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Land Acquisition and Use in Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable Food and Livelihood Security

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Abstract

Land acquisition and use remain a critical issue of great policy relevance in developing countries such as Nigeria. This study therefore examined land acquisition and use in Nigeria within the context of food and livelihood security. The chapter used secondary data obtained from the World Bank website, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and other sources. It was found that there are gender, location and income-group considerations in the allocation of land in Nigeria. While the urban land market is relatively more formal, the rural land market is informal and the transactions were not documented in most cases. The study found that bureaucratic bottlenecks, high cost of registering land and long registration procedures, and inconsistent policy regimes impede the development of land market in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the government should reduce and make the processes to be completed in registering lands in Nigeria easier. The Land Use Act 1978 should be amended to capture the prevailing realities around customary laws and informal markets. The government should reduce the cost of land registration in Nigeria. Multilateral organisations and government should co-create and co-finance innovative interventions to improve activities in the land market.

Keywords: conflict, food security, land acquisition, livelihood security, Nigeria, welfare

1. Introduction

Land acquisitions are broadly defined to include not only the purchase of ownership rights but also the acquisition of user rights, for instance through leases or concessions, whether short or

long term [1]. Land tenure system can be defined as the rights and institution that governs access to and use of land [2]. Tenure system of land involves a system of rights, duties and responsibilities concerning the use, transfer, alienation and ownership security of land and its resources. From the ongoing, it is clear that land acquisition and use cannot be discussed extensively without incorporating land tenure system. This chapter therefore presents a comprehensive review of literature on the land acquisition and use in Nigeria and the implications for sustainable food and livelihood security in the country.

Land is a veritable ingredient of development especially in the agricultural and tourism sector of any economy. Nigeria has a total land mass of 924,768 sq.km with a population of 198 million and annual population growth rate of 2.8% [3]. Nigeria comprises over 250 ethnic groups located within the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory [4]. Land is an asset and factor of production for households in Nigeria [5]. However, the level of access and title ownership is determined by the state [6]. Therefore, the land system is characterised by several actors including government, community leaders, families, lawyers, middle men and estate agents among others. All activities of the different actors are regulated by the government through policies and programmes. Generally, land systems thrive on clearly stated property rights. Two types of proprietary rights have been defined in literature-absolute or nonderivative interests and derivative interests [6]. The absolute or nonderivative interest is a nonrestrictive access and use of land conferred on the holder. The absolute interest on land has also been explained as inclusive of highest scope of proprietary decisions on the use and management of land. Derivative interest derives from a larger estates or superior estates. The derivative rights cover leaseholds, life interests, mortgage, rents and pledges among others. The two types of property rights (absolute or nonderivative interest and derivative interest) exist in Nigeria.

The Nigerian land system has evolved over the years as classified into precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods in literature [7]. The three periods are explained below:

- a. Precolonial land ownership structure: Prior to the colonial era, lands were solely owned by families and communities. The land was owned by the community and family heads who then allocate based on the needs of their subordinates [8]. The legal estate or authority existed at the community or family level. Thus, the leadership of communities and families had absolute interests, while constituents had derivative interests.
- b. Ownership structure during colonial rule: The ownership of land was regulated by the colonial authorities before independence. The legislations included Treaty of Cession (1861), Land Proclamation Ordinance (1900), Land and Native Rights Act (1916), Public Lands Acquisition (1917), State Land Acts (1918) and Town and Country Planning Act (1947). The colonial legislations were meant to take property rights out of the reach community leaders. For instance, in 1900, the Land Proclamation Ordinance created by Lord Lugard regarded the principles of native law and custom and stipulated that the title of land can only be acquired through the high commissioner [6].

- c. Postcolonial ownership structure: As depicted earlier, the land ownership structure in Nigeria has evolved over the years. Two key legislations have been enacted since independence: Land Tenure Law of Northern Nigeria of 1962 and Land Use Act of 1978. The land tenure law of Northern Nigeria of 1962 stipulated that the minister responsible for land matter controls, holds and allocates land (unoccupied or occupied native lands) to natives of Northern Nigeria. This implies that non-natives except for the approval of the minister could not land titles. The law granted the natives of Northern Nigeria the right to own land for a limited number of years. The individual/native may sell, mortgage or transfer the land subject to the minister's approval. The Land Tenure Law of 1962 was repealed, and land use decree of 1978 was implemented.

