsidy was introduced in 2017 with farmers encouraged to pay 50% of the subsidised cost before planting and pay the remaining 50% after harvest. Here, the poverty reduction attributes of the intervention are clear however this staggered payment before and after harvest was removed in 2018. By 2022, the subsidy was reduced from 50% to approximately 25% despite generally increasing input prices (Agricultural Extension Officer, Dromankese). In real terms, statistics from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture show an increase of over 300% in the cost of subsidised fertilizers from 48 to 160 Ghana Cedis (MoFA 2021a; MoFA

2022). These quick changes in subsidy administration are unlikely to encourage sustainable graduation out of subsistence. This uncertainty is common across many SSA countries. Bringing clarity to the state's aim is essential for designing the PFJ policy such that groups that bring optimal returns are targeted. It will for example determine whether productive small farmers that may have the latent capacity to purchase inputs without subsidies should be targeted and encouraged to graduate to medium and large farmers or resource poor farmers with lower risk of graduating or maintaining commercial cultivation status when short term input subsidies are withdrawn should be considered.

Finally, a critical component that is often ignored in agricultural subsidies relates to the cost of weedicides, pesticides, labour, farm implements, land rental and land preparation. For some groups including women, youth and migrants, the implementation of input subsidies without these is viewed as a half-baked solution that does not encourage uptake (Fieldwork, 2020, 2022). The gendered and group specific components of agricultural subsidies need not only make quota allowance for beneficiaries; instead, detailed research on the mechanisms of cropping among different groups is essential for preparing a unique package of input subsidies that will encourage their production.

5.4 Theoretical, Empirical and Methodological Contributions

Existing research on the interactions between state and customary institutions on the question of land tenure have been limited to a dialogue of competition rather than collaboration for economic development. Meanwhile, little attention has been paid to the political economy of agricultural policies and the implicit role land tenure actors can play in the attainment of planned agrarian change objectives. The thesis (Article 1) uses Ghana's smallholder-based agricultural policy as an anchor to contribute to the literature around relationships between state and customary actors. It shows why state-customary relations with regards to customary land tenure are tense, opportunities for improving synergies and how the relationship between both actors may constrain or improve attainment of agrarian change objectives. In doing so, the thesis uses theories of property rights, ideal and new customary tenure as the analytical framework. The empirical material supports the existence of a new customary tenure system that acts as a hybrid of the ideal customary tenure and statutory tenure (see Chimhowu 2019). While upholding the administrative tenets of the ideal customary tenure, the new customary tenure operates within a mix of market relations and tenets of land rights formalization encouraged by the property rights school. Though the Ghanaian state has done little to adapt customary tenure to its agricultural development objectives, it nonetheless considers customary tenure

as a disincentive to agricultural modernization. State actors cite reasons including tenure insecurity concerns, non-marketability and low propensity for collateralization of communal land. State ideologies align with mainstream property rights theories (De Soto 2000; Deininger 2003) that propose the replacement of existing customary systems with formalized titles. However, the thesis empirically shows changes in customary tenure that makes it receptive to private sector investment. These changes include the development of vernacular land markets, the use of professionals and documentation to record strangers' land tenure rights, erection of barriers and fences to signal private ownership and the extinguishment of prior overlapping communal rights. Despite these new characteristics, the former nature of customary tenure is used as justification by that state for a narrative of replacement.

Chiefs have mounted resistance to the states' narratives of tenure formalization. They argued that gaining chiefly support and community approval (that often emanates from chief's support) is enough assurance of land tenure security. Statutory tenure was simply regarded as an added non-compulsory layer for attaining tenure security. Since formal titling is expensive, slow and limited to urban areas, local governments and courts provide statutory attestation to the customary documents provided by chiefs. The empirical contribution herein is a layered form of tenure security determined by one or a combination of statutory recognition, community acceptance and customary approval. Additionally, customary actors continue to uphold their influence over land. This is explained by a practice of non-interference in the customary domain which has allowed chiefs to consolidate their hold on customary land. Such non-interference also argued by (Ubink 2008a: 213) is embedded in constitutional provisions (Article 36[8] of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana) and historical narratives of chiefly resistance of colonial attempts at nationalizing land (see Nti 2012). The persistence of customary tenure despite replacement attempts is further explained by political expediency, fear of redundancy and resurgence of the chieftaincy institution (chiefs acting as better representatives of the people) and potential to explore the avenue of negotiated agreements. With this, the state tends to avoid everyday engagements with land tenure issues, treating it as too complex or acting as though it has no bearing on agricultural policies. The animosity and low trust between states and customary actors goes beyond land management and is further explained by the loss or gain of political powers; typically, the weakening of traditional authority's power and the transfer of the same to the state. For customary actors, land tenure management is the final frontier of their relevance without which they fear being perpetually treated as a relic of a past civilization and an extension of the tourism industry.

Rather than an evolution and related demise of the ideal customary tenure, both ideal and new customary tenure exist in parallel within customary institutions and are evoked depending on the particular group demanding land and the planned land use. Native land rights are still administered in accordance with the principles of the ideal

type customary tenure while many non-natives, especially those with capacity to make monetary payments, access land through the new customary tenure. Native land users whose land rights rest within the ideal type customary tenure cannot claim privatised or individualised land rights. They are instead required to make land periodically available for utilitarian use by all community members though they maintain exclusive rights to farm produce. At present customary land lends itself towards tradability and related individualized and privatised tenure which are definitive features of property rights theories. The thesis contradicts theoretical narratives of replacement of customary land tenure with statutory processes as the mechanism for tenure security and supports the existence of a new customary tenure which is amenable to state interests of improving tenure security.

The second paper shows how land access is constrained in the context of commercialization for migrant groups who do not hold bloodline entitlements to communal land and are easily expropriated. They are often pushed towards rentals in land constrained areas or cultivation of less fertile grasslands (on the basis of customary licences) in areas of land abundance. Meanwhile from colonial times, northern migrants have shown their capacity to provide the labour needed for the development of southern plantations (see Boni 2006). The north was largely regarded as a labour reserve of the Gold Coast because colonialists saw little economic potential in the semi-arid region. The labour dynamics surrounding consequent migratory patterns from north to south still exist today. Southern agricultural estates and even smallholder farmers are highly dependent on migrant labour especially for land preparation and other labour-intensive farm activities. The effect of food and tree crop commercialization encouraged by the PFJ and PERD policies is increased land loss among migrant farmers. Such land loss has necessitated the development of taungya relations in which migrants exchange the labour power that they have historically shown to hold in abundance, for the opportunity of free land access through intercropping of food crops with land owner's tree crops (in this case, cashew). Thus, the more labour migrants provide as evidenced by the health of cashew crops, the better their tenure security and ability to continuously use the land. Paradoxically however such diligent provision of labour also leads to the termination of their rights to intercrop as the tree crops develop a dense canopy. The related empirical contribution concerns the creation of short-term tenure security to benefit from the surplus labour created by dispossession and further acts of re-dispossession after approximately three years when the tree crop develops a dense canopy. Theoretically, the paper shows how tenure security is tied to provision of high-quality labour. It further adds crop type and the health of crops as determined by the quality of labour expended, to the understanding of unfolding tenurial relations in the context of commercialization. In this case, tree crops provide an avenue for short term tenure security while the health of these crops determine whether migrants are quickly re-dispossessed or are allowed to utilize the land until natural dispossession occurs through canopy formation. Although taungya agreements come with diminished land rights in

comparison with other tenure forms (such as rental), migrants are not passive victims of the agreement. Instead, migrants themselves shape the agreements by actively seeking it out and resisting characteristics that they consider unfair.

