



# *Struggles over family land? Tree crops, land and labour in Ghana's Brong-Ahafo region*

Article

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**Title: Struggles over family land? Tree crops, land and labour in Ghana's Brong-Ahafo region**

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**Abstract (250 words)**

Agricultural land use in much of Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana has been shifting from the production of food crops towards increased cashew nut cultivation in recent years. This article explores everyday, less visible, gendered and generational struggles over family farms in West Africa, based on qualitative, participatory research in a rural community that is becoming increasingly integrated into the global capitalist system. As a tree crop, cashew was regarded as an individual man's property to be passed on to his wife and children rather than to extended family members, which differed from the communal land tenure arrangements governing food crop cultivation. The tendency for land, cash crops and income to be controlled by men, despite women's and young people's significant labour contributions to family farms, and for women to rely on food crop production for their main source of income and for household food security, means that women and girls are more likely to lose out when cashew plantations are expanded to the detriment of land for food crops. Intergenerational tensions emerged when young people felt that their parents and elders were neglecting their views and concerns. The research provides important insights into gendered and generational power relations regarding land access, property rights and intra-household decision-making processes. Greater dialogue between genders and generations may help to tackle unequal power relations and lead to shared decision-making processes that build the resilience of rural communities.

**Key words (6)**

Gender and intergenerational relations

Land access

Property rights

Division of labour

Rural community resilience

West Africa

**Word length: 9674 (excl. references)**

## 1. Introduction

In rural spaces in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, access to land signifies group membership, belonging and exclusion (Cooper and Bird, 2012; Lentz 2007). Questions of land access need to be understood within the context of the division of labour, social inequalities and wider changes that are re-shaping rural landscapes (Amanor, 2001), such as greater integration into the global capitalist economy and climate-related pressures. Agricultural land use in much of Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana has been shifting from the production of food crops towards raw cashew nut cultivation in recent years. Global demand for cashew is growing and an International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT, 2011:2) report argues that 'the crop has the potential to reduce poverty among the rural poor' in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. As a tree crop which is regarded as 'property', however, the expansion of cashew plantations may lead to greater individualisation of property rights (Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997; Berry, 2009). While higher income may increase access to education and enable people to buy food, cashew cultivation reduces the land available to grow food crops, revealing both benefits and trade-offs for rural communities.

While literature on large-scale land acquisitions has burgeoned recently (Li, 2014; Doss et al. 2014), few studies have investigated less visible, everyday struggles over family farms. An extensive literature documents the gendered division of labour in rural Sub-Saharan Africa (Koopman, 1997) and recent research and policy has revealed the significance of young people's labour on family farms in the global South (Kielland and Tovo, 2006; ILO, 2013). Few studies, however, integrate analysis of gender and generational relations. In this article, we seek to develop a nuanced understanding of gendered and generational inequalities in labour and access to land in the context of globalisation and provide insight into the views of rural young people from the global South, which have been somewhat overlooked to date. We first give an overview of our conceptual approach to gender and generational relations, the division of labour and land access, within the broader framework of sustainable livelihoods and the resilience of rural communities. We then discuss the qualitative participatory methodology used to investigate labour, intra-household resources allocations and land access on family farms in Ghana's Brong-Ahafo region. We analyse the views and experiences of young people and middle and older generations regarding current practices and how they responded to increased commercialisation of communally-held resources.

### 1.1 Gendered division of labour and land access in Sub-Saharan Africa

Rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa are often characterised by a complex gendered division of labour, whereby women combine their reproductive role in subsistence agriculture, with their productive role in selling any surplus in markets and producing cash crops, working as unpaid family labourers on male relatives' fields (Koopman, 1997). Gender and development analysts have challenged classical economic models of the 'unitary household' and revealed that rather than being characterised by altruism and harmony, intra-household relations and decision-making processes are characterised by unequal power relations and often conflicting interests (Sen, 1987; Kandioti, 1997). Patterns of labour, income earning, resource allocation and expenditure within households thus differ according to gender (Shah, 1998) and significantly affect the wellbeing of different family members (Soto Bermant, 2008).

Although women are responsible for household food production in many rural communities across Sub-Saharan Africa, customary law often excludes women from owning and inheriting land (Cooper and Bird, 2012). Customary law, which can be defined as, 'a body of rules

governing personal status, communal resources and local organisation' (Joireman, 2008, p.1235), affects individuals as members of kinship groups and lineages, in contrast to the individual nature of statutory law. In many Sub-Saharan African countries, women usually have secondary usufruct access rights to land gained through their husband and/or father or other male relatives (Yngstorm, 2002; Meinzen-Dick et al.,1997). Rights to land often involve 'a series of overlapping claims, dependent on customary use, season and negotiation' (Toulmin 2008:12). Berry (1997) argues that in Asante, Ghana, as in much of Africa, land rights are subject to intermittent or on-going negotiation, and social institutions (including the 'household', 'family', 'community' and so on) should be understood as processes rather than as sets of fixed rules or structures. Carr's (2008a & b) research among the Akan in Ghana's Central Region has revealed that it is the complex interplay of access to land, local understandings of how to manage economic and environmental uncertainty, and local gender roles which shape agricultural decisions and intra-household resource allocations.

Increased commercialisation and privatization of land often consolidates men's control of land (Lastarria-Cornhiel,1997; Yngstorm, 2002). The introduction of a tree crop with a long life span (such as cocoa, teak or in our research, cashew) on family land may distil communal property rights into an individual's (often men's) sole ownership (Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997; Berry, 2009). As Quisumbing et al.(2001) note in Western Ghana, under customary land tenure institutions, relatively strong individual ownership rights are granted to those who plant trees. Community members who have 'acquired family land through inheritance and allocations from the extended family may have strong incentives to plant trees to strengthen his [sic] individual land rights' (ibid:158). Women do not necessarily lose out in such shifts towards greater individualisation of land tenure; a woman's labour on her husband's plot may represent a form of 'sweat equity' that confers individualised land rights. Furthermore, gift transactions, usually in return for labour on a husband's plot, are the most important mode of land acquisition for women, rather than land inheritance (ibid).

## **1.2 Intergenerational relations, young people's labour and access to land in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Recent literature expresses concern about conflicts between generations in diverse contexts (Vanderbeck and Worth, 2015; Reynolds Whyte et al, 2008). In many African societies, the everyday lives of different generations are often integrated and based on generational hierarchies (Reynolds Whyte et al, 2008). Historically, the relationship between the generations in African societies has been based on 'the value of the knowledge, respect and experience that the younger generation receives from the older generation' (Oheneba-Sakyi and Takyi, 2006:14). 'Generation' can be understood as a genealogical relation of kinship; as a principle for structuring society; and as a historical generation (Reynolds Whyte et al, 2008:4-6). It is thus a relational term that may denote generational position within families, social categories of seniors and juniors in society, as well as a historical cohort. In this article, we draw predominantly on the first and second notions of generation, using the third meaning when referring to future generational cohorts.