Land tenure issues are important components of developmental discourse [9]. This is because unplanned or weak regulatory undermines development as informal settlements grow thereby stressing already inadequate urban infrastructure [5]. Therefore, poor land management affects security and growth as it induces, slums and suboptimal living conditions [10, 11]. The Nigerian land use decree of 1978 stipulates that all land belong to the government holding same in trust for the public [12]. This implies that the government allocates land to individuals and corporate entities based on the objectives of interested parties [13].

Objectives of Land Use Act 1978

- Make land accessible to all Nigerians
- Prevent speculative purchases of communal land
- Streamline and simplify the management and ownership of land
- Land available to governments at all levels for development
- Provide a system of government administration of rights towards improving tenure security

The aftermath was political considerations in the allocation of land, corruption and rise in lobbyist tendencies. The land use act avails the opportunities to own lands without recourse to families and communal land holdings. The process of obtaining certificates of occupancy is characterised by bureaucratic bottlenecks, high registration fees and perpetual payment of levies and taxes [10]. Till date, land tenure is governed by customary laws, especially in rural Nigeria. Therefore, tenure security is low as the transactions in the land market are largely informal.

Nigeria trails other African countries in the ease of registering land indices (see **Table 1**) [14]. Nigeria ranks 179th in the ease of registering land compared to Botswana (81st position), Morocco (86th position), South Africa (107th position) and Ghana (119th position). In terms of the number of procedures required to complete land title registration, there are 11 procedures in Nigeria compared to Botswana, Morocco, South Africa and Ghana with four procedures, six

S/ N	Country	Registering of property (DTF)	Registering property index	Procedures (number)	Time (days)	Cost (% of property value)	Quality of land administration index (0–30)
1	New Zealand	94.97	1	2	1	0.1	26
2	United States	76.80	37	4.4	15.2	2.5	17.6
3	China	76.15	41	4	19.5	3.4	18.3
4	United Kingdom	74.51	47	6	21.5	4.8	24.5
5	Botswana	65.45	81	4	27	5.1	10
6	Morocco	64.35	86	6	22	6.4	15.5
7	South Africa	58.43	107	7	23	7.6	13.5
8	Cote d'Ivoire	57.56	113	6	30	7.4	10.5
9	Ghana	55.5	119	6	52	6.7	8.0
10	Burkina Faso	50.44	140	4	67	12	11.5
11	Algeria	43.83	163	10	5.5	7.1	7
12	Nigeria	34.08	179	11.3	68.9	10.5	7.4

Source: World Bank [14].

Table 1. Ease of registering land in selected countries (2017).

procedures, seven procedures and six procedures, respectively. This depicts low level of innovation and inefficiency in the land registration process in Nigeria. As expected from a country with one of the highest number of procedures for land title registration, it takes more days to register land title in Nigeria than elsewhere (see **Table 1**).

2. State of land acquisition and land market in Nigeria

Generally, lands are small and fragmented which imparts significantly on the mechanisation potentials of farming households. Similarly, fragmented nature of land systems inhibits the creation of an effective land market, which consequently hinders the emergence and development of an overall equitable distribution of wealth [15]. Land markets should be accessible to all categories of people including women and minority groups.

According to Dale et al. [15], land markets should possess the following features:

- Guaranteed security of land rights
- Low transaction cost for all users

- Access to credit
- Transparency, openness and ease of access to all
- Protection of minorities
- Support for social, economic and environmental sustainability
- Public/private partnerships to provide value-for-money services

Small-scale farmers dominate rural landholdings with average farm size ranging from 0.5 ha in the South to 4 ha in the North. About 50% of the Nigerian farms are less than 1 ha, while 15% are less than 5 ha [16]. There are three types of land markets in Nigeria. The types of markets are:

- Formal markets where certificates of occupancy from the government are allocated.
- Combination of formal and informal markets where transfer of land rights are certificate of occupancy.
- Informal market where the bulk of the transactions are not documented as title owners do not obtain certificate of occupancy [16].

The land can be used for different purposes including agricultural production, industrial production, buildings for households and establishment of parks among others [5]. There are location, gender, income-class considerations in the allocation and ownership of land in Nigeria [17]. In terms of ownership structure, men typically own more land compared to women in Nigeria (see **Table 2**). Majority of the land owners inherited it from their family, while only 7 and 2.2% of male and female, respectively, reported purchase of land (National Bureau of Statistics; World Bank and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, [18]).

