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The implications of large scale land acquisition on small landholder's food security

Rushini De Zoysa

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The implications of large scale land acquisition on small landholder's food security

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Abstract. The Global South has been swept by an increasing trend of large scale land acquisitions since the food and economic crisis of 2008. This paper will analyze the implications of LSLA on local population's food security and livelihoods. It will use 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 Model (PAR), this paper will argue that Ethiopia's land reform has systematically weakened small landholder's access to food and livelihood

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List of acronyms.

- ADLI – Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
BIT – Bilateral Investment Treaties
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
EBRD – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EPLF – Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front
EPRDF – Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP – Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party
EU – European Union

FAO – United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization
FDI – Foreign Direct Investment
FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GoE – Government of Ethiopia
GNP – Gross National Product
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
Ha. – Hectare
IMF – International Monetary Fund
LSLA – Large Scale Land Acquisitions
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MOARD – Ethiopia's Ministry of Agricultural and Rural
Development
PAR – Pressure and Release Model
SWFs – Sovereign Wealth Funds
TPLF – Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet
Union)
WFP – United Nations World Food Programme
WCED – United Nations Commission on Environment
and Development

1. Introduction

There has been growing media attention regarding large scale land acquisitions (LSLA) that have aroused many reservations about the direction of agricultural development. Is this the new wave of neoliberalism? Despite the mounting concerns from media outlets and a few published journals, the phenomenon of international land acquisitions and its impact is still little to be understood. The rise of these agreements is particularly visible in the Global South. This sudden increase has been coined as land grabbing or neo-colonialism and warrants critical analysis in order to advocate or rebuke such claims. This trend gained momentum after the 2008 global food crisis due to speculation while financiers started taking into consideration the benefits of land as a profitable and secure form of investment. The World Bank and United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) have outlined terms to ensure a win-win scenario for investors, host governments and local populations, however neither organization is able to enforce such regulations. Although Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is certainly necessary in developing countries, advocacy and human rights groups have called for these investments to support small landholder's agro-ecological farming systems (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 9). Furthermore, there is critical concern about the impact on the social, political and environmental fabric of local communities, seeing that there are seeming negligible safeguards in place to protect local populations' right to food security and livelihood.

Land acquisitions are broadly defined to include "purchase of ownership rights, but also the acquisition of user rights, for instance through leases or concessions, whether short or long-term. What qualifies as large scale varies among countries depending on local contexts (e.g. average farm size); the report considers deals involving land areas above 1000 ha. (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p.17)." This paper will analyze the implications of LSLA on local population's food security and livelihoods. It will use 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 Model (PAR), this paper will argue that Ethiopia's land reform has systematically weakened small landholder's access to food and livelihood.

This study is divided into six main sections: Chapter 1 will introduce the relationship between land acquisitions and neoliberal policies which has historically weakened small landholders ability to secure food and livelihood; Chapter

2 presents the analytical framework; Chapter 3 discusses the scope and methodology of the research; Chapter 4 introduces Ethiopia as a case study; Chapter 5 analyzes the findings from the research to uncover the implications and challenges; Chapter 6 lists the recommendations and discusses the limitations of this study and opportunities for future research to conclude the study.

1.1. Neoliberal Land Reform

The years prior to World War II spelled a legacy where elites would land grab in colonized countries to expand the establishment of the rulers, which now sets the context that angers indigenous populations with regards to the present land acquisitions. In Post World War II, nationalist governments emerging from the decolonization process sought to transform land policies as part of their political agenda for development. However, for the past three decades the ideologies of neoliberal globalization have remerged into new patterns of land reform threatening a dependence ones experienced during colonization. The main neoliberal policy pertaining to land reform seeks to privatize or lease property of the remaining public/com-munal lands in order to attract investment either through domestic or FDI(Borras, 2006, p. 102). Aggressively supported by many pro-market scholars and policy markers particularly in the World Bank, neoliberal land reform is seen as a solution to the persistent rural poverty in developing countries (Ibid, p. 99). Many developing countries still practice state-led agrarian reform which gives land ownership to the government such as Ethiopia. However, Deininger and Binswanger conclude that "most land reforms have relied on expropriation and have been more successful in creating large bureaucracies and in colonizing frontiers than in redistributing land from large to small farmers (1999, p. 267; Borras, 2006, p. 103)." Consequently, as land ownership is legally connected to the powers of the government authorities and political elites, this compromises the power of rural farmers to defend their rights to land thereby making them vulnerable to livelihood shocks and food insecurity.

Such policy measures have been particularly evident after the financial and food crisis of 2008. There has been a trend to perceive countries in the Global South as sources of alternative energy (e.g. biofuels), food production, mineral deposits, and reservoirs of environment services

(Friis. et. al, 2010, p. 1). As a result, there has been a striking rise of cross-border, transnational corporation driven, in some cases foreign government driven, LSLAs happening worldwide (Ibid). As reflected in neoliberal policies the trends of land grabbing also encourages the expansion of the value chain, the commodification of the land and labor, and the removal of public interventions thus increasing the vulnerabilities of small landholders in rural areas (Da Vie, 2011, p. 20). The restructuring of agricultural farmland is entirely consistent with the neoliberal agenda as it promotes farmland investments as a core component of agricultural and economic restructuring across the Global South (Ibid). This would formulate a production-oriented, market based response to the surge in food prices while providing capital to host countries (Ibid, p.8). The drawbacks of LSLA have been reframed by the World Bank as an opportunity to industrialize farming in order to provide a mutual beneficial scenario for investors and host nations. But is it a win-win scenario for local communities? The lessons learnt from neoliberal policies measures is that the trickledown effect is rarely experienced by poor people as host government race to the bottom to attract more investments.

1.2. Reasons for Investing

There are two main motives behind this growing phenomenon; one based on food security and the other based on financial returns. However, these agendas are not always mutually exclusive. These motives coupled with attractive investment policies from the host countries make land acquisitions a viable and easy venture for profit.

Food Security The food security agenda and was ignited by the food crisis in 2008 (refer to Box 1). Countries that relied on food imports and speculated about global markets turned to secure their own food supply by outsourcing production to other countries, mainly in the Global South (Grain, 2008, p. 2). This long term strategy to outsource production releases the pressure on the investing countries' own national environments. These investor countries often are constrained by a lack of water resources and/or land scarcity to produce enough food supply to meet the demand from their own national population. Such players include Saudi Arabia, China, India, Libya and Egypt (Ibid). The reasons to invest are exacerbated by other factors such as export restrictions imposed by major producers when food prices are high, increased rates of urbanization and changes in diets (Braun & Meinzen-Dick, 2009, p.2; Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p.4). A main characteristic of investors is that they are capital rich and therefore have the ability to invest in international fertile farmlands.

Financial Returns The financial returns agenda was

ignited by the 2008 financial meltdown which caused (1) investment houses seeking fast returns; (2) hedge funds recovering from the collapse of the derivative markets; (3) grain traders looking for new markets and vertical integration strategies, all converged to invest in land for food and fuel production as a new source of profits (Grain, 2008, p.2). However, in order to gain a favorable return, investors would need to increase the production capabilities of the land (Ibid). Furthermore, until this time, land acquisition was not a traditional investment strategy since it is normally a domestic policy to not allow land to be owned or leased to foreigners. Such domestic policies were created as land is central to the identity, culture and livelihoods of its people and has the power to ignite political and civil conflict. However, the neoliberal model suggests that FDI can be a catalyst for transformation of agricultural production for host countries. Players for this agenda for example include Britain, South Korea, France and Japan. An interesting emergence is the rise of local land aristocrats and elite classes who are also endeavoring into land acquisitions for investment. Many times they do not even have past experiences with commercial agriculture but find the incentives (tax and duty exemptions) from host countries a promising business venture. Local elites are likely to have strong ties to government officials who lease thousands of hectares of land with little or no consultation from local communities.

Investing governments and host governments have both set policies that are favorable to such investments, while it is the private sector that executes and delivers on the agreements (Grain, 2008, p.3). Whichever track is to be taken, the major concern is that it increases the pressure on host countries, many of which cannot feed its own domestic population and irrationally leases or sells arable land to meet the demands of foreign consumption. This also increases the pressures from climate change,

Box 1.1. Overview of Factors leading to the 2008 Food Crisis. Source: (Paul & Wahlberg, 2008)

Overview of Factors leading to the 2008 Food Crisis

- Trade Policies
- Population Pressures
- Consumption Patterns
- Increased Production of Biofuels
- Climate Change
- Soil Depletion and Water Shortage
- Fuel and Input Costs/ Fall of the Dollar
- Speculations
- Agro-Companies
- Modern Agro-Industrial Systems

soil and forest destruction, and depletion of water resources that local populations depend on (Ibid, p. 7). This becomes further illogical by that fact that there are examples of host countries that are promoting agricultural investment policies to investors such as Ethiopia, but are still major recipients of foreign food aid. The attractive policies from host governments are causing a wave of investors who are scouting for countries with fertile lands in order to transform local land use into monocropping-based, export-oriented enterprises which consequently places rural economies and livelihood in dire threat (Da Vià, 2011, p. 5-6). This is reminiscent of colonial land policies but this time it is from emerging governments who have adopted these policies to gain benefits from capitalist agriculture. Such trends are similar in Africa, South Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

This is offset by host countries that are racing to the bottom in order to encourage investment which offers lower production costs, more ideal climatic conditions and 'abundant' natural resources while their geographic locations are favorable due to trade routes. These factors present encouraging conditions for investors who are intensively seeking to increase the rate of agricultural returns which makes land acquisition an increasingly attractive option (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 5).

1.3. Statistics

Table 1.1 refers to the top 13 countries in Africa listed by the number of land deals.

