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# GLOBAL LAND AND RESOURCE GRABBING

## An Introduction

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### **Introduction: The Global Rush for Land and Natural Resources in the 21st Century**

The global financial crisis in 2007/2008 combined with other major crises – food, fuel, climate, environmental – triggered a wave of both large- and small-scale land acquisitions and leases, primarily in resource-rich countries in the Global South and parts of Eastern Europe. These land deals for agro-industrial, energy, mining, tourism, infrastructure, urban development, conservation and carbon sequestration projects have affected hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minority groups and communal landholders. Fifteen years later, the new global land and resource rush shows no signs of abating, although media attention has significantly waned (Borras et al., 2022a). Major geopolitical shifts and the long-term ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to intensify land and resource grabbing for the foreseeable future.

Over the past few years, the global land and resource rush has reached new levels of absurdity and impunity. In August 2019, then US President Donald Trump grabbed the headlines when the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that he had asked his advisors whether it would be possible to purchase semi-autonomous Greenland from Denmark, which escalated into a brief but intense diplomatic row with the Danish government (Salama et al., 2019). The launch of NASA's Artemis project in 2020 – with the aim of putting humans back on the moon by 2024 – has raised questions about outer space territoriality and space resource ownership and utilization (de Zwart, 2021), nearly 60 years after a group of North American legal scholars had first pondered on the legal aspects of acquiring outer space resources (McDougal et al., 1963). And in 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted the largest land grab post World War II, when he announced the formal annexation of four occupied regions of Ukraine (Hall, 2022; Murphy, 2022). The food security concerns triggered by the brutal invasion of one of Europe's largest producers of wheat and sunflower oil could well lead to further justifications for land and resource grabs in distant places.

A number of scholars have compared the ongoing global land and resource rush to previous global land grabs (e.g., during the heydays of European colonialism and imperialism), but have offered differing forecasts regarding its long-term prospects. Many scholars, activists and journalists maintain that the 21st century land and resource rush will

have long-lasting and devastating social and ecological consequences (Land Research Action Network, 2011). Pearce (2012, p. x), for instance, contends that “the new land rush looks increasingly like a final enclosure of the planet’s wild places, a last roundup on the global commons”. Others claim that it is just another land and resource boom that will eventually fade away, as a large share of the investments is bound to fail economically and/or will be resisted locally, with support from growing domestic and international advocacy movements. Yet, as Borrás et al. (2022a) point out, failed or non-operational land deals can still have long-lasting impacts on property regimes, landlessness and social relations.

In the early 2010s, there was an intense debate on whether some of these large-scale land deals can provide tangible and positive development outcomes for affected local communities and societies (e.g., World Bank, 2011; Blumenthal, 2013; von Braun & Meinzen-Dick, 2009) or whether the global land rush should be categorically condemned as an unacceptable manifestation of ‘neo-colonialism’ and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2004), as stressed by critical development scholars, La Vía Campesina, GRAIN, Global Witness and a number of other social movements and advocacy groups (GRAIN, 2008; Hall, 2011; Bush et al., 2011; White et al., 2012; Global Witness, 2013). Associated with this debate was the question whether large-scale land deals could always be categorized as ‘land grabs’, implying that they are either outright illegal under national and/or international legal frameworks (e.g., when they involve the violent displacement of formal right-holders), largely illegitimate (e.g., when they infringe on customary land rights not acknowledged by the state) or at least unethical (e.g., when investments formally follow the rules, but still have adverse social, cultural or economic impacts on local actors) (Alden Wily, 2012; Neef, 2014; Neef, 2019; Özsü, 2019). To date, overwhelming evidence has been amassed to support the notion of land and resource grabbing underlying the vast majority of large-scale land deals. The contributions to this handbook also leave little doubt that land and resource grabbing is a global phenomenon with far-reaching negative consequences on the environment, human rights and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples and marginalized groups in countries of the Global South. Box 1.1 presents two of the most commonly used definitions of land grabbing.

### **Box 1.1 Definitions of Land Grabbing**

The International Land Coalition (ILC, 2011) defines land grabbing as “acquisitions or concessions that are one or more of the following:

- i in violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women;
- ii not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land-users;
- iii not based on a thorough assessment, or are in disregard of social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered;
- iv not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing, and;
- v not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation.”

Borrás et al. (2012, p. 851) define land grabbing as “the capturing of control of relatively vast tracts of land and other natural resources through a variety of mechanisms and forms that involve large-scale capital that often shifts resource use orientation into extractive character,

whether for international or domestic purposes, as capital's response to the convergence of food, energy and financial crises, climate change mitigation imperatives, and demands for resources from newer hubs of global capital.”

*Source:* ILC (2011).

