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Supervisor: Fariborz Zelli

Understanding the Fragmented Global Governance on Land Grabbing

- a discursive institutionalist analysis

Emma Korpi

Abstract

Land grabbing has rapidly become an important issue in global governance. The recent interlinked crises on food, fuel, climate, and finance have increased the importance of land governance on the global level, and created a complex and fragmented global land governance architecture that involves international institutions, country groups, private actors, NGOs, and international peasant organizations. The aim of this thesis is to create a deeper understanding of this fragmented architecture by identifying the key institutions and relating them to the underlying discourses and coalitions within the architecture. An innovative discursive-institutionalist perspective will be used to analyse the increasingly fragmented architecture, and to provide new insights into the causes and implications of this complex issue area. In addition, critical theory by Cox will be used to further understand the observed fragmentation. Ultimately it will be argued that the conflictive fragmentation within the global land governance architecture reflects a considerable level of discursive contestation in this issue area.

Keywords: land grabbing, global governance, institutional fragmentation, discursive institutionalism, critical theory

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List of abbreviations

BRICs	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CFS	The Committee on World Food Security
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPs	The Equator Principles
FAO	The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FIAN	Food First Information and Action Network
GCAR	Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
ICARRD	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILC	The International Land Coalition
IPC	The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
MLAR	Market-led Agrarian reform Approach
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PRAI	Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respect Rights, Livelihoods and Resources
RSB	The Roundtable Sustainable Biofuels
TNI	The Transnational Institute
UN	The United Nations
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
Voluntary Guidelines	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
WCARRD	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
WFP	The United Nations World Food Program

1 Introduction

”Buy land. They’re not making it any more.”

- *Mark Twain*

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse the nature of the global governance on land grabbing. I seek to create a deeper understanding of this architecture by identifying key institutions and relating them to underlying discourses and discourse coalitions. In this section, the rationale behind this purpose will be introduced, along with the main research questions and hypotheses. I argue that land grabbing has developed into a global governance problem, that its institutional architecture has become increasingly fragmented, and that an innovative discursive-institutional analysis could provide new insights into the causes and implications of this institutional complexity on land grabbing.

1.1 Land Grabbing as a global governance issue

Land grabbing¹ refers to the acquisition or long-term lease of large areas of land by investors (De Schutter, 2011, 249). It has recently become an important issue in contemporary global governance because it combines the areas of development, investment and food security among others. The phenomenon is not new, but the current scale, character, pace, and motivators are making the recent wave a peculiar trend. These characteristics are closely tied to big changes in production and power relations in the global setting and economy. Land grabbing is hence strongly connected to economic globalization, as the growth of trade, markets, investment and finance have influenced the increase in land sales. The emergence of new actors in global governance such as the BRIC countries, and the new OECD countries, and the replacement of the G8 with the G20 are clear indicators of a shifting world order and a move towards multipolarity. In addition, one of the main reasons for the increased attention on and complex nature of land governance is the emergence of ‘flex crops and commodities’² within the international food regime (Borras et al., 2013). As Margulis et al. (2013) argue, land grabbing is situated in an “era of advanced capitalism, multiple global crises, and the role of new configurations of power and resistance in global governance institutions”. With these changes and developments in the background, the recent and interlinked global crises on food,

¹ It is recognized here that there arguably exists no uncontested term to label this phenomenon. Rather than referring to terms that, while suggesting a neutral approach may have biases of their own (e.g. large-scale land acquisition, global land rush), I keep using *land grabbing* as the most commonly used term in the scholarly and policy literature. However, it is acknowledged here that land grabbing is an inherently political and historical phenomenon that is related to existing asymmetric power relations.

² The term refers to the multiple uses of crops (food, feed, fuel, industrial material), e.g. soya, sugarcane, oil palm, corn.

fuel, climate and finance have hence created an increasingly complex, polycentric global land governance system³ (Borras et al., 2013).

While land grabbing as such is taking place at the local level, the recent growth of transnational activities has resulted in what David Held calls '*new layers of governance*' (Held, 2002, 305). With new regional and global organizations emerging, there now exists an array of global, regional, and multilateral systems of governance in addition to national governments (ibid.). With regard to land grabbing, the character and challenge of this agricultural investment trend is beyond state control and coordination alone, and arguably requires regional and global governance. As Held and McGrew point out, where there appears to be a lesser degree of supreme or regulatory authority, global governance is a relevant perspective (Held and McGrew, 2002, 1). This is clearly the case for land grabbing, as land governance on local, national and regional levels is alone often insufficient in regulating this global phenomenon. Hence the choice of global governance as the level of analysis is justified.

