

ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCIL COURTS IN RESOLVING LAND DISPUTES: A CASE STUDY OF MUKONO MUNICIPALITY, UGANDA

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF GOVERNANCE
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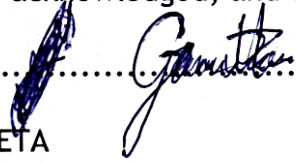


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DECLARATION

I, GLORIA TETA, do hereby declare that this research report has not been submitted for any academic award to any institution. All sources consulted have been duly acknowledged, and this work is not plagiarised.

Signed:  Date: 5th / 06 / 2025

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report was done under my supervision as the academic supervisor, and is ready for submission for examination.

Signed: Date:

Dr. KIZITO MARTIN

(ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR)

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering encouragement, sacrifices, and prayers carried me through every difficult moment of this journey. Your belief in me made me go farther than I thought possible. To my friends who walked this path alongside me, sharing ideas, giving their time, and lending a hand without hesitation this work is also yours.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BGIR	Bachelor of Governance and International Relations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
LC	Local Council
LEMU	Land and Equity Movement in Uganda
MoL	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
QDA	Qualitative Document Analysis
UCU	Uganda Christian University
ULA	Uganda Land Alliance

ABSTRACT

Land conflicts are one of the perennial governance issues in peri-urban Uganda. They have been exacerbated in Mukono Municipality by a fraudulent titling process that forced the Ministry of Lands to cancel hundreds of titles, with many residents having insecure land rights and lacking effective institutional support. Local Council (LC) Courts are the most easily available governance forum for common people to resolve land disputes; however, their functions within the wider context of local governance and community empowerment have not been well researched in the Mukono setting. The study investigates the contribution of the LC Courts in resolving land disputes in Mukono Municipality from 2019 to 2026 in three aspects of governance namely; awareness of land rights to the community, community dialogue forum about the land dispute and accountability in land governance. A qualitative research design was employed and the method of research was Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA). Systematic identification, selection, appraisal and analysis of 22 documents. These included national land governance policy documents, reports from Uganda Land Alliance and LEMU, publications from the Ministry of Lands, records from Mukono District Local Government, academic research on land tenure and community governance in Uganda, and civil society assessments of the performance of LC Courts. All sources were free and accessible and evaluated based on Scott's (1990) criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the data with the assistance of NVivo 14, a qualitative data analysis software. Documentary evidence demonstrates the role of LC Courts as 'meaningful but limited governance'. Their locally established processes are publicly visible and raise awareness of land rights but this awareness is less systematic and is not reaching the most vulnerable, especially women and elderly citizens. They create opportunities for community discussions that are based on local knowledge and social networks, but these are not necessarily inclusive: disadvantaged groups can be excluded by power differentials and gender norms. They claim to hold accountable members of the local government but this is in

theory rather than in practice because of political interference and the lack of mechanisms for communities to hold members of government to account. The study finds that the community dialogue role plays the best part in land dispute resolution in the LC Courts and the least effective in cases involving strong parties in land disputes where accountability is required. The study calls for organised civic education programmes to be integrated with LC Court proceedings, gender responsive governance trainings for LC officials and introducing community accountability mechanisms to enhance accountability. Abstract: The study aims to investigate how the implementation of Local Council Courts influences land disputes in Uganda, specifically in Mukono Municipality. Research Objectives: The study aims at investigating the influence of the implementation of the Local Council Courts in the resolution of land disputes in the Municipality of Mukono, Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study falls under the pool of literature that focuses on the reactions of decentralised governance institutions to land conflicts in fast-growing peri-urban communities. The performance of Local Council (LC) Courts, especially in the areas of awareness creation, discussion, and holding to account, has not been systematically studied in the context of land disputes in Uganda, especially in the Mukono area. Mukono Municipality, 25 kilometres east of Kampala, is a case of severe breakdowns in LAND administration, including a government-imposed moratorium on land transactions and the cancellation of a large number of fraudulent titles, in the country's recent history. Chapter One has the background of the study, problem statement, general and specific objectives, research questions, significance, rationale, scope, and conceptual framework. In the literature review in Chapter Two, the theoretical and empirical literature on the study objectives is reviewed. The methodology used in conducting the research is explained in Chapter Three. The results of the documentary analysis are presented and interpreted in Chapter Four. The findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

1.1 Background to the Study

Conceptual Background: A Local Council Court is a local government court structure that is established at the village and division levels to hear, resolve and, if necessary, refer certain civil cases under the Local Council Courts Act (2006). In the case of land disputes, governance can be seen with respect to three interrelated aspects pertinent to the Governance and International Relations discipline: awareness of the community regarding land rights, facilitation of land dispute resolution through community dialogues that are inclusive, and accountability in local governance of land disputes. Community awareness regarding land rights refers to the knowledge of the community members

regarding their rights of the land tenure system such as rights to occupy, use, transfer and inheritance of land and the processes through which they can assert and defend their rights (FAO, 2012). In such a land tenure system as in Mukono Municipality where land is held by various land ownership types such as customary, leasehold and freehold, awareness is an important governance variable. The public hearings and community involvement of LC Courts can help to communicate and educate about land rights to people who may not have received information previously. In the governance context, community dialogue is a participatory advocacy process where community members are deliberatively engaging in a discussion with each other about their issues, opinions, and decisions on how to address the conflict (Chambers, 2010). LC Courts are set up to facilitate this kind of discussion, and they have the following features: They hold local trials, in local language, with local involvement, thus allowing one to discuss and reach a decision on the land dispute issue, rather than hope for a decision from a remote court. The quality, and the inclusiveness of this dialogue - whether of women, elderly residents and other marginalised groups - is one of the important aspects of the effectiveness of the LC Courts' governance. In a nutshell, accountability in local land governance is when governance institutions govern in a transparent, consistent and lawful way and are accountable to the communities they serve for their actions (Schedler, 1999). The concept of accountability in the context of the LC Court includes fair procedures, consistency of decisions with national laws and community standards, responsiveness of LC officials to community issues/concerns and ability of community to challenge decisions of the LC officials that they feel are unfair. Political interference, gender bias and a lack of decision making is a weak form of accountability that directly impacts the function of these courts in land governance.

Historical Background Land governance in Uganda can be traced back to colonial times. The Uganda Agreement of 1900 was a political deal that granted major land parcels to the chiefs of the Buganda Kingdom and the colonial administration, while dispossessing many of the ordinary cultivators of the territory and forcing

them to become tenants and pay rent to the chiefs or the colonial administration, and in this case, the former, and they were called the "bibanja holders. This structural mismatch between land occupiers and registered land owners left gaps at the community-level, which have not yet been filled (Musisi, 2019). After independence in 1962, the Uganda governments have been unable to develop sound land governance institutions. The first major attempt at land governance reform after independence was the Land Act of 1998 which identified four different types of tenure—Mailo, freehold, leasehold, customary—and also introduced Land Tribunals as specialised bodies for the resolution of land disputes. 227). But the Land Tribunals were poorly resourced, understaffed and eventually disbanded, thus creating a huge governance vacuum on land dispute resolution (Adoko et al., 2019). The Local Council Courts Act of 2006 was then enacted to fill the void, and to give jurisdiction to LC Courts over specific types of land disputes, such as land conflicts regarding customary tenure and land boundaries. Mukono Municipality has had a challenging experience regarding land governance issues since 2019 up to 2026 which is the time frame for this study. The cumulative impact of fast urban growth, speculation on land and extensive fraud in land titles started to create a land crisis from 2019. Land transactions and land governance processes were affected and affected by the pandemic in Uganda (2020-2021) resulting in a backlog of outstanding disputes. In 2022, the investigations into fraudulent titling started to get underway in Mukono, culminating in a ban on land trading and the cancellation of hundreds of fraudulent titles by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (Ministry of Lands, 2025). All such events posed new challenges to LC Courts and changed the character and amount of land disputes involving LC Courts.

1.2 Contextual Background

Mukono Municipality is the administrative headquarters of Mukono District, located in the Central Region of Uganda approximately 25 kilometres east of Kampala along the Kampala-Jinja highway. It is one of the fastest-growing peri-urban centres in the country, driven by its proximity to Kampala and its position along

major transport and commercial corridors. The municipality's rapid growth has been accompanied by intense pressure on land, as urban developers, real estate investors, and incoming residents compete for a limited and increasingly valuable land resource.

Land tenure in Mukono Municipality is highly complex. Mailo land, which predominates in much of Buganda, coexists with freehold, leasehold, and customary holdings within the same administrative boundaries. This tenure complexity creates frequent overlaps and ambiguities in land rights, providing fertile ground for disputes. Land administration data and governance field reports from civil society organisations consistently identify land disputes as among the leading causes of conflict in the municipality, with boundary encroachments, inheritance disagreements, landlord-tenant evictions, and fraudulent ownership claims among the most frequently reported categories (Uganda Land Alliance, 2023; LEMU, 2022).

The governance response to the land crisis has been deeply inadequate. The Ministry of Lands' cancellation of fraudulent titles exposed the degree to which the land registry – the foundational instrument of formal land governance – had been compromised. Residents who had purchased land in good faith found themselves holding legally invalid documents, and the institutional pathways through which they might seek redress were slow, expensive, and geographically distant. In this governance vacuum, LC Courts became the primary point of contact between the state and ordinary citizens in land matters – a role they were designed to play but for which they have not been adequately resourced or supported.