Another debate that has occupied critical development scholars, legal experts and human rights advocates over the past 15 years has been around the effectiveness of the various soft law instruments that have been developed at national and international levels to govern and control the global land rush (Cotula, 2012; Dhanarajan, 2015; Tzouvala, 2019, Anseeuw et al., 2022). De Schutter (2011, p. 274), then United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, asserted that “voluntary approaches to discipline land-grabbing are bound to fail”, largely because both investors and host governments have strong motives to “shield the deals they negotiate from outside scrutiny”. In the most recent assessment, Anseeuw et al. (2022) find that notwithstanding the developments of global and national frameworks for land governance in the past decade, effective changes in large-scale land acquisition practices have remained scant. In their assessment of the implementation of the most popular international legal framework – the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) – in the context of land deals on the African continent, the authors find that 78% of all deals showed unsatisfactory levels of VGGT uptake and implementation and 87% of the countries assessed presented unsatisfactory results in terms of VGGT implementation. The main areas of concern include (1) weak or non-existent consultative processes, (2) lack of respect for national law and legislation, (3) low regard for legitimate tenure rights, including informal tenure of local communities and Indigenous peoples, (4) lack of respect for human rights, (5) lack of safeguards, unlawful expropriation, and minimal application of agreed-upon compensation measures, and (6) continuous lack of data and the dire state of transparency (Anseeuw et al., 2022, p. 3).

### **Actors Driving the Global Land and Resource Rush**

The actors involved in land and resource grabbing have been well-described in the scholarly literature and reports of international advocacy groups, and this section can only provide a sketchy and highly selective picture of the major actors. In origin countries, *national governments*, notably in the Gulf States, East Asian countries and the BRICS states – play a major role in driving investments in land and other natural resources in large parts of the Global South. South-South land and resource grabbing is increasingly common (e.g., land grabs by Vietnamese rubber companies in Laos and Cambodia), as are triangular South-North-South collaborations. One example of the latter is the trilateral agrarian cooperation program ProSavana, instigated by the Brazilian government, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Mozambican government and a number of agricultural corporations, which threatened to dispossess thousands of smallholder farmers in northern Mozambique before it was eventually discontinued in 2020 by the Mozambican government following a decade of fierce resistance by domestic and transnational advocacy movements (Bussotti & Nhauelique, 2022). In many cases, national governments invest in overseas land through *Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs)*, such as the

Qatar Investment Authority, Singapore's Temasek Holdings, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (Clark et al., 2013; Woertz, 2013). The first decade of the 21st century saw the establishment of 29 new SWFs, exceeding the number of newly established SWFs in the entire second half of the last century (Clark et al., 2013). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, SWFs' direct investments reached a record number in 2021, increasing 60% on the five-year average number of deals, with investments of USD 15.5 billion in infrastructure (almost doubling the USD 8.1 billion investments in 2020) and around USD 12.2 billion in real estate (IFSWF, 2022). SWFs have thus become a major element in international finance, and their economic power and global outreach can hardly be overstated. **Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)** have also become major players in the global land rush (Fairbairn, 2020). Other types of investors include **private equity funds and hedge funds** that have substantially increased their positions in global farmland investments, critical infrastructure and real estate, which they consider as more tangible assets in an increasingly volatile global financial system (Fairbairn, 2014; 2020). **Transnational corporations** have been either directly involved in land and resource grabbing (e.g., multinational mining companies) or are indirectly fueling land and resource grabs through their huge demands for commodities associated with land grabbing. A study by the Zoological Society of London in 2021 identified 12 corporations as the major culprits for the continuation of global deforestation, including Cargill, Walmart, IKEA, Starbucks, Procter & Gamble and McDonald's (Lai, 2021). **International environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** have purchased vast amounts of land, dubbed the 'great green land grab', that is, the appropriation of forestland and other natural resources for conservation purposes (Fairhead et al., 2012). Evolving international carbon markets, such as the global REDD+ initiative (**Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradations**), have attracted a number of **reforestation companies** that aim at turning conservation forests and monoculture tree plantations into lucrative businesses under the guise of climate-saving investments in the green economy (Nerlich & Koteyko, 2010; cf. Milne et al. (Chapter 11, this volume) and Bruna & Mbanze, Chapter 12, this volume)).

Large-scale land deals often rely on **national governments and state agencies** in host countries, often with weak or bad governance structures and a large share of poor and undernourished populations. Some governments may invite large-scale investors to overcome a perceived or actual lack of investment in rural areas and to exploit allegedly 'underutilized' areas. Another motivation for national governments to encourage large-scale land acquisitions is to make the rural landscape legally legible through a combination of territorialization and privatization. In some countries that have undergone a major decentralization process in recent years, such as Indonesia, **regional governments** at provincial or district level may willingly collaborate with predatory investors. Several African countries and small island nations in the Pacific have provided legal recognition of customary land rights through their constitutions and land legislations, often with **chiefs** as the holders of legal titles and **traditional councils** as land administrators (Peluso & Lund, 2011). Although the alienation of customary land tends to be restricted by law, traditional authorities oftentimes hold the legitimate power to negotiate with investors over leasehold terms (Schoneveld & German, 2014).