Land grabbing is an issue relevant beyond individual state policies and rule making, and the need for this phenomenon to be handled on a global level has been rather quickly recognized. Without regulation, land grabbing can have negative consequences on human rights and food security, as well as rural livelihoods and ecologies (TNI et al., 2012). Hence, land grabbing rapidly elevated to the global governance agenda after the linked global crises in 2008, resulting in a complicated and fragmented architecture of global rule-making projects (Margulis et al. 2013). Compared to the earlier waves of land grabbing, the past few years have indicated a significant increase in scale and pace. Estimates vary from World Bank's 45 million hectares to Oxfam's 227 million hectares, with a consensus on the fact that biofuels, food and cash crops are major contributors to this global rush for land (World Bank, 2010 & Oxfam, 2012). In addition to the scale, low levels of transparency, consultation and respect for human rights are often associated with land deals, and hence land grabbing has quickly become an issue of world political significance (Zoomers, 2010 & Cotula, 2012). Local and transnational resistance has swelled, new global governance instruments are being created, and land grabbing is on the agenda of the G8/G20, World Bank, and UN Agencies. Non-binding laws, rules, norms, and guidelines play an important role in shaping global policy, both in relation to state and non-state actors. In addition, the global civil society and transnational social movements are mobilizing around the phenomenon, while corporations and investors are increasing their global competition for land.

This existing situation well indicates the importance of analyzing land grabbing on the level of global governance. It is crucial to do this research in a framework that recognizes the variety and multiplicity of actors, influences, initiatives, rules and guidelines that are involved in dealing with the phenomenon. Land grabbing is a global-scale phenomenon that is occurring in all parts of the world in the context of several interrelated global crises. While there is increasing academic literature that examines land grabbing from a local and national level perspective (as case studies), and from several different perspectives (food security, human rights, political economy, labor, and even increasingly gender relations to name a few),

³ The two terms '*global land governance*' and '*global governance of land grabbing*' are synonyms, and both broadly used in the scholarly and policy literature. This thesis mostly uses the term global land governance, but global governance of land grabbing is also used at times.

systematical analyses and theory-based studies of the global level of land grabbing are still quite rare. It has been argued that the pace of change in global affairs is accelerating, and hence it is important to build on existing studies of global governance to better understand the global land governance architecture (Margulis and Porter, 2013, 66). Vice versa, as Margulis et al. (2013) argue, contemporary global land grabbing reveals many aspects specific to our era of advanced economic globalization. Hence, a broader understanding of power relations and political struggles that are in play in global governance institutions and practices dealing with land grabbing will be a useful example of understanding the main characteristics of global governance in general.

1.2 Fragmentation in Global Governance

The global governance architecture for a given issue area in today's world often involves a wide range of different organizations, regimes, principles, norms, regulations and procedures (Zelli, 2011, 255-6). While every global governance architecture is different and the degree of complexity varies across policy domains, Keohane and Victor (2011) argue that most commonly they are arrangements of non-hierarchical and loosely coupled systems of institutions. Likewise, Zelli and van Asselt argue that "a core institutional phenomenon and challenge in today's international relations is a growing degree of fragmentation" (Zelli & van Asselt, 2013, 1). Fragmentation is defined as a "patchwork of international institutions that are different in their character (organizations, regimes, and implicit norms), their constituencies (public and private), their spatial scope (from bilateral to global), and their subject matter (from specific policy fields to universal concerns)" (Biermann et al, 2009, 16).

It can thus be argued that more or less all areas of today's international relations are be characterized by some degree of institutional fragmentation or, as other authors call this phenomenon – regime complexity, polycentricity or complexity (Keohane & Victor, 2011; Ostrom, 2010; Oberthür & Stokke, 2011). Although fragmentation on a broader level can to a degree be explained as a consequence of the processes of globalization (multipolarity/'new medievalism'), it is not clear what the specific causes and consequences of institutional complexity are. It is also not clear why the degree of fragmentation varies across issue areas and global governance architectures (Keohane & Victor, 2011, 8). However, as Zelli and van Asselt (2013) point out, major gaps exist in the literature on institutional interlinkages and complexity. Empirically, the character of fragmentation has so far only been mapped systematically for a few issue areas like climate change or forestry (ibid.). Furthermore, more theory-driven analyses are needed that explain or understand the more specific causes and consequences of institutional complexity, as well as on the variation on the degree of fragmentation between different policy domains. More specifically, while scholars have begun to adapt traditional approaches, such as neoliberal institutionalism, to the analyses of fragmentation, the considerable potential of discourse-based or critical approaches have remained mostly unexplored (Zelli & van Asselt, 2013; Keohane & Victor, 2011).

