

LAND GRABBING AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

RETHINKING
Globalizations

Edited by Matias E. Margulis, Nora McKeon
and Saturnino M. Borras Jr



Land Grabbing and Global Governance

Land grabbing per se is not a new phenomenon, given its historical precedents in the eras of imperialism. However, the character, scale, pace, orientation and key drivers of the recent wave of land grabs is a distinct historical event closely tied to the changing dynamics of the global agri-food, feed and fuel complex.

Land grabbing is facilitated by ever greater flows of capital, goods, and ideas across borders, and these flows occur through axes of power that are far more polycentric than the North-South imperialist tradition. Land grabs occur in the context of changes in the character of the global food regime, formerly anchored by North Atlantic empires; the integrated food-energy complex seems to be headed towards multiple centres of power, especially with the rise of the BRICS and the proliferation of middle income countries participating in many of the land transactions.

Land Grabbing and Global Governance offers insights from leading scholars and experts on contemporary land grabs. This volume examines land grabs in direct relation to a global economy undergoing profound change and the role of new configurations of actors and power in governance institutions and practices.

This book was published as a special issue of *Globalizations*.

Matias E. Margulis is Assistant Professor of International Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia. His current book project explores the global regulation of agricultural trade and food security. He is a former Canadian trade policy advisor and has worked on global food security policy at several multilateral organizations.

Nora McKeon studied history at Harvard and political science at the Sorbonne before joining the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations where she became responsible for the overall direction of FAO's policy and programme interaction with civil society. She now divides her time between research, teaching and activism around food systems, peasant farmer movements and UN-civil society relations.

Saturnino M. Borras Jr is Associate Professor at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, Adjunct Professor at the College of Humanities and Development Studies (COHD) of China Agricultural University in Beijing, and a Fellow of the Amsterdam-based Transnational Institute (TNI) and of the California-based Food First.

Rethinking Globalizations

Edited by

Barry K. Gills, University of Newcastle, UK

Kevin Gray, University of Sussex, UK

This series is designed to break new ground in the literature on globalization and its academic and popular understanding. Rather than perpetuating or simply reacting to the economic understanding of globalization, this series seeks to capture the term and broaden its meaning to encompass a wide range of issues and disciplines and convey a sense of alternative possibilities for the future.

1. Whither Globalization?

The vortex of knowledge and globalization

James H. Mittelman

2. Globalization and Global History

Edited by Barry K. Gills and William R. Thompson

3. Rethinking Civilization

Communication and terror in the global village

Majid Tehranian

4. Globalization and Contestation

The new great counter-movement

Ronaldo Munck

5. Global Activism

Ruth Reitan

6. Globalization, the City and Civil Society in Pacific Asia

Edited by Mike Douglass, K.C. Ho and Giok Ling Ooi

7. Challenging Euro-America's Politics of Identity

The return of the native

Jorge Luis Andrade Fernandes

8. The Global Politics of Globalization

"Empire" vs "Cosmopolis"

Edited by Barry K. Gills

9. The Globalization of Environmental Crisis

Edited by Jan Oosthoek and Barry K. Gills

10. Globalization as Evolutionary Process

Modeling global change

Edited by Geroge Modelski, Tessaleno Devezas and William R. Thompson

11. The Political Economy of Global Security

War, future crises and changes in global governance

Heikki Patomäki

12. Cultures of Globalization

Coherence, hybridity, contestation

Edited by Kevin Archer, M. Martin Bosman, M. Mark Amen and Ella Schmidt

13. Globalization and the Global Politics of Justice

Edited by Barry K. Gills

14. Global Economy Contested

Power and conflict across the
international division of labor
Edited by Marcus Taylor

**15. Rethinking Insecurity, War and
Violence**

Beyond savage globalization?
*Edited by Damian Grenfell and
Paul James*

16. Recognition and Redistribution

Beyond international development
*Edited by Heloise Weber and
Mark T. Berger*

17. The Social Economy

Working alternatives in a globalizing era
Edited by Hasmet M. Uluorta

18. The Global Governance of Food

*Edited by Sara R. Curran, April Linton,
Abigail Cooke and Andrew Schrank*

**19. Global Poverty, Ethics and Human
Rights**

The role of multilateral organisations
*Desmond McNeill and
Asunción Lera St. Clair*

**20. Globalization and Popular
Sovereignty**

Democracy's transnational dilemma
Adam Lupel

21. Limits to Globalization

North-South divergence
*William R. Thompson and
Rafael Reuveny*

22. Globalisation, Knowledge and Labour

Education for solidarity within spaces of
resistance
*Edited by Mario Novelli and
Anibel Ferus-Comelo*

23. Dying Empire

U.S. imperialism and global resistance
Francis Shor

24. Alternative Globalizations

An integrative approach to studying
dissident knowledge in the global
justice movement
S. A. Hamed Hosseini

**25. Global Restructuring, Labour and the
Challenges for Transnational
Solidarity**

*Edited by Andreas Bieler and
Ingemar Lindberg*

26. Global South to the Rescue

Emerging humanitarian superpowers
and globalizing rescue industries
Edited by Paul Amar

**27. Global Ideologies and Urban
Landscapes**

*Edited by Manfred B. Steger and
Anne McNevin*

28. Power and Transnational Activism

Edited by Thomas Olesen

29. Globalization and Crisis

Edited by Barry K. Gills

**30. Andre Gunder Frank and Global
Development**

Visions, remembrances and explorations
*Edited by Patrick Manning and
Barry K. Gills*