A related theoretical contribution is the development of barter relations as a means of dealing with the effects of dispossession brought by commercialization. Such barter relations involve the exchange of labour power of a group historically known for the same for access to land from a group that has relatively abundant land. This mechanism of land access aligns with theoretical prescriptions by Ribot and Peluso (2003) on how access to land may be relational, in this case, defined by principles of reciprocity or determined by exchange of services. The observed land-labour relationship creates transactional labourers whose trajectories are different from the theorised waged labourers (Bernstein 2010) who are exposed to market risks and are guided by predetermined going rates for sale of their labour. The terms of agreement for transactional labourers are neither predetermined nor operationalized within waged labour markets. Instead, the terms are agreed based on the historical relationship and negotiation capacity of the migrant and the land owner. Migrants noted the consequent terms of agreement as unfair when understood through the prism of the market (ie labour costs in comparison with land costs and the benefit of enjoying cashew proceeds for a long time) since they do not retain a share of the cashew proceeds.

Also, migrants maintain relational forms of land access (Ribot and Peluso 2003) through food crop gifting and general good relations with landlords to reduce the risk of dispossession from rented land. This is contrary to the hitherto exercise of private and individualized rights over land and all its proceeds that accompanies market-based land access. Thus, social relations are becoming important, despite market-based access to land, in order to reduce the risk of dispossession. The empirical evidence shows how multiple processes around tenure are emerging in parallel. The expected evolution of tenure from communal to private (see Platteau 1996) as encouraged by land pressures emanating from processes of commercialization has not materialized. Instead, non-capitalist and traditional forms of tenure relations around land and labour are emerging in some cases as an adaptation to the changes in tenure brought by commercialization processes. Similar to capitalist tenure adaptations that may exclude poorer groups and lead to proletarianization, these developing non-capitalist tenure adaptations also result in exploitation. Thus, capitalism as encouraged by commercialization does not exclusively encourage inequality as suggested by the Marxist literature (see Marx 1961; O'Laughlin 2002; Bernstein 2010; O'Laughlin et al. 2016). Instead, capitalist processes may encourage different forms of adaptations and exploitation within non-capitalist modes of land access.

The empirical evidence around food and tree crop commercialization supports the creation and deepening of existing land-related forms of differentiation as commercialization proceeds and the land resource becomes scarce. However,

instead of the creation of a landless group of proletariats as depicted in theory (Bernstein 2010), the most vulnerable groups adapt by developing strong relations with land owners, accepting weaker rights to land or relocating to less desirable lands. For migrants, low tenure security and land endowment means lesser capacity to commercialize while small farmers with larger land endowments are among the first to produce with a market orientation (see Wiggins et al. 2011: 31; Sitko and Jayne 2014).

The third paper shows how women's commercialization opportunities are constrained by both local conditions of female production (including gendered division of labour, discouragement/ inability to exert physical strength, discouragement from chemical application) and auxiliary factors that mediate commercial production yet are not considered among the PFJ policy initiatives. While women are not observed to be land constrained, their ability to assert cultivation rights on land is determined by the capacity to deal with these factors. Meanwhile, men are not as constrained as women by local narratives around masculine modes of production or auxiliary factors that accompany commercialization. Instead, they are able to leverage on their physical strength and financial capacities to overcome the barriers to commercialization. Thus, the ability to pay for auxiliary products (see Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Lambrecht 2016) or exert one's labour becomes an important determinant of who is able commercialize their food crop production and how much land a person controls as a result. The effect of all these processes is a consolidation of men's hold onto land. While theoretical considerations show that commercialization allows for improved market-based access to land (Chitonge et al. 2017; Colin 2018), the empirical evidence shows that commercialization has not encouraged improved market-based access to land. Instead, women prefer to leverage on free communal land and have low interest in commercial farming that involves the added cost of land rental. Relatedly, increases in food crop commercialization has not encouraged women to reassert or renegotiate their affinal and consanguineal land rights. Thus, women have poor land access as defined by the effective capacity to utilize a resource (Ribot and Peluso 2003). In sum, most women have preferences around farming and commercialization that are fundamentally different than men's. These preferences intersect with structural aspects of tenure relations and commercialization processes to generate or reinforce unequal access to resources.

The empirical results align with theoretical perspectives around production that show that women are least favoured in commercialization processes (Maertens and Swinnen 2009; Negin et al. 2009; Andersson Djurfeldt 2018b) leading to their control of less land assets (Deere and Doss 2006). Such vulnerability goes beyond land based factors and includes poor access to inputs and finance (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Lambrecht 2016). For women, land tenure influences their production capacity while production capacity in turn defines their tenurial rights. The changes in women's tenure due to commercialization only occur to the extent of men

expanding the family farm periodically into women's plots but does not lead to total annexation of the woman's land. During periods of expansion into female-owned plots, the land is simply viewed as the man's work station. He cannot claim absolute ownership of it. Nonetheless, women still maintain cultivation of their subsistence plots to support the fulfilment of their household and reproductive tasks. The findings therefore contradict theoretical predictions of landlessness in the context of commercialization (Bernstein 2010). It also shows how women retain *dejure* ownership of lands that are brought under production to support the expansion of the family farm.

On the other hand, tree crop commercialization (cashew) aligns with women's mode of cultivation and does not involve as much cost as food crop commercialization. The cultivation of tree crops also constitutes proprietary claim to land in the context of existing customary law. According to customary logic, such long maturity tree crop cultivation is accompanied by a high risk of perpetual loss of land and individual annexation of communal land. Practically, this benefits male kin who are customarily entrusted with land management responsibilities. These two factors have contributed to women's interest and improved capacity for tree crop commercialization in comparison to food crops. Thus, the empirical results show that some women's land rights in their consanguineal families are simply dormant and not lost. Given the right conditions, they can reactivate their claims to land however small or weak. In doing so, women exercise active land use rights defined by the theory of access (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Though the empirics support theoretical predictions in terms of improvements in land rights as a result of commercialization, the mechanisms for such attainment are different. On one hand, the theory predicts a dependence on market systems for improved land rights for women (Hayami and Otsuka 1993; Chitonge et al. 2017; Colin 2018) however the empirical evidence shows that women renegotiate or claim their dormant land rights within the realm of customary tenure when the conditions of production are favourable and when there exists imminent risk of perpetual land loss.