In the study conducted by Eze et al. [19], they examined land tenure systems, farm sizes, agricultural productivity and innovation by looking at the socio-economic characteristics of farmers and identified the factors that affected agricultural productivity in the Imo State. Five communities were chosen randomly, and from each of these communities, twenty farmers were randomly chosen. Data were collected, collated and analysed using relevant techniques such as means, percentages, frequency distribution and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that 85% of the respondents practiced individual land tenure system alone. It was also revealed that the laws of inheritance and increase in population led to the subdivision and fragmentation of existing farmland in such a manner that the sizes of farm holdings

Outright purchase		Rented		Used free of charge		Allocated by community		Family inheritance	
Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
7.0	2.2	6.8	11.8	7.9	11.8	7.1	5.9	71.2	68.4

Source: NBS et al. [18].

Table 2. Land ownership structure in Nigeria.

discouraged agricultural commercialization. Also, the study revealed that fragmentation widened the distance between plots that led to increased waste of man-hour and energy. It was also shown that mechanisation of agriculture was impracticable under land fragmentation and adoption of modern innovation was reduced since just 35.0% of the respondents claimed to have adopted other forms of innovation. From the analysis, it was found that lands were severally fragmented during the acquisition and sharing of either family or community lands, and this went a long way in discouraging adoption of laudable innovation like mechanised farming as a result of reduced farm size of land. Also farmers were not at liberty to sell a portion of land acquired through communal ownership and thus majority of them could not acquire extensive land for considerable agricultural productivity. The econometric result revealed those socioeconomic factors that significantly affected the farmers' productivity in the area to include planting materials, household size, farming experience, tenure system and labour cost.

Alarima et al. [12] examined the land rights and rental systems followed by sawah rice farmers in Nigeria. The study was conducted in six states in Nigeria that use sawah rice technology: Kwara, Ondo, Niger, Ebonyi, Kaduna and Abuja. A total of 124 sawah farmers were selected for participation based on their involvement in sawah-based rice production. Data used in this study were collected from October 2009 to January 2011 in all the sawah sites in Nigeria. T-test was used to determine significant differences in the yields and farm sizes of landlord and tenant farmers. The land tenure system practiced in the lowlands is governed primarily by inheritance (71.8%), with temporary arrangements made through rentals (37.1%). Tenants pay ₦12,000 ha⁻¹ year⁻¹ in land-for-cash agreements and 5% of the total yield of rice in land-for-paddy agreements. Generally, agreements between landlords and tenants were verbal, binding and honoured by both parties. Land conflicts occurred when either party breaches the agreement and always result in the landlords taking over the land. Significant differences in the farm sizes and yields of landlord and tenant farmers were found. The findings of the study indicate the importance of secured land tenure, which affects the practice of sawah and the productivity of rice farming. Sustaining and improving sawah rice production in the study area would require addressing the land tenure issues of both landlords and tenants. Access to land for tenants will enhance their participation in sawah and increase their chances of increasing their income and emerging from poverty. Investment in more durable inputs such as power tillers, dykes and irrigation canals will decrease if the land is not secured. Therefore, tenants and landless people need more secure access to land to provide them with opportunities to manage their sawah plots so that they will have higher yields. Farmers whose land security was not guaranteed would be more inclined towards short-term investments in land, and the sustainability of sawah would not be expected to be their priority.

Also, the study by Ojo [20] examined the effects of land acquisition for large-scale farming on the performance, productivity and technical efficiency of small-scale farming in Nigeria. The farmers were grouped into two groups: farmers whose families donated land for large-scale oil palm project (A) and those who did not (B). Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, gross margin and stochastic frontier production function analyses. The study revealed that acquisition of land for large-scale farming in the study area had adverse effects on small-scale farming. This could further worsen the food security crisis in Nigeria because

about 80% of farmers in Nigeria practice small-scale farming [21] that constitutes over 90% of food and agricultural production in the country [22]. It was revealed that group B farms were more productive in the allocation of resources and overall production as measured by the decreasing positive elasticity of production of most of the variables involved in the production function analysis. The group B farms were also more technically efficient than the group A farms.

The study therefore recommended that government in its drive to encourage large-scale agricultural production should not acquire land near the towns and people's settlements; rather, land on the highways/expressways should be opened up and allocated to prospective large-scale farmers.