1.4. How does it Operates?

Table 1.1. Land Deals in Africa. Source: (Friis. et. al, 2010)

Recipient Country	Number of Deals	Magnitude (1000ha)	
		Min	Max
Ethiopia	26	2,892	3,524
Madagascar	24	2,745	
Sudan	20	3,171	4,899
Tanzania	15	1,717	11,000
Mali	13	2,417	2,419
Mozambique	10	10,305	
Uganda	7	1,874	1,904
DR Congo	6	11,048	
Nigeria	6	821	
Mozambique	6	2,245	
Uganda	5	89	
DR Congo	5	307	
Nigeria	5	510	
Total (all 27 countries)	177	51,415	63,111

Although agreements are complex, it is vital to break-down the type of deals in order to understand the power dynamic of stakeholders. The list below is not distinct of each other but rather overlaps and reinforces each other. The following is directly sourced from: (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, pp. 4-8)

1. Framework agreements and national policy:
 - National governments play a major role by establishing the regulatory framework that governs investments
 - Eg. National legislation and foreign relations policy, bilateral agreements investment treaties (BITs) and cooperation agreements in agriculture.
2. National government support to private sector in investor and host countries:
 - Governments have a number of vehicles beyond equity stakes for providing financial and non-financial assistance to private sector and state-owned companies in their countries.
 - Some governments have established development funds that provide financial services such as subsidies, soft loans, guarantees and insurance to both SOEs and other companies (e.g. the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development).
3. SWF investments:
 - Most commonly, this involves acquisitions of minority shares in foreign public-listed companies
 - Direct investments in foreign land assets are less common
 - SWFs may operate through a subsidiary operational company, or through entering into shared-governance joint ventures with private sector companies or with other governments' state-owned enterprises (SOEs) or investment funds.
4. State-owned enterprises and other non-SWF equity shares:
 - Many states own or partner in enterprises through investment sources other than SWFs.
 - Broadly speaking, a majority stake or whole ownership by the state classifies a business as an SOE
5. Direct land acquisition by central government agencies:
 - Model appears rare
 - Eg, Minister of Agriculture acquiring land in a foreign country through a high-level deal with the relevant host country minister

As summarized above, the national government's role is important to foster investment opportunities domestically and internationally. LSLA can vary in strategy, although agreements mostly comprise of private sector

investments through supportive national government policy frameworks. Both home governments (investor governments) and host governments (recipient governments) need a legal framework to ensure cooperation. The World Bank and EBRD have given overarching support by advising governments to modify their land ownership regulations so that foreign investors find incentives and put funding into farmlands abroad (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 35). In usual direction of neoliberal policies, the World Bank believes changing land ownership laws is an integral target of the Bank's US\$1.2bn package to deal with the food crisis in Africa (Grain, 2008, p. 8). The complementing agendas of investors, recipient governments and multilateral organizations have sought LSLA to resolve surging prices of food commodities but also there has been significant evidence of these policies causing rural dispossession in the Global South.

1.6. Land Acquisition supported by

Neoliberalism

Borras concludes that in both (ex-) socialist and capitalist settings "privatization and individualization of land property rights in public/communal lands and state/collective farms have resulted in variegated outcomes, but they are almost always unfavorable with regard to the rural poor (2006, p. 128)." The rhetoric of pro-poor neoliberal land policies have also been in large ineffective to materialize poverty alleviation without systematically weakening assets of small landholders (Ibid, p. 129). History has proclaimed that neoliberal land policies have progressively shaped vulnerabilities of poor people embedded by root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions making them highly susceptible to shocks. The narrative of win-win land acquisitions needs to be critically analyzed in order to legitimize such a claim.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Economic inequality is often described as income inequality which can be measured by the Gini coefficient with 1 stands for absolute inequality where one economic person possesses

all the income while others have none and 0 stands for perfect equity where everybody share the same level of income (Atkinson, 1970).

2. Analytical framewrok

This section introduces the analytical framework that will be used to assess the findings from research about the implications of large scale land acquisitions on small landholders' food security. The Pressure and Release Model (PAR) also known as the Disaster Crunch Model has been selected as the analytical framework for this paper. It was selected because the model allows one to understand that food insecurity as defined as the availability, access and utilization 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. The PAR has been used by advocates to demonstrate the effects of policies such as the study conducted by Geurts who used the framework to articulate the impact of the Green Revolution in Punjas, India. It is recognized that all frameworks have limitations in analyzing complex situations including the PAR and it will be treated with caution to ensure there is no oversimplifications.

If LSLA is sound development policy then it must take into account the impact hazards, such as droughts, have on vulnerable populations, and if adequate measures are not in place this could lead to food insecurity or even famine. Food crises in particular have been result of long-term failures in development therefore sound development policies and effective disaster risk reduction (DRR) are both needed if such crises are to be avoided in the future (Hansford, 2011, pg. 25).

The PAR originally developed by Blaikie et al. in 1994 demonstrates that disasters are not simply a random natural phenomenon but a result of development regression (Boano, 2010). A disaster occurs as a result of a

hazardous impact on a vulnerable community which leads to a significant number of people's deaths (greater than 50 deaths), severe damage to assets and/or disruption to livelihood systems in such a way that exceeds the community's capacity to cope (Blaikie, et al., 2005, pp. 49; Hansford, 2011, pp. 15). The PAR illustrates the relationship between opposing forces – vulnerability and hazards. It is through this interaction that increases the risk of disasters (refer to Figure 2.1). There is no risk of a disaster if there is a hazard and vulnerability is nil, and vice versa, if there is a vulnerable population but no hazard (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, pp. 25). Vulnerability occurs when people's assets are weakening (physical, social, financial, natural and human) either through slow processes or through abrupt stressors shocks and/or hazards. It is through the interaction from stressors that tests people's ability to cope without damaging loss (Burg, 2008, pp. 610, Chambers, 1989, pp. 1). The scale of vulnerability can vary greatly from individuals, households, communities, entire populations or even countries. Vulnerability is dynamic and changes resulting from acquiring or depleting of assets. Hazards on the other hand, can be either natural (eg. earthquakes, flooding, droughts, and land-slides etc.) or man-made (eg. conflict and technological)

Figure 2.1. Interaction between Vulnerability and Hazards. Adapted from: (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005)



Figure 2.2. Progression of Vulnerability. Source: (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005)



and varies in intensity and severity (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, pp. 49). Environmental degradation and climate change exacerbates the duration and impact of hazards and most often the size of a disaster is dependent on the strength of the hazard and the degree of vulnerability (Hansford, 2011, pp.18).

The number of deaths and physical destruction is normally what is apparent in media reports. However, the PAR Model discovers how this physicality only represents the impact of the disaster when a hazard such as an earthquake confronts vulnerability in the locality it strikes. A disaster is a socially constructed phenomenon where simultaneously something manifest physically (Camillo, 2011; Birkland, 2007). For example, two different earthquakes measuring the same reading in the Richter Magnitude Scale may have a devastating amount of deaths, destruction and loss of livelihood in one country and have less destruction in another country. What causes this difference? This might be due to the prevention mechanisms, mitigation and preparedness strategies in place prior to the hazard. The lack of strategies is caused by a progression of vulnerabilities embedded into the societies that face catastrophic disasters. Therefore, a hazard is not a disaster but becomes a disaster when it confronts social vulnerabilities (Hansford, 2011). The PAR identifies three factors that exacerbate vulnerabilities which include (1) Root Causes; (2) Dynamic Pressures; (3) Unsafe Conditions (Figure 2.2).

To investigate these factors further, the following section will describe the key components in the PAR. The model would be highly useful to analyze countries that are chronically prone to disasters such as famines and earthquakes in order to understand what causes so many deaths and physical destruction.

2.1. Progression of Vulnerability

Made up of the three elements (listed in Figure 2.2) systematically breaks down assets thus dramatically weakening people's resilience to hazards. First beginning with Root Causes then proceeding to Dynamic Pressures that ultimately entrenches vulnerable people into Unsafe Conditions.

Root Causes are underlying processes that are embedded within a society and economy based on power and reinforced by resources and structures. In the PAR, root causes are identified as the limited access to power, resources and structures and secondly the ideologies, political and economic systems. Power is a root cause that determines the level of vulnerability as groups associated with a lower scale of power have less supportive systems in place and is also reinforced by a lack of resources and structures. The root causes

that produce a lack of power is one, two or all of the following:

- Spatially Distant: Power developing in a distant economic or political center (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, pg. 49). People who are vulnerable under this category are geographically marginalized. An example would be the rural poor who experience inadequate rural-urban linkages.
- Temporally Distant: is based on time (eg. history). This would be people who are vulnerable due to pressures and factors from their past experiences (Ibid, 238).
- Socially Distant: This is based on norms that are embedded within social systems. People who are marginalized in this category can be minority groups based on ethnicity, religions or culture. For example, if an individual/community is socially isolated they might not be able to access measures to reduce the disaster risk.

These underlying root causes reinforce each other over time through economic, demographic and political processes and dramatically affect the allocation and distribution of resources to be objectively delivered with impartiality (Ibid, p. 50). This is a direct reflection on the national government's policy decisions in favor of retaining power, as they would be highly unpopular if spending priorities did not reside with the population that secured their political win. This also affects economic and legal structures. For example, the illegality of discrimination against a certain caste from attaining jobs might not have political favor to implement the legal structures.

Dynamic Pressures are processes that convert the insecurities of root causes into the vulnerabilities of unsafe conditions (Ibid, pp. 50). In the PAR Model, Dynamic Pressures are influenced by a lack of training, local investment and press freedoms. For example, a root cause of vulnerability can be an ethnic minority residing in a remote rural region of a country and facing marginalization from political power. This group would face 'dynamic pressure' if there was a lack of press freedoms to advocate for rights. This scenario is further aggravated by macro-forces such as rapid population change, urbanization and deforestation as it intensifies the limited resources available.

Unsafe Conditions are unstable or fragile conditions in which vulnerable populations live and work. For example, due to root causes and dynamic pressures these populations are unable to afford safe housing and find that they engage in unsustainable livelihoods. The PAR model states unsafe conditions as: (Adapted from: (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, p. 26)

1. Physical Environment: is housing in dangerous locations and unprotected buildings and infrastructure. For example, dynamic pressures drive

migration into cities where large numbers of people often reside in slums. These slums regularly are located in hazard prone areas and build with a lack of adherence to national building codes.

2. Fragile Local Economy: this is when livelihoods are at risk and income levels are low.
3. Social Relations: vulnerable social groups are at risk as they do not have adequate local institutions to support them.

Unsafe conditions are symptoms of a series of dynamic pressures that can always be tracked to root causes (Ibid, 26).