Overall, the thesis shows how smallholder dynamism and the ability to adapt to strenuous conditions as argued by Van der Ploeg (2018) and Bryceson (2018b) reduces the potential for depeasantization and deagrarianization. Such dynamism is for instance depicted by a return to non-capitalist modes of land access which remain an enduring aspect of customary societies albeit dormant in some cases. The opportunities for such may be created by capitalist processes themselves in the quest to utilize labour surpluses created by dispossession. Smallholder dynamism is further shown in farmer's risk management decisions. This is depicted by temporal reductions in production intensity; oscillating between subsistence, semi-subsistence and commercial production depending on their own household economy (exemplified by temporal expansion of the family farm shown in paper 3) and how favourable production and market conditions are. In all these, a return to agrarian livelihoods is occurring although it takes the form of strategic investments by

absentee natives. While this process neither signals repeasantization nor reagrarization, it shows an allied process of translocality in which resident and absentee families and kin groups jointly coordinate their resource use; making rural agriculture a central node in sustaining their livelihoods (Steinbrink and Niedenfürh 2020; Andersson Djurfeldt 2021). Empirically, these processes of translocality neither align with unitary household models nor principles of cohesive decision making. Instead, they manifest in varied ways laced with complex intra-household, gendered, kinship and power relations that determine land use and ownership claims (see Andersson Djurfeldt 2021). While the consequent theorised process of smallholder-led structural transformation has not materialised, the trajectories of investments by local and absentee natives, the rise in contract farming (Hall et al. 2017b) and technological diffusion that accompanies investments in medium scale farms by urban elites (see Jayne et al. 2014a; Jayne et al. 2016), provides some grounds for potential future transformations.

While land tenure does not ordinarily manifest physically, the thesis coined the participatory tenure identification method to identify the physical manifestation of new relations around land tenure in the study communities. In this thesis, these physical manifestations are depicted by the mixed cropping of food and tree crops and the covenants around tree crop intercropping with tuber crops and fertilizer, pesticide and weedicide application. Participatory tenure identification aligns with the field research on farming systems and participatory land use planning method in participatory research (see Chambers 1994a; IFAD 2014; Snapp et al. 2019). The method does not present predefined tenure categories and instead uses, individual description, group consensus and physical farm inspection to identify tenurial relations while allowing categorization to emanate from farmers themselves. Though some authors have empirically described how land tenure rights manifest physically in terms of land degradation (Adjei-Nsiah et al. 2004), erection of barriers (Navarro-Castañeda et al. 2021; Løvschal et al. 2022), building of farm houses (Doss and Meinzen-Dick 2020: 6) or crop type (Schroeder 1993; Sjaastad and Bromley 1997), little evidence exists of a systematic participatory methodology that incorporates the non-physical tenurial rights and their physical manifestations. Instead, existing participatory tools applied to tenure research have been limited to descriptions of the social relations between people and land. The PTI's unique advantage lies in introducing the physical manifestations of these social relations of land tenure.

In general, the thesis provides a nuanced perspective around the tensions between customary and statutory land tenure and the mechanisms of attaining agricultural policy objectives. Further theoretical contributions of the thesis relate to bringing nuanced perspectives to the dominant theories around interrelations between commercialization, production and land by analysing the social relations of tenure within the frame of these narratives. Besides established theoretical predictions of landlessness and proletarianization, the thesis highlights the intervening processes

in terms of the new forms of land relations that develop as commercialization proceeds. Using the case of women and migrants, the thesis further contributes to the literature around commercialization and differentiation by showing how the pathways to commercialization differ for different smallholder groups. Further contributions relate to showing the empirical linkages between land and labour and how labour can be leveraged on as the mechanism for obtaining access to land and maintaining non-capitalist tenurial relations. These theoretical and empirical contributions are shown in papers 2 and 3. Both papers note that commercialization and its impact on land rights may be direct as is the case of migrants or indirect through the production capacity of a group as shown in the case of women. While a distinction needs to be drawn between direct tenurial effects of commercialization and those effects that take the form of production constraints and onward manifestations on land tenure, the outcomes of both processes are the same and culminate in lower access and control of land.

5.5 Policy Implications

The thesis considers a number of policy implications. Firstly, it shows the need for coordination between state and customary actors for the attainment of national agricultural objectives. Discussions around making land available for supporting state-led agricultural development efforts need to be conducted with recourse to the customary traditions that have long shaped local land administration. Future policies can leverage on the advantages of the new customary tenure and focus on how to reduce incidences of abuse and tenure insecurity. This may be done through institutional appendages (such as land information systems) to existing customary institutions.

There is also the need for the development of agricultural land use policies to protect Ghana's most arable lands. Practically, this may include the creation of a system of land banks jointly with land owners and other stakeholders to ensure land is readily available to support agricultural policy implementation. These agricultural land use policies are vital for creating linkages between agricultural production objectives and land tenure. Meanwhile, agricultural policies themselves should be the product of broad stakeholder consultations rather than emanating primarily from political considerations.

States need to give considerations to the differential effects of commercialization on different groups and use targeted rather than blanket approaches to encouraging commercialization. These targeted approaches need to consider among other things, the unique production capacities of different groups, social constraints around production, geography and other mediating factors that may encourage or discourage commercialization.

Generally, the emphasis of smallholder commercialization is on rural farmers and the contributions of urban agriculture is ignored. Meanwhile, there is no real transition period for commercialization. Without much education and investment in rural farming communities, states expect smallholders to transform into agrarian entrepreneurs instead of viewing them as farmers who may lack the technical capacity and business acumen needed to navigate local, national and international produce markets. Thus, future policies could consider the role of urban agriculture in smallholder-based agricultural development and introduce pre-commercialization plans to prepare smallholders for entrepreneurial engagements.

Finally, further considerations need to be given to improving the synergies between agricultural policies and their implementation to reduce the incidence of competition for land or consistent crop changes by farmers in order to benefit from one policy or another. When such competition occurs, the ability for production to be sustained over long periods in order to catalyse a structural transformation is constrained.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Smallholder commercialization is a widespread phenomenon across many SSA countries and further research around its varied dynamics is needed. While this thesis focuses on land tenure, further research is needed to analyse non-land-based factors of production and how these influence commercialization and differentiation processes. Again, further research could be conducted to provide a longitudinal perspective and map the trajectories of commercialization and differential outcomes at the community level. Such longitudinal mapping could include the differential distribution of inputs that may favour some groups over others and also include analysis of possible class formations among smallholders as commercialization proceeds. The thesis also opens an avenue for research into the synergies between agricultural sector actors and agricultural policies themselves in attaining the common goal of agri-based structural transformation.