Again, Twene [23] investigated the effects of the large-scale agricultural land grabbed for the Bui Dam project on the livelihoods of the affected people. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the use of interviewer questionnaire administration, interview guide, focus group discussions and observations. A total of 142 household heads were interviewed, although some key informants such as chiefs and community development officers of the district assemblies were also interviewed. The descriptive statistical tools and the t-test were employed to analyse the quantitative data whilst content analysis was applied to qualitative data with the result presented in the form of direct quotations. The study revealed through the result of the t-test for difference in output within 2005/2006 and 2013/2014 production seasons that local food crop production and the quantity of fish catch have declined after the land grabs.

Equally, it was found that annual income levels of the local people had fallen after the Bui Dam project due to reduction in their productivity of both crop production and the quantity of fish caught. Thus, farming and fishing were the most affected occupations in the study area. These were attributed to loss of farmland and low level of experience for fishing in the newly created lake as well as the problem of proximity between the resettled communities and the river.

In addition, it was found that the land grabbing situation resulted in conflict between some communities and the Bui Power Authority. The study showed that the local people initially reacted by engaging in conflict with officials of the Bui Power Authority, particularly in Dokokyina. Equally, it was found that the land-grabbing incident in the study area was not accompanied by adequate compensation packages as promised which were the bases for the conflict because assets lost were not in commensurate measure with compensation packages received.

However, it was also revealed that the acquisition of the land for the Bui Dam project and its associated relocation of the affected people have adversely affected the natural capital base of the people (land, forest and water bodies). Thus, generally, the study discovered that the local people's access to the natural capital had worsened, while access to the physical capital had improved.

Finally, with regard to interventions and coping strategies, the study revealed that the main coping strategies adopted by both men and women in the study communities after the land was taken for the Bui Dam project are casual work (by-day) and petty trading, respectively.

The growing interest in petty trading was attributed to the view that the construction of the dam has caused influx of people into the study area, thereby providing market for consumable goods. Other coping strategies included farming, premixed fuel business, wood gathering and pito brewing. The local people in the study communities were unaware of any alternative livelihood interventions provided by the Bui Power Authority and the district assemblies to ensure the sustainability of their livelihoods.

The study therefore recommended the introduction of a comprehensive livelihood enhancement programme such as skill training for the youth and the landless group of people in the study communities by the Bui Power Authority and the district assemblies. This would enable them to promote their livelihood sustainability.

3. Land tenure, food security and livelihood security

Rural Nigeria is agricultural as 85% of the residents depend on agriculture for their livelihood. However, access to land is limited as families and community heads still manage to control land thereby determining access to land. Given the position of Land Use Act 1978, it implies that the beneficiaries of the communal land allocation system are not formally recognised as the legal holders of right to the land. Again, family and community heads rely on memory and reference to natural and artificial features to define plots of land that is prone to uncertainty regarding the location of boundaries [23]. This is because most communal land allocations are not documented [23].

Availability of land determines food and livelihood security given the level of agricultural development in Nigeria [17]. This is because farming operations will remain at subsistence level due to inadequate access to land. In fact, an estimated 95% of agricultural lands in Nigeria are not titled [24]. This undermines the capacity of farmers to present lands as collateral to access formal loans from financial institutions [24]. Again, the lack of absolute or nonderivative property interest constrains the ability of farming households to plant cash crops consequently limiting their income generation potentials [17]. Therefore, food security is difficult as the population continues to grow and agricultural land becomes scarce [25]. The challenges of agricultural production and food security including inadequate access to land, finance and technology, inconsistent policy regime, infrastructure deficit and adverse climate change impacts have been documented in literature [26, 27].

4. Land acquisition and livelihood security in Africa

Moreover, Onoja and Achike [28] reviewed cases of land grabbing by foreign investors in West Africa, identified the possible drivers of large-scale land acquisition by foreign investors in the region and discussed the implications of the findings for agricultural and land policy reforms in West Africa. Prior to the study, reports indicating that large portions of land (estimated 50–80 m ha) have been bought by international investors in middle- and low-income countries,