Finally, the success of land deals relies on support from intermediaries – that is, those actors that play a major role in promoting, brokering or financing large-scale land acquisitions and resource grabbing. Among these intermediaries feature **international development banks and aid agencies** that have promoted investor-friendly policies and legislative

frameworks in many countries of the Global South. The World Bank's lending arm – the International Finance Corporation – has provided direct financial support for a large number of land deals (White et al., 2012). While both the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have also advocated support for smallholder farming in the Global South and have been involved in major international initiatives to regulate the global land rush (e.g., FAO, 2012), some of their representatives have provided and reinforced discursive justifications for large-scale, transnational land deals and prepared fertile ground for land and resource grabbing through supporting and implementing investor-friendly property rights legislation (cf. Gould, Chapter 6 in this volume). ***Internationally operating commercial banks*** are another major group of intermediaries in transnational land acquisitions. Germany's Deutsche Bank and Australia's ANZ, for instance, have been condemned by human rights organizations and international media for financing companies involved in large-scale land grabs and violent evictions of local communities in Cambodia and Laos (Global Witness, 2013; Inclusive Development International, 2014). According to Forest & Finance (2019), a coalition of civil society organizations and research groups, the ***world's 50 largest banks and investors***, including Bank of America, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), BlackRock, and Vanguard are driving deforestation through major investments in commodities (beef, palm oil, pulp and paper, rubber, soy and timber) that are directly linked to tropical rainforest destruction. In September 2022, Global Witness published a briefing document 'Bankrolling Destruction' that implicated three of the world's biggest ***central banks***, namely the Bank of England, the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, in having bought millions of USD in bonds issued by companies linked to deforestation and land grabbing (Global Witness, 2022).

### **Discourses and Narratives around Land and Resource Grabbing**

The discursive justification for land and resource grabbing comprises a whole set of discourses and narratives, most notably (1) development discourses, (2) crisis narratives, (3) idle land discourses (the myth of empty lands or terra nullius) and (4) conservation discourses.

#### ***Development Discourses***

These discourses emphasize the need for land-based investment to increase land productivity and resource values, provide job opportunities and alleviate poverty. They are often linked to an efficiency narrative which asserts a superiority of capital-intensive, large-scale agriculture over semi-subsistence smallholder farming and small-scale commercial agriculture (Blumenthal, 2013; Riddell, 2013). In the context of infrastructure and urban development projects, development discourses are used to legitimize land confiscation and involuntary resettlement. Once a development project involving land deals is accepted by wider society as a 'public purpose', governments can then invoke the concept of 'eminent domain' as a legal mechanism to take away private or communal property from rightful owners.

#### ***Crisis Narratives***

These narratives aim to create a sense of urgency to address various global crises, most notably those around food, water, energy, the environment and climate change. Through

creating, manipulating and managing crises, governments in alliance with corporate actors and international financial institutions construct a rationale for (foreign) land-based investments as a pathway out of the crisis (cf. Harvey, 2006). It is claimed that corporate land acquisitions are necessary to achieve global food security, ensure global water supplies, provide energy security through fossil fuel extraction, preserve the environment and combat climate change. Leaving the solution to major crises to customary landholders, local communities and Indigenous peoples is considered too risky and/or inefficient.

### ***Terra Nullius or the Myth of Empty Lands***

This narrative builds upon the Lockean notion that a declaration of land as “wasteland would come to legally justify the dispossession of Indigenous peoples” (Bhandar, 2018, p. 47). Accompanying colonial invasion are myths and presuppositions that render Indigenous land use, often nomadic and collective, inferior to sedentary and individuated Euro-American land use arrangements and becomes the basis of Indigenous dispossession. Such narratives conjure the myth of an abundance of unused or under-utilized land, in the hands of Indigenous peoples, that could be brought into (more) productive use by Euro-American (white) settlers (see Bhandar, 2018; Mollett, 2016).

### ***Conservation Discourses***

These discourses brand the original landowners and customary users of pristine forest areas, wildlife conservation zones or cultural heritage spaces as ‘eco-threats’ or dangers to the preservation of sites of cultural significance. Conservation discourses have been deployed to justify the forced relocation of Indigenous people from protected areas, such as from Yellowstone National Park and Yosemite National Park in the United States in the second half of the 19th century and more recently from wildlife conservation zones in Eastern and Southern Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia (Brockington & Igoe, 2006). In Cambodia, the government has recently instigated the ‘voluntary’ relocation of 10,000 families from the country’s iconic Angkor Wat Heritage Site, using the discourse that this measure is necessary to preserve the integrity of the archaeological park and maintain its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site (Kelliher & Rathana, 2022).

