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Land and land grabbing: the case study of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda

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**Land and Land Grabbing:
The Case Study of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda**

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the dynamic of North-South relations and food politics in relation to the trend of “land-grabbing” by foreign investors in sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis focuses on the conceptual and discursive “ecology” surrounding food and land security in the post-colonial, globalized world. The image of post-colonial Africa has been made to show a continent plagued with turmoil, yet filled with expanses of underutilized land that are ripe for cultivation. I argue that land lease relationships between governments of less developed countries and organizations, companies or agencies from more developed countries affect peasants and local communities more than- or more accurately, in different ways than- these investor agencies present. There are unjust consequences and cultural, societal, and spatial effects that result from land deals that are beyond the scope of investor agencies’ understanding and knowledge gained from area studies. I will use my case study of the Kaweri Coffee Plantation land lease in Uganda to explore the nature of these relationships and their effects. I am able to look into the reactions of displaced peasants and their acts of resistance toward the Ugandan government and the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe’s Kaweri Plantation upon being evicted from the land they had lived on. Land lease arrangements such as the one I examine impact local populations through geographies of land reform and development.

Throughout this paper, I aim to answer questions such as: How do widely accepted ideas about food security and underused land reserves in Africa promote land leasing by foreign investors in sub-Saharan Africa? How have food politics and land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa reshaped geographies and imposed displacement on local populations? How do these local populations react or resist? After researching these questions, I have found that the convoluted nature of land deals between governments and foreign investors often leave a lot of questions and the process of large-scale land leasing often does not address the role of local citizens within the land transaction.

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ABBREVIATIONS

FIAN	Food First Information and Action Network
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NCP	Germany's National Contact Point
NFC	New Forests Company
NKG	Neumann Kaffee Gruppe
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
UIA	Ugandan Investment Agency
ULA	Ugandan Land Alliance
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

This thesis is an investigation of the role of land in less developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In these countries, arable land has become a very important resource that is made available to outside economic actors, public and private, from more economically developed regions for use according to their own interests. Local governments have facilitated land deals with foreign entities in the so-called “neo-scramble for Africa,” sometimes referred to as “land-grabs,” sometimes as “large-scale foreign land investment.” I focus here on a land deal between the Ugandan government and a German coffee company called the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG) as my main case study. The NKG has entered a long-term lease agreement with the Ugandan government in order to develop a coffee plantation, and the local population of peasants in the Mubende district of Uganda has been directly affected by this property transaction.

My study considers events occurring from the start of the land lease contract in 2000 through June 2014. Through this case study, I am investigating the relationship between governments of less developed countries and the foreign investors who take part in land trading which often affect and displace poor landowners and squatters. In my case study, I will look further into the reactions of these displaced peasants and their acts of resistance toward the government and the NKG due to being evicted from the land they lived on. My broader thesis questions are: how do land lease relationships between governments of less developed countries and corporate or governmental

entities from more developed countries affect peasants and local communities of the less developed countries, and what are the [latter's](#) active responses to these relations? Those questions can be specified in relation to my case study to ask: how does the land lease between the Ugandan government and the German Coffee Company, the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, affect local peasants who have been forcefully evicted from the land they lived on in order for NKG to construct a coffee plantation? How have local people reacted, and in what ways have they resisted?

Two important concepts in my work are that of a “peasant” population or social class segment and “land grabbing.” I will use the term peasant to describe people living in rural or semi-rural areas who are farmers, small plot owners, rural salary workers, sharecroppers, or squatters. “Land-grab,” “land deal,” “land investment,” “new green revolution,” “new colonialism,” and “neo-scramble for Africa” are phrases used to describe the process of transferring land rights from a government to a foreign entity in Africa.¹ The listed terms do not mean exactly the same thing, but all refer to the same trend involving foreign investors buying or leasing large amounts of land from African governments.

Groups on both sides of “land grabbing” adopt or create rhetoric that will advance their agendas. These various terms can be strategically used to instantly render a positive or negative association with land investments in Africa. I will be using the terms “land grab” and “land deals” to signify the transfer of land rights (leased or purchased) from one government to a foreign entity such as another government or a private

¹Lorenzo Cotula, *The Great African Land Grab?: Agricultural Investment and the Global Food System*, (New York, New York: Zed books Ltd, 2013), 12-13.

company. When speaking specifically of the Ugandan/NKG case, I will use the term land-lease because this transaction was implemented as a 99-year lease of land, whereas not all land deals are conducted through leases. I will also use the term land grab, or land grabbing to describe the general action of a government entering into a long-term land lease with a foreign business or other entity. To me, land grabbing does specifically indicate the relationship of a *foreign* investor in a large scale land lease.

Today's land lust is nothing new. For example, in the past there was land acquisition through colonization or Western companies' appropriation of farmland in South and Central America to set up fruit plantations. What makes today's land grabbing different, besides the terms used to describe it and a broader shift in discourse (from the colonial to the neoliberal), is that it is occurring on a much larger scale, more impersonally and with more active participation of local governments.²

In my thesis and through my case study, I hope to show the impacts that these land acquisitions have on local populations. Although some local people see benefits from the land deals, land grabs throughout Africa and South America often displace peasants and other members of disadvantaged lower classes. The specific land deal with NKG in Uganda resulted in the eviction of roughly 2,000 peasants from the land that they were living on. Between August 17 and 21, 2001, the Ugandan military stormed villages and brutally evicted 400 families who were living in the area of land that the Ugandan government leased to NKG.³ The residents were brutally evicted and

²Michael Kugelman and Sarah L. Levenstein, *The Global Farms Race: Land Grabs, Agricultural Investment, and the Scramble for Food Security*, (Island Press, 2012), Format of e-book.

³ Complaint against Neumann Kaffee Gruppe under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2000)-. Submitted on 15.6.2009 by FIAN-Doser.

their houses were demolished. To date, only about 2% of those evicted have been compensated. Recently, certain groups of scholars or activists, such as FIAN International (Food First Information and Action Network), have shed light on the controversies created by these large scale land grabs in Africa by Western powers and China for their own agricultural or natural resource needs.

My analysis is informed by Rob Nixon's concept of an "environmentalism of the poor," developed in his book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. His approach derives from close studies of resistance actions by local peasants such as those who were displaced due to the land deal between the Ugandan government and the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe. Foreign investment leading to peasant displacement or disadvantage can be seen in many other examples throughout history and in recent land grabbing ventures. Nixon's thinking about environmentalism of the poor can be applied to these types of cases of displaced peasants trying to gain back their livelihoods.

To understand the relationship between governments of less developed African countries and foreign investors and how this affects poor farmers and peasants, we must first understand the position of sub-Saharan Africa in our global community and how food security concerns and land security concerns affect this position. The question of the role of Africa's land within discussions of food and land security is now a global one.⁴ Through centuries of colonialism, capitalism, globalization, and the creation of new discourses by those who hold power and create knowledge, land has become a

⁴ James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 25-28.

commodity to be bought and sold. It is also a source of security for nation-states who need land to produce crops or gather natural resources. Policy and state relations have overshadowed the personal relationship to land by small farmers or peasants. This is what leads to the possibility for large amounts of peasants to be displaced through land acquisitions by foreign investors from the government. Whether owing to a perceived lack of food and land security, or simply the desire to turn a profit on an international investment opportunity, economic powers in more developed countries are often more than willing to enter into land deals with governments without knowing the full extent of what will happen to those who were living on the leased land. Likewise, governments of less developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa see entering into a land deal as a positive opportunity economically and often do not seem to worry about the fate of those who were farming or living on the land in question. This leaves room for a lot of displacement of local populations who do not feel properly compensated.

Following this introduction, the first chapter of my thesis will consist of a literature review and methodology. My literature review will include sources that discuss the role of food and land security in land grabbing, theories on peasant resistance, descriptive overviews of land acquisitions by foreign entities in Africa, and theoretical works on the relation land brings about between Africa and more developed countries. My methodology is essentially a small-n extended case study of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe's land acquisition gambit in Uganda. Following Claire Jean Kim's approach I examine the case through the different "optics" of land policy, legal rights discourse and peasant resistance. Although I am researching a land deal with a coffee plantation, I will

not be focusing on the politics surrounding coffee production itself. In my research, I am more interested in the treatment and role of land through acquisitions and displacements and what lessons about a changing regime of land politics may be gleaned from my case study. My second chapter presents the specific situation in Uganda and the nature of this land deal.

The third chapter explores theories of land, peasant relations and land, landlessness, and the meaning of land grabbing in Africa. My goal is to paint a picture of land grabbing in Africa in light of the NKG-Uganda case. I want to address why and how the continent of Africa is being portrayed as land that is ideal for leasing to more developed countries. I also want to speak to theories about why these land leasers have the relationships they do with governments that they lease from. My fourth and final chapter will focus more on peasant resistance and environmentalism of the poor. I examine the local resistance efforts in Uganda, non-profit organizational assistance, and the workings of a lawsuit filed against the Ugandan government and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe. Through this chapter I will explore the ways local populations are affected by land deals between governments and foreign entities and the problems that peasants face in their resistance struggles. I will end my project with a brief conclusion and summary of my findings.

In sum, my goal is to introduce the case study of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda, investigate the position of sub-Saharan African countries in relation to land security generally, study land grabbing and the nature of foreign investment in Africa, understand how land deals with foreign investors affect local population of small farmers

and peasants and observe the actions the latter groups take to offset displacement or disadvantage.

Chapter 1

Literature Review and Methodology

In order to conduct this study, it is important for me take into consideration the conversations already taking place in the subject area of international land exchange between governments and businesses. I will be reviewing scholarly sources drawing from three main categories of analysis: 1) land-alienation and land development, 2) land in Africa and post-colonial large-scale land grabbing there, and 3) peasants' involvement in and reaction to imposed geographical changes. The overall goal of this literature review is to give a synopsis of scholarship that explores the political and historical discourse surrounding 'land in Africa' and *why* this discourse fosters a global environment for land grabbing by foreign investors to take place in sub-Saharan Africa. Further, these scholarly pieces explore how these same discourses play a role in *how* African Land grabbing is portrayed and how people react to land grabbing. Each of these three categories is an integral part of this discourse. This chapter is an outline of the literatures that have shaped the scholarship around these three subjects as well as an outline of the scholars who influenced my way of thinking while studying land grabbing and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe case in Uganda. I explore these areas of literature based on the key questions that led me to this subject matter.

What are the prevailing Conversations about Land Grabbing Today?

Central to my project is understanding terms such as “land-grab,” “land deal,” “land investment,” “new green revolution,” “new colonialism,” and “neo-scramble for Africa,” all of which are used to describe current land transactions in Africa, sometimes interchangeably. Mainly, the terms refer to current [globalized schemes that](#) transfer land rights from governments (national “ownership”) to a foreign entity, especially [as this occurs](#) in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵ In his work, *The Great African Land Grab?: Agricultural Investment and the Global Food System*, Lorenzo Cotula tackles the meaning of these terms and their place in scholarly literature and in the global culture today. He explains that these terms do not mean exactly the same thing, but all refer to the same trend of foreign investors buying or leasing up large-scale amounts of land from African governments.

Groups on both sides of the issue of land grabbing adopt rhetoric to advance their own agendas. The terms are deployed in political contexts but often have not been the subject of scholarly elaboration. These various terms can be strategically used to instantly render a positive or negative association with land investments in Africa. I will be using the terms “land grab” and “land deals” to signify the transfer of land rights (which could be leased or bought) from [the local or national](#) government to a foreign entity such as another government or a private company.