1.3 Problem Statement

The policy intent of Uganda's decentralised governance framework is that LC Courts should serve as accessible, accountable, and community-responsive institutions through which ordinary residents can resolve land disputes without resorting to the expensive and distant formal court system. They are expected to

raise community awareness of land rights, facilitate inclusive dialogue among disputing parties, and uphold accountability in local land governance decisions.

In practice, the governance performance of LC Courts in Mukono Municipality falls significantly short of this intent. Civil society field reports and published governance assessments consistently document awareness gaps, exclusion from dialogue, and accountability failures that undermine the effectiveness of LC Courts as land governance institutions. In terms of community awareness, many residents particularly women, elderly individuals, and low-income households remain unaware of their land rights and of the processes through which those rights can be defended. LC Court proceedings are not systematically used as civic education platforms, and their potential to build a rights-aware citizenry remains largely unrealised (Adoko et al., 2019). In terms of community dialogue, the spaces that LC Courts create for deliberation are not consistently inclusive: entrenched power imbalances and gender norms shape whose voice carries weight and whose claims are taken seriously, resulting in outcomes that reflect social hierarchy rather than legal entitlement (Rugadya et al., 2020). In terms of accountability, LC officials are elected by and theoretically accountable to their communities, but in practice they are susceptible to pressure from politically connected landowners and wealthy developers whose interests frequently conflict with those of the residents LC Courts are meant to serve (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2021).

The period from 2019 to 2026 intensified all three of these governance failures. The fraudulent titling crisis generated new categories of dispute for which residents had no awareness framework; the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the community dialogues through which disputes had previously been managed; and the political stakes surrounding land in Mukono grew dramatically as land values rose. Despite the urgency of these challenges, no existing study systematically examines the governance performance of LC Courts in Mukono Municipality across these three dimensions during this critical period. This study is designed to fill that gap.

1.4 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine the role of Local Council Courts in resolving land disputes in Mukono Municipality, Uganda, for the period 2019 to 2026.

1.5 Specific Objectives

The following three specific objectives guided the study:

- i. To examine how LC Courts promote community awareness of land rights in Mukono Municipality.
- ii. To assess how LC Courts serve as platforms for community dialogue in resolving land disputes in Mukono Municipality.
- iii. To analyse how LC Courts promote accountability in local land governance in Mukono Municipality.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. How do LC Courts promote community awareness of land rights in Mukono Municipality?
- ii. How do LC Courts serve as platforms for community dialogue in resolving land disputes in Mukono Municipality?
- iii. How do LC Courts promote accountability in local land governance in Mukono Municipality?

1.7 Significance of the Study

1.7.1 Contribution to Policy

The findings of this study are intended to inform decision-making at the local government, district, and national levels on how to strengthen LC Courts as

community governance institutions. In particular, the study provides evidence for the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Lands on where specific governance gaps exist in Mukono Municipality and what targeted interventions including civic education programmes, gender-responsive governance training, and community oversight mechanisms are most urgently needed to improve the effectiveness of LC Courts in land dispute resolution.

1.7.2 Contribution to Practice

The study offers practically relevant findings for LC Court officials, Mukono District Land Office staff, and civil society organisations working on land rights in the municipality such as the Uganda Land Alliance and LEMU. By identifying what works and what does not across the three governance dimensions examined, the study enables practitioners to focus their support, training, and advocacy efforts where they will have the greatest impact on community land governance outcomes.

1.7.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to academic literature on decentralised governance and community-based dispute resolution in Africa by providing a governance-focused analysis of LC Court performance in a peri-urban Ugandan municipality during a period of exceptional governance disruption. Existing literature tends to examine LC Courts primarily through a legal lens. This study's governance framework centred on awareness, dialogue, and accountability – offers a discipline-appropriate analytical approach that can inform future research on community governance institutions across the region.

1.8 Rationale / Justification of the Study

The study is justified by both an academic gap and governance urgency. Academically, no existing study examines the governance performance of LC Courts in Mukono Municipality during the 2019 to 2026 period using the governance framework adopted here. The framework centred on awareness, dialogue, and

accountability has not previously been applied to LC Courts in Uganda, and the study therefore makes an original contribution to the literature.

In terms of governance urgency, the fraudulent titling crisis in Mukono Municipality exposed the degree to which formal land governance institutions have failed the most vulnerable residents. In the absence of a functioning formal registry and in the context of an overwhelmed formal court system, LC Courts have become the primary governance institution through which residents seek protection of their land rights. Understanding how effectively they perform this role – and what is preventing them from doing it better – is therefore a matter of practical governance importance with direct implications for the livelihoods and security of thousands of Mukono residents.

1.9 Scope of the Study

1.9.1 Geographical Scope

The study examined the governance performance of LC Courts within Mukono Municipality, Uganda. Mukono Municipality was selected as the study area because of the acute governance failures it has experienced in the land sector and the rich and instructive case it provides for studying community governance institutions under sustained institutional stress. The documentary evidence reviewed covers governance and land dispute data specific to Mukono Municipality and, where municipality-level data was unavailable, the broader Mukono District and Central Region context.

1.9.2 Content Scope

The study examined three governance dimensions of LC Court performance: the promotion of community awareness of land rights; the facilitation of community dialogue as a means of resolving land disputes; and the promotion of accountability in local land governance. Each dimension was assessed through systematic documentary evidence drawn from policy instruments, civil society

governance assessments, academic studies, and government reports covering the study period.

1.9.3 Time Scope

The study covers the period 2019 to 2026. This time frame was chosen because 2019 marks the period immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted community governance and land transactions across Uganda. The period also encompasses the escalation of fraudulent titling in Mukono, the Ministry of Lands' investigations and transaction freeze, and the eventual mass cancellation of fraudulent titles. Together, these events fundamentally reshaped the land dispute landscape and the governance demands placed on LC Courts. The documentary sources reviewed extend from 2019 to the most recent publicly available records at the time of this study, completed in March 2026.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study positions the three governance dimensions of LC Court performance the promotion of community awareness of land rights, the facilitation of community dialogue, and the promotion of accountability in local land governance – as the independent variables, and land dispute resolution effectiveness as the dependent variable. The framework proposes that when LC Courts effectively perform these three governance functions, the result is more disputes resolved in a fair, timely, and community-accepted manner, contributing to greater land tenure security in Mukono Municipality.

Community awareness of land rights is operationalised as the degree to which residents engaging with LC Courts gain knowledge of their entitlements and how to assert them, as documented in governance assessments and civil society reports. Community dialogue is operationalised as the inclusivity, fairness, and participatory quality of the deliberative processes that LC Courts facilitate, as documented in field reports and academic studies. Accountability is

operationalised as the consistency, transparency, and answerability of LC Court proceedings and decisions to the community, as documented in governance assessments, civil society monitoring reports, and academic studies.

Intervening variables include the governance capacity of LC officials, gender norms and power dynamics within the community, political interference in LC Court proceedings, and the broader governance context created by the Ministry of Lands' reforms. These intervening variables are expected to either strengthen or weaken the contribution of each governance dimension to land dispute resolution outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature that pertains to the three goals set out in the research project. Section 2.2 provides the theory on which the study is premised namely, Decentralization Theory and Theory of Participatory Governance and critically analyses the theories in terms of the underlying assumptions, justification, applicability, and limitations. Section 2.3 examines empirical literature with regard to the three goals identified above focusing, in particular, on the work carried out in the Ugandan setting, and other Sub-Saharan African settings alike.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Decentralisation Theory

Decentralisation theory as propounded by Rondinelli (1981), Manor (1999), and Smoke (2003) explains that decentralising political power, administrative responsibility, and resource distribution from the national level to sub-national and community-based governance structures results in effective outcomes of governance by putting the decision-makers at a closer level to those whose lives will be most impacted by the decision. This theory is based on four major assumptions. First, community-level governance structures are more effective than national-level structures in understanding the needs and preferences of the communities they serve. Second, the proximity of the community fosters more responsive and accountable governance structures since the community leaders are directly accessible to their constituents. Third, the decentralization of governance structures reduces the cost of governance by cutting down the gap between the citizenry and the state. Fourth, participatory local governance develops civic capacity in the communities.

Decentralisation Theory serves as an appropriate framework for analysing land governance in Ugandan LC Courts due to the compatibility of its foundational assumptions with the functioning principles of LC Courts. LC Courts are a part of Uganda's decentralization program, designed to decentralize land governance and conflict management by bringing it to the grassroots. Decentralization Theory helps understand the process through which land governance is either improved, or remains unchanged with the only difference that governance failure is shifted rather than addressed. The question to be answered in the course of research is if LC Courts have managed to actualize the potential benefits of decentralization through increased awareness, dialogue, and accountability (Smoke, 2003).

For example, when applied in this research project, the following propositions can be made from Decentralization Theory: that LC Courts should enhance community understanding of their land rights by involving the community in the process of governance and implementing procedures that the community understands; that LC Courts should enable community discussions by providing forums of discussion where disputes can be sorted out; and that LC Courts should encourage accountability by ensuring that the officials are accountable to the communities they work within.