### **Practices of Dispossession and Social Impacts of Land and Resource Grabbing**

Drawing on Devine and Ojeda (2017) and Neef (2021), this section identifies five major practices of dispossession associated with land and resource grabs, (1) eviction, (2) enclosure, (3) extraction, (4) exclusion and (5) erasure. These practices are explained in detail in Table 1.1.

While proponents of large-scale land deals point to a range of benefits that these investments may entail for host countries and local communities – most notably the modernization of agriculture, the revival of rural economies, the improvement of infrastructure and the beautification of urban areas – “there have been shockingly few examples of projects that offer real benefits to local populations, or even to host governments” (Spielloch & Murdoch, 2013, p. 61). A number of land deals have in fact provided new job opportunities for rural people, but many of these jobs may be seasonal and/or low-wage only (Li, 2011). Others have included compensatory measures, such as provision of wells,

*Table 1.1* Practices of dispossession through land and resource grabbing

<i>Type of practice</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>Eviction</i>	Land and resource grabbing physically removes communities and individuals from territories that they have previously occupied, whether under non-codified customary ownership or formally recognised communal or private land title. Eviction can occur via openly violent measures (such as the burning of houses) or by more subtle means of threats, bribery and false promises and may or may not include compensation.
<i>Enclosure</i>	Land and resource grabbing dispossesses people from access to material means of subsistence, such as land, water, timber, fisheries and other resources. It is linked to ‘accumulation by dispossession’ as governments, corporations and other actors physically appropriate various types of natural resources that were previously vital to local people’s livelihoods, e.g., for subsistence farming, timber for construction and fuel, or artisanal fishery.
<i>Extraction</i>	Land and resource grabbers exploit the natural environment by such extractive practices as exhausting fragile agro-landscapes through monocultures, drilling and mining fossil fuels metals and minerals, extracting large amounts of freshwater, and removing forests through logging and land clearing for plantations.
<i>Exclusion</i>	While all forms of land use and resource access involve exclusion of some kind (Hall et al., 2011), land and resource grabbing exercises particularly exclusionary powers by excluding former land and resource users from the benefit streams of their rightfully owned resources. These benefits may be tangible (e.g., harvesting crops or wild honey) or intangible (e.g., being intimately connected to an ancestral domain).
<i>Erasure</i>	Land and resource grabbing renders pre-existing definitions of place, livelihood, identity and history invisible or erases them deliberately. Land deals might infringe on culturally important places (e.g., graveyards, sacred sites), destroy artifacts of cultural and historical significance or render Indigenous and minority cultures invisible through a variety of measures.

*Source:* Partially adapted and expanded from Devine and Ojeda (2017) and Neef (2021).

health stations or school buildings. In most recorded cases, however, customary land rights of farmers, pastoralists, fishers, hunters and gatherers, and other occupational groups with high dependency on natural resources have been compromised by large-scale land deals without any compensation or relief mechanisms. Dispossession, semi-proletarianization, forced resettlement and increased social conflicts are among the most commonly noted impacts of land and resource grabbing (Pearce, 2012; Neef et al., 2013; Borrás et al., 2022b).

Women tend to be particularly adversely affected by large-scale land deals, especially in cases where forests or other essential communal resources are affected, as they may lose their traditional access to medicinal plants, wild fruits and nuts, fuel, bamboo shoots and other non-timber forest products (Hall, 2011; Park & White, 2017; Mollett; 2017; 2021). Often the gendered impacts of land grabs are less noticeable as land grabbing also results from the accumulation of small tracts of land over time where bit by bit through policy changes, land commercialization, land registration and land invasions alike, women are rendered landless (Mollett, 2010; Behrman et al., 2012; Perry, 2013; Verma, 2014; Hajjar et al., 2020).

Land and resource grabbing does not only affect the land rights and livelihoods of affected populations; it also affects their freedom and may even put their lives at risk. Defenders of land rights against corporate and government land and resource grabs are

particularly under threat from persecution and extrajudicial killings. In Myanmar, one-third of political prisoners in 2015 were land rights activists (Neef, 2021). In Cambodia, authoritarian populism and crackdowns on media and NGOs have considerably constrained spaces for social movements and human rights advocacy (e.g., Beban et al., 2020). According to Frontline Defenders (2022), 53% of the 358 human rights defenders who were killed globally in 2021 – as reported to the International Human Rights Defenders Memorial – worked on land rights, Indigenous people’s rights and environmental rights, with land rights defenders in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, India, the Philippines, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Democratic Republic of the Congo being most at risk of being killed.

Women are also at the frontlines of many resistance movements. Women, like men, as land defenders, suffer intense violence in their quests to defend collective rights to lands against impending extractive development. As Mollett writes (2021), while more male land defenders are killed around the world, women land defenders face particularly gendered (and often carnal) attacks where they are terrorized, criminalized and often murdered while working to defend their communities from extraction.