Geographies of children and youth have demonstrated that young people make significant contributions to the household's productive and social reproductive work in the global South (Katz, 2004; Robson, 2004). Children often do the low status activities associated with 'women's work' according to conventional gendered divisions of labour (Bradley, 1993; author's, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa is the world region with the highest proportion of the child population (aged 5-17) in employment (30%) and in child labour (21%)<sup>1</sup> (ILO, 2013).

'Child labour in agriculture' consists primarily of work on smallholder family farms and agriculture is regarded by the ILO (2013) as one of the three most dangerous sectors due to work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents and occupational diseases. The type of work that young people are involved in, the hours they work, labour relations, the setting, remuneration, degree of hazard, among other factors, are key to assessing the extent to which work may be harmful (Ansell, 2005).

Few studies explicitly focus on young people's access to land or intergenerational wealth transfers in rural spaces, yet inheritance represents a critical mode for the transfer of land between generations (Cooper, 2012). The little available literature tends to focus on orphaned young people's land (dis-)inheritance in the context of the HIV epidemic in Eastern and Southern Africa (Rose, 2007; Evans, 2015). In Babo's (2010) study in Cote d'Ivoire, young people's introduction of cashew (without elders' permission) on lineage land (usually used for yam cultivation) was found to threaten established land tenure norms. Within two years, village chiefs found that the portions of their land they had loaned to young people had become cashew plantations and found themselves in an impasse, since, at the time, there were no customary regulations over the use of permanent (tree) crops and dispossession or other sanctions would harm the lineage. This created intergenerational tensions, but ultimately led to a process of negotiation and consensus-building to introduce new regulations to limit the rapid monopolisation of soils by cashew plants and protect land for food crop cultivation (ibid).

In rural Southern Ghana, Amanor (2001) argues that the lineage system of redistribution is breaking down, resulting in fragmented households and struggles between elders and youth, and men and women. Indeed, Van de Geest (2008) suggests that intergenerational relations are becoming more strained in rural Eastern Ghana, as knowledge about farming, medicinal herbs, customs, family history that was traditionally passed down from elders to younger generations becomes 'obsolete'; the new generation needs different types of knowledge than previous generations in order to survive and become successful, such as a school education or contacts to obtain a job or travel abroad.

### **1.3 Sustainable livelihoods**

Our gendered and generational analysis of the empirical findings is underpinned by the sustainable livelihoods framework. Livelihoods are viewed holistically as encompassing the capabilities, assets and activities required to make a living (Chambers and Conway, 1992). Assets have been conceptualised as different forms of capital, including physical assets and material resources, such as livestock and property, human, financial, socio-political and environmental capital, including land, trees, and water resources.

Despite widespread adoption in policy, the actor-orientated local focus of the sustainable livelihoods framework has been critiqued for its tendency to downplay structural constraints, such as politics and power, and for its failure to engage with processes of economic globalisation, the challenges of environmental sustainability, and transformatory shifts in rural economies (de Haan, 2007; Scoones, 2009; de Haan and Zoomers, 2005). Further criticisms of the approach include an under-theorised and implicitly unitary model of the household, instead of utilising a model based on co-operative conflict (Prowse, 2010). While recent research in Ghana has drawn attention to gendered power relations within the household which mediate livelihood strategies and land access (Carr, 2008a & b; Quisumbing

et al., 2001), few studies combine analysis of gendered and generational inequalities, which our research seeks to address.

We also draw on Wilson's (2010) model of multifunctional quality and the temporal evolution of rural systems, which builds on the sustainable livelihoods framework of interrelated 'capitals'. Resilient rural communities are characterised by a balance of well-developed economic, social and environmental capital<sup>2</sup>, including:

- *Economic capital*: economic wellbeing, diversified income streams, integration into the global capitalist system;
- *Social capital*: close interaction between rural people; availability of skills training and education, good health and sanitation, good communication between stakeholder groups, transparent land ownership regulations;
- *Environmental capital*: good water quality and availability, sustainable soil management, predictable agricultural yields, sustainable management of environmental resources.

These broad categories can gloss over more nuanced understandings of the characteristics of diverse rural communities. Rather than regarding 'integration into the global capitalist system' as a form of economic capital, for example, we argue that this is a process which is often characterised by global inequalities and may take different forms of integration which may or may not increase economic capital in rural communities. Furthermore, 'close interactions between rural people' could be exploitative and lead to conflict and poor governance, rather than being seen only as a positive aspect of 'social capital'.

While we acknowledge, therefore, the limitations of these broad categorisations of economic, social and environmental capital identified by Wilson (2010), the overall framework nevertheless helps to highlight how the combination of different forms of capital may enhance the resilience of rural communities. Wilson argues that as rural communities become embedded into global capitalist systems, they 'may be forced/ encouraged to intensify agricultural production and/or to seek alternative means of income generation' (ibid:373). While this does not necessarily reduce the multifunctional quality of communities, social and environmental capital may be weakened in the process, particularly when outmigration of young people leads to a 'disintegration of formerly close-knit communities'(ibid). Globalisation, however, may also offer opportunities for increasing the multifunctional quality of rural communities through improved infrastructure, education or diversification of livelihoods.

In this article, we draw on the conceptual framing of the sustainable livelihoods framework and the multifunctional quality and resilience of rural communities, combined with a gendered and generational perspective, to analyse the empirical findings. We first give an overview of the research methods used.

## **2. Research methods**

A qualitative, participatory methodology was considered most appropriate to investigate the division of labour, land tenure and inheritance practices in a rural community in Ghana's Brong-Ahafo region<sup>3</sup>. The research explored how and why labour and land access may be changing for men, women and young people and analysed their perceptions of the shift towards cashew cultivation. Carr (2008b) argues that a poststructural feminist approach is needed to provide a more nuanced picture of the vulnerability of sub-divisions of the categories of 'man' and 'woman' than that usually provided by 'mainstream development

thinking'. A diverse purposive sample of community members of different generations, genders, ages and social status and with varying sizes of cashew plantations was therefore identified in the study location in order to provide insights into the heterogeneous experiences of 'men', 'women' and 'young people'.

During Phase 1 (August-October 2012), the sample was identified using snowball sampling and fieldwork was conducted by the authors and research assistants with a total of 60 participants. Focus groups and participatory mapping activities were conducted with 24 participants in three workshops, comprising groups of men, women (both of middle and older generations), and young people. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 26 participants (age range:14-85 years old) involved in cashew cultivation from 13 households. Two participants of different genders and/or generations from each household were selected where possible to provide insight into intra-household divisions of labour and land access. The majority of interviewees were of Bono ethnicity, a sub-grouping of the Akan, while one was Fante, another sub-grouping of the Akan, and two were of Nkona (Nkorang) ethnicity. All interviewees were Christian, belonging predominantly to the Presbyterian, Roman Catholic or Pentecostal Church. The majority of households were headed by married men, with three de-jure female-headed households, headed by widows and one de-facto female-headed household, headed by a married woman whose husband usually stayed in Sefwi, Western region, Ghana.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with ten key informants at the village, district and national levels, including elders, leaders of local cashew associations, representatives of the District Agriculture Office, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and an international NGO. Table 2.1 provides a breakdown of participants. All audio-recorded interviews and focus groups were transcribed into English. An analytic summary of each transcript was written and further thematic analysis undertaken to assist in reading across the dataset.