Biermann et al. (2009, 24) point out that institutional fragmentation has crucial implications for governance performance and therefore merits more thorough analyses across issue areas. The different degrees of fragmentation in policy domains are likely to lead to different degrees of governance performance. Biermann and his colleagues discuss the potential consequences of fragmentation to governance performance with regards to speed, ambition, participation, and equity, arguing that these consequences vary depending on the degree and nature of fragmentation (ranging from conflictive to synergistic types of fragmentation) (ibid).

While all fragmentation cannot be argued to negatively effect governance performance, conflictive fragmentation within a global governance architecture has been found to have this impact (ibid).

However, in order to analyse such implications, one first needs to provide a mapping of institutional fragmentation for an issue area – and to create a better understanding of underlying causes or discourses. This thesis intends to create this understanding for the issue area of land grabbing. While the consequences of the fragmented nature of this field are clearly important, the scope of this thesis does not allow to go into detail on the consequences – especially since a thorough mapping and causal understanding is so far largely absent for this policy field. It will instead concentrate on mapping the architecture as well as analyzing the underlying causes of it, offering a basis for future research into the consequences of this institutional diversity.

1.3 The Global Land Governance Architecture

With regard to the trend of institutional fragmentation in international relations, the global land governance architecture is no different. The architecture is strongly fragmented, as it involves a variety of different organizations, discourses, principles, norms, and regulations.

“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” (Margulis et al., 2013, 4)

From the most notable global governance actors, both the UN system (most actively the Food and Agriculture Organization – FAO, and the Committee on World Food Security – CFS) and the Bretton Woods institutions (most actively the World Bank) have taken up the issue of land grabbing in their work. In addition land grabbing is on the agendas of the G8/G20 summits as well as regional institutions such as the European Commission and the African Union. A few of the most well known rule-making projects around land grabbing are the UN *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*, and the transnational process of developing rules/principles for responsible agricultural investment. In addition to these, numerous other projects related to the food crisis and specifically land grabbing have been initiated, such as the G8’s ‘New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition’ and the World Economic Forum’s ‘Grow Africa’ - initiative, as well as private sustainability certification schemes.

The role of non-state actors has also increased in global governance. Private actors play a role in governing transnational financial transactions and economic flows, whereas NGOs and transnational social movements have also increased their authority through a range of activities. NGOs were the first to bring public attention to the global land grab in 2008, and have been quick to mobilize transnationally, especially through the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) (GRAIN, 2008 & McKeon, 2013). Whereas the main private actors tend to side with the G8 and the World Bank, the presence of global civil society in the global governance of land grabs is more challenging. The movements compete with each other on the use and implementation of key international governance instruments, and hence engage

themselves with several of the existing discourses within the global governance framework (Borras et al. 2013).

The role of states in land grabbing also further complicates the global governance framework. Land is seen as sovereign territory and hence does not easily fit the idea of a global-scale problem. Land and its control has until recently been seen as an issue closely related to state practices, and this has been largely internationally recognized (Margulis et al. 2013, 5). Hence, while global actors are the drivers of contemporary land grabbing, the importance of national legal frameworks is highly important in that they actually make it easier for states to facilitate land grabbing (Borras et al, 2013). While land is shifting from sovereign national territory to a commodity for the global market, the state is transforming by further engaging in the existing transnational processes (Sassen, 2013).

Multilateral institutions are the key sites for the ways of addressing land grabbing, but at least so far none of the transnational governance mechanisms developed are legally binding international treaties. In addition to this, different actors pick and choose to engage in different multilateral institutions to advance their own objectives. As an example, the G8 has chosen to support the World Bank in being the leading institution in the governance of land grabs, whereas many of the global civil society actors and transnational rural movements have chosen to support the FAO and the CFS to serve as a key arena for global land governance.

In sum, it is clear that the global land governance architecture is strongly fragmented. As Margulis et al. (2013) point out, the global governance of land grabbing is entangled across various types of governance institutions at multiple scales, within which investors, states, domestic and global civil society, and transnational, international and regional institutions contest land control and authority. However, these contests go beyond the authority over property, as the global governance of land grabbing can be seen to represent a broader contest over the norms, discourses and institutions in the new global political economy. The process of formulating a new form of global land governance is fluid and complicated, and marked by asymmetric power relations between the different actors that are trying to control and influence the institutions that govern land.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Given the above empirical rationale as well as the theoretical gap of discourse-based approaches on fragmentation, the main research object of this thesis is to address the dual question:

What is the degree of fragmentation of the global land governance architecture, and how can this observed degree of fragmentation be explained through a discursive analysis?

