Land grabbing in Ghana - A false promise?

Neo-colonialism or a development opportunity?

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A global land rush developed during the last decade, spared primarily by the sharp rise in global food prices between 2007 and 2008. The increased international food prices resulted in increased interest from foreign actors to invest in agricultural land in developing countries in the global south. The “global land rush” or “land grabs” is driven by the increased demand for primarily food and biofuels. The phenomenon refers to foreign direct investment in agricultural land in developing countries that has escalated in recent years, with Sub-Saharan Africa as the most targeted. This study examines foreign land investment in Ghana focusing on the regions of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta through a qualitative literature study. The purpose of the study is to analyze to what extent these investments can be explained as neo-colonial or as development opportunities. Based on analyzing economic, political, cultural and power relations, the study concludes that all cases are in line with neo-colonial theory according to Nkrumah. The economic effects show temporary job creation and loss of livelihood, which indicates economic exploitation. The cultural effects include disruption of traditional practices and loss of cultural identity, suggesting cultural imperialism. The aspect of political power shows the marginalization of local interests and political dominance. None of the three cases fulfills the principles of a win-win situation and therefore can’t be considered development opportunities either. The legal frameworks in the regions prioritize foreign actors over the rights and welfare of affected communities, leading to an unbalanced distribution of power. The job opportunities that the projects bring often hide the long-term effects and loss of livelihoods for the local population. In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of Land Grabbing in Ghana as a neo-colonial phenomenon rather than a development opportunity.

Keywords: Land grabbing, Neo-colonialism, Development opportunity, Ghana, Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti, Volta, Customary land tenure system, Nkrumah
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1. Introduction

In step with the technological and economic innovations of the 20th century, globalization processes came to develop. Time-space compression is the technological development of the 20th century that has generated an increasingly integrated world of transnational processes (Campbell et al. 2010, p. 9). Today's globalized world is characterized by an integrated world market with economic, social and ecological effects. The 16th century until the 1750s constituted an important period for the development of globalization. During this period, colonialism and its transnational trade developed as monarchs began to discover new strategic trading locations in the world (Ibid, p. 9). The boundlessness of globalization has resulted in a globalized economy that consists of transnational companies that depend on complex production and supply chains of specialization patterns that consist of subcontractors that are globally located. Transnational companies control entire production chains of goods and capital flows with the aim of lowering production costs and negative ecological and social effects within the own country. Hence, goods that people in the Western world take for granted are a result of transnational production chains. Globalization has resulted in an integrated world market where private investors and companies search across national borders to find new markets (Giddens & Sutton, 2014, p. 102). However, the question is who are the winners and who are the losers of the effects of globalization?

Globally, there are sufficient resources to be able to feed all the people in the world. Despite this 828 million people in the world live under constant food insecurity (Global Hunger Index, 2022, p. 5). Globally, ten of the most food insecure countries are in sub-Saharan Africa (Reliefweb, 2017). At the same time, obesity is increasing in the Western world. Figures from the World Health Organization show that over 2 billion people in the global North suffer from obesity (FAO, 2022). Despite the fact that Africa is the world's most natural resource-rich continent, several of these countries are dependent on food aid (Alhassan, et al, 2018, p. 16). Against this, a growing network of transnational land deals has emerged, where developing countries in the global south that are rich in land and natural resources surrender land user rights to foreign investors from the global north. This phenomenon is referred to as “land grabbing” (Manzo & Padfield, 2016, p. 509). Large scale land acquisition itself isn't new, it has been around for centuries. The colonization with its economic and imperialist underlying motives is an early form of large scale land acquisition. However, land grabbing is a new form of large scale land acquisition (Robertson & Pstrup-Andersen, 2010). According to the Land Matrix database, sub-Saharan Africa is the region most affected by foreign land acquisitions.

Despite the widespread famine that characterizes the continent, agricultural land is occupied and food is supplied to foreign markets. The global food crisis between 2007–2008 raised international food prices resulting in increased interest from foreign actors to invest in agricultural land in the global south. Capital-rich countries' demand for greater control over their food security has generated transnational large-scale land investments. Transnational land transfers have become an increasingly important political issue in many African countries. This is because the extent of foreign land ownership rights continues to grow in
number (Yang & He, 2021). The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that between 2006 and 2009 around 20 million hectares of land were sold to foreign user rights in Africa (Robertson & Pinstrip-Andersen, 2010). This accelerating developing trend in the name of globalization for land acquisition is alarming. Africa is the continent characterized by the most widespread hunger with 278 million malnourished people, which corresponds to a fifth of the continent's people that are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of this trend (Reliefweb, 2022). Ghana has become a primary destination for foreign large scale investments. Since 2005, foreign actors have acquired over 2 million hectares of land, representing between 91 to 99 percent of the total area of land suitable for agriculture. Since the majority of all resource-rich and suitable land for agriculture belongs to foreign land-use rights, the rapid development of land grabbing could have significant consequences. The agricultural sector has historically been fundamental to Ghana's economy. Traditionally, Ghana has been Africa's epicenter for foreign biofuel investment. However, since the global oil and food crisis of 2007, the number of foreign land investments for large-scale commercial agriculture has increased drastically. Since 2007, over 36 foreign companies have each taken over 2000 hectares of agricultural land and forestry plantations (Schoneveld et al, 2014, p. 188).

The impact of foreign land acquisition in Ghana is multifaceted on social, economic and ecological levels, as natural resource management not only covers land but also waters, biodiversity and land traditionally inhabited by local people. Access to land titles in Ghana has critical implications for people's vulnerability and life chances (Aha & Ayitey, 2017). This is because there is a connection between land availability and people's development opportunities in rural areas (Potter et al. 2018, p. 533). Although land grabbing occurs in all of Ghana's ten regions, the majority of land grabbing cases are located in the regions of Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta (Aha & Ayitey, 2017). Whether the effects of land grabbing can be considered a development opportunity or a new form of colonialism there is still little empirical evidence on. Land grabbing has created a polarized global debate regarding whether the phenomenon is a development opportunity for the host country or whether it is a phenomenon of a neo-colonial nature (Pinstrip-andersen and Robertson, 2010). Thus, the question is whether there are winners and losers in these transnational land deals in Ghana and whether the land grabbing cases in Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Volta can thus be explained as a development opportunity or neo-colonialism?

2. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate and provide insight on whether land grabbing in Ghana can be explained as a development opportunity or as neo-colonialism. Based on the neo-colonial theory of Kwame Nkrumah, the study will examine the implications on the economic, political, cultural and power relation aspects of land grabbing in the region of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. Through this study, we want to contribute to a deeper understanding of the characteristics of this phenomenon and whether it can be explained through a lens of neo-colonialism or a lens of development opportunity through the PRAI-principles. The following research questions has thus been formulated:
- To what extent can foreign land investments in Ghana as a former colony be explained through a neo-colonial lens in the cases of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta?

- To what extent can foreign land investments in Ghana be explained as development opportunities in the cases of land grabbing in Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta?

3. Disposition

This study is based on a qualitative systematic literature study as a method. The research design of the study is a multiple case study of land grabbing cases in the regions Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. The study is based on two theoretical concepts; neo-colonialism by Kwame Nkrumah and The Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI) which aims to maximize the development opportunities of transnational land investments. The study uses existing scientific articles as data sources and examines the economic cultural political power-related implications of foreign land investments in the defined cases. The essay is structured in a way that makes a logical and clear presentation of the research. It begins by presenting the background to the subject and emphasizes its relevance and importance. Then summarizes previous research in the area continued by methodology and research design. After establishing methodology and research design, the essay presents the theoretical concepts followed by the result of the study. And finally, concluding discussion where the authors summarize the most important results and conclusions from the studies. This part connects findings with previous research and discusses their significance and implications. A reflection of areas for future research in the subject is also made.

4. Background

In this section, firstly land grabbing as a phenomenon will be described. Secondly, the historical background will account for the land tenure system of Ghana, where the pre-colonial access to land is described. Thirdly, it will account for the access to land after independence. Lastly it will account for the extent of land grabbing in Ghana and for the land ownership system.

4.1 The logic behind land grabbing

Land grabbing as a phenomenon is relatively new, even though large scale land acquisition itself isn't new since exploitation of foreign land has been occurring for several centuries. European colonization with its economic and imperialist interests is an early form of land grabbing (Anuradha & Shepard, 2009, p. 2). Land grabbing refers to large-scale land acquisitions by private investors, public investors or agricultural companies who lease or buy land areas to produce and export raw materials (Yang & He, 2021). Despite the fact that land
grabbing as a phenomenon officially came to be recognized 2011 in connection with the first international conference on Global Land Grabbing, a complete definition and consensus about its causes and character to land grabbing haven’t been reached (Edelman et al, 2013, p. 1518-1519). Land grabbing typically operates outside the traditional market for land investments. This is because land grabbing involves the acquisition rights and exploitation licenses for land that are valid for very long periods, around 30-90 years, usually for large-scale forestry or agricultural production.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) believes that land grabbing as a phenomenon differs from previous forms of foreign land investment, as the main driving force behind foreign investments in land ownership is resource security and not market seeking. This means that foreign actors use land areas in a country where the purpose is the repatriation of crops as well as other goods and not commercial export (Anuradha & Shepard, 2009, p. 2). The phenomenon refers to large-scale land acquisitions by actors from the global north that usually occur in the global south. The global food crisis between 2007–2008 raised the international food prices resulting in increased interest from foreign actors to invest in agricultural land in developing countries in the global south. The underlying driving force is primarily to meet the global demand for food security, raw materials, biofuel and for countries to be able to protect their own ecological sustainability. In 2008, the non-profit international organization GRAIN published the first report that drew attention to the phenomenon of land grabbing: "Seized: The 2008 land grab for food and financial security". This publication became the starting point for numerous academic publications on the phenomenon. Land grabbing constitutes a polarized global debate that tends to be characterized by two orientations: those who believe that the effects of land grabbing generate development opportunities for host countries and the critical voices who believe that the effects of land grabbing undermine recipient countries (Zoomers & Kaag, 2014, p. 2). GRAIN explains the phenomenon as following:

Today’s food and financial crises have, in tandem, triggered a new global land grab. On the one hand, “food insecure” governments that rely on imports to feed their people are snatching up vast areas of farmland abroad for their own offshore food production. On the other hand, food corporations and private investors, hungry for profits in the midst of the deepening financial crisis, see investment in foreign farmland as an important new source of revenue. As a result, fertile agricultural land is becoming increasingly privatized and concentrated. If left unchecked, this global land grab could spell the end of small-scale farming, and rural livelihoods, in numerous places around the world (GRAIN, 2008, p. 1).

4.2 The pre-colonial access to land

Pre-colonial land ownership in Ghana was based on a "village subsistence economy" where chiefs, who were considered traditional leaders, held the land in trust for the community. There was little or no land rent at the time. This wasn't because there was no demand for land or that there was an abundance of vacant land, rather the land ownership system was different and land wasn't considered a commodity. The elders in the community were the ones in
charge and held land reserves as trustees and allocated them in consultation with other leaders so that each household received land in accordance with their size (Obeng-Odoom, 2015, p. 663).

This system was considered socially effective because it prevented people from monopolizing the common land. The bush fallow system was used in pre-colonial Ghana, but access to land wasn't open to all. There were specific rules about who owned what land and what land was reserved for future generations. Although some land may have been underutilized, it was never without purpose. The reserved land wasn't for speculation, but for the benefit of future generations. Customary laws governed common land, but there was no uniformity within communities. Different groups had their own versions of customary law, including the chiefs, whose version wasn't always the same as that of the people. The interpretation and implementation of these laws was decided collectively and by consensus (Ibid, p. 664).

4.3 The access to land after independence

Early attempts were made to develop large plantations for tropical export crops in Ghana when the country was under colonial rule. It was only after Ghana's independence in 1957 that the development of large-scale mechanized agriculture became a political objective in Ghana. Early in Ghana's post-colonial era, many large-scale state-owned grain farms were established in the transition area of the north, but these collapsed due to neoliberal reforms and mismanagement (Schoneveld et al, 2014; German, Nutakor, 2011). After independence, the communal land ownership system was transformed into a land tenure system based on private property to accelerate the land market. This system is mainly governed by chiefs who are found in all regions of Ghana (Tizikata & Yaro, 2014, p. 204-205). The development of private tenure and a decline in communitarian principles came at the expense of various social groups in Ghana. Migrant farmers, or so-called settlers from other regions of Ghana, are a particularly vulnerable group regarding access to land. Studies show that migrants displaced from their land areas are less likely than native Ghanaians to regain land they had lost. Native Ghanaians are compensated to a greater extent than migrants for the lost land by their local communities and chiefs (Tizikata & Yaro, 2011, p. 9). Competition for land areas in Ghana's regions creates friction between groups where Ghana's land system often disadvantages migrant farmers (Ibid, p. 5).

Although Ghana has experienced economic growth in recent decades through the agricultural sector the country came to be characterized by agricultural stagnation accompanied by global economic crises, environmental stress and governance problems. The economic decline of the 1970s and early 1980s resulted in an export-oriented development model. During the 1980s, the neoliberal development led to the IMF and the World Bank introducing a structural adjustment policy (SAP) (Hall et al. 2015, p. 48). Through the World Bank and the IMF, Ghana came to make up for the economic situation in the country which came to be generated in new loan agreements which were conditional on Ghana following a Structural Adjustment Program. The aim was to reduce state control over production as well as promote global transnational flows of goods and capital. The program aimed to achieve macroeconomic
stability by reducing public expenditure and raising fees for public services. Through the program, new structural reforms were created which meant that the IMF and the World Bank began to demand the privatization of state-owned enterprises in order for states to earn more money and deregulate price controls. These reforms also meant deregulation of government subsidies, liberalization of foreign trade through reduced customs duties and export taxes, which promotes exports and makes it cheaper for other countries to import goods (Hall et al. 2015, p. 48). The financial sector was opened up to stimulate the manufacturing sector and investment and the currency markets were liberalized (Naylor, 2015, p. 24).

The neoliberal development of the 1980s and the structural adjustment policy involving the IMF and the World Bank with rationalization, liberalization and privatization as the basic components of this development came to generate favorable conditions for the cultivation of export crops and investments in the agricultural infrastructure in Ghana. In contrast, food crops came to be de-prioritised. During the 1990s, urban incomes in Ghana were rising, which resulted in the Ghanaian population's demand for food crops. During this period, criticism of the neoliberal economic export-oriented policy grew, generating initiatives to produce improved crops such as fertilizer subsidies and roads where the production of farmers can be safely transported across Ghana (feeder roads). This generated an increased production of food fertilizers. However, this didn't change the market-friendly and export-oriented orientation. The agricultural sector in Ghana has been strongly influenced by neo-liberalism with its reforms which also included the deregulation of government subsidies, the liberalization of foreign trade which has been endorsed by the World Bank since the 1980s. This has resulted in the efforts of the Ghanaian state in promoting investment by foreign actors in land areas for agriculture and other production as a strategy for modernization as well as growth. Furthermore, this generated in the Ghanaian state the establishment of the Ghana Investment Promotion Center which is an authority with special handles and courts for land matters aimed at promoting and facilitating investors in all economic sectors of Ghana. The Ghana Investment Promotion Center works to facilitate foreign investment and to promote strategic commercial agriculture. In the year 2000, land tenure deregulation reached its peak through a national land policy and land management project aimed at reforming land ownership rights. These land policy and agricultural policy reforms have come to override the interests of small-scale farmers (Hall et al. 2015, p. 49).