INSERT TABLE 2.1 ABOUT HERE

'Active' participatory dissemination may enable participants to prioritise research findings and engage in policy dialogue (Van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). During Phase 2 (March 2014), participatory feedback workshops were held with men, women and young people in the rural community and with national and international stakeholders in Accra. A total of 32 community participants (see Table 2.1), most of whom had participated in Phase 1, were invited to discuss the preliminary findings, rank their priorities and participate in a short video that aimed to generate discussion and disseminate messages for policy and practice<sup>4</sup>. The workshop discussions in Accra and an additional interview were transcribed and analysed.

We acknowledge that the small sample recruited from one rural community could be seen as a limitation of the study; funds did not permit fieldwork in other rural communities which might have provided a contrasting context elsewhere in the district/ region. The findings cannot therefore be regarded as representative of young people, middle and older generations involved in cashew cultivation in Brong-Ahafo region or Ghana more generally. The diversity of the purposive sample, as well as the participatory dissemination process we engaged in, however, provides rigour and enhances the validity of the findings. Rather than seeking to map variability in terms of patterns, the small, but heterogeneous sample enables



us to provide in-depth qualitative insights into a range of views and experiences regarding changing land use and the division of labour in a specific rural context in Brong-Ahafo region.

## 2.1 Case study

Agricultural activities contribute to over a third of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product and the majority of the population (60%) are involved in agricultural production (African Cashew Initiative [ACi], 2010). Alongside cocoa and other cash crops established during the colonial era, non-traditional export crops, such as pineapple, mango and cashew nuts, are of increasing significance to the Ghanaian economy (ibid). Africa's production of cashew has grown rapidly over the last decade, with Côte d'Ivoire currently the largest producer in Africa and second in the world (ACi, 2014). Although projected climate-related changes are subject to great variability in West Africa, Ghana and other countries which depend heavily on rain-fed agriculture may experience more frequent and intense droughts, altered rainfall patterns and increases in temperature as this century continues, which is likely to affect yields of food crops currently cultivated and increase vulnerability to poverty (Codjoe et al, 2012; Owusu and Waylen, 2009). Projected increases in temperature due to climate change, however, will increase the suitability of most of the current cashew-growing areas in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire by 2050 (CIAT, 2011). These environmental conditions, alongside growing global demand, suggest that cashew cultivation is likely to continue to expand in Brong-Ahafo and other cashew-growing areas in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in future.

Seketia, a small rural community in Jaman North district, Brong-Ahafo region, was selected as the research location, due to its relatively recent involvement in cashew nut production (see Figure 2.1). As is the case for the whole District and most of Brong-Ahafo, Seketia lies in the forest savannah transition zone of Ghana, which is highly suitable for cashew production (Dedzoe et al., 2001) and is very close to the border with Côte d'Ivoire, which is important for trade. The lands in the District are owned by the three 'paramount traditional authorities' (term used for chiefdoms in Ghana) who are custodians of the land and have control over the use of land within their jurisdictions. The majority of land surrounding the village is used for farming and most residents are farmers, as are 70% of residents in the District (District Assembly, 2014). The population of the village was estimated to be 2,088 in 2013 (GSS, 2005; 2012) and is composed mainly of Bonos, a sub-grouping of the Akan ethnic group, who are the indigenes, and other minority ethnic groups.

The study location is in the Sunyani and Wenchi area, which has experienced a significant decline in mean annual rainfall over the last sixty years (Owusu and Waylen, 2009). Despite this downward trend, Dezdoo et al.'s (2001) analysis of mean monthly rainfall from the nearest station of Wenchi from 1960-1995 and TAMSAT satellite-based monthly rainfall estimates from 1983-2012 show similar patterns (Evans et al., 2014). The time period covered by the research (2011 and 2012) does not appear to deviate substantially from long-term average rainfall conditions, though there may have been locally variable rainfall patterns that could have impacted on cashew and food crop yields.

INSERT FIGURE 2.1 HERE

*Caption: Figure 2.1 Map showing the research location in Jaman North district, Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana.*

### 3. Research findings

#### 3.1 The division of labour and intra-household resource allocations

##### *Livelihood networks and the gendered and generational division of labour*

The livelihoods of many rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly characterised by diverse, multi-local networks, along which flow remittances, information and goods (de Haan, 2007). Community mapping revealed that most men and women relied on farming for their livelihood and subsistence, but they usually had more than one source of income. Family farms where they cultivated cashew and food crops were located an estimated 1-4 miles from participants' homes in the village. Several participants were also engaged in non-farm employment (teachers, nurses), skilled work (tailors, carpenters, mechanics, timber operator, driving) or trading or other small business activities, alongside farming. According to focus groups and interviews with elders, an estimated half or more of residents in the community also had cocoa farms in Sefwi, Western region of Ghana, which they had cultivated, inherited or purchased. Some household members engaged in seasonal migration during the cocoa harvest, left other family members in charge of managing the farms or lived there on a more permanent basis. The majority of families interviewed (8 out of 13) were engaged in cocoa farming and received regular remittances from family members in Sefwi. Half of the young people reported that one or both parents worked on cocoa farms in Sefwi at the time of the interview; young people lived with their remaining parent and siblings or other relatives. This demonstrates the fluidity of agricultural households and the strength of familial ties to land in more than one locality, linked to the colonial legacy of the establishment of cocoa monoculture and increased commercialisation in recent decades (Quisumbing et al, 2001).

Cashew was usually harvested in the period from February to April each year. Participants sold the cashew to agents (intermediaries) of large cashew export companies who came to the village to buy raw cashew nuts. Participants welcomed the additional income stream that cashew provided during the 'lean season' following the cocoa harvest, which had helped to improve living standards and enabled them to pay for children's education. This suggests cashew cultivation helped to provide 'income smoothing', whereby households diversify livelihoods to stabilise incomes throughout the year and thereby decrease their vulnerability to different kinds of shocks (Knudsen, 2007).

Research in Ghana has revealed that the gendered division of labour varies according to different crop types, household headship, access to land and labour resources (Carr, 2008a & b). In the study location, pruning cashew trees was regarded as 'hard work' and more 'men's work' than women's, but widows or women whose husbands or other male relatives were away either hired labour or did this work themselves. Women and children were usually responsible for weeding and gathering the cashew nuts and/ or labourers were hired to harvest the cashew. Middle generation men were usually responsible for the management of cash crop fields (cashew plantations in the study location and cocoa farms in Western region) and larger scale food crop cultivation for sale. Older men were often retired or only had light duties overseeing others' work or allocating land and labour resources. Of the thirteen households interviewed, just over half (7) were able to pay for hired labourers to work on the family farm during important agricultural periods, while female-headed and some male-headed households with smaller farms (6) struggled to afford this.