Nonetheless, there are major limitations associated with Decentralisation Theory, which constrain its ability to explain governance within the Mukono Municipality setting. Decentralisation often fails to achieve its governance objectives in cases where there are no adequate economic resources, capabilities, and political autonomy available for the implementation of institutional responsibilities. Decentralisation might also tend to reinforce rather than mitigate inequalities where local elites exploit governance benefits while excluding marginalized populations such as the poor, women, and minorities from access. These concerns relate to Mukono Municipality where LC Courts operate under circumstances characterized by severe resource shortages, insufficient administrative capabilities, and political interferences. It should be appreciated that Decentralisation Theory does not address aspects of power relations, gender roles,

and political interference, which have a bearing on the governance performance of LC Courts. The theory equally lacks explanatory mechanisms for examining the influence of community participation on good governance or lack of it. For this reason, it is necessary to employ another theory alongside Decentralisation Theory.

2.2.2 Theory of Participatory Governance

According to the Theory of Participatory Governance, as derived from the studies of Arnstein (1969), Fung and Wright (2003), and Cornwall (2008), successful governance entails the active participation of citizens in decision making affecting them. Participation of citizens in decision-making processes is seen in contrast to top-down governance where power moves from the government to its citizens. Instead, participatory governance recognizes participation by citizens as an important element in governance where such citizens are actively engaged in problem identification, solution creation, and monitoring of the process. This means that, according to the theory, participation by citizens should be seen not only as a procedural process but also as a governance outcome where, as long as citizens are effectively engaged in institutional processes, there will be higher likelihood of trusting the institution and compliance with its decisions as well as advocating for improvements.

The rationale behind the adoption of the Participatory Governance Theory in this study is the fact that the theory addresses effectively the exact weaknesses of the Decentralisation Theory pointed out above. While Decentralisation Theory emphasizes the structure of the transfer of power, the Participatory Governance Theory places its emphasis on the process by which this power is exerted. It highlights the question of participation in the LC Court hearings, whether everyone is being heard and whether the voices of certain individuals have been silenced, and whether LC Courts are truly open for dialogue.

As applied to the current study, the Participatory Governance Theory helps to evaluate the quality of dialogue held between the communities and the LC Courts

especially in relation to the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women and the elderly in the dialogue and assessing the accountability mechanisms which ensure that LC Courts are responsible to the communities. Participatory Governance Theory also facilitates the analysis of community awareness in that according to this theory, awareness is not a personal characteristic of the individuals but rather is a political and social asset that facilitates the participation of citizens in the governance process.

Decentralization Theory and Participatory Governance Theory help provide a thorough framework for analyzing the issue of governance in LC Courts. Decentralization Theory tells us what the purpose of LC Courts is as well as what functions they should fulfill; Participatory Governance Theory offers a way of assessing the quality of fulfilling of these functions.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 LC Courts and Community Awareness of Land Rights

Community awareness about land rights is an essential governance variable within any dispute resolution mechanism related to the use of land. The lack of awareness among the population makes it difficult for the public to enforce their entitlements through any established mechanism. Several studies conducted on land governance in Uganda have indicated low levels of community awareness to be one of the key challenges in managing land disputes (Rugadya et al., 2020; Adoko et al., 2019).

According to Adoko et al. (2019), a thorough study was carried out in the context of land governance in Uganda, which revealed that most rural and peri-urban communities had little knowledge of the various types of land tenure systems relevant to them, the rights granted them by law as land occupiers/owners, or the procedure that would enable them to enforce their rights in case of any conflict. This knowledge was lacking especially among women and old people, whose exclusion from the social network LC Court proceedings where knowledge about

land governance is shared and learned had been systematic. Significantly, Adoko et al. (2019) cited LC Courts as one of the key community-level institutions where such knowledge awareness could be created, in the sense that LC Court cases made publicly were an opportunity to educate citizens informally since the language used and witnesses involved were the community's own. Unfortunately, according to the researchers, this awareness potential remained untapped because LC court officers did not regard raising awareness as within their duties.

It emerged from the fieldwork survey conducted by the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) that, although LC Court cases were the first opportunity for many individuals to learn formally about their rights, this happened incidentally rather than intentionally. Those individuals who were actively involved in the cases learned of the same, whereas other individuals such as neighbors, family members, and others did not benefit at all. It can be clearly concluded from the above observation that since awareness will always come incidentally, it will never be complete and inclusive.

Matembe (2021) adds a gender angle to the above literature by showing that women in Uganda are much less aware of their legal rights regarding the ownership of land, including their legal right to equal share in inheritance as per the Land Act and Constitution. She argues that this is a result of both customary rules that place women second to men with respect to land issues and also the marginalization of women from local council meetings where such information on land governance is disseminated. Field reports on tenure security in Buganda region municipalities conducted by LEMU (2022) further show this trend whereby widows and single women were least aware of the legality of retaining their own land upon the death of their husband, which was then used against them by male members of the family during inheritance battles.

2.3.2 LC Courts as Platforms for Community Dialogue on Land Disputes

The idea of using LC courts as community dialogue forums is based on the theory of participatory governance, among others. In terms of dialogue, it means not just

talking but conducting discussions that involve different voices, questioning conflicting claims, and arriving at solutions through consensus building rather than imposition from outside (Chambers, 2010).

The best description of the processes involved in the LC Courts' dialogue practices in Uganda has been provided by Ssekana (2018). In particular, according to the author, LC Courts function effectively as dialogue platforms in three cases: the presiding officer is familiar with the community and its values; both disputants act honestly; and all people involved speak the same language during the discussion. If all the above-mentioned conditions are satisfied, the decisions reached in LC Courts will be approved by both parties and accepted by the whole community. If not, LC Courts can become places where existing power relations continue being reproduced.

The findings from Rugadya et al.'s (2020) national survey revealed that the processes involving dialogue among the community members through LC Courts was perceived positively by the members due to factors such as local language use, familiarity with the forum, and social legitimacy of the LC members. On the other hand, the authors noted that the level of quality for dialogue was greatly varied among the communities, where one major concern included the inconsistency on the participation of the women in the dialogue forums. More specifically, the female participants expressed that they felt talked down to and forced to agree with what they did not want.

In his study Deininger (2020), he places this observation within the wider body of comparative literature on community dispute resolution in Sub-Saharan Africa, stating that the success of community dialogue as a form of governance is highly dependent on the structure of the process itself. A controlled dialogue carried out in a hierarchical structure simply reproduces the same power structures in question. However, a dialogic approach, in which there is room for more than one voice and the facilitation of more marginal parties in discussion, yields better results. This idea is directly relevant to the organization of LC Court proceedings

in Mukono Municipality. In the Central Region assessment carried out by the Uganda Land Alliance (2023), it was observed that LC Court proceedings were frequently set up in such a way as to disadvantage women and tenants, as evidenced by the influence that the official carrying out the proceedings had through his social relations with the more dominant party.

In the case of disruption of governance processes, this can be observed in relation to community dialogue in the Mukono setting. According to civil society monitoring reports conducted by LEMU (2022), it was seen that the pandemic caused the disruption of LC Court sessions among Buganda municipalities for the years 2020 and 2021 because of the banning of any kind of community meetings, which created backlogs of unsettled cases and disrupted the community dialogue process. From the Mukono District Local Government Annual Report (2022), it was reported that there had been a sharp rise in land disputes among the divisions since the end of the pandemic ban.

2.3.3 LC Courts and Accountability in Local Land Governance

Accountability can easily be said to be one of the hardest governance virtues to attain in the literature on good governance. Accountability takes two forms within local governance structures such as the LC courts: vertical accountability, where the answerability of LC officials to higher levels of government is concerned, and horizontal accountability, where the answerability of LC officials to the communities they govern is concerned (Schedler, 1999).

In their groundbreaking comparative study on decentralized governance, Crook and Manor (1998) observed that horizontal accountability, which refers to the ability of citizens to hold local officials accountable for their actions, was always weaker than vertical accountability within all studied contexts. The researchers observed this problem to be as a result of electoral dependence (local officials dependent on electoral support are not keen to offend influential citizens by ruling against them), as well as the lack of independent oversight systems within

local communities. This study implies that accountability will fail at its very core, especially in cases where it matters the most.

The same phenomenon is evident in Uganda, where Adoko et al. (2019) have identified several documented instances in which LC Court judgments on land issues seemed to favor the interest of the stronger side rather than the substance of their competing arguments. In particular, Adoko et al. (2019) explain that the mechanisms of structural accountability for LC Courts such as the option for individuals to appeal against LC judgments to higher courts of magistrate courts are rarely utilized due to the unavailability of the process because it was too costly and complicated for ordinary citizens to access. As per the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) land governance assessment report for Mukono Municipality, appeals against LC judgments were very few.

Matembe (2021) includes a gender aspect in his discussion of accountability, stating that LC Courts not only fail to protect women's rights according to the country's constitution but also legitimize the violations of such rights by using discriminatory practices embedded within customary laws as a framework for decision-making. According to the Uganda Human Rights Commission (2021), the belief that the LC Courts show partiality when addressing conflicts leads people, especially women and poor households, not to use the LC Courts at all or follow their decisions. This finding highlights the importance of accountability and its impact on dispute resolution effectiveness: if LC Courts act more like biased bodies than impartial governance mechanisms, they can never become an effective means of conflict resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a methodological framework that has been used in this study. It is integrated by the research design, the research approach, the data source, the population of documents, the sampling, the definition of variables, the method and tool for data collection, the procedure for data collection, the quality and error control, the data processing and analysis, ethical considerations, and methodological constraints. All methodological choices have been taken with regard to the targets of the study and the necessary requirements for a documentary study of a qualitative nature. This research did not collect any primary data from human beings. No access letters to institutions, research permits, or consent processes with participants were necessary. All evidence was sourced from public documents.