4.4 The scale of land grabbing and land tenure system

Since 2007, Ghana has experienced the expansion of capital commitments to the large-scale commercial plantation sector with 36 companies purchasing land in excess of 2000 hectares for agriculture and forest plantations, which has been estimated to cover an area of 2.05 million hectares of land. Furthermore, 89 percent of these 36 companies are located abroad and 93 percent of all acquired land is attributed to foreign actors (Schoneveld & German 2014, p. 188). There are mainly two categories of foreign investment that are most common: (1) investment in grain farming projects; and (2) investment in biogas projects (Choi, 2018, p. 5). Ghana's land tenure system can be divided into three categories;
**Customary land:** Customary land ownership constituting 78 percent of Ghana's total land area (Schoneveld & German 2014, p. 192). The customary system is the most common form of husbandry and it is converted into a land system which is mainly controlled and owned by local communities according to their customs. Customary land has been passed down through generations within the region's traditional area. The decision makers within the customary system are the chiefs, country priests (tendambas) or heads of families. This makes access to land more difficult for migrant farmers because they aren't considered to have no say on the land. The customary system which has its basis in the constitution from 1992 and it is maintained through legislation and judicial processes by the state land institutions (Tizikata & Yaro, 2011, p. 9).

**Public lands:** Public lands are controlled by the state and constitute 18 percent of total land area (Schoneveld & German 2014, p. 192).

**Vested land:** Vested land is a hybrid between state lands and customary lands, in other words shared ownership which constitutes 3 percent of the total land area (Schoneveld & German 2014, p. 192). Vested land occurs when the state takes over the rights of land ownership from customary land owners. This means that the state has the right to sell, lease and collect rents for vested land but that the chiefs are recognized as land managers that are responsible for the land on behalf of their community (Bugri & Yeboah, 2017, p. 19).

The dominant land tenure system in Ghana is the customary system which is governed by traditional leaders in each region such as chiefs, clan heads or tenambas (land priests). This customary land tenure system is legitimized by the Ghanaian constitution from 1992. The customary land tenure system has undergone several changes since the colonial era through pressure from external actors. These transformations involve conversions of municipal land into private property where agricultural landmarks are converted into industrial development where the state has established compensation to farmers for loss of crops and royalties for compensation. The increased commercialization of agriculture is challenging the customary land system (Hall et al, 2015, p. 48). Under the Ghanaian constitution, public land is under the control of the President of Ghana, while private land is primarily controlled by traditional authorities such as tribal chiefs. The chiefs have primary responsibility for the division and use of arable land. The central role of chiefs in land use rights has its basis in the resistance of the Ghanaian population to the colonial attempts to nationalize lands. During the colonial rule of Ghana by the British, even then the chiefs recognized the group that could only dispose of and trade with men's rights. During the colonial as well as the post-colonial era, the land areas came to be handed over to chiefs to manage (Amanor and Ubink 2016, p. 60). Every region in Ghana has so-called traditional councils. In traditional councils, there are traditional leaders such as chiefs, clan heads, paramount chiefs. Traditional councils function to administer customary land traditions, administer traditional community interests in accordance with existing traditions, as well as support the work of municipalities in identifying common needs. Each municipality in the Ghana regions has a traditional council. Traditional councils have the so-called 'allodial title' which means they can redistribute and
align land. Hence, the traditional councils have sole authority to negotiate with project developers on their lease terms (Schoneveld & German, 2014, p. 192).

Although the Government of Ghana recognizes customary land ownership, the lack of documented title deeds has resulted in forcible land acquisition. Furthermore, although the customary land is legally recognized the ownership is usually not documented and therefore isn't allowed according to the Ghanaian constitution of 1992 to sell these lands. The government only allows leasehold tenure rights of these traditional land areas, where the government can lease land from traditional owners for usually a period between 50 and 100 years. Customary land can only be reclassified as state land if the state obtains total right of use through eminent domain, which allows for involuntary expropriation of customary land (Hall et al, 2015, p. 49). Eminent domain means that the government has the power to transfer citizens private property (such as land) to government property for example with the purpose of a public utility (Azure, 2012, p. 1). Hence, Ghanaian land ownership rights are a source of conflict (Elhadary & Obeng-Odoom 2012, p. 66). The first and second parts of Section 20 of the Constitution of Ghana “Protection From Deprivation Of Property” constitute four conditions under which it is permissible to acquire land. These are important for understanding the government's forced acquisition of land:

The first condition is that land acquired must be of public interest;

The taking of possession or acquisition is necessary in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, town and country planning or the development or utilization of property in such a manner as to promote the public benefit (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

The second condition is that it isn't enough to simply announce that a land acquisition is in the public interest, but a deeper explanation of what the interest is is required;

The necessity for the acquisition is clearly stated and is such as to provide reasonable justification for causing any hardship that may result to any person who has an interest in or right over the property (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

The third condition is that compulsory acquisition of land is approved only if it is carried out in accordance with;

“The prompt payment of fair and adequate compensation” (Constitution of Ghana, 1992)

The fourth condition is that the expropriating party must be given the opportunity to oppose the decision in court;

A right of access to the High Court by any person who has an interest in or right over the property whether direct or on appeal from any other authority for the determination of his interest or right and the amount of compensation to which he is entitled (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).
However, it should be noted as previously mentioned that forced land acquisition by the state is common through the process of "eminent domain" (Hall et al., 2015, p. 50).

Figure 1: Land tenure system in Ghana
Based on (Schoneveld & German 2014, p. 192).

5. Previous Research

Land grabbing as a phenomenon has created a polarized global debate in previous research. This division consists of two approaches to the view of land grabbing regarding whether the phenomenon is a development opportunity for the host country in question or whether it’s a phenomenon characterized by neo-colonialism. Although previous studies have examined other cases in Africa of land grabbing based on neo-colonialism or as a development opportunity, there is a knowledge gap of such studies on the defined cases in the regions Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. Due to limited knowledge and information gap on land grabbing in these regions this study contributes to fill the knowledge gap and provide comprehensive understanding of land grabbing.

5.1 Land grabbing as a development opportunity

Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen (2010, p. 273) write that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that developing countries need between 83 and 209 billion dollars annually in agricultural investment. The reason for this is to meet the global food needs for the year 2050. Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen explain that the FAO believes that the lack of development aid combined with a developing country's insufficient capacity to finance agricultural development on its own is problematic. They claim that it will lead to developing countries not succeeding to reach the estimates by FAO regarding meeting the demand for food without foreign investment. Thus, Robertson and Per Pinstrup-Andersen (Ibid, p. 273) believe that international land investments in the agricultural sector in developing countries could be seen as something positive in this regard. At the same time, Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen (Ibid, p. 272) believes that land grabbing could be a
development opportunity for the host nation. These development opportunities arise in connection with the investment of foreign actors in building an improved infrastructure in local communities, increasing employment through job opportunities as well as through foreign exchange that stimulates economic development, if the host country's government establishes an enforceable investment policy and tax policy. Furthermore, they believe that foreign land investment is an opportunity for the agricultural sector in poor developing countries by adding technology and capital that can result in increased innovation and productivity in rural areas (Robertson & Pinstrup-Andersen, 2010, p. 277).

Other advocates of land grabbing also highlight the benefit of adding capital and innovation, arguing that investment in agriculture can help advance rural communities by modernizing agriculture, building infrastructure, creating jobs and increasing productivity. They also emphasize that land grabbing and foreign direct investment can help to close "the yield gap", (ie the difference between the potential and the actual amount of crops grown in a country) and thus increase the productivity of food crops. Similarly, Alhassan, Shaibu and Kuwornu (2018, p. 1122) point out the positive effects of foreign land investment in agriculture in that it can help promote development in rural areas by modernizing agriculture, building infrastructure, creating jobs as well as increasing productivity. Goets (2019, p. 70) believes that land grabbing can be a development opportunity for host countries in connection with new foreign landowners investing in infrastructure, which generates positive effects for the local population and can thus be considered a win-win deal. Researchers thus agree that land grabbing and its effects can be a development opportunity for the host countries that generate a win-win outcome.

Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen (2010, p. 278) write that in conjunction with small-scale farmers having the opportunity to produce crops for a larger agricultural company, it generates a reduced loss of local agricultural knowledge and at the same time advanced agricultural techniques and infrastructure are passed on from commercial investors. This generates an opportunity for income generation for small scale farmers while allowing local farmers to grow their own crops for their own livelihood. The Varun Agriculture Sarl contract in Madagascar is an example of such a successful land investment based on this so-called contract farming. This has resulted in several districts in the country gaining access to, among other things, new health centers, schools, roads and water. The investment company agreed to employ local people but also buy from small-scale farmers in exchange for land. Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen (2010, p. 278) believes that contract farming is a development strategy that has also been applied in Sudan and Uganda with successful results.

5.2 Land grabbing as a neo-colonial phenomenon

Yang and He (2021, p. 2) explain that criticism of land grabbing and its effects is increasing globally. Land grabbing as a concept has come to be used extensively by activists, non-governmental organizations and researchers who believe that land grabbing is a new form of colonialism. The International Land Coalition believes that land grabbing violates human rights because of its methods and the effects of these land deals exclude the interests
and needs of local populations in the host countries (2021, p. 8). Yang and He argue that these deals are characterized by their disregard for customary land traditionally used by local and indigenous peoples. This generates both short-term and long-term social, economic and environmental consequences. These transnational land deals are characterized by a lack of transparency and democratic decision-making processes, which means that people's needs and interests are ignored. Yang & He (2021, p. 8) further takes a critical position for land grabbing and its methods by claiming that land grabbing is characterized by a top down perspective by arguing that investors ignore the power of the local population and their interests. It means that foreign investors are able to be aware of the comprehensive impacts for the local communities but still choose to not consider them as they are beyond the interest of pure profit of the investors.

Holmén (2015, p. 467) believes that external actors who want to invest in land abroad put pressure on host governments in Africa in the process of designing land agreements. Holmén believes that host governments that are put under pressure from foreign actors often result in negotiating deals that are outside their interests. Suhiyini (2018, p. 12) writes that the concentration of land grabbing on the African continent should be explained as a reflection of colonial-era patterns of large scale land acquisition. This is because major powers from Europe and the United States, as the main actors with a colonial history, take advantage of their colonial connections to African countries that were formerly colonies.

Pinstrip-Andersen and Roberson (2010, p. 272) claims that violence is likely to break out in the future between populations in host countries suffering from the negative effects of land grabbing; food security, disenfranchisement, lost livelihoods and exploitation of their natural resources and traditional customs. This is also noticed by Feintrenie (2013, p. 34) and Alhassan, Shaibu and Kuwornu (2018, p. 1126), who believes that land grabbing has recently tended to generate friction and conflicts between ethnic groups that claim each other's land due to the reduced access to land. They also note that local populations have begun to rebel against regimes as a result of dissatisfaction with the changing land ownership rights, competition for land and the exploitation of natural resources and changing land rights. According to Ndi and Batterbury (2017, p. 34), these frictions are due to a so-called top-down approach that characterizes land grabbing and its methods. This top-down perspective means that the interests and needs of the local population aren't taken into account in the process of drafting agreements between foreign actors and local actors. This top-down approach that characterizes land grabbing, Ndi and Batterbury believe, marginalizes people and leaves people vulnerable (Ibid, p. 34).

Manzo and Padfield (2017) argue that land grabbing shouldn't be disconnected from its historical background and that colonialism and imperialism have shaped contemporary power relations. By 2005, the majority of African governments had privatized previously state-owned farms and introduced laws aimed at promoting foreign land investment. They believe that the neoliberal structural adjustment program resulted in a so-called "fractional sovereignty" where states in Africa were exposed to a neo-colonial “tutelary government" that was controlled by external actors from the global north. This development has resulted in
an asymmetric power balance between former colonial powers and former colonies. Despite the fact that African governments today have ownership rights over their lands, foreign actors return with the aim of using land that was previously controlled by colonial powers (Manzo & Padfield, 2017, p. 517). Manzo and Padfield (2017) argue that the neoliberal structural adjustment program aimed to make it easier for private foreign actors to invest in agricultural land that was considered “unused” by the local population (Ibid, p. 518).

6. Methodology and Research Design

This section consists of four parts. Firstly, this section conducts for the hermeneutic epistemological approach of the essay. Secondly, it provides an explanation of the research design chosen, which is a multiple case study. Furthermore this section constitutes a critical perspective on case studies as research design which is followed by the cases of analysis. Thirdly, the methodology as a qualitative literature study, is explained. Lastly this section accounts for the literature research process, the collected data followed by an explanation of the coding scheme.

6.1 Methodology

In order to answer the defined purpose and research questions, a qualitative systematic literature study was carried out. Studies that are literature-based mean that the empirical evidence is drawn from literature. Bryman (2018) defines systematic literature study as a method where, through secondary data, one is given the opportunity to process and find new interpretations in existing research (Ibid, p. 130). In a similar way, Eriksson Barajas, Forsberg and Wengström (2013, p. 32) define systematic literature study as a method whose implementation aims to generate a synthesis of existing empirical studies. Eriksson Barjas et al (2013, p. 32) write that a systematic literature review should strive to identify knowledge gaps in previous empirical material and thus contribute to new analyzes and interpretations within the defined problem area. This justifies the application of this method because there is a large base of previous research that problematized land grabbing as neo-colonialism and as a development opportunity, but there is a knowledge gap as to whether the selected cases of land grabbing in Ghana can be explained as neo-colonialism or a development opportunity.

Furthermore, this method is suitable for data collection considering that there are no resources to collect the primary data themselves. Thus, this study isn't based primarily on primary data, but rather aims to collect published scientific literature on which an analysis can be carried out. Systematic literature study refers to a method where one systematically searches for, critically examines and finally compiles collected literature within the chosen problem area. Eriksson Barajas et al (2013, p. 31) explain that collected literature within systematic literature should consist of current research within the defined problem area and that systematically selected data should be based on scientific articles and reports to strengthen the quality and validity of a study. Initially, a problem area is defined that this essay aims to study. Questions were then formulated that the essay aims to answer. The basis for literature study as a method is to find a good search strategy that includes keywords that
generate relevant scientific articles that can be used to answer the research questions. After data material has been found, it will be analyzed, which will then form the basis of the essay's discussion (Bryman, 2018, p. 131).

Hjerm (2021, p. 25) writes that qualitative methods are usually characterized by a discovery logic. In the same way, the defined problem area is characterized by an exploratory approach that aims to develop in-depth interpretations and a multifaceted understanding of whether the effects of land grabbing in the selected cases can be explained based on neo-colonial theory or as a development opportunity. Qualitative methods are applied with the aim of creating an understanding of other people's perception of reality and the effects of belonging to a group in a specific context. Hence it justifies that this literature study has a qualitative approach which, through a deductive inference process, aims to test neo-colonial theory (Ibid, p. 25).

6.2 Epistemological approach

This study is based on a hermeneutic epistemological approach. The hermeneutic approach is characterized by researchers developing a multidimensional understanding of a phenomenon and not merely perceiving a phenomenon on a measurable level (Thurén, 2019, p. 6). Hermeneutics believes that generating new knowledge requires the ability to interpret a phenomenon, which requires the ability to be empathetic and open to new understandings. Hermeneutics is therefore referred to as the doctrine of interpretation. This scientific theoretical approach doesn’t aim to overcome limitations that a human being is exposed to, but the hermeneutic aims to recognize the consequences of human limitations (Hjerm et al, 2014, p. 34). In relation to the special features of hermeneutics and the purpose of this essay to understand, interpret and recognize the implications of land grabbing, it justifies that this essay is based on a hermeneutic epistemological approach.