While women are customarily considered as vulnerable in terms of their land rights, the thesis brings new avenues for researching the particular characteristics including crop types and production styles that could improve their land rights. The unique nature of migrants' spatial settlement, how they conduct their production, the translocal nature of their livelihood and how their land rights and access to inputs can be improved also requires further investigation. Such investigation also needs to consider exploring further the relationships between labour and tenure rights shown in this thesis as well as the gendered aspects of tenurial relations among migrants in the tree crop sector. These aspects can also be tied to the gendered dynamics of translocality among natives.

Consistent increases in world market prices for inputs as well as general economic challenges has meant that the percentage of subsidies provided to small farmers could reduce considerably. Future research could consider analysing the household and farm-level effects of exogenous shocks such as price volatility of agricultural inputs on processes of smallholder farmer graduation from subsistence/semi-subsistence to commercial farmers. Finally, further research is needed to highlight the supply chain challenges farmers face and related low changes in farm revenues despite increasing productivity, which contributes to recurrent cycles of productivity booms and busts. Such research could include investigations of the linkages between smallholder production, the influence of local aggregators and the variety in pricing and produce weights between the farmgate and markets. The implications of this for reducing inequality within the produce value chain and processes of de/repeasantization and de/reagrarianization could be a relevant addition to the literature around smallholder commercialization.

5.7 Conclusions

While many scholars acknowledge the vast potential for agricultural development in SSA, most policy actions aimed at positioning the continent as a powerhouse of agri-based structural transformation and onward economic growth have been met with lacklustre implementation and poor results. The continental approach to agricultural development has oscillated continuously between pro-interventionist approaches pioneered by the state and liberal market reforms. Nonetheless the common theme in both approaches is a central focus on commercialization of agriculture (in this case, smallholder agriculture) as the panacea to structural economic change. Using two study communities in Ghana's forest transition zone, the thesis investigates how smallholder transitions from subsistence to commercial production occur, who transitions successfully, who gets left behind and why and the role land tenure plays in all these.

In the charge towards smallholder-based structural transformation, the nature of land tenure and interactions between state and customary actors with regards to utilizing land as the primary factor for attaining targeted economic gains is critical. While both actors hold hostile views of each other the thesis advocates for a shift away from notions of non-interference in land issues and a replacement narrative that vilifies customary actors. Instead, a negotiated approach, that makes land readily available in support of the state's agrarian change objectives is advocated. In doing so, the thesis challenges normative property rights and state views that make land formalization a requirement for agricultural and economic development. Empirical evidence shows how a semblance of formalization is already occurring within customary tenure and could be the anchor for improving state-customary

relations. With this, agricultural policies can be in close affinity with present land tenure characteristics rather than dependent on its former nature.

The thesis shows how responses to state stimuli for smallholder commercialization are varied. The related processes of differentiation manifest in uneven ways between and within farmer groups. Smallholder challenges are multiple and it is often unrealistic to design a unitary package that addresses all their challenges. Thus, commercialization need not be viewed as a linear process from subsistence to entrepreneurial production. The process is much more complex and relates to social, economic, and cultural factors that mediate the opportunities available to different smallholder groups. While processes of smallholder commercialization have not led to proletarianization among less dynamic farmers, the thesis depicts the varied tenurial pathways that develop as commercialization proceeds. These pathways involve barter exchanges, relational access despite holding market-based land rights and male consolidation of communal land to the detriment of women.

The thesis also brings nuanced perspectives to the current dominance of theoretical discussions around differentiation, dispossession, landlessness and proletarianization in the context of commercialization. It for instance challenges the normative perspectives around the creation of waged labour as commercialization proceeds and instead shows how transactional labour relations are created to ensure continued access to land by vulnerable groups. Placing land tenure narratives within the broad scope of agricultural commercialization brings a vital analytical perspective to the realities of the adoption of smallholder pathways to economic development across SSA. These perspectives not only push the research frontiers but are also relevant for practical policy formulation and implementation.

Western and Asian country's transition from subsistence to commercial farming is used as a mechanism for measuring structural change and often touted as a blueprint to follow. However, the realities in Africa are different as exemplified by land tenure trajectories. African agricultural development needs to be analysed within the contextual possibilities that the continent provides. Given the unique context of SSA, the thesis raises a number of questions around processes of agricultural development and structural change in the agrarian literature. Why must customary land tenure be formalized given its new characteristics? What benefits are there to be attained from incentivising smallholder production without developing farmer's entrepreneurial capacity? In which ways can the unique nature of customary tenure serve state agricultural development objectives? Why do smallholder commercialization policies remain production oriented with little focus on market processes that can improve farmers' incomes? What benefits are derived from blanket commercialization policies that neither consider the contextual advantages or constrains of different groups or geographical enclaves? Should smallholder commercialization aim for poverty reduction or general agricultural development or both? These are questions that find expression across SSA states leaning towards a smallholder-based agricultural development strategy and must be given adequate

consideration in the quest for economic development and poverty reduction. In answering these questions, efforts need to be made to place smallholders themselves at the fore front of agricultural interventions to help improve policy design and implementation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent Form

Study Background

This interview forms part of a PhD thesis by Selorm Kobla Kugbega on Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana and a final report will be presented to Lund University. The research aims at exploring land tenure changes occasioned by the Ghanaian State's smallholder commercialization policy dubbed Planting for Food and Jobs. The policy lends itself as an attempt at encouraging entrepreneurial production motives among smallholder farmers. With extensification (characterized by farmers' bringing new areas into production) being the dominant mechanism of productivity increases in Ghana, the policy may encourage land asset (re)distribution and have significant implications on structural differences that exist among smallholders. The research is therefore aimed at understanding the nature of tenurial changes and smallholder differentiation as farmers attempt to transition from subsistence and semi-subsistence production to commercial production. Your help in showing the patterns that the research seeks to investigate through partaking in this interview is highly appreciated. Your responses will be treated as anonymous to remove all possibilities of traceability and further held in confidence to the full extent of the privacy laws of Ghana and Sweden. The data will be stored securely and only used for academic purposes by the researcher.

Your views are important because you are involved in smallholder farming and/or understand the dynamics of land tenure, differentiation, state policy (PFJ) and smallholder commercialization in Ghana. With a signed or verbal consent to partake in this study, your views will be recorded and transcribed to form part of data analysis. You may choose not to answer certain questions or stop participating at any time. The researcher is open to discussions on all factors that may limit or prevent you from expressing your most genuine thoughts. You also reserve the right to seek further clarifications and you may request to verify a copy of the transcribed text before data analysis and publication. Your views will be summed together with those of other interviewees for the production of the final PhD thesis.