While today’s land lust is nothing new, the concept discourse of security that is part of the driving force behind land grabbing is malleable, and because of this, there

⁵ Cotula, Lorenzo (2013), p. 5-7

are different facets that surround land grabbing today. Authors Michael Kugelman, and Sarah L. Levenstein also discuss these concepts and terms in *The Global Farms Race: Land Grabs, Agricultural Investment, and the Scramble for Food Security*. I believe that the historical example of land acquisition through colonization or Western companies appropriating farmland in South and Central America to set up fruit plantations show the type of land acquisition going on in sub-Saharan Africa in regards to the outcome for small farmers and landowners living in the area where the land deal is taking place. What makes today's land grabbing different is that [it](#) is occurring on a much larger scale and it is occurring more impersonally and more with the aid of local governments.⁶

To understand the relationship between governments of less developed African countries and foreign investors and how this affects small farmers and peasants, we must first understand the position of sub-Saharan Africa in our global community and how food security concerns and land security concerns affect this position. The question of the role of Africa's land within discussions of food and land security is now a global one.⁷ Through centuries of colonialism, capitalism, globalization, and the creation of new discourses by those who hold power and create knowledge, land has become a commodity to be bought and sold. It is also a source of security for nation-states who need land to produce crops or gather natural resources. Policy and state relations have overshadowed the personal relationship to land by small farmers or peasants. This is what leads to the possibility for large amounts of peasants to be displaced through land acquisitions by foreign investors from the government. Whether owing to a perceived

⁶ Kugelman, Michael and Levenstein, Sarah L. (2012), kindle edition

⁷ James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 25-28.

lack of food and land security, or simply the desire to turn a profit on an international investment opportunity, economic powers in more developed countries are often more than willing to enter into land deals with governments without knowing the full extent of what will happen to those who were living on the leased land. Likewise, governments of less developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa see entering into a land deal as a positive opportunity economically and often do not seem to worry about the fate of those who were farming or living on the land in question. This leaves room for a lot of displacement of local populations who do not feel properly compensated.

Rural property institutions in sub-Saharan Africa can likely be created and manipulated by the state and that they are authority based instead of market based. In my case study, it seems that property institutions are mainly disorganized, and slowed down by multiple land tenure systems occurring simultaneously. Catherine Boone investigates property institutions in rural Africa in her text *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*. These institutions also have political effects seen in land-related conflict, racial or ethnic conflict, and in local resource struggles.⁸ I think this theory of structural manipulation based on the state's needs brings to light a new facet in my thesis case. While Boone's work does not directly address lasting colonial impacts on African land politics, it is nevertheless a study set in the post-colonial setting. Instead of analyzing situations in terms of post-colonialism, Boone's focus is on current rural Africa, which is relevant for my study of rural Uganda and the current flaws in political institutions that deals with land rights.

⁸ Boone, Catherine (2014), p. 309

How has the historical Process of Colonialism, Capitalism, and Neo-liberal Globalism shaped the value of land, especially in Africa, and even more especially in Uganda?

Now to focus on the North-South relation and post-colonial discourse that particularly allows for sub-Saharan Africa to be prone to land grabbing by foreign investors. The North-South relation has already been put into place and is constantly being reinforced in popular culture and politics. But how do these historical presentations of and relations with Africa by the western world place African countries in this position for foreign investors to buy or lease large amounts of land from their governments?

The discursive nature of North-South relations is clearly laid out by Roxanne Lynn Doty, and I use her concept heavily in my study. Doty wrote in her book *Imperial Encounter*, published in 1996, that since the Cold War, much of the North-South relations has focused on international aspects of problems that arise from terrorism, the drug trade, nuclear proliferation in the South, the movement of immigrants or refugees from South to North, and lastly concerns with the spread of AIDS.⁹ Issues such as these are central to the North-South relations dynamic and have been pivotal in crafting the meaning of North-South relations.¹⁰ This means that identities are embedded in what has become the very character of North-South relations. Doty argues that even though North-South relations have focused on these specific topics listed above, the

⁹ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

¹⁰ Doty

North-South relation is about a great deal more than these issues.¹¹ North-South relations have been a process of construction and reconstruction of identities. Representation of the South by the North has played a large part in this process. I will discuss Doty and these theories in relation to my case study in a later chapter.

Human security can be studied in many areas of international relations. Paul D. Williams, a scholar of Africa's International Relations, suggests that there are different constructions of Africa and these relate to security. Different images are created that portray Africa as "a scar on the world conscience," as a continent of terrorists, as a continent of threats and problems, and as a space of abundant natural resources. These various portrayals serve distinct purposes to specific audiences. The Westerners with power of knowledge possess the ability to create the way people see audiences in order to promote their own agendas. Understanding security and Africa means that one must understand the political practices and outcomes that go along in the name of security. Security itself has an objective meaning, but is often understood to be related to matters of survival. Williams notes that security and survival do not mean the same thing, but that security has come to mean 'survival-plus' with connotations of freedom and justice.¹²

The relationship between companies and local populations is set within the wider trend of power relations, which are often unfavorable for local interests. The prominent 'idle land' concept surrounding the land that had been previously occupied by local

¹¹ Doty

¹² Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *International Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

farmers and peasants lead to the leasing of that land to a willing company.¹³ A government looking to profit from leasing land and a company believing this to be an opportunity to create a profit which bringing some infrastructure and jobs to the community lead to the undermining of the rights of the local population in the Mubende region.

How are peasants formed as subjects and how does thing inform their ability to act politically?

Lastly, key to my study is literature relating to peasants reactions to negative outcomes from land grabbing, specifically being displaced from their land. In some literary works, groups of people who lack the ability to improve their political, social, or personal lives due to economic reasons are referred to as “the poor” or “peasants.” A definition of “peasant” that speaks this thesis came from the anthropologist Eric Wolf. He states that the aim of a peasant is substantiate, and this person is “rendered relatively immobility prior liens and expectations.”¹⁴ This explains the uniqueness that I see in many of the case studies about people who are displaced by land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa and why I refer to these groups as peasants.

Because these groups of displaced individuals, or peasants, have a shared history of colonialism in their communities, their subjectness is formed through this lens. Mahmood Mamdani’s theory on citizenship and subjecthood offers a look into the colonial legacy in Africa and the obstacles it presents to identity formation and democratization. In relation to my project, Mamdani’s work offers insight into post-

¹³ Cotula, 121.

¹⁴ Wolf, Eric R. *Peasant Wars of the 20th Century*. University of Oklahoma Press Norman, 1999.

colonial status of citizenship in Africa. In his study of Uganda, he points to tensions between rural populations and cities, and how the government is able to use this to its advantage. The government can use this tactic to fragment resistance efforts and avoid dealing with political actions by rural communities in a meaningful way. It can be applied to the reasoning behind why so many peasants can easily be displaced due to their position as subjects of post-colonial governance, which Mandani calls *decentralized despotism* in the case of Uganda. Mamdani's theories shed light on how the current era of land policy and displacement have come about in the post-colonial Africa.¹⁵

My analysis is also informed by Rob Nixon's concept of an "environmentalism of the poor," developed in his book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. His approach derives from close studies of resistance actions by local peasants such as those who were displaced due to the land deal between the Ugandan government and the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe. Foreign investment leading to peasant displacement or disadvantage can be seen in many other examples throughout history and in recent land grabbing ventures. Nixon's thinking about environmentalism of the poor can be applied to these types of cases of displaced peasants trying to gain back their livelihoods.

According to Nixon, environmentalism of the poor is the specific action that peasants, or those without much traction in social and political circumstances, are forced to take in order to maintain their environment, land, etc. The slow violence Nixon

¹⁵ Mamdani, Mahmood, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

talks about is the act of slowly but steadily moving policy and actions of governments, agencies, and other power holders that negatively affects the poor within a community. For example- allowing and fostering land grabbing that results in displacement of a community. I believe that this text is an appropriate source for my paper because I want to look at my research question through the lens of environmentalism of the poor and actions taken by displaced peasants. This theory can be used in my thesis to examine the actions being taken by displaced peasants in Uganda due to the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe coffee plantations. This source inspires a broader scope for my research project, suggesting the lens of landscape construction through which to assess displacement and resistance among the peasant populations. Nixon's work emphasizes environmental concerns beyond land ownership. His book speaks to the importance of environmental politics as western imperialism and global powers transform geography to fulfill their own needs. He uses geography as temporal and spatial boundary framework to examine environmental violence against the poor that is experienced in place and over time.

It has proven difficult for those who are displaced from their land in Africa, and Uganda, to get land rights back or to receive what they believe to be adequate reparations. One reason for this is that women are most likely to carry the brunt of land loss, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute. The IFPRI states that the cost of rebuilding livelihoods as a result of these displacements cause is to be difficult to navigate the time and energy to act politically. The lopsided displacement of women in the process of these African Land Grabs also can cause a greater divide in

equality between genders as a result.¹⁶ Displaced individuals who lack social or economic capital find it difficult to successfully take political action in order to retain their land through traditional streams of action.

A final reason that peasants who are evicted from their farmland find it hard to act politically and regain their livelihoods is due to food insecurity. They have been evicted from the land where they provided for themselves and their family, the land that was home to them. Once evicted, these people often face food insecurity. As shown in many circumstances in many countries, it is not easy to productively react to acts being committed against them without strength from food¹⁷.

All of these ideas are present in informing this thesis. Many of these ideas will be explored and applied further over the next chapters.

Methodology

My methodology for this thesis consists mainly of 1) theoretical, [conceptual and historical](#) research [around](#) land policy, land rights, and peasant resistance due to loss of land and 2) research regarding [the relationship between](#) Uganda and the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, including [as evidenced in](#) the lawsuit brought against the company. My aim in this thesis is to explore this case study and the concepts behind land grabbing in Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹⁶ Future Agricultures. "Policy Brief 041" *www.future-agricultures.org*. (June 2011).

¹⁷ Nixon

Chapter 2

The Case Study: The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda

In 2000, a German coffee company called the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG) entered into a 99-year land lease agreement with the Ugandan government to use land in the Mubende region for a coffee plantation, which is now called the Kaweri Coffee Plantation. This lease deal has had a variety of effects on the local population who formerly lived where the plantation is now located. Further, it has affected the local geography surrounding the area of the Kaweri coffee plantation.¹⁸ I investigate the specificities of this land deal in the context of land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa. I explore what the contract between the government and the NKG means for the local population who lived on or near the leased land. Many people feel that they were unjustly evicted from their land with no compensation because of this land deal and report that they did not receive compensation from the NKG or the Ugandan government. On the other hand, some individuals who live near the coffee plantation, but were not evicted from their land feel that they benefit from improved infrastructure. This chapter [probes](#) the complexity of the land deal between the NKG and Ugandan government and its outcomes on local geography, food, and people in the Mubende region of Uganda. I will also [reference theories](#) of land grabbing in Africa and concerns over food and land security, but [will](#) delve [more](#) deeply into these topics in Chapter 3.

¹⁸ Albert Makochekanwa, "Foreign Land Acquisitions in Africa: An Analysis of the Impacts of Individual Land Deals on Local Communities" (*World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty*, 2012), 23-26.

Land in Uganda

The Land Act of Uganda 1998 recognizes four types of land tenure. [The recognized](#) systems are: customary, freehold, mailo, and leasehold.¹⁹ Within these tenure systems, two are important to this case study. The first is customary tenure. This is the most common system used in Uganda and accounts for 70% to 80% of the land in Uganda. This tenure system is problematic because there is generally no record keeping over ownership of land, and this can make it difficult to resolve conflicts over land.

The leasehold tenure system is the second relevant system to this case study. Within this system, the owner of a plot of land, usually the Ugandan government, grants a tenant exclusive use of this plot of land for a specific period of time, usually 5, 45, or 99 years. These leases can generally be costly and difficult to obtain, but once they are made, the tenant pays annual rent and uses the land under specified conditions.²⁰

In order to facilitate investment and economic growth, the Ugandan government established the investment code act of 1991, which allows local and foreign companies to lease public lands more easily.²¹ The Ugandan Investment Authority (UIA) is a semi-autonomous state-agency that oversees and promotes investment projects.²² The UIA's website features three types of forms that potential investors and land leasers can fill out.

¹⁹ Makochekanwa, 23.

²⁰ Makochekanwa, 23.

²¹ Peter Veit, "Land For Private Investors and Economic Development: Uganda" (Focus on Land in Africa Brief, 2010). <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/countries/brief-land-for-private-investors-and-economic-development/> (Accessed June 1, 2015).