3.2 Research Design

The use of a case study research design was implemented. Case study research, as defined by Yin (2018), is an empirical inquiry that studies a contemporary phenomenon in its natural environment with the aim of depth of study, especially when the phenomenon has blurred boundaries between the phenomenon and the environment. For four reasons, the case study design was an appropriate design. First, Mukono Municipality is an explicitly delineated and culturally and contextually strong governance unit in which the three facets of LC Court performance can be empirically tracked via documentary evidence. Second, the design is appropriate for explanatory 'how' research questions, which is the type of research question for all three research questions for this study. Third, a use of multiple sources of documentary evidence such as policy instruments, civil society governance assessments, government reports, and academic studies that can be triangulated within a single analytical frame (Yin, 2018). Fourth, the design is

context sensitive that is it must be applicable to the institutional, historical and political context of the Mukono Municipality and not abstracted out of the context. These characteristics put the case study design in the spotlight as the most suitable design for this study, as alternatives were narrative inquiry that focuses on individual life experience and grounded theory that aims at the inductive development of new theory from data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

3.3 Research Approach The qualitative research approach was used.

The qualitative approach focuses on the meanings, the processes within institutions and the results of governance, rather than testing statistical hypotheses or creating numerical measures, in a natural context (Creswell and Creswell 2018). The main characteristics of the key features are that they are interpretive when reading information and inductive when analysing between concrete information from the texts and broad governance themes (Bryman, 2016). Three reasons were used in choosing the qualitative approach. The three governance aspects analysed in this study - community awareness, dialogue quality and accountability - are of an inherently interpretive nature and cannot be fully captured with numerical data alone. Qualitative documentary analysis does provide the necessary contextual and process-based evidence that is needed to understand how LC Courts perform these governance functions. Secondly, the study aimed at discovering governance context and analytical framework that has not been studied in Mukono Municipality; qualitative methods are appropriate for exploring those areas where there is little or no previous literature (Bryman, 2016). Third, because the study is wholly based on secondary documentary sources, a qualitative epistemological orientation seems the most appropriate because it is more oriented towards depth of interpretive analysis than toward breadth of numerical measurement.

3.4 Data Sources

This study was based only on second hand data sources. Secondary data is information that is collected for other research questions or for other purposes (Bryman, 2016). Three justifications were worked out to justify the exclusive use of secondary documentary data. Three justifications were developed for the exclusive use of secondary documentary data. Institutional and governance processes are best documented in records, policy documents, and governance evaluations, as they offer contemporaneous, authoritative and verifiable evidence rather than relying on the individual's recall. Second, the documentary record for the timeframe 2019-2026 enables longitudinal evidence to trace the governance trends and institutional patterns over time. Third, the identified sources have been sourced from authoritative government publications, civil society governance assessments and peer-reviewed academic literature, which increases the credibility and verifiability of the evidence base (Yin, 2018). The secondary sources consulted were: Land Act (Cap. 06) of 2006; Local Council Courts Act (2006); Local Council Courts Act (2006); Local Councils Act (Cap. 06); Local Councils Act (Cap. 06); Community Lawyers Act (Cap. 06); Community Lawyers Act (Cap. 06). 227, 1998); the Local Governments Act (Cap. The following reports, publications and policy statements were used: 243, 1997); Uganda Land Alliance field assessment reports (2019-2023); LEMU land governance and tenure security reports for Buganda municipalities (2020-2022); Mukono District Local Government annual reports (2020-2024); Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development publications and policy statements; Uganda Human Rights Commission land rights assessment reports; civil society monitoring reports on land dispute resolution in Central Region municipalities; peer reviewed academic studies on land tenure, community governance and LC Courts in Uganda; published comparative studies on decentralised land governance in Sub Saharan Africa. A brief overview of population and sampling of documents.

3.5 Population and sampling of documents.

Document population included all officially documented, governance assessment reports, policy instruments, civil society publications and peer-reviewed academic

literature of the governance, land tenure and dispute resolution context in Mukono Municipality and similar peri-urban settings in Uganda between 2019 and 2026. Purposive sampling was used in document selection due to the direct relationship of documents to the three objectives of the study, as well as the fact that documents were selected because they represented official, civil society, or peer-reviewed sources (Bryman, 2016). Twenty-two documents were reviewed (as summarised in Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Document Selection Matrix

Document Category	Source	Estimated No.	Study Objectives	Time Period
National land governance legislation and policy instruments	Government of Uganda (Ministry of Lands; Ministry of Local Government)	4-5 documents	All three objectives	1997-2026
Uganda Land Alliance field assessment reports	Uganda Land Alliance (ULA)	3-4 reports	Obj 1, 2, 3	2019-2023
LEMU land governance and tenure security reports	Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU)	2-3 reports	Obj 1, 2, 3	2020-2022
Mukono District Local Government annual reports	Mukono District Local Government	3-4 reports	All three objectives	2020-2024
Uganda Human Rights Commission reports on land rights	Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)	1-2 reports	Obj 1, 3	2019-2021
Ministry of Lands publications and policy statements	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development	2-3 documents	Obj 1, 3	2020-2025
Peer-reviewed academic studies on land tenure, LC Courts, and community governance in Uganda	Academic journals and books	10-12 publications	All three objectives	1998-2024

Source: Researcher's own design, 2026.

Each document was appraised before extraction using Scott's (1990) four criteria: authenticity (whether the document is genuine and of unquestionable origin), credibility (whether the evidence contained is free from distortion and error), representativeness (whether the document is representative of the governance realities it describes), and meaning (whether the content is clear and comprehensible). Documents that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

3.6 Measures and Definitions of Variables

The study had three independent variables the three governance dimensions of LC Court performance and one dependent variable land dispute resolution effectiveness. Since the study employed a purely qualitative documentary approach, variables were defined and measured using qualitative indicators derived from the documentary record rather than numerical scales.

Community awareness of land rights was assessed through documented evidence of the extent to which LC Court engagement raised residents' knowledge of their entitlements, the groups identified as most lacking in awareness, and the factors that enabled or constrained awareness-raising. Community dialogue was assessed through documented evidence of the inclusivity and quality of deliberative processes in LC Court proceedings, including who participated, whose voices were recorded as influential, and how agreements were reached. Accountability was assessed through documented evidence of the consistency and impartiality of LC Court proceedings, recorded instances of political interference or gender bias, and the availability and use of mechanisms for challenging LC Court decisions.

Land dispute resolution effectiveness, the dependent variable, was assessed through governance indicators documented in civil society assessments and government reports: the degree to which disputes brought before LC Courts were resolved in a fair and timely manner, the durability of resolutions as evidenced by re-litigation rates, and community perceptions of LC Court fairness as recorded in governance assessments.

3.7 Method of Data Collection: Document Review and Analysis

The data collection method was Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA): a systematic process involving the identification, selection, appraisal, and interpretive analysis of data contained in existing documents (Bowen, 2009). QDA was appropriate as the sole method for four reasons: it is unobtrusive, allowing the researcher to analyse data that exists independently of the research process and is unaffected by the researcher's presence (Bryman, 2016); it provides longitudinal data covering the entire study period from 2019 to 2026, enabling the tracing of governance trends over time; it draws on data produced by authoritative institutions in the course of their functioning, ensuring credibility and verifiability; and it allows for triangulation of evidence from multiple document types, strengthening the validity of findings through convergence (Yin, 2018).

3.8 Data Collection Tool: Document Review Checklist

The data collection instrument was a structured Document Review Checklist (see Appendix), which specified for each document category: the types of information to be extracted, the indicators to be recorded, and the study objective(s) to which each was related. The checklist guided the systematic extraction of evidence on community awareness of land rights, the quality and inclusivity of community dialogue in LC Court proceedings, accountability mechanisms and their performance, and the governance effects of the 2019 to 2026 disruptions. Systematic and transparent linkage was maintained between each data point extracted and the corresponding study objective and variable dimension (Yin, 2018). The checklist was piloted on two documents before full deployment to ensure adequacy and to refine extraction categories as needed.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic order. First, the researcher compiled a comprehensive list of all relevant documents in the categories specified in Table 3.1. Second, documents were retrieved through government

ministry websites and publication portals, civil society organisation report repositories (Uganda Land Alliance, LEMU, Uganda Human Rights Commission), and peer-reviewed academic databases including Google Scholar and Africa Journals Online. Third, each document was appraised using Scott's (1990) criteria. Fourth, data was extracted using the structured checklist into a master extraction matrix organised by objective and variable dimension. Fifth, gaps, inconsistencies, and areas requiring corroboration from additional sources were noted throughout (Bowen, 2009). The entire process was conducted at home using publicly available online sources, requiring no institutional access permissions and no contact with human participants.