### **Contributions to This Handbook**

The remainder of this handbook comprises 30 chapters divided into nine thematic parts. Each part contains between three and four chapters. The contributions to Part 1 examine the historical trajectories of land and resource grabbing. Colonization has been aptly described as “the most dramatic and violent rupture and reordering of property and political subjectivity in human history” (Lund, 2016, p. 2013). All three chapters in this section are stark reminders that colonialism has never ended. Drawing on a review of land grab cases in Sub-Saharan Africa, Thembela Kepe (Chapter 2) suggests that contemporary land and resource grabbing in the Global South is just another version of the infamous Doctrine of Discovery, which originated as a papal bull issued by Pope Nicholas V in 1454 and was subsequently adopted by European colonizers to legitimize the unfettered seizure of ‘discovered’ foreign lands inhabited by non-Christians and subjugate Indigenous Peoples to violence, dispossession and unfreedom (cf. Winchester, 2021). Kepe argues that the contemporary land rush is a toxic legacy of the Doctrine and bears many of its elements, including what he refers to as ‘dignity takings’ which is the dehumanization of the dispossessed (cf. Atuahene, 2016). Turning to settler colonial states, Margaret Mutu (Chapter 3) deconstructs the ‘legal fiction’ of the Doctrine by demonstrating how the British colonizers used deceit, violence and theft to dispossess and subjugate the Indigenous Peoples of the United States, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, thereby disempowering them with ramifications that have lasted to this day. She examines the contemporary struggles of Māori, the Indigenous peoples or tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand to regain sovereignty and self-determination and achieve land and resource restitution. Joel Correia (Chapter 4) explores Latin America’s resource frontiers and demonstrates how contemporary land and resource grabs and Indigenous labour exploitation are a form of normalized racial dispossession rooted in colonial capitalism. Drawing on his analysis of agrarian extractivism in the Paraguay-Brazil borderlands, he describes the land and resource rush as a form of slow violence and continuation of colonialism through new forms of agrarian technologies and juridical mechanisms.



Contributions to Part 2 explore the complex processes and governance mechanisms of land and resource grabbing. Rachel Goffe (Chapter 5) examines the phenomenon of ‘capture land’ in Jamaica, which refers to informal land settlements on abandoned public and private land, which from the 1970s were widely accepted by the anti-imperialist, postcolonial state as a form of ‘expropriation by the people’. With the turn to neoliberal development policies and property rights regimes, these settlements are now seen as illegitimate obstacles to foreign and local investments. Goffe argues that contemporary anti-squatting policy in Jamaica establishes a form of processual land grab that is rendered justifiable by incriminating squatters as the culprit behind national crises and by detaching the postcolonial land question from colonial legacies of genocide, dispossession and enslavement. Kevin Gould (Chapter 6) continues the historicization of land grabs by focusing his analysis on the role of technocrats, such as consultants and other experts, in creating favorable conditions for land and resource grabbing. Drawing on a land grab in northern Guatemala, he demonstrates how World Bank technocrats established an exclusionary, neoliberal property rights regime that provided large landowners (cattle ranchers and oil palm plantation owners) with the legal mechanisms to acquire lands that were previously owned by marginalized Indigenous people and peasants (*campesinos*). Miles Kenney-Lazar and coauthors (Chapter 7) examine the frictions around government-sanctioned foreign land concessions that have met increasing resistance from dispossessed peasants. The authors take a critical and relational approach to analyze the various relations between different actors (government officials, private market actors, civil society groups and farming communities) and processes that determine how authority and power over land are established and how land and resource grabbing is governed, in terms of both facilitation and regulation.

Part 3 looks into the scramble for food, feed and agro-biofuels to resolve real or imagined food and energy crises which underpins a large share of contemporary land and resource grabs. In a study of 80,000 land deals concluded between 2000 and 2018 in 15 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, Davis et al. (2020) found that the largest increase in deforestation stemming from these deals was associated with concessions for oil palm plantations, tree plantations, and wood fibre (cf. Neef, 2020). Drawing on concepts of agro-extractivism, flex crops and commodity frontier and case studies from Eastern Africa, Guiliano Martiniello (Chapter 8) explores the expansion patterns of sugarcane cultivation. He argues that the advancement of the sugar frontier has driven land enclosures, dispossession, livelihood destruction and massive social conflicts, while adversely incorporating poor farmers through contract farming into new agro-scapes and politico-economic assemblages. Mark Vicol and Helena Pérez Niño (Chapter 9) take this analysis a step further, aiming to provide an advanced conceptualization of contract farming within the global land grabbing literature. They start by exploring the various scholarly perspectives on contract farming in the land grab debate, seeing it as (1) a particular form of land grabbing, (2) a more inclusive alternative to land grabbing, or (3) a way of organizing crop production post land grab. The authors offer an alternative view of contract farming as a form of controlling land through capital without actually gaining ownership of land. Their analysis allows an important distinction between outright dispossession of farming communities and cases in which farmers retain land ownership while losing control over the production process. In the final contribution to this section, Lindsay Naylor (Chapter 10) takes a critical look at the proliferation of genetically modified (GM) crops, claimed by many scientists and philanthropists to be a solution in the fight against