with roughly two-thirds of those purchases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa, called for a cursory appraisal of the implications of the trend of land grabbing for West African food security (Sahel West Africa Countries, SWAC/OECD, [29]). Land transactions involving foreign investors had increased in the area over the years. Over 100,000 ha have been documented in Nigeria. Ghana and Mali have many significant transactions on land by foreign investors. Several investors have more than 100,000 ha. Burkina Faso has one significant land transaction (200,000 ha), while Niger and Senegal have relatively small land transactions. Most lands grabbed in West Africa were profit driven (by biofuel investors) and were made under the guise of using the lands acquired for agricultural investments. Land tenure and investment in land have far-reaching economic and social implications and are therefore key issues for small family-operated farms and their relations with agribusiness (Sahel West Africa Countries, SWAC/OECD, [29]). According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation [30], many problems that are now being recognised in natural and agricultural land systems have arisen out of the use of inadequate technologies for assessing and monitoring land resources, preventing land pollution and rehabilitating contaminated lands. According to Cotula, Vermeulen, Leonard, and Keeley, transactions labelled as “large-scale” involved between 1000 and 500,000 ha [31, 32]. Increasing evidence is emerging to affirm that the problem of large-scale land acquisition by foreign investors in Africa is following a dangerous trend, which needs to be monitored.

Global Development [33] reported that research findings have indicated that a million Chinese farmers have joined the rush to Africa and that some of the world’s richest countries are buying or leasing land in some of the world’s poorest to satisfy their insatiable appetites for food and fuel. In the new scramble for Africa, the report added, 2.5 m ha (6.2 m acres) of farmland in five sub-Saharan countries have been bought or rented in the past 5 years at a total cost of \$920 m (£563 m). Recent high-profile land purchases encompassing thousands of hectares of prime agricultural land have raised concerns over equitable land access [30]. Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria and other West African countries, is not exempt from this development (see Cotula, Vermeulen, Leonard, and Keeley, [31, 32]). Such a trend is more disturbing when considered alongside the future of food production from SSA land, where FAO [34] put the estimated share of arable land in total agricultural land at only 15.6% as of 2000. Response indicators showed that the value of agricultural production per hectare of agricultural land is highest in South Asia, at I\$ 720.6, while Sub-Saharan Africa trailed behind, globally ranking lowest with a value of I\$ 71.8. Under this scenario, worrying over the growing trend of large-scale land acquisition by foreign investors—who are, at best, interested in growing crops that can only contribute to food security and economic growth of countries outside SSA—while the limited land available for African farmers is diminishing in the face of lingering hunger and poverty is justified.

Food security is a current issue in Nigeria, as it is across Africa. According to the review, it was noted that there are 307 million hungry people in Africa, most of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa (265 million). A FAO statistic indicated that at least 9.4 million Nigerians were undernourished and that out of Nigeria’s 147.7 million citizens, 6% were highly undernourished (2011). Instead of dealing with food supply or food security problems at such a critical time, the country is selling off arable lands to foreign investors prospecting in biofuels production to

the extent of losing greater than 136,000 ha of land from only eight deals that could have been used in producing food crops. The implication of this is that the drive for food security will still be a far-fetched dream as long as attraction of foreign investment in agriculture only aims to produce biofuels for profit. The auctioning of fertile farmlands for this purpose also portends danger of losing job opportunities, increasing poverty in the country, and helping the growth of foreign companies to the disadvantage of poor land owners in Nigeria. The overall implication of these trends is to increase poverty, unfavourable terms of trade against Nigeria, desertification, increased global warming and the adverse consequences of climate change and the disempowerment of indigenous citizens, who will now be left with few pieces of land that may not reach even 1 ha. The study therefore recommended that a regional approach should be applied by African countries, implementing land reforms that will involve the local communities who own the land, stopping long-term leasing beyond 50 years, building capacity and creating awareness about land transactions of large magnitudes.

Furthermore, a report by Economic Commission for Africa [35] to show the linkages between land tenure and food security in Africa confirms that land plays an important role in the livelihoods of the majority of Africans. This asserts that food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure and the capacity to use land productively and in a sustainable manner are addressed. This chapter suggests that land is central in promoting rural livelihoods in Africa because access to land and security of tenure are the main means through which food security and sustainable development can be realised because the livelihoods of over 70% of the population in Africa are mainly linked to land and natural resources exploitation.

This chapter studied the land policy generic model developed by Moyo [36], based upon Shivji et al. [37], derived from five analytical constructs of land management, namely, land distribution, land utilisation, land tenure security, land administration and land adjudication. It posits land tenure as one of the central factors determining food security and sustainable development.