3.10 Quality and Error Control

Several measures were used in addressing credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The credibility of the information was verified by the triangulation of the documentary sources used, checking consistency between evidence from civil society governance assessments, government reports and academic studies and noting any discrepancies. The issue of dependability has been dealt with by keeping a detailed audit trail of all document selection decisions and extraction procedures. Transferability was considered by providing a detailed description of the study context and by using documentary materials to allow for an evaluation of the applicability of the results to other contexts. The confirmability was achieved by linking all findings to specific documents and providing sources to validate each analysis. To process and analyze data for scientific purposes. The information extracted was first presented in a master extraction matrix, organized by study objective, variable dimension, and indicator. Thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) was adapted to the documentary data and applied in six steps: familiarisation with the data extracted from the documents, by rereading them repeatedly; generation of codes in the entire data, initial codes; identification of codes and their grouping as potential themes; review and refinement of themes against the coded evidence; definition and naming of final themes; and writing of the analysis. NVivo 14, a

computer-assisted qualitative data analysis program, was used to support analysis, which is commonly used in governance and social science research. Extracted documentary data was imported and coded within NVivo 14, using the software's node and theme structure, and allowing for systematic questioning of the presence of specific governance indicators across the various document types. The codes referring to 'gender exclusion from dialogue' were mapped through civil society reports, academic research and government evaluations to see if there was a pattern or if it varied according to context. The analysis was deductive, built around the three research objectives, the theoretical frameworks and also inductive, whereby new patterns, which arose from the documentary record, could be added to the analysis, for example the impact of the COVID-19 disruption on LC Court proceedings.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The study only used secondary documentation sources, and did not carry out primary data collection on human participants. No interviews, surveys or focus group discussion and no actual contact with participants was undertaken. Consequently, some of the common ethical criteria such as participant consent, research permits and institutional clearance for research on human subjects have not emerged. However, the following moral principles were followed all along.

3.12.1 Proper Attribution and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity demands that all intellectual work be acknowledged appropriately and properly referenced as per Bryman (2016). The citations of all the sources used in this study followed the convention of APA 7th edition. The study does not reproduce large chunks of one single source, and all analytical interpretations are the researcher's own. The documentation sources are open sources, and uses by the researcher are consistent with the original intention of the publication.

This practice is referred to as responsible reporting. It is called responsible reporting in 3.12.2 of the practice.

While there was no direct involvement of the individual participants, the study's findings relate to the performance of specific institutions and governance actors in

the governance of Mukono Municipality. Evidence is balanced and presented in a way that supports findings. Governance performance weaknesses are identified in the governance system, not as individual weaknesses, and the analysis focuses on how to improve the system, not on who is to blame. The use of Public Domain Sources In order to do documentary research in an ethical manner, the data must be obtained in an ethically proper way (Scott, 1990). All the sources utilised in this study were obtained from freely available sources such as official websites of government ministries, civil society repository of reports and academic databases (Google Scholar, Africa Journals Online). There were no restricted, classified or confidential documents used. This was recognised as a methodological limitation as potentially relevant internal records were not available in the public domain.

Avoidance of Harm In terms of non-maleficence, research should not harm the researcher's reputation or the institutions where it is conducted or the community in which it is done (Bryman, 2016). The study was designed and carried out with a view of making positive contribution to the governance improvement in Mukono Municipality. It uses published evaluations and is structured around patterns of systemic governance, not fault. The researcher does not have any conflict of interest with respect to the institutions and governance actors discussed.

3.13 Methodological Constraints.

The study has four methodological limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. The qualitative case study approach prevents the generalisation of findings beyond the Mukono context and the wider community of peri-urban municipalities in Uganda: findings may be analytically generalised, but not statistically. Secondly, because the study used secondary documentary sources, it is limited in the extent of analysis because of the incompleteness, inconsistency, and institutional bias of the records generated by both government and civil society organisations. The possibility of institutional bias in the governance performance reports was minimized by triangulation from the independent civil society monitoring reports, government documents and

academic literature reports. Third, the most granular (division-level) LC Court records, such as case registers and governance minutes, were not accessible publicly during the study period, reducing the granularity of quantitative governance data. Fourthly, the study's documentary scope was limited to English-language documents and documents that were publicly available on platforms, which may have narrowed the study's focus on documents that were available in English or in public circulation within the local community. The constraints that arise in the documentary case study approach are common to other similar investigations (Bowen, 2009).

3.14 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the methodological approach adopted for this study, including the justifications for the use of a qualitative case study design, a method of inquiry, Qualitative Document Analysis and a data collection tool, structured Document Review Checklist. Twenty-two documents were purposively sampled and then appraised according to Scott's (1990) criteria and systematically analysed using the framework of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and supported by NVivo 14. The chapter illustrated the coherence of the methodological decisions with the interest of the study in governance and that they satisfy the needs of a high quality qualitative research, carried out solely by analyzing secondary documentary data. The results of this approach are reported in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter brings in the results of the documentary analysis and provides the interpretation, structured under the three specific objectives of the study. The results were generated using the systematic thematic analysis of the 22 documents analysed, which was supported by NVivo 14 qualitative data analysis software. Themes identified in the analysis of the documents are presented in each section accompanied by evidence from the documentary record followed by an interpretation of the finding to explain its meaning in terms of the performance of the governance role of LC Courts in Mukono Municipality. It is worth mentioning that during the study period the division level LC Court records (case registers, meeting minutes) were not accessible to the public. The analysis relies, therefore, on governance assessments, civil society field reports, district-level government documentation, and academic research that captures the performance of LCs in Mukono Municipality as well as in similar peri-urban contexts in Uganda. Awareness of land rights in the courts and among the broader community. Awareness of land rights in society and courts. This section highlights results of the study on the role of LC Courts in sensitizing the community on land rights in Mukono Municipality. Three themes emerged from the documentary analysis.

LC Court Proceedings as Incidental Civic Education Spaces One recurring positive finding in the civil society governance assessments conducted was the role that involvement in the LC Court proceedings has been used as one of the main informal mechanisms to reach the common people in Mukono Municipality when it comes to knowledge about land rights. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) found through their field work that the LC court proceedings (held in local languages, open community spaces, with broad community attendance) had an organic civic education effect, which was not programmed but was still significant. Residents

who had been involved in LC Court proceedings, either as participants or community observers, were more likely than residents who had never been involved in such proceedings to be aware of the difference between the various types of land tenure, the rights of bibanja holders and the protection offered under the Land Act to widows.

This is confirmed by the national land governance study by Adoko et al. (2019) which noted that the few governance events, at the community-level, where land rights information in an accessible and contextually relevant format was communicated to ordinary citizens was related to public LC Court proceedings in peri-urban areas of Uganda. As LC officials explained the rationale behind their choices, they often cited legal aspects of the situation that they had not heard of before, such as the right of a widow to stay on customary land or the need for a proper eviction procedure to be followed by landlords. This awareness-raising effect was however, clearly stated to be incidental, a byproduct of the governance process and not a targeted goal, and was only achieved to the degree that people attended the proceedings.

The LEMU (2022) report on the status of land tenure security in Buganda-region municipalities specifically highlighted the capacity of LC Courts in Mukono to raise awareness on land rights, as communities where LC Courts met regularly and were observed by the community had significantly more awareness of land rights than the communities where the Courts met less often and were not observed by the community. This finding directly addresses the first objective of the study and extends the theoretical prediction of Decentralisation Theory (Manor, 1999) that community proximity will improve the responsiveness of governance: Community proximity to LC Court proceedings equates, at least in part, with community proximity to land rights information.

Uneven Awareness: The Systematic Exclusion of Women and Vulnerable Groups
The effect of awareness-raising that occurred from participation in LC Court was reported in various sources but a common theme that was found in the

documentary record was that this was a very uneven awareness-raising, with women, elderly residents, and lower income community members always missing from the awareness flows produced by LC Court involvement. The LEMU (2022) field report revealed that in the municipalities studied, women did not attend LC court hearing sessions on a par with men, and even when they do attend, they are often sitting in a role where they observe or are silent parties rather than being expected to be active participants from which awareness of governance processes naturally flows. Matembe (2021) highlights the effects of this exclusion in practice, noting that widows and single women in Buganda-region municipalities, including Mukono, were the most likely to not have known their rights to land inheritance, and to find out those rights only when their rights were actively being denied by male relatives. Once awareness came, it was often too late to stop the initial stages of displacement, and the responsibility for stating their rights was given to those with no previous knowledge or social networks to effectively assert them. The Uganda Human Rights Commission (2021) confirmed this, stating that most of the cases of gender-based land dispossession in Mukono Municipality were those of women who were not aware of their rights under the law before the land dispute commenced. This is supported by the Mukono District Local Government Annual Report (2022) which revealed that cases of land disputes that were brought before the district since the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions were disproportionately brought by women, who had lost their land thanks to the pandemic when the governance forums were suspended, meaning that their awareness of their rights was most likely to be triggered after the event of their land being lost. This is in line with Arnstein's (1969) finding in the Participatory Governance paradigm that, awareness and participation are available to those who are already relatively empowered, and those who are least in need of them are structurally excluded.

The Governance Information Collapse due to Fraudulent Titling Crisis is the 4.2.3 element.