²² Veit, <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/countries/brief-land-for-private-investors-and-economic-development/>



Figure 1: From the Homepage of the UIA Website

The UIA's Website has easily accessible On-Line Forms for Prospective Investors²³

In Uganda, the process of the government acquiring land for investors is not very clear. Many Ugandans have argued that many aspects of land acquisitions should be transparent to the public.²⁴ Within the last 15 years, the Ugandan government has used land in gazette-protected areas for investment purposes. Degazettement refers to the loss of natural reserves and especially forest reserves. For example, certain land areas have been degazetted for palm oil plantations or sugarcane production.²⁵

In a 2013 publication, the Republic of Uganda's Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development discusses the Uganda National Land Policy. The basis for the national land policy is this set of ideals:

Land is the most basic resource in terms of the space it provides, the environmental resources it contains and supports, and the capital it represents and generates. It is a commercial asset that can be used and traded. It is a critical factor of production and an essential part of the national patrimony. It is a key factor in shaping individual and collective identity through its history, the cultural expressions and idioms with which it is associated. It also influences spirituality and aesthetic values of all human societies. Land is perhaps, the most essential pillar of human existence and

²³ UIA: Ugandan Investment Agency Website, <http://www.ugandainvest.go.ug> (Accessed June 24, 2015).

²⁴ Veit, <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/countries/brief-land-for-private-investors-and-economic-development/>

²⁵ Veit, <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/countries/brief-land-for-private-investors-and-economic-development/>

national development and is usually a political issue with potential to be volatile. In this regard, its control, management and use, continues to be a critical factor in Uganda.

This statement is a high standard for the Ministry to hold Uganda's Land Policy practices to. The document recognizes this and discusses reasons such as historical background and the colonial legacy why the Ugandan government has stumbled in land management and land rights practices.²⁶

This document states that the legacy of colonialism left a newly introduced system of individualized land ownership, whereas previously land was held communally. However, in other areas of the country that were less influenced by colonization, the traditional practice of communal land tenure continued. Having both systems in practice left for cumbersome social, economic, and political circumstances resulting from these inconsistent land tenures.²⁷

In this piece, Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development admits that Land disputes and conflict have become a huge part of what Uganda's contemporary reputation. The Land Amendment Act of 2010 aimed to criminalize the act of evicting tenants, however not much has come from this. Not only may is the Ugandan Government actively aiming to attract investors to generate economic growth, but on top of that the land administration is undersourced and still tends to keep records manually. This means that delivery of land services can be slow moving, it may be difficult for

²⁶ Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, "The uganda National Land Policy: 2013." The Republic of Uganda. February 2013, 1.

²⁷ Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, 4.

tenants to prove land tenure, and conflicts over land can take a very long time to resolve.²⁸

In Uganda, nearly 80% of the population's economic activity takes place in agriculture and land. However, the government still aims to enter into land deals to create more economic growth, promote improved infrastructure, and hopefully bring jobs into rural communities. However, there is a lack of clarity in how to do this without displacing farmers and peasants without compensation. The Ugandan government has been aiming to reform property laws since the 1970s. Amendments have been made to the Land of Act of 1998 in 2001, 2004, and 2010.²⁹ This trend shows that at least certain people within the Ugandan government are aware of the negative consequences of land deals in Uganda and are trying to rectify the situation. However, the ideal land policy that works for small farmers and local population, the government, and land investments is not in place yet.

As colonial rule formed in sub-Saharan Africa, indirect rule was what took hold in Uganda. This type of rule created a dependant, but autonomous system of rule. As long as the customer rule of the colony of Uganda kept its books balanced, England would remain highly decentralized. This meant that the population was accountable to its superiors, but the government was not as accountable to its subjects.³⁰ In Uganda, once colonialism ended, the government kept this lack of accountability by dividing urban and rural citizens in a way that makes it nearly impossible for one group to achieve political

²⁸ Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, 4.

²⁹Kabanda, Naome. "Uganda's National Land Policy: Background, Highlights and Next Steps." Focus on Land in Africa. 2013. <http://www.focusonland.com/fola/en/resources/ugandas-national-land-policy-background-key-highlights-and-next-steps/>

³⁰ Mamdani, 56 and 60

goals without the assistance of the other group.³¹ There have been efforts to work through this divide and improve social and economic conditions for peasants in Uganda. In order to try and give voice to peasants, the Resistance Council (RC) was created in 1996. While this council recognized the existence of peasant communities, it did not understand the gradient of peasant communities. The RC did not take head of the different experiences of the urban worker and rural farmers. Instead of being an organization that would be able to assist peasants in making social reform through government avenues, the RC has tended to reinforce this issue of separation between rural and urban. This is a clear example of how the post-colonial Ugandan government uses this divide to lower accountability to its subjects.³²

Background on The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe's Land Lease

In 2000, talks between the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe and the Ugandan government began. The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe is a Hamburg-based company and holds 10% of the world's coffee market.³³ The NKG has 46 companies in 28 countries and considers itself the world's leading green coffee service group.³⁴ The two parties (the NKG and Ugandan government) entered into a 99-year land lease agreement, allowing the NKG to open the Kaweri Coffee Plantation in Uganda. When the plantation

³¹ Mamdani, 39

³² Mamdani, 215

³³ *The Local*, "Coffee giant in hot water over African grounds," TheLocal.de, April 4, 2012, <http://www.thelocal.de/20120402/41713> (accessed April 5, 2015).

³⁴ Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, "About Us," NKG.nt, <http://www.nkg.net/aboutus> (accessed May 3, 2015).

assembly began in 2001, NKG head Michael Neumann and the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, personally laid the first foundation stone together.³⁵

Before the coffee plantation construction began, Ugandan soldiers had allegedly forcibly evicted 401 families from the land that they were living and working on in the Mubende district of Uganda. Many of these approximately 2,041 people then resettled on small plots of unfertile land. According to an estimate by trade analyst. Albert Makochekanwa in 2012, only about 2% of these people were compensated for their loss of farmland and property.³⁶ In a presentation to the World Bank, he shared what he saw as the main impacts of this land deal in Uganda. The foremost impacts to the local population were a loss of farmland and livelihood for those evicted. Due to these evictions, some farmers and peasants became casual day laborers at the coffee plantation. The evictions caused these families to become reliant on the Kaweri Plantation for employment and income. However the laborers receive very low wages and many people have seen a reduction in income following their evictions once they began working at the plantation.³⁷ To summarize, through the evictions, most of the 401 families experienced a loss of farming plots, loss of means of livelihood, experienced property destruction, loss of access to water once displaced, and loss of access to health care facilities once displaced. Although some people in the Mubende regions saw benefits of employment or improved infrastructure, most were negatively affected. In general, the families did not feel that they were properly compensated and would

³⁵ *The Local*, "Coffee giant in hot water over African grounds," TheLocal.de, April 4, 2012, <http://www.thelocal.de/20120402/41713> (accessed April 5, 2015).

³⁶ Makochekanwa, 24.

³⁷ Makochekanwa, 24.

have liked to play an active role in the decision making throughout the negotiations of the land deal between the NKG and Ugandan government.³⁸

Following their eviction, many of the displaced people suffered from an increase of illness or death, mainly due to lack of access to shelter, clean water, and healthcare facilities. In order sustain livelihoods, some families found a temporary place to stay on neighboring land where they could farm small plots. They found this land insufficient to provide for themselves and their families year round, and began to actively seek means of compensation directly from the Ugandan government and the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe and to build alliances with non-profit groups who work for peasant and small farmer rights.³⁹

Geographic Displacement in Mubende

In the process of land grabbing, foreign investors often do not take into consideration the landscape already present when acquiring land. Rather, they impose new landscape lines and boundaries onto the land physically or socio-politically. A lack of understanding of the landscape in place before entering into a lease deal with a national government can leave the investing leaser in the situation of displacing the people who already lived and worked on that land. Between the NKG land deal and others in the same area, foreign investors land leases from the Ugandan government have caused quite a bit of displacement in the Mubende district of Uganda.

³⁸ Makochekanwa, 25-26.

³⁹ FIAN, "Land Grabbing in Uganda: Evictions for foreign investment in coffee in Mubende" (*FIAN Fact Sheet*, 2012), 1-2.

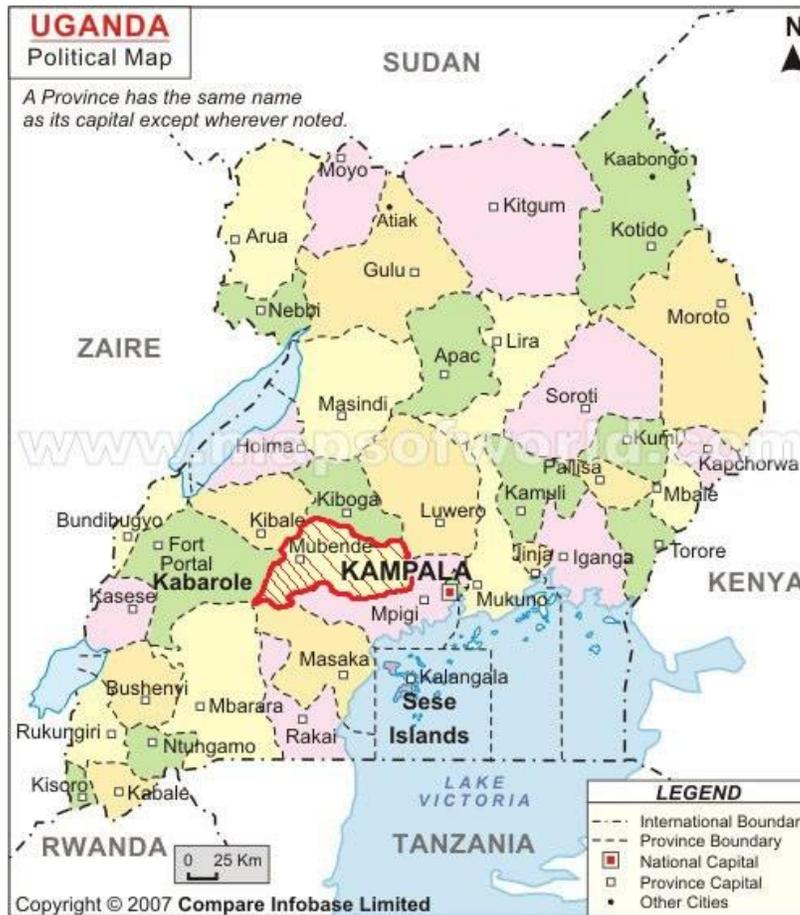


Figure 2: Map of Uganda showing the Mubende District in Kampala⁴⁰

Rob Nixon, a geographer, explains displacement and its relationship to place. He says, “place is a temporal attainment that must be constantly renegotiated in the face of changes that arrive from without and within, some benign, others potentially ruinous.”⁴¹ In some sense, the boundaries of landscape are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. Displacement occurs when elements of loss are introduced to these

⁴⁰ Nick Logler, “Resident Removal in the Namwasa Forest Reserve, Uganda,” December, 2011, <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ICE/uganda-plantation.html> (accessed January 3, 2015).

⁴¹ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011), 9.

negotiations. There are certain powers at play, whether transnational, national, or local, that can force removal or take away land and recourses. Displacement due to foreign investors buying or leasing land that was already being used by population of farmers or peasants can lead to many negative outcomes, including a loss of food access for those who can no longer use their farmland anymore.

Displacement is related to land grabbing by foreign [actors](#). The current system of large-scale land leasing by foreign investors fails to consider dimensions of time and space, as seen in the example of the NKG land deal. A thorough assessment of large land deals would need to reflect on short, medium, and long-term effects as well as what these effects will bring to the local context, regional context, national context, and international context.⁴² When these facets of the setting are ignored, this allows for the displacement of local populations.

Rural farmers are more likely to be displaced or stripped of land rights. This is due to the fact that access and ownership of land is becoming more and more concentrated in the hands of the power holders, those who create knowledge and maintain power. Small farmers do not fare well in this sense.⁴³ In Uganda, the urban/rural divide discussed earlier in this chapter also interrupts rural peasants ability to gain traction in maintaining land rights within the political scene. The loss of land, or loss of having some control over land and resources, is especially detrimental to many rural people in the world and in Africa [who](#) use the land as their livelihoods, not just as a commodity.