Young people often make significant contributions to the household economy through their unpaid agricultural labour, usually doing low status activities associated with women's work (Bradley, 1993). Young people in the study location worked predominantly with their mothers and other female relatives and siblings to plant and harvest tomatoes and pepper for sale, weed cassava, plantain and cashew farms, raise yam mounds and harvest food crops, vegetables and cashew on the family farm. Boys and young men were often responsible for small livestock. These findings are supported by secondary data; in Brong-Ahafo region, over two fifths of children aged 5-17 (41.7%) were reported to be engaged in economic activity in the previous seven days in 2012, the third highest in the country following Upper West (45.1%) and Upper East (44.5%) regions (GSS, 2014)<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to providing unpaid family labour, young men, widows, older women and children in situations of poverty often worked as day labourers on others' cashew farms during the harvest to earn money to buy food or other basic necessities. They usually earned 2-6 GHS [equivalent of £0.66-£2] per day. Indeed, a Guardian news report from Brong-Ahafo region suggests that children are 'attracted to' (or rather are compelled by poverty to engage in) the low paid work of gathering the fruits from the ground during the cashew harvest, although they are usually only employed after school (Hirsch, 2013). Ill health and frailty of other family members may heighten the need for young children and older women to work as casual labourers on cashew plantations, as was illustrated by one older woman whose husband was blind and her grandchildren who appear in the accompanying video. This reveals how gender, ill health, age and generational identities may intersect to exacerbate vulnerability to chronic poverty.

Young people generally combined their part-time unpaid work on the family farm, and sometimes paid work on others' farms, with their schooling. Some young people's day labour could be an important source of income that enabled young people to continue their education, supporting previous research findings in Africa (Kielland and Tovo, 2006). Many adults and young people placed a high priority on education, and adults sought to ensure that the work children did on the family farm was not overly strenuous and only took place after school, at weekends or in the school vacations. There was little evidence of 'hazardous' child labour in the study location, although children aged under 12 were observed working on cashew plantations at weekends during the harvest and young people reported significant work responsibilities on family farms, which could have harmful effects on their education, health and development. It should also be noted that the average age of starting work nationally and in Brong-Ahafo region was 9 years old in 2012, which is defined by the Ghanaian Government as child labour, and a significant proportion (7.1%) of children (aged 5-17) in the region worked for 43 or more hours a week, which is considered 'hazardous work' (GSS, 2014)<sup>5</sup>.

Older youth, particularly young men, regularly engaged in seasonal migration to Western region to work on their parents' and relatives' cocoa farms, while young women often worked there during the cocoa season as seamstresses, traders or engaged in sexual relationships with men for financial support. Some older youth also sought work, training or apprenticeships in other towns and cities in Ghana or migrated abroad (Nigeria, Libya, Spain, other European countries or the USA), attracted to the possibility of more lucrative employment opportunities outside Ghana (Jones and Chant, 2009). These findings support Amanor's (2001) argument that the lineage as an organisation redistributing wealth, land and labour services within

specific community localities is being replaced in Ghana by more amorphous and mobile kinship networks extending over large areas of towns, villages and cities.

### ***Intra-household resource allocations and decision-making processes***

Gendered patterns of expenditure and resource allocations often accompany the gendered division of labour in agricultural households in Ghana and other African countries, which has a significant impact on the health, education and wellbeing of household members (Shah, 1998; Koopman 1997; Carr, 2008a). It is thus important to understand how access to, and control of, intra-household resources are influenced by gendered and generational relations.

In the study location, focus group discussions revealed that income from the sale of farm products that had been cultivated jointly by the husband, wife and children was usually pooled to meet the family's needs, but when men and women engaged in separate activities, they maintained separate accounts. Women usually earned their own income from the sale of peppers, tomatoes and garden eggs and produced food staples such as yam, cocoyam, maize and cassava predominantly for household consumption. Participants reported that insufficient rainfall had badly affected the maize and yam yields during the year of the research. As Carr (2008b) notes, since women have a greater reliance on food crops which are very vulnerable to small fluctuations in precipitation than their husbands, women in these households appear to be more vulnerable to environmental change than to changes in the market price of the crops that affect 'men's crops'. Women also sometimes earned their own income from the sale of cooked food, trading or other small business activities.

In focus groups, women and young people reported that traditionally, men controlled the income from cash crops such as cashew and cocoa, as one woman commented: *'The men do not usually disclose income from the sale of cash crops. He uses his discretion to spend the money. The woman has little say'*. Some women reported that husbands allocated a portion of the cashew plantation to their wife for her to cultivate and earn money from independently, while others reported joint control of income if financing or labour on the farms was shared between husband and wife: *'If the two of you jointly financed or worked together on the farms, he makes you aware of how much income is generated and the two of you take decisions regarding how to use it'*. Women's labour on plots owned by individual men was not only used to bargain for joint decision-making about income within households, but could also represent an important means of women negotiating ownership of land through so-called 'sweat equity' (Quisumbing et al, 2001).

According to interviewees, male heads of households were usually responsible for paying for children's schooling and other household expenses, while in female-headed households, widows, grandmothers and young people struggled to meet these costs themselves and sometimes received remittances from adult children. One married couple had moved back to the community to pursue cashew and food crop cultivation, following difficulties obtaining good yields from cocoa farming in Western region. Their comments demonstrate the control men may have over income and expenditure within households, as well as how women may be forced to use their small income to support the family. Addo, a married man explained:

*'When we get any money from our farming or other activities, you know that I am the man of the house. So as the man of the house, I keep the money. But if any of us need money for something, then the person will contact me and I will then give out the money'*.

His wife commented: *'The little money I get is from the sale of the pepper on the farm. But I end up using all the money to pay hospital bills because my son and husband have been falling sick frequently this year'*. Thus, as Carr (2008a) found in Central region, while men and women had distinct gendered responsibilities, men may not be in a position to pay for all of the household costs and may exert influence over women's use of their own income. Women may therefore often pay for children's school fees, healthcare or other costs, despite these usually being regarded as 'men's responsibilities' (ibid).

Despite young women's significant contributions to the household economy through their unpaid labour on family farms, young women appeared to be at a greater disadvantage in intra-household resource allocations compared to brothers the same age, as observed by Korang-Okrah and Haight (2015). In the focus group, young women said that some parents stopped providing for their children when they were aged between 12 and 16 years old and expected them to pay for their own needs for clothing, personal hygiene and schooling, which led to girls engaging in relationships with older boyfriends to meet their material needs, placing them at risk of early pregnancy. As one young woman commented: *'At a certain stage, if I need something, my parents cannot get it for me so I go out for a boyfriend who can provide what I need.'*

While young people said that they usually decided how to spend the money they had earned/acquired, often using it to pay for their school uniform or other needs, they were not usually involved in household decisions about the use of income earned from cash crops or food crops they had helped to cultivate. Kinship relations, co-residence and mobility also influenced young people's involvement in decision-making processes. As Kwafo, a young man (aged 18) whose parents had both died and who stayed in his deceased father's house adjacent to his uncle's household, explained: *'I cannot actually tell [how much income family members earn] because my uncle does not discuss the amount of money he earns from the farm with me. The other issue is that I do not stay here during vacations. I go to spend the holidays with my sister who lives in Sefwi'*.