If you have questions about this interview, you may contact the researcher by Phone: +233246833057/+46736894578 and email: selorm.kugbega@keg.lu.se

CONSENT:

I have understood the information provided above and I consent to partaking in the study. I have also received a copy of the consent forms.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Interview Guides

Lund University- Sweden
Department of Human Geography
Selorm Kobla Kugbega

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Farmers

Topic: From Subsistence to Commercial Producers. Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Be assured that all information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Section 1: Basic Information

Name of Respondent.....
Name of community.....
Address.....
Date of Interview.....
Place of Interview.....
Age.....
Gender.....
Primary Occupation.....
Secondary Occupation(s) (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
Status in community.....Migrant/ Indigene
If migrant; place of origin.....
Number of years lived in community.....
Marital status.....
If married; Occupation of spouse.....
Number of children.....
Level of education.....
Consented for interview? Yes/No

Section 2: Land Rights, Acquisition and Ownership

1. Do you have access to agricultural land? (Yes/No)
2. If yes, how did you acquire or gain access to the land? (Gift/ inheritance/ sale/ usufructuary rights/ occupancy/ licenses/ taungya/ Cash or share tenancy)
3. Do you have ownership of this land?
4. If no, who is the land owner?
5. How much land (in acres) do you currently own/control in total? (Including cultivated, fallow/uncultivated, rented-out and borrowed-out land)
6. Did you make or still make payments for use of land?
7. If yes, to whom were these payments made?
8. What is the nature of your land holding arrangement/ what covenants or conditions pertain to your land holdings?
9. What year did you begin farming your own land? (Not with parents/guardians)
10. When you started farming on your own, how big was your land size?
11. Did you grow up in the area where you are currently farming or you migrated/settled here later? If grew up in the area, go to question 14.

If settled,

12. In which year did you migrate/settle in this area?
13. What was the main reason for settling/ migrating to this area?
14. What attracted you to farming?
15. How much land were you farming before PFJ implementation?
16. How much land are you farming now?
17. Was any of your crops grown under sharecropping arrangement? If yes, what percentage of the harvest do you keep

Section 3: Other Land Owners in Household

Other than you, who else in this household is a landholder?	What is the relationship of identified individual to the head of the household?	What is the gender of the person identified?	What is the land size under the individual's control including cropped land, virgin land, fallow plots, borrowed or rented out plots and gardens?

18. What is the nature of secondary land rights in the community?
19. How important are secondary land rights to the household?

Section 4: Land tenure Changes

20. In your view, do village authorities in this area still have unallocated arable land that could be given to households for farming purposes?
Yes/No
21. If your household needed more land, could some of this unallocated land be allotted to you for cropping purposes?
22. Describe the different mechanisms through which you can acquire more land if you wish to expand your production?
23. How has land rights and tenure changed for you in the past years if any?
24. Generally, what are the reasons for changes in land tenure?
25. What is your reason for joining the PFJ programme and cultivating priority crops?
26. For PFJ beneficiaries, has your cultivated farmland area changed significantly since 2017/ becoming a PFJ policy beneficiary? Yes/No
27. (a) If yes, what do you think are the reasons for the changes in cultivated area?
28. Do you perceive that the PFJ policy implementation has changed the nature of land ownership and tenure within the community? If yes, how and for whom?
29. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on customary land allocation by chiefs and families?
30. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on usufructuary land access?
31. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on land rental markets?
32. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on land leases?
33. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on cash/share tenancy?
34. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on Taungya?
35. Has your pattern of production changed since the implementation of the PFJ policy? If yes, how?
36. How have secondary land rights changed for men and women in the community?
37. Could you leave the land empty for a period of several months without being worried about losing it? (a) If yes, how long do you think you could leave the land alone without losing it?
38. Has the fear of losing uncultivated land increased since the implementation of the PFJ policy?
39. What are you are doing to ensure that you do not lose the land?

Section 5: Planting for food and jobs policy

40. **For PFJ beneficiaries**, did you apply any fertilizer to your crops before becoming a policy beneficiary?
 - (a) If yes, has the amount of fertilizer you apply to the crop changed since becoming a PFJ beneficiary?
 - (b) How much of the fertilizer applied currently is sourced through the PFJ?
 - (c) How much of the seed currently used is sourced through the PFJ?
 - (d) Describe the process of sourcing fertilizer and improved seeds?
 - (e) Have you experienced a change in yield since joining the PFJ policy? If yes, how much change in yield per crop?
 - (f) What do you think accounts for the change in yield?
 - (g) Does the PFJ policy give you access to marketing channels and improve value chain integration?
 - (h) Have you benefited from extension services through PFJ? If yes, how frequently?
41. How easy is it for women/ migrants to access the PFJ policy initiatives?
42. Does the PFJ policy afford equal access rights to all smallholders in your view?
43. What are your thoughts on the role of politics, corruption and nepotism with regards to benefiting from the PFJ policy initiatives?
44. What are your thoughts on integrating a targeted input component that targets the poorest and most vulnerable smallholders?

Section 6: Smallholder Capacities

45. Do you have a plan on how to develop/ commercialize your farm? If yes, what does the plan entail?
46. What are your main sources of finance for farming?
47. Do you have access to guaranteed/ subsidized loans?
48. To what extent do you use mechanized tools?
49. How has mechanization influenced changes in cultivated farm area?
50. Do you own or have access to agro-processing machinery/equipment?
 - a) When did you buy it?
 - b) How did you get the funds to buy it?
 - c) Why did you invest in this equipment specifically?
51. Do you own or have access to a warehouse or storage space?

Section 7: Land Rights and Ownership (Women and Migrants)

If respondent has knowledge of women's tenure

52. How do women acquire land in the community?
53. How can women obtain land to expand their farms?
54. Describe women's land tenure in the community.
55. What covenants or rules govern women's land rights?
56. How have women's land tenure changed?
 - a) Since when has it changed?
 - b) Why?
57. What aspect of the changes in women's tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
58. How much land was cultivated by women before implementation of the PFJ policy?
59. How much land do women cultivate now?
60. What crops were cultivated by the women?

If female-headed household,

61. How much land do you own or control?
62. How did you acquire the land?
63. What type of tenure do you currently hold in the land?
64. What type of tenure did you have when you still had attachments to your husband, father, uncle or other male?
65. Is your current tenure derived from an attachment with a male figure in the community?
66. How much land did the household control when the male figure was still around?
67. How much control or ownership did you have over the land when the male figure was still around?
68. How has the nature of your land ownership and tenure changed since becoming the household head?
69. How much land did you cultivate before implementation of the PFJ policy?
70. How much land do you cultivate now?
71. How can you access more land if you wish to expand your production?
72. Under what circumstances can women lose their land rights if any?

If respondent has knowledge of migrant's tenure

73. How do migrants acquire land in the community?
 - a) Where do they come from?
 - b) Why do they migrate to this community?
 - c) Do all migrant groups access land in the same way?
 - d) Do female migrants and male migrants access land in the same way?
74. How can migrants obtain land to expand their farms?
75. Describe migrant's land tenure in the community
76. What covenants or rules govern migrant's land rights?
77. How have migrants' land tenure changed?
78. What aspect of the changes in migrants' tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
79. How much land was cultivated by migrants before implementation of the PFJ policy?
80. How much land do migrants cultivate now?
81. Under what circumstances can migrants lose their land rights?