This question unfolds into the following more specific research questions:

- a. What is the degree of fragmentation in the global land governance architecture?
- b. Which major discourses constitute this governance architecture?

- c. How do discourses and institutions relate to each other? In other words, which discourse coalitions – bringing together a discourse or storyline, certain actors and institutions – can be identified?
- d. To what extent does the observed fragmentation reflect a contestation between the discourses and associated coalitions?
- e. Which discourse coalition is dominant in the fragmented global land governance architecture?
- f. Does this dominance reflect expectations about the hegemony of neoliberal world order addressed in Robert Cox's critical theory?

The research will aim to deepen the understanding of global land governance by mapping the highly complex and fluid global governance architecture and hence identifying the main discourses and discourse coalitions within it. This kind of mapping of a global governance field is a necessary starting point for understanding and analyzing the workings of this area, and the implications of such a system. As Margulis et al. (2013, 19) argue, the '*dynamics of contestation*' will be a crucial aspect in shaping the future of land governance, and that the degree to which the complexity of land grabbing will be understood and dealt with will determine the future outcomes. Based on the mapping, the main discourses and discourse coalitions constituting the different institutions will be identified, along with examining if there is a dominant discourse. In answering the question of why the framework is so fragmented, the global land governance architecture will also be connected to a broader arena of global political economy, and the ideological underpinnings of the different discourses within these debates.

Given the theoretical choice, the underlying hypotheses for the following analyses are:

- a. The high degree of institutional fragmentation in the global land governance architecture reflects a considerable level of discursive contestation in this issue area.*
- b. Based on Cox's theory on the hegemonic world order, the dominant discourse coalition can be expected to reflect a neoliberal discourse, e.g. preference of market-based self-regulation, and concentration on facilitating and enabling investment.*

The last research question and the connected second hypothesis will be further developed in the theory section, where Cox's critical theory will be introduced.

2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The theory section first discusses two main concepts that are central to the topic – global governance and fragmentation. Discursive Institutionalism is then discussed as a theoretical starting point to the analysis, as it arguably provides this research with an innovative dual approach in addressing the research problem. This approach will then be complemented with a more practical approach. Specifically, the Policy arrangement approach will provide more specific tools for the analysis of the research question. In addition a neo-Gramscian theory by Cox will be added to further complement the approach.

2.1 Main Concepts

2.1.1 Global Governance

The concept of Global governance provides this research with the overall framework and level of analysis. Global governance is a term and concept used to refer to "the practice of governing transborder problems, and to the institutions, rules, actors and ideologies that govern the global political economy" (Margulis et al, 2013, 4). From the 1990s onwards both academics and the general public have used this term in a variety of ways and meanings, and it has hence become a complex term. Among many other definitions, Rosenau and Czempiel (1992) refer to global governance as 'practices of governance without government', Brand (2005) sees it as a 'discourse', and Cox (1993) argues it is the 'institutionalisation of the neoliberal globalization project'.

Biermann et al. use the term '*global governance architecture*' which they define as "the overarching system of public and private institutions that are valid or active in a given issue area of world politics" (Biermann et al., 2009, 15). This term aptly suits the research by combining global governance as well as fragmentation, that will be discussed further in the next section. As the goal of this research is to create a better understanding of the fragmented global land governance architecture related to land grabbing, it is natural that the concept of global governance plays a central role in the analysis. Margulis et al. argue that in order to create a clear understanding of the new global rule-making projects around land grabbing, a critical approach to global governance is required (Margulis et al., 2013, 4). This consists of identifying the actors, interests, and ideologies driving particular governance initiatives. It is also important that the international political economy is taken into account, as these initiatives arise in this context (Margulis et al. 2013, 5). Hence a theoretical framework is needed that provides the tools to both analyse the existing framework and help understand the larger context behind it.

2.1.2 Fragmentation

The second central concept – fragmentation, has already been introduced and defined in section 1.2 above. Zelli and van Asselt (2013,1) speak of institutional fragmentation, not just fragmentation or complexity of regimes, since they follow Keohane's understanding of institutions as a generic term that comprises international regimes, international organizations and implicit norms and principles (Keohane, 1989, 3-4). But unlike for Keohane, institutions here also include non-state initiatives and actors when analyzing the overall architecture. Related to the increasing fragmentation in international relations, it has become evident that

international institutions cannot be viewed in isolation, and that their wider institutional environment needs to be taken into account (Zelli & van Asselt, 2013, 2).

