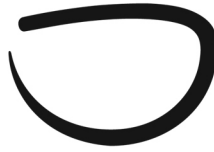


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## Section VII

### **Land grabs and agrarian reform**

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One of the key responses to the global food crisis that hit the headlines in 2008 was a significant change in land ownership in many countries as a result of large-scale land acquisitions carried out by governments, investors, and corporations. This global land grab, or what some refer to as agricultural investment, is leading to fundamental shifts in agricultural production, land use, and labour relations. Peasant and farm organizations, rural communities, and social movements in the global North and global South are actively resisting these forces, structures, and processes of further accumulation by dispossession.

The papers in this section discuss various aspects of the changing global land tenure patterns. Wendy Wolford sets the stage by first highlighting the areas of research that have been conducted on the global land grab. She then makes the case that we need more research on the nature and complexities of the different kinds of knowledge that, on the one hand, is used to engage in and promote large-scale land acquisitions, and, on the other hand, is involved in resistance and alternative land tenure models. Using a political economy approach Haroon Akram-Lodhi focuses on the “agrarian question” to stress that much more research is needed to better understand the role of capital in the changing farming production systems. While indicating the social and environmental unsustainability of large-scale, industrial agricultural farming Akram-Lodhi points to the potential of agro-ecology as an alternative. Zoe Brent then analyzes the dynamics of territorial restructuring as a result of the financialization of land in the

Americas while examining specific examples of resistance to land grabbing in Argentina and the United States of America.

Isaac Lawther's concluding paper urges us to analyze the current global land grab in the context of colonization. In centering his discussion on the key question of why the 21<sup>st</sup> Century global land grab has become so important at this particular point in history, he explores why and how it differs from earlier processes of land enclosures.