Moreover, young people's unpaid labour on family farms did not appear to confer rights to participate in decision-making processes about land use, as is illustrated by Yaw, a young man (aged 17) who lived with his grandfather and whose parents lived in Sefwi: *'I think because I am considered to be a young person, I am not involved in the decision-making process in my family'*. Hierarchies of sibling birth order and age, as well as school attendance, also played a role, as Kwafo's experience suggests: *'Usually when it is time to make such decisions, I am not around [because he was at school], when I come to meet them, the issues are decided, which I accept. After all, I am the youngest amongst my siblings'*.

The previous sections reveal how gendered and generational power imbalances shape the division of labour and intra-household decision-making processes in the case study rural community. Such inequalities were mirrored in the differential positions of men, women and young people regarding ownership, inheritance and use of land, as we discuss in the next section.

### **3.2 Access to land, tree crops and the individualisation of property rights**

Land represented a vital asset (a key component of environmental capital) that participants depended on for agricultural livelihoods. The land they cultivated was regarded as 'family

land', which was allocated to different family members in large extended family/ clan groups by the family head. Chiefs were regarded as custodians of these 'stool' or 'family lands' (Berry, 2009) and had an important role in resolving land disputes. The average farm size in the District was approximately 1 hectare (2.5 acres) and the proportion of women with access to land for cultivation was estimated to be 30 per cent (District Assembly, 2014), significantly higher than in other parts of Ghana (Doss et al., 2011). Women usually had usufruct rights to land that belonged to their husband, father or other male relatives, although they were often granted their own plots of land to cultivate food crops or sometimes cashew. The male migrants participating in the study had gained access to land through their wife's male relatives or through share-cropping arrangements with local residents. As the chief explained: *'We do not sell land here, if you come as a stranger in need of land for farming, we would give you or if you also want it for growing cashew too we give you but for selling of land, we don't do it here'*. There were no large-scale commercial cashew plantations in the community; the chief commented that there was insufficient land available for this.

Most participants had been cultivating cashew for between three and ten years at the time of the research. The estimated size of participants' cashew plantations varied considerably, although many participants were not aware of the exact size of their farms. Estimates varied from 2 acres cultivated by one widow, to 40 acres cultivated by a middle-aged married man not originally from the community who had gained access to the land through his wife's family. Participants commented that the climate and soil were particularly favourable for cashew cultivation, especially since many of their cocoa farms were becoming less productive and the food crops, such as maize, that they used to rely on for sale as well as consumption, were not producing such good yields in recent years. They linked the decline in productivity of food crops to insufficient rainfall, a downward trend supported by Owusu and Waylen's (2009) analysis of mean annual rainfall in the area. One elder also commented that relatively unproductive 'waste' land could be used for cashew cultivation.

Few interviewees had land titles or had registered their family lands, except for those who had cocoa farms in Western region, which they had bought, obtained through share-cropping arrangements or inherited. Some widows and young people whose parents had died had inherited or expected to inherit cocoa farms in Sefwi, Western region. In these cases, the land had been divided between the widow, children and husband's family, sold to pay off debts, or continued to be managed by the extended family or by farmers engaging in share-cropping arrangements.

### ***Adherence to patrilineal inheritance practices and the individualisation of property rights***

Assets, such as land, 'not only allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation', they are also 'the basis of agents' power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources' (Bebbington, 1999: 2022). The research therefore sought to understand the rules governing land use, access and inheritance and how such customary practices may be changing in the light of the shift towards cashew cultivation.

Traditionally the Akan ethnic group (which represents almost half [48%] of Ghana's population [Kutsoati and Morck, 2012], a sub-grouping of which reside in our study location) practised matrilineal inheritance. According to such practices, land is transferred from a deceased man to his brother or nephew (sister's son) in accordance with the decision of the extended family or matrilineal clan (Quisumbing, 2001; Berry, 2009). Concerns that matrilineal inheritance practices did not protect widows and their children from poverty,

among other arguments, led to reform of the Intestate Succession Law (PNDCL 111) in Ghana in 1985 (Kutsoati and Morck,2012). The distribution of residue property<sup>6</sup> under the law specifies 16th shares to be divided between the spouse, children, parents and lineage, although it is commonly interpreted as specifying one-third each of the farm and other assets for the spouse, children and maternal family should a husband die intestate (ibid; Quisumbing et al., 2001). The Intestate Succession Law thus strengthened the process of individualisation of land tenure institutions in Ghana (Quisumbing et al.,2001).

In the study location, land was traditionally transferred to younger generations through matrilineal inheritance, as practised by the Akan. Since the introduction of the Intestate Succession Law in 1985, participants reported that matrilineal inheritance practices were rarely observed in the rural community. The change in law, combined with the expansion of cashew cultivation in the community, had led to a shift towards patrilineal inheritance so that widows and their children (sons and daughters) could inherit assets directly from the husband/ father (see men's quotations in Table 3.2). This suggests that statutory law may 'work as a "magnet" in pulling customary practice in its direction' (Cooper and Bird 2012: 536; Evans, forthcoming).

INSERT TABLE 3.2 HERE

As Table 3.2 shows, men welcomed the change in practice to predominantly patrilineal land inheritance, a shift which was strengthened by the planting of cashew trees, since these were regarded as important assets to be passed on to heirs. Matrilineal customary practices were regarded by men as having detrimental impacts on widows and children, who might be forced to leave the home and land they had shared and worked on with their deceased husband/father. Such shifts away from matrilineal towards predominantly patrilineal land inheritance practices have also been observed in the contrasting context of rural Senegal, driven by different influences (Evans, forthcoming). Furthermore, men's and women's perspectives (see Table 3.2) suggest that community members were aware of the Intestate Succession Law, which protected widow's and children's inheritance rights, but they also increasingly made written or verbal wills to further safeguard the inheritance of their property and avoid future disputes. As Osei, an older man reported: *'I have already made that arrangement so if I pass on they know what to do. I have dedicated portions of my farms to my wife, children and my siblings. Each one knows his or her area and so there will not be any conflict'*.

As a tree crop, cashew was regarded as an individual man's property to be passed on to his wife and children, and sometimes extended family, in the same way as cocoa and teak, rather than regarding the cashew trees and land on which they were planted as belonging to the matrilineage to allocate and use as they wished. One male interviewee summarised how cashew cultivation was changing the nature of land ownership and inheritance in the community: *'If a man dies without a cashew farm, then the land goes to the family but if he had cashew on the land, it will go the children as their property'*. This suggests that cashew plantations were associated with more secure, individualised property rights than family farmland, which was subject to a bundle of overlapping communal use rights (Berry, 1997; Toulmin, 2008) allocated by family heads.

Increased cashew cultivation thus appeared to be changing communal property rights into more individualised systems of property ownership. In comparison to men's perspectives,

however, middle generation women (see Table 3.2) were much more concerned about tenure insecurity and the risk of encroachment by wealthier neighbours or relatives, especially when land was left fallow or under-used, despite changes in the law to safeguard widows' inheritance rights, as the next section explores.