The hermeneutic spiral is a metaphor that explains the logic of hermeneutics, which is about that understanding emerging through an alternating process (Hjerm et al, 20214, p. 34). Qualitative research is described as an iterative process, which means that data collection and analysis take place in parallel, which is consistent with the hermeneutic spiral where the research process strives to constantly develop interpretations of collected data material (Bryman, 2018, p. 689). As the data was collected and read through, the authors have created interpretations that during the research process will probably be deepened and become more multifaceted.

6.3 Research design

This study is based on a multiple case study as research design. Just as the term derives, case studies refer to the study of one or more context-specific cases (Yin, 2007, p. 17). Case studies are within the group of qualitative research methods by using collected data to try to develop understandings of concrete cases (Lundquist, 2008, p. 104). This research design is usually applied when one wants to develop an understanding of what is happening in a specific environment and explanations for why it's the way it is in a social environment (Yin,
Since the purpose of this essay is to develop a multifaceted understanding of whether land grabbing in defined cases can be explained as a neo-colonial phenomenon or as a development opportunity use study as a research design is suitable.

Gummesson (2003, p. 116) writes that research based on case studies is suitable when trying to create a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon as well as when aiming to shed light on complex areas where there are gaps in knowledge. Case studies as a research design refer to a study of empirical material where current phenomenon are studied in their natural context (Ibid, p. 32). Since there is a knowledge gap with scientific studies on land grabbing and its effects in Ghana, its of high relevance to describe how the cases of land grabbing in the Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta regions can be examples of land grabbing as neo-colonialism or a development opportunity. This paper is based on multiple case study design of three cases to examine defined research questions. Fundamental to case studies are units of analysis that are defined before the data is collected. Units of analysis are the defined phenomenon, in other words the case. The units of analysis define the case to be investigated. Units of analysis are objects of study in a context where the researcher has selected a case to be investigated. In this study, the units of analysis are the geographical units of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta (Yin, 2007, p. 41).

Yin believes that the planning phase for case studies as a research design should meet four criteria that affect the quality of execution and thus the validity and reliability of a study. These four criteria are conceptual validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Conceptual validity is about a measure for terms being studied measuring what the term intends to measure and denote. In order to strengthen the validity of the data, Yin believes that one should use several sources of data and evidence in the data collection process (Yin, 2008, p. 55). Internal validity is about the extent to which a study measures what it's intended to measure and thus being able to ensure that the results of the study aren't due to inaccuracies in the design of the study, implementation or analysis of data. Thus, it's important that the study's causal relationship between variables reflects the actual relationship between variables being studied in order to generate a reliable result. In order to strengthen the internal validity of the data analysis process, one should compare different patterns with each other. The study should also have clearly formulated research questions that clearly shows what the study aimed to investigate. In order to achieve a high internal validity, it's also important to take into account selection bias that can affect the validity of the results (Ibid, p. 57). External validity concerns the degree of generalizability that a study's results have, that is, whether it can be generalized to other situations outside of the specific case.

6.4 The literature research process

Initially, it's important to generate a systematic search strategy that generates information about defined research questions, keywords and inclusion and exclusion criteria (Erikkson Barajas et al, 2013, p. 174). Through a well-functioning search strategy, it will facilitate the identification of relevant literature. Initially, a pilot search of selected databases was carried out with the aim of creating an idea of whether there is enough scientific data available to
answer the defined research questions. During the process of conducting a pilot search in all databases, it was possible to create an idea of which keywords generated search hits on the subject area. Bryman (2018) explains that in the process of searching the literature to find relevant data, it is fundamental to identify key concepts that can delimit the research area in question. These key terms were identified during the pilot search and then came to constitute search terms used in the electronic databases in question to generate relevant data within the delineated subject area (Bryman, 2018, p. 149).

Forsberg & Wengström (2015, p. 74) writes that after a problem area for a study has been defined, keywords should be formulated that should form the basis for a literature search. The literature search can either be carried out manually or through a database search. In this study, a database search has been carried out. The literature research was conducted in the databases Google Scholar, Primo, ProQuest and JSTOR. Since the information search was carried out in four different databases, this meant that the same search word combinations didn't generate the same search results and hence the search words aren't equally combined in the respective databases. The keywords combined in respective databases are: land grabbing, Brong-Ahafo region, Ashanti region, Land grabbing Volta region, ScanFarm, Prairie Volta, Kimminic corporation. Selected keywords in all databases generated the most relevant search hits on publications that problematize land grabbing in selected cases in Ghana.

Table 1: Database search results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primo</td>
<td>Land grabbing Brong-Ahafo AND Land grabbing Ashanti AND Land grabbing Brong Ahafo AND Scanfarm</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest</td>
<td>Volta region land grabbing AND Brong-Ahafo region land grabbing AND Kimminic corporation AND Prairie Volta</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSTOR</td>
<td>Scan Farm land grabbing AND Prairie Volta land grabbing AND Kimminic corporation land grabbing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Scholar</td>
<td>Prairie Volta land grabbing AND Volta region Prairie Volta AND Brong-Ahafo land grabbing AND Ashanti land grabbing</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result is based on 19 scientific articles selected based on defined inclusion criteria. Eriksson Barajas et al (2013, p. 276) write that in systematic literature studies, inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria form an important part that is established based on the purpose of the study. From this, the inclusion criteria has been identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Published after 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is peer reviewed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is relevant to the designed purpose of the essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.5 Material

The material on which this essay is based are scientific reports and peer-reviewed publications that were selected to ensure that the knowledge overview is based on reliable data. Collected data must be published after 2007 because land grabbing as a phenomenon had not taken off before then. All data must be written in English to enable non-Swedish-speaking outsiders to review the results of this essay with the sources. Furthermore, all data must be peer reviewed to ensure that the data has undergone a review process to ensure that the data has a good quality. Collected data must also primarily contain information on selected land grabbing cases in Ghana and a problematization of its methods as well as effects. Articles that wasn't included didn't fulfill any of the inclusion criteria above and was therefore excluded.

Furthermore, the majority of the research material that was found on the topic was mainly written by people from the Western world, which may indicate that there is a knowledge gap regarding non-Western perspectives on land grabbing. As the writers of this knowledge overview, we are aware of this and have therefore tried to the greatest extent possible to include data that isn't characterized by a western lens. The Ghanaian researchers Festus Boamah, James Boafo and Thomas Yeboah are examples of a recurring researcher in the data material on which the result is based on. After the collection of data and the readings of it, the data was compiled in a themed structure based on formulated purpose and research questions.
6.6 Coding Scheme

Since the research method that has been chosen aims to gain a deeper understanding of a specific situation, event and, in this case, a phenomenon, it has been essential to use coding. Coding is a process where the researcher decomposes and categorizes data in terms of specific subject areas or themes (Bryman, 2018, p. 367). During the process of coding data is analyzed and labels are assigned to create a meaningful organization and structure of the material. In order to carry out a consistent and correct coding, the authors have chosen to apply a coding scheme, which has served as a guide to assign correct codes (ibid, 370-372). The coding scheme was constructed to organize and categorize the empirical data based on the research questions. The categories identified include; economic, political power and cultural implications. Within the economic category, information was sought on, creation/loss of job livelihoods, income generation for households and creation of long term/ short term job opportunities. Within the category of political power the information was sought on the aspects of unjust/equal power balance between local population and foreign investors, another aspect is the marginalization/inclusion of local interests and foreign actors' legal impact on the land tenure system. Within the cultural category information was sought on the aspects of; impacts of foreign actors on the local traditions and customs, the impact of foreign actors has on local communities' traditional relationship to their land and lastly the exploitation/conservation of the traditional knowledge and cultural diversity.

Early in the coding process, the exploration of an additional category to be analyzed with regards to power relations was considered. However, after careful discussion and reflection, a decision was made to include that category within the political impact category. The decision was based on the need to ensure a clear demarcation between different dimensions and to avoid possible overlaps, which on some occasions was difficult to separate and thus led to the composition between categories political and power relations (Bryman, 2018, p. 372).

Table 3: Coding scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Political Power</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation/Loss of livelihoods</td>
<td>Equal/Unjust power balance between local population and foreign investors</td>
<td>Impact foreign actors on the local traditions and customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income generation for households</td>
<td>Marginalization/Inclusion of local interests</td>
<td>Impact foreign actors has on local communities' traditional relationship to their land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of long term/short term job opportunities</td>
<td>Foreign actors' legal impact on the land tenure system.</td>
<td>Exploitation/ conservation of the traditional knowledge and cultural diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.7 A critical perspective on case studies

In the scientific community the generalisability of case study results is criticized. Critics argue that because case studies examine individual cases, it's difficult to generalize such results which in turn affect the external validity. However, Yin (2019) argues that while statistical studies and its findings can be generalized to other populations and contexts, the results of case studies aren't generalisable in a statistical way. Yin distinguishes between two types of generalization: statistical generalizations and analytical generalizations. Statistical generalization means that the researcher draws a conclusion about an entire population on the basis of collected data. Static generalization is common in quantitative research where studies aim to achieve quantifiable results (Yin, 2019, p. 18). A common misunderstanding among scientific scholars is that they claim that a small set of cases can be generalized to a larger population. Hence statistical analysis means that a conclusion is made by generalizing for an entire population (Ibid, p. 18). For case studies, analytical generalizations are appropriate.

Case studies aren't intended to be generalized in this way. Hence, the assumption that statistical generalizations from "samples to universes" (Yin, 2019, p. 18) are the only way to generalize results is wrong. In contrast, analytical generalization is applicable for case studies. Analytic generalization is based on a theoretical framework with the aim of extending or generalizing the theory. Hence, analytic generalization is about establishing a theoretical logic that might be applicable to other contexts (Ibid, 2019, p. 18). Case studies are based on analytic generalization where the researcher uses an already developed theory as a template which is used to compare the results from the different cases. If two or more cases turn out to be in line with a theory, replication is called for. In cases where two or more cases are found to be consistent with a theory, the results should be considered credible in relation to the theoretical framework. (Yin, 2007, p. 53) Yin writes:

The short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a "sample," and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization) (Yin, 2019: 15).

In the same way Denscombe (2018, p. 94) argues that the result of case studies is used to confirm or develop a theory. Denscombe also explains that the results in case studies shouldn't be considered as absolute, but that they should be considered as part of the research process to contribute to confirming or refining theories developed in previous research (Ibid, p. 94).

6.8 Cases of analysis

The choice of Ghana is based on the fact that the country has been ranked as one of Africa's ten fastest growing economies. But despite the good economic growth, the standard of living hasn't developed as well as it was hoped for, instead economic inequality has grown, with
increased unemployment and poverty. The country has fallen to 133rd place in the 2021 Human Development Index according to the World Bank. The rapidly accelerating rate of land investment in the country is another reason why we have chosen to have Ghana as the focus country (Standard Bank, 2023).

We have chosen to write about cases from the Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Volta regions of Ghana because they have a particular significance for research and investment in agro-ecological areas and bioenergy. Although land grabbing occurs in all regions of Ghana, the majority of land grabbing cases are located in the regions of Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta (Aha & Ayitey, 2017). The transition zone between forest and savanna is an important area for research, and research activities have focused precisely on this zone in the region of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. In addition, the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions are particularly significant for bioenergy investments, with a high concentration of bioenergy plantations. We chose these two regions because it is the largest producer of jatropha plant for biofuels in Ghana (Schoneveld, 2013, p. 14 -15). The choice of the Volta region is based on the fact that it's the largest producer of food crops such as rice and maize (Lantz et al. 2018, p. 1534). There are also differences between the Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta regions and southern Ghana, which have influenced our choice to examine the cases in these regions. While the majority of the population in these regions engage in shifting cultivation and a smaller proportion in agro-pastoralism, southern Ghana is more market-oriented and has higher population densities, which may affect the access to land for foreign actors in these southern regions. Thus, studies focusing on the Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta regions may provide a different insight into agro-ecological issues and bioenergy than studies focusing on southern Ghana.

7. Theoretical approach

This study is based on a neo-colonial theoretical framework. Neo-colonial theory will be applied to each selected case of land grabbing in Ghana with the aim of analyzing each case from a neo-colonial lens. Hence, this essay starts from a deductive inference process that aims to test neo-colonial theory (Hjerm, 2021, p. 25).

The term neo-colonialism was coined by Kwame Nkrumah, who has a history of being an anti-colonial activist and Ghana's post-independence leader. Some scholars are convinced that states that were previously under colonial rule and have become independent benefit from their sovereignty. Therefore, Nkrumah believes that this isn't the reality. Nkrumah continues that the basis of neo-colonialism is that formerly colonized countries are still governed by external economic systems and thus the politics of these countries are governed by external factors outside the country's borders. Despite the fact of states being recognized as independent, some countries are still governed by external factors. This implies that foreign military groups are still established in these states that have declared themselves independent. It also means that foreign companies have great influence in these states through ownership of land but also parts of the domestic politics. Nkrumah further emphasized that the basis of
neo-colonialism is that the state is theoretically independent and has full international sovereignty. In contrast, state economic systems, politics and policies are controlled in practice by external forces (Nkrumah, 1965). This means that the European great powers' exploitation of people and natural resources leads to a colonial legacy, which despite the countries' independence still affects their opportunities, influence and power in the international system (Baylis et al, 2020, p. 167). While political independence was achieved by several African countries, neo-colonialism came to enable continued economic, cultural and political interference by former colonial powers as well as other actors. Nkruma explained the essence of neo-colonial theory as following:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subjected to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. The methods and forum of this direction can take various shapes (Nkrumah, 1965, p. ix).

In his book "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism" (1965), Nkrumah identified several aspects of neo-colonialism that were crucial to understanding its impact on African nations. Nkrumah identifies economic exploitation, cultural imperialism, political domination and an unequal power balance as central concepts of neo-colonialism. These aspects will be utilized in the analysis by putting the categorization of the result of economic implications, cultural implications and implications of political power against these concepts to analyze whether the results live up to these neo-colonial aspects. Hence whether the economic implications can be considered as economic exploitation, whether the cultural implications can be considered as cultural imperialism and whether the implications of political power can be considered as political domination. Following these concepts will be conceptualized below.

**Economic exploitation**

The economic aspect of neo-colonialism describes the exploitation of Africa's resources and markets by foreign powers. Despite political independence, many African countries were often left with economies that depended heavily on the export of raw materials to the global North. Foreign companies maintained a dominant presence in African markets and controlled key industries such as finance, mining and agriculture. Economic control allowed foreign authorities to set the terms of trade and obtain wealth from African states, perpetuating a pattern of underdevelopment and poverty. There is a strong factor that favors Western monopolies and works against the developing countries. It is the control of international capital over the world market and the pricing of goods bought and sold there. Neo-colonialist trap on the economic front is described as "multilateral aid" which takes place through international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction (World Bank), the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Fund. All of them have in common that they have American capital as their main backing. These organizations have a tendency of forcing potential borrowers to accept various abusive conditions, such as providing information about their finances, submitting
their policies and plans for review by the World Bank, and accepting the agency's monitoring of the use of loans (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 241–242).

**Cultural Imperialism**

The cultural aspect of neo-colonialism describes the way Western culture and values are imposed on African nations. This often takes the form of cultural imperialism, in which Western norms and values are seen as superior and universal. It can also involve the erosion of traditional cultures and the adoption of Western behavior and mindset. This cultural dominance can also be seen in the media, where Western media conglomerates have massive influence and shapes perceptions of the world. Neo-colonial theory claims that developed countries use their cultural influence to perpetuate their dominance over developing countries by fostering western norms, values and cultural products. At the same time western powers are marginalizing local products, techniques and traditions (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 246 – 247).