⁴² An Ansoms, "Large-Scale Land Deals and Local Livelihoods in Rwanda: The Bitter Fruit of a New Agrarian Model" (*African Studies Review*, 2013), 19.

⁴³ Grain, "Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland," <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929>, 2014 (accessed July 20, 2014).

The landscape is a backbone of their identities, their culture, and their welfare. This land is being ‘grabbed up’ and concentrated in fewer and fewer hands at a quickening pace. The main concern of these land grabs is producing food at a “more efficient” rate through the industrial food system in order to feed the world’s growing population.

The leasehold tenure system in Uganda makes land somewhat easily available to foreign investors to lease through the government. The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe leased their coffee plantation land through the government, but neither the government nor NKG believed it was their responsibility to include the people already living on that particular plot of land in the land leasing discussion or to compensate them once the land was leased. The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe leased 11.6 square miles of land from the Ugandan government in a 99-year contract. Allegedly, once the land was leased, soldiers began forcibly evicting people from the land, destroying their property and crops, [all without](#) compensation. These people lost their means of livelihood because of this drastic displacement.

The ideas of land and agricultural progress and development play a role in land grabbing. Putting “development” ideals on a higher pedestal than concern for local populations is what allows for reckless land deals [and](#) massive displacement to occur. [Displacement and the imposition of](#) new landscapes on individuals in the name of development or sustainable agriculture can be damaging to their livelihoods, society, and the local economy.

Land is being [re-](#)conceptualized as a market commodity without understanding the people who were already living [there](#) and their reliance on that land. The local

groups affected by companies acquiring land in their community see the land as a “social, cultural, and political space” in which they have created their livelihoods and their identities.⁴⁴ In the Mubende region of Uganda, the farming peasants who were already living where the Kaweri plantation is now located feel that it was unjust that they had no part in the process of the NKG land deal contract. To these people, the government was able to make money off of the land that they saw as their own. Being geographically displaced and losing their way of life has been harmful to the 400 families who were evicted.

Further, a large-scale land deal was made between the New Forests Company (a London-based organization) and the Ugandan government within the same district of Mubende. This land lease project resulted in the eviction of at least 22,000 people from the land they had been living and farming on [that would be transformed into](#) a carbon offset tree plantation. The New Forests Company (NFC) entered into this lease in 2005.⁴⁵ This second case continues to show the massive effects of displacement from foreign land grabbing in just one district of Uganda. Land deals such as these are occurring throughout Uganda and sub-Saharan Africa and the Mubende region is a sample of the displacements these deals can cause.

Food and Coffee

Perceived looming global threats of a food crisis, fuel crisis, and financial crisis have driven this rise in land grabbing activities around the globe. Many African countries are at the center of the land-grabbing trend due to the alluring belief that the continent is a large splotch of empty land, ripe for consumption. The projection of Africa as the last

⁴⁴ Ansoms, 12.

⁴⁵ Matt Grainger and Kate Geary, “The New Forests Company and its Uganda Plantations,” Oxfam International, 2011, <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/cs-new-forest-company-uganda-plantations-220911-en.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2015).

unsettled frontier creates an image of far reaching empty land, but the land is not empty.⁴⁶ Throughout the world, relations through the buying and selling and ownership of land have shaped the livelihoods of much of the population. These “capitalist land relations” can be summarized as an unequal ownership of the means of production, in this case unequal ownership over land and labor.⁴⁷

‘Land grabbing’ or the ‘farms race’ in Africa has been described as a new neo-colonial push by foreign companies and governments to annex key natural resources.⁴⁸ Food security concerns are a major factor playing into the rise of land acquisitions in Africa. There are several underlying factors in this growth of land deals and land acquisition in Africa. Rapid changes within the global economy, views of Africa being the next breadbasket of the world, and shifting policies in investor and recipient countries fuel this series of large scale land deals. Today’s land rush has deep historical roots, yet can be differentiated from the series of changing contexts seen within past sequences of land grabbing.⁴⁹

One general conclusion is that for people in the recipient countries, land investment has some benefits and some risks. The most noted of these benefits is GDP growth for the country. The risks, however, include local people losing access to the resources they depend on for food security. There is also no guarantee that an increase in a country’s GDP will mean improved conditions for everyone. Ultimately, the benefits

⁴⁶ Hall, 200.

⁴⁷ Tania Murray Li, *Land's End Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 14

⁴⁸ Hall, 203.

⁴⁹ Cotula, Lorenzo, *The Great African Land Grab?: Agricultural Investment and the Global Food System*. (New York, New York: Zed books Ltd 2013), 173

of the land deals for local people depend on the terms and conditions by which they are set as well as factors such as the level of government corruption and the relation between investors, host governments, civil society, and international development agencies.⁵⁰ A general concern is that even if this leased land is being used for agricultural purposes, it may interfere with the local population's access to food or ability to provide their own food due to lack of access to their own plots of farmland.

This case is an example of a food justice issue. The Kaweri Coffee Plantation has been established where Ugandan people were living and growing their own foods to support themselves and their families. Before their evictions, the people who were living on what is now NKG's Kaweri Plantation were using the land to pursue a variety of economic activities such as "cultivation of cassava, potatoes, bananas, coffee, maize, passion fruits, avocado, pineapples, livestock and poultry farming, brick laying, beer brewing and alcohol distilling, [and] carpentry."⁵¹

There has also been a negative reaction over the NKG's Kaweri Coffee Plantation's claims that it "highly prioritizes the sustainability of coffee production."⁵² The reason that these sustainability claims are sometimes criticized by activist groups who work for peasants' and farmers' rights is the open question of whether a coffee plantation, or any agricultural operation, can really be sustainable if not based on a fair deal with local communities.⁵³ Although this plantation may be certified as a sustainable coffee plantation, it has still had negative impacts on the people in the area through loss

⁵⁰ L. Cotula, S. Vermeulen, R. Leonard, and J. Keeley, *Land Grab or Development Opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa* (IIED/FAO/IFAD, London/Rome, 2009), 23.

⁵¹ FIAN, 2.

⁵² FIAN, 4.

⁵³ FIAN, 4.

of land, food, and livelihoods. The label “sustainable” gives an ethical impression of the plantation, which it may not fully live up to.

Although the Kaweri Coffee Plantation views itself as sustainable and an employment option for the local population, the people cannot eat coffee and survive on it. These families were once living off of the same land and growing a variety of crops where now only coffee is grown. The map below shows the possible relation between a state selling or leasing arable land and the [prevalence of](#) hunger in that same area. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute, Uganda is involved in selling and leasing land and also has a serious hunger problem.⁵⁴

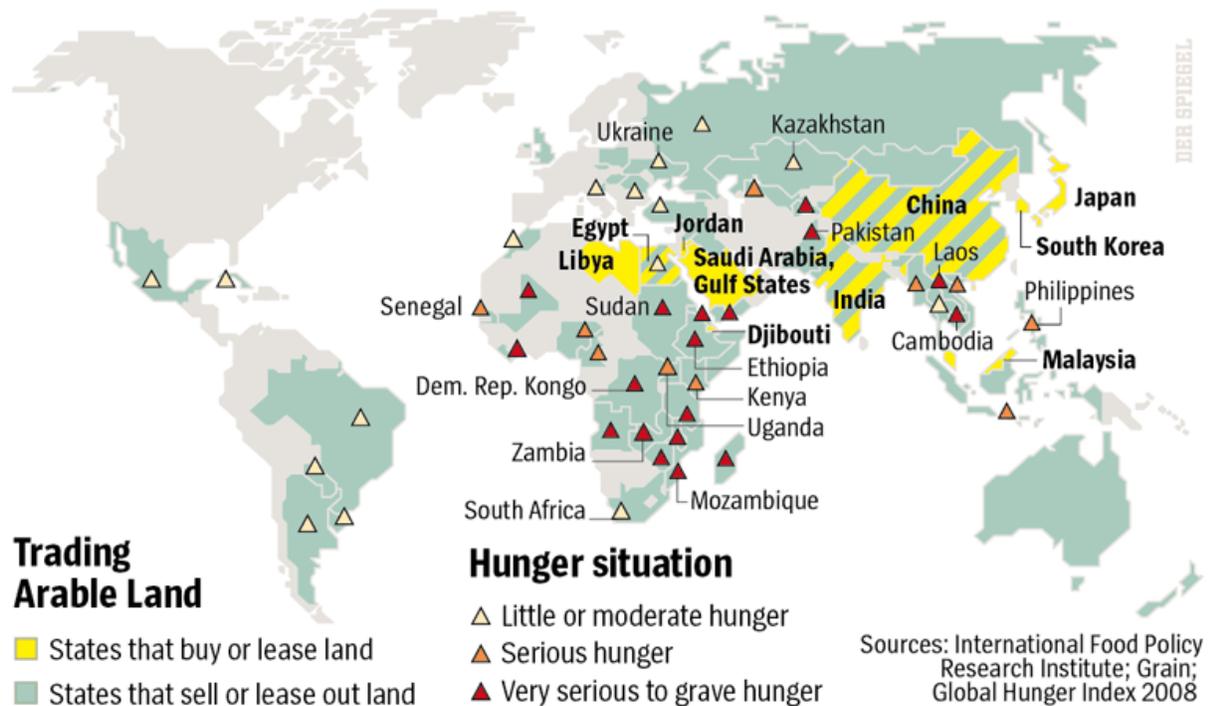


Figure 3: Trading Arable Land and Hunger Map⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Horand Knaup and Juliane von Mittelstaedt, "The New Colonialism: Foreign Investors Snap up African Farmland," Spiegel.de, 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-new-colonialism-foreign-investors-snap-up-african-farmland-a-639224.html> (accessed April 14, 2015).

⁵⁵ Knaup, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-new-colonialism-foreign-investors-snap-up-african-farmland-a-639224.html>

This map shows that Uganda contains “very serious to grave hunger.” Yet as I’ve discussed in this chapter, some small farmers have been evicted from their land and their ability to produce food has been taken away from them. If land deals are to be used to prevent food insecurity crisis, this tactic is not working in Uganda.

Conclusion

The case of the land deal between the Ugandan government [and NKG](#) is an issue of food justice. The land deal has geographically [displaced a local population which has also](#) lost access to livelihoods through the loss of land. This included a loss of access to food and clean water. In an effort to gain some sort of compensation from the government or NKG, the evictees organized and looked to outside support in order to take action against those who they feel are responsible for their forced displacement.

Another food justice concern seen in this case is that the Kaweri Coffee Plantation of the NKG is considered to be a sustainable coffee producer. This is problematic because labeling something such as coffee “sustainable” often implies [that it is](#) morally and environmentally better than its counterparts, when in reality this plantation has caused a lot of grief for the 400 families who were displaced [and](#) lost access to land, food, and livelihoods. This land deal and the New Forests Company land deal are just two examples of the many different land deals and land grabbing occurring internationally. The Mubende region of Uganda is just one of many areas in sub-Saharan Africa that shows local populations struggling with imposed geographical changes resulting in food access issues. This case is an example of the global phenomenon of land security issues dovetailing with food justice issues. As I have touched on, combating global food insecurity is often brought up a reason to promote

land leasing in sub-Saharan Africa. Companies involved in leasing land in sub-Saharan Africa often point to these countries as the new breadbasket of the world. However as we see here, the arable land is not always used to produce food and can often be used for commodities such as coffee, which do not relieve hunger.

Chapter 3

Land Theory and Land Grabbing Today in Sub-Saharan Africa

For the purposes of this project, the dynamics of global North-South relations along with Africa's relationship with the outside world are important to discuss in order to further understand the trend of land grabbing in Africa today. The nature of these relationships which have formed and been reproduced over time show what specifically about sub-Saharan Africa (and Uganda) presents opportunities for international governments and companies such as the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe to enter into long term land deals with African governments. The role of security, especially food security and land security play a significant part in these global relations. Over the past decades, the image of post-colonial Africa has been made to show a continent plagued with turmoil that may threaten the rest of the world. Mainstream discussions of security and food security have been formed mostly within the existing political framework, which often means that people look for political answers and actions in addressing security. I argue that the western political forces and knowledge creators generate and constantly re-enforce these discourses [regarding](#) a lack of security in Africa as well as the existence of a looming threat to food and land security in the global community in order to [further](#) their own agendas of intervening in Africa in the form of land acquisition.