Section 8: Recommendations/ Auxiliary Questions

82. What do you think are the challenges of the PFJ policy and how can they be resolved?
83. How can the PFJ policy be improved to efficiently address underlying tenure concerns and reduce the probability of deepening or creating new forms of differentiation among farmers?
84. How can the policy be improved to reduce incidences of corruption, nepotism and ensure equitable benefits among smallholders?
85. Are you a member of an agricultural organization- farmer-based organization (FBO), women's group, youth group, faith-based organization or cooperative? If yes, which one and what are the benefits?
86. What are your recommendations for improving land tenure in the community?

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Semi-structured Interview Guide for Key Informants (Land Owners- Chiefs, Family heads, Cooperative leaders)

Topic: From Subsistence to Commercial Producers. Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. The interview will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. Be assured that all information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Section 1: Land Rights and Ownership

1. What is your position in the community or organization?
2. Who are the principal land owners in the area?
 - a. *Do you have any sub-group ownership in the community?*
 - b. *What rights do these sub-groups hold in land?*
 - c. *Does the central or local government exert land ownership rights?*
 - d. *To what extent do individuals own land?*
3. How much land do you currently own/control in total?
4. What institutional arrangements exist for managing land?
5. What is the process of acquiring land?
 - a. *Is the process the same for both indigenes and migrants?*
 - b. *What ownership and use rights do indigenes and migrants each have in land?*
 - c. *How has the right to use land changed over time for indigenes and migrants?*
 - d. *Since when? And why have land rights changed?*
 - e. *Under what circumstances can indigenes and migrants lose their land rights?*
 - f. *Is the process of land acquisition the same for women?*
 - g. *What ownership and use rights do women have in land?*
 - h. *How has the right to use land changed over time for women?*
 - i. *Under what circumstances can women lose their land rights?*
 - j. *How have the rules governing land acquisition changed?*
6. What covenants or conditions govern land holdings in this community?
7. How is land transferred between individuals in the community?
8. What are the common forms of tenure in this community?
9. What forms of tenure do you often grant?
10. What is the nature of secondary land rights in the community?

Section 2: Land tenure Changes

11. Do you still have unallocated arable land that could be given to households for farming purposes? Yes/No
12. Describe the different mechanisms through which people can acquire more land if they wish to expand their production?
13. How have the rules governing land acquisition changed?
14. How have land rights and tenure changed in the community?
15. What are the general reasons for changes in land tenure?
16. Has cultivated farm area increased or decreased in the past years?
17. What are the general reasons for changes in cultivated farmland area if any?
18. What are your thoughts on the PFJ policy?
19. Do you perceive that the PFJ policy implementation has changed the nature of land ownership and tenure within the community?
20. If yes, what are the implications of the PFJ policy for land tenure and ownership in your community?
21. In your view, has farmers' cultivated crop area changed significantly since implementation of the PFJ policy?
22. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on customary land allocation by chiefs and families?
23. What are your thoughts on the implications of the PFJ policy on usufructuary access?
24. What are your thoughts on the implications of the PFJ policy on land rental markets?
25. What are your thoughts on the implications of the PFJ policy on land leases?
26. What are your thoughts on the implications of the PFJ policy on cash/share tenancy?
27. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on Taungya?
28. How has the pattern of production in the community changed since the implementation of the PFJ policy?
29. How have secondary land rights changed?
30. Does the PFJ policy afford equal access rights to all smallholders?
31. What are your thoughts on the role of politics, corruption and nepotism in implementation of the PFJ policy?
32. What are your thoughts on integrating a targeted input component that targets the poorest and most vulnerable smallholders?

Section 3: Land rights of Women and Migrants

33. How do women acquire land in the community?
34. Describe women's land tenure rights in the community
 - a) Do all women acquire land in the same way, regardless of marital status, age or ethnic group?
35. What covenants or rules govern women's land rights?
36. How have women's land tenure changed?
37. What aspect of the changes in women's tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
38. How can women obtain land to expand their farms?
39. Under what circumstances can women lose their land rights?
40. How do migrants acquire land in the community?
41. Describe migrant's land tenure in the community.
42. What covenants or rules govern migrant's land rights?
43. How have migrants' land tenure changed?
44. What aspect of the changes in migrants' tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
45. How can migrants obtain land to expand their farms?
46. Under what circumstances can migrants lose their land rights?

Section 4: Recommendations

47. What do you think are the challenges of the PFJ policy and how can they be resolved?
48. How can the PFJ policy be improved to efficiently address underlying tenure concerns and reduce the probability of deepening or creating new differentiation among farmers?
49. How can the policy be improved to reduce incidences of corruption, nepotism and ensure equitable benefits among smallholders?
50. What are your recommendations for improving land tenure in the community?
51. Are you a member of an agricultural organization- farmer-based organization (FBO) women's group, youth group, faith-based organization or cooperative? If yes, which one and what are the benefits?

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Semi-structured Interview Guide for Key Informants (Staff of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Representatives of Peasant Farmer's Association of Ghana, National Development Planning Commission, Ghana Chamber of Agribusiness, Ministry of Lands and Natural resources, Extension officers)

Topic: From Subsistence to Commercial Producers. Processes of State-led Agrarian Change, Land Tenure Dynamics and Social Differentiation among Smallholders in Ghana.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. The interview will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. Be assured that all information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Section 1: Land tenure changes

1. What is your position in the community or organization?
2. What are your thoughts on the process of acquiring land for agricultural production in Ghana?
3. Who can acquire land and how?
4. What are the common forms of tenure rights held by farmers?
5. What are your thoughts on the PFJ policy?
6. Briefly explain your views on the five pillars of the PFJ policy and how they are being implemented.
7. How does the PFJ policy plan to improve marketing, processing and value-chain integration?
8. Do you perceive that the policy implementation can/ has changed the nature of land ownership and tenure?
9. If yes, what are the implications of the PFJ policy for land tenure and ownership?
10. In your view, how have the patterns of agricultural production in the community changed since the implementation of the PFJ policy?
11. In your view, has farmers' cultivated crop area changed significantly since implementation of the PFJ policy?
12. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on customary land allocation by chiefs and families?
13. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on usufructuary access?
14. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on land rental markets?
15. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on land leases?

16. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on cash/ share tenancy?
17. What are your thoughts on the implication of the PFJ policy on Taungya?
18. How have secondary land rights changed since implementation of the PFJ policy?
19. What is the general post-implementation plan for the PFJ policy?