2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the PAR Model

The strength of this model is that it is based on the principle that natural disasters are not a one-off phenomenon but are symptoms of social processes. The focus on vulnerability has fundamentally influenced disaster and food

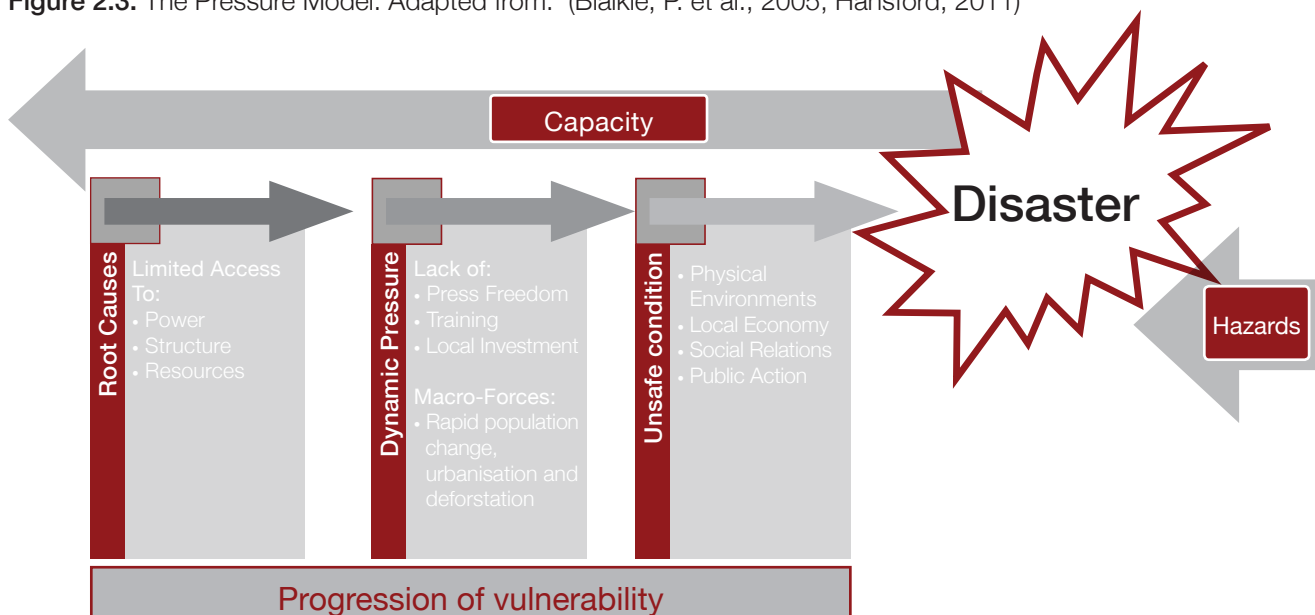
security discourse. Development policy should not only be tailored to respond to hazards after the fact by using technological means but take progressive measures to prevent root causes, mitigate dynamic pressures and prepare vulnerable populations to lessen the risk of disasters. The main criticism of the PAR developed by Blaikie et al. was that it considered people as passive. The PAR has since been updated to incorporate the capacities of vulnerable populations. Capacities are defined as the ability to reduce damages and losses by preparing, responding and recovering from the impact of hazards and can be found in all levels, (individual, household, community) (Hansford, 2011, pp. 19). Increasing capacities releases the pressure of affected populations and reduces the risk of disasters (refer to Table 2 for an example). Government policies significantly affect the impact of hazards. Policies that are considered damaging are ones that increase vulnerabilities to hazards in contrast, sustainable policies increase the capacities of populations to prevent, mitigate and prepare for hazards.

Therefore the analytical framework will incorporate the important component of capacity into the PAR Model (refer to Figure 2.3).

Table 2.1. Capacity Example. Adapted from (Hansford, 2011, pp. 20)

Hazard Type	Impact	Vulnerability	Capacity
Draughts	Crop yields fail Livestock dies Malnourishment Displacement	No irrigation systems No grazing land available Lack of clean water Lack of safety net programmes	Year-round hand pumps Drought-resistant varieties Fodder Storage Local knowledge Access to Credit

Figure 2.3. The Pressure Model. Adapted from: (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005; Hansford, 2011)



3. Methodology

The objective as discussed in prior chapters is to investigate the implications of LSLA on small landholder's food security and livelihood. Following the analytical framework - PAR, the research will uncover whether local populations' capacities or vulnerabilities are affected by such land deals. Most media reports regarding this topic heavily criticize land deals made through foreign direct investment (FDI) that has been supported by national and host governments. International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines FDI as "the investments made by a resident entity in one economy (direct investor) with the objective of obtaining a lasting interest in an entity resident in an economy other than that of the investor (direct investment enterprise). A lasting interest implies "the existence of a long-term relationship between the direct investor and the enterprise and a significant degree of influence on the management of the enterprise (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 19)." It must be recognized that land deals are no means limited to FDI as domestic investors are highly influential and involved in the process themselves. That being said, the research will also review the impact of domestic policies and relations in large scale acquisitions. In order to accomplish the objective, the scope is defined surrounding both thematic and geographic boundaries to narrow the focus of the research.

The research will be assessed using the PAR analytical framework. The study will be based on secondary data through the forms of both academic and grey literature. Published academic journals will set the foundation for the research, while the grey literature allows an understanding of country context for the purpose of the case study. Data collected under the grey literature will include policy papers, statistics, and media reports. The information collected through this form is considered controversial as it has not been put through a peer review evaluation process. However, the inclusion of such literature is important as foreign LSLA as it is considered a 'new' phenomenon and therefore published reports are limited. The potential bias of such reports has been noted and will be discussed the limitations of this research.

3.1. Scope

- i. The thematic boundaries of the research will mainly investigate activities that involve land ac-

quisitions for the purpose of commercial agriculture. Therefore, land acquisitions in sectors such as extractive industries, infrastructure and manufacturing are outside the scope of this research (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 19).

- ii. The geographic scope will be set by investigating one case study that has been greatly impacted by LSLA. The process of selecting one country for the case study will include the following host country criteria:
 - a. In the past 5 years, the country has had an increase in FDI byway of land deals .
 - b. Based on agrarian political economy.
 - c. History of food insecurity.
 - d. Sufficient secondary data available regarding land acquisitions.
- iii. As defined in Chapter 1 the threshold of land acquisitions will only be included in the research if the scale is over 1000 ha. of land.

3.2. Research Questions

The use of the PAR as the analytical framework discovers the importance of how policies such as land reforms can embed vulnerabilities for decades until it is later realized in the wake of a disaster. In line with this theory, the research questions endeavors to uncover the interrelations that cause these vulnerabilities for local populations. In the PAR, LSLAs would be considered a dynamic pressure that affected populations have little control over but are greatly impacted by. Therefore the research questions will follow the structure of the PAR by discovering the root causes, other dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions that plight the affected populations into disastrous situations.

Root Causes: About the Affected Populations

1. Power Status: What are the economic, demographic and political processes of the affected populations?

2. Are they spatially, temporary or socially distant from unaffected populations?
3. What structures and resources are available to the affected populations prior to the land acquisitions?

Dynamic Pressures: The pressures caused by LSLA

4. What is the strength of press freedoms and non-governmental organizations in the country?
5. What other pressures are interrelated with LSLA that affect local populations?

Unsafe Conditions: Impact of LSLA

6. How has LSLA effected the physical environment of affected populations?
7. How has LSLA impacted the local economy and social relations?

Capacity:

8. What are the coping mechanisms of food insecure households?

4. Case study

4.1. Ethiopian Case Study

The following chapter will introduce the case study in order to understand the ground realities of development policies that promote LSLA in the Global South. Based on the criteria discussed in the previous chapter, the case study analysis for this paper is the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). In a report published by the FAO, it states that Ethiopia is a hot spot for international land acquisitions given its resource endowments (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 16, 26). The critical concern regarding Ethiopia is that most of the rural population in the country depends on land for their livelihood and food security. Currently, an intensive drought has led to a famine that is affecting millions of people in the Horn of Africa (refer to Box 4.1 and Figure 4.1 for details).

The disaster is a combination of factors that include the sharp increase in staple food crops, conflict and two consecutive rainy seasons that failed throughout the Horn of Africa (European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, 2011, p.1). Countries in the Horn of Africa have been ravaged by war however still maintain high military expenditure when compared to the fact that their local population is food insecure (refer to Figure 4.2). The frequency of droughts burdens households to

recover each year without depleting assets. Furthermore, droughts have a severe impact on livestock and in this case the mortality rate of livestock is between 40-60% which threatens the livelihood of pastoral communities in affected areas (Ibid). The food shortage is exacerbated further as people from countries that border Ethiopia such as Kenya and Somalia pour into Ethiopia's refugee camps to escape from famine. The WFP has released a statement conveying that they are providing assistance to more the six million people in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti and eastern Uganda (WFP, 2011). Secretary General Ban Ki Moon urges, "short-term relief must be linked to building long-term sustainability. This means an agricultural transformation that improves the resilience of rural livelihoods and minimizes the scale of any future crisis (WFP, 2011)." As emergency relief only cures the symptoms of vulnerability, it is important to investigate the reasons behind the destructive cycle of drought and hunger that plagues Ethiopia in order to 'minimize the scale of any future crisis.'

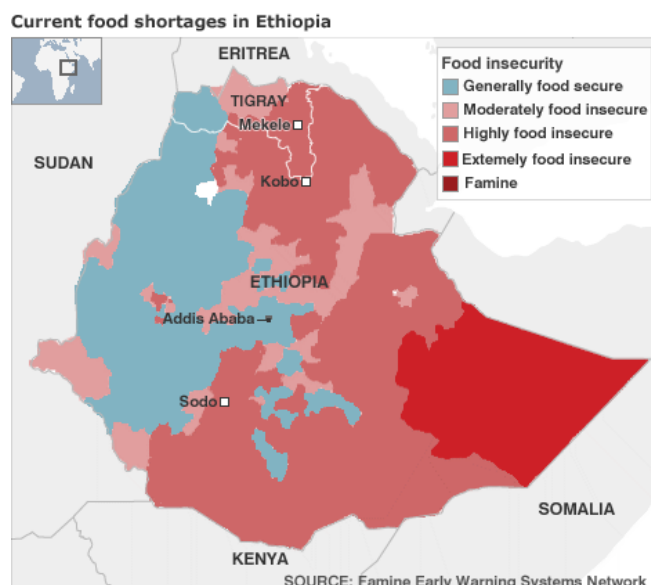
In order to understand the complexity of the reasons behind food insecurity in Ethiopia, one must first understand the interaction between social, political, military and economic factors that set the context.

Box 4.1. Statistics on the 2011 Famine in the Horn of Africa. Source: (European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection)

The European Commission states the following facts and figures:

- Around 11 million people affected in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti;
- Malnutrition rates over 30% in drought affected areas;
- Livestock mortality has increased by 15-30%;
- Severe food insecurity;
- Tens of thousands of Somalis are seeking refuge in camps in Ethiopia and Kenya.

Figure 4.1. Map of Food Storage in the Horn of Africa. Source: (BBC, 2011)



4.2. Social Context

Ethiopia has a population of over 85 million people making it the second largest country in Africa in terms of population (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 4). The main ethnicities of Ethiopia are Oromo (34.5 percent of the population), Amhara (26.9 %), Somali (6.2 %), and Tigray (6.1 percent) (Ibid). Amharic is the official language and is spoken by 27 million people, however there are many more languages and dialects spoken throughout the country (Ibid). The main medium of communication is state controlled radio whereas print media centers on urban areas. Journalists commonly practice self-censorship of media communication due to arbitrary imprisonment and this is reinforced by the censorship of the internet which is enforced by the government (Ibid). There are laws that pronounce freedom of information however this is not enforced as public access to information is largely restricted (Ibid). Civil society' liberties to advocate for the rights and freedoms of Ethiopians are commonly suppressed and blatantly outlawed in the country.