global hunger, despite a large share of GM crops being cultivated either as non-food crops or as feed for livestock to support meat- and dairy-based diets in wealthy countries. Naylor argues that the combination of neocolonial land grabbing and the use of a large portion of that land for GM crops engenders sites of multiple enclosures (geopolitical, geoeconomic and biopolitical) and perpetuates the problems (such as food insecurity) that they claim to resolve. She calls on land grab scholars to challenge universalizing discourses of industrial-capitalist modes of agricultural production by incorporating pluriversal and place-based thinking into knowledge production that can inform agricultural policy and practice.

Contributions to Part 4 examine land and resource grabbing in the context of nature conservation, eco-tourism, renewable energy and carbon markets. The recent Land Gap Report 2022 found that the total land area needed to meet the projected biological carbon removal in national climate pledges amounts to nearly 1.2 billion hectares which is almost equivalent to the current global cropland (Dooley et al., 2022). This is likely to place enormous pressure on Indigenous people and smallholder farmers whose ability to access and control land and protect their customary tenure rights will be put further at risk. Sarah Milne, Tim Frewer and Sango Mahanty (Chapter 11) discuss the process of green territorialization in Cambodia, where over 40% of the country's land area has been demarcated for conservation purposes, while this Southeast nation has been notorious for foreign and domestic land grabbing, deforestation and other types of resource extraction (cf. Neef et al., 2013). The authors critically reflect on this ambiguity and scrutinize the Cambodian government's motives for green territorialization. They argue that the expansion and consolidation of 'protected' areas advance a dubious agenda of state control, resource extraction and elite accumulation, legitimized and greenwashed by international donors and environmental actors through such programs as REDD+. In a similar vein, Natacha Bruna and Aires A. Mbanze (Chapter 12) discuss how Mozambique's government is changing its focus from solely efficiency-driven foreign direct investment (FDI) to *green* efficiency-driven FDI and financialization by embracing 'climate-smart policies' that are in disregard of local communities' aspirations, priorities and needs, but cater for the interests of corrupt and neopatrimonial governments at national and local levels. These investment projects – which include REDD+, CSA, and biofuel projects – receive financial and regulatory support from the World Bank and other international actors that have jumped on the 'green economy' bandwagon. Arnim Scheidel and colleagues (Chapter 13) demonstrate how the global land and resource rush intersects with the increased demand for land and other natural resources to advance the transition from fossil fuel-based economies to 'greener and cleaner' ones. They discuss the gross environmental and social injustices that are emerging from the global energy transition, focusing on large-scale biofuel projects, hydropower dams, solar megaprojects and wind parks. The authors call for a socially just energy transition that emphasizes local energy sovereignty and inclusive community participation. Drawing on a case study of Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, Laura Aileen Sauls and Jennifer Devine (Chapter 14) provide insight into how the global tourism industry enables land and resource grabbing and the role geo-spatial knowledge production and securitization plays in dispossessing Indigenous peoples and community foresters. The authors disentangle a complex web of (geo-)political and economic interests in the El Mirador Maya archaeological sites, which includes the introduction of legislation in the United States that aims to fortify national borders and control migration streams from the Mirador Basin under the guise of eco-tourism and archaeological conservation. They also show the relative success of forest dwellers in El Mirador in defending their land rights and livelihoods, albeit at a very high cost.

Part 5 turns attention to the ‘classical’ extractive industries that are concerned with the extraction of fossil fuel, minerals and metals. Markus Kröger (Chapter 15) sheds light on a particular resource frontier, the Arctic region, which has not received much attention from global land grabbing scholarship to date. He highlights the enormous risks that are rapidly accelerating climatic changes in this fragile region, leading to dangerous tipping points in terms of permafrost melting. This questions the sustainability of extractive infrastructures that have been built despite these risks, but are now deteriorating and spreading pollution into Arctic ecosystems. Pascale Hatcher and Etienne Roy Grégoire (Chapter 16) explore the political economy of large-scale mining in Asia and the pluralist interests of myriad stakeholders – multinational corporations, domestic elites, armed actors, international financial institutions and civil society – involved in the development, implementation and contestations of mining regimes. Their contribution calls for the preservation and protection of the disruptive capacity of grassroots mobilization as a way to address the complex and multilayered web of interests that characterize the mining sector’s extractive governance model. Catherine Alexander, Katerina Teaiwa and Andreas Neef (Chapter 17) explore how decades of grabbing phosphate resources in distant places have contributed to the success of pastoral farming in Aotearoa New Zealand which is the backbone of the country’s economy and a major source of its wealth. What started in colonial times with the exploitation of the country’s Pacific Island neighbors continues with the contemporary import of phosphate from conflict zones in Western Sahara, where the Indigenous Sahrawi people have been dispossessed and displaced through the annexation of their territories by Morocco. The New Zealand government’s prioritization of the strategic supply of phosphate resources over Indigenous land sovereignty and human rights – discursively justified by the need to contribute to ‘feeding the world’ – appears at odds with official government policy but has largely remained under the radar of national and international public interest.