While Biermann et al.'s concept of fragmentation as a structural characteristic of global governance – and as a matter of degree across issue areas - is a conceptual starting point for this thesis, there are some shortcomings in their approach that need addressing in my analytical framework. First, fragmentation is a concept rather than a theory and hence does not provide a full-fledged, theoretical framework. Rather than following Biermann et al. in their overall reliance on regime theory and a method of policy analysis, a more complex approach is taken in this research. When Biermann et al. discuss fragmentation and its possible consequences, the use of theory is limited as a whole, and, more importantly, discursive analysis is not used at all. Going beyond Biermann et al., I develop in the following sections an approach to fragmentation analysis that builds on discursive and neo-Gramscian theories.

2.2. Discursive institutionalism and Policy Arrangement Analysis

2.2.1 Discursive institutionalism

According to Maarten Hajer, discourse is an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena (Hajer, 1995, 60). Discourses⁴ in the sense of frames and social practices can shape institutional design, and contribute to institutional complexity and fragmentation. This is why more than an institutional approach is needed for the purposes of this research. For the purposes of researching a complex global governance architecture such as the one related to land grabbing, discourse analysis has particular strengths; the capacity to reveal the role of language in politics and to reveal the embeddedness of language in practice (Hajer & Versteeg, 2006, 176). While Discourse analysis is highly useful in analyzing this side of institutional complexity, traditional discourse analysis can too easily point at 'policy change' and assume 'policy effects' (Arts & Buizer, 2009; 341). Institutionalism is thus also necessary to reach a more nuanced explanation (ibid.). A theory that finds a middle-road between discourse and institutional analysis is needed for the purposes of this research. Hence, discursive institutionalism is attempting to provide a more dynamic approach to institutional change by bringing together aspects from both new institutionalism and discourse theory (Schmidt, 2008, 303; Arts & Buizer, 2009, 340). One of the main interests behind this approach is to observe how and to what extent discourses become institutionalized and affect social processes and outcomes.

Discursive institutionalism is based on institutional theory and more specifically new institutionalism that emerged as a response to an overemphasis on agency without structure. Based on this background institutions clearly play a major role in discursive institutionalism. In discursive institutionalism institutions are not 'external-rule-following structures' but rather they are structures and constructs at the same time (Schmidt, 2008, 303). In other words, they

⁴ Norms are mainly used in this research as a reference to broader discourses underlying the specific political discourses. This is related to Robert Cox's idea of norms, and will be discussed further in section 2.3.

are simultaneously treated as a given (as the context within which agents act, speak and think), and as contingent (as the outcome of agents' thoughts, words and actions (Schmidt, 2008, 314; Arts & Buizer, 2009, 340). Institutions frame the discourse, and the formal institutional context plays a major role in determining when and where a discourse may succeed, and what forms of discourses are emphasized (Schmidt, 2008, 312-4).

Discursive institutionalism sees discourse as the interactive process of conveying ideas that enables agents to change institutions (Schmidt, 2008, 316). Schmidt's definition is left unspecified, and since discourses play such an important role in this research, the definition will be further discussed and better conceptualised. Discursive institutionalism takes a Foucauldian broad view of discourse that includes social practices, power and institutions. According to this view discourses constitute the social reality (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, 107) and discourse analysis makes it possible to examine the construction of this social reality, as well as the conflicts and legitimating processes related to it. As the Foucauldian view of discourse will function as a basis for this research, this will be further developed and specified based on Martin Hajer's ideas next when discussing the policy arrangement approach.

While discursive institutionalism provides this research with one part of the theoretical framework, there are a few major shortcomings with regards to analyzing the fragmentation of the global land governance architecture. First, it lacks clear guidance on method. To account for this shortcoming, a more practical version of discursive institutionalism, policy arrangement approach is introduced next. While it builds on discursive institutionalism and its basic assumptions, the policy arrangement approach enables the analysis of a concrete policy field (something that discursive institutionalism would be too abstract for). In addition, since the policy arrangement approach builds on the basic premises of discursive institutionalism, the problems and limitations of these approaches will be further elaborated on in the next section when dealing with the policy arrangement analysis. Second, discursive institutionalism does not account for institutional fragmentation. Discursive institutionalism so far only looks at one institution and its constitution by one discourse, but this research aims to analyse a whole global governance architecture and the causes for this. To account for this shortcoming, this thesis expands on Schmidt's argument. As framed in one of the starting hypotheses in section 1.4, it holds that not only single institutions but also entire sets of coalitions of institutions are informed by an overarching discourse. This will make the analysis about the causes of fragmentation much more nuanced and advanced. Third, discursive institutionalism does not account for the dominance of a certain discourse, which with regards to the last research question is a shortcoming. The concept for this in discursive institutionalism is perhaps too simple, and hence Cox's theory will come in useful to better assess the dominance of certain discourses that underly certain institutional constellations. In sum, while discursive institutionalism offers a solid theoretical starting point for the analysis, two more theories, along with the concept of fragmentation, will be merged with it to develop the analysis further.