Throughout this chapter, I aim to investigate questions from the view that a North-South relation has already been put into place and is constantly being reinforced

in popular culture and politics. But how do these historical presentations of and relations with Africa by the western world place African countries in this position for foreign investors to buy or lease large amounts of land from their governments? What is meant by food and land security today? What do land grabs mean for countries and local populations? In this chapter, I am investigating the theoretical reasons why sub-Saharan African countries are in the global position to be so disposed to land grabbing by foreign investors. I will relate broad theories back to my case study in order to root these concepts in a concrete example.

Global relations and post-colonial Africa

In his book *The Invention of Africa*, VY Mudimbe quotes Cesaire to say “the tragedy of Africa has been not so much that it was too late in making contact with the rest of the world, as the manner in which that contact was brought about.”⁵⁶ This is a meaningful reflection to keep in mind when approaching North-South and Western-African relations. I acknowledge to myself and to readers that much of what I have come to know about Africa was shaped and produced by the Westerners through presentation and representation of the African continent as one giant landmass. I believe it is beneficial for this paper’s purposes to examine theories dealing with the continent of Africa as a whole, with special interest in sub-Saharan Africa, and relate it to my specific case study of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe land deal in Uganda. Outside forces have been able to look into Africa and take action when it comes to agriculture

⁵⁶ Mudimbe, V. Y. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988. Print.

and land acquisition due to discourses that have been so strongly formed through the dynamic of North-South relations about security and food security.

One particularly interesting facet of the continent of Africa within the scheme of globalization is that Africa is rarely studied in modern texts that focus on the globalization phenomenon. While many sources may cover McDonaldisation or the appearance of African migrants around the world, few go into depth to discuss Africa's resistance to a range of externally imposed projects resulting in, populated areas of land, that do not conform to the Western ideals on central, nation-state governments.⁵⁷ Countries in sub-saharan Africa have difficulties finding a place in concepts and literature of "modernity" because of its unique relationship with Westernization and the rest of the world.

The formation of the discourse of food security over the past few decades and the character of the North-South dichotomy in the globalized world today have led to and allowed a certain amount of agricultural intervention, also referred to as agro-imperialism in Africa today. I would like to now study the North-South binary, then security and food security in Africa followed by briefly touching on the current state of agricultural intervention and land acquisition in Africa in order to [drill](#) down and show the effects that the formation of these discourses [is](#) having.

The discursive nature of North-South relations is clearly laid out by Roxanne Lynn Doty. Doty wrote in her book *Imperial Encounter*, published in 1996, that since the [Cold War](#), much of the North-South relations has focused on international aspects of problems that arise from terrorism, the drug trade, nuclear proliferation in the South, the

⁵⁷ Ferguston, James, 25-27.

movement of immigrants or refugees from South to North, and lastly concerns with the spread of AIDS.”⁵⁸ Issues such as these are central to the North-South relations dynamic and have been pivotal in crafting the meaning of North-South relations.⁵⁹ This means that identities are embedded in what has become the very character of North-South relations. Doty argues that even though North-South relations have focused on these specific topics listed above, the North-South relation is about a great deal more than these issues.⁶⁰ North-South relations have been a process of construction and reconstruction of identities. Representation of the South by the North has played a large part in this process. Doty says the South “has been discursively represented by policy makers, scholars, journalists, and others in the North.”⁶¹ The regime of the North has produced and presented the “truth” and “knowledge” about the South. North-South relations has become a realm of politics in which the “identities of people, states, and regions are constructed through representational practices.”⁶² Imperial encounters [are](#) asymmetrical encounters between two entities, [here](#), the North and the South. The North was able to construct “realities” that the South could not because the South is denied equal access to agency as the North. As Said made clear Orientalism “has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world.”⁶³ North-South relations have more to

⁵⁸ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁵⁹ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶⁰ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶¹ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶² Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶³ Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1994. Print.

do with the North in this way [as well](#). Historically, there has been an exclusion of the study of representation in the field of international relations. This exclusion has played a role in the shaping of the discipline.⁶⁴ This is particularly important when considering the “reality” of the South’s place in international relations.

The positionality of the South, in this case, Africa, has been cemented in this discourse of North-South relations through specific tools and practices. This allows for the North to keep their position of power and maintain the power of knowledge creation. Doty discusses ways in which the North-South relation discourse is kept in place through methods of discourse that she defines. Doty explains that what makes a discourse successful is its capacity to naturalize. This can occur through the creation of background knowledge that is taken to be true or real.⁶⁵ An example of this can be seen in the creation of Africa’s history as a troubled continent when it comes to famine and agriculture knowledge. Doty also points to classification as a discursive tool that creates and naturalizes categories in which human beings ‘naturally’ belong. Because of the North’s encounters with the South, the South is now denied effective agency.⁶⁶ Negation is another tool that Doty points to that Westerners can use in filling in the blank spaces of other civilization’s history. Doty suggests that representational strategies used by the North are intensified in times of crisis because this is the time

⁶⁴ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶⁵ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶⁶ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

when the existing order and naturalized identities can be called into question.⁶⁷ The North is confronted with a potential loss of control during these times. Examples of representation and its effects can be seen in Spivak's work "Can the Subaltern Speak." The Subaltern is spoken for, they are represented, and this is problematic because an entire set of voices is not being heard. African countries are often not heard by the West.⁶⁸

Now we see that once discourses become naturalized, we are affected by them on such a basic level that we are often not even aware of it; the notion of security is another creation formed into reality through discursive methods. The concept of "human security" was popularized by the United Nations Development Programme in 1994. Since then, it has gained attention in the academic sphere, but has been marginalized elsewhere. Human security is simply a re-categorization of security by the West. It reinforces existing frameworks rather than challenging the norm or questing policy formation. Although it may appear to seem like a new way of improving the system of the world, human security is simply a continuation of past discourses and allows current power structures to remain intact.⁶⁹

Human security can be studied under the general categories of health security, political security, environmental security, food security, economic security, personal security and community security. These wide parameters of human are broader terms that umbrella over the concepts that Doty says have been the central points of interest

⁶⁷ Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996.

⁶⁸ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1988.

⁶⁹ Wibben, Annick. "Human Security: Toward an Opening." *Security Dialogue* 39.4 (2008)

between North-South relations since the end of the Cold War. The West can use the justification of human security in order to address or intervene in these pivotal North-South issues such as migrations or the spread of AIDs.⁷⁰ The creation of a need to provide security allows for political entities to take more actions and intervene in the name of security purposes.

Redefining the term human security is not going to fix anything. Redefining definitions such as this will simply give the knowledge holders and creators more power to shape this phrase to mean what they want it to mean. So-called experts will turn this phrase into a meaning based off of a bureaucratic checklist. It is necessary to find the underlying epistemology of security rather than focusing on politics or a particular political moment of security.⁷¹ Understanding underlying factors is central in understanding the position of the situation at hand and the history [behind our](#) state of affairs.

While human security can be used to cover global topics, there is specific scholarly conversation about security and Africa. Paul D. Williams, a scholar of Africa's International Relations, suggests that there are different constructions of Africa and these relate to security. Different images are created that portray Africa as "a scar on the world conscience," as a continent of terrorists, as a continent of threats and problems, and as a space of abundant natural resources. These various portrayals serve distinct purposes to specific audiences. The Westerners with power of knowledge possess the ability to create the way people see audiences in order to promote their

⁷⁰ Wibben, Annick. "Human Security: Toward an Opening." *Security Dialogue* 39.4 (2008)

⁷¹ Wibben, Annick. "Human Security: Toward an Opening." *Security Dialogue* 39.4 (2008)

own agendas. Understanding security and Africa means that one must understand the political practices and outcomes that go along in the name of security. Security itself has an objective meaning, but is often understood to be related to matters of survival.

Williams notes that security and survival do not mean the same thing, but that security has come to mean 'survival-plus' with connotations of freedom and justice.⁷²

When it comes to Africa, environmental security is one of the main security concerns. This goes along with the image of Africa painted as a land of useful natural resources ready to be enjoyed. This issue may not have gotten a lot of attention compared to issues of war or terrorism, but it is an increasing concern as far as water security, food security, and deforestation worries begin to demand more attention in the world today.⁷³ Political elites and scholars alike have been taking an interest in environmental security in Africa and have taken part in shaping the knowledge available on this subject.

I question whether political action should be the sole way to tackle security. This tactic of using political action to improve security (whether it be food, land, or human security) seems to remain within and actively enforce the current, sometimes problematic, theoretical framework. There are a variety of other options such as grassroots movements. I also believe it could be dangerous to categorize the entire continent of Africa into a single security issue. Moving on from these thoughts, Williams

⁷² Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *Internaional Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

⁷³ Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *Internaional Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

prioritizes three insecurities to the top of Africa's list: violence, health challenges, and environmental degradation.⁷⁴

For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on William's view of environmental degradation, even though all three issues are important. Williams believes that environmental issues can often be found in the center of war and repression. He uses the example of Sudan as a 'failing state' who also suffers from a collapsing ecosystem.⁷⁵ This example can be used to show how nuanced 'threats' and 'security' are and how dangerous it can be to categorize them under one subject without looking at all causes and effects of what is really going on. Williams writes that similar occurrences of environmental degradation in relation to political and economic instability similar to that being experienced by Sudan can be seen across Africa. All of these factors are closely tied together and the existing framework does not show a clear-cut answer to improving the entire picture in one [fell](#) swoop. There are many components that [affect](#) security at different levels.

The dynamics of pursuing regime security in African countries has not always been successful in post-colonial African history. Williams explains that African insurgents have been able to take some security dynamics into their own hands and fulfill what are typically seen as governmental duties. Williams also warns outsiders that there is only so much they can do and suggests opening up a helpful dialogue rather than [having](#) outsiders imposing their security views and practices on countries in

⁷⁴ Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *Internaional Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

⁷⁵ Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *Internaional Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

Africa.⁷⁶ William's piece was key in highlighting what issues are seen as important to security in Africa and what type of steps are being taken to address them, although both topics are under much debate.

James Ferguson writes that political instability can sometime be beneficial to some kinds of foreign investors. In these cases, deregulation is seen as a business opportunity. The absence of a set banking system or hands on government can have it's advantages to investors. Ferguson takes this to mean that in weakly governed African states, the concept of security or sovereignty is not even related to the ability to regulate over the national territory. Rather, in these cases it is more relevant to security to be able to provide contractual legal authority over legitimate land deals with foreign entities. Obviously too volatile of a national feeling does not allow for a great business climate, however the costs and benefits of investing in a land deal in a somewhat unstable Africa country can be tallied like other business expenses.⁷⁷ This shows another facet of security within the larger picture of African land grabbing within the history of colonization within the current context of globalization.

Food and Land Security

In sub-Saharan Africa, the complex picture of food and land security subject is woven through local, national, and international ideas and political bodies. In the article "The politics of security: Conceptualising the current food security crisis in southern Africa," Vogel and Smith [present a detailed study of the regime of](#) food security in Africa. The prevalent Western concept of North-South relations combined with the way

⁷⁶ Williams, Paul D. "Thinking about Security in Africa." *Internaional Affairs* 83.6 (2007).

⁷⁷ Ferguson, 206-207.

in which scholars talk about security, and more specifically food security, in Africa allow for the actions taking place in Africa [effecting outside](#) land acquisition and land deal policies. Vogel and Smith explain in their article that for the past few decades there has been an evolving [set](#) of ideas [regarding](#) food security and food; the [view has evolved](#) [that](#) there is not an absolute lack of food, but a lack of access to food.