**Table 3.2 Men's and women's perspectives about changing land access in the study location, based on focus group discussions**

Middle generation men's perspectives	Middle generation women's perspectives
<p><i>'The government introduced the Intestate Succession Law, which changed our system of inheritance. We also spotted such move as we realised that it will help us and reduce the conflict associated with inheritance.'</i></p> <p><i>'Previously when people passed away, their cousins and nephews took over their assets to the detriment of their children. So when the government changed the inheritance system, we all supported it since we realised that will help us'.</i></p> <p><i>'Previously, we can inherit the lands that our grandfathers farmed on. But now that is not possible since nobody will allow his cashew plantations to be inherited by external relatives. It is for only your wife and children, not for the external relatives'.</i></p> <p><i>'The land has been allocated to individual members of the family. At the moment we practise patrilineal inheritance, so there is no way I will give my assets to other family members'.</i></p>	<p><i>'We prepare a will. Some people indicate which assets should be given the extended family and which ones should be given to the spouse and children'.</i></p> <p><i>'With the coming into force of the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC law 111), whether the will is written or it is oral, the people must obey what the deceased person said before death'.</i></p> <p><i>'There are situations where you own the land but someone will use force and intimidation to eject you out of it and use the land'.</i></p> <p><i>'I was sick and did not visit my farm for some time. Later when I went there, I realised that someone had expanded his farm and taken over parts of my land. I could not take the land back because I did not have the resources to challenge him in court'.</i></p> <p><i>'This year alone I invested GHC 80 to slash my land and prepare it for farming. But someone with more resources has seized the land from me and there is nothing I can do'.</i></p>

**Women's access to land and tree crops**

Not only was cashew associated with more secure, individualised property rights, its lifelong nature and dense canopy prohibited other uses of the land (such as growing food crops). Due to these reasons, women requested land for growing cashew from their natal families rather than from their husband's family. Adwoa, a woman, said: *'I have been farming on my husband's land for some time. But later I wanted to engage in cashew cultivation so I went to my father for land and he granted me access to some portions of the land'*. Widows were usually able to continue to grow food crops on their deceased husband's land following his death, especially if they had children to support, but could be subject to regulations about growing cashew and other tree crops on land to which that they only had usufruct rights: *'A widow is allowed to farm on her late husband's land but only for cultivation of food crops and not cash crops like cashew'* (Ama, young woman). Widows' usufruct rights to their deceased husband's land were lost if they remarried. Married women's continued labour on their father's land was regarded as a vital strategy to safeguard their livelihood security and protect them from potential asset loss in widowhood. Indeed, some instances were reported where widows' continued access to their deceased husband's land was denied by his relatives, resulting in disinheritance, as Korang-Okrah and Haight (2015) also observed among the Akan in Ghana.

Widows who moved to the community following their husband's death also found it difficult to access farmland, as was the case for Serwaa, a middle-aged widow: *'I was in another town with my husband. When he passed away, I came home but I was not given land by his relations since they were already farming on the land allocated to him. So I have to beg somebody for a piece of land to enable me farm'*. Carr (2008b) highlights the vulnerability of

female-headed households who lack a male head through which to access farmland and therefore often have little land on which to grow crops for themselves and their households. This means that women heading households are 'forced to eat nearly all of their staple crop production', resulting in very low incomes and little, if any, annual savings, 'making them particularly vulnerable to economic or environmental shocks' (ibid, p910). This reveals the complex, nested nature of customary land and property rights (Lenz, 2007) which marginalise widows and other *de-jure* female-headed households and increase their vulnerability to external shocks.

In contrast to widows' potentially insecure usufruct rights to land used for food crops gained through inheritance, widows' inheritance of cashew plantations, as a tree crop, appeared to be more secure. The continued cultivation of a husband's cashew plantation, albeit on smaller plots obtained through inheritance, could represent an important means of securing widows' ownership rights to the land. Akosua, a middle-aged widow interviewed commented: *'Even though it has its disadvantages, I am doing it to secure my late husband's land to prevent people from encroaching on it in future...I am left with a small part of the land because people have been farming on it, so if I don't, they would take it from me'*. Thus, the cultivation of tree crops, such as cashew, could help to strengthen women's tenuous ownership rights to the land, as Quisumbing et al. (2001) report in relation to cocoa in Western Ghana.

Widows' experiences suggest that despite men's statements, the Intestate Succession Law carries little weight for many residents in the locality and is often not enforced in rural areas. As the quotations in Table 3.2 highlight, women may lack the financial resources and face violence, intimidation and other institutional and social barriers to seeking legal redress to reclaim their land (Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003).

### ***Young people's access to land and tree crops***

The change in practice towards patrilineal land inheritance in recent years, and the individualised nature of property rights associated with cashew trees that middle and older generations had reported, were confirmed by young people's experiences. In focus groups, young people stated that they usually inherited land from their father, rather than through matrilineal inheritance practices. As one young person commented: *'Even though we farm on our mother's land, we do it most often on our father's lands. This is because we get our inheritance from our father's side'*. Due to the individualised nature of tree crop property rights (Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997; Quisumbing, 2001), younger generations usually needed the approval of family heads to change land use from food crop to tree crop cultivation. Family disputes could develop when a younger sibling started planting tree crops on land traditionally controlled by the eldest son, as one young man explained: *'If you ask for a piece of land from your brother he will give [it to] you but if he sees that you are cultivating cashew but not food crops, then he will begin to have conflict with you'*.

Generational power imbalances also prevented some young people from inheriting land to which they had patrilineal inheritance rights. Some young people who had not inherited their deceased father's land reported that it was very difficult, when they came of age, to re-claim their inheritance from relatives. Kwame, a young man explained that his father's nephews (considered the heirs under matrilineal inheritance practices) had taken the land he should have inherited: *'I lost my father at an early age, he had a big farmland but his nephews took it over by the time we the children were ready to farm on it'*. Thus, older relatives may exploit

adult-child power relations and use traditional matrilineal inheritance, previously practised in the community, to justify the seizure of land from children who were the patrilineal heirs. Furthermore, children were regarded by middle and older generations as more vulnerable to disinheritance if the deceased had died intestate, as one woman commented: *'Normally some people seize the property from the children if the will is not made'*. This provides further evidence that the Intestate Succession Law has had little influence on customary inheritance practices at local level.

Planting tree crops may also be used as a strategy to further strengthen adult relatives' land rights, shoring up the confiscation of the land from young heirs. Baduwaa, a young woman whose father had died, reported that her father's brothers took the land her father had cultivated and had planted teak and cashew trees. In so doing, they further strengthened their individual ownership rights to the land: *'Two years ago when my father died, his siblings took over his land, growing teak and cashew on it so we the children have no share from our father's side. We farm on our mother's land'*. Young people's rights to land belonging to the maternal lineage were likely to be usufruct in nature and subject to the regulation of tree crops, and hence less secure than individually owned land and trees gained through patrilineal inheritance. Young people identified the need to gain the support of family elders in order to pursue inheritance claims. Fear of witchcraft, however, may prevent children from seeking redress, as Baduwaa commented: *'Sometimes the children are afraid of spiritual warfare [using witchcraft/ spiritual powers to harm someone] through asking for land, so they let go of it'*. This reveals how land is much more than a material asset or 'environmental capital'; it is entwined with complex socio-cultural webs of meaning, unequal power relations and social hierarchies within particular places.