31. Global Social Justice

*Edited by Heather Widdows and
Nicola J. Smith*

**32. Globalization, Labor Export and
Resistance**

A study of Filipino migrant domestic
workers in global cities
Ligaya Lindio-McGovern

33. Situating Global Resistance
Between Discipline and Dissent
*Edited by Lara Montesinos Coleman
and Karen Tucker*

34. A History of World Order and Resistance
The Making and Unmaking of Global Subjects
André C. Drainville

35. Migration, Work and Citizenship in the New Global Order
*Edited by Ronaldo Munck,
Carl-Ulrik Schierup and
Raúl Delgado Wise*

36. Edges of Global Justice
The World Social Forum and Its 'Others'
Janet Conway

37. Land Grabbing and Global Governance
*Edited by Matias E. Margulis,
Nora McKeon and
Saturnino M. Borrás Jr*

38. Dialectics in World Politics
Edited by Shannon Brincat

39. Crisis, Movement, Management: Globalising Dynamics
*Edited by James Goodman and
Jonathan Paul Marshall*

40. China's Development
Capitalism and Empire
Michel Aglietta and Guo Bai

41. Global Governance and NGO Participation
Charlotte Dany

42. Arab Revolutions and World Transformations
*Edited by Anna M. Agathangelou and
Nevzat Soguk*

43. Global Movement
Edited by Ruth Reitan

44. Free Trade and the Transnational Labour Movement
*Edited by Andreas Bieler,
Bruno Ciccaglione, John Hilary and
Ingemar Lindberg*

45. Counter-Globalization and Socialism in the 21st Century
The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America
Thomas Muhr

46. Global Civil Society and Transversal Hegemony
The Globalization-Contestation Nexus
Karen M. Buckley

47. Contentious Agency and Natural Resource Politics
Markus Kröger

48. Social Movements, the Poor and the New Politics of the Americas
*Edited by Håvard Haarstad, Mark Amen
and Asuncion Lera St Clair*

49. Development in an Era of Neoliberal Globalization
Edited by Henry Veltmeyer

Land Grabbing and Global Governance

Edited by

**Matias E. Margulis, Nora McKeon and
Saturnino M. Borras Jr**

First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2014 Taylor & Francis

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-62834-1

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Taylor & Francis Books

Publisher's Note

The publisher accepts responsibility for any inconsistencies that may have arisen during the conversion of this book from journal articles to book chapters, namely the possible inclusion of journal terminology.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders for their permission to reprint material in this book. The publishers would be grateful to hear from any copyright holder who is not here acknowledged and will undertake to rectify any errors or omissions in future editions of this book.

Contents

<i>Citation Information</i>	ix
1. Introduction: Land Grabbing and Global Governance: Critical Perspectives <i>Matias E. Margulis, Nora McKeon & Saturnino M. Borras Jr</i>	1
Section One: Theorizing Land Grabbing, Globalization and Governance	
2. Land Grabs Today: Feeding the Disassembling of National Territory <i>Saskia Sassen</i>	25
3. Land Grabbing as Security Mercantilism in International Relations <i>Philip McMichael</i>	47
4. Governing the Global Land Grab: Multipolarity, Ideas, and Complexity in Transnational Governance <i>Matias E. Margulis & Tony Porter</i>	65
Section Two: Transnational Actors and Emerging Global Land Governance	
5. The Governance of Gulf Agro-Investments <i>Eckart Woertz</i>	87
6. ‘One Does Not Sell the Land Upon Which the People Walk’: Land Grabbing, Transnational Rural Social Movements, and Global Governance <i>Nora McKeon</i>	105
7. International Human Rights and Governing Land Grabbing: A View from Global Civil Society <i>Rolf Künneemann & Sofía Monsalve Suárez</i>	123
8. Certification Schemes and the Governance of Land: Enforcing Standards or Enabling Scrutiny? <i>Elizabeth Fortin & Ben Richardson</i>	141

CONTENTS

9. The Challenge of Global Governance of Land Grabbing: Changing International Agricultural Context and Competing Political Views and Strategies <i>Saturnino M. Borras Jr, Jennifer C. Franco & Chunyu Wang</i>	161
Section Three: Review of Recent Global Land Governance Instruments	
10. The FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests <i>Philip Seufert</i>	181
11. The Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment <i>Phoebe Stephens</i>	187
12. The Minimum Human Rights Principles Applicable to Large-Scale Land Acquisitions or Leases <i>Priscilla Claeys & Gaëtan Vanloqueren</i>	193
13. Private Governance and Land Grabbing: The Equator Principles and the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels <i>Ariane Goetz</i>	199
14. Restrictions to Foreign Acquisitions of Agricultural Land in Argentina and Brazil <i>Nicolás Marcelo Perrone</i>	205
<i>Index</i>	211

Citation Information

The chapters in this book were originally published in *Globalizations*, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013). When citing this material, please use the original page numbering for each article, as follows:

Chapter 1

Introduction: Land Grabbing and Global Governance:

Critical Perspectives

Matias E. Margulis, Nora McKeon &

Saturnino M. Borras Jr

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 1–24

Chapter 2

Land Grabs Today: Feeding the Disassembling of National Territory

Saskia Sassen

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 25–46

Chapter 3

Land Grabbing as Security Mercantilism in International Relations

Philip McMichael

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 47–64

Chapter 4

Governing the Global Land Grab: Multipolarity, Ideas, and Complexity in Transnational Governance

Matias E. Margulis & Tony Porter

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 65–86

Chapter 5

The Governance of Gulf Agro-Investments

Eckart Woertz

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 87–104

Chapter 6

*'One Does Not Sell the Land Upon Which the People Walk':
Land Grabbing, Transnational Rural Social Movements, and
Global Governance*