Contributions to Part 6 examine the global rush for freshwater and marine resources, popularly referred to as ‘blue grabbing’. Globally, pressure on freshwater and marine resources is increasing as a result of such factors as rising food demand, indiscriminate groundwater extraction, offshore fossil fuel and mineral explorations, hydro-energy expansion, climatic changes and the enhancement of biofuel production (Gerbens-Leenes et al., 2009; Nasr & Neef, 2016; Ayelazuna & Ovadia, 2022; Birkinshaw, 2022). Mansee Bal Bhargava (Chapter 18) explores the entanglements of waterscape developments with land appropriation and water grabbing in the Indian city of Ahmedabad. She demonstrates that such ‘legal’, but largely uncontrolled, urban development processes as groundwater extraction, dredging, draining and wastewater discharges can amount to water grabbing and have serious impacts on water ecosystems, life in and on the water, and even urban resilience. Drawing on concepts of resource-making and resource frontiers and an analysis of three distinct historical periods, Oliver Lilford and Matthew Allen (Chapter 19) trace the successive shifts by which deep-sea mineral deposits in Oceania have become desirable elements that are increasingly seen as indispensable for fueling the global energy transition. The authors demonstrate how these shifts have been shaped by changing political-economic, regulatory and techno-scientific conditions, involving a wide range of actors, including Pacific Island governments, the deep-sea mining industry, powerful economies and trading blocs, as well as scientific bodies and international organizations. Lilford and Allen see a strong role of Pacific civil society actors in countering these blue economy discourses through their deep Indigenous Pacific connections to the ocean and their legacies of resisting foreign incursions. Achim Schlüter and his coauthors (Chapter 20) employ the

Institutional Analysis and Development Framework to examine both formal and informal institutional changes in the use of marine space for scallop production in Peru's Sechura Bay. They show how the state-led formalization of a previously informal open access activity through the allocation of exclusive extraction and territorial use rights opened the field for large-scale investors who pushed most small-scale fishers out of business. The authors found that standards and preferences of European market actors also played an important role in locking out those small-scale fishers that were not able to align themselves with more powerful players. Drawing on the concept of terraqueous territoriality, Glenn Finau and colleagues (Chapter 21) discuss how overlapping rights to various resources (e.g., mangroves, sand and fisheries) in the Ba River Delta in the South Pacific nation of Fiji have enabled a process of coastal grabbing by a mining company that is extracting a large deposit of iron sand from this fragile area. The authors explain how the ongoing re-territorialization of this transitional space between land and sea affects the livelihoods and resource rights of coastal communities and creates tensions between mining companies, state actors and Indigenous landowners. They call for a close collaboration between civil society, communities, media and academics to debunk the myth of 'minimal social and environmental impacts' perpetuated by foreign mining companies and the Fijian government.

Part 7 looks into the role of large infrastructure projects in driving land grabbing. China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), which focuses mainly on infrastructure development, is a major case in point. By mid-2022, China had signed over 200 BRI cooperation documents with about 150 countries and 32 international organizations (Nedopil, 2022). These BRI investments were worth over US\$900 billion, of which more than US\$500 billion was in construction contracts (*ibid*). A global study recorded about 700 incidents of human rights abuses, chiefly related to land grabbing and associated loss of livelihoods, conducted by over 10,000 Chinese companies involved in BRI projects from 2013–2020 (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 2021). Jessica DiCarlo and Kearnin Sims (Chapter 22) examine the Laos-China Economic Corridor as a case that highlights how the corridor model and associated megaprojects of capital accumulation contribute to territorialization, land grabbing and dispossession. Their contribution calls on land grabbing scholarship to pay theoretical, methodological and empirical attention to the adverse impacts of large-scale infrastructure development on land relations and land governance. The authors argue that land grabs are not a by-product of infrastructure development, but a constitutive element of it. Drawing on a close examination of large infrastructure projects in northern Kenya, Evelyne Atieno Owino, Kennedy Mkutu and Charis Enns (Chapter 23) demonstrate how the ongoing transport infrastructure boom in this region has triggered a cascade of land grabs, thereby multiplying the spatial and social impacts of new infrastructure. They find that land alongside upgraded infrastructure routes is targeted by a wide range of actors, forcing existing land users to secure their land and resource access by warding off potential land grabbers. Tobias Haller and Samuel Weissman (Chapter 24) use case studies of the BRI in Tibet and development corridors in Tanzania to shed light on the massive obstacles facing minority groups in their attempts to resist at the local level. Deploying the concept of 'anti-politics machine' and approaches from new institutional political ecology, the authors show how the false promises of infrastructure development lead to widespread commons grabbing and undermine local institutions and resilience.