### **3.3. Concerns about food security and intergenerational tensions**

A representative of the District Agriculture Office estimated that the majority (60-70%) of the land in the district was used for cashew cultivation at the time of the research. The expansion of cashew plantations in the community was accompanied by considerable concern about the impacts on food security and access to land for future generations. Although intercropping of young cashew plants and food crops was possible in the first three to five years, the dense canopy and root system of the tree meant that intercropping was no longer possible when cashew trees matured. Participants were concerned that this would result in insufficient land remaining for food crop cultivation. Women, who are usually responsible for household food production, explained: *'You cannot grow crops on the land once it has been used for cashew. So it means that we will run out of foodstuffs very soon and famine will increase'*. Women had to travel to the nearby market town to buy more foodstuffs than previously and hence were more subject to price fluctuations in world food prices.

Some younger and older participants spoke disapprovingly of the actions and motivations of community members who had 'rushed' to expand their cashew plantations at the expense of allocating sufficient land for food crops. Several interviewees and focus group participants recognised that some land needed to be reserved for food crops and some families had allocated specific portions for this purpose. Village chiefs had made public announcements calling for people to stop the expansion of cashew, as one male elder reported: *'There has been a 'gongon' beating [public announcement] to announce that already by the chiefs, but the young ones don't listen, before you realized the mounds are made ready for planting the cashew'*. Male elders thus blamed younger generations for not listening to their advice.

In the focus group and workshop, young people expressed frustration about their parents' actions that they thought were jeopardising their future land inheritance: *'What our parents are doing now is not good, it will affect us and our children in future[...] I think it's about time to tell them enough is enough!'* Young people explained that the pressure on the land meant that fallowing practices were being abandoned and continuous cultivation of food crops on the same plots was leading to declining soil fertility:

*'The land for food crop farming is now scarce so the crops do not get enough nutrients from the soil to grow well after many years of continuous farming. Most of the land has been used for cashew cultivation so we keep farming on the same land for food crops'.*

Thus, the quality of environmental capital that younger generations would inherit in future was perceived to be declining due to the monopolisation of the soils by cashew trees and intensification of food crop cultivation. Young people thought that their parents and older generations were reluctant to recognise the problem and found it difficult to raise these issues with them: *'They [their parents and elders] know but because of the present benefits, they do not want to talk about it'*. They felt that direction was needed from community leaders and elders in positions of power, such as family heads, who governed land use: *'Only the heads of families can stop our fathers from growing cashew'*. Young people suggested that *in vivos* transfers of land to young people while their parents and older generations were still alive might be a more equitable means of intergenerational transfers of land than via inheritance practices. They felt this would help to ensure that young women did not lose out, thereby also contributing to gender equality, as one young woman commented: *'Our fathers need to share the land for us while we are young so that men or women can have an equal share in future'*.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This article has revealed that the expansion of cashew plantations on family land in a rural community in Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana is linked to a range of present and future concerns about gender equality, intergenerational justice, food security, tenure insecurity and the resilience of rural communities. A gendered and generational perspective, underpinned by a sustainable livelihoods and rural resilience approach, has provided a nuanced understanding of the vulnerability of differentially positioned 'men', 'women' and 'young people'. Children, young women, widows, older and other women heading households who had more marginal access to land or lacked labour resources were particularly vulnerable to chronic poverty, environmental shocks and the disinheritance or loss of their insecure usufruct land rights. They were also more likely to work as low paid casual labourers on cashew plantations.

Cashew plantations were regarded by many as an individual's property to be inherited by a spouse and children, rather than by extended family members. Increased cashew cultivation was thus further cementing the process of individualisation of customary land tenure and property rights put in motion by statutory legal reforms in Ghana (Quisumbing et al, 2001). Experiences of disinheritance and encroachment on land to which widows and orphaned young people were entitled suggests however that the Intestate Succession Law appeared to carry little weight in rural areas. Widows in particular could sometimes face violence, intimidation and a lack of financial resources, among other barriers, which prevented them from seeking legal redress for loss of land and inheritance claims, as has been reported elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa (Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003; Evans, 2015).

The research has demonstrated that gendered and generational inequalities in access to land cannot be divorced from questions of labour, intra-household resource allocations and decision-making processes (Amanor, 2001). While some women participated jointly in household decision-making processes with their husband/male relatives, others were excluded. Despite young people's considerable unpaid labour contributions to the household economy, their work did not confer rights to participate in clan or family decision-making processes over cash crop incomes, land use or other resources. The lack of dialogue between generations resulted in intergenerational tensions when young people felt that their parents and elders were neglecting their views and concerns about the expansion of cashew and loss of land for food crops.

The tendency for land, cash crops and income to be controlled by men (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Yngstorm, 2002), and for women to rely on food crop production which is more vulnerable to insufficient rainfall (Carr, 2008a & b) as their main source of income and for household food security, means that women and girls are more likely to lose out when cashew plantations are expanded to the detriment of land for food crops. It is unsurprising, therefore, that in the priority ranking exercise, women and young people were more concerned than men about the loss of land for food crops and future generations' land inheritance. Many women and young people thought that chiefs and elders should halt the expansion of cashew in the community, as one woman's video message highlighted: *'We want to appeal to the traditional authority to forbid community members from further expanding their cashew farms. Otherwise future generations will not have access to land for farming'*. While customary practices and communal rules governing the use of environmental capital in rural communities are characterised by fluidity and on-going negotiation (Berry, 1997), they often reproduce existing gender, generational and class inequalities (Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003; Evans, forthcoming) and may be weakened by changing economic, social and environmental conditions (Rocheleau and Edmunds, 1997; Wilson, 2010).

This case study of a rural community reveals some of the benefits and trade-offs of increasing integration into the global capitalist system in the context of environmental change. Cashew provided an additional income for many households that complemented their usual income stream from cocoa and/or food crops and other livelihoods. The widespread adoption of multi-local livelihood networks involving cocoa and cashew production, non-farm activities and rural-urban linkages appears to confirm Knudsen's (2007: 41) findings that, 'diversification of income seems to be a survival strategy for the poor as well as a strategy for further accumulation for the more wealthy'. In the workshops, young people, women and strategic stakeholders recognised the importance of diversifying sources of income to spread risk and adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions, which is recognised as an important strategy to build resilience (ibid; Wilson, 2010; Carr, 2008a). Rather than continually expanding cashew plantations and farming food crops more intensively on smaller plots, strategic stakeholders pointed to the need for greater awareness about good agricultural practices in planting, maintaining and pruning cashew trees (such as using 'alley cropping' method of 30 metre spacing of cashew plants to allow more sustainable intercropping with food crops), as well as establishing beekeeping and by-product processing, as important ways to increase the quantity and the quality of cashew production on the existing land and to diversify livelihoods (ACi, 2010; 2013).