The way in which we talk about the politics of food security and ideas about a looming food security crisis in Africa have been conceptualized through a specific discourse in recent history.⁷⁸ The United Nations World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization are two of the most globally influential actors in the spread of knowledge and enforcement of current discourse regarding discussions surrounding the possibility of a food security crisis in Southern Africa. The current discourse about food security has allowed for a shift in the study of famines. They are no longer globally analyzed simply under the category of a lack of food; they are now seen as the result of complex relationships between society, economic development and the environment.⁷⁹ In this article, L Brown is quoted as saying that the percent of the population that is hungry is diminishing in all areas except for Africa.⁸⁰

This discourse and this belief that Africa is lagging behind in decreasing the [number of](#) starving citizens allows for “Agro-Imperialism” in Africa. Although drought and other [aspects](#) of climate change have been factors in shaping panicky thoughts food

⁷⁸ Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002): 315-17.

⁷⁹ Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002): 315-17.

⁸⁰ Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002): 315-17.

insecurity, 'food-access' is a key problem that may [be](#) even more serious than food availability.⁸¹ This rationalization of land-grabbing, or thought process that assumes the need for large scale land deals in order to provide food security can be turned over through practice. Over a period of time of land grabbing, the economic profit or sustainability factors can become the focus of the land deal process. The rationalization of land-grabbing for food security purposes can lead into a rationality for using the acquired land for sustainably growing coffee and bringing some level of economic growth to a certain area. If the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, for example, believed that growing coffee sustainably and creating some economic growth around their plantation in Uganda, the company may have seen or portrayed the business deal as a way for themselves to make a profit while enabling local Ugandans to learn to farm and earn wages in order to acquire food. In short, although land grabbing is often portrayed as a way to ensure food security, there is not always a direct link between what actually happens to the land acquired in a deal and bringing about food security.

In 1981, Amartya Sen published an essay describing the 'entitlement theory' that explained a different conceptual framework of famine theorizing. This shifted the discourse on food security and famine. The entitlement approach recognizes 4 legal approaches to acquire food: growing it, receiving it as a gift, buying it, or working for it. The amount of food a person is entitled to is based on how capable they are of obtaining food in these ways at any given moment. This is an economic approach

⁸¹ Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002): 315-17.

(market operations and the exchange of goods and services), not a human rights approach.⁸²

According to this article, there are two main strands of thinking that are popular regarding the roles that markets play in shaping famine. The first sees famine as a product of imperfect markets. It is not uncommon for markets to malfunction during food crises because food prices are inflated and increased through speculation and hoarding. The second thought process that is popular is the entitlements approach, which emphasizes that 'demand failure' is a distinct issue from 'supply failure.'

Although Sen's work has been criticized for putting too much faith in the predictability of the market and overlooking factors such as politics and decision-making, the work of Sen and others has allowed scholars to look beyond science to further understand societal and external factors that affect food security. Food security and general human security must be addressed in a way that [gets at](#) the core causes of vulnerability. Climate vulnerability and environmental change should be integrated into regional assessments, according to Vogel and Smith.⁸³ There is an urgency and importance in understanding these issues more deeply than the current discourse allows.

This discourse of food security concerns and North-South relations has led to a new wave of land acquisitions by outsiders in Africa. Due to these discourses, there is [in the first instance](#), a panic over food security embedded into environmental debates.

⁸² Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002), 315-17.

⁸³ Vogel, Coleen, and James Smith. "The Politics of Scarcity: Conceptualising the Current Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa." *South African Journal of Science* (2002), 315-17.

[combined with](#) an entrenched view that Africa is an available place for countries to access land. When these two thoughts come together, it seems that African land is a solution to food security issues. The emerging picture of land acquisition in Africa and growing interest in large-scale land acquisition in Africa can be seen through this study of 5 specific countries done by Lorenzo Cotula, Sonja Vermeulen, Rebeca Leonard, and James Keely. The countries are Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, and Sudan. While this is not an entire picture of the whole continent of Africa, it is a small part of what is currently going on in the area of agriculture on this continent. The changing picture of land politics in these countries include: 1) [a](#) significant rise in levels of activity of approved land allocations since 2004, 2) a steady rise in land-based investment since 2004, 3) large scale land claims taking the most valuable land in regards to irrigation potential or land closer to markets and 4) currently, the private sector's [s](#) dominant presence in land acquisitions [with strong](#) financial support from governments.⁸⁴ The trends in these five countries show us a lot about the trend in many other countries in Africa.

Food security concerns are a major factor playing into the rise of land acquisitions in Africa. There are several underlying factors in this growth of land deals and land acquisition in Africa. These include food security concerns and the desire to expand biofuel production. The return rates in agricultural production are also part of what makes land acquisition seem appealing. In the past decade, there have been some policy reforms in many African countries regarding legislation on land, banking,

⁸⁴ Cotula, L., Vermeulen, S., Leonard, R. and Keeley, J., 2009, Land Grab or Development Opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa, IIED/FAO/IFAD, London/Rome. ISBN: 978-1-84369-741-1

and taxation. One general conclusion is that for people in the recipient countries, land investment has some benefits and some risks. The most noted of these benefits is GDP growth for the country. The risks, however, include local people losing access to the resources they depend on for food security. There is also no guarantee that an increase in a country's GDP will mean improved conditions for everyone. Ultimately, the benefits of the land deals for local people depend on the terms and conditions by which they are set as well as factors such as the level of government corruption and the relation between investors, host governments, civil society, and international development agencies.⁸⁵ Although the point of this paper was not to write about specific details of land acquisition in Africa, this subject was used to ground the effects of discourse formations of food security and Africa as a continent.

Africa's historical relationship with the rest of the world through the structure of global North-South dynamics and the discourse that has been so strongly formed around food security have allowed for outside forces to look into Africa and take action when it comes to agriculture and land acquisition. 'Land grabbing' or the 'farms race' in Africa has been described as a "new neo-colonial push by foreign companies and governments to annex key natural resources."⁸⁶ This discourse of food security concerns and North-South relations has led to a new wave of land acquisitions by outsiders in Africa. [And, as](#) the example of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda,

⁸⁵ Cotula, L., Vermeulen, S., Leonard, R. and Keeley, J., 2009, *Land Grab or Development Opportunity? Agricultural Investment and International Land Deals in Africa*, IIED/FAO/IFAD, London/Rome. ISBN: 978-1-84369-741-1

⁸⁶ Hall, Ruth. "Land Grabbing in Southern Africa: The Many Faces of the Investor Rush." *Review of African Political Economy* 38.128, *Land: a New Wave of Accumulation by Dispossession in Africa?* (2011): 193-214. JSTOR. Web. 27 Apr. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/23055201?ref=search-gateway:894e28d0cf58f5339c910ca540a14e28>

while the government may be receiving money for the land lease and some residents found new employment with the coffee plantation, many peasants were displaced with no compensation and only saw the negative effects of land grabbing.

“Opportunity” in Africa: Current Land Grab Trends

The most recent land grabbing phenomenon in Africa is not only the result of business activities, but the accumulation of differentiation between national societies through studies and experiences. Changes in government and policies and business practices do fuel the rush in land grabbing, but this can only happen alongside the cultural and academic changes in national and international societies.⁸⁷ In 2009, the World Bank published a report called “Awakening Africa’s Sleeping Giant: Prospects for Commercial Agriculture in the Guinea Savannah Zone and Beyond” that promoted the belief that Africa’s land has been underutilized and that it would be in the best global interest to grow food in these underused land reserves to support the world’s increasing population.⁸⁸ This report specifically studied the geographic region of the Guinea Savannah, which spans across most of inland West Africa, through central Africa and down the east coast to Mozambique.

The study claims that reducing poverty in Africa will depend largely on stimulating agricultural growth.⁸⁹ While this study does bring up valid idea about improving

⁸⁷ Cotula, 52-54;173-174.

⁸⁸ Hall, Ruth. “Land Grabbing In Africa and the New Politics of Food” (2011): Future Agricultures: Policy Brief. www.future-agricultures.org

⁸⁹ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. "Awakening Africa's Sleeping giant: Prospects for commercial Agriculture in the guinea Savannah Zone and Beyond." The World Bank: Agriculture and Rural Development. (2009)
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/sleeping_giant.pdf (accessed June 1, 2015).

agriculture and reducing poverty, I believe that it misses the larger issues of government corruption and war that also affect poverty in many areas of sub-Saharan Africa.⁹⁰ The analysis of the World Bank Report takes into account projected global supply and demand trends of cassava, cotton, maize, soybeans, rice, and sugar and how to improve their future competitiveness in order to alleviate poverty in the Guinea Savannah zone. The key question addressed by this study was how well a sustainable increase in agricultural competitiveness could be achieved in order to reduce poverty.⁹¹

The World Bank report on the Guinea Savannah region imposes its study over a specific geographic landscape of Africa, but fails to analyze beyond the agricultural aspect of the land. It fails to recognize state or cultural borders that already exist in these areas and the meaning of the land to the locals who already populate the region of this study. This report focuses on the competitiveness of land against other regions such as Thailand and Brazil.⁹² The report does state that negative environmental impacts are possible with the commercialization of farming and that these impacts should be studied in order to prevent them as much as possible. Overall, this piece advocates investing in commercial farming in this region so long as the proper policy and land reforms are taken. This piece is encouraging enough to foreign investors

⁹⁰ Valeria Popa, "The impact of civil wars on poverty in sub-Saharan Africa," Geopolitics.ro. <http://english.geopolitics.ro/the-impact-of-civil-wars-on-poverty-in-sub-saharan-africa/> (accessed September, 12, 2015).

⁹¹ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. "Awakening Africa's Sleeping giant: Prospects for commercial Agriculture in the guinea Savannah Zone and Beyond." The World Bank: Agriculture and Rural Development. (2009) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/sleeping_giant.pdf (accessed June 1, 2015).

⁹² Morris, Michael. "Awakening Africa's Sleeping giant: prospects for commercial Agriculture in the guinea Savannah Zone and Beyond." *The World Bank: Agriculture and Rural Development Notes*. 2009.

Africa is seen as a land that is not yet settled, a place where outsiders can still have great influence. These factors make this continent specifically appealing for foreign governments and businesses to conduct land deals. The prevailing narrative of food demand dramatically increasing over the next decades along the prospect of having to follow limited regulations can be appealing to businesses.⁹⁴ The shift towards large scale farming also allows for an increased amount of attention on Africa for agricultural business deals since it can be perceived as a continent containing much unused land. These shifts bring about the view of Africa as the future breadbasket of the world to many investors looking for profitable land deals.

This publication can be used to demonstrate the major transnational land deals in Africa are made by foreign investors to use land for agricultural production, biofuels, forestry, tourism, mining, and other purposes.⁹⁵ These foreign investors often do not take into consideration the vernacular landscape already present when acquiring land. Rather, they impose new landscape lines and boundaries through land grabbing in various regions of Africa. This World Bank Report encourages the development of smallholder-based commercial agriculture in order to self-reinforce positive agricultural growth and poverty alleviation.⁹⁶ While I do believe that this is a nice sentiment, I have not seen evidence of this occurring on a large scale in my study.

⁹⁴ Cotula, 70-73.

⁹⁵ Hall, Ruth. "Land Grabbing in Southern Africa: The Many Faces of the Investor Rush." *Review of African Political Economy* 38.128, Land: a New Wave of Accumulation by Dispossession in Africa? (2011): 193-214. JSTOR. Web. 27 Apr. 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/23055201?ref=search-gateway:894e28d0cf58f5339c910ca540a14e28>

⁹⁶ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. "Awakening Africa's Sleeping giant: Prospects for commercial Agriculture in the guinea Savannah Zone and Beyond." The World Bank: Agriculture and Rural Development. (2009) http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/sleeping_giant.pdf (accessed June 1, 2015)

Conclusion

Historically speaking, the continent of Africa has been in a position to be analyzed, occupied, and exploited by outside forces such as foreign governments and businesses. This is continuing today under the name of food security and land security. Although the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe has set up a sustainable coffee plantation in Uganda in an effort to use the land fully and properly, it does not change the fact that there have been negative impacts to the surrounding areas and people [as a consequence of](#) the Kaweri Plantation. The sense of food and land security were taken from the population displaced by NKG, who leased the land in the hopes of sustainably producing coffee and a profit.