Nora McKeon

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 105–122

Chapter 7

*International Human Rights and Governing Land Grabbing:
A View from Global Civil Society*

Rolf Künneemann & Sofía Monsalve Suárez

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 123–140

Chapter 8

*Certification Schemes and the Governance of Land:
Enforcing Standards or Enabling Scrutiny?*

Elizabeth Fortin & Ben Richardson

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 141–160

Chapter 9

*The Challenge of Global Governance of Land Grabbing:
Changing International Agricultural Context and Competing
Political Views and Strategies*

Saturnino M. Borras Jr, Jennifer C. Franco &

Chunyu Wang

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 161–180

Chapter 10

*The FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance
of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*

Philip Seufert

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 181–186

Chapter 11

The Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment

Phoebe Stephens

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 187–192

Chapter 12

*The Minimum Human Rights Principles Applicable to
Large-Scale Land Acquisitions or Leases*

Priscilla Claeys & Gaëtan Vanloqueren

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 193–198

Chapter 13

*Private Governance and Land Grabbing: The Equator
Principles and the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels*

Ariane Goetz

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 199–204

Chapter 14

*Restrictions to Foreign Acquisitions of Agricultural Land in
Argentina and Brazil*

Nicolás Marcelo Perrone

Globalizations, volume 10, issue 1 (February 2013)

pp. 205–209

Please direct any queries you may have about the citations to
clsuk.permissions@cengage.com

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

Land Grabbing and Global Governance: Critical Perspectives

MATIAS E. MARGULIS*, NORA McKEON** &
SATURNINO M. BORRAS JR***

**University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, Canada & Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Cologne, Germany*

***Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy*

****International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands*

ABSTRACT *Land grabbing has emerged as a significant issue in contemporary global governance that cuts across the fields of development, investment, food security, among others. Whereas land grabbing per se is not a new phenomenon, having historical precedents in the era of imperialism, the character, scale, pace, orientation, and key drivers of the recent wave of land grabs is a distinct historical phenomenon closely tied to major shifts in power and production in the global political economy. Land grabbing is facilitated by ever greater flows of capital, goods, and ideas across borders, and these flows occur through axes of power that are far more polycentric than the North–South imperialist tradition. In this introduction we argue that land grabbing speaks to many of the core questions of globalization studies. However, we note scholars of globalization have yet to deeply engage with this new field. We situate land grabbing in an era of advanced capitalism, multiple global crises, and the role of new configurations of power and resistance in global governance institutions. The essays in this collection contribute to identifying land grabbing as an important and urgent topic for theoretical and empirical investigations to deepen our understanding of contemporary globalization and governance.*

Introduction

Over the last few years, land grabbing has become a well-established phenomenon. There are varying estimates of the quantity of lands that have changed hands during recent years, from a low of 45 million hectares (World Bank, 2010) to a high of 227 million hectares (Oxfam, 2012), although how the counting was done in these estimates is not always clear. This global land rush is characterized by transnational and domestic corporate investors, governments, and local elites taking control over large quantities of land (and its minerals and water) to produce food, feed, biofuel, and other industrial commodities for the international or domestic markets. Such land deals are often associated with very low levels of transparency, consultation, and respect for the rights of local communities living off the land (Borras and Franco, 2010; Cotula, 2012; Zoomers, 2010). In response to concerns over the real and massive experiences of dispossession, violence, and social exclusion, land grabbing has been elevated to an issue of world political significance around which local and transnational resistance has swelled and for which new global governance instruments are being created. The importance of land grabbing as a topic in global governance is well established. This salience is confirmed by events in the real world: land grabbing is on the agenda of the Group of Eight (G8)/Group of Twenty (G20); it is at the core of the World Bank's new global development agenda; several new global governance instruments have been negotiated to address land grabbing; global civil society and transnational social movements are mobilizing around this phenomenon; and investors and corporations are intensifying their acquisitions and global competition for land.

The idea of a land grab has a long intellectual history dating back to the writings of Karl Marx. The study of land and agrarian change has been integral to our understanding of the development of capitalism and the contemporary world order (Araghi and Karides, 2012; Peluso and Lund, 2011). We recognize that land grabs today are deeply shaped by past practices and historical legacies and exhibit continuities from the past but also diverge in significant ways, and are riddled with contradictions and tensions. Our emphasis here, however, is on the specific contemporary context that is giving rise to land grabbing on a global scale. There is a burgeoning academic literature that has so far examined land grabbing from the perspective of agrarian political economy (Peluso and Lund, 2011; White et al., 2012) and political ecology (Fairhead et al., 2012), as well as around the issues of food security (Robertson and Pinstrup-Anderson, 2010), food sovereignty (Rosset, 2011), labor (Li, 2011), human rights (De Schutter, 2011), gender relations (Berhman et al., 2012; Chu, 2011; Julia and White, 2012), land use change (Friis and Reenberg, 2010), the role of the state (Borras et al., 2013b), water grabbing (Allan et al., 2012; Mehta et al., 2012), and neoliberalism (Araghi and Karides, 2012).