Contributions to Part 8 explore land grabbing in the context of urbanization and special economic zone (SEZ) development. Kei Otsuki, Murtah Shannon, Griet Steel and Femke van Noorloos (Chapter 25) provide an overview of urban land grabs, analyzing empirical

cases from urban developments in Sudan, Mozambique and Kenya. The authors discuss two key issues surrounding urban land grabs; first, the complex alliances between actors involved in urban investments, and, second, the different types of economic and physical displacement associated with urban land grabbing. They argue that these issues obscure the question of who is responsible for addressing dispossession and displacement and call for a closer analysis of the chain of effects triggered by urban development investments. Conceptualizing urban areas as products of history, Eberhard Weber and colleagues (Chapter 26) examine processes, power structures and interests that have marked the restructuring of Indigenous land tenure in Fiji's capital Suva over one and a half centuries, starting with colonial land grabbing in the 1860s. The authors show how for a long time, poorer sections of Suva's society living in informal settlements have used their agency to avoid forced relocation from prime neighborhoods. Yet, in recent years, they are facing increasing pressure from the expansion of commercial interests into former peripheries of the city, jeopardizing tenure security of the least resilient groups of urban society. Setsuko Matsuzawa (Chapter 27) explores how transnational NGO advocacy against the Thilawa SEZ in Myanmar – a joint venture between the governments of Japan and Myanmar – was partially successful in remedying injustices caused by land grabbing and forced relocation. The author sheds light on how project-affected persons became transnational activists and joined forces with national and international NGOs to pressure the Japanese government to examine the human rights violations and adverse environmental impacts of the SEZ, as the Government of Myanmar remained unresponsive to their plight. She discusses the re-configurations that occurred through the transnational advocacy process, particularly through the involvement of a Japanese NGO.

Part 9 takes a closer look at resistance against land grabbing, processes of land restitution and potential remedies for the global land and resource rush. Ian Baird (Chapter 28) looks beyond the adverse social and environmental impacts of large-scale land concessions in southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia and examines the challenges that foreign investors have faced as a result of commodity price declines, resistance from villagers and activists, poor planning and management, technical and environmental problems, and lack of government support. He finds that many plantations have either been totally abandoned or are performing below expectations, which questions the sustainability of these often ill-informed investments. While such failed land grabs could potentially offer opportunities for land restitution to dispossessed communities, the author cautions against overly optimistic voices, as abandoned land will not be automatically returned to the former owners who need to join forces with advocates in their long struggle to get their land back. Drawing on studies of anti-land grabbing struggles in contemporary India, Saba Joshi (Chapter 29) explores how gender shapes the dynamics of collective action against land dispossession and displacement. Combining insights from feminist political ecology and feminist critical agrarian studies, she discusses three key themes, which are social reproduction, women's leadership in collective action and transformative outcomes generated due to participation in anti-dispossession struggles. Her chapter makes an important theoretical contribution by emphasizing the relevance of the wider political and institutional context for gendered resistance against land grabbing. Comparing two cases of gendered resistance in rural Cambodia, Alice Beban and Sochanny Hak (Chapter 30) argue that emotions matter in struggles over land and can be both enabling and disabling land grabs. They demonstrate how state and corporate actors use diverse strategies to produce negative emotions of fear and distrust among communities while simultaneously generating positive emotions of desire and gratitude through discourses of

promised prosperity, thereby limiting social mobilization. The authors find that emotions also play an important role in building a sense of solidarity and encouraging collective action within resistance movements. They conclude that inquiries into resource struggles should not only look into tangible claims and responses but also include a focus on emotional resources which can provide a more complete analysis of the factors determining collective action. In the final contribution, Fons Coomans, Rolf Künemann and Andreas Neef (Chapter 31) identify two important gaps in international human rights law to address global land and resource grabbing, namely extraterritorial human rights obligations of states and the rights of future generations. While the 2011 Maastricht Principles on the Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have provided a sound legal framework for holding to account corporations that are involved in land and resource grabbing beyond national borders (albeit with limited implementation), the rights of future generations have remained a blind spot in international human rights law. The authors discuss how closing the gaps in the legal acknowledgment of the human rights of future generations might help to address the grabbing and destruction of those resources that future generations need to use to meet their own needs.

We hope that the contributions to this handbook will provide new perspectives on the global and local dimensions of land and resource grabbing. We are confident that the handbook will spark even more scholarly interest in examining the theoretical, methodological and empirical dimensions of the global land and resource rush and supports advocacy and activism in resisting land and resource grabbing locally and globally.

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