2.2.2 Policy Arrangement Approach (PAA)

Like discursive institutionalism, the policy arrangement approach (PAA) tries to find a middle-road between discourse and institutional analysis, and shares the same core assumptions as discursive institutionalism. It brings discursive institutionalism to the level of policy analysis and makes it possible to analyse a concrete policy field (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). Its overall objective is to "analytically link changes in day to day policy practices to broader, structural changes in contemporary society" (Lieberink, 2006, 45). In relation to

some of the shortcomings of discursive institutionalism, PAA brings in the needed guidance in methodological issues and hence is used in this research mainly as a methodological tool. It provides a systematic guideline that is compatible with discourse theories, and narrows down which aspects to identify and focus on. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, 4) argue, theory and method are intertwined in discursive approaches, and hence the four dimensions of PAA will be briefly introduced here, and discussed in more detail in the methods section.

Four dimensions of PAA - Discourses, actors, rules, and power

As it was already argued before, a policy domain is temporarily shaped in terms of *discourses, actors, resources and rules*. The policy *discourses* are defined as interpretative schemes that range from formal policy concepts and texts to popular narratives and story lines (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). The second dimension, the *actors* involved in the policy domain aims to identify the relevant actors and their influence in the policy process, and to further group these actors together according to their views on the issue at stake (Lieverink, 2006, 51-52). The third dimension, the *rules of the game* within the arrangement, refers to rules in terms of formal procedures or as informal rules and ‘routines’ of interaction (Arts & Leroy, 2006, 13). Hence, this dimension is strongly connected to the dimension of actors. The first three dimensions fit well with Hajer’s idea of discourse coalitions, which consist of *storylines, actors and practices* (Hajer, 1995, 65). These dimensions will hence be analysed together when discussing the discourses and discourse coalitions within the global land governance framework. The dimension of rules of the game focus on institutions and the ways in which they act within the architecture. Hence, these dimensions, and Hajer’s idea of discourse coalitions provide the crucial link between discourses and institutions, and makes the approach offered by PAA a legitimate method in bringing institutions and discourses together. The fourth dimension, the *power relations* between these actors, will be discussed in relation to the earlier ones when analysing the dominant discourse in the architecture. The main idea is that actors around a given policy issue are partly dependent on each other for resources, e.g. money, information, or political legitimacy (Lieverink, 2006, 54).

These dimensions combine three mainly organizational aspects (actors/coalitions, rules, and power) with one substantial one (discourse), and hence illustrates the aim of PAA to capture the ideational-organizational duality (Arts & Leroy, 2006, 13). In sum, discursive institutionalism provides us with a fitting overall framework and a dual structure in creating a nuanced understanding of the fragmented governance architecture.

However, with regards to analyzing the causes behind the fragmented nature of the global land governance architecture, a critical approach to global governance is needed. This is especially because the possible connection between a specific policy domain and broader processes in the contemporary global world will be analysed. In addition, in order to assess the dominance of certain discourses that underlie certain institutional constellations, Cox’s theory will provide ways to analyse this. Used together, PAA and critical theory will provide a broader basis to analyse dominant discourses and the reasons behind their position.

2.3 Critical theory

As was mentioned earlier when discussing the concept of global governance, a critical approach to global governance is needed when analyzing the new global governance architecture around land grabbing (Margulis et al., 2013, 4). It will be instrumental in

identifying the actors, interests and ideologies driving particular governance initiatives, as well as connecting these to the broader international political economy context. Critical theory stands apart from the prevailing world order and asks how that order came about (Cox, 1986). Unlike a problem-solving theory, critical theory does not take power relations and institutions for granted but rather calls them into question (Cox, 1986, 208). With regards to this research, critical theory is the analytical tool that connects the more specific analysis of one policy domain to the larger picture of the whole world order. Ultimately critical theory seeks to understand the processes at play that concern both the individual parts and the world order as a whole (Cox, 1986, 209). Cox's approach would also provide great tools for a follow-up analysis on how the global land governance architecture has changed over time and whether discourses have maintained their positions. However, considering the scope of this research, this would be a relevant topic for further research in the future.