With some exceptions scholars of globalization in general have been absent from the debate on this emerging issue. This is unfortunate because land grabbing is emblematic of contemporary globalization and speaks to many of the big questions that concern scholars of globalization. Land grabbing is facilitated by ever more extensive and rapid flows of capital, goods, and ideas across borders and these flows occur through axes of power that are far more polycentric than the North–South imperialist tradition. In addition, land grabbing is occurring in the context of late capitalism and global multiple food–energy–climate–finance crises in which we can see the changing character of global production and consumption, including an integrated global food–energy complex. Land grabbing is a global-scale phenomenon that is occurring in all regions and parts of the world, and not only in Africa as is assumed to be the case (see Visser and Spoor, 2011, on post-Soviet Eurasia; Borras et al., 2012b, on Latin America; Borras and Franco, 2011, on Southeast Asia). Whereas land grabbing per se is not a new phenomenon,

having historical precedents in the eras of colonialism and imperialism (Alden Wily, 2012), the drivers, scale, and pace of the recent wave of land grabs are distinct from previous eras. As Saskia Sassen, explains (2013, this volume), unlike in the eras of colonialism and imperialism the current wave of land grabs occurs in a world of sovereign states exercising territorial control at least formally. Transborder flows of capital, property rights, and agricultural production go through, rather than bypass, multiple layers of formal governance mechanisms ranging from investment and trade treaties to financial markets. Therefore, contemporary global land grabbing displays properties specific to our era of advanced economic globalization. Land grabbing is an important site of new transnational political struggles for authority and control over resources and governance. These struggles go beyond who should control the land, and are contests largely about what should be grown on it, how, by whom, for what markets, hence the future of global agriculture. Thus the stakes being fought over in the struggles in the global land grab are massive and are likely to reshape the future course of globalization, partly by producing openings and/or closing off avenues for global policies and practices that provide those that live off the land with autonomy, including a degree of protection from global economic forces, to decide future life courses.

In this introductory essay, we raise the point of the need for globalization studies to address more systematically the issue of global land grabbing. As suggested above, the global land grab reveals strongly many aspects of economic globalization. In the same instance, contemporary globalization cannot be fully understood without a deeper understanding of land grabbing. It is useful to develop a more nuanced understanding of new and important sets of transborder flows, power relations, and political struggles that converge where land grabbing occurs and in global-scale governance institutions and practices. These global aspects have remained largely under-studied and under-theorized but are precisely the terrain for inquiry where globalization scholars are most strongly situated to engage with questions concerning territory, power, authority, and resistance.

This collection is a preliminary effort seeking to bring a lens from globalizations studies to land grabbing. Our purpose is twofold. One is to offer initial analyses of land grabbing from a globalization perspective in order to bring land grabbing to the attention of scholars interested in globalization and transnational governance. Our hunch is that given that land grabbing cuts across so many core areas of globalization research—territorialization, financialization, trade, human rights, crises, and so on—readers will quickly start to see the links between their work and the ideas presented here, and in the process we hope to stimulate new questions and lines of investigation in the field. A second purpose is to foster greater dialogue between scholars of globalization with the burgeoning literature on land grabbing spearheaded by agrarian political economy and political ecology scholars. These latter fields of study, which now provide an extensive set of case studies of land grabbing, would be enriched by the global-scale theoretical contributions of globalization and transnational governance studies. This can lead to more robust analysis of global–local interactions behind land grabbing. One starting point for such cross-fertilization is to consider how local land struggles are likely to be altered by changes in the global policy environment, such as the entrance of foreign investors that is permitted by the burden of the debt regime affecting most developing countries—as Sassen (2013, this volume) explains—but also by global governance instruments aimed at defending the rights of those who live off the land (Künneemann and Monsalve Suárez, 2013, this volume; McKeon, 2013, this volume). Studies of globalization and governance also stand to benefit from a deeper engagement with agrarian political economy and political ecology analysis of land grabbing because the latter have produced deep knowledge of the social, economic, and political effects of the multiple food–energy–climate–finance crises *on the ground*. Globalization and transnational governance

scholars have disproportionately paid attention to the recent global financial crisis with little consideration of the other related political economy processes. It is not our point that one crisis (i.e. financial, food or climatic) is more important than another one. Instead our point is that knowledge of globalization in the twenty-first century is most likely to be enhanced only when we start from the standpoint that these crises are mutually affected world historical events.

This collection is organized around the transnational contestation of land grabbing and its governance. This is because the global/transnational scales are sites of new and significant governance activity. This volume offers a perspective that examines land grabbing and its governance as embedded within a larger international political economy context. The collection offers critical perspectives in the sense that most authors in this collection are concerned by land grabbing and its negative social and ecological consequences. Hence, this collection is sympathetic to a global social justice agenda. It is in this context that we also purposely include knowledge and experiences from outside the academy: several of the essays in this volume are written by activists situated in global civil society who have participated in the negotiation and resistance politics of emergent global land governance. This coming together of academic and activist researchers enriches this collection immensely, and is important for the co-production and -mobilization of knowledge.

Global Governance and Land Grabbing

One of the notable developments that followed public awareness of a global land grab in 2008 was the rapid elevation of land grabbing onto the global governance agenda and a flurry of global rule-making projects at various scales involving a multiplicity of actors to regulate land grabbing. Land grabbing has been taken up in the work of the United Nations (UN) system and Bretton Woods institutions—but most actively at the UN Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the World Bank, at the G8 and G20 summits, at the European Commission (i.e. in discussion about the indirect effects of its biofuel mandate), and in the African Union's work on a regional land policy framework. The well known, flagship global rule-making projects are the recently negotiated UN *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* (herein 'Voluntary Guidelines'; see Seufert, 2013, this volume) and the ongoing transnational negotiations to develop rules for responsible agricultural investment (see Stephens, 2013, this volume). Many other projects have been spawned by the food crisis that impact on global governance and are directly related to land grabbing, such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (a new multi-donor trust fund that encourages public and private investment in agriculture), the G8's so-called New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, a development assistance program now spearheaded by the Obama administration, and the World Economic Forum's 'Grow Africa' initiative. All of these projects share the objective of promoting large-scale private-sector led investments in developing country agriculture and highlighting the weight of investments relative to that of policies. Meanwhile, dozens of countries are revisiting and reforming national and local land planning and tenure laws as well as their bilateral/multilateral trade, investment, and development cooperation arrangements—and depending on the local politics, doing so to either facilitate (Borras et al., 2013b) or limit (Murmis and Murmis, 2012; Perrone, 2013, this volume; Wilkinson et al. 2012) land grabbing domestically.