**Political domination**

The political aspect of neo-colonialism refers to the way in which African countries are controlled by foreign powers through political manipulation. This can happen through overt political intervention, such as funding opposition parties or support for coups, through regime change or through give power to local actors that favor the interests of external actors. It can also take more subtle forms, such as the promotion of pro-Western policies and the marginalization of African voices and perspectives. In both cases, a foreign power can maintain its influence over African politics, often at the expense of democratic participation and national sovereignty. Nkrumah argues that the former colonial power has in theory relinquished political control but if social conditions caused by neo-colonialism lead to a revolt, the local neo-colonialist government can be sacrificed and replaced with another equally subservient government. At the same time, the same social pressures that can cause rebellion in neo-colonial areas can also affect those states that have refused to accept the system. Therefore, the political dimension of neo-colonialism enables the former colonial power to maintain its dominance without directly intervening by manipulating the political systems of the neo-colonized countries and threatening those who challenge the system (Nkrumah, 1965, p. XIV).

**Unequal power balance**

Ne-ocolonial theory argues that there is a continuing power imbalance between developed countries and developing countries. This prevailing unequal power balance are rooted in historical disjunctions which has its roots in colonialism. Structures embossed by an unequal power balance are perpetuated by global economic and political structures (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 31). Neo-colonial states are sometimes forced by the power of external actors to exclude the manufactured products of external actors from competing products from elsewhere (Ibid, p. ix). Hence, the power of external actors takes control over the policy of the government. States that are targets of the historically rooted created unjust power balance doesn't necessarily have to be by a state which formerly ruled the state in question. Hence ne-ocolonial power and control doesn't have to be practiced by the former imperial power in question. Unjust power relations are constituted by developed countries attempting to in any
way take advantage of less developed countries without considering the short term and long term effects on the host country. Therefore for the developed countries who practice neo-colonialism means power without responsibility. Hence for countries that suffer from it means exploitation without redress (Ibid, p. x).

7.1 Definition of development opportunity

The purpose of this essay is to study whether land grabbing can be explained as in line with neo-colonial theory or as a development opportunity. Hence, a definition is required of an opposition to an outcome of land grabbing that is characterized by neo-colonialism.

In 2010, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) joined The World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD) to propose a set of principles for responsible agricultural investment by name. These principles are called The Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI). The driving forces behind the introduction of PRAI was the goal of minimizing the negative social, economic and environmental effects that large-scale transnational land investments entail (Ashukem & Ngang, 2022, p. 422). PRAI consists of the following principles:

- Principle 1: Land and natural resource rights of existing land users are respected
- Principle 2: Investments doesn't jeopardize food security – rather strengthen it
- Principle 3: Policy framework ensures transparency & accountability
- Principle 4: Agreements based on extensive consultations with all potentially affected communities
- Principle 5: Investors respect the law (e.g. human rights) and other best practices (e.g. industry specific)
- Principle 6: Investments generate broad social benefits for all surrounding communities
- Principle 7: Investments are environmentally sustainable ” (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security)

Through PRAI-principles, the aim is to maximize the development opportunities with such market investments. Thus, the win-win narrative is fundamental for land investments in PRAI. A win-win outcome for host countries means that their local communities, small businesses and indigenous people aren't marginalized or their needs as well as desires aren’t ignored. Furthermore, a win-win outcome means that the short-term and long-term effects of foreign actors' land investments contribute to positive economic, social and environmental development (Ashukem & Ngang, 2022, p. 422).
8. Result

This section will account for collected data of the cases of land grabbing in the regions Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. The result will be presented based on the thematized aspects: economic implications, cultural implications and implications of political power.

8.1 The case of Brong-Ahafo region

Table 4: Description of case in Brong-Ahafo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure system</th>
<th>Investor</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Size in hectares (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customary lands</td>
<td>Kimminic Corporation (Canada)</td>
<td>Biofuels</td>
<td>65 000 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Boamah, 2014, p. 413)

Brong-Ahafo is the second largest region in Ghana with a land area of 39,558 km². The region covers 16.6 percent of the total land area of Ghana. Brong-Ahafo is characterized by a varied vegetation of forest and savanna (Ministry of food and agriculture, 2023). The region has various favorable agro-ecological zones that enable the cultivation of a wide variety of different crops such as grains, vegetables and cashew nuts. The favorable agro-ecological characteristics of the region have attracted migrant farmers from northern Ghana. In addition to migrants, the favorable conditions of the region have attracted foreign actors who want to farm the land (Boafo & Lyons, 2022, p. 411). The region has a long history of agricultural commercialization, primarily through cocoa production. The foreign demand for land with the purpose of food production increased during the post-colonial era. Commercial food crops such as maize, groundnuts and cassava are also cultivated in the region. This prompted a commercialization of agriculture in Brong-Ahafo which has generated commodified land (Boafo & Yeboah, 2022, p. 3). Brongs, Ahafos and Akan are the largest ethnic groups in the region, but there are also minor ethnic groups (Ministry of food and agriculture, 2023). As the region is characterized by a customary land tenure system which isn’t based on any formal legal agreements to agricultural land, this tenure system implies that so-called “first comers” that are classified as having a customary right to land. This system implies that people who have migrated to the region aren’t served by the customary system and therefore rely on leases and cultivation agreements approved by the chiefs or family clans in the region. However, the conditions for migrants regarding their access to land vary depending on when they arrived and their social capital (Sward, 2017, p. 88).

In Brong-Ahafo, foreign actors have invested primarily in customary land, which constitutes 80-90 percent of the tenure system of the region, which is based on a system of inheritance and not legal documents for ownership. This means that the commercialization of agricultural
land through foreign investors in the region has generated a socio-political transformation for the tradition of customary land that dominates (Schoneveld, 2010, p. 4). In recent years, the development of foreign land investment in the region for biofuels has been growing in the agricultural sector. Since 2007 and 2008, the number of foreign actors wanting to invest in land to grow biofuel crops has drastically increased. Jatropha is a low-cost biodiesel feedstock that foreign companies grow on acquired land in the region (Acheampong & Campion, 2014, p. 1). Since 2009, biodiesel companies have acquired around 730,000 hectares of land in the region (Ibid, p. 2). Kimminic Corporation is a Canadian company leading one of the largest Jatropha biofuel production projects in Brong-Ahafo. The Kimminic project was started in 2008 and it was planned to be a 40 year long project in total. The Kimminic project has occupied 65,000 hectares of land in the region. The project is described as a jointly owned land agreement with six of the thirteen traditional councils in the region represented by local chiefs. The project is financed by Canadian investors and Ghanaian residents living in Canada (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). However, the project was suspended due to funding problems in May 2012. Furthermore, the result will account for the implications of the project based on an economic aspect, cultural aspect and the aspect of political power.

8.1.1 Economic implications

The computed financial indicator from a study showed that land grabbing has had a high negative impact on the physical and financial resources of farming families in Ghana, especially in the Brong Ahafo region. The study also found that the impact of land grabbing varied across the six study areas, with Brong Ahafo having the highest impact on the physical resources of farming families (Alhassan, et al, 2020, p. 3313). The Kimminic project was based on a joint venture agreement where it was agreed on annual profit sharing of 75 percent and 25 percent for Kimminic corporation and Nkoranza Traditional Council (NTC) respectively. The NTC is one of the traditional authorities in Ghana. The project was financed by Canadian investors and Ghanaians residing in Canada. Funding and capital assets such as machinery and building infrastructure were provided by the investors and the project community contributed by making land available for the establishment of the Jatropha plantations (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 115).

Kimminic corporation has employed 300 workers in a village called Bredi. Among the 40 households that had been selected for the survey, 23 households had at least one member who worked for the company between one to four years. Seven of these 23 households were migrant households and 16 were native households. The employees earned a monthly salary and some of the employees were also able to take loans from Ghanaian rural banks, guaranteed by Kimminic corporation, as well as from the Kimminic Welfare Association (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 116). The access to the financial resources for the workers was essential for the household's livelihood, this through small trade and the cultivation of crops. The job opportunities that came with the Kimminic project also helped the households to avoid selling the crops at a cheap price during harvest times and instead store them to sell later at better prices. The project employment also helped indirectly by increasing
opportunities to gain employment through networks as well as to provide access to land for cultivation. In contrast, migrant workers who didn't have native contacts or a family member employed by Kimminic corporation found it more difficult to obtain employment at the company due to the company's preference for hiring native workers. A job-seeking migrant said the Kuromafo (indigenes) want their family members alone to work in the plantation. He explained that many migrants who had kuromafo friends were employed but he didn't know anyone to help him. 23 of the 40 households surveyed improved their livelihoods through the project through employment or engaging in income-generating activities. However the suspension of the project in 2012 led to the workers not receiving any salary since January of the same year. Thus, plantation workers and their households, as well as small traders who relied on sales to the plantation workers, were faced with financial difficulties. It was estimated that 34 households took out loans and only three had repaid their loans before the project suspension (Ibid, p. 117).

The suspension of the project was due to several factors, including unrealistic business plans regarding expected high jatropha yields that wasn’t fulfilled. In addition, the lack of the knowledge in the company regarding jatropha farming and local conditions led to poor management of the project. The company also expanded very aggressively without achieving immediate returns to counter the increased operational costs. As a result, the investments in the farmland and the wages paid were greater than the financial return on the project, indicating very poor business planning(Ahmed et al, 2017, p. 142). Many of the laid-off workers then had difficulty repaying the loans on time, resulting in accumulated interest to repay. The former workers were also therefore forced to spend their already limited incomes on servicing remaining bank loans. Most of the women who had started small businesses during the implementation of the project lost their business capital, this because former plantation workers couldn’t pay for goods they bought on credit. After the suspension of the project, interviews with the residents who were laid off showed how discussions about land deals could revive local discourses about resource utilization to improve livelihoods. Although the natives were preferred more than migrants, they were also affected by the suspension of the project. Many people became vulnerable after the suspension of the project because they lost their jobs and didn't know when the company would start again. A former Kimminic employee explained that most of them were still unemployed;

Our chiefs negotiated with Kimminic corporation to employ the kuro- manfo [indigenes] and we all benefited from the project. Most of us are now still in the house [unemployed] after the lay-offs. We don’t know when the company will resume work (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 112-117)

For example, in the municipalities of Bredie the Unity Committee Chairman reported that the most affected communities in the Kimminic plantations are Dasagwa and Camp. He pointed out that the main problem was that the company didn't give the affected farmers time to relocate. Kimminic corporation waited until the farmers had finished harvesting and then took the land immediately. The company didn't pay compensation to the affected farmers for the loss of their farmland, this with the explanation that they were settlers. The farmers didn’t
dare to go directly to the manager to complain. A total of approximately 50 farmers in Camp and Dasagwa have been identified as losing their lands, some of whom have since left the area (Acheampong & Campion, 2014, p. 4594).

8.1.2 cultural implications

Brong-Ahafo is a region that has developed a customary-land tenure system since colonial times. This means a customary system that rests on historically developed traditions, norms and cultures. According to the traditions on which the customary land tenure system rests, land use rights are transferred between generations within ethnic groups. People who belong to ethnic groups that have cultivated the land in the region for generations are considered as "first comers" and are considered to possess a social identity that comes with the right to use the land in Brong-Ahafo. Several ethnic groups in the region are classified as having the social status of indigenes and therefore have collective ownership rights to land (Sward, 2017, p. 88). As large tracts of land have been inherited for several generations through tradition and customary law, many of these tracts of land lack legal deeds proving that the land is cultivated for, for example, small-scale agriculture. The Kimminic Corporation and their occupation of land and the commercialization of the agricultural sector has had a negative impact on the culture of small-scale agriculture and its traditional practices (Boafo & Yeboah, 2022, p. 2).

The Kimminic Corporation advertised the potential of the project as:

KIMMINIC operates a unique model of joint plantation owner-ship with the local communities . . . KIMMINIC’s acquisition process from the traditional councils is consistent with the Office of Administrator of Stool Lands Act . . . (Act 481). KIMMINIC explained the benefits and impacts of the projects to the chiefs before the lands were acquired (Boamah, 2013, p. 331).

Furthermore, according to a chief in one of the project villages have stated that:

We gave out the lands to the company so that the youth can secure jobs. Most occupants [migrants] of our land have not paid anything to us lately. . . . It is not a lease, the land areas are not sold out. Local people [indigenes] are also owners of the project (Boamah, 2013, p. 331).

Small-scale agriculture and traditionally developed techniques have historically been crucial for the livelihoods in Brong-Ahafo. The region constitutes Ghana's largest food-producing zone, accounting for 30 percent of Ghana's staple food, such as yam, cassava, beans, sorghum and cowpea. This means that the region is called the "food basket" of Ghana, which refers to the importance of the region for the country's domestic food supply (Boafo & Lyons, 2022, p. 408-409). Hence, the tradition of a customary land tenure system that is rooted in the culture of the region has resulted in people being forced to leave their land areas with the purpose of commercialization of agricultural production. The commercialization of agricultural land in the region has generated a socio-political transformation for the tradition of customary land that dominates the region (Schoneveld, 2010, p. 4). Even though the traditional chiefs have
explained that they entered into this land deal with Kimminc to create job opportunities for young people, the project came to replace large parts of the traditional production methods with new technological methods. The Kimminic project used methods of agricultural production that are both mechanized and labor intensive. The purpose of not excluding traditional labor-intensive farming methods completely was according to the Kimminic Corporation to generate employment. However the transformation from traditional to new technological methods has come to be a threat to the preservation of traditional knowledge about agricultural production (Boamah & Overå, 2016, p. 112-113).

Through the commercialization of the agriculture sector by foreign companies in Brong-Ahafo, there has been a commodification of land and social relations as the traditional cross-generational landowner system ceases (Boafo & Yeboah, 2022, p. 2). The establishment of the Canadian Kimminic project has come to generate socio-economic change by altering the dynamics of social relations and the culture upon which customary land-owning traditions are founded. In connection with the preparation of the land for the project, the land use rights of households that cultivated on land near the Jatropha plantation of the Kimminic project were changed. These changes meant that households that farmed on land near the Jatropha plantation were forcibly displaced or had to give away parts of their farmland to the Kimminic corporation. Small-scale farmers and their families had to give up customary land that has been passed down through generations. Hence, the project has led to a disruption of the customary and traditional tenure system in the region, which is founded as a historically developed tradition (Boamah & Overå, 2016, p. 113).

Furthermore, the two main reasons for the displacement of local people and the transformation of the access to their customary land. Firstly, the Jatropha plantations that developed were rectangular contiguous farm fields occupying large areas. Secondly, the so-called "fire belts" were built around the Jatropha plantations aimed at protecting the lands from potential fires. Although the project is described as being based on a venture agreement, the compensation for the lost land came to be prioritized for the local citizens only. Immigrant households, i.e. Ghanaians who moved to Brong-Ahafo from other regions, came to be deprioritized in compensation for lost land areas (Boamah & Overå, 2016, p. 113). Migrants were rarely compensated for the loss of their traditional agricultural occupation (Boamah & Overå, 2016, p. 112-113). The Ghanaians' disadvantage in the project is because they aren't considered to meet the usual criteria for what constitutes "local citizenship". Successive generations of different citizens of Brong-Ahafo have lost the perception of the extent of customary land that is claimed by traditional owners. As there are no formal boundaries, migrants from other regions have occupied land that is on the outskirts of Brong-ahafo as well as frictions has occurred as ethnic groups within the region have started to engage agriculture activity on land that different groups claim to be their customary land (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). Although the project and its agreement with the respective traditional councils is described as a jointly owned land agreement, it is important to note that several of the traditional councils saw the agreement as an opportunity to re-establish authority over traditional land that had been used by migrants. Local chiefs in the region's various traditional councils accuse migrants of not paying the annual agricultural fees and
hence the social and cultural connection that migrants have developed over generations to Brong-Ahafo has been threatened by the Kimminic project (Ibid, p. 415).