2.3.1 Hegemonic World Order and Global Governance

Robert Cox represents a neo-Gramscian understanding of globalization as the hegemonic process of neoliberalism. Gramsci's work concentrated on national hegemony of a dominant social class, and Cox expands this notion to world hegemony based on the same characteristics. Throughout Cox's theory, Gramsci's ideas about the importance of national situations are still valid, but a new level has been added as the result of the global economy that even all national specificities are dependent upon (Cox, 1999, 11-12). Thus, hegemony at the international level is not just an order among states, but instead it is an order within a world economy that includes and concerns all states and societies at all levels (Cox, 1993, 61). This suggests an increasing complexity, sometimes termed as 'new medievalism' (Bull, 1977, 254 & Rosenau 1992) or 'new governance' (Abbott and Snidal, 2009) with a system consisting of multiple layers of authority and multiple loyalties. To Cox 'global governance' indicates control and orientation when there exists no formally legitimated coercive power (Cox, 1999, 12). World hegemony is an overarching structure that must include all three structures - the social, the economic and the political (Cox, 1993, 61). Furthermore, world hegemony is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms that create the general rules that support the dominant mode of production (ibid.).

2.3.2 International Organizations – mechanisms of hegemony

The most powerful corporate economic forces, their allies in government and the many networks form a '*nascent global historic bloc*' that propagates the ideology of globalization (Cox, 1999, 12). States mostly function as agencies of the global economy, by adjusting their national economic policies and practices to better fit global economic liberalism (ibid.). In addition to the states, international organizations play an important role.

“One mechanism through which the universal norms of a world hegemony are expressed is the international organization. (...) International institutions embody rules which facilitate the expansion of the dominant economic and social forces but which at the same time permit adjustments to be made by subordinated interests with a minimum of pain.” (Cox, 1993, 62)

International institutions also perform an ideological role by reflecting orientations and legitimizing practices favorable to the dominant social and economic forces (Cox, 1993, 62). Gramsci's concept – *transformismo* – describes this strategy of assimilating potentially counter-hegemonic ideas by adjusting them to the policies of the dominant coalition (Cox,

1993, 63). According to Cox, the only way a serious counter-hegemonic threat can derive from international institutions is if representation in them is firmly based upon an articulate challenge to hegemony (ibid).

The role of international organizations according to Cox is related to Steven Bernstein's work on the dominance of neoliberal norms in liberal environmentalism. According to Bernstein, the institutions that have developed in response to global environmental problems support particular kinds of values and goals, which have important implications for the constraints and opportunities to combat the problems in this domain (Bernstein, 2002). He argues that norms are central to all governance structures and that the importance of norms in policy comes from their institutionalization (Bernstein, 2002, 2). By using global environmental governance as an example, he uses a "socio-evolutionary" explanation, arguing that the framing and understanding of appropriate behavior on environmental issues stems from broader neoliberal norms/discourses and broader social structures (Bernstein, 2002). As an example he uses the sudden growing involvement of UN institutions and especially the World Bank that started formulating environmental policies that were viewed as consistent with their broader goals of promoting economic growth and liberalization. While Bernstein's work concentrates on global environmental governance, the same processes are arguably at work with regards to global land governance, and hence his work on the issue is highly interesting for the purposes of this research.

2.3.3 Civil Society – a force of transformation or stabilization?

Gramsci sees civil society as the realm in which existing social order is grounded, and also the realm in which a new social order can be founded. While Cox argues that the very notion of what constitutes civil society has changed along with the current context, he lines with Gramsci's dual notion of civil society being both shaper and shaped of the world order (Cox, 1999). In a 'bottom-up' sense, civil society provides the ones disadvantaged by globalization an arena to raise their voices and seek alternatives (Cox, 1999, 10). The idea of a 'global civil society' is then the extension of this on a global level where social movements on a world scale constitute an alternative world order. This development, in turn, is partly reflected in the emergence of transnational institutions that shape the (fragmented) institutional architecture in a given issue area.

This fits well with Bernstein's notion about how in global environmental governance, some civil society groups, frustrated with the limited ability of international institutions to address the problems in an efficient way, have started more radical forms of oppositions to challenge the legitimacy of existing institutions (Bernstein, 2002, 13). Likewise, these new initiatives and groups are often directly opposing the broader neoliberal idea of globalization and the current norm-complexes behind current policies (ibid.). However, in a 'top-down' sense, states and corporate interests influence the development of civil society, and hence make it an agency for stabilizing the existing world order and enhancing the legitimacy of the status quo (Cox, 1999, 11). For the purposes of this research it is important to emphasize one more notion by Cox; on a world scale, the nature and condition of civil society is very diverse, and is itself a field of power relations (Cox, 1999, 25). From the analysis on the different actors and discourses within the global land governance architecture, it will become clear that the civil society sector holds within a large variety of positions and views, and plays an important role with regards to the different discourses and coalitions.