In terms of land distribution, the major problem relates to unequal access to land according to race, gender, class and ethnic distinctions. The second analytical construct relates to land utilisation and how this has been economically and socially constructed. There is a tendency to view small farms as inefficient and large farms as highly efficient in terms of yields per unit of land [38], especially in settler countries. But such a perception has long since been debunked [39, 40] and multinational organisations (IMF and World Bank) have come to accept the efficiency of smallholder land use. The main question of analysis is how the regulation of land-use is consensual or coercive and whether it is free of discrimination. The third conceptual issue is how land tenure has been constructed and qualified in most African countries. The main question relates to how secure the tenure systems are and whether there is equity or not. It was argued that access to more productive land and control of natural resources by the poor offers the most stable form of security for poor households. In this case, livelihood security cannot be achieved without some form of redistribution of land held by wealthy classes (constituted of individuals and multinational companies). The assumption tends to be that enhancing access to land, security of tenure or sustainability of land resource use will ultimately enhance welfare, including food security.

The fourth conceptual issue relates to how land is administered. The management regimes of land and natural resources differ due to the nature of the historical experiences. The main issues relate to the accessibility, transparency and accountability of the administrative systems. There has been a tendency towards too much administration, due to the different layers of the state, local and indigenous authority, particularly within customary tenure systems. The fifth analytical construct relates to systems of adjudicating land disputes. There are key questions with regard to how to resolve current and past land problems in situations where multiple tenure regimes exist. In most countries, the legal framework has been biased towards the market and the state.

The study also reviewed the model by Maxwell and Wiebe [41] that illustrates a causal flow relationship between resources, production, income, consumption and nutritional status.

5. Conventional conceptual links between land and food

Below is an example of a conventional conceptual nexus between land and food: Resources → Production → Income → Consumption → Nutritional status (Source: Adopted from Maxwell and Wiebe [41]).

But it was suggested that a simple linear model does not adequately capture the inter-relationships between consumption and investment decisions, household endowments, production and exchange decisions, and household entitlements. A more comprehensive model illustrates a circular relationship between these four factors, which are further impacted upon by tenure institutions and asset markets and have outputs in terms of environmental impact, generation and redistribution of wealth. The most apparent qualitative link that was suggested was that increased security of tenure in productive resources enables more efficient and profitable agricultural production and hence greater access to food via both own production and trade.

Also, a report was given by the European Union on Development in 2011 that was driven mainly by concerns about the scarcity of food, energy and arable land and linked to these expectations of rising land values with issues relating to:

- i. How the land deals come about, the quality of the contracts, and who will benefit and who will lose (i.e., governance and accountability issues with respect to decision-making on transactions and terms of the contracts).
- ii. Whether there is recognition of all local rights (including informal and secondary rights) and adequate compensation.
- iii. Whether the contracts override customary rights, resulting in smallholders, pastoralists and forest dwellers being driven from the land.
- iv. The implications for food security/sovereignty, rural development and the future of smallholder farming.

- v. Risks related to water availability, environmental degradation and loss of ecosystem services.

The report explained that it was not only transnational investors but also migrants who use their remittances to buy land in their country of origin [42] that were acquiring large areas of farmland. Although not a new phenomenon, studies indicated that this form of land acquisition is accelerating [43].

Also, LSLAs (large-scale land acquisitions) were also taking place for purposes other than food and biofuel or agricultural production [44, 45] that included nature conservation, parks and new initiatives under the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD).

According to the report, the debate on global food security continues to stimulate the interest in large-scale farming, which is perceived as more productive and efficient. The argument runs as follows: given that by 2050, some 9 billion people will need to be fed and there is a need for a significant increase in production and productivity, which can be achieved only by replacing smallholder farming with industrial-type farming. Others contend, however, that smallholder farming can be just as efficient (e.g., [46]).

Moreso, the direct contribution of LSLAs to national food sovereignty depends on the type of crop grown and whether it is locally marketed at affordable prices. In Ethiopia, these large farms sell grain to WFP (World Food Programme), which uses them to feed those who left the famine areas and are now in camps. It is important to look at local as well as national food security. As mentioned, the first effect of these large-scale farms is often that local smallholders lose access to land and natural resources, which undermines their livelihoods, food security and ability to accumulate resources. These losses may be partly compensated for if new jobs are created that allow these people to earn sufficient to feed themselves and their families to a comparable level in terms of quantity and quality and also to pay for other services.

