

# LAND MARKET LIBERALIZATION AND TRANS- NATIONAL COMMERCIAL LAND DEALS IN GHANA SINCE THE 1990S.

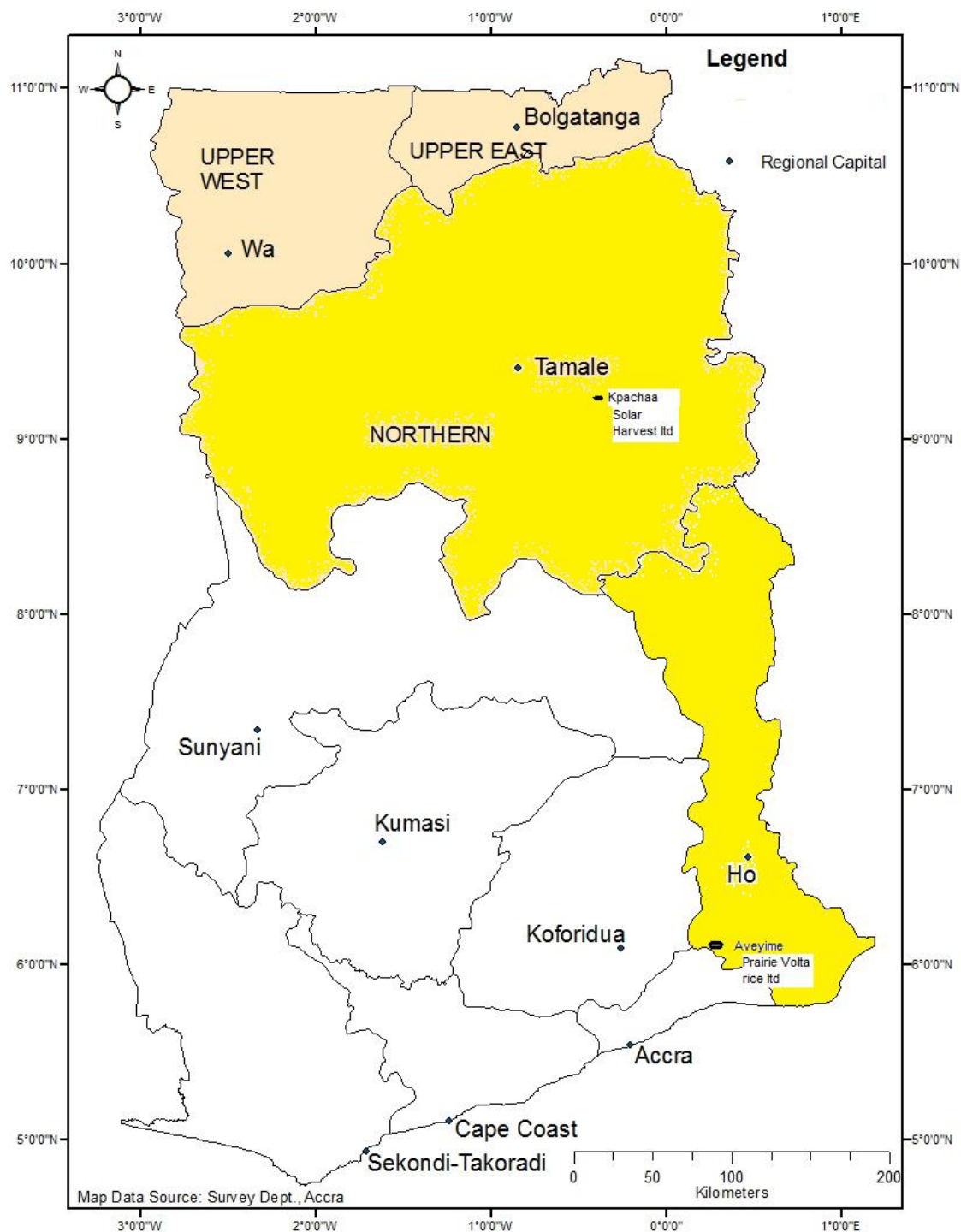
Dzodzi Tsikata and Joseph Yaro,  
University of Ghana

# Research Questions

- Is the nature of particular transnational commercial land transactions a factor in how local communities respond to them?
  - Structure, business model, the role of different actors and mitigation measures
- Are environmental characteristics and local rules of land tenure factors in how communities and their members are affected by transnational land transactions?
  - The sustainability of livelihoods and land tenure arrangements
- Are there differences in impacts and responses within communities?
  - Social differentiation- land users; land interests; gender; poverty and migrant

# The study areas and Methods

- 3 Case studies
  - Prairie Volta Rice Ltd Project (Lower Volta, Volta Region)
  - Biofuel Africa Ltd., Now Solar Harvest Ltd, Projects (Kpachaa Area, Northern Region)
  - Integrated Tamale Fruit Company (Dipaale Area, Northern Region)
- Methods- qualitative
  - Interviews with project officials and chiefs
  - One male and one female focus group discussion
  - Individual interviews with 4 men and 4 women



# Findings so far-Prairie Volta Rice Ltd Project

- Long standing depression of Lower Volta; Area of outmigration
- Company owned by American Texans, Ghana Government and Ghana commercial bank
- Land holding system family based; however, Project land the subject of compulsory land acquisition, and now court dispute.
- 1250 hectares acquired to cultivate rice largely for local market; Only 300 hectares under cultivation; additional 2,000 hectares in process of acquisition elsewhere in the area

# Prairie continued

- Much more land cleared but not in use- resulted in losses of usufruct in land; inconvenience of farming across a stream; and the loss of commons and bio-diversity.
- Project business model does not involve communities except as employees (100 permanent staff); Community expectations centred on employment
- 3 kinds of affected communities- land owning community- Mafi Dove; resettled pastoralists; and Bakpa Tademe- community with no land left.
- Responses have included re-migration
- Differences among the community- chiefs; members from land owning group- men/women; those not from land owning group; loss of commons have gendered impacts

# Findings so Far- Kpachaa

- Area of intensive farming and in migration
- Land holding system chieftaincy based; acquisition from Dagbon overlord although sub-chiefs involved
- 10,600 hectares acquired- majority Kpachaa village lands. 400 hectares- jatropha; 220 hectares maize. Another 500 hectares cleared for next season
- Company began with jatropha; now shifting to maize
- Business model involved farmers in the acquisition and gave options

# Kpachaa-2

- Corporate social responsibility measures
- Company employed community members until crisis
- Disruption of local farming systems
- Destruction of commons
- Impacts gendered- shea nut; fuel wood losses
- Responses have included out-migration;
- Anti-project demonstration

# Key issues and themes in the case studies

- Nature of deals/contractual arrangements and Implications for Customary Systems of Land Tenure
- Role of the state and local elite
- Responses of Transnational companies to local conditions and changing global trends
- The disappearing 'commons'
- Food security

# Some early conclusions

- There are variations in the land transactions of transnational corporations in different land holding systems in Ghana.
- Outcomes have been remarkably similar for both food crops or non-food crops.
- Unfulfilled or partially fulfilled expectations and promises.
- Benefits have been meagre, while their disadvantages have been significant from the point of view of local communities.
- For the companies, returns have also been disappointing - unfavourable local conditions, but more importantly, the changing global trends.
- The State as a player has compounded negative outcomes .
- Institutional failures have occurred alongside conflicts of interest.
- Land deals impacts are not only economic, but are changing traditional dynamics and arrangements of power and resource systems.
- All these raise questions of agribusiness's role in agrarian transformation.