4.3. Political and Military History

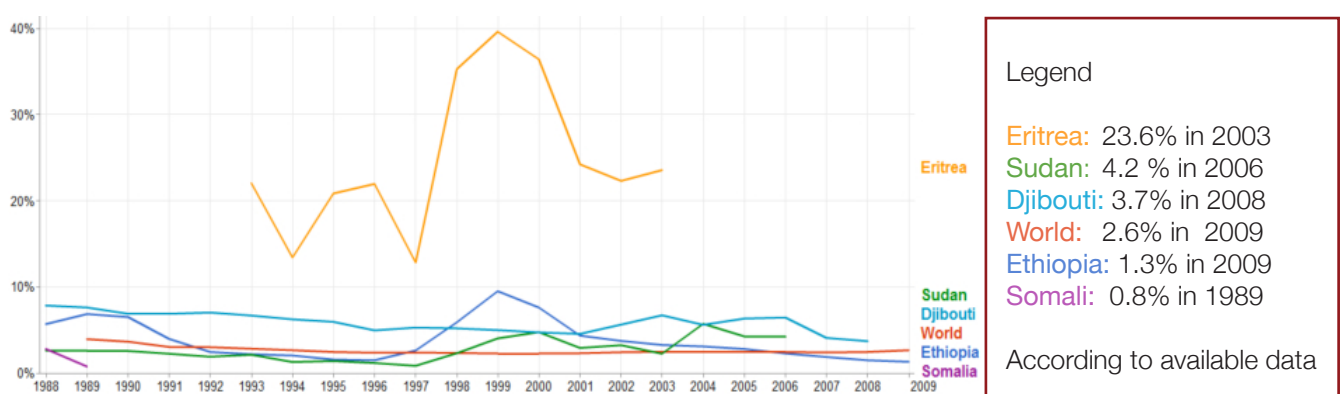
A military junta locally known as the Derg, led through the fist of its military might when it ruled Ethiopia between 1974 and 1987. The Derg brought Ethiopia from a feudal to a communist state thus becoming a pro-USSR satellite state during the Cold War. Although highly popular during the uprising using the propaganda of slogans such as "land to the peasants" the Derg sent off alarms by the implementation of unfavorable policies and mass executions (Teklehaimanot, p. 2011). Struggling to retain its power, the Derg's reign reflects a history scared by conflict from outside its borders such as the Somalian invasion of Oga-den as well as separatist groups fighting for independence of Eritrea. The oppositions to the Derg grew with deepening unpopularity by Ethiopians and consequently backed political groups such as Tigray Peoples' Libera-

tion Front (TPLF), Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) etc (Ibid). During the conflict with Somalia, the United States of America backed the conflict as it did not support the Marxist and Leinstein ideologies of Ethiopia but Ethiopia received military support from the Soviet Union and Cuba (Ibid). The USSR actually switched alliances from Somalia to Ethiopia which gave Ethiopia dominance in the region. The conflict ended in 1978 with the victory of Ethiopia and the withdrawal of Somalia troops from Orgaden region. The TPLF and EPLF gained momentum in the northern region of Tigray but the conflict exacerbated by drought led to a catastrophic famine in 1984/85. The Derg restricted aid and goods to the affected region as it were controlled by the rebels (Ibid). As a response to the famine, the Derg implemented a plan but was criticized as it was seen as a concealed policy that prevented support to the opposition (Ibid).

4.4. Economic Context

The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has boasted GDP growth rates in the double digits and has made the commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This unprecedented growth rate has made Ethiopia the highest in terms of non-oil exporting country in Africa (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 6). The reasons behind the success are based on the adoption of an economic model known as the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization. The country faces heavy constrains by being land-locked and are further burdened by the erratic nature of rain patterns and high population growth. The industrialization from traditional small scale agriculture has been a systematic process that began with a shift in policy in order to attract foreign investment. This is beneficial to the GoE as both foreign currency and food reserves are dangerous low (Ibid). The objective of the economic model is to industrialize Ethiopia through agricultural transformation that would open the gateway to

Figure 4.2. Military Expenditures as percentage of GDP. Source: (World Bank, April 2011)



other industries such as services. This would methodically reduce the share of GDP from agriculture into a diverse economy. This policy direction has led to a significant increase in exports paralleled by a greater diversity in product and destination (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 8). Horticulture, staple crops and livestock production are the largest share of exports. China, India, EU and Middle Eastern countries have steadily increased FDI into Ethiopia (Table 4.1 and 4.2).

Current trends of privatization and the introduction into modern markets are expected to continue alongside domestic infrastructure improvement to support growth rates (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 9).

Table 4.1. Ethiopia's Annual FDI. Source: (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011; UNCTAD, 2010)

Ethiopia's Annual FDI (Million)	
1992	0.17
1993	3.50
1994	17.21
1995	14.14
1996	21.93
1997	288.49
1998	260.67
1999	69.98
2000	134.64
2001	349.40
2002	255.00
2003	465.00
2004	545.10
2005	265.11
2006	545.26
2007	221.00
2008	108.54
2009	93.57

4.5. Food Security Context

The 1984/85 famine cemented the international image of Ethiopians as a country stricken by famine and war. Although the disaster of famine subsides, the vulnerabilities have never been cured. This is reflected by the fact that Ethiopia is the largest recipient of food aid in the world as it has faced droughts over 15 times since 1965 (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 10). The dependence on unreliable rain fed agriculture, lack of modern farming inputs and small land holdings reduces productivity of rural households, this in turn makes households fall into the poverty trap.

Transitory hunger occurs during the dry season and is a consistent burden for rural households. Unfortunately they respond by depleting assets in order to meet their basic survival needs. Coping strategies to avoid hunger include selling off livestock and finding work during the dry season. This also negatively affects school enrollment rates as older children drop out during the dry season to support their family by seeking employment in the informal sector. Consequently these reasons place a heavy dependence on government safety net programmes such as food for work. The variation of people at risk of hunger differs from region to region

Figure 4.3. Percentage of Food Vulnerable Population by Region Source: (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011)

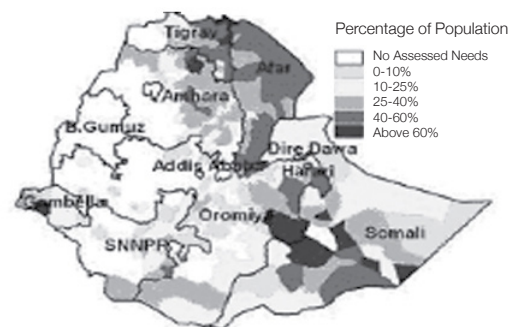


Table 4.2. FDI Inflows by Investor Countries Table 4 Source: (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011; Ethiopia's Investment Bureau, 2009)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
EU	26.63	7.41	5.34	11.72	18.47	00.87	12.11	52.61	16.37	21.22
India			21.6	1.94	13.2	8.75	70.62	2.8	12.81	32.43
Israel	2.75	15.76		5.56	23.65	29.21	43	10.63	5.42	7.18
Saudi Arabia	47.4	76.84	58.77	4.87	3.07	4.13	0.23	3.53	3.6	3.1
USA			4.3	44.55	28.96	20.06	10.93	17.17	4.89	11.54
Other	23.21			31.36	12.66	16.98	1.82	13.26	56.91	24.53
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (Million USD)	43.51	56.12	19.52	223.77	380.96	180.59	349.89	1640.47	3214.17	678.78

(Figure 4.3). The complex combinations of social, political, military and economic factors have systematically increased vulnerabilities of rural populations that have led to food insecurity.

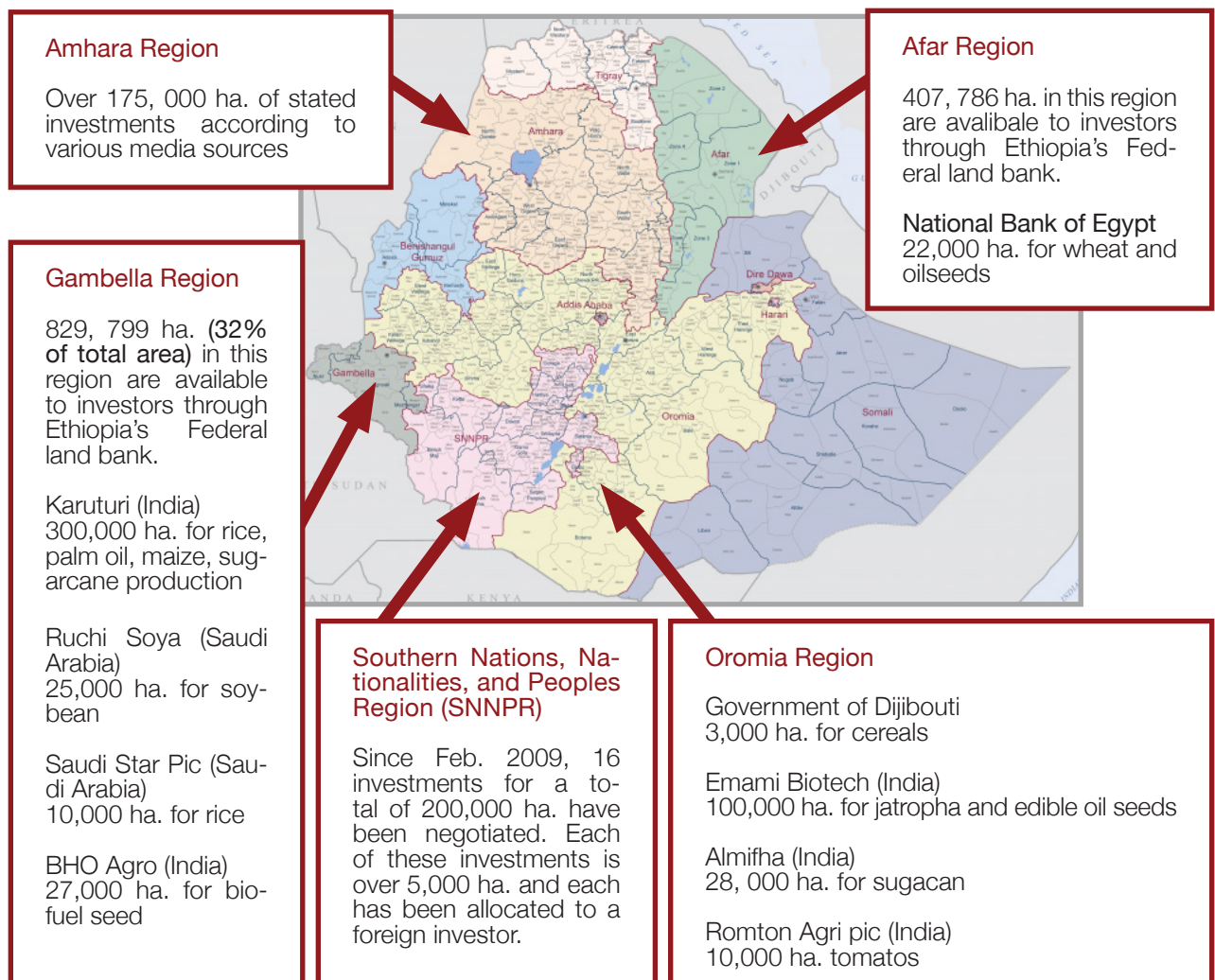
4.6 Current Investments

Figure 4.4 refers to the current land acquisitions in Ethiopia uncovered by the research of Oakland Institute in 2011. Most of the data collected was through the Ethiopian Federal Land Bank registry. The land deals predominantly concentrate in natural resource rich regions of the south/south-western provinces, such as the Gambella Region. Chapter Five will discuss why these regions in particular are more systematically vulnerable to LSLA due to root causes of ethnic marginalization.