Section 2: Land tenure and Agricultural policy

20. In your view, are land tenure issue given high consideration in agricultural policy formulation?
21. What are the reasons for the absence or low consideration of land tenure issues in agricultural policy discussions?
22. Were chiefs, land owners, farmer representatives and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources considered as important stakeholders and invited during consultations on the PFJ policy formulation?
23. Are chiefs, land owners, farmer representatives and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources considered as important stakeholders and invited during consultations on other agricultural policy formulation?
24. In your view, should land tenure issues be central to agricultural policy formulation and implementation?
25. If yes, how can land tenure issues be integrated into agricultural policy formulation and implementation?

Section 3: Smallholder Differentiation

26. Does the PFJ policy afford equal access rights to all smallholders?
27. What are your thoughts on the implications of the policy on smallholder differentiation?
28. What are your thoughts on the role of politics, corruption and nepotism in implementation of the PFJ policy?
29. Has the policy shown significant changes in the cultivation orientation of smallholders from subsistence and semi-subsistence to entrepreneurial cultivation? (Yes/No)
30. Will you say the policy subtly encourages the dispossession of inefficient smallholders by more efficient entrepreneurial smallholders?
31. What are your thoughts on integrating a targeted input component that targets the poorest and most vulnerable smallholders?

Section 4: Land rights of Women and Migrants

32. What are your thoughts on women's land tenure in PFJ beneficiary communities?
33. What covenants or rules govern women's land rights?
34. In your view, how does implementation of the PFJ policy affect women's land tenure?
35. What are your thoughts on migrant's land tenure in PFJ beneficiary communities?
36. What covenants or rules govern migrant's land rights?
37. In your view, how does implementation of the PFJ policy affect migrant's land tenure?

Section 5: Recommendations

38. What do you think are the challenges of the PFJ policy and how can they be resolved?
39. How can the PFJ policy be improved to efficiently address underlying tenure concerns and reduce the probability of deepening or creating new forms of differentiation among farmers?
40. How can the PFJ policy be improved to reduce incidences of corruption, nepotism and ensure equitable benefits among smallholders?
41. What are your recommendations for improving synergies between agricultural policy land tenure?

Interview guide for Focus Group Discussions

Section1: PFJ policy and Land tenure changes

1. How do you acquire land in the community?
2. In your opinion, what kind of rights do you have in the land?
3. What are your thoughts on the planting for food and jobs policy?
4. How has the policy affected the nature of land tenure in the community?
5. What are the effects of changes in land tenure in the community?
6. How has the policy affected the nature of cropping in the community?
7. What are the effects of changes in cropping patterns in the community?
8. What are the implications of the PFJ policy on different smallholder groups?
9. What are your perceptions on the PFJ policy benefiting some smallholders more than others?
10. What are the characteristics of these smallholders that benefit less or more from the policy?
11. What are the reasons for some smallholders benefiting more/less than others from the policy?
12. What are the effects of the PFJ policy on your livelihoods?
13. What new livelihood strategies have you adopted since implementation of the PFJ policy?
14. What livelihood strategies have you discarded since the implementation of the PFJ policy?

Section 2: Land rights of Women and Migrants

15. How do women acquire land in the community?
16. Describe women's land tenure in the community
17. What covenants or rules govern women's land rights?
18. How have women's land tenure changed?
19. What aspect of the changes in women's tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
20. How can women obtain land to expand their farms?
21. Under what circumstances can women lose their land rights?
22. How do migrants acquire land in the community?
23. Describe migrant's land tenure in the community.
24. What covenants or rules govern migrant's land rights?
25. How have migrants' land tenure changed?
26. What aspect of the changes in migrants' tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
27. How can migrants obtain land to expand their farms?
28. Under what circumstances can migrants lose their land rights?

Section 3: Recommendations

29. What are your thoughts on an input targeting component of the PFJ policy?
30. What do you think are the challenges of the PFJ policy and how can they be resolved?
31. How can the PFJ policy be improved to efficiently address underlying tenure concerns and reduce the probability of deepening or creating new differentiation among farmers?
32. How can the policy be improved to reduce incidences of elite capture, corruption nepotism and ensure equitable benefits among smallholders?
33. What are your recommendations for improving land tenure in the community?

Interview Guide for Women/ Migrant Focus Group Discussions

Section 1: PFJ policy and Land tenure changes

1. How do you acquire land in the community?
2. In your opinion, what kind of rights do you have in the land?
3. What are your thoughts on the planting for food and jobs policy?
4. How has the policy affected the nature of land tenure in the community?
5. What are the effects of changes in land tenure in the community?
6. How has the policy affected the nature of cropping in the community?
7. What are the effects of changes in cropping patterns in the community?
8. What are the implications of the PFJ policy on different smallholder groups?
9. What are your perceptions on the PFJ policy benefiting some smallholders more than others?
10. What are the characteristics of these smallholders that benefit less or more from the policy?
11. What are the reasons for some smallholders benefiting more/less than others from the policy?

Section 2: Women's Land Tenure

12. How do women acquire land in the community?
13. Describe women's land tenure rights in the community?
14. What covenants or rules govern women's land rights?
15. How can women obtain land to expand their farms?

16. How have women's land tenure changed?
17. What aspect of the changes in women's tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
18. How much land was cultivated by women before implementation of the PFJ policy?
19. How much land do women cultivate now?
20. What crops were cultivated by the women?

Female-headed households

21. How much land do female-headed households own or control?
22. How do female-headed households acquire the land?
23. What type of tenure does female-headed households usually hold in land?
24. What type of tenure did female-headed households have when they were attached to their husband, father, uncle or other male?
25. How much land did the household control when the male figure was still around?

26. How much control or ownership did the woman have over the land when the male figure was still around?
27. How has the nature of land ownership and tenure changed since becoming the household head?
28. How much land did you cultivate before implementation of the PFJ policy?
29. How much land do you cultivate now?
30. How can female-headed households access more land if you wish to expand your production?
31. Under what circumstances can women lose their land rights?

Section 3: Migrants' Land Tenure

32. How do migrants acquire land in the community?
33. Describe migrant's land tenure in the community
34. What covenants or rules govern migrant's land rights?
35. How can migrants obtain land to expand their farms?
36. How much land was cultivated by migrants before implementation of the PFJ policy?
37. How much land do migrants cultivate now?
38. How have migrants' land tenure changed?
39. What aspect of the changes in migrant tenure is related to the PFJ policy?
40. Under what circumstances can migrants lose their land rights?

Section 4: Recommendations

41. What are the effects of the PFJ policy on your livelihoods?
42. What new livelihood strategies do you adopt since implementation of the PFJ policy?
43. What livelihood strategies have you discarded since the implementation of the PFJ policy?
44. What do you think are the challenges of the PFJ policy and how can they be resolved?
45. What are your thoughts on an input targeting component of the PFJ policy?
46. What are your recommendations for improving land tenure in the community?