Chapter 4

Peasant Resistance against Land Deals between the Ugandan Government and The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe

In the final chapter of this thesis, I would like to discuss the actions of the group of Ugandans who were evicted from the land they were living on and their attempts to get compensation from the Ugandan government and the NKG. I will use theory while discussing the case study, and will focus heavily on the lawsuit that the peasants have brought against the NKG and the Ugandan government as well as the non-profit groups who have helped these peasants to obtain some traction. Understanding the reaction and outcomes of a land deal is a key factor in looking at the full picture of the land lease deal between the Ugandan government and the NKG.

Three key components to the reactions following the implementation of the NKG-Ugandan Land deal that I believe are significant are 1) The local population claim to have received almost no compensation whatsoever for the lose of their homes; 2) The NKG has claimed that locals have benefited from their plantation in the forms of employment and improved infrastructure in the surrounding area; 3) The Ugandan government believes that if the evictees are to be compensated, the NKG is responsible for taking care of this.

Peasant Resistance to the NKG Land Deal and Displacement

Physical displacement can be caused by land grabbing, as is seen in the NKG-Ugandan land deal. Rob Nixon explains displacement and its relationship to place. He says, “place is a temporal attainment that must be constantly renegotiated in the face of changes that arrive from without and within, some benign, others potentially ruinous.”⁹⁷ In some sense, the boundaries of landscape are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. Displacement occurs when elements of loss are introduced to these negotiations. There are certain powers at play, whether transnational, national, or local, that can force removal or take away land and resources. Displacement can happen when communities are involuntarily located, but there is also such a thing as displacement without moving. This is a more radical notion of displacement, which stresses the loss of community, land, resources, and the very characteristics that the land and livelihoods were composed of. Displacement of small farmers by large agrobusiness without meaningful compensation, like the Ugandans displaced by the NKG coffee plantation, demonstrates the negative effects that land grabbing can cause.

As I touched on in the previous chapter, the agro-business structure plays into the process and increase in land grabbing throughout Africa. The dominant opinion on agriculture in the Guinea Savannah region of Africa from the World Bank and other agents fails to view land as more than a commodity. The goal of the World Bank and foreign entities is to use land to maximum to produce agricultural products and money, but neglects to look at outcomes for the people who inhabit this land. A thorough assessment of large land deals would need to reflect on short, medium, and long-term

⁹⁷ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011.

effects as well as what these effects will bring to the local context, regional context, national context, and international context.⁹⁸ When these facets of the setting are ignored, this allows for the displacement of local populations.

GRAIN, which describes itself as a small international non-profit organization that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems, published an article explaining threats that large scale farms pose to small farmers' land access. The article explains that many international organizations often estimate that small farmers control the largest portion of the world's agricultural land. This claim is seen as questionable since many small farmers have been organizing to demand for agrarian reform. Why would they be doing this if they had control over most of the world's farmland? Rural people's access to land has been under attack around the world. Rural farmers are more likely to be displaced or stripped of land rights. This is due to the fact that access and ownership of land is becoming more and more concentrated in the hands of the power holders, those who create knowledge and maintain power. Small farmers do not fare well in this sense.⁹⁹

The loss of land, or loss of having some control over land and resources, is especially detrimental to many rural people in the world and in Africa uses the land as their livelihoods, not just as a commodity. The landscape is a backbone of their identities, their culture, and their welfare. This land is being 'grabbed up' and concentrated in fewer and fewer hands at a quickening pace. The main concern of

⁹⁸ Ansoms, 17.

⁹⁹ Grain. "Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland." Combined. <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929> (accessed July 20, 2014).

these land grabs is producing food at a “more efficient” rate through the industrial food system in order to feed the world’s growing population. Today, small farmers occupy less than 25% of the world’s farmland. Rural populations are being displaced in large quantities.¹⁰⁰ Land grabbing by agricultural companies furthers this displacement by small farmers and rural peasants. Small farmers seem to always lose in the renegotiation of landscapes.

The case study of the NKG in Uganda is interesting because the local population does see some positive results in the changing landscape around them, mainly improved infrastructure. But on the other hand, there is an NGO working on behalf of those who were evicted in an effort to give them agency and bring back a means to a livelihood for the displaced.

The ideas of progress and development play a role in land grabbing. As many scholars have noted, African countries have been marginalized by globalization and many times weakly governed states are considered undeveloped. The unique mix of a perceived undeveloped nation filled with vast swaths of mineral rich and arable land leads to the new sort of political-economic power for global investors as well as governments.¹⁰¹ Putting development on a higher pedestal than concern for local populations is what allows for reckless land deals to massive displacement to occur. The issues of displacement due to imposed landscapes and individuals’ loss of a way to take care of them will negatively impact the local economy in this time.

¹⁰⁰ Grain. "Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland ." Combined. <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929> (accessed July 20, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Ferguson, 41-42.

“Environmentalism of the poor” is a concept introduced by Nixon. He describes it as an unseen slow violence, such as displacement, against poorer communities. These communities in the case of my study include peasants, small farmers, and rural people. The environmentalism of the poor, the displaced, and the global south has shifted in recent years. It has been shaped by slow violence and other social events around it, such as displacement. Slow violence lack visibility, this is a key factor in the environmental and social movements of the displaced.¹⁰²

It is difficult to find success stories or even stories of any types of environmental resistance as a result of land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa that are more than a rumor or a brief mention in an longer article. Many of these resistances are done under the framework of rights i.e. The Right to Adequate Food, The Right to Adequate Housing, to an Adequate Standard of Living including Resources, and the Right to Work, The Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and The Right to Self-determination and the Right Not to be Deprived of One’s Means of Subsistence.¹⁰³ However, even if these acts of environmentalism of the poor aren’t an outright success, they do help in bringing attention to the negative effects of land grabbing to the global community.

Displacement is a serious consequence of land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa, and as I see it, the largest negative impact of the NKG-Ugandan land deal. The local peasants who were evicted from their land found a way to resist through the formation

¹⁰²Grain. "Hungry for land: small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland ." Combined. <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4929> (accessed July 20, 2014).

¹⁰³Anton Pieper, “Undermining the Accountability Process-the Mubende-Neumann Case,” *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2006, <http://www.fian.at/assets/110818Mubende-RTFquarterly-S7.doc.pdf>: (accessed May 4, 2015).

of the group “Wake Up and Fight for your Rights,” which is an association of communities who were affected by the eviction.

In 2002, FIAN International began supporting the “Wake Up and Fight for your Rights” movement. FAIN then assisted the group in filing a formal complaint “on the grounds that the NKG breached the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.”¹⁰⁴ The complaint argues that the NKG was informed of human rights violations such as the forced evictions and did not provide any sort of compensation as well as consistently rejecting dialogues with representatives of the evictees.

The evictees and organizations such as FIAN believe that the negative effects that stem from shady, unclear land deals between a government and investor are not acceptable. In the larger picture of land deals, it seems that there should be a way to eliminate these negative effects through more transparent transactions in the formation of long-term land leases.

According to FIAN, the Ugandan government clearly violated specific areas of the Ugandan constitution when evicting those living in the Mubende region. FIAN officially states:

- 1) *The eviction was carried out by the state in a manner that breaches General Comment 7, Paragraph 13 of the CESCR on the right to housing, according to which the Ugandan government should have ensured that all evictees received adequate compensation for any affected properties.*

¹⁰⁴ Anton Pieper, “Undermining the Accountability Process-the Mubende-Neumann Case,” *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2006, <http://www.fian.at/assets/110818Mubende-RTFquarterly-S7.doc.pdf>: (accessed May 4, 2015).

2) *The eviction also constitutes a violation of the Ugandan Constitution (Article 26, 29(2-a) and 237(1, 3-a, 8) which states that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of property unless it is necessary for public use or in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health. In fact, many of the evictees were lawful customary tenants who are guaranteed security of occupancy under the 1998 Land Act of Uganda. According to this Act, specifically Article 29(2-a), the evictees were bona fide occupants of the land. They had occupied and utilized or developed the land unchallenged by the registered owner for over 12 years.*¹⁰⁵

Citing specific articles in the Ugandan constitution that shows the government's violations proves how fickle the Ugandan government is in the views and recognitions of property rights.

The conflict between the NKG, Ugandan Government and displaced peasants reflects Paul Robert's theory of the "environmental conflict and exclusion thesis." This thesis states that environmental problems become socialized, creating long term conflicts between groups in a community.¹⁰⁶ The conflict between these three groups has lasted much longer than it should despite efforts from peasants and activist groups.

Not keeping a standard of land tenure recognition system, obviously, brings up conflict for local population like the community who was displaced in the Mubende

¹⁰⁵ FIAN, "Land Grabbing in Uganda: Evictions for foreign investment in coffee in Mubende" (*FIAN Fact Sheet*, 2012), 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ Robbins, Paul. *Political Ecology: Second Edition*. John Wiley and Sons Ltd. 2012. 22.

region. The “environmental conflict and exclusion thesis” is used to show conflicts that arise from access to environmental sources and the relevance to larger picture gender, race, and class struggles. A class struggle as well as a cultural struggle of a group of marginalized Ugandans can be seen in this NKG land grab case study. This thesis is in line with Rob Nixon’s ideas.

NKG Reaction

The Neumann Kaffee Gruppe has uncompromisingly insisted that its Kaweri Plantation has been beneficial to the Mubende region and the people who live in the surrounding areas. The press releases and reports from the company conclude that the sustainable coffee plantation is environmentally responsible and is valuable in providing employment for local Ugandans.

In 2010, the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe released a project report summarizing the Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance support project and its effects. Stefan Cognigni, the project manager, wrote the report in which he summarizes the setup of the project, activities and results, and the overall impact on farmers’ incomes.¹⁰⁷ In the section “Project Implementation” section of this report, there is a description of the project area and the Mubende district as a whole. According to the report, 70% of the population depends on “substance farming as the main source of livelihood” including the growth of

¹⁰⁷ Stefan Cognigni, *Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project: Establishment of the “Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance”* (NKG Coffee Alliance Trust- Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project, 2010) 2.

sweet potatoes, beans, maize, bananas, and groundnuts.¹⁰⁸ The Mubende district is described as ideal for growing Robusta coffee due to its altitude and rainfall patterns. While the report does mention farmers in the region, it did not mention anything about people living on the land previous to the building of the coffee plantation.

In the conclusion of this report, Cognigni states that this project has reversed the situation where farmers were in route to abandon coffee production to the situation where a large, successful coffee plantation is now flourishing. The main claim is that this project has shown local farmers how to produce coffee in better ways and how to turn that coffee into a viable business. According to this report, local farmers are more eager than ever to test new activities as they have seen the positive effects of improved coffee production and an improved marketing and business system.¹⁰⁹

The NKG's initial reaction to accusation that it had unfairly caused the displacement of local people who had been living on the land where they built the Kaweri Plantation was to largely ignore the issue and gloss over it with statements and reports about how the project was successful. While some of the successes described in these reports are accurate, it does not address the concerns of the evictees. Even though there are some positive effects that come out of and deals such as the NKG-Ugandan lease, they often do not outweigh the negative effects such as the displacement of families and disruptions of communities.

¹⁰⁸ Stefan Cognigni, *Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project: Establishment of the "Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance"* (NKG Coffee Alliance Trust- Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project, 2010) 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ Stefan Cognigni, *Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project: Establishment of the "Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance"* (NKG Coffee Alliance Trust- Kaweri Coffee Farmers Alliance Support Project, 2010) 59.

The relationship between companies and local populations is set within the wider trend of power relation which are often unfavorable for local interests. The prominent 'idle land' concept surrounding the land that had been previously occupied by local farmers and peasants lead to the leasing of that land to a willing company.¹¹⁰ A government looking to profit from leasing land and a company believing this to be an opportunity to create a profit which bringing some infrastructure and jobs to the community lead to the undermining of the rights of the local population in the Mubende region.