'Global governance' is a term that is widely used to refer to the modern practice of governing transborder problems and to the institutions, rules, actors, and ideologies that govern the global political economy (we include here the social and biophysical). Global governance as an academic concept and field emerged in the 1990s in response to new global-scale problems such as HIV/

AIDs, climate change, and international migration that came to be understood as beyond the capacity of any single nation-state to manage on their own (Roseneau, 1995). The field of global governance was also deeply influenced by shifting power at the global level and its implication for international cooperation; this included at first the fall of the Soviet Union and what this meant for US unipolarity and multilateralism and, more recently, the focus on emerging countries as new players in multilateralism. Today the term global governance is widely used by academics and the general public in a variety of ways and meanings, including reference to the ‘practices of governance without government’ (Roseneau and Czempiel, 1992); a ‘normative goal’ (Weiss, 2000); a ‘discourse’ (Brand, 2005); the inclusion of actors other than nation-states (McKeon, 2009) and the ‘institutionalization of the neoliberal globalization project’ (Cox, 1993). Like other scholars, we recognize the complexity and contradictions bound up with this term/concept and empirical reality (see Kahler and Lake, 2003; Wilkinson and Hughes, 2002). In our view, a critical approach to global governance is required to make sense of the new global rule-making projects around land grabbing. This includes identifying the actors, interests, and ideologies driving particular governance initiatives but also the international political economy context in which such initiatives arise.

Land and Territoriality

Land at first glance does not easily fit the type of singular issue areas commonly associated with contemporary global governance. Unlike other fields of global governance such as climate change, HIV/AIDs, and terrorism that are framed as global-scale problems that are broadly recognizable as such by the global imagination—climate change with (negative) ecological change, HIV/AIDs with high mortality rates, terrorism with unpredictable violence—land does not slot easily into existing socially constructed categories of a global-scale ‘problem’. Unlike earlier moments of world history the contemporary period of world order is one defined by nation-states as the primary forms of political organization. As such, in the current era land and its control have tended to be equated with state practices. This conception of land as integral to sovereign territory and authority is affirmed by most international practices, such as international legal recognition of state borders and territorial authority (i.e. the spatial demarcation of where a state’s land and water borders begin and end). In the postcolonial era, land is regarded as a thing belonging to a national state. In general, land has not figured as a significant issue area of global governance with the exceptions of instances of where land is invaded by an occupying force. Land as sovereign territory is a key international norm and framework critical to understanding the politics of global land governance. This particular norm and discourse that the land belongs to the state is especially strong in postcolonial states where the state owns most of the land. Rolf Künemann and Sofía Monsalve Suárez (2013, this volume) note that land tenure governance regimes in the Global South mirror their colonial antecedents in that they provide the state with far-reaching control over the land. They contend that while contemporary land grabbing may be driven by global economic actors, the importance of national legal frameworks should not be overlooked because these have actually made it easier for states to facilitate land grabbing. Closely related to the argument made by Künemann and Monsalve Suárez (ibid.), Borrás et al. (2013, this volume) explain that states actively facilitate land grabs through a combination of the following tasks that only national governments have absolute authority to perform, namely, (1) ‘invention/justification’ of the need for large-scale land investments; (2) ‘definition, reclassification and quantification’ of what is ‘marginal, under-utilized and empty’ lands; (3) ‘identification’ of these particular types of land; (4)

‘acquisition/appropriation’ of these lands; and (5) ‘reallocation/disposition’ of these lands to investors. Much of what is being grabbed is within the legal-administrative-military control of national states.

The global land grab raises deeper questions about territoriality in the era of advanced economic globalization. In her contribution to this collection, Saskia Sassen (2013, this volume) explains that the global land grab suggests a larger structural transformation at play that is ‘producing massive structural holes in the tissue of national sovereign territory’. For Sassen, the global land grab reveals an ‘active making of an increasingly large number of partial, often highly specialized, cross-border spaces and arrangements’ occurring during a moment of massive systematic change; land is shifting from sovereign national territory to a commodity for the global market. Land is highly demanded by capitalism that is leading to the rapid commodification and financialization of land on a world scale and ‘re-purposing’ of national territory along the lines of the demands and purposes of foreign firms and governments (Sassen, 2013, this volume). This, according to Sassen, does not signal the end of the state but a transformation of the state that is ever more inserting itself into transnational processes that operate according to other (non-national) logics. However, such transformation can be highly destructive to society and citizenship: ‘Foreign land acquisitions include vast stretches of national territory articulated through villages, smallholder agriculture, rural manufacturing districts, and through the actors that make these economies and reproduce them—whether or not this is recognized by the state. Much of this politico-structural complexity is today being evicted from that territory due to those acquisitions. At the extreme we might ask what is citizenship when national territory is downgraded to foreign-owned land for plantations and the rest is evicted—floras, faunas, villages, smallholders’ (Sassen, 2013, this volume).