Economically vulnerable farmers in the region have explained the commercialization of production chains as a disproportionate disadvantage (Boafô & Lyons, 2021, p. 416). Farmers in the region describe the new commercial environment with its technological production methods as displacing traditional agricultural methods. New technological farming methods are perceived by some farmers as displacing local farming skills and possible loss of native crops (Ibid, p. 417).

8.1.3 Implications on political power

In the process of land grabbing, the transformation of changing land ownership rights is central. The process of developing an agreement between The Kimminic corporation and local traditional councils in the region came to affect the socio-political dynamics of the region as the interests of the local population wasn't included. This means that the design of agreements for the occupation of large-scale land affects the dynamics between social and political forces in Brong-Ahafo (Boamah, 2013, p. 331). When the socio-political dynamics change, the dynamics between people within a society usually change depending on which ethnic group, social status and class. This transformed the interpersonal dynamic between people in the region which in turn resulted in changed power relations. Brong-Ahafo as the epicenter of transactional land deals in Ghana is characterized by continuous socio-political changes. Just as the expansion of exporting cashew production has generated frictions and competition for land, the Kimminic project has similarly generated socio-political dynamics regarding access to land (Boafô & Yeboah, 2022, p. 3).

As the agreement for the project was with six of the traditional councils in Brong-Ahafo, the project had an impact on the socio-political dynamics of various villages in the region. The dominance in the region of customary land, which constitutes between 80-90 percent of the tenure system, has generated major socio-political consequences when foreign investors change the traditional division of the customary land (Schoneveld, 2010, p. 4). For instance, the right to customary land is claimed through social identity. Hence, the development of foreign actors, such as Kimmimine Corporation, which constantly changes the traditional land boundaries based on social identity between ethnic groups has generated ambiguities and blurring of traditional boundaries (Boamah, 2014, p. 419-420). The marginalization of Ghanaian migrants in the Kimminic project was because they aren't considered to meet the criteria for what constitutes the social identity of a "local citizenship" in the different villages in Brong-Ahafo. Transnational land deals such as the Kimminic project have generated in generations of native citizens of Brong-Ahafo successively have lost the perception of the extent of customary land that is claimed by their chiefs. This has resulted in migrants from other regions have occupied land that is located the outskirts of Brong-Ahafo as well as different indigenes within Brong-Ahafo have started to claim each other's customary land (Boamah, 2014, p. 413).
The village of Brendi in Brong-Ahafo is located near one of the areas where The Kimminic Corporation operated Jatropha plantations which was agreed together with the Nkoranza Traditional Council. Nkoranza Traditional Council has large customary lands in Brong-Ahafo. Kimminic Corporation signed agreements together with six traditional councils in the region to carry out agricultural production of Jatropha for biofuel. Nkoranza Traditional Council constitutes one of the traditional councils in the Brong-Ahafo region with which Kimminic had a land agreement with. Nkoranza Traditional Council is one of the prominent councils comprising several villages and its customary land in Brong-Ahafo. Just as in all other traditional councils, the council is made up of traditional chiefs. However, the lack of formal boundaries for customary land has resulted in migrants staying on the outskirts of the customary land of Nkoranza Traditional Council in Brong-Ahafo and conducting agricultural production without the chief's permission (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). Local chiefs in Brong-Ahafo have thus accused migrating farmers from neighboring traditional councils from other regions of occupying customary land without paying tribute to the Nkoranza Traditional Council. Therefore, several traditional chiefs have claimed before the project that migrant farmers posed a threat to traditional leaders' authority over customary land (Ibid, p. 414).

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the agreement for The Kimminic project was based on a joint venture together with the project village in the vicinity of Brendi. In Brendi, many migrant farmers engaged in agricultural production on land that chiefs believed to be customary land belonging to indigenous people in the region by the Nkoranza Traditional Council. The Ghanaian investors from Canada and the traditional chiefs from the Nkoranza Traditional Council therefore advocated that compensation for the lost land of indigenous citizens should be compensated before migrants (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). The prioritization of indigenous villagers' lost land and deprioritization of migrants characterized the project. This meant that the migrants were made extra vulnerable by the agreements that gave local elites together with Kimminic the power to forcibly relocate migrants without any compensation. In addition to the project changing the socio-political dynamics of the intergenerational landholding system, the production of Jatropha also prompted as well as reinforced changes in the dynamics between local elites and migrants (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). The changed dynamic between local elites in Brong-Ahafo and migrants meant that the local elites saw the agreement with the Kimminic corporation as an opportunity to re-establish authority over traditional land that had been used by migrants. Before the jatropha plantation project, the majority of migrants relied on leases and cultivation agreements approved by chiefs or family clans. However, during the period the project was carried out the political power of the traditional leaders together with the Kimminic Corporation managed to break these land agreements with migrants. This forced displacement of migrant farmers with The Kimminic corporation in the back generated a change of political power where the chiefs increased their power and control over migrant farmers (Sward, 2017, p. 88).

The provision and food security of migrant households was therefore negatively affected by the project. For example, a woman who migrated to Brong-Ahafo with her family in 2008 without any social networks said that she was negatively affected by the Kimminic project:
My husband and I came here [Bredi] in 2008. We got stool land through a friend [a fellow, migrant] who was leaving the village. When Kimminic started cultivating our land, the Odikro said we have never paid any tribute to him (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 114).

The Odikro is the name of the chief in the village to which the family had migrated. Through the changed power dynamics that the chiefs jointly designed with the Kimminic Corporation, the family lost their farmland to the Kimminic project. The woman also said that:

> It had no money to lease equally productive land and no social networks to obtain new land. The household switched to a nearby waterlogged area, which affected their crop yields. Other newly settled migrant farmers who had accessed land without the permission of chiefs or indigenous landlords — which custom demands — lost their farmland areas to the project without being allocated new land (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 114).

Since the family had no social networks in Brong-Ahafo or money to lease new land with fertile soils, the project left the family vulnerable. As well as this example, the Kimminic project has resulted in households in various villages in the region being forced to move to lands with poor ecological conditions, which affects the food security and quality of life negatively. The result of migrants not being compensated for the lost land generated friction between migrants on one side and traditional leaders together with the Nkoranza Traditional Council on the other. Migrants came to protest against the changing access of agricultural land by allying themselves with Non-governmental organizations. Against this criticism, the Nkoranza Traditional Council said they were shocked that migrants tried to contest the land allocation for the Kimminic project (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). The Nkoranza Traditional Council explained the decision to base the agreement on a joint venture was based on the need to prevent future land conflicts:

> We opted for a joint venture instead of a lease in order to avoid land encroachment. Leases usually lead to occupation by encroachers [migrants] if intended projects are not successful. … But reversal of the land to the NTC is possible with the joint venture agreement (Boamah, 2014, p. 414).

The Nkoranza Traditional Council has explained that based on past experience of agreements with land leases to migrants have resulted in migrants occupying customary land when projects have been abandoned midway. Further, the Nkoranza Traditional Council argued that they couldn't legally reclaim the farmland from migrants until the long lease period had come to an end (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). The Nkoranza Traditional Council agreement, as well as the other traditional councils' agreement with the Kimminic corporation, which affected the local people's land use rights was strategic. The traditional councils' agreement with the Kimminic corporation was strategic because the agreement stated that land use rights for local people depended on local citizenship in Brong-Ahafo. This meant that mainly migrants lost their lands and the possibilities for compensation depended on "the goodwill" of Kimminic Corporation to allow migrants to cultivate the land for the project. Migrant farmers have expressed that there are village chiefs in Brong-Ahafo who were employed by Kimminic and
therefore postponed meetings to discuss the negative effects of the changed land rights (Ibid, p. 415).
The Kimminic project came to an abrupt end due to funding problems. This meant that the people who were forcibly displaced to less productive agricultural lands and affected by the changed land rights were left without any compensation. During the project, the chiefs were negotiating with Kimminc to employ local people who had lost their productive farmland. But after Kimminc abruptly laid off local employees, many people were left vulnerable; now they had no land to cultivate to support their food security or jobs to provide for their families (Boamah, 2013, p. 331).

8.2. The case of Ashanti region
Tabel 5: Description of case in Ashanti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure system</th>
<th>Investor</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Occupied land: Size in hectares (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customary lands</td>
<td>Kimminic Corporation (Canada)</td>
<td>Biofuels Maize</td>
<td>65 000 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: (Boamah, 2014, p. 415)

The Ashanti people belong to one of the largest ethnic groups in central Ghana. Before they were colonized by the British in 1900, the Ashanti had built a powerful empire in West Africa, which at its height spread across Ghana and parts of present-day Togo and the Ivory Coast. Research shows that the land in the region originally belonged to a number of independent families who later joined together to form a larger group, a clan, with an elected chief. The land was seen as coherent, not as fragmented pieces of family land, and became known as "tribal land". This transition resulted in the transfer of responsibility for land distribution from household heads to the new leader or chief. The tribal land could be obtained in five ways: by conquest, as confiscation gift, purchase or escheat (Shaw, 2012, p. 161-162). According to the Ashanti land customary tenure system, every piece of land is owned by someone, except when an entire family dies. In that case, the land may be ownerless. When such a situation arises, it's common for the Odonko ba (slave or labourer) to take over the land. If there isn't nobody to inherit the land, the plot would be absorbed by the stool. The people of Ashanti place a great importance on the value of the land, and this is reinforced by the customary and religious meanings attached to the land. Because of this, the Ashanti people are very reluctant to give up land and only do so in an emergency. Registering land in Ghana involves a costly and long procedure that makes registration difficult and sometimes impossible for the poorest (Ibid, p. 162).

The Ashanti region's three largest towns, Agogo, Kwaman and Kumawu were considered as traditional towns whose political history was dominated by joint efforts to annex the
boundary of what the elders of Agogo and Kumawu call the “powerful” and “oppressive” neighboring ruler in the seventeenth century. After they succeeded in annexing, the first three chiefs promised not to draw boundaries between their jurisdictions because of kinship. However, due to the ever-increasing demand for land over the past decade, this has sparked conflicts over large-scale land allocations, undermining the custom that used to unite the three traditional councils. The chiefs of the three traditional councils have strategically extended their land rights to contiguous areas without physical boundaries. The chiefs of Kumawu and Agogo have in the last decade allocated many tracts of land to investors without any form of mutual consent (Boamah, 2016, p. 416). One of these foreign companies was ScanFarm Ghana which is a subsidiary of a Norwegian company, ScanFuel AS. The company initially signed in 2008 a 50-year lease agreement with the Agogo Traditional Council (ATC) in the Ashanti region with its purpose of production of Jatropha. Between 2008 and 2009 the company conducted production of jatropha biofuel on 13,000 hectares of land. However, expectations of quick profit from jatropha production weren’t fulfilled as the company claimed that there was a limited market for the harvested jatropha nut. Therefore, ScanFarm switched to producing maize instead in 2010 and changed its name to ScanFarm and in 2011 the leasing period was reduced to 15 years (Boamah, 2014, p. 415).

8.2.1 Economic implications

The production of Jatropha for biofuel has the potential to generate a new source of agricultural income in rural areas and can also contribute to improvements in local infrastructure. ScanFarm presented the project as:

(...)

(...) bringing development to the area in the form of capital, technology, large-scale mechanized food production (supplied locally or nationally), employment, and a stimulus to the local economy of the area (Wisbourg, 2013, p. 1215).

In contrast, the large-scale land acquisition and export-driven process of biofuel production by ScanFarm generates negative consequences for the local economy and livelihoods in Ashanti. The industrial Jatropha plantations, led by ScanFarm have come to generate negative socio-economic consequences for the local population. The project’s expansion of commercial Jatropha plantation has resulted in the displacement of local population which in turn has resulted in a lost opportunities for employment and income generation (Acheampong & Campion, 2014, p. 4602). Local people affected by the project in the region have expressed that the Jatropha cultivation has meant the loss of land which has resulted in a negative impact on their food production. Before the company established itself in the region, the local population had previously been able to make a living from their crops either through sales or self-sufficiency. Due to the land losses, the area of land for cultivation has decreased for the local population, which has resulted in an increased cultivation intensity. The increased cultivation intensity in turn shortens the fallow period which normally allows the soil to recover. The loss of land hasn’t only resulted in food insecurity, it has also resulted in reduced
food production, which in turn has significantly reduced household income levels (Ibid, p. 4595).

Furthermore, as local people saw the economic losses of the establishment of the project, local people along with non-governmental organizations came to criticize the traditional chiefs' agreement with the company. The chief's attempt to respond to the criticism was to spread the information based on development optimism that the company promoted for the chefs. ScanFarm argued that the agreement wouldn't jeopardize household farming and assured that there would be employment for unemployed youth. These statements based on the project as a development opportunity and especially for the poor who could see the project as an opportunity calmed the population's anxiety and fear of forced displacement and reduced livelihood opportunities (Boamah, 2013, p. 329). A resident who is affected by the project's effects has said that:

“the ATC announced that a company [ScanFarm] is here to produce oil from nkane dua [jatropha] but we later heard of maize production. . . . The maize benefited us but we are no longer allowed to pick maize from the plantation” (Boamah, 2013, p. 329).

After transitioning from Jatropha production, ScanFarm in its first year of maize production allowed local people from nearby villages to collect the leftover corn left in the plantation after the maize harvest. This opportunity for free maize was taken advantage of by the population to support their households as their own lands were occupied by the company. But this possibility ended at the end of 2010 because ScanFarm believed that the population was stealing from the plantation. The employment opportunities that ScanFarm promoted as a development opportunity for the poor were primarily temporary. This coincidence was due to the mechanized farming system on which the project was founded. This meant that many residents were left vulnerable as their productive land areas on which they could make a living had been occupied while the company's job opportunities weren’t long-term sustainable for household finances. A 28-year-old man who lives in one of the project's villages has expressed his disappointment with the temporary and uncertain that ScanFarm offers:

The odikro [village chief] told us that, there would be jobs for us. . . . Now all friends of mine who were initially employed by ScanFarm are laid off. I don’t need this type of job (Boamah, 2013, p. 329)

In the majority of the villages affected by the project through large tracts of land being set aside for commercial agriculture, the affected households haven't received any information about the transaction amounts for lost land. Hence, as ScanFarm displaced several households from their traditional areas, this has raised concerns among the population that it will not receive compensation payments for the lost land. This in turn has triggered many demonstrations in the affected villages in the Ashanti region (Kuusaana & Bukari, 2014, p. 58). In the Agogo region, ScanFarm has been met with resistance from the local population who describe the project's forced displacement of people and the financial losses that come with it as "land grabbing" (Ibid, p. 753)
8.2.2 Cultural implications

The acquisition of the land was done with the aim of being able to stimulate development in the area and ATC tried to prevent criticism by emphasizing that the project would benefit the poor. However, in reality, the project was found to lead to limited access to productive land resources for some households and the employment opportunities created were temporary due to ScanFarm's mechanized farming methods. Initially, Scanfarm grew jatropha but switched to maize production due to the former not providing sufficient economic returns. The communities were already critical and there was more skepticism towards the project when scanfarm switched to maize production. Some of the residents lost access to land, which affected their livelihood. Others saw no major improvement in their livelihoods. They weren't allowed to pick maize as they used to as Scanfarm had the right to the land. This transformation from traditional agricultural orders to mechanized agricultural methods will over time generate a loss of traditional knowledge about agriculture and the economic environment (Boamah, 2013, p. 328).