4.7 Positives for Host Countries

Increased investment encourages a multitude of advantages for developing countries. The characteristics of land acquisition agreements are that investors bring capital, technology, know-how and market-access, and can be a catalyst for economic transformation for rural areas (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p. 15). This in turn is supposed to increase public revenue, generate employment, increase access to much need infrastructure and overall increases the standard of living of the local population (Ibid). As developing countries look to modernize small scaled farming into more productive farming outputs by the development of rural infrastructure, storage and distribution facilities in order to industrialize operations (Grain, 2008, p.6). Increased know-how is brought by research to improve seed varieties and breeding programmes to encourage animal husbandry productivity (Ibid).

Figure 4.4. Who is investing in Ethiopia?. Source: (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 2)



5. Findings

5.1. Case Study Findings

This chapter will unpack the embedded causes that create vulnerability. It is important to address why particular regions are extraordinarily subjected to land acquisitions by prevailing government interests. In order to capture the impact of LSLA on affected populations, the case study needs to narrow the scope from one country into a region of the country that faces the highest amount of LSLA. The reason being is that one country faces a diverse spectrum of demographic, cultural and class differences, and Ethiopia is a shining example of this diversity. Therefore a population who is directly impacted from land deals such as the Gambela Region of Ethiopia will have a drastically different perspective and experience than a population who are indirectly impacted such as the Tigray Region. As the map in Figure 4.4 illustrates, 32% of the Gambela Region is up for lease in the Ethiopian federal land registry whereas the Tigray Region faces no land available in that registry. An obvious point is that the regions of Gambela and Tigray face dramatic differences in environment. The region of Gambela has the highest amount of naturally irrigated land whereas Tigray has a semi-arid, arid climate. But the most important differentiation is that the Tigrarian Region is the political base of the EPRDF and therefore the ruling party would become highly unfavorable if they would seize land from their main supporters, if not lose widespread support. This is simply because the current government raised the movement to overturn the Derg from the highland regions of the country, particularly from the Tigrarian Region. However, a deep similarity between the populations that reside in the Gambela and Tigrarian Regions are that both sets of people depend on land for their survival.

After a thorough investigation of land deals in Ethiopia, a subtle pattern slowly emerged. Suspicions were raised when many of the affected populations of land deals were historically marginalized people who shared opposite social-political ideologies to the past regimes and current ruling party of the GoE. These suspicions have also been shared by many media reporters and human rights activists who see these land deals as a continuing historical pattern of oppression.

5.2 The Gambela Region

The Gambela Region is one of nine regions in Ethiopia and is located in the southwest of the country bordering South

Sudan. Historically this region was populated by the indigenous Anuak tribe¹. Currently, the region is made up of a diverse mix of ethnicities which include Anuak, Nuer, Majangir, Opo and Koma that account to more than 200,000 people (Human Rights Watch, 2005, p. 10). The Anuak and Nuer are considered the largest populations that reside in the area and the third largest group is referred to as the Highlander (Ibid). Highlanders are a population of people from other parts of Ethiopia who mostly settled into the Gambela Region during the Derg's forced resettlement programme of the 1980s (Ibid, p. 10-11). With the Derg facing heavy opposition from the TPLF and EPRP in the Tigray Region, they felt the international spotlight due to the famines and also felt pressure from Sudanese refugee settlers in the Gambela Region. The forced resettlement plan of the Highlanders into the Gambela Region accomplished the following objectives for the Derg:

- Oppositions from TPLF → Forced resettlement into other regions should suppress political opposition to the Derg
- International Famine Spotlight → Communicated to the world that the Derg was taking steps to bring an end to the famine
- Sudanese Refugees → The civil conflict that occurred in Sudan displaced thousands and caused the immigration of refugees into Ethiopia's Gambela Region. The Sudanese Nuer population steadily increased, making the Nuer population one of the largest inhabitants of the Gambela Region to this day. The demographic changes threatened the Derg in which the Derg forcibly resettlement other ethnicities (Highlanders) to stabilize the region.

This cemented a historical pattern of politically and socially powerful groups from the densely populated Christian central areas of Ethiopia who would then acquire land from less powerful groups in the South and West of the country. Consequently, the resettlement of the highlanders and the sharp increase of Sudanese refugees made the indigenous Anuak population a minority in their own region and as a result created ethnic tension and persistent conflict as they fought for self-determination and autonomy.

5.3. Progression of Vulnerability

Research on disasters has revealed that vulnerability is rooted in everyday occurrences that are reinforced by historical patterns that shape the political economy and determine how people access resources (Jessamy, 2002, p. 1). The progression of vulnerability will uncover a systematic process where the indigenous Anuak tribe of Gambela Region faces a pattern of oppression that has led to the current phenomenon of land grabbing.

Root Causes

Power. The Anuak population in the Gambela Region have a lack of knowledge about land deals because they are 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. identifies three causes that limit the access to power which are spatial, temporal and social.

Spatially Distant: The Gambela Region lies on the border between Sudan and Ethiopia and represents sovereignty concerns to the GoE. The migration of the Nuer population of Sudan significantly increased during the Sudanese civil war, and for the most part, refugees migrated permanently into the Gambela Region. Moreover, the population of the Gambela Region faces geographic marginalization from the political center of the country. This is directly reflected in the fact that the Gambela Region only won three seats in the legislative election of 2010 which signifies a lack of political power.

Temporally Distant: The paper Land Tenure in Ethiopia, states that unlike other sub-Saharan African countries, Ethiopia does not share the colonial heritage that resulted in land grabbing by European settlers (Crewett, Bogale, & Korf, 2008, p. 5)². However, the legacy is similar to Ethiopia's imperial colonialism that reigned during the second half of the 19th century (Ibid). This is when the imperial rule sought to expand from the center towards the South and imposed exploitative land tenure systems in those new conquered territories (Ibid). This historic confirmation signifies how land tenure and land use rights are a position of power in agrarian societies. This process of oppression is rooted in agricultural policies that are imposed by the government to control the masses.

This domination continued during the Derg regime in the 1980s with the implementation of the forced resettlement of Highlanders in the Gambela Region, which rapidly eroded the political power and cultural identity of the indigenous Anuak population. The tension created by this policy is still evident when in 2003, armed Anuak groups fighting for political power attacked Highlanders. This initiated a three day response riot led by Highland-

ers and GoE military that killed 424 people, which were mostly Anuak. The Human Rights Watch published report states that these killings are a pattern of persecution in "Gambela's long history of conflict and insecurity (2005, p. 5)."

Socially Distant: The military effort that supported the 2003 massacre is mainly comprised of the same ethnic groups of the Highlanders, and becomes significant with the consideration that this became the moment when the Ethiopian military came into the conflicts against the Anuak population (Human Rights Watch, 2005, p. 5). The Human Rights Watch report conveys ongoing killings since the 2003 riots which have displaced Anuak families and risks the survival of the Anuak culture (ibid).

Structures. Since the 1980s the explanation behind the factors that cause famine has shifted the discourse from an isolated natural event to an emphasis on causal implications starting from a root cause that are reinforced by social structures and processes. Political and economic structures reproduce domination against the marginalized in order to maintain the control of power. In the case of the Gambela Region, the lack of secure land tenure is a structure that reinforces the deeper issue of an ethnic minority who has a lack of political power.

Land Policies and Structures: When Meles Zenawi came to power in 1991 after the fall of the Derg, he supported the state ownership of land. The new government which sought to support small landholder's farming did decentralize the responsibilities of land tenure arrangements to the regional state that was more ethnically diverse (UNECA, 2004, p. 91-92). The ideologies that supported this policy were that if the state privatized land, the poor would sell their land to the elites in the wake of a shock thus deepening poverty. GoE's implementation of ADLI fundamentally changed the security of smallholders since the policies looked to industrialize production of farming. Furthermore, agricultural intensification can have a major environmental impact if there are no adequate measures in place to protect against deforestation and degradation of soil quality, in which smallholders depend on for their survival. The feudal system of the Meles Zenawi regime evokes land tenure to be determined by regional governments and subject to three different systems of rights: administrative-based, market based and customary based non-market arrangements.

Administrative-based: Systems allow eligible farmers to have rights to land which are subject to a certain plot size depending on the size of the family and land availability in the land bank registry.

Market-based: With the rise in population, the demand for land has also increased, which significantly decreases the plots of land available to eligible farmers. As a result, rent markets have increased in volume through tenancy

and short term contracts (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 12). This land is also not transferable as in the case with administrative based systems.

Customary based non-market arrangements: The extensive research conducted by Oakland Institute states that “this is the dominant system in the lowlands where much of the current land investment is focused. It usually involves some claims to ancestral lands and hereditary rights. There are many variations of this system depending on the ethnicity of the people and location (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 12).” The sharing of these lands are often informal but well understood arrangements that have bonded communities throughout generations. Customary arrangements have deeply affected pastoral population’s livelihoods since they use common grazing areas to herd their livestock. With a direct push from the federal GoE to increase the productivity of agricultural outputs, these informal customary arrangement threatens the way of life of indigenous populations in the Gambela Region. Although pastoral rights have increasingly been recognized through fierce protests it stands against a historical process that has disregarded communal rights, and the productive activities and contribution made by pastoral communities for generations (refer to Appendix 1). To completely understand how ethnic marginalization is reinforced by the structure of land tenure, one must know that land certification varies from region to region. Land tenure security is particularly different in Highlander regions such as Tigray, Amhara and Oromia as current landholders are eligible for registration certificates (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 12). In Tigray, a region that is politically important to the current regime, ex-TPLF fighters, supporters and early migrants have the rights to rural land even if they live in urban areas, a right that is not permitted anywhere else in the country (Ibid).