In his contribution to this collection, Philip McMichael’s (2013, this volume) reading of the global land grab through a ‘food regime’ lens similarly identifies the global grab as a paradox, where “‘re-territorialization” via investment in offshore lands for agro-exporting of food, fuel and bio-economic products, and “de-territorialization” as host states surrender land and water for export to states defined (through market measures or policy) as food-dependent’. Indeed, the global land grab signals a major shift in the global agri-food system because the process of ‘re-territorialization’ is a strategy by certain states and investors ‘to avoid dependence on markets, or more particularly, market intermediaries’ that he labels as an incipient form of ‘security mercantilism’ that is overriding the World Trade Organization (WTO)/corporate food regime with a set of bilateral arrangements organized by states and/or sovereign wealth funds (ibid.).

A Short History of Global Land Governance and Structural Changes in the Global Political Economy

The current efforts to construct land grabbing as a sphere of global governance need to be put in the historical context of global land politics. The postwar interstate system dominated by the US actively sought to keep the land question out of formal international governance institutions and practices. This was largely a response to quash leftist and socialist states that sought to create international instruments to reinforce land reform and/or collectivization at home. Land reform, especially the nationalization of privately held lands and land redistribution from elites to peasants/landless poor, has long been a highly ideological and politicized struggle. Land reform was a very contentious issue of international significance during the Cold War. In the 1960s, under the Alliance for Progress, the US supported land reform on a selective basis, providing bilateral assistance to countries where it regarded land reform, if not adequately

addressed, would result in communist revolutions. An early effort to establish formal international governance for land took place at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) convened by FAO in 1979. The aim of this conference was to establish an international framework (in the context of the Cold War) for land reform and rural development. Despite political momentum in advance of the conference, WCARRD was unsuccessful in reaching this objective. As Nora McKeon (2013, this volume) explains, the international land agenda lost further steam, as it fell ‘victim in the 1980s to the introduction of structural adjustment and a general disenchantment with agriculture as a motor for development’. Whereas land reform was pulled out of oblivion in the 1990s as part of the World Bank-led implementation of a market-led agrarian reform approach, land had receded in importance for states as an issue requiring international deliberation. It is partly the lack of political progress at the international level to advance social justice-oriented redistributive land policies that eventually led to the conditions that gave birth to the ‘Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform’ by La Via Campesina and its allies. Launched in 1999 originally as an anti-market-assisted land reform campaign, the campaign later evolved into a more comprehensive agrarian reform agenda (Borras and Franco, 2009). This campaign has contributed to the revival of agrarian reform in the international official agenda, especially at the FAO. In turn, this led to what is essentially a second version of WCARRD, the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in March 2006, organized by FAO and hosted by the Brazilian government and held in Porto Alegre.

The ICARRD initiative paved the way for states and rural social movements to articulate a new normative basis for future international land governance that included, among others, the recognition of collective land rights and acknowledged the cultural and social dimensions of land (see ICARRD, 2006; McKeon, 2009, 2013, this volume). This event was critical in that it brought land issues back on the official agenda of the FAO’s deliberative bodies. Around this time, bilateral and multilateral agencies initiated and passed their own land and development policies, including the European Union (EU) in 2004, the International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 2009, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in 2009, and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) in 2010. One of the most concrete outcomes of ICARRD has been the decision by the FAO, supported by civil society organizations, to start a process for possible voluntary guidelines on land tenure. However, political consensus on negotiating international rules proved elusive and crawled along until the global land grab (on the heels of the global food crisis) put the negotiations under the global spotlight. As the global land grab became a matter of public knowledge and concern, it provided the political impetus and sense of urgency to move forward on global land governance. The outcome of this was the negotiation and adoption in 2012 of the Voluntary Guidelines in the newly reformed CFS (which is itself an innovative experiment in global governance). Taking the long view, the global land grab proved to be a significant tipping point in the politics of land that has ushered in land governance at the global scale.

Land grabbing also signals shifts in *world order*. Land grabbing already points to a transition towards new world political, economic, and biophysical conditions with the emergence of the BRICs and middle-income countries, global biofuels complex, and green grabbing (McMichael, 2012). Key aspects of this shift include the geographic sites and modes of agricultural production with the Northern grain-based food regime being supplanted with ‘the emergence of new players wanting to gain power in terms of reshaping international rules that govern the production, distribution and consumption of food and other closely related commodities embedded within the ongoing reconfiguration of key hubs of global capital’ (Borras et al., 2013, this volume). These

new players include the BRICS countries, powerful middle-income countries, new OECD countries such as South Korea, and the Gulf states. However, new and old powers pursue different ends through land grabbing. In his contribution to this collection, Eckart Woertz drives home the point that Gulf states are quite different from the other players in contemporary land grabbing because of their unique political economy conditions. They are rentier states highly dependent on imported food and aware of the historical legacy of the failed 1970s pan-Arab breadbasket strategy that involved land grabbing in Sudan and Egypt (Woertz, 2013, this volume). This time around, and also in response to the depth of the global food crisis, Gulf states are creating new institutions to coordinate food security policies and land investments, including a mix of public and private ventures. A key but less well understood phenomenon is the importance of crops and commodities with multiple and flexible uses across food, feed, and biofuel complexes and industrial commodities; much land grabbing is for what Borrás et al. (2013, this volume) call the ‘flex crops and commodities’ sector. A second important aspect is the shift towards multipolarity evidenced by the replacement of the G8 with the G20 and the ascent of emerging countries in the governance architecture for finance, trade and climate change (see McMichael, 2013; Margulis and Porter, 2013, this volume). As Margulis and Porter argue in their essay, the global land grab cannot be reduced only to core–periphery relations. Even though Chinese activity in land acquisitions in rural Africa display ‘asymmetries of power and patterns of exploitation very closely resembling core–periphery relations . . . Chinese land acquisitions in rural Australia are not captured well by a core–periphery label’ (Margulis and Porter, 2013, this volume). Indeed the same applies to *land grabbed-land grabbers* such as Brazil and Argentina which are both major players in land acquisitions across South America but are also major targets of foreign land acquisitions (see, Perrone, 2013, this volume; see also Borrás et al., 2012a; Galeano, 2012; Murmis and Murmis, 2012; Urioste, 2012). To a certain extent, land grabbing reveals important shifts in global political power but also in production of resources and goods that may be more vital to a future global political economy where the ecological considerations become more paramount.