The decision of Scanfarm to occupy land that the people had traditionally cultivated for small-scale agriculture for maize production came to undermine their rights and opportunities for self-sufficient farming. Those who were given temporary jobs at the project lost them as the project shifted to a more mechanized form of farming. Out of all 40 households that were investigated, 14 households suffered from reduced livelihoods due to the project (Boamah, 2013, p. 329). ScanFarm also emphasized the benefits that employment would bring to women and was then supported by the Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency to finance its training programme. Despite this, women as a group benefited less from employment compared to men, with fewer jobs and lower wages. Many women also had insecure and poorly paid employment that was only temporary. It has also been shown that some women made a living by delivering food to workers, but it wasn't well-paid or stable employment. Scanfarm didn't protect the right to equality and the company also lacked a clear strategy to promote women's equal opportunities for employment but also their access to resources such as land, energy, food and water (Wisborg, 2013, p. 1215).

Some chiefs described the project as something positive and beneficial for the entire village while others described it as land grabbing. The organization ActionAid Ghana described the ScanFarm project as a "land grabbing spree" and called for a review by the government. Later reports from the organization showed that their pressure had had a positive impact on the project area (Boamah, 2013, p. 330).

The Scanfarm project has also led to conflicts that change the traditional dynamics between people and their cultures. Due to the region's tenure system, citizenship and social identity affect access to land and land rights. The Fulani people in the region are considered a non-indigenous population and lack the social legitimacy and belonging that accrues to settler farmers. This cultural differentiation based on ethnicity and belonging creates an imbalance in land access and rights, where the Fulani people end up in a vulnerable position. This has meant long conflicts between the farmers and the Fulani herdsman precisely because of
manure destruction and competition for land. Although Scanfarm is aware of the ongoing conflict between farmers and herdsmen, they still chose to occupy land, which has also led to conflicts with the herdsmen. Scanfarm reinforces this inequality in land access and ownership between different social groups. Therefore the company is taking advantage of the prevailing situation to maximize their own production and profit, although this may have negative consequences for both herdsmen and farmers (Bukari & Kuusaana, 2018, p. 755). Scanfarm manager in an interview regarding migrants in agogo answered “The chief made us aware that those people are squatters; they are there illegally; they must pay taxes to the chief”. Hence the company claims that they are only doing their job and that it is the chiefs that one should turn to if they have objections to their way of working (Wisborg, 2013, p. 1215).

8.2.3 Implications on political power

During the process of drafting the agreement, ScanFram was approved by the Agogo Traditional Council to acquire for the production of Jatropha. The Agogoman royal family who sit in the Agogo Traditional Council came to facilitate the process of the transfer of the agricultural land as they saw it as an opportunity to stimulate development in the area. Once the negotiations were complete, ScanFram paid the traditional council in the customary currency and also decided on the annual land leases for the project. However, in the process of designing the project, there were no discussions with the eight villages that would be affected by the land acquisitions. The company excluded local people from this process. Nor were any assessments made on how the local population could be affected by the project. Furthermore, there were no meetings from the company's side to inform people about the project and educate them about the project's potential development opportunities. Thus, local people's views, needs and voices weren't included in the process of designing the project (Acheampong & Campion, 2014, p. 4600).

Initially, the project was based on a leasing agreement for a 50-year period, which meant that the company would pay an annual fee and a monthly ground rent to the Agogo traditional council. Despite the people's dissatisfaction, Agogo traditional council and ScanFarm chose to overlook this. It was only when the non-governmental organization ActionAid Ghana and the state called a meeting with the affected local population that the agreement was improved. This transformation meant that the lease agreement was decreased to 15 years, as well as ScanFram now had to turn directly to the traditional land owners in the local population and not directly to the Agogo traditional council in order to occupy land (Boamah, 2013, p. 330). ScanFram had the advantage of having the full support of the state, the land commission but also from the local chiefs. This has given Scanfarm a significant position of power and made it difficult for local farmers or herdsmen to challenge or oppose the company. This aspect of power also means that because the company had the support of the federation and other influential actors, they got a higher degree of protection and legitimacy of their interests. This asymmetry in power resulted in scanfarm prioritizing its own profit and exploited the ongoing power structure to protect its interests at the expense of the vulnerable groups (Bukari & Kuusaana, 2018, p. 755).
8.3 The case of Volta Region

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tenure system</th>
<th>Investor</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Occupied land: Size in hectares (ha)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Customary lands</td>
<td>Prairie Volta Rice Ltd (USA: Texas)</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>5 270 ha</td>
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Source: (Tsikata & Awetori Yaro, 2015, p. 7).

The Volta Region is one of Ghana's regions made up of several ethnic groups that have inherited the land areas through generations. The majority of land in the region has been passed down through generations and is owned by traditional leaders such as chiefs, clans and male family heads. The land on which the different ethnic groups practice different forms of agriculture has been created through historical divisions around tradition, culture and the perception of being a so-called "first comer" to an area. The chiefs of these different ethnic groups in the different parts of the region have the primary responsibility for the division of land and land use rights. This system of land transfer, which is strongly linked to identity and culture, means that the Volta region is primarily founded on a customary-land tenure system.

Certain groups of people are considered to have more prioritization to land than others depending on their social identity, especially regarding migrant groups who aren't considered to live a specific social identity that is earned by land inherited for generations within a specific ethnic group. Due to the poor rainfall that characterizes the Lower Volta region, small-scale farming has long characterized the region (Tsikata & Awetori Yaro, 2015, p. 7). Fishing is also a common, the Tongu Ewe are a major ethnic group in the region who have a long tradition of riverine fishing as well as floodplain agriculture. The region is a destination for foreign land investments for mainly food products such as corn and rice (Lantz et al. 2018, p. 1534).

Prairie Volta Rice is one of these projects in the Volta region that has come to affect the living conditions of the local people in the region. Prairie Volta Rice is a project to produce rice and it was initiated in 2008. The project is based on a joint venture between the Government of Ghana and an American company located in the American state of Texas called Prairie Texas. Previously, the project was owned by other American investors, but after controversy over how they mismanaged the project, they left. The company produces rice on land that the Ghanaian government in 1970 forcibly took from local people in Mafi Dove to develop mechanized cotton cultivation. Although the land in Mafi Dove is considered as customary land tenure system and it was possible for the local people to return after the cessation of the cotton production the land remained under the control of the government. The contribution of the government to the project is the land that in 1970 was forcibly taken from local people in Mafi Dove (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). The project is also known as the Aveyime Rice Project.
because the project headquarters as well as its rice mills are stationed in the village of Aveyime in the Volta Region. The land that the American company has occupied, on the other hand, is located in the villages of Mafi Dove, which is located a few kilometers away. Prairie Volta Rice has occupied land on four different tracts of land. The first land area is 5 hectares of land where the company has its offices and risk warning no. The other land area constitutes 15 hectares of land where there is a helipad as well as two fields for irrigation of rice which constitute 1250 hectares and 2000 hectares of land (Tsikata & Awerteri Yaro, 2015, p. 7). Later on in the project, the company expanded and acquired 2000 hectares of land in the South Volta region in the village of Agorta. The leases are for fifty years. The demand for rice in Ghana is very large and in order to meet this demand, the company sells the produced rice within Ghana (Ibid, p. 8). However commercialization and methods of rice production by the Texas based investors have generated significant impacts on the local population.

8.3.1 Economic implications

Since the closure of cotton production in 1970, the lands in Mafi Dove have been able to return to their traditional customary land tenure system, even though it was the state that owned the land since the cotton production of the 1970s. However, the establishment of the American company Prairie Volta Rice came to mean a repetition of the 1970s pattern of forced displacement of local people from their customary productive lands (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). Through the project, the local population's total loss or cutting off of their traditional agricultural lands has resulted in more difficult livelihood opportunities. The business model that Prairie Volta Rice implemented for the project is large-scale plantations that, through mechanized production techniques, produce rice. The plantations are so-called monocropping plantations where only the rice crop is grown for several years. The commercialization of agriculture meant that high-intensity mechanized production methods were used in the project ( Hall et al. 2015, p. 58).

Furthermore, the commercialization of the project’s rice production meant a socio-economic transformation for the local population. Although the production technology is primarily mechanized, hired labor is also used (Hall et al. 2015, p. 54). For local people who originally made a living from small-scale farming, this meant a transformation from being farmers to working in the rice fields. The possibility of receiving a monthly cash income and not having to worry as a subsistence farmer about generating abundant harvests made this process of proletarianization (from subsistence to wage labor) perceived as acceptable. Prairie Volta Rice has provided about a hundred people from the local population with permanent employment, while between 50 and 60 people have been given temporary work. Due to mechanized production techniques, opportunities for employment are limited, which means that people from the local population have been left without employment opportunities and have to find strategies themselves to compensate for the lost land. The demand for work opportunities to support their households has been very high. During the project, job positions such as transport operators, transporters, food vendors, rice retailers, food vendors, market women, food vendors and many other positions have appeared. Despite the fact that
not everyone in the local population can be compensated with these work positions, these employments have had good effects on the local economy (Ibid, p. 56).

The CEO of Prairie Volta Rice has stated that the most fundamental development opportunity and benefit the project brings is the positive impact on the economy of Aveyime & since the closure of cotton production in 1970, the lands in Mafi Dove have been able to return to their traditional customary land tenure system, even though it was the state that owned the land since the cotton production of the 1970s. However, the establishment of the American company Prairie Volta Rice came to mean a repetition of the 1970s pattern of forced displacement of local people from their customary productive lands (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). Through the project, the local population's total loss or cutting off of their traditional agricultural lands has resulted in more difficult livelihood opportunities. The business model that Prairie Volta Rice implemented for the project is large-scale plantations that, through mechanized production techniques, produce rice. The plantations are so-called monocropping plantations where only the rice crop is grown for several years. The commercialization of agriculture meant that high-intensity mechanized production methods were used in the project (Hall et al. 2015, p. 58).

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CEO believes that the local farmers' lands must be large enough to benefit from new modern technology and machinery. The CEO believes that the reduced mesh size required to be able to use new technology is eight hectares of land and such conditions don't exist as small-scale agriculture is traditional in the region (Ibid, p. 15).

The Ghanaian government's land dealings with Prairie Volta Rice are marked by flaws in the project's promised development efforts, which mainly involved the seizure of customary land without ensuring compensation to all people for the lost land. The Ghanaian government's transfer of the land in the project areas to Prairie Volta Rice has resulted in many disputes between local people and the company regarding the ownership of the land and compensation for lost land. The traditional chief of Mafi Dove has spoken out about how the project failed to take responsibility for its attendant negative socio-economic impacts due to forced displacement (Hall et al. 2015, p. 60).

8.3.2 Cultural implications

The establishment of the Prairie Volta Rice project hasn't only resulted in a redistribution of land and reduced access to land for the local population. Prairie Volta in the Volta establishment in the Volta region has influenced and changed a customary tradition that is rooted in the culture of the villages. Since Ghana's land system hasn't formalized the ownership of customary land, it means that when foreign investors, such as Prairie Volta, establish themselves in the region, it brings about a changed dynamic between traditional groups who lose their traditional land areas. The company's commercialized production and their relationship with the local community where they have occupied land has resulted in different local groups that previously farmed side by side now being pitted against each other. This is because the reduced access to productive land has resulted in people groups starting to claim each other's land. The establishment of the company has commercialized the customary land system (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 168).

The business model that Prairie Volta Rice implemented for the project is large-scale plantations that, through mechanized production techniques, produce rice. The plantations are so-called monocropping plantations where only the rice crop is grown for several years. Although the production technology is mainly mechanized, hired labor is also used. These commercialized production methods that are highly intensive pose a threat to the survival of traditional agricultural methods that have been applied through local traditions and local culture for generations (Hall et al. 2015, p. 52)

In the villages where Prairie Volta has acquired customary land, local people have been forced to barter with neighboring villages for land. This means that through the company's establishment, the local population has been forced to leave their customary lands, which through culture and social identity have been inherited for generations and where traditional crops were grown. The lack of access to land has resulted in several people being left totally landless and thus unemployed. This has resulted in the local population starting to leave projects in the villages with the aim of finding new productive land and opportunities for
employment. A male resident's statement from one of the project villages has illustrated this change (Hall et al. 2015, p. 52):

We are idle. We do not have any work to do. Because of that people have left for Praso, Yeji, Krachi and other places (Hall et al. 2015, p. 60).

The population that hasn't left the project villages has to, under the changed circumstances, make an effort to support themselves despite the reduced access to land. Two villagers have expressed the deteriorating conditions through agricultural production and livelihood to create a good quality of life (Tsikata et al. 2015, p. 16).

Amavi is 58, female and married with children and lives at Tademe. She sells kenkey and farms two separate plots of land across the road. She grows pepper on the land, which is her grandfather's plot. She also has four goats. Before the acquisition, she was farming four acres with beans, cassava and maize, and also making kenkey. She sold some of her farm produce and the family consumed some as well. She had been given the land by her maternal grandfather. With the acquisition, she lost her four acres. She is now surviving with the help of her three children who are into small-scale mining in the Eastern Region. Kenkey is now her main source of income and her customers include the workers on the rice farms. She now has to buy most of the food she eats. She and her husband now farm on the same small plots. He also used to have his own farm of some of six acres which he has lost (Tsikata et al. 2015, p. 16).

8.3.3 Implications on political power

The project has received complaints from the local population, the chiefs and other traditional leaders in the region that their opportunities for influence in the project and opinions about its effects have been very limited. The local population feels that the company, through its power, did not include the local population in the process of the project. The power of Prairie Volta has resulted in an undermining of the local people's voices and will in the project. A man from one of the project villages has illustrated in his statement how the project has ignored the views and needs of the local population (Hall et al., 2015, p.60):

There should be a negotiation and the right compensation paid. The government alone should not decide on the value of the land. We were thinking that the project would take off so the youth of this town would be employed. We have not been treated fairly at all. We gave out the biggest tract of land but the project headquarters is on a different land (Aveyime). We will ask for the head office to be moved to Dove, and if not, the project will not take off. We would also ask for the name to be changed to Dove rice. We want our name to be heard (Hall et al. 2015, p. 60-61).

The Prairie Volta rice concession has generated a great deal of food insecurity due to the lost lands. The villages of Dova and Tadame haven’t been provided with any social development for the traditional activities of the small-scale farmers. This is because Prairie Volta's agreement with the Ghanaian government has resulted in the company not feeling compelled to take social responsibility for its operations. Thus, the level of deteriorating well-being of
the local population has increased in the project villages. The benefits of the project have been enjoyed by the urban consumers who can afford to buy the rice (Hall et al. 2015, p.58). Local people from the project builders believe that the agreement for the long period of the project disregards the opportunities of the contemporary population and future generations to have complete power over their life destinies and life opportunities. The view that the length of the duration of land contracts should not be longer than ten years at a time (Tsikata & Awetori Yaro, 2015, p. 17). A villager expressed himself as follows:

If you lease land for 50, 99 or 100; then you are not thinking about future generations (Tsikata & Awetori Yaro, 2015, p. 16).

9. Analysis

The findings of the results show that the outcomes of land grabbing in the regions of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta have different effects within the economic aspect, cultural aspect and aspect of political power. Against the background of the different development opportunities and effects of a neo-colonial character that the results show, land grabbing in the various cases is context specific. Whether the different outcomes of land grabbing in the different regions can be considered a development opportunity or neo-colonialism, the discussion will explain by examining the result based on Nkrumah's neo-colonial theory and through the lens a win-win outcome through the PRAI principles. The discussion will also compare the results against previous research to find possible similarities or new narratives. The discussion is based on the different themes in the coding scheme, where the economic effects for all cases will be discussed first, followed by the cultural effects and finally the effects of political power. Based on this, the discussion will categorize and account for the first question whether the cases of land grabbing can be considered as a development opportunity or as neo-colonialism as well as the discussion will weave in for the second question about what socio-economic effects land grabbing has generated in the various cases.