Ugandan Government Reaction

Before the current large scale land rush even began, groups of non-profits and other organization created texts that deal with the process of land deal transactions. However, these guidelines are not binding and hardly enforceable. The Voluntary Guidelines provide advice on a large range of land tenure questions.¹¹¹ The guidelines do encourage governments to protect all previously respected land tenure policies within in the country; however the logistics of land deals can be somewhat hidden and many times this does not happen. It is also true that land tenure in African countries, including Uganda, can often in shift in how it is viewed or protected by the Ugandan government. A settlement that was recognized at one point may find that in new or just newly enforced legal terms they are not fully protected by national law.¹¹² This can lead to an easy eviction by the Ugandan government; the government can simply state the

¹¹⁰ Cotula, 121.

¹¹¹ Cotula, 101.

¹¹² Cotula 86-87.

farmers or tenants within a certain area of land were simply squatters and have no legal rights to that land.

Because of the lack of transparency in the process of making land deal agreements, accountability is undermined. It is difficult to see through the murkiness of the legalities behind land grabbing in order to protect human rights within a national or international framework.¹¹³ However, the figure below illustrates the differences in corruption indicators of countries who have land deals and those who do not.

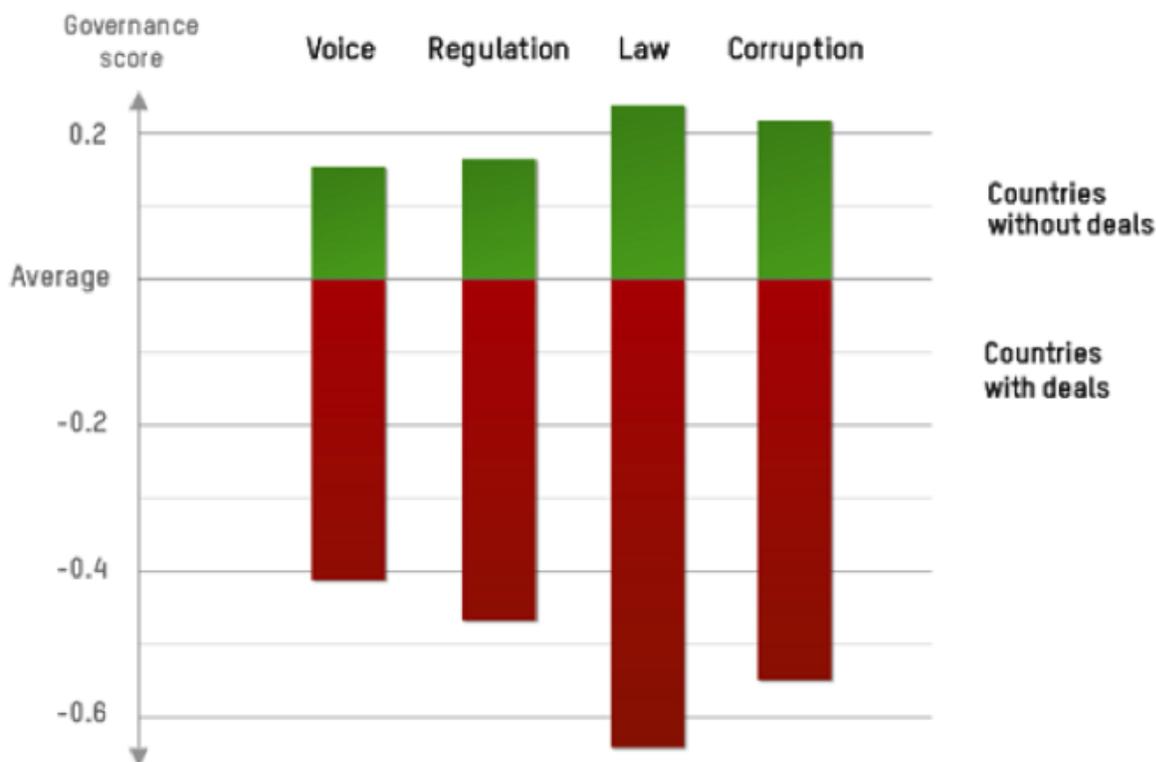


Figure 5: Average Governance Indicators 2000-2011¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Anton Pieper, "Undermining the Accountability Process-the Mubende-Neumann Case," *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2006, <http://www.fian.at/assets/110818Mubende-RTFquarterly-S7.doc.pdf>: (accessed May 4, 2015).

¹¹⁴ Ricardo Fuentes Nieva, Twisted Rules and Land Deals, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2013/02/twisted-rules-and-land-deals> (accessed May 15, 2015).

Evictees, with the aid of FIAN, have requested the construction of new homes, access to clean water, and adequate school and healthcare facilities from the Ugandan government.¹¹⁵ The Ugandan government's response to the protests and requests of evictees and organizations like FIAN is to ask for apologies. The Ugandan government has asked for apologies from Oxfam and 60 different NGOs who have been working on food and land reform for "inciting violence" in the country.¹¹⁶

Esther Obaikol, director of the Ugandan Land Alliance (ULA) stated, "We were asked to make a public apology to the people of Uganda and the president for harming his name, and [told] that if we don't we will be deregistered." A spokesperson for the group stated later, "We do not see any need to apologize because there are issues on the ground that we think need urgent attention. People have lived on this land for quite some time and have now been chased away."¹¹⁷

Continuing Conflict

In 2011, nearly 10 years after the eviction in Mubende, Germany's National Contact Point (NCP) declared closure of the complaints procedure against NKG.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ FIAN, "Land Grabbing in Uganda: Evictions for foreign investment in coffee in Mubende," July 2012, www.fain.org, (accessed September 12, 2014).

¹¹⁶ John Vidal, "Uganda threatens to expel Oxfam and NGOs over land-grabbing claims," *The Guardian*, May 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/may/10/uganda-oxfam-land-grabbing-claims> (accessed August 4, 2015).

¹¹⁷ John Vidal, "Uganda threatens to expel Oxfam and NGOs over land-grabbing claims," *The Guardian*, May 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/may/10/uganda-oxfam-land-grabbing-claims> (accessed August 4, 2015).

¹¹⁸ Anton Pieper, "Undermining the Accountability Process-the Mubende-Neumann Case," *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2006, <http://www.fian.at/assets/110818Mubende-RTFquarterly-S7.doc.pdf>: (accessed May 4, 2015).

Many evictees were not compensated and as of 2011 those remaining evictees continued to suffer from loss of land. While some found shelter on neighboring land, many still live in makeshift homes and work as on small-scale farming plots which are not sufficient for feeding themselves and their families. Further, because of reduced incomes the number of students attending secondary school has decreased.¹¹⁹

Because of these continuing challenges for the evictees, FIAN and “Wake Up and Fight for your Rights!” believe that the NCP is biased and unfairly favors the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe.

In 2013, a letter from the German Development Minister, Dirk Niebel, was made public. In the letter, Niebel asked FIAN to stop their “campaign” against the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe. In a response letter, FIAN outlined their counter-argument which stated that the “coffee giant” should pay restitutions to those who were forcibly displaced from the land they were living and working on by the Ugandan military in order to allow the NKG access to this land. In an interview with a German public radio station Deutschlandfunk, Niebel insisted that FAIN in focusing on the wrong party in the dispute, hinting that the Ugandan government is more responsible for taking care of compensating the displaced locals. He also reminded audiences that his ministry helps to fund FIAN. Niebel went on to say:

"There is no reason to believe that this investment [by the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe through its Kaweri Coffee subsidiary] was not made in good faith. That's why you have to be careful who you criticize. There were certainly some unfortunate situations in the build-up to this project. But when you work with a government who issues assurances - also in writing - then you can't really start

¹¹⁹ Anton Pieper, “Undermining the Accountability Process-the Mubende-Neumann Case,” *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2006, <http://www.fian.at/assets/110818Mubende-RTFquarterly-S7.doc.pdf>: (accessed May 4, 2015).

with genealogical research, digging deep into Uganda's history, to find out what really happened on a plot of land."¹²⁰

The German Development Minister also went on to urge listeners not to boycott Ugandan coffee, as it would likely harm even more Ugandans and not help those who had been displaced. He also reassured the public that because the NKG Kaweri Plantation is the largest German investment in Uganda, the German government is keeping a close eye on the operations there. Niebel has been closely linked with Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose government regime has been criticized for its libertarian, pro-business stance.¹²¹

As recently as 2016, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda passed legislation allowing the Ugandan government to seize private land if that land was to be involved in national projects such as building roads. The reasoning behind this was said to be that the process of negotiations and discussion compensation with individuals was slowing down national projects.¹²² This is an example of the Ugandan government ability to shift recognition of land tenure for its own benefits. This action shows that the Ugandan government is still able to push communities off of their land for national or international land re-purposing.

¹²⁰ Deutsche Welle, "German Development Minister Niebel defends letter to FIAN on Ugandan coffee," DW.com, <http://www.dw.com/en/german-development-minister-niebel-defends-letter-to-fian-on-ugandan-coffee/a-17018196> (accessed June 25, 2015).

¹²¹ Deutsche Welle, "German Development Minister Niebel defends letter to FIAN on Ugandan coffee," DW.com, <http://www.dw.com/en/german-development-minister-niebel-defends-letter-to-fian-on-ugandan-coffee/a-17018196> (accessed June 25, 2015).

¹²² Athumani, Halima. "Uganda's Government Accused of Grabbing Citizens' Land." Anadolu Agency. August 03, 2016. Accessed September 01, 2016. <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/uganda-s-government-accused-of-grabbing-citizens-land/621005>.

Conclusion

The Ugandan government seems to want to ignore any negative effects of making land deals with foreign investors. The NKG believes that they are having a positive impact on the community the Kaweri coffee plantation is placed in. However, many evictees have not been compensated from their loss of land and their lives have taken a downturn in quality in regards to access to water, medical care, and education (as well as food and land). Organization and individuals looking to reform the land and food practices have had minimal luck in gaining cooperation from the legal system or government.

Conclusion

Land deals in sub-Saharan Africa are a complicated subject matter that involves historical conflicts, historical relationships, perceptions, and real people and places. Land grabbing has very real consequences on real people, land, and industries. However, looking into historical examples of sub-Saharan African relations within the global community helps to give deeper understanding to how and why land grabbing has become such a phenomenon. Examining food security is the other main scholarly topic that dovetails into the land deal discussion. The case of the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe in Uganda is just one example of the new world of popular land grabbing that is rooted in historical context.

Africa's position in the current, globalized world is sometimes argued over by scholars, but many do believe that it is relatively understudied and has been largely defined by exclusion and marginalization. However, in recent years the US and other countries have become more dependant on countries in Africa for oil and other goods. The US military has been giving more prominence to West Africa in strategic planning. These developments point to a shift in the marginalization of African countries by the rest of the world. These circumstances challenge Africa's place in the global economy. According to the scholar James Ferguson, this shift allows an opportunity for some capital investment even if the business opportunity is surrounded by some political contexts that "conventionally considered to discourage it."¹²³

¹²³ Ferguson, 194-195.

Land alienation due to the Ugandan government leasing land to the Neumann Kaffe Gruppe created friction between three groups: the government, the business entity the NKG, and peasants along with their supporters from various non-profit activist groups. Although the NKG claims that its coffee plantation in the Mubende region is a sustainable farm and benefits to local populations who were not displaced are visible, sustainable agricultural development cannot truly be sustainable unless it protects human and land rights as well as treating land practices with respect.

The aim of this thesis was to paint a picture of land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa and give some background on the subject matter. I hoped to show the complicated outcomes of land deals, including the many negative impacts- especially the negative impacts on those who are displaced by land leasing. I also hoped to show the reaction of those trying to protest their eviction and the difficulties they face in gaining political or legal traction. Although in some ways the Ugandan government has recognized the flaws in its land tenure system, there are still many conflicts over land.

Thoughts of development, security threats, and post-colonial placement of Africa in the globalized world all allow for foreign investors to lease land in countries like Uganda. Theories surrounding the history and placement of Africa in the world have been a key part in allowing for the rush of present day land grabbing. Rhetoric on security (global security, food security, and land security) also plays a role in the act of present day land grabbing. Each of these also shape how land grabbing is presented to governments, business, and the public.

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