Cashew may enhance economic capital in rural communities and, as a tree crop, may strengthen some women's insecure usufruct land rights. The expansion of cashew cultivation

on family land, however, appeared to be leading simultaneously to greater conflict and competition for land, and was exacerbating gender and generational inequalities in land access and inheritance and the division of labour. This could potentially weaken social capital in rural communities. As is the case in many Sub-Saharan African contexts, continued population growth, more intensive land use, monocropping and increased foreign direct investment in the agricultural sector, alongside environmental changes, may lead to food insecurity, land disputes and a declining quality of environmental capital for future generations.

Participants valued the participatory spaces, facilitated as part of the research process, to discuss the expansion of cashew plantations and identify priorities for action at local level. A key priority for women was more dialogue between older and younger generations about land use and access, while young people wanted to raise awareness about land use and food security concerns (Evans et al., 2014). Greater dialogue may help differently positioned men, women and young people to listen to each other's perspectives and develop shared decision-making processes which may move closer towards addressing the unequal gendered and generational relations that underpin land access and the division of labour and help them to adapt to changing economic, social and environmental conditions. Such efforts may strengthen social, economic and environmental capital, which are all crucial to the resilience and sustainability of rural communities in future.

### Footnotes

1. *Children in child labour* are a subset of *children in employment* and are defined as those in the worst forms of child labour and children in employment below the minimum age, excluding children in permissible light work, if applicable (ILO, 2013:45).
2. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail the extensive literature on social and ecological resilience; see Adger (2000) and Wilson (2010).
3. This collaborative research project led by the authors was funded by the University of Reading and Walker Institute for Climate System Research. Ethical approval for the research was granted by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee in 2012 and 2014.
4. The accompanying video is available online:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqZLmwkN3LM&feature=youtu.be>.
5. According to Ghanaian law, children are considered to be in 'child labour' when they are doing 'hazardous work', are aged under 12 years old and involved in economic activity, or are aged 12-14 years and involved in economic activities that are not defined as 'light work'. Hazardous work includes children working long hours (42 hours or more per week)(GSS, 2014).
6. 'Residue property' is defined as all property not classified as household chattels or lineage property including business-related and investment assets: business properties, commercial vehicles, non-primary residential properties, bank accounts, savings, and investments (Kutsoati and Morck, 2012: 14).

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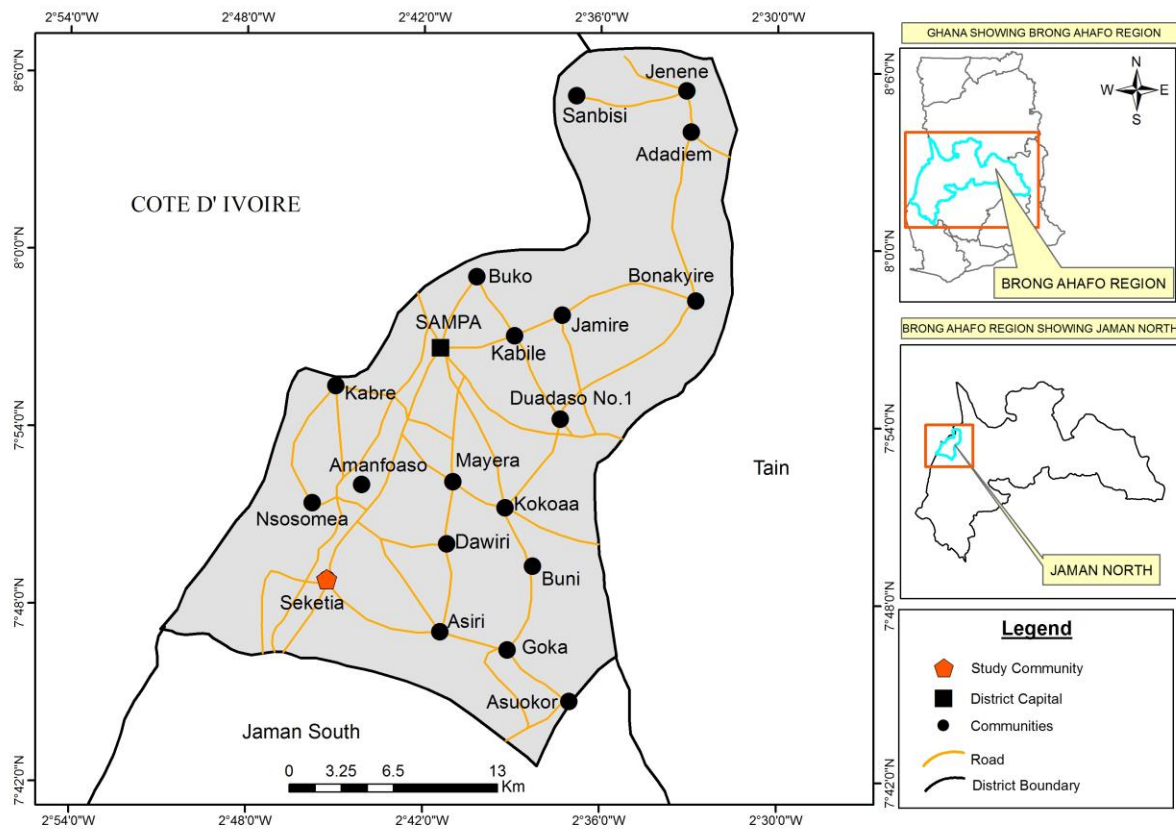


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## Highlights

- Tree crops cement individualisation of customary land tenure and property rights
- Commercialisation may increase gender and generational inequalities in land access
- Women sometimes used cashew, as a tree crop, to help secure their ownership of land
- Young people's unpaid work did not confer participation in decisions about land use
- Community dialogue may address unequal power relations and build rural resilience



**Figure 2.1** Map showing the research location in Jaman North district, Brong-Ahafo region, Ghana.

## Struggles over family land? Tree crops, land and labour in Ghana's Brong-Ahafo region

**Table 2.1: Research methods and number of participants**

Research method	No. of young men (aged 14-25)	No. of young women (aged 14-25)	No. of men of middle generation (aged 26-50)	No. of women of middle generation (aged 26-50)	No. of men of older generation (aged over 50)	No. of women of older generation (aged over 50)
<b>PHASE 1</b>						
Focus groups and community mapping	3	5	5	4	3	4
Household interviews	6	2	2	6	7	3
			<b>No. of men</b>	<b>No. of women</b>		
Key informant interviews:						
Village			5	1		
District			1			
National			3			
<b>Total participants in Phase 1: 60</b>	9	7	26	18		
<b>PHASE 2</b>						
Participatory feedback workshops in rural community	5	6	10	11		
			<b>No. of men</b>	<b>No. of women</b>		
Strategic stakeholder workshop			1	10		
Key informant interview: International				1		
<b>Total participants in Phase 2: 44</b>	5	6	11	22		