Governance and Authority

A number of concepts from global governance scholarship are relevant for the study of land grabbing. The first is the concept of *authority* which is closely related to the idea of governance; which actors have authority to regulate a particular sphere of activity? Global governance scholarship has shown that authority has flowed in two principal ways over the past decades that differ from the postwar international system of governance.

First, there has been a *shift of authority delegated from the state to international institutions*. International institutions play a greater role in managing interstate affairs than previously; this is most prominent in the case of the EU, the WTO, and the International Criminal Court (ICC), which can take decisions that are binding on states and constrain a state’s policy space. Emerging global land governance at first glance does not appear to involve a formal delegation of land governance from the state to supranational institutions. None of the transnational governance mechanisms—the Voluntary Guidelines or principles for responsible agriculture investment—are taking the form of legally binding international treaties. However, multilateral institutions are the key sites for the new politics of addressing land grabbing. In particular, we can observe different actors enrolling different multilateral institutions to advance alternative objectives. The G8 countries have enrolled the World Bank as their preferred site for the creation and implementation of emergent global land governance. The World Bank’s official policy supports

large-scale investments in lands as a means of improving agricultural productivity and economic growth that fit well within its new agricultural development strategy that has become the core of its activities since 2008. Simply put, the G8 countries have sought to provide the World Bank with the authority to be the leading agent in this new sphere of governance, and they have continued to provide it with resources and entrust it to manage a spate of new global agricultural development programs. Global civil society and transnational rural movements have instead enrolled the FAO and the CFS to serve as a key arena for emergent global land governance. The FAO and the CFS are global policy spaces that have been much more open to incorporating human rights and exploring food sovereignty as an alternative paradigm for global agricultural policy. The CFS, in particular following the 2008 global food crisis, has been reformed and has taken on a more central role in global agricultural and food policy debates (McKeon, 2011; Margulis, 2012, 2013). For many, including McKeon (2013, this volume) the CFS has filled, partially, a governance gap that existed for transnational political deliberation over food security and rural development. But, the CFS is not the only important arena in which transnational agrarian movements try to construct global governance in their favor. They engage in other strategic undertakings through multilateral institutions, such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) for Via Campesina's advocacy for a UN Peasants' Charter (Edelman and Carwil, 2011).

Global governance scholarship also has examined the *shift of authority to non-state actors*. Non-state actors have taken on governance functions in existing policy fields but also in new areas of activity. The first group includes private actors that play a greater role of governing transnational financial transactions and economic flows often through modes of self-regulation, including the use of standards and benchmarking, as well as private international arbitration of financial and investment deals (Cutler et al., 1999; Hall and Biersteker, 2002). NGOs and transnational social movements too have increased authority in global governance, and this is seen in diverse areas ranging from fair trade labeling and certification to developing industry standards for humanitarian relief to the monitoring and reporting of human rights and environmental abuses. The rise of non-state authority should not be seen as a zero-sum game where states compete with non-state actors for authority in governance. The situation is more nuanced. Many private forms of governance require explicit consent from the state, especially legal approbation of private practices at the national level and for their global operations (Brathwaite and Drahos, 2000). In practice, states always retain some regulatory oversight even if they choose to exercise it lightly. There is also a trend toward hybrid forms of global governance, where even industry-led initiatives involve states and NGOs as stakeholders in governance practices and implementation such as at the International Standards Organization (Clapp, 1998) or the Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Hein and Kohlmorgen, 2008). Non-state actors also exert authority outside of formal global governance arrangements. For example, credit rating agencies' assessment of the state's credit worthiness (i.e. in the form of bond ratings) has a significant influence on the state's financial affairs. Transnational business lobbies also work to influence global rules such as in the creation of the intellectually property rights regime at the WTO (Sell, 2003). NGOs and transnational social movements have contested global economic governance such as mobilizing against the policies of multilateral institutions like the WTO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, producing what O'Brien et al. (2000) identify as a 'complex multilateralism' whereby multilateral institutions seek to respond to pressure from transnational social movements and other non-state actors.