9.1 Land grabbing as a development opportunity

This section discusses whether the cases of land grabbing in Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta are in line with the PRAI-principles and can be considered as a development opportunity.

9.1.1 Economic implications

Regarding the creation of job opportunities as well as economic growth. In the Kimminic project in Brong-Ahafo, 300 jobs were offered, which contributed to the households' financial situation and improved their opportunities for income. A similar effect can be found in the Prairie Volta Rice project in Volta by offering both temporary and permanent employment for the local population. This has led to increased employment but has also created a positive impact on the local economy by generating income for households. Job opportunities were also prioritized in the Scanfarm project, where employment was initially promised especially for unemployed young people. This can be interpreted as a potential opportunity for
development because it provides the youth with income opportunities and contributes to reduced unemployment. Additionally foreign direct investments have meant that technology and knowledge have been transferred to the local communities. All the projects had introduced advanced farming methods and techniques to increase productivity and efficiency, which has had an impact on people who had previously relied on small-scale farming and with the projects got other options with monthly income.

Since all the projects had the potential to create job opportunities, contributed to economic growth and introduced advanced farming methods, which aligns with second PRAI principle because it can be considered as generating broad social benefits (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security). The projects also had the potential to strengthen food security and increase agricultural income, which aligns with the second PRAI-principe, which emphasizes that the investment should not jeopardize food security but strengthen it. Despite all opportunities mentioned which the project initially gave, it is essential to see from a sustainable point of view, moreover, it was favorable for some and not all, which isn’t sustainable in the long term.

9.1.2 Implications on political power

Further regarding the aspect of political power, the result shows a similar outcome in all three regions. The land agreement in the case of Brong-Ahafo with the Kimminic corporation was founded on a joint venture with six traditional councils in the region. The company's advertisement of the project as a unique model of joint plantation ownership together with the traditional councils, could be perceived as that the project didn’t rely on the intentions of entering as an external actor aiming to take over control of the political power (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). Furthermore, the result shows that the establishment of the Kimminic project changed the dynamics between the local leaders (the chiefs) and migrants in the region. In this regard, the traditional leaders were given an opportunity to re-establish political authority over traditional land that had been cultivated by migrants (Sward, 2017, p. 88). The political power of the chiefs together with the Kimminic Corporation manage to break land agreements with migrants generated in an increased mandate in power for the chiefs. The company's consideration of the interest of the local leaders to break the land agreements with the migrants could be interpreted as a development opportunity for the local leaders who believed that it could reclaim land from migrants that traditionally belongs to the population from Brong-Ahafo (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). However to what extent the effects of this are in line with the PRAI principles and can be considered as a development opportunity for the migrant farmers is critical. The effects of this for the migrants were considerable and will be discussed in the next section.

In the case of Ashanti the ScanFram company regarding the aspect of political power the result shows (Boamah, 2014, p. 415) that lease agreement was completed and approved by the Agogo Traditional Council to acquire for the production of Jatropha. ScanFarm's inclusion of the traditional council in the region can be interpreted as that the company had no obvious intentions to, as an external actor, disrespect the local actors who hold the
political power. Such an interpretation would in such cases mean that the Scanfram is in line with principle five of the PRAI principles governing that investors respect the law and principles, in this case the respect of traditional chairs who rule the political system in the region. However, despite the fact that the company showed consideration by including the approval of the project by the Agogo Traditional Council, the underlying effects of the influence of external power through project regarding marginalization of locals and respecting the customary tenure system are critical if they live up to the principles of PRAI for a win-win outcome.

Furthermore in the case of Volta when it comes to political power the project, like the agreement in Brong Ahafo, is based on a joint venture (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). However the difference in Volta compared to the agreement in Brong Ahafo is that it’s a joint venture between the Government of Ghana and an American company Prairie. The joint venture could be interpreted as the Ghanaian government's co-ownership of the project indicating that the project hasn’t completely taken power from political local powers. However, the generation of development opportunities and a win-win outcome for the local population through the joint venture is critical, which will be discussed below.

9.1.3 Cultural implications

As the result account for the case of Brong-Ahafo was founded on a joint venture with traditional councils (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). The case of Volta was also based on a joint venture with the Ghanaian state (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). Thus, this could be interpreted as that the foreign actors in both cases showed efforts to not enter the project that totally could endanger the preservation of local cultures and traditions. The projects in Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti therefore have the potential to fulfill the first PRAI principle which is about foreign investors respecting the existing land users in connection with local farmers not being driven from their land. The projects also therefore have the potential to fulfill the sixth PRAI principle, which is about investments resulting in social benefits. This is because a joint venture could involve the influence of the local population (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security) Although the case in Ashanti was lease agreement of 50 years initially, it was reduced to only 15 years due to pressure from the NGO ActionAid Ghana together with the state, which resulted in Scanfarm having a meeting with the locals affected. They improved the agreement, meaning Scanfarm had to turn directly to the landowners to buy up land and pay for the annual and monthly costs to the farmers instead of Agogo council. Which can be interpreted as Scanfarm taking responsibility, however, it is essential to understand that without pressure from a higher power such as the state, Scanfarm wouldn't have agreed to the new agreement, as they together with Agogo Councils ignored people's dissatisfaction (Boamah, 2013, p. 330).

Finally, If the purpose of the projects was to result in a win-win outcome, these foreign investors would have prioritized in a different way. Better planning and knowledge of the traditional customs of these local residents should have been implemented. If these foreign investors really wanted investment that gave them what they wanted while not endangering
the local population, they wouldn't have occupied land that already had owners generations back. This is critical to keep in mind and is discussed in more depth below.

9.2 Land grabbing as a Neo-colonialism

This section discusses whether the cases of land grabbing in Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta are in line with the neo-colonial theory by pitting the result against the PRAI-principles and the defined neo-colonial criterias by Nkrumah.

9.2.1 Economic implications

Scanfarm's expansion of commercial Jatropha plantations contributed to the displacement of local people and lost opportunities for employment, but also income generation. The loss of land negatively affected the local population's food production, which led to reduced food production and significantly lower income levels for households (Acheampong & Campion, 2014, p. 4602). Similarly, the Prairie Volta Rice also had detrimental economic effects on the local population. The start-up of large-scale rice plantations and mechanized production methods led to the loss of traditional agricultural lands, making it difficult for local people to make a living. Despite the fact that the project did offer a number of employment opportunities, it can still be stated that the mechanized methods contributed to limiting the total employment that the project could provide. This changed the socio-economic landscape and disrupted the traditional agricultural practices that local people were used to but also relied on for their own livelihoods. These economic disadvantages caused by the Prairie Volta Rice project can be seen as a form of disruption to the livelihood of the affected local population and limited their employment opportunities.

The poor business planning and mismanagement of the Kimmicic project resulted in persistent setbacks for the local population. Due to a lack of knowledge of the local conditions in the region and unrealistic expectations with aggressive expansion without direct returns, the project resulted in large financial losses and finally the project was suspended. The suspension of the project has led to several workers being laid off and facing enormous difficulties in repaying the loans they took out and living on their now limited incomes. The small businesses started by women in connection with the project were also affected and many became unemployed and uncertain about their future (Ahmed et al, 2017, p. 142). This is in line with the economic aspect of neo-colonialism which involves the exploitation of Africa's resources and markets by foreign actors. When the scanfarm, Kimminic corporation and Prairie volta Rice projects were implemented and described as a good development opportunity, these investors were simultaneously limiting the local population's ability to support themselves and generate income in traditional ways (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 241-242).

The findings from the result show that the foreign land investments have resulted in a disregard of local people's traditional land as well as usage rights. This wasn't compensated either, which is a clear pattern in all three projects. And it shows how the projects failed to take responsibility for the negative socio-economic effects the projects brought about which
resulted in forced displacement (Boamah & Overå, 2016, p. 112-117). This type of economic loss and the dependence on foreign investors that is created is part of the neo-colonialist dynamic where foreign powers both control and exploit economic resources at the expense of local residents (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 241-242).

The projects also don't meet several of the PRAI principles, where in principle 1 which stands for both land and natural resource rights of existing land users are respected, which wasn't done because the local residents were displaced and lost access to their traditional agricultural land, which shows that their land rights weren't respected. In addition, principle 2 wasn't fully met because even though the projects initially provided food, it wasn't sustainable and long-term, for example when Scanfarm changed tracks to grow corn, it resulted in reduced food production but also lower income levels. The Prairie Volta Rice project business idea of investing in rice plantations made it more difficult to get livelihood opportunities for local people and the Kimminic project made people more vulnerable and dependent on the project when they were forced to cancel. These effects undermine the food supply and go against the principle's idea of strengthening food security. In addition, the projects don't fully comply with principle 6, which is about investments generating social benefits for all communities, this is clearest in the Kimminic project, which chose to prefer hiring natives over migrants, but also in the Prairie Volta Rice and Scanfarm projects, which provided employment for significantly less than what they could have done mostly in temporary jobs, but it isn't sustainable and doesn't benefit the whole society when only some receive benefits. All projects violate principle 5 which aims for the investors to respect laws such as human rights, which wasn't fully achieved as many people relied on the projects but were forcibly evicted and had to give up lands they had usually made a living on. In addition, due to the poor business planning and mismanagement, the Kimminic project has affected the local population. This shows the lack of respect these foreign investors have for local people where only their own interests are at the center.

9.2.2 Implications on political power

The result shows that the dynamics of how political power in all three cases was affected by the methods that foreign actors applied to occupy land are characterized by similar outcomes. The common factor that characterizes all three cases of land grabbing is that the methods that have been applied and thus undermined the political power of the local population is the so-called top down perspective. This top down perspective as researchers who adopt a neo-colonial positioning for land grabbing in previous research, such as Ndi and Batterbury (2017, p. 34), believe that this top down approach that neglects and undermines the interests and needs of local populations characterizes the methods of land grabbing.

Although Boamah (2014, p. 415) explains that the agreement in the case of Brong-Ahafo was based on a joint-venture, as mentioned above could be interpreted as an stand on the part of the Kimminics to want to include the power of the local interests, are the outcome characterized by an asymmetric power balance. The establishment of the company with its incorporation came insted to constitute a central actor of power. The displacement of migrant
farmers through the establishment of the Kimminic corporation is an outcome that the company believes empowered the chiefs to reclaim customary land that the chiefs claim to have once belonged to them. However, the result of this was that the needs and wishes of the migrant farmers were completely ignored in the process where corporate social responsibility didn't exist as they hid their profit interests in the desire of the chiefs to reclaim land. The Kimminic corporation differentiated who was deserving of compensation between what the chiefs meant were local people and who were migrant farmers (Boamah, 2014, p. 413). This shows that the establishment of the company actually constituted a considerable political power factor in the region which, without social responsibility, came to differentiate between migrant farmers and local population by leaving migrant farmers completely vulnerable. Without knowing for sure the local power dynamics and developing an understanding of the history of the division of customary land, the corporation chose to design an agreement that would displace migrant farmers from areas of land they would profit from (Boamah, 2014, p. 414). As well as migrant farmers basing their livelihoods on land that the chiefs thought belonged to them, the Kimminic corporation came to take over this land from the chiefs for their own profit interests without ensuring in the agreement that the needs of the migrant farmers would be compensated.

Thus, if the company's legitimate intention through the joint venture was to create a development opportunity for those affected by the project in the local population, they should have designed an agreement that would take into account everyone's interests, including those of the migrant farmers (Sward, 2017, p. 88). However, instead, the company forged not only an agreement that reinforced a skewed balance of power between migrant farmers and chiefs in Brong-Ahafo, but also an asymmetrical balance of power between migrant farmers and the company itself. Hence, The power of the Kimminic corporation can be explained as a fractional socio-economic. This is because the migrant farmers were more affected by the negative consequences of the company's land acquisition than the local population as they didn't live up to the usual requirements for local citizenship. The company justified leaving migrant farmers utterly vulnerable with no land and thus no means of livelihood with the motivation that they weren't considered to meet the criteria to be considered local.

Regarding the implications of political power of foreign companies, the case in Volta is characterized by a similar outcome. In line with what Hall et al. (2015, p. 58 ) mentions in the result The Prairie Volta Rice also didn't take any social responsibility when they through agreement together with the Ghanaian government generated in that company didn’t considered themselves compelled to take social responsibility for its operations. Hence the power of the Prairie Volta Rice should be considered as a setback for the social and economic development of the local population as people lost their lands, means of livelihood and thus were exposed to food insecurity.

Although Prairie Volta Rice occupied land as migrant farmers establishing their livelihoods for the company's own profit interests, no agreement was drawn up to ensure compensation for their lost lands (Tsikata & Awetori Yaro, 2015, p. 7). When it comes to the aspect of political power in the case of Ashanti it is marked by a similar outcome as the other cases.
Just as (Wisborg, 2013, p. 1215) mentions in the result it shows that the case in Ashanti is marked by the same outcome where the power of Scanfarm through the project's agreement together with the traditional councils in the region came to justify the forced displacement of mainly migrants without compensation for their lost lands and livelihoods by referring to the power of the chiefs and their customary land. If the aim of the Scanfarm project was to generate a development opportunity, the company wouldn't take over these land areas for its own profit interests and also wouldn't leave mainly migrants without compensation for the lost land area, the loss of their livelihoods and in a food insecure position.

Against this background, none of the foreign companies have taken social responsibility for their land investments in the design of land agreements. Instead, it has promoted their investments as potential development opportunities and entered into agreements with traditional councils that want to reclaim land from migrant farmers, which benefits the companies' land interests, but leaves migrant farmers without land, loss of livelihoods, livelihood difficulties and in a food insecure position. This shows that not one of the three cases isn't in line with the second PRAI principle for a win-win outcome which is about not jeopardizing the local population's food security but instead strengthening it (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security). None of the projects thus fulfills the sixth PRAI principle, which deals with investments generating social benefits for the affected communities. Acheampong and Campion (2014, p. 4600) explain how the process of designing the project in Ashanti didn't include any discussions with local people from the eight villages that Scanfarm had signed agreements with. Hall et al. (2015, p. 60) write how the local people affected by the project in Volta feel that their interests and needs have been ignored. In the same way, Boamah (2013, p. 331) explains that the interests and the influence of the local population in the case of Brong Ahafo were ignored.

Thus, none of the projects fulfills the third PRAI principle, which is about the policy framework for the investment ensuring accountability. The projects also don't meet the fourth PRAI principle which deals with the drafting of agreements in consultation with the affected communities. Through the establishment of all three projects, people have lost their customary land areas, and since self-sufficiency mainly characterizes the villages in these regions, this means that people's livelihood opportunities disappear completely or, at best, are compensated with less productive land. This shows that the companies don't respect people's traditional land use and thus ignore the local population's equal opportunities for social and economic development. Through these projects, the power of external investors leaves people in vulnerable positions where measurement uncertainty is a significant problem. Thus, none of the projects are in line with the first PRAI principle for a win-win outcome, which is about investors respecting the existing use of land and natural resources (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security).