Resources. Resources such as land and the access to water are primary assets for farmers and pastoral communities within the Gambela Region. With the modernization of agriculture that is rapidly evolving in Ethiopia, LSLAs threaten small landholders as they are seen as less productive. For example, pastoral communities are increasingly vulnerable because they are denied access to grazing areas that provide 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 labor to purchase food (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, p. 16). This in turn reinforces other vulnerabilities as wage labor can be interpreted by drought. Ethnic marginalization is a root cause that is reinforced by the structures of land tenure and the depletion of resources that leave indigenous communities more vulnerable to disasters.

Dynamic Pressures. The notion of dynamic pressure exacerbates the root causes of tension entailed in limited access to power and resources.

Lack of :

Press Freedom

Amartya Sen, a winner of the Nobel Prize in Economic Science confirms the connection between press freedoms in a country and the quality of life. Sen states “no substantial famine has ever occurred in any country with a relatively free press (Sen, 2004).” To investigate further, Sen outlines the following argument:

The Importance of Press Freedoms: (Sen, 2004)

1. **Quality of Life:** The lack of press freedoms suppresses people’s ability to discuss openly with each other and this directly reduces the quality of life. This occurs even if the country that imposes such action happens to have high Gross National Product (GNP).
2. **Human Security:** Press freedoms have an important protective function that gives a voice to the neglected and disadvantaged. Sen conveys that without such freedoms, leaders and elites rarely are held accountable for the realities of the common people. In a disastrous occurrence such as a famine, the rulers will infrequently face the same fate, but through public criticism through the media the ruling elite would face critical scrutiny and heavy pressure to avert such crises and take immediate action.
3. **Dissemination of Knowledge:** The informational role of the media is to keep people generally informed and by doing so can prevent disasters. Furthermore, investigative journalism discovers information that would otherwise go unnoticed or even unknown to the public.
4. **Public Discourse:** Open communication keeps people informed and critical about the realities of their life. It creates discussions and reflections about processes that obstruct their civil liberties.

In 2008 the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation was passed in Ethiopia through heavy consultation and debate (Sudan Tribune, 2011). The Ethiopian constitution endorses the highest standard that guarantees the freedom of press however these rights and freedoms are restricted in practice. The deteriorating working environment for journalists is caused by the lack of independent judiciary which consequently leaves journalists concerned about receiving arbitrary charges and an unfair trial (Ibid). Most media outlets are state owned which leaves the limited independent newspapers highly pressured. Many journalists practice self-censorship to avoid charges that can take up to years in trial. Reporters without Borders, an advocacy group that presses for the rights and freedoms for journalists, criticizes the GoE by stating “the government is trying to suffocate them, as they are unable to pay exorbitant legal costs, newspapers risk bankruptcy when they are sued

or prosecuted (Sudan Tribune, 2011).” Intimidation, law suits, arbitrary charges and even self-censorship deeply affects the ability of journalists to pressure the GoE to uphold civil liberties and rights of Ethiopians throughout the country.

The plight of the Anuak population in the Gambela Region and the lack of coverage in the media about land acquisitions on indigenous land are further suppressed when journalists are highly pressured to support government policies. Foreign investments in Ethiopian are regularly promoted by state-owned media outlets as the major benefit of LSLA without any spotlights about the impact it is causing to the local populations. The benefits of those investments are undeniable but the absence of free press suppresses equal benefit, and creates the inability to voice concerns that further isolates and oppress the Anuak population.

Lack of NGO Advocacy

Civil society in Ethiopia has been stunted by the long history of a feudal monarchy, a Marxist regime and the current administration under Girma Wolde- Giorgis (Clark, 2000, p. 8). Through this process, the country faces a non-governmental sector that struggles for definition, operating space and enhanced institutional capacity (Ibid). NGOs in Ethiopia are broadly divided into three different entities: (Ibid)

1. Relief organizations coordinating with the government and the humanitarian wing on opposition parties that are beyond the governments reach
2. National NGOs which are community based organizations and church agencies etc.
3. Professional Organizations such as trade unions, the media, academia etc.

In 2008, the GoE passed the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies. The growing resistance to NGOs was cemented by this law given that it limits the operational space of NGOs to work in sectors other than education, health, and food security (Freedom House, 2010). As a result, international NGOs faced significant restrictions on implementing projects in the areas of governance and human rights, including freedom of expression which drastically reduces the ability to advocate for civil liberties (Ibid). Furthermore, local NGOs have also faced these limitations if they received more than 10 percent of their budgets from foreign sources (Ibid). Economic development can be constrained by the repression of NGOs as it is unable to stimulate both political and social development of a country. For example, countries that suppress civil liberties can face sanctions that reduce trade and countries that face widespread disease affects the productivity of a country ultimately affecting economic growth. Without NGO advocacy at a local, national and international level

and freedom of press these issues constrain the growth of the country. The GoE apparently sees civil society as an extension of opposition. This significantly impacts neglected groups such as the Anuak populations because NGOs are unable to enter the political sphere to demand participation, accountability and transparency of government policies that promote LSLA.

The lack of press freedoms and the limited space of NGOs has significantly suppressed the tensions created by the loss of ancestral lands and access to livelihood which signifies a deliberate stance of a government that is actively oppressing its people. This reflects a pattern of historical repression that is currently unfolding from LSLA.

Macro-Forces. Blaikie et al. conveys that the root causes channeled 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, p.31). LSLA exacerbates the effects of deforestation, rapid rise in populations causing displacement while escalating negative social relations.

Deforestation: of the natural environment and deforestation has a lasting impact on indigenous populations of the Gambela Region that depend on these forests for hunting and gathering. Although an accurate rate of deforestation in the lowlands (including the Gambela Region) is unknown, the areas marketed and available to investors are normally uncultivated land and many are covered with woodland and forests (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 45).

The Brundtland Report of 1987 shifted discourse by insisting on an environmental strategy to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987).” The limitation for growth is only restricted by the current state of technology and social capital that needs to be balanced with environmental resources. In order to accomplish this theory in a practical sense there needs to be greater cooperation amongst countries at different stages of economic and social development. Transformation in land use and control is central to the debate as this critically impacts ecosystems that sustain human livelihood on a micro and macro level (Friis. et. al, 2010, p. 7). Ethiopia’s Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MOARD) Investment Directive No. 13 specifically states, “Investors are required to protect and properly administer natural resources, plant trees and vegetation that are good for soil conservation and replace trees and bushes that are cut down for agricultural purposes (Shete, 2011, p. 13).” This directive is to ensure that there is no negative environmental impact from land acquisitions. Furthermore, this investment directive is supported by the 1997 En-

environmental Policy which states that prior to project implementation there needs to be consultation with stakeholders, adherence to sustainability and the fulfillment of both environmental and social impact assessments (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 45). Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's opening address at the African Bioenergy Conference affirmed that "it is through the improvement of agricultural productivity that we can protect our forests (Ethiopian Forums, 2011)." However a study conducted by Oakland Institute discovered that in practice this law remains weak due to a lack of awareness, capacity, enforcement mechanisms and incentives reinforced by a weak political commitment (Ibid). Unfortunately, these legislations are more theory than practice when there is a lack of monitoring to ensure that investors do not degrade and deforest land for the purpose of agricultural productivity. Oakland Institute also discovered that clauses in land deals to replant trees for every hectare cleared "has never been enforced (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 45)." The lack of enforcement of these policies directly reduces domestic food security and livelihoods while degradation of Ethiopian soils using chemical fertilizers provides higher returns for investors looking to make quick profits.

Accelerated deforestation is a major concern for countries like Ethiopia that faces frequent droughts with little capacity to respond to disaster risk (Ibid). In addition, households use forests to curtail food insecurity during droughts through hunting and gathering thus having an important role in preventing famines. There needs to be an understanding regarding the trade-off between the risks incurred by the loss of forests and the risk for agricultural intensification and take a critical look for alternative ways to increase agricultural productivity sustainably (WWF, 2011).

Table 5.1. Population Growth in Ethiopia 1900 to 2007
Source: Ethiopia Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Population Department, Population and Development Ethiopia 12, no. 1 (2008)

Year	Population
1990	11.0 Million
1954	19.5 Million
1964	24.2 Million
1974	30.6 Million
1984	40.1 Million
1994	53.1 Million
2004	71.1 Million
2007	73.9 Million

Rapid Population Growth. In Ethiopia, population growth is one of the most critical challenges for poverty reduction (refer to Table 5.1). There has been an intensified effort through policy direction to combat and reduce population growth. These efforts are made over concerns regarding population pressures over land, food security, low income in rural areas and youth unemployment in urban areas (Ringheim, K. et. al, 2009). The World Bank advises only a 2% rate of population growth for developing countries in order to keep up with the country's institutions and technology while sustaining sectors such as water, sanitation, agriculture, health, housing and education (Ibid). This also aggravates environmental resources as populations increase and the availability of land and resources are more infinite (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 33). Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world, with an overwhelming rural population of 83% (Ibid). Large families are still culturally valued and important for agricultural productivity in rural areas. In a study presented at the Global Land Grabbing Conference, it was discovered that Regional States did not project demand of land based on population growth rates. (Shete, 2011, p. 14). Such oversights will create overgrazing and encroachment to forest areas in the future which has a serious implication to natural resource management (Ibid). When there is a lack of available land and population rates are steadily increasing, the growth of landless people systematically increases which deepens poverty and dependence on government safety net programmes.

Villagization, Migration and Displacement. The GOE's Villagization Programme seeks to resettle scattered rural communities into permanent villages that are closer to resources such as main roads, hospitals and schools. The Villagization Programme first occurred in the 1950s but became highly controversial in the 1980s with food insecure Highlander communities being resettled into lowlands such as the Gambela Region (refer to Root Causes for controversy information). The Villagization Programme in the 1980s remains an active tension in the Gambela Region that permeates conflict between the indigenous populations such as the Anuak and the Highlanders as recent as 2003. The current Villagization Programme is seen as a form of political motive to pursue land deals from foreign, domestic elites and diaspora investors. In the Gambela Region, the Villagization Programme and land investment displacement is calculated to affect 45,000 households resulting in the loss of livelihood of 650,000 people (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 38). The Oakland Institute research on land acquisitions in Ethiopia state,

It is difficult to verify, but there is a definite correlation between the areas undergoing relocation and the areas that are marketed as available for large-scale commercial agriculture. In addition, the communities that are the first to be relocated are those communities that live in and use the areas that have been given to foreign investors. (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 40)

The study testifies to this claim by citing the example of the Saudi Star lease, where several villages were told to relocate under the Villagization Program and in parallel the forests surrounding these villages and highly depended on for generations were cleared by Saudi Star (Ibid).