The 4.2.3 element is the Governance Information Collapse Triggered by the Fraudulent Titling Crisis. A third and very important theme that could be seen in

the documentary record relating to the period 2019-2026 was the disorientating impact of the bogus titling issues on community awareness of land rights. The Ministry of Lands (2025) policy statement on the cancellation of fraudulent titles in Mukono Municipality reported that hundreds of people in Mukono found themselves in a condition of acute tenure insecurity, with their titles cancelled and no clear direction of how to assert or establish their rights given in the new governance environment. The announcement of the cancellation of title documents in Uganda had led to an unprecedented influx of interest in rights and entitlements information in Mukono, with the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) undertaking an assessment which concluded that the 'previously stable' framework of rights and entitlements that had governed how community members understood their land ownership had been disrupted. This discovery is what can be described in the words of the documentary evidence as a 'governance information collapse' – a national event in which the legal underpinnings that gave the community-level land order its stability and authority are so fragile that even the most basic functions of awareness, which are to be carried out by local governance institutions including LC Courts, become impossible due to the fact that the rights they are supposed to be communicating are themselves in flux. This is an important addition to the existing literature. The unchanging awareness gap among the Ugandans' land governance system is described by Adoko et al. (2019) and Rugadya et al. (2020), although neither of these studies focuses on the specific problem of the disruption of the knowledge base that underpins awareness. The Mukono experience from 2022 - 2025 is exactly this type of disruption, which requires a more dynamic understanding of the role of the awareness function of LC Courts; one which recognizes not only their ability to raise awareness in a stable situation but also their ability to thrive, or fail to thrive, in the context of governance upheaval.

4.3 LC Courts as Platforms for Community Dialogue on Land Disputes

In this section, findings are brought about on how LC Courts are providing platforms for community discussion on solving land disputes in Mukono Municipality. Document analysis yielded four themes.

4.3.1 Distinctive Value of Community Embedded Dialogue

One of the points that

emerged from the text under review was the unique governance value of a dialogue shaped by an integral community and local context that LC Courts foster. Ssekana (2018) in his study of different LC Courts in Uganda, found that the social context of LC Court dialogue (i.e. the presiding officer's knowledge of the people concerned, the history of the land at issue, the community's standards of fairness, and the relationship between the families involved) enabled a quality of contextual resolution that formal courts, which are separate from the community, could not match. He discovered that the resolutions attained by the LC Court dialogue were more likely to be voluntarily respected by parties and the wider community because it was a process that the parties recognised as legitimate and contextually informed. This is corroborated by the results of the national survey conducted by Rugadya et al. (2020) which found that the ratio of land disputes that went to the magistrate court or further in communities where LC Courts were active and well-received, was significantly lower than the ratio of land disputes that reached the magistrate court or further in communities where LC Courts were inactive or poorly received. They attributed this difference mainly to the quality of community dialogue conducted through effective LC Courts, and how the people's knowledge is shared in the management of dispute dialogue, which minimized informational asymmetries that are known to fuel escalation. Specifically, the community dialogue aspect of LC Courts was the most frequently mentioned governance value by the residents who used them, with the ease of the process, use of Luganda as the language of the process and the community LC official's ability to understand the social context of the dispute being highlighted.

How do power imbalances and a lack of participation in dialogue affect inclusiveness? While the evidence was overwhelming on the importance of community embedded dialogue, the documentary evidence always indicated that power imbalance between the parties to the dialogue and exclusion of less powerful community members from meaningful dialogue in the Makoni Municipality was a significant challenge. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) evaluation revealed that the proceedings of LC Courts were often skewed against

tenants in relation to landowners, women compared to men, and younger against older community members in Mukono. The assessment recorded a number of situations in which the more powerful party in a land dispute was able to dominate the dialogue process, either because the LC officer was not able to, or not willing to, balance out the power dynamic in order to ensure that the less powerful party has an equal voice. The same was reported in the Buganda region municipalities by LEMU (2022), with the systematic silence of women in inheritance and kibanja disputes being the most common exclusion from LC Court dialogue. Women brought into the LC Courts as parties were often described in the field reports as being talked over by male relatives, interrupted and not given the chance to complete their claims, or submitted to during court proceedings to accept settlements that they had not authorized. In fact, LC officials often ignored these dynamics, and on occasion reinforced them by asking questions only of male members of the other party, the LEMU reports noted. This is consistent with what Deininger (2020) found in her research on public dialogue that communities will tend to reinforce existing power dynamics unless they are designed and led to be inclusive. The national study by Adoko et al. (2019) also showed that the level of inclusiveness of LC Court dialogue was directly linked to the type of governance training received by the presiding official: where the court official had received any type of governance or legal awareness training, although an informal one, the inclusiveness of the dialogue was measurably higher and the outcomes of the dialogue were more equitable for less powerful parties. This finding has important implications for the governance reform recommendations made in Chapter Five.

Social Relationships in the LC Court Dialogue are Double-edged. Another theme that came up during the documentary analysis was the two-sidedness of the social relationships that are necessary for LC Court dialogue. Multiple sources noted that the personal relationships between LC officials and community members helped to build trust and familiarity between them that enabled the process of community dialogue, however when the LC official had a personal relationship, social, or political interest with one of the parties in conflict, it created a conflict of

interest that distorted the process of community dialogue. The study by Adoko et al. (2019) found multiple instances across Uganda where the personal links between land controllers and one party in a land dispute meant that the dialogue was highly biased, with the position of the land owner/connected party being given greater time and credibility, any evidence that contradicted the connected party was dismissed and confirmation of the agreement or decision was centred on the interests of the social network of the land controller rather than on the merits of the competing claims. Ssekana (2018) described this as a key structural weakness of the LC Court: 'the strength of LC Court is the social knowledge of the community by the official and the weakness is the same social knowledge that puts the official under obligations and dependencies that compromise impartiality. This tension has significant implications on the governance performance of LC Courts in Mukono Municipality as the dense networks both social and political aspects in a fast-growing peri-urbanized area make conflicts of interest common and hard to manage. Disruption of community dialogue processes due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (4.3.4). Another theme that was unique to the 2019 to 2026 study period was the heavy impact of COVID-19 on community dialogue processes in Mukono Municipality. The Covid-19 lock-downs that affected LC Court operations in Buganda, from March 2020 to mid-2021, were documented by LEMU (2022) to have left Buganda without any forum in which the disputes over land could be constructively discussed, as all public gatherings were banned. The Mukono District Local Government Annual Report (2022) reported that the number of land dispute cases filed at the district level had increased considerably in the first half of 2022, due in part to the backlog of pending cases from the land dispute cases that were pending during the period of suspended LC Court operations. This is a similar result to challenges documented by Ntale (2023), regarding the governance impacts of institutional disruptions on community level land dispute management in Kenya, and demonstrates that even temporary suspensions of community dialogue forums can have long-term governance impacts due to an increased opportunity for disputes to escalate to a level that is more challenging to resolve through the community process. The COVID-19 experience in Mukono Municipality

is a natural experiment of what happens when the community dialogue role of LC Courts is taken away and the documented impacts offer strong indirect evidence of the governance value of the community dialogue role of LC Courts.

LC Courts and Accountability in Local Land Governance. This section provides the results of the investigations on accountability in local land governance in Mukono Municipality through LC Courts. Documentary analysis resulted in five themes. Formal Accountability Structures and Their Government Constraints The documentation showed that the formal accountability mechanisms of the LC Court system in Uganda are constitutionally and legislatively supported. LC Courts are formally established and given a defined jurisdiction and procedure under the Local Council Courts Act (2006). The Local Governments Act (Cap. Elected LC leaders are held accountable to their communities in a system of democratic accountability (243, 1997). The Land Act (Cap. The legal redress in land cases is established by Article 227 of the Constitution 1998, which allows an appeal from the LC court to the magistrate court, making the process of appeal formal and introducing a formal chain of accountability in land cases. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) evaluation in the Municipality of Mukono, however, revealed that there was a gap between the formal accountability structure of the LC Court system and the functional governance of the system. Although there are formal accountability mechanisms, the assessment indicates that processes for community members to challenge and/or report unfair LC Court decisions were not widely used. The assessment noted that there was negligible appeal by community members from the LC Court's decisions in Mukono Municipality, not because the community was satisfied with the decisions made by LC Courts, but because the formal accountability mechanism was not accessible by the majority of community members who accessed the LC Courts due to its cost and complexity. This confirms the structural accountability gap detected by Crook and Manor (1998) based on their comparative study of decentralised governance: in practice, formal accountability mechanisms where enforcement is inaccessible are not functional for the communities that most need them.

Subjectivity of Messages in the Context of the Reporting of Accountability Failures. Political interference in LC Court proceedings appeared to be the most consistently and strongly documented accountability challenge in Mukono Municipality in the documentary record. The Uganda Human Rights Commission (2021) land rights assessment in Mukono District identified community perception of the political nature of proceedings in LC Courts as one of the main reasons why the courts are avoided, especially by low-income tenants, and by tenants who were in dispute with landowners with political connections. The UHRC report revealed that the LC officials, whose job and position in the community relied on the goodwill of politically connected residents, were structurally unable to rule against the residents, even when the legal and factual evidence supported their side. In the study on national governance, Adoko et al. (2019) found that land disputes involving LC Court decisions whose governance basis could be defended was followed by a reversal of those decisions or failure to implement them when pressure was put by the losing party's political allies. This type of accountability failure is especially harmful because it is not registered in the formal governance document: when a decision is reversed, or it is not implemented, there is no official governance log that registers that reversal or that the land is no longer available; and when a resident is displaced from their land because of a governance failure, there are no documents in the official governance record that register that governance failure. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) Mukono assessment referred to this as 'accountability in reverse,' meaning it is the LC Court that is being held to account by the more powerful party and not vice versa as the accountability architecture was intended to do. The lack of systematic application of women's land rights is a specific area of gender and accountability. There was an accountability gap in the systematic application of women's land rights. One of the strongest and well-documented findings in all the civil society assessments consulted for this report is that LC Courts in Mukono Municipality are not enforcing the national laws on women's land rights, which has led to a lack of accountability for women. Matembe (2021) described in detail how the pattern of LC deferral to customary norms over statutory law is common in inheritance and

occupancy disputes of women, with results that are discriminatory and legally inexplicable. The Uganda Human Rights Commission (2021) validated this trend in the case of Mukono District, reporting that women who filed land inheritance cases with the LC Courts were far less likely to get results aligned with their statutory rights compared to men who filed land inheritance cases with the same courts. The most specific documentation of this pattern was from the field reports by LEMU (2022) which show that in Buganda-region municipalities, LC officials explicitly refer to customary norms when deciding to remove widows from land that has been in their possession for decades, despite the clear provisions of the Land Act that they should be protected. No documented decisions or actions by the officials concerned had been challenged, disciplined or formally held to account which went against the national law in each of the cases reported. This finding supports Matembe (2021) who characterises LC court proceedings as contexts where gender discriminatory customary norms are reproduced rather than challenged, and highlights an accountability deficit: a functional mechanism that allows LC officials to be held accountable for not exercising their duty to apply women's statutory land rights.