Since none of the three cases, based on the aspect of political implications, fulfills five of the PRAI principles, it indicates that the projects haven't resulted in a win-win result and are therefore not a development opportunity. But instead, the influence and power of the external investors has generated considerable negative social and economic consequences. This
instead indicates that the political implications of the projects should rather be regarded as Nkrumah's neo-colonial definition of political domination. Nkrumah explains that the political aspect of neo-colonialism is about foreign actors influencing African countries through political manipulation. Nkrumah states that one way political manipulation can take place is by giving external support and power to local actors that favor the interests and motives of external actors Nkrumah, 1965, p. XIV). As discussed above, the foreign companies in the cases of Brong Ahafo and Ashanti have given power to the local chiefs in the traditional councils who want to expel migrant farmers from customary land, which favors the interests of the companies. In the case of Volta, the company has entered into an agreement with the Ghanaian government which in 1970 forcibly occupied customary land to develop mechanized cotton cultivation (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 167). This means that The Prairie Volta maintain a political power system that oppresses the local population. Nkrumah also notes that political domination can take place through subtle forms by marginalizing the voices and influence of the local population in Africa (Nkrumah, 1965, p. XIV). This is in line with the development of the macro agreements in the cases that ignored and neglected the wishes, needs and interests of the local population. Hence In this sense from the perspective of political implications, all three cases are in line with Nkrumah's criteria of political dominance for neo-colonialism. All three cases are also in line with the neo-colonial criteria of unequal power balance. Nkrumah explains that African countries are destination countries for a historically rooted asymmetrical power balance and he believes that the world since colonialism has been characterized by a continued asymmetrical power balance between developed countries and developing countries. This unequal balance of power, he believes, is founded and maintained by global and political structures (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 31).

The cases of Ghana as a former colony and the Ghanaian government, through the historically developed asymmetric power structures against African countries, has fallen victim to this unequal power balance as Nkrumah explains is maintained by an economic and political world system that has been created by countries with a history of colonial dominance and developed countries from the global north that maintain and favor from this historically unequal world system. The foreign actors from the case studies are located in the countries, Norway, the United States, Canada, which all either have, as Nkrumah means, a history of colonial dominance or as a developed country in the Global North benefits from and maintains the asymmetric balance of power on which the world system is founded. Just as Nkrumah (1965, p. x) writes, countries that are targets of the historically rooted created unjust power balance don't necessarily have to be by a state which formerly ruled the state in question. Neither does it have to be a country that has a direct colonial history. In fact countries in the global north in more passive ways contributed to the development of today's unjust world system.

Nkrumah (1965, p. x) states that unfair power relations are constituted by developed countries that somehow try to take advantage of less developed countries without taking into account short-term and long-term effects in the host country. This characterizes all the cases of land grabbing all the companies without any sense of responsibility established themselves
without considering the short-term or long-term social and economic effects for the local population. Thus, in line with Nkrumah, all the foreign actors located in developed countries in the cases of Ghana have exercised neo-colonial power without accountability. For the local populations who fall victim to and suffer from this unequal power balance, it means exploitation without redress.

9.2.3 Cultural implications

Regarding the cultural implications, the results show that all three projects are in line with Nkruma's description of cultural imperialism. All projects are characterized by the erosion of traditional cultures through the introduction of Western values, norms and production methods that these foreign investors do at the expense of locals (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 246-247). This marginalizes the local techniques and production that were traditionally developed and replaced instead with crops that meet western needs. Thus, the projects endanger the survival of the local population of traditional crops. This shows how foreign actors benefit from the historically developed world system that has marginalized African cultures in this case Ghana, which has its basis in colonialism but also the structural adjustment program.

Furthermore the Prairie Volta Rice project came to replace commercialized production methods for rice cultivation, traditional farming methods but also the local customs in. Through the introduction of a western business idea and production method and to dominate land use and production, it can result in a shift towards a more western influenced culture (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 168). The same patterns can also be found in the kimminic project, where the introduction of technological methods and the commercialization of agriculture has led to the replacement of traditional knowledge and methods (Boamah & Overà, 2016, p. 113). Likewise with the scanfarm project where they occupied land and introduced mechanized farming methods, which also undermines traditional practice (Boamah, 2013, p. 328). This will eventually in the long term mean a loss of cultural identity. In all three cases, the foreign investors, without regard for the customary land tenure system, have driven people from land that has been inherited for generations, whose social identity is tied to it. Hence the ignorance that characterizes all three companies' land acquisition of customary land has meant a disruption of traditional tenure systems and displacement of communities. This shows that all projects don't contribute to a win-win outcome, the foreign investors ignore the consequences their actions have on the population, therefore the projects meet neither principle 1, 6 nor principle 5 according to PRAI, as the local population was displaced from their land and it generated no major social benefits as the investors didn't respect traditional practices (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security).

All three projects' occupation of land has resulted in a redistribution as well as a reduced access to customary land. The result shows that the customary land system which has its history in Ghanaian tradition has posed a problem for the local people's land security since the interests of foreign actors to acquire land. The historical traditional distribution of the system for customary land has therefore been gradually disrupted since the establishment of
foreign actors in the regions. In all three cases, the foreign actors have contributed to this successive change in the division of customary land. This has resulted in people groups that were previously able to live side by side and farm on their customary lands, but recently due to foreign land investments have now come into conflict with each other. Due to this confusion regarding land boundaries for customary land that foreign actors have created, it is possible to state that the problem of local chiefs claiming that migrants use their customary maker is a problem that has been created by foreign actors' non conscious acquisition of land. In the case in Ashanti the result shows that a similar outcome has occurred as the land that was occupied for the project was customary land. The establishment of Scanfarm has also resulted in conflicts that change the traditional dynamics between inhabitants and their cultures.

Just as in the case in Brong-Ahafo due to the customary land tenure system in Ashanti the social identity is crucial for the access to customary land. In Ashanti the Fulani people in the region are considered as non-indigenous population as they lack the social legitimacy that accrues to settler farmers (Bukari & Kuusaana, 2018, p. 755). Thus, the conflict in Ashanti between farmers and the Fulani herdsmen has meant that Scanfarm's ruthless establishments have reinforced this inequality in land access and ownership between different social groups. In Volta the result shows a similar outcome as in the other two regions. The establishment of Prairie Volta has changed the dynamic between traditional groups that have lost their access to their customary land. Also in this case, as in Brong-Ahafo, the redistribution of land due to Prairie Volta's establishment has resulted in different ethnic groups that previously lived side by side starting to compete with each other for land (Fritz et al. 2014, p. 168). This shows that in all cases the companies without responsibility to create a pre-understanding of the cultural and traditional dynamics between people have generated and aggravated conflicts between people.

Furthermore regarding the cultural aspect the PRAI principles emphasize the importance that foreign actors should maximize short-term and long-term development opportunities in order for land investments to be considered a win-win deal. A win-win outcome must, among other things, fulfill the sixth principle, which is that investments must generate broad social benefits for the surrounding communities. In light of the social conflicts discussed above, none of the projects meet the sixth principle. In the case of Ashanti, Acheampong, and Campion (2014, p. 4602) report that the loss of customary land has resulted in an increased cultivation intensity in turn shortens the fallow period which normally allows the soil to recover. This is environmentally sustainable in the long. term as the soils will be depleted. Thus, the case of Ashanti also isn't in line with the seventh PRAI principle, which is about investments having to be environmentally sustainable (The World Bank, 2014, Land and Food Security).
10. Concluding discussion

The aim of this study was to analyze to what extent foreign land investments in Ghana can be explained through a neo-colonial lens and to what extent it can be explained as a development opportunity in the cases of land grabbing in Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta. By categorizing the result and the discussion based on the neo-colonial theory by Nkrumah in the aspects of the economic, political, cultural and power relations the result and discussion evidently show that all the cases are in line with the neo-colonial theory by Nkrumah. Hence, the cases of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta do all confirm the neo-colonial definitions of political domination, economic exploitation, cultural imperialism and an unjust power balance between the external actors and local population.

Regarding the aspect of economic implications all the cases show that although job opportunities were created they weren't created for all affected in the local population, as well as that the jobs weren't long-term but only temporary. The affected populations by the projects lost their customary lands, which implies a loss of livelihoods. Hence the economic implications of the projects should be explained as economic exploitation. Regarding the aspect or cultural implications all the cases show that the establishment of the projects in the short term has resulted in a disruption of the traditional customary land tenure system, loss of traditional agricultural methods, displacement of communities and conflict between ethnic and social groups. A continuation of such a development would, in the long term, generate a loss of cultural identity. Hence the cultural implications should be explained as cultural imperialism. Regarding the aspect of political power, all the cases show that the establishment of the projects is characterized by a top-down perspective where the interests and needs of the local population were ignored. In all cases, the foreign actors had a major negative impact on the customary land tenure system, through their power they left people vulnerable without compensation. Hence, all the cases are characterized by the companies' marginalization of local interests. Therefore the implications of political power should be explained as political domination. Accordingly the findings confirm neo-colonial theory on all of the aspects.

The results from the case studies show similar findings in relation to previous research. Regarding land grabbing as a development opportunity Robertson and Pistrup-Andersson (2010) in the section of previous research argues that developing countries need between 84 and 209 billion dollars annually in agricultural investment to be able to meet global food needs by 2050. All cases showed a potential opportunity for increased agricultural income for the production of biofuels in Brong-Ahafo, Maize production in Ashanti and rice production in Volta. Which all contribute to meeting the needs in the agricultural sector as well as increasing productivity in agricultural areas. Hence, all of the projects' infusion of technology and capital could be perceived as being in line with the estimates made by FAO.

Regarding the creation of job opportunities as well as economic growth in transnational investment. Alhassan et al. (2018) and Robertson and Pistrup-Andersen in previous research claimed that foreign investment in land acquisition in the agricultural sector contributes to
development and economic growth, this by creating employment opportunities and increasing productivity and should be seen as a development opportunity. In relation to this previous research in the case of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta through the investments it was introduced advanced farming techniques to increase productivity and efficiency. In all the regions this has had an impact on the local population who before had relied on small-scale farming and through the projects got new job opportunities for monthly income. Hence this is consistent with Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen's (2010) reasoning that foreign investment increases employment by introducing mechanized production methods. However as the result evidently shows these job opportunities were not available for all the affected in the affected local communities in the cases, as the migrant farmers through their identity got excluded from these opportunities. All of the three cases could possibly constitute a development opportunity for the local population. An example from previous research that Robertson and Pinstrup-Andersen (2010, p. 278) write about illustrates how foreign land investments can be a development opportunity and at the same time promote the local culture. Through so-called contract farming, where an exchange between buyers and local farmers takes place, it generates an opportunity to produce crops for an agricultural company, without being displaced from their traditional land areas, and the buyer and local farmers agree on a price. That in turn would generate a reduced loss of local agricultural knowledge as the farmers and at the same time a possibility to in combination use advanced agricultural techniques as well as infrastructure are passed on from commercial investors. However as result shows that wasn’t the outcome in any of the cases.

The findings from the projects are consistent with previous research regarding land grabbing as neocolonialism and add to the existing knowledge base in the field. Yang and He (2021) emphasized that these land purchases are characterized by a disregard of local people's traditional land as well as usage rights and this goes in line with the projects. In addition, there is the top-down dynamic mentioned by Yang and He where these foreign investments, despite knowing what the extensive projects can bring to the local people, choose not to consider it because it is beyond their interest in pure profit, which can be clearly linked to the Kimmnic project which promised a lot and gave a lot of hope where they also offered loans but after they realized that they lost on the project and paid out higher wages than what they made profit on, the project was canceled leaving many in very difficult situations more vulnerable and dependent on the project. The results show that the project shows a lack of respect for the local population's land rights and land use patterns. The foreign investors' actions and limitations of the local population's means of livelihood and economic dependence on the project are consistent with the to-down dynamic discussed above.

Regarding the aspect of political power in relation to previous research Ndi and Batterbury (2017, p. 34), believe that a top down approach characterizes the methods of land grabbing. According to Ndi and Batterbury (2017, p. 34) in the previous research the top down approach is an approach characterized by an asymmetrical power relationship between foreign actors and the local population. As previous research points out, this asymmetric power relationship is due to the fact that the process of the execution of land contracts and how its methods are carried out neglects the influence and needs of the local population. This
implies that the needs, interests and power of the local populations aren’t taken into account in these land deals. This previous research claims that foreign actors are aware of the comprehensive impacts for the local communities but choose not to consider them as they are beyond the interest of pure profit of the investors. Yang and He (2021, p. 8) who also ingests the position by arguing for how land grabbing is characterized by a top down perspective by claiming how investors undermine the power of the local population and their interests. This previous research claims that foreign actors are aware of the comprehensive impacts for the local communities but choose not to consider them as they are beyond the interest of pure profit of the investors Just as previous research argues that the top-down perspective results in a win-lose result where foreign actors through its power become winners and the local population is the result for all cases in accordance with this previous research. In all cases, the political influence and power of foreign actors have overlooked the interests of the local population.

The unequal balance of power which Nakrumah believes is founded and maintained by political and global structures can be linked to Manzo and Padfield (2017, p. 518) in previous research. They claim that the neoliberal structural adjustment program aimed to make it easier for foreign actors to invest in land that was considered "unused" by the local population. This program is explained in previous research that it generated a so-called "fractional sovereignty" where African countries, in this case Ghana, became victims of a neo-colonial tutelary government controlled by external actors from the global north. The results from the case studies show that there is a clear asymmetric relationship where foreign actors exploit the unequal power balance to prioritize their own interests at the expense of the local population.

Furthermore, just as in the cases of Ghana, this has meant that despite the fact that African governments today have sovereign ownership of the country's land areas, foreign actors from the global north have returned with the aim of using land that was previously controlled by colonial powers. This can be linked to previous research where Alhassan et al (2018, p. 12) claims that the concentration of land grabbing on the African continent should be explained as a reflection of colonial patterns of large scale land acquisition. This is because powers from Europe and the United States, as the main actors with a colonial history, take advantage of their colonial connections to African countries that were formerly colonies.

Pinstup-Andersen and Robertson (2010, p. 272) writes in previous research that violence will break out in the future between populations in host countries that are suffering from the negative effects of land grabbing, such as food security, disenfranchisement, lost livelihoods and exploitation of their natural resources and traditional customs. This is in line with the result that shows that in the case of Brong-Ahafo the local population successively have lost the perception of the extent of customary land that is claimed by traditional owners as a result of foreign actors’ land acquisition. Just as Pinstup-Andersen and Robertson (2010, p. 272) write, this has resulted in friction between different ethnic groups in Brong-Ahafo that have started to engage agriculture activity on land that different groups claim to be their customary land.
Moreover, Robertson and Pimstrup-Andersen (2010, p. 272) write that land grabbing could be a development opportunity for the host nation if the government of the host country establishes enforceable an investment policy and tax policy. In line with this, through the project it could be interpreted that the Ghanaian state got an opportunity to implement positive changes through their influence in the project. However, due to the fact that all projects had legal support for their foreign investments, which prioritized and facilitated their land expansion, it demonstrates the problem of the Ghanaian legal frameworks allowing foreign actors to occupy land without sufficient regard and policies for the well-being and rights of the affected communities. Hence, it would be interesting in future research to investigate potential contradictions and loopholes within the Ghanaian constitution of 1992 regarding customary land and land ownership. Future research can contribute to addressing these problems by mapping the exact legal provisions that create ambiguities and conflicts for the traditional landowners and loopholes for the investors.

Finally, thus none of the cases fulfills any of the PRAI-principles that are fundamental for a win-win outcome. Accordingly, none of the cases can be classified as a development opportunity. The PRAI-principles is a decisive measure for land grabbing to generate the possibility of development, which isn't fulfilled in either of the cases. This has resulted in an unbalanced power structure, where the investors have the privilege of making their own decisions and imposing responsibility for their actions on local actors, such as the chiefs. The job opportunities offered can be interpreted as a way for the investors to ease their mind, by marketing the project as a development opportunity based on a goodwill approach. However they hide the long-term effects of land grabbing and the loss of livelihood for the local population. In conclusion, it can be concluded that all three cases chose to ignore the negative consequences their actions created for profit, which clearly marks that this is the reproduction of colonial structures. Consequently the projects in the regions of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and Volta are all false promises.