The lack of planning and capacity to implement the Villagization Programme can have a detrimental impact on local populations who have ancestral ties and depend on the land for food security (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 14). There is a lack of consultation and participation from locals and only receive information of leasing when they are pushed off their land when investors show up with tractors and guards to prevent their entry, and rarely are they offered employment on these commercial farms (Ibid). The forced resettlements typically rise when there is no land tenure security over ancestral lands leaving no option for compensation (direct nor in kind). The Villagization Programme is spun to portray a proactive policy that reduces vulnerability. However, the fact is that communities become more food insecure as traditional coping mechanisms (fishing, upland maize and sorghum production and hunting and gathering in forests) are reduced through the relocation (Ibid). The Oakland Institute' study exposed that the Gambela Regional State maintains that the Villagization Programme is strictly voluntary resettlement, however, the research uncovered that the majority of the communities interviewed did not want to relocate but were intimidated by police who threatened to arrest anyone who did not move (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 39). Moreover, when affected local communities objected to LSLA the GoE's released statements publicly condemning the protests and calling such objections as anti-development (Ethiopian Forums, 2011). It is considered by the GoE that these investments improve food security and access to needed services. However, there is no clause in land agreements that require investors to improve local food security or make production available for local consumption (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 36). The Gambela Region is a testament that forced resettlement and displacement has a long term impact that creates social disruption and conflict amongst affected and host communities. In addition, it leaves the affected communities further isolated from the resources that they depend on by resettling farmers into smaller-fragmented landholdings. This in turn creates stress on traditional coping mechanisms making communities highly vulnerable to hazard such as a drought. The further these traditional coping strategies break down it systematically increases vulnerability. With Ethiopia's history of concurrent droughts these populations are highly susceptible to a disaster.

Furthermore, large scale commercial agriculture seeks land that has a greater irrigation potential or access to markets but ultimately displacing locals who used these resources to survive (Ibid). Cotula states that displace-

ment has an indirect impact that is harder to measure for example "the loss of seasonal resource access for non-resident groups such as transhumant pastoralists, or shifts of power from women to men as land gains in commercial value (2009, p.15)." Pastoralist use communal grazing lands to herd their livestock but face risk as these lands become privatized. Informal lands tenure is rarely compensated since these grazing lands are seen as unproductive by the government thus weakening pastoral forms of livelihood. The long term implication of land acquisition is that local populations are steadily being dispossessed of high value lands and therefore start encroaching marginal lands thus dramatically affecting food and livelihood security of small landholders.

Unsafe Conditions. Blaikie et al. expresses that root causes and dynamic pressures manifest into unsafe conditions in the physical and social environment making the affected populations more vulnerable to risks (Cyr, 2005, p. 5).

Physical Environment and Local Economy. The liberalization of land policies has a negative impact on both the environment and local population. In order to attract investment the GoE classifies land as 'abundant.' The physical environment of the land leased to investors will steadily degrade through agricultural intensification because there is a lack of monitoring mechanisms and enforcement from the GoE. The depletion of resources has a direct impact on local communities whose livelihoods depend on the land for grazing, the forest for gathering and rivers for irrigation.

Eighty percent of all Ethiopians depend on agricultural or livestock to sustain their livelihood making small-holder agriculture the most important sector in Ethiopia's economy (USAID, 2011). Unfortunately, 85% of farming households operate on less than two hectares of land, and in 2000, more than 40% depended on 0.5 hectares or less (Ibid). The notion that land is abundant is clearly incorrect as land available to local populations are decreasing in farm size and is heavily fragmented. As a result of these factors, the average farm size cannot generate more than 50% of the minimum income required for an average household to escape from the poverty trap (Gebreselassie, 2006, p. 9). LSLA intensifies these statistics by the fact that land needed to sustain the local populations' livelihood is leased to investors looking to export. Furthermore, the cloak of the Villagization Programme displaces households in the Gambela Region who were largely self-sufficient (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 38). The programme seeks to relocate the affected populations into larger villages that are supposed to secure their access to services. However, the loss of livelihood only increases the dependences on government safety net programmes as the physical environment and social networks have been completely disrupted from LSLAs.

As previously discussed, the GoE uses incentives (ie. tax and duty exemptions) to encourage food production for export rather than for domestic markets (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 25). There are no incentives in the land deals to ensure that investors protect local economies or supply local markets. A disastrous equation is when policies are implemented without a thorough investigation and analysis of how it affects local markets. This can even affect resilient communities who begin to take destructive coping strategies that deplete their assets and resources. The Minister of MOARD told researchers from the Oakland Institute that “if we get money we can buy food anywhere. Then we can solve the food problem (Ibid).” This statement fires to the core of the issue because importing food globally or purchasing food from distant national markets to be given out as handouts to the poor will not increase food security in comparisons to smallholder self-sufficiency (Ibid).

Negative Social Impact. The lack of enforcement of Social and Environment Impact Assessments prior to leasing out land to investors is a critical oversight that will as a result lead to tensions. It is difficult to comprehend the attachment indigenous groups place on their ancestral lands. It is more than an economic resource but tied to their identity, history, spiritually and culture. Traditional knowledge is also deeply entrenched in the land and forests, as the trees are used for building materials, plants used for medicine and land is used to cultivate their food. During times of food shortage, they turn to the natural environment seeking varieties of fruit, nuts and plants as a coping mechanism to sustain their survival and then turn to social networks for assistance. In interviews conducted by the Oakland Institute, a community leader expressed the emotions behind land security by stating “when this territory is invaded, even if they are Anuak, it will cause war, because we feel degraded, disrespected, so we will die for this land (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 42).” Through the investments received by large scale commercial agriculture and supported by the Villagization Programme, the GoE promises to build new infrastructure to support the affected population with schools, roads and clinics. However, with the root causes of political marginalization and a lack of monitory mechanisms in place these promises remain to be fulfilled. The social impact of land deals need to be considered as this will lead to conflict because these lands are intimately connected to the indigenous population’s well-being, identity and livelihood.

5.4. Coping Mechanism

This section will review and analyze the traditional coping mechanisms of food insecure populations. In the PAR Model, coping strategies counteract the progression of vulnerability. Coping mechanisms and strategies are diverse and complex in nature and highly differ by geog-

raphy (eg. region) and demography (eg. gender, age and class). In order to reduce risk from stresses and shocks, households adapt and diversify their coping strategies. However, these approaches can breakdown during multiple confrontation with hazards either simultaneously or concurrently such as the occurrence of droughts over several years which creates a progressive deterioration of livelihood strategies. Coping mechanisms influence the severity of the effects of hazards and has the potential to avert disasters. Therefore, coping strategies are a prime example of the capabilities and resilience of humans to reduce vulnerability in the face of hazards.

The Institute of Development Studies research on coping strategies identifies four major categories: (Swift, 1993)

1. Production: This implies that households would combat food insecurity by producing at a higher level or diversify livelihood strategies. Examples include: changes in cultivation of crops and planting practices, hunting and gathering of wild food, fishing, herding of livestock, laboring in commercial farms and seeking wage labor.
2. Consumption: One of the major coping mechanisms used by food insecure households is reducing portion size, limiting meals throughout the day and lowering nutritional value in meals.
3. Exchanging: This entails selling or exchanging assets such as livestock, agricultural tools, mortgaging or selling of land.
4. Assets/Claims: Through the use of social, human and financial capital, vulnerable households borrow money or food (eg. through credit facilities or inter-household loan systems), seek family assistance, selling of personal items and enlisting in government or NGO Food for Work/ Cash for Work programmes
5. Migration and displacement: Is the harshest form of coping strategies if no other asset or resource is available.

The varying degree of food insecurity depends on the strength of households coping mechanisms. Food crises result from the accumulation of vulnerability that erodes coping strategies of households to deal with shocks in the local economy. The progression of vulnerability analyzed in the above sections, systematically deplete the major coping categories which produces increased risk of disasters.

5.5. Hazards and Droughts

Global climate change has significantly increased the rate of extreme weather such as droughts. It is almost certain that climate change is rooted in the mishandling of human activities which has increased the levels of greenhouse gases (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005, p. 135). The effects

of drought triggered by climate change impacts seasonal patterns, production and distribution of food and can also spread diseases to humans, animals and crops (Ibid). Since 1965, Ethiopia has faced 15 occurrences of drought (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p.10). With the negative progression of climate change, this statistic is only likely to continue. Famines, in contrast, do not occur sporadically but builds on high levels of food insecurity that a government is not prepared for which in turn causes the disaster (Ibid). Table 5.2 refers to eight occurrences of chronic food insecurity and famine which does not include the almost 11 million people that are suffering from famine in the Horn of Africa during 2011. What becomes

evident using the PAR Model is disasters such as famines are preventable (Webb, Coping with Drought and Food Insecurity in Ethiopia, 1993).

In the case of Ethiopia, LSLA exacerbates the root causes, dynamic pressures and produces unsafe physical and social conditions that increase the risk of food insecurity. With these preconditions combined with a trigger such as a drought, this can devastate the indigenous population of the Anuak tribe impacting the entire country as a whole. Multiple factors contribute to the collapse of societies and coping mechanisms, and it will take multiple efforts to prevent famines from occurring in Ethiopia.

Table 5.2. Famines in Ethiopia. Source: (Webb & Joachim, Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia: Lessons for Africa, 1994, p. 29)³

Date	Region Affected	Attributed Cause and Severity
1969	Eritrea	Estimated 1.7 million people suffering food shortage.
1971-1975	Ethiopia	Sequence of rain failures. Estimated ¼ million dead. Fifty percent livestock lost in Tigray and Wollo.
1978-1979	Southern Ethiopia	Failure of belg rains.
1982	Northern Ethiopia	Late meher rains.
1983-1985	Ethiopia	Sequence of rain failure. Eight million affected. Estimated 1 million dead. Much livestock loss.
1987-1988	Ethiopia	Drought of undocumentaed severity in peripheral regions.
1990-1992	Northern, Eastern, and Southwestern Ethiopia	Rain failure and regional conflicts. Estimated 4 million people suffering food shortage.
1993-1994	Tigray, Wollo, Addis	4 million people requiring food assistance, including demobilized army and Somili refugees. New droughts.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. The Anuak tribe is also related to the Nilotic (non-Semitic) Anuak of South Sudan.
2. Ethiopia has never been colonized but there was a brief Ital-

ian occupation in the 1930s-1940s

3. These statistics also include Eritrea. Eritrea gained independence in 1993.

6. The release model

In the PAR Model, disaster risk can only be released if there is an active effort to eliminate vulnerability. This chapter will make recommendations that will reduce the various root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions intensified by large scale land acquisitions. Moreover, it will review the limitations, gaps and conclude the research.