No Community Oversight Mechanism is in place. The consistency of the documentary record was that there were virtually no formal community level processes by which citizens could hold LC Court officials accountable for their governance decisions. This was one of the major structural gaps identified by Ssekana (2018) in the LC Court system in Uganda as it rests heavily on the personal integrity of individual members with no viable mechanism of redress for most of the people. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) Mukono assessment found that the overall governance results were highly variable depending on the integrity and commitment of the LC officials themselves, as some were personally dedicated to fairness and impartiality, while others were more likely to be pressured by political authorities or to be gender biased, resulting consistently in poor governance and no institutional arrangements that were able to counter the trend. Crook and Manor (1998) found decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa to be

characterised by a lack of community oversight, as decentralisation programmes have never included the community accountability institutions that would be required to ensure that formal democratic accountability would become functional governance accountability. The Mukono Municipality case illustrates this: LC Court system has been formally established and legally empowered for almost two decades, but there is no community-level monitoring system which could support the accountability promises made by the LCs.

4.4.5 Examples of meaningful accountability in governance

Through this documentary record, despite the overall critical portrayal of accountability, some governance assessments recorded examples of effective accountability during the LC Court process, thus highlighting the potential of the LC Court when it is utilized in an independent and integrity manner. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) assessment identified communities in Mukono Municipality where LC Courts had delivered consistent, unbiased and impartial decisions in land disputes between powerful individuals without overturning the decisions due to pressure and where these decisions were respected by communities. In these communities there was significantly more community trust in community-governing institutions and less risk of land disputes reoccurring. This finding is analytically significant as it demonstrates that specific, changeable conditions of governance cause accountability failures in the LC Court system and not inherent to the system. It can help to read positively on the opportunities for governance reform that were identified in the recommendations in Chapter Five.

4.5 Chapter Conclusion

The result of the documentary analysis has been presented in this chapter organised under the three research objectives and supported with documented evidence from the civil society governance assessment, government reports, academic studies and policy instruments from 2019 to 2026 for the Mukono Municipality.

There was a consistent pattern with regard to how the governance content of the form of each LC Court is constrained, through a lack of awareness raising, exclusion from dialogue, gender bias, political interference, and lack of community oversight mechanisms. The promotion of community awareness is

significant albeit incidental and inconsistent, with direct participants, but excluding vulnerable groups and women. Community dialogues are facilitated by real social capital and local knowledge, although they are not necessarily inclusive or unbiased. While there are some structural political pressures that weaken accountability, gender discriminatory norms are reproduced and community oversight not in place, principles of accountability are aspirationally supported in the institutional structure of governance. The theoretical and empirical literature relating to these findings is discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the findings presented in the following chapter, Chapter Four, in the context of the theories used in Chapter Two and the empirical literature detailed in that chapter. The discussion focuses on the three specific aims of the study and looks at similarities, differences and additions to the scholarship in the Mukono findings. A conclusion and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research are made for each objective, following each objective in the chapter. The findings from the studies are discussed in section

5.2. Discussion on the role of the LC Courts and the awareness of the community on land rights.

Finding 1: LC Court proceedings are incidental civic education spaces which raise awareness of those who participate in the process, but the process does not have a systematic approach or reach the most vulnerable community members. The findings herewith directly build on and enrich the observation of Adoko et al (2019) that LC Courts are unutilised awareness-raising platforms. Review of such documentation for Mukono Municipality reveals that this potential is being realised to a small extent as various civil society assessments and academic studies have reported that awareness has been enhanced as a result of being involved in LC Court proceedings, but then this enhancement has not been intentional. This follows the prediction of Decentralisation Theory (Rondinelli, 1981; Manor, 1999) that the more the community is close to governance, the more responsive the governance is, and it also confirms the criticism of Crook and Manor (1998) that decentralised institutions, if they are not deliberately programmed, tend to raise the governance floor for those already involved and do not reach the excluded. This can be confirmed by the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) finding that women and elderly residents had very low level of land rights awareness, as compared to

women and elderly residents who had contact with LC Court, for both Mukono and the broader context.

Finding 2: Temporary governance information collapse occurred as a result of the fraudulent titling crisis, which rendered the awareness function of the LC Courts temporarily disabled. This discovery is completely novel to the literature and is the most original contribution to knowledge of this study. Decentralisation Theory, and the Participatory Governance framework, does not foresee that the disruption of the national governance system could so impact the legal basis of community land tenure that local governance institutions are not in a position to communicate authoritative information about rights. The documentation of the title cancellations by the Ministry of Lands (2025) and the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) assessment of the governance vacuum created by the cancelled titles, point to a specific mechanism in the absence of which the existing theoretical frameworks cannot explain, and which requires further conceptual development, namely 'governance information collapse'. This discovery requires the development of a new analytical category in land governance scholarship that can explain the awareness issues generated by these institutional disruptions of this magnitude and type.

Talk about LC Courts as forum for community dialogue. This is a unique LC Courts role as a form of governance, where community-integrated LC Court discussion yields resolutions that are respected and accepted at community level (Finding 1). This result is a strong confirmation of what Ssekana (2018) and Rugadya et al. (2020) found to be the key governance value of LC Court dialogue - the social embeddedness. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) results from the Community Dialogue function of LC courts in Mukono Municipality - which is the most frequently cited governance value among residents who had accessed the LC courts - is consistent with the theoretical prediction of Participatory Governance Theory (Fung and Wright 2003; Cornwall 2008) that governance processes that seek to harness community knowledge and use familiar formats are more likely to

produce legitimate and enduring results, compared to governance processes imposed from outside the community's social context.

Result 2: Power imbalances and gender exclusion undermine the quality and inclusiveness of LC Court dialogue. This finding both validates Deininger (2020) and extends Arnstein's (1969) insight that the problem of involving the public in governance is a structural one, not an incidental one. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) report on the Court proceedings in Mukono indicates that in such proceedings the role of the tenant is often disadvantaged over that of the landlord, the male over the female, and a less powerful person over a more powerful one, which adds to the body of evidence on the structural problem in practice. One key practical lesson from the Adoko et al. (2019) finding is that the issues of inclusivity that were documented in the Mukono context are not fixed and can be resolved through targeted capacity development of LC officials.

Finding 3: The LC Court dialogue role became structurally apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the suspension had an impact on governance. It is a new finding to the literature and builds on the similar documentation by Ntale (2023) from Kenya, which provides specific evidence of the governance impacts of the suspension of dialogue in the LC Courts in the Mukono context. The situation of increased land dispute registrations that occurred after the lifting of the pandemic restrictions recorded in the Mukono District Local Government Annual Report (2022) serves as strong indirect evidence of the role in governance that community dialogue plays in settling dispute disputes; when community dialogue was suspended, land disputes escalated and when it resumed, the disputes were to be settled through it. The implications of this finding are important to governance resilience planning as explained below.

5.2.3 Discussion of LC (Local Courts) and Accountability in Local Land Governance (LLG)

Finding 1: Formal accountability mechanisms are provided by law, but in practice are unavailable to the vast majority of residents using LC Courts. The finding is a structural critique of accountability in decentralised governance (Crook and Manor 1998) extended to show that formal accountability mechanisms are complex and costly and thus tend to be inaccessible to residents who are more privileged than the average user of the LC Court, the magistrate court in which the appeal is filed. This is in line with Ssekana (2018), which observed that the accountability of LC Courts in practice relies mainly on individual integrity of the LC officers, which is a weak and unstable governance model and therefore significantly vulnerable.

This is supported by the Uganda Land Alliance (2023) which noted that the rates of appeal are very low, indicating that the enforcement of LC court accountability in practice rests almost entirely on the integrity of individual officials, which is inherently weak and inconsistent.

Finding 2: It is a documented structural failure of accountability that is political interference - affecting the electoral dependence of LC officials on powerful community members. This finding reinforces the characterization by Adoko et al. (2019) and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (2021) as 'accountability in reverse' (AiR) - i.e. the LC Court is accountable for by the powerful party, not the other way round - and extends the existing analysis by identifying a specific mechanism for this reversal not explicitly predicted by the theoretical frameworks. The consistency of this finding across multiple independent documentary sources (UHRC, ULA, academic studies) reinforces confidence in the validity of the finding and its significance as a governance reform priority.