Transnational social movements and NGOs are highly visible in the politics of emerging global land governance. NGOs were the first to bring the global land grab to public attention (GRAIN, 2008). Moreover, NGOs and transnational agrarian movements were also quick to

mobilize transnationally against the global land grab. However, mobilization at the global scale this time around has less to do with organizing mass public protests (as it was in the case against the WTO), but tends to focus on advocacy work in global policy spaces, particularly the CFS. The emphasis on the CFS (in the midst of a relative absence of anti-WTO type of mass mobilizations) is politically relevant, and we argue that NGOs and transnational agrarian movements are contributing to the creation and contesting emergent global land governance (see also Borras and Franco, 2009). McKeon points (2013, this volume) to the importance of the ‘reformed’ CFS as an open space that was available for transnational agrarian movements and their NGO allies, working through the International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty—today’s largest international coalition of rural social movements—to introduce land issues as an item for intergovernmental deliberation at the CFS. According to McKeon (*ibid.*), ‘[c]ivil society intervention in the discussions was decisive in obtaining agreement that the Voluntary Guidelines be negotiated within the CFS . . . outcomes were largely attributable to the innovative format of the CFS whereby political decisions are made in plenary sessions in which civil society and social movements are full participants rather than in closed door drafting committees as is normally the case in intergovernmental forums.’ The embeddedness of global social movements at the CFS provides a novel experiment in complex multilateralism (see O’Brien et al., 2000).

The participation of global civil society is more than token inclusion; global civil society at the CFS has been relatively successful in advancing its goals and articulating alternative policies that challenge the mainstream policies advanced by the G8 and World Bank. Indeed, the success by global social movements to position the Voluntary Guidelines as a wedge and counter-discourse against the earlier maneuver of the World Bank to place the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (PRAI)—which is essentially a voluntary, corporate self-regulatory instrument—as the centerpiece to regulate land grabbing is indicative of the chessboard politics shaping emergent global land governance (McKeon, 2013, this volume; Margulis and Porter, 2013; this volume).

The heightened presence of global civil society presents its own challenges. At a deeper level is the tension within and between global civil society groups caught between the three political tendencies to governing the land grab identified by Borras et al. (2013, this volume), namely, regulate to facilitate land deals; regulate to mitigate negative impacts and maximize opportunities; and regulate to stop and rollback land grabbing. The position global civil society actors take on this continuum results partly from ideology (i.e. taking an explicit anti-capitalist stance or not), institutional factors (i.e. whether an autonomous coalition of agrarian social movements or a coalition of NGOs, aid donor agencies, and international financial institutions), and differences in strategy and tactics of political work (i.e. dealing with land grabbing in focusing on the ‘here and now’ issues in specific land cases versus dealing with strategic issues such as the character and orientation of the world’s agriculture) (Borras et al., 2013, this volume). These positions are significant because they ‘compete with each other in their interpretations of key international governance instruments, how to use these, and for what purposes’ and thus the meaning ascribed and how emergent global land governance will be implemented on the ground (*ibid.*).

Private-sector actors concerned by emergent global land governance were relatively less present than global civil society organizations in the CFS at the outset, but they have engaged increasingly as the political salience of this forum has become more evident, in close alliance with several national delegations to the CFS process. As several authors in this collection note, it is ironic that the initial drive for private self-regulation has been most strongly advanced

by the G8 countries and the World Bank but not by private actors themselves (McKeon, 2013, this volume; McMichael, 2013, this volume; Margulis and Porter, 2013, this volume). Indeed, much of the World Bank-proposed PRAI seeks to integrate the numerous transnational private self-regulatory schemes on sustainability (Stephens, 2013, this volume; see also Borras and Franco, 2010). Fortin and Richardson (2013, this volume) argue that private sustainability certifications schemes fall short of providing the protection of land rights its champions suggest. Such schemes cannot ensure sourcing is from poor farmers and that free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is respected. In addition, such schemes are not equipped to fully account for intensified competition for land resulting from indirect land-use change (ibid.). Fortin and Richardson suggest that certification schemes do enhance the scrutiny of land deals because of the information made public and through the auditing process provide some leverage to pressure large transnational firms' procurement practices whose brand is closely tied to claims of 'sustainability'. However, they contend certification schemes continue to fall short of providing robust protection of land rights and a pro-poor policy framework to support rural development and livelihoods.

There is already an alliance among the private sector (e.g. World Economic Forum, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), the G8, and the World Bank that cooperates in promoting global agricultural development projects. These actors remain highly supportive of promoting private standards and certification as the primarily means to address land grabbing. Even if only some private actors engage in the formal spaces of emergent global land governance, most can choose to operate through backdoor lobbying, aggressive media work to influence governance processes, and low key negotiations especially within other global governance institutions for finance and investment and the World Bank that are less accessible to global civil society (especially the radical elements that now participate in the CFS). In addition, agri-food corporations and large institutional investors engaged in land grabbing can resort to their structural power to advance their agendas (see Clapp and Fuchs, 2009).

Land Grabbing as Struggles for Control Grabbing and Land Authority

We now turn to a discussion about conceptualizing land grabbing. Indeed, one of the central aims of this collection is to explore different approaches to the study of the global land grab from a perspective that takes seriously insights from work on globalization and governance. At the same time, theorization and analysis can be done without complete and perfect information about land grabbing (see discussion on the politics of number below) once we begin to conceive of land grabbing as embedded in wider processes rather than just procedural matters concerning the formal transfer of property rights. Take for example Saskia Sassen's essay in this collection, which argues that land grabs are particularly strong illustrations of the global inserting itself into the local revealing significant contradictions at play; states are simultaneously acting as facilitators of land grabs, which on the one hand is an assertion of national sovereignty, while in the very same instance they are ceding territorial sovereignty (Sassen, 2013, this volume).

For the contributors to this collection land grabbing is marked by *a twofold transnational contest for control over resources and authority over institutions*. Current research has demonstrated that land grabbing reveals a sharp and intensifying global competition for control over land (Peluso and Lund, 2011), including the bundle of productive resources contained in or on the land. This process manifests itself in efforts to control specific pieces of land most visible in the exchange of property rights to a specific piece of land on a permanent or temporary