6.1. Recommendations

In order to reverse pressure and create sustainable development there needs to be collaboration at the local, regional, national and international levels. Figure 6.1 refers to the Release Model (opposite to the Pressure Model) which combats the causal factors that lead to disasters.

6.2. Safety Progression

Address Root Causes

Improved access to power, structures and resources:

- Conduct thorough investigations and open trials for the dismay that occurred in the 2003 Gambela riots. This will allow people to face justice and gain closure. This will also signify to the Anuak population that the GoE is taking measures that hold criminals accountable.
- Transparent induction of land into registry land bank ensuring participation of locals and other relevant stakeholders in the process of land deal negotiations.
- The affected populations of land deals must be compensated for the loss of livelihood with notable diligence dealing with customary land tenure.
- Affected populations need priority within the recruitment process of commercial agriculture.
- Regional governments need to negotiate for resource allocation and investments into the region that is being invested. So that affected populations also receive the benefit of the investments.

Reduce Dynamic Pressures

Develop Press Freedoms and NGO operational scope and capacity in order to improve transparency and accountability .

- The GoE needs to increase and support press freedoms and diminish self-censorship of journalists
- GoE need to revoke legislation that limit the operational scope of NGOs
- NGOs need to build the capacity of local leadership and implement participatory approaches to development
- GoE should request NGOs to complete independent social and environmental impact assessments prior to land deals
- The Villagization Programme should only relocate voluntarily once all promised facilities are implemented and/or build
- Strengthen early warning systems for famine

Improve Conditions

Protected environment and strong local economy and community relations. Reducing vulnerabilities created by root causes and dynamic pressure will in turn lead to safer conditions

- Monitoring activities need to be conducted by GoE's Agricultural Extension Officers to ensure that investors and households are not degrading the natural environment on a district basis. This information must be open to the public and civil society for review.
- The Agricultural Extension Officers needs to visit households on a continuous basis monitoring local markets and ensuring that households are diversifying livelihood.

Strengthen Coping Mechanisms. GoE and INGOs need to fund programming that supports indigenous knowledge and the traditional coping mechanisms of vulnerable populations. If vulnerability is to be reduced in the

long term, there needs to be acknowledgement of the knowledge, capabilities and skill traits of locals. When this is ignored and programming continues to look at people as helpless this in turn creates dependence (DMTP, 1992, p. 32).

Hazard Reduction and Disaster Risk Reduction = Less Impact. There are ways to reduce the intensity and frequency of hazards. This entails pro-active environmental policies and investors of commercial agricultures need to adhere to these guidelines or face penalties for non-compliance. A pro-active approach to hazard reduction emphasizes preparedness, mitigation, predication and early warning (Sivakumar & Wilhite, 2001, p. 1). Regional governmental bodies must monitor early warning systems, measure the risk of impact and strategize and enforce mitigate programmes to respond to situations adequately (Ibid). Early warning systems are only helpful if there is an effective and timely delivery of information to decision makers (Ibid). Strong partnership with communities, civil society, private sector and government bodies are determinates to reducing hazardous impact. The impact of drought and the level of exposure is what cause a disaster. It is important to address the root causes of why Ethiopia is prone to famines if the level of exposure is to be reduced. The combination of the progression of vulnerability, coping mechanisms and hazard reduction influences the risk of exposure.

6.3. Limitations and Gaps of the Research

There were several limitations and gaps in this research. Resources and time allocation limited the ability to conduct primary research. The use of grey literature might

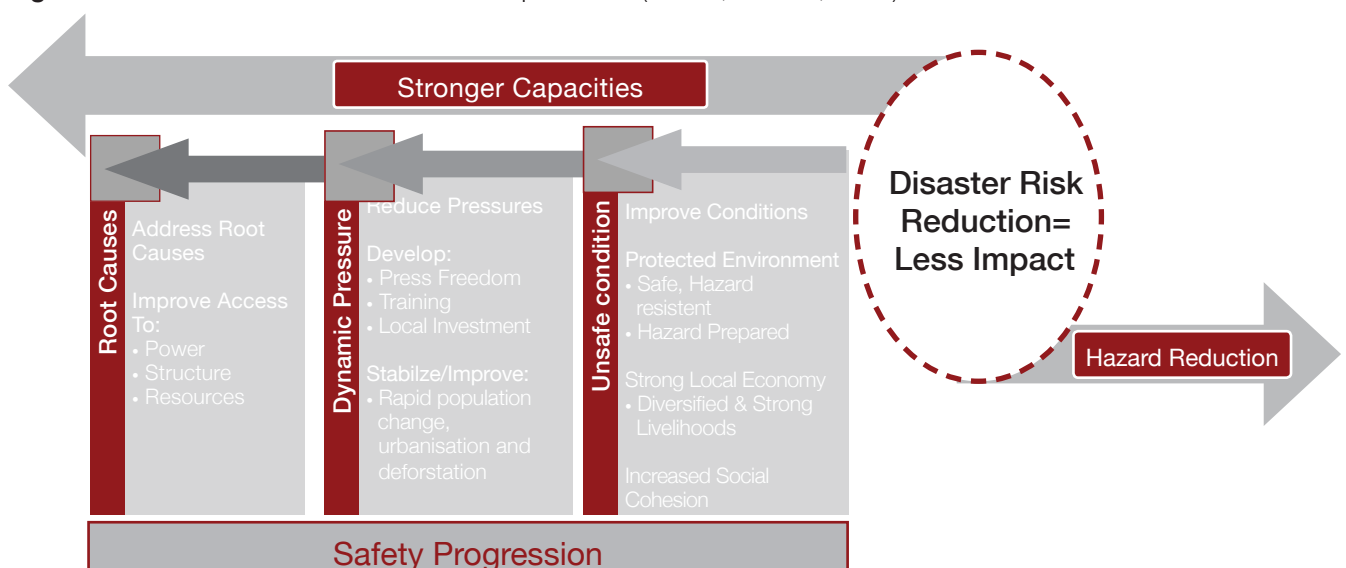
have distorted data to serve political interests of publishers. Gaps in the research may serve as an opportunity for further study. A gender perspective would add to the growing discourse on this topic. Furthermore, the exclusion of domestic and diaspora investors was intended to narrow the scope of the research since there is currently little information regarding these investors.

6.4. Conclusion

Neoliberal rationality in the name of development has deepened food insecurity and threatens food sovereignty for small landholders in Ethiopia. The major lessons learned from the Ethiopian case study is that the 'new phenomenon' of land acquisitions in the Gambela Region is actually a process that has 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 ensures that such oppressive actions continue 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 paper 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.

The concern in a drought prone country is how land policies are implemented and managed in order to contribute to sustainable development that reduces the vulnerabilities to disasters such as famines. The Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) outlined by

Figure 6.1. The Release Model. Source: Adapted from (Blaikie, P. et al., 2005)



the World Bank are mere best practice guidelines that the World Bank cannot even enforce. Governments like Ethiopia that lack a strong political opposition party use the neoliberal model to race to the bottom by deregulating and offering incentives to attract the most investment for 'unclaimed' rural land. As the GoE takes measures to liberalize land policies in order to actively seek foreign investment, this in turn reduces local communities' access to resources that they depend on for their livelihood and food security. This only deepens the vulnerability, as some host countries themselves have a vicious past of food insecurity challenges (Cotula, L. et. al, 2009, p.5-6). There needs to be recognition that there is rarely land in Ethiopia that is not utilized or unclaimed. Primarily, these lands are subject to long standing customary rights of use, access and management mechanisms enforced and abided by the surrounding communities (World Bank, UNCTAD et al., 2009, p. 4). The lack of recognition of land and resource rights signifies to the root causes of people who are marginalized from power, structures and resources such as the Anuak population who have been historically oppressed. The lack of power and limited access to resources decreases local's bargaining power even if there is participation within the negotiation of land deals.

These underlying reasons are further aggravated by the dynamic pressures created by the lack of press freedoms and limited operational capacity of NGOs. The suppressions of these factors significantly reflect in the transparency and accountability of governance in Ethiopia. The macro-forces of deforestation, rapid population growth and displacement are further plagued by policies that promote large-scale land acquisition. This is due to the lack of enforcement of legislation that requires an environmental and social impact assessment prior to the land deals. In addition, there is a lack of monitoring schemes to ensure there is no negative impact on environmental and social sustainability. Current Villagization Programmes re-

ignites controversy as these programmes seem to benefit elites and investors rather than the local communities because there is a lack of planning and capacity to implement in order to ensure adequate access to resources. A research finding from the Oakland Institute believes that such resettlement programmes can cause a serious long-term detrimental impact to local communities (Felix Horne, et. al, 2011, p. 14). Such as the case of the Villagization Programme of 1980s that created long term hostilities and conflict as recent as 2003 in the Gambela Region, when the GoE resettled Highlanders without assessing social impact. The GoE has systematically weakened small landholder's right to livelihood with a shift in policy direction that looks to modernize agriculture.

LSLA for commercial agriculture worsen conditions of affected populations as they find themselves in unsafe conditions that heighten their vulnerability to hazards such as droughts. These commercial farms exploit and intensify agricultural output thereby depleting and degrading the physical and natural environment, and impacting surrounding areas in which small landholders depend on for their survival. These farms also disrupt the local economy since local people's livelihoods have been loss. Moreover, there is no clause in legislation for investors to protect local economies or supply local markets. It is actually the contrast where investors are given incentives such as tax and duty exemption on exports. In order for people to survive these conditions, affected populations will engage in destructive coping mechanisms that deplete their assets. Tensions and conflict rise when people find themselves with no other option but to take drastic measures. The progression of vulnerability coupled with destructive coping mechanisms are the causal factors, when confronted with a hazard such as drought creates a disaster. The major tragedy is understanding that disasters are preventable but only bandaging the symptoms and not the root causes.

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The Development Planning Unit, University College London (UCL), is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning, management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning, management and design, especially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition.

The central purpose of the DPU is to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deal with the wide range of development issues that are emerging at local, national and global levels. In London, the DPU runs postgraduate programmes of study, including a research degree (MPhil/PhD) programme, six one-year Masters Degree courses and specialist short courses in a range of fields addressing urban and rural development policy, planning, management and design.

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The academic staff of the DPU are a multi-disciplinary and multi-national group with extensive and on-going research and professional experience in various fields of urban and international development throughout the world. DPU Associates are a body of professionals who work closely with the Unit both in London and overseas. Every year the student body embraces more than 45 different nationalities.

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