PRA Exercise: Wealth Ranking

- 1) What makes a person poor, middle-income or rich in this community.
- 2) What are the characteristics of a poor, middle-income or rich person?
- 3) On the basis of votes and explanations kindly describe the relative poverty of persons based on the following characteristics:
 - (a) Type of house and other related asset ownership
 - (b) Migrant or indigene
 - (c) Number of children
 - (d) Sell their labour/ Engage in pooling of communal labour/ Hire waged labour
 - (e) Food access
 - (f) Elderly- Unable to leverage on physical strength for farming
 - (g) Widow or widower
 - (h) Gender
 - (i) Farming as the sole source of income/ Farming as one of many income sources
 - (j) Education Level
 - (k) Intermittent migration
 - (l) Live in settler suburbs
 - (m) Cash crop farmers
 - (n) Own their land/ Have access to land for farm expansion/ Rent land or are customary licensees
 - (o) Commercial farmer
 - (p) Own livestock or poultry
 - (q) Social or political status
 - (r) Cashew buyer
 - (s) Owner of Agrochemical shop
 - (t) Return migrants from Libya and other countries
 - (u) Farm size
 - (v) Government employee
 - (w) Owns storage facility
 - (x) Has access to finance (loans. Savings etc)
 - (y) Relative lives abroad and sends remittances
 - (z) Owns mechanized farm equipment

Appendix C: List of Research Participants

(a) Key Informant Interviews

Name	Designation/ Institution	Data Provided
Key Informants		
Key Informant 1	Akyeamehene of Nkoranza Traditional area	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 2	Member of the National House of Chiefs	Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors
Key informant 3	Executive Member of the Peasant Farmer's Association of Ghana	Land tenure changes among smallholder farmers, Agricultural policy formulation and implementation processes
Key Informant 4	Executive Member of the Ghana Chamber of Agribusiness	Land tenure changes among smallholder farmers, Agricultural policy formulation and implementation processes
Key Informant 5	Director at the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors
Key Informant 6	Analyst at the National Development Planning Commission	Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Agricultural commercialization for economic development
Key Informant 7	Divisional Chief of Nkwabeng	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key Informant 8	Paramount Chief of Dromankese	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 9	Sub-chief of Nkwabeng	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 10	Sub-chief of Nkwabeng	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 11	Sub-chief of Nkwabeng	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 12	Sub-chief of Nkwabeng	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 13	Sub-chief of Dromankese	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 14	Sub-chief of Dromankese	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Interactions between state and customary tenure actors, Market and non-market land tenure, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 15	Native Cooperative head (Nkwabeng)	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Differential land access, production and input access
Key informant 16	Native Cooperative head (Nkwabeng)	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Differential land access, production and input access

Key informant 17	Native Cooperative head (Dromankese)	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Differential land access, production and input access
Key informant 18	Migrant Cooperative head (Nkwabeng)	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Land access, production and input access among migrants
Key informant 19	Migrant Cooperative head (Dromankese)	Land tenure changes, Linkages between agriculture policy and land tenure, Land access, production and input access among migrants
Key informant 20	Agriculture extension officer (Nkwabeng)	Land tenure changes, Agricultural commercialization, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 21	Agriculture extension officer (Dromankese)	Land tenure changes, Agricultural commercialization, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 22	Assembly member (Nkwabeng)	Agricultural commercialization, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 23	Assembly member (Dromankese)	Agricultural commercialization, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 24	District Agriculture Officer (Nkoranza South)	Land tenure changes, Agricultural commercialization for economic development, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants
Key informant 25	District Agriculture Officer (Nkoranza North)	Land tenure changes, Agricultural commercialization for economic development, Land access, production and input access among women and migrants

(b) Household Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Participatory Approaches

Category of Participants	Number of Households/ Participants	Data Provided
Household Interviews (Nkwabeng)		
Native Farmers (Including women)	30 (17 included women's views)	Land access and production possibilities related to state policies. Changing tenure rights for different groups and the contributions of state policy if any Tree crop commercialization opportunities and constraints Gender dimensions of land access, production and input access Women's commercialization possibilities and constraints
Focus Group Discussions (Nkwabeng)		
FGD 1 (Natives and migrants)	12	Group sentiments on land access, input access, relative wealth, commercialization possibilities and changing tenure rights
FGD 2 (Natives and migrants)	19	Group sentiments on land access, input access, relative wealth, commercialization possibilities and changing tenure rights
FGD 3 (Migrants)	10	Group sentiments on migrants' challenges and opportunities for commercialization including input access, land tenure changes and production possibilities
FGD 4 (Migrants)	16	Group sentiments on migrants' challenges and opportunities for commercialization including input access, land tenure changes and production possibilities
FGD 5 (Native and migrant women)	6	Group sentiments on women's land rights, production possibilities and constrains and access to inputs
FGD 6 (Native and migrant women)	7	Group sentiments on women's land rights, production possibilities and constrains and access to inputs
FGD 7 (Migrant women)	8	Group sentiments on migrant women's production opportunities and constraints, input use/access and land access and tenure changes
FGD 8 (Migrant men)	7	Group sentiments on gendered aspects of migrants' production, land tenure rights and the emergent taungya relations
Participatory Approaches (Nkwabeng)		
2 Wealth Ranking exercises	31	Group description of different wealth categories and their characteristics
1 Transect walk	1	Preliminary maps of study community's social and resource base
2 Social and Resource mapping exercises	11	Group description of the social profile and resource base of the study community
1 Participatory Tenure Identification exercise (Farm inspection component)	4	Identification of tenure rights held by migrant groups through a series of self-reported, group categorization and physical farm inspection processes

Household Interviews (Dromankese)		
Native farmers (Including women)	23 (8 included women's views)	Land access and production possibilities related to state policies Changing tenure rights for different groups and the contributions of state policy if any Tree crop commercialization opportunities and constraints Gender dimensions of land access and tenure, production and input access Women's commercialization possibilities and constraints
Migrant farmers (Including women)	8 (3 included women's views)	Land access and production opportunities and constraints attributable to state incentives. Land tenure and input access opportunities and constraints Tree crop commercialization opportunities and constraints
Focus Group Discussions (Dromankese)		
FGD 1 (Natives and migrants)	12	Group sentiments on land access, input access, relative wealth, commercialization possibilities and changing tenure rights
FGD 2 (Natives and migrants)	11	Group sentiments on land access, input access, relative wealth, commercialization possibilities and changing tenure rights
FGD 3 (Migrants)	8	Group sentiments on migrants' challenges and opportunities for commercialization including input access, land tenure changes and production possibilities
FGD 4 (Native and migrant women)	6	Group sentiments on women's land rights, production possibilities and constrains and access to inputs
Participatory Approaches (Dromankese)		
2 Wealth Ranking exercises	23	Group description of different wealth categories and their characteristics
1 Transect walk	1	Preliminary maps of study community's social and resource base
2 Social and Resource mapping exercises	9	Group description of the social profile and resource base of the study community
1 Participatory Tenure Identification exercise (Farm inspection component)	2	Identification of tenure rights held by migrant groups through a series of self-reported, group categorization and physical farm inspection processes