Fombe et al. [47] studied security of land ownership by women in Anglophone Cameroon. In most parts of Africa, land ownership is affected by traditional values, inheritance rights and government influence. This study illustrates that land acquisition and development by women constitute a problem because of traditional pressures and the law guiding the process of land certification. Aluko and Amidu (2006) however argue that the complexity of land tenure in Nigeria is the result of the co-existence of several systems; none of which is completely dominant. This legal pluralism causes a degree of uncertainty about land rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, like women. In most of Anglophone Cameroon, there are basically two ways in which women can acquire land either through family bond (users' rights) or through transactions (purchase, lease and rent). In the current context of land scarcity, population mobility, urbanisation and land reforms, the competitive demand for land has not only generated a diversity of struggles over land but has further complicated the prospects of women accessing land in a predominantly patriarchal setting (LotSMART et al., 2010). In Anglophone Cameroon, the majority of women do not own land or have the right to inherit land and other property where statutory laws and customary practices co-exist.

The study's major aim was to ascertain the effectiveness of government's legal instrument (the Land Consultative Board) that regulates the purchase and ownership of land; random interviews were conducted with traditional and local administrative authorities as well as men and women landowners in five of six divisions in the North West and four of five in the South West Region. These two English-speaking regions were considered as Anglophone Cameroon because they were administered by British Cameroon during the colonial period.

A random but stratified survey method was adopted with 20% of the sampled population comprised males based on their traditional and societal roles, while 80% was addressed to rural and urban women in eight divisions.

Women's land rights can contribute to their empowerment and constitute a key to reducing poverty and developing a community. With secured land rights, crop production will increase; women will have better access to credit, develop self-esteem and will be able to develop their own skills (Mantobang, 2011). According to Sengupta (2000), empowerment is inextricably linked to rights language, whereby it constitutes the ability or opportunity of the poor to claim and exercise their rights.

Sustainable development should be inextricably linked to tenure rights. This concept is not mentioned in the Declaration of the Right to Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1986 (Marks, 2008). In as much as women have a right to development, so do they have a right to sustainable development, though this latter concept hinges more on rights and obligations of humans towards nature. Taking an ethical perspective on the concept of sustainable development, Marks (2008) looks at it as fairness at three levels; "intragenerational", "intergenerational" and "between humans and the environment", by enhancing people's moral consciousness and environmental protection, altering traditional ideologies and behaviours and promoting sustainable survival.

Women's lack of ownership and access to land results from some traditional practices that violate sustainable development. This is exemplified by those who uphold the values on the one hand and the environment on the other, with the victims (women) being at the centre. It follows therefore that depriving a woman of the right to inherit land for the simple fact that she is a woman puts her in a disadvantaged socio-economic and political position vis-à-vis the men. This only accentuates the feminization of poverty.

It was noted that there is need to exhume the barriers of government's legal instrument (the Land Consultative Board) that regulates the ownership of land and to revisit some traditional practices as regards land ownership that impact negatively on women in a changing and globalising world. A compromise approach was advocated for land acquisition that can transcend traditional barriers as well as render the process of land registration more realistic especially for women.

In the same vein, Odoemelam et al. [48] evaluated women access and rights to land and its implication on rural household food security in Abia State, Nigeria. The study established that it was not just the shortage of land that affects the output of agriculture but the structure of the land tenure, lack of proper land ownership and rights.

Multistage sampling procedure was used in the selection of the sample size with a total of 180 respondents. Data were generated through the use of Focus Group Discussion and participatory observation. Data generated were analysed through the use of simple descriptive statistics like frequency distribution and means.

Results showed that most of the women were in the economically active age and majority were married with a very high percentage having only up to primary school level of education. The level of income indicated that majority of the respondents 34% earned between (N160–180,000), while 16% earned between (N200–220,000) per annum. Methods of land inheritance showed that women acquired land for cultivation through majorly matrilineal ties and purchases, while other forms of acquisition such as renting, borrowing and through inheritance were minimal. In terms of access and use rights on lands, the study found about 30% of the respondents were allowed to cultivate only annual crops, 15% perennial crops, 11% were not allowed to harvest production from the trees, 13% were not allowed to retain land after long fallow and 8% complained about limited access to inputs.

On effect of access and land use rights on food security, the 25% respondents stated that due to the lack of access to land use right, their expertise on farming activities are underutilised leading to food insecurity, 15% said they lack commitment, 26% complained about their inability to get credit facilities from bank because they can not use their cultivating land to get collateral, unfertile plots 13% leading to low yield and nonmechanised farms, 24% due to scattered plots. The study concluded that ownership rights are critical to securing a sustainable livelihood and income, and the lack of rights is one of the main sources of economic insecurity. When men and women have equal access to land use rights, they have effective decision-making power in the household and food production will be enhanced to its full capacity to support the welfare of all family members and to promote food security in the society.

