

# Völkerrechtsblog

Der Blog des Arbeitskreises junger Völkerrechtswissenschaftler\*innen

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LAND GOVERNANCE SYMPOSIUM

## Grab me if you can?

The global scramble for land in local context

MICHAEL RIEGNER — 31 October, 2016



This post opens our symposium on “Land governance”, which accompanies an international [conference](#) at the [Law and Society Institute](#) of Humboldt University Berlin. Lawyers and political scientists from Germany, India and Brazil will reflect on the global scramble for land in local contexts.

Land as such is a rather localized phenomenon, but land governance matters in much wider political, economic, social and ecological contexts: Control over land has always been linked to political and economic order – from [feudalism](#) through [capitalist industrialization](#) to [\(neo\)liberal globalization](#). Property rights in land shape relations [between government and society](#), state and markets, parliaments and courts, the national and the international. They implicate [all](#)

layers of law – from local customary law through national constitutions to international human rights law and investment treaties like TTIP and CETA.

Besides, land governance also affects the ways in which housing and food are accessed and distributed. It is closely linked to inequality and poverty – whether we look at gentrification and evictions in urban Europe and America, at development-induced displacement in Asia, or at smallholders in rural Africa who struggle against the forces of global land markets – or “land grabbing”, as critics say. As global prices for land rise, should anyone just grab it if they can?

More than ever, land governance also matters for the environment and biodiversity. Land governance is natural resource governance. Ownership of forests is becoming a regulatory tool to save the global climate. And as climate policy seeks to save the forest, indigenous peoples in many places face their third dispossession – after colonialism and industrialization this time in the name of green economy.

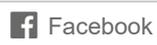
In this symposium, we hope to capture some of these multi-disciplinary and multi-level aspects of land governance – and to discuss them with our readers and commentators.

Michael Riegner

**Tags:** *Comparative Public Law, Development, Human Rights, International Environmental Law, International Investment Law*



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