Finding 3: There is no functional mechanism to correct the documented accountability failure for failure to apply women's statutory land rights. This

discovery is in line with and builds on Matembe (2021) and LEMU (2022) field documentation. The lack of any disciplinary or corrective measures or steps taken against LC officials who have shown clear discriminatory customary norms over the national law, as mentioned in the UHRC report in 2021 and LEMU report in 2022, is a specific governance accountability gap that neither Decentralisation Theory nor Participatory Governance Theory would suggest any remedies for; but both theories, in fact, implicitly require that all community members hold all LC officials accountable. This is the strongest rationale for the gender accountability recommendation below.

Finding 4: Cases of serious accountability by the government do not reveal that accountability deficiencies highlighted are endemic in the LC Court system, but are rather a product of the shifting conditions of governance. This is an analytical finding since it eliminates the fatalistic interpretation of the accountability analysis. The Uganda Land Alliance (2023) evidence clearly shows that community trust is higher and land disputes are less frequently recurring in communities where impartial and independent LC Courts are in place, directly supporting the governance benefits of effective accountability as well as the case for the structural changes recommended below.

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusion: Community Awareness in the Municipal of Mukono, the LC Courts raise awareness of land rights in an incidental, but not uniform and significant way. Their civic education effects are organic, embedded in the community, in the local language and are experienced by the people who engage in their proceedings, but are not intended, systematic, or reaching the percentage of women and other marginalised groups who are not present in the social and physical spaces where LC Court proceedings take place. The fraudulent titling crisis (2022-25) added a new level of failure of awareness: a governance information collapse, where even the incidental awareness function of LC Courts could not be performed because the rights they would be supposed to communicate were in flux. The study findings

are that LC Courts have potential but it remains untapped as an awareness-raising governance institution and that this potential can only be realised through deliberate programmatic civic education efforts, not incidental awareness effects, during LC Court proceedings. Community Dialogue: Conclusion,

At the community level, the LC Courts in Mukono Municipality are effective community dialogue venues that harness social capital, local knowledge and community relationships to achieve acceptable and respected resolutions at the community level. It is the governance function of the LC Courts, where they do the most and do it best; it is also their most important responsibility in land dispute resolution. But the power imbalance, gender norms and the structural conflicts of interest of their social relationships systematically hinder the quality and inclusiveness of the dialogue they facilitate. It is the governance impact of the absence of this dialogue function that became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study finds that the concept of community dialogue is the essence of governance values of LC Courts, but it is not guaranteed for all the citizens of the community nor it is a right of the poor people and not a duty on the rich or powerful class but rather in the hands of the latter, and that the structure of the LC Courts should be changed to ensure the dialogue is real and inclusive, and equitable.

Conclusion on Accountability There is some accountability in local land governance with respect to the Land Courts in Mukono Municipality where the officials operate with personal integrity and independence but is structurally impeded by political interference, the continuous reinforcement of gender discriminatory customary laws and lack of effective community monitoring systems. Although the formal accountability structure of the LC Court system is constitutionally and legislatively robust, the community-level institutions and mechanisms to realize the formal accountability are not built. The study concludes that accountability is the most important and most missing out of the three areas of governance studied and that structural reforms to specifically address political independence, gender compliance and community oversight are of the greatest and most pressing

urgency to provide accountability promises in the LC Court system with governance content.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations for Community Awareness are as follows: There should be a structured civic education programme by the Ministry of Local Government in collaboration with civil society organizations (Civic education) in the LC Court proceedings in Mukono Municipality directly linked to the proceedings in LC Courts. The programme should educate LC officials on the importance of the opening and closing of proceedings as deliberate moments of awareness-raising, to be used as and when needed to inform all community members present about relevant land rights and inheritance protection, and about governance processes. This would shift the current incidental "awareness" effect of LC Court processes into a "governance output. The programme should be implemented in Mukono Municipality, before scaling it up to the national level, if the results are favourable. Targeted interventions for women and other marginalised groups should be developed and implemented via women's savings groups, religious groups and community health workers as community entry points. These activities to be encouraged should create an accessible information on women's land rights and the LC Court process in the local language. LEMU and the Uganda Land Alliance, both having established community networks in Mukono Municipality, have great opportunities to spearhead this outreach together with the LC3 Court. The Ministry of Lands should compile and make distributed a simple, illustrated guide on land rights in Mukono Municipality, which covers the governance situation of affected residents of Mukono Municipality due to the cancelation of the titles. The distribution of governance information via LC Courts, DLOs and religious leaders, and through the community would help address the governance information vacuum created in the cancellation exercise, and alleviate the awareness collapse described in the findings. The recommendations from the Community Dialogue are summarized below: All LC Court training programmes should include a compulsory

train the train or on facilitation in a gender responsive manner in the Ministry of Local Governments. The module should equip LC officials with the skills to be active in managing power imbalances during meetings, to ensure women and less powerful participants also have protected speaking time, and to adopt a national law approach instead of discriminatory customary norms in disputes concerning women's land rights. This training should be conducted at the district level once a year, and should be a requirement for continued employment as an LC Court official. A co-facilitation approach by trained community facilitators (including women and representatives of marginalised groups) with the presiding LC facilitator in the LC Court process in Mukono Municipality should be piloted. This would include an intrinsic inclusivity protection mechanism into the dialogue mechanism without necessitating a redesigning of the LC Court mechanism. The results of the study by Adoko et al. (2019) indicate that quality of dialogue and findings are significantly improved already after some capacity building for governance, even when it is minimal, which supports the feasibility and potential benefits of this reform when implemented for less powerful parties. The Mukono District Local Government should prepare a governance continuity process for LC Court proceedings to ensure that community dialogue processes are sustained when there is a governance disruption such as institutional reforms, natural disasters or a public health emergency. The COVID-19 experience showed that the closure of community dialogue forums have longlasting governance impacts. The protocol should also cover the options for conducting proceedings outside the court and options for decentralisation, as well as a mechanism for maintaining an effective backlog management process in the event of a disruption in the activities of the LC Court.

5.4.3 Recommendations on Accountability Mukono district local government should put in place a Community Land Governance Oversight Committee, made up of women groups, community elders, civil society organisations and the District Land Office. The committee has to have a clear scope of work to receive and review complaints concerning the conduct of the LC Court and to report directly to District Council. This would establish a community level accountability institution that would not need to involve the formal court

system and would offer a meaningful avenue for redress for the community's most reliant users of LC Courts. The Inspector General of Government and the Ministry of Local Government should establish a confidential reporting process for the local government officials to report any political interference in their proceedings with protection from action against the reporting officials. Training will not be sufficient alone in tackling structural vulnerabilities of elected LC leaders to political pressure because they need room for integrity in the face of powerful interests. Gender conformance reviews of the LC Courts in Mukono Municipality should be institutionalised and done annually by a CSO, like LEMU or Uganda Land Alliance, in collaboration with the District Community Development Officer. The reviews should specifically evaluate whether the cases decided by the LC courts on inheritance and land occupation issues affecting women are in line with the provisions of the Land Act and the Constitution, and report the outcome of the review to the District Council including recommendations. This mechanism will establish a specific, institutionalized accountability for the equal application of women's land rights at the community governance level, a governance gap that the documentary evidence always points to as one of the most impactful in the entire LC Court system.

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APPENDIX: DOCUMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST

Study Title: Role of Local Council Courts in Resolving Land Disputes: A Case Study of Mukono Municipality, Uganda

Researcher: Gloria Teta (S23B56/025)

Date of Review: _____

Document Being Reviewed: _____

Document Category	Information to Extract	Indicator(s)	Study Objective	Data Present (Y/N)	Notes / Source Reference
National land legislation and policy instruments	LC Court jurisdiction; documentation mandate; women's land rights provisions; accountability frameworks	Legal basis for each governance dimension	All three objectives		
Uganda Land Alliance field assessment reports	Community awareness levels; dialogue quality; accountability patterns; political interference; gender outcomes	Awareness gaps; dialogue inclusivity scores; accountability failures documented	Obj 1, 2, 3		

LEMU tenure security reports	Bibanja holder rights awareness; women's exclusion from governance forums; LC Court performance in Buganda municipalities	Awareness of rights by gender; participation rates; outcome equity	Obj 1, 2, 3		
Mukono District Local Government annual reports	Land dispute volumes; governance disruptions; post-COVID spike in cases; LC Court activity levels	Dispute registration trends; governance continuity evidence	All three objectives		
Uganda Human Rights Commission reports	Accountability failures; gender bias in LC Court decisions; avoidance of LC Courts by vulnerable groups	Documented accountability failures; appeal rates; community trust levels	Obj 1, 3		
Ministry of Lands publications and policy statements	Title cancellation details; governance information vacuum; effect	Scale of cancellations; institutional response to governance	Obj 1, 3		

	on community tenure security	information collapse			
Peer-reviewed academic studies	Empirical evidence on LC Court awareness- raising; dialogue quality; accountability in comparable contexts; gender exclusion patterns	Comparative evidence; theoretical support for findings	All three objectives		

Instructions for Use: One copy of this checklist was completed for each document reviewed. Specific data points found were recorded under 'Information to Extract.' 'Data Present (Y/N)' indicated whether the document contained the specified information. Page numbers, section references, or table numbers were recorded under 'Notes / Source Reference.' All extracted data was transferred to a master extraction matrix organised by study objective and variable dimension. Where information was absent, 'N' was recorded with relevant observations about the gap. Each document was appraised for authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning according to Scott's (1990) criteria before extraction.

ACCEPTANCE LETTER