De Zoysa [1] examined the implications of large-scale land acquisition on small landholder's food security. This chapter analysed the implications of LSLA (large-scale land acquisition) on local population's food security and livelihoods using Ethiopia as a case study to measure the progression of vulnerability created by land reform policies that encourages such investments. Using the analytical framework of the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, this chapter argued that Ethiopia's land reform has systematically weakened small landholder's access to food and livelihood. The Pressure and Release (PAR) model was selected because the model allows one to understand that food insecurity as defined as the availability, access and utilisation of food does not occur due to a drought but more so a systematic breakdown of coping mechanisms and the lack of consideration paid to rectify root causes of food insecurity. It was recognised that all frameworks have limitations in analysing complex situations including the PAR, and it was treated with caution to ensure there is no oversimplifications.

The PAR originally developed by Blaikie et al. in 1994 demonstrates that disasters were not simply a random natural phenomenon but a result of development regression [49]. The PAR identified three factors that exacerbate vulnerabilities that include: (1) root causes; (2) dynamic pressures; (3) unsafe conditions.

The study was based on secondary data through the forms of both academic and grey literature.

In order to capture the impact of LSLA on affected populations, the case study needs to narrow the scope into a region of the country that faces the highest amount of LSLA such as the Gambela Region of Ethiopia.

Root Causes: Power: There was a lack of knowledge about land deals because they were rarely advised or consulted prior to the agreements. Even if they were consulted, their lack of bargaining power stunts their ability to negotiate fair rates of compensation. Blaikie et al. identified three causes that limit the access to power which are spatial, temporal and social.

Structures: Political and economic structures reproduce domination against the marginalised in order to maintain the control of power. In the case of the Gambela Region, the lack of secure land tenure was a structure that reinforced the deeper issue of an ethnic minority who had a lack of political power. **Resources:** Pastoral communities were increasingly vulnerable because they were denied access to grazing areas that provided access to livelihood resources. What can occur through this process is that these communities shed their cultural way of livelihood and become highly dependent on wages earned in farm labour to purchase food [50].

Dynamic Pressures: The notion of dynamic pressure exacerbates the root causes of tension entailed in limited access to power and resources. This was evident in the study area because of issues that dealt with the lack of press freedom and NGO advocacy. Blaikie et al. conveys that the root causes channelled by the dynamic pressure of the absence of press freedoms and limited scope of NGOs eventually force changes to the macro-economic and social conditions (2005).

Unsafe Conditions: Blaikie et al. expressed that root causes and dynamic pressures manifest into unsafe conditions in the physical and social environment making the affected populations more vulnerable to risks [51]. The physical environment of the land leased to investors steadily degraded through agricultural intensification because there is a lack of monitoring mechanisms and enforcement from the authority.

The major lessons learned from the Ethiopian case study was that the 'new phenomenon' of land acquisitions in the Gambela Region was actually a process that had historical roots dating to Ethiopia's imperial colonialism making it 'an old wine in a new bottle.' The local conditions of suppressing press freedoms and NGOs' operational space ensured that such oppressive actions continued in the future without critical review. Another lesson from the case study is that disasters are never a one-off event but manifests from embedded vulnerabilities. This chapter does not argue with the fact that a high level of investment is needed in Ethiopia, but the concern is that without rectifying the root causes of disasters that have plagued Ethiopia, large-scale land acquisition only exacerbates the progression of vulnerability.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This study examined the issues around land acquisition and the implications on livelihood and food security. It was found that the land acquisition is bound by the Land Use Act 1978, which stipulates that all lands belong to the government. However, the bulk of the land transactions

are carried out in informal markets under customary laws with poor or lack of documentation, especially in rural Nigeria. The land market in Nigeria has evolved over the years from the pre-colonial era when land titles were in custody of family and community heads through colonial era and post-colonial era. The current framework undermines food security as farmers typically lack the access to land and as such cannot scale their subsistence farming or even present land as collateral for formal loans. This study identified bureaucratic bottlenecks, high cost of registration of land title, weak land markets and policy inconsistency as the challenges of land acquisition and use in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Government should reduce and make the processes to be completed easier in registering lands in Nigeria.
2. The Land Use Act 1978 should be amended to capture prevailing realities around customary laws and informal markets.
3. Government should reduce the cost of land registration in Nigeria.
4. Multilateral organisations and government should co-create and co-finance innovative interventions to improve activities in the land market.

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