Cox's critical theory complemented with Bernstein's work provides a basis for the argument behind the second hypothesis. As discussed above, for Cox, the main international institutions reflect the broader norms and discourses of neoliberalism in their policies. The second hypothesis is based on this expectation, and will be analysed further in chapter 4.

2.3.4 Further rationale for choosing Cox over related approaches

There are other theories on dominant or hegemonic discourses, which I chose not to incorporate into my analytical framework. Laclau and Mouffe's theory on discourse and hegemony has its roots in Marxist theory and Gramsci as well as Cox, but both have developed further from that. These two theories share several key assumptions regarding power and hegemony. They both argue that the main condition of hegemony is the unevenness of power relations, and see the goal of hegemony to be the transformation of one social group's demands into universal ones (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Cox, 1993). Notwithstanding the many similar and useful aspects of Laclau and Mouffe's theory, their approach barely touches upon international and transnational institutions or upon the agency of different discourse coalitions. I therefore regarded a combination of Cox's theory and PAA (and their combined focus on rules and actors) as a more suitable approach for analyzing hegemonic discourses in a fragmented institutional architecture. In addition, with regards to the second hypothesis, Cox and Bernstein provide a sense of which discourse will likely be dominant. While Laclau and Mouffe leave the topic open, Cox's approach makes clear that the neoliberal discourse is expected to dominate (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Cox, 1993).

While Foucault's approach to theorizing about dominant discourses draws from a different theoretical tradition than Cox and Laclau and Mouffe, it may have also been useful here. However, Foucault's theory has such a broad conceptualization of discourse that it becomes difficult to make a meaningful distinction between discourses and institutions or discursive and non-discursive practices. In sum, it seems that while there are clearly other useful theories and approaches that could be made use of here, Cox's theory provides this research with the needed focus on agency, and hence makes it more compatible with the notion of discourse coalitions. As discourse analysis is a meaningful part of PAA, and hence discourses will be given considerable attention, the combination of PAA with Cox's theory helps emphasize institutions as well.

2.4 Summary and Compatibility of Approaches

2.4.1 Summary of main concepts and theories

Altogether, with the two main concepts of global governance and fragmentation, and the theories (discursive institutionalism, policy arrangements approach, and Cox's critical theory,) a full theoretical framework has been created for the analysis of this research.

As global governance can simply be seen as an overarching framework within which this research takes place, the concept of fragmentation gets properly combined with discursive institutionalism and PAA to develop our approach further. Vice versa, it can be argued that discursive institutionalism and PAA bring in new approaches to the concept of fragmentation, and the shortcomings that it presents for our research. In addition, a new-Gramscian theory by Cox assists in understanding the architecture and the fragmentation. Cox's critical theory together with discursive institutionalism will bring other explanatory variables onto the ones

already used in fragmentation literature (e.g. interests and power in the realist sense). In sum, while fragmentation provides the conceptual starting point to this research, the two theoretical approaches provide more tools to conduct a nuanced and theory-based analysis of the fragmented global land governance architecture.

Next, summarizing the three theory approaches that together provide a good framework to analyse the research question in a nuanced and balanced way;

- 1) Discursive institutionalism indicates the relation of discourses and institutions, and hence provides a good approach to the duality of discourse and structure.
- 2) PAA provides the research with more practical tools for the analysis. A more specific definition of discourses is also provided, as well as the concept of discourse coalitions. These concepts along with a practical outlook to the analysis make PAA an important part of the theoretical framework.
- 3) Cox's critical approach, along with some additions from Bernstein, helps to further analyse the dominant/hegemonic discourses, and the coalitions behind them. In addition, the critical approach brings in the broader context that will provide more ways to analyze the causes behind fragmentation.

By combining these different theories into a nuanced and broad theoretical framework, this research aims to develop an innovative theoretical framework, within which fragmentation can be analysed in a different way. It is this combination of theories that arguably provides the research with the appropriate framework to provide a nuanced analysis of the existing institutional architecture, the underlying discourses and associated coalitions, and the hegemonial structure among them.

2.4.2 Compatibility

The compatibility of discursive institutionalism and PAA does not need to be separately addressed, as PAA is clearly seen as a strand and a more practical level that represents the same ontological and epistemological premises. As it was already discussed with regards to discursive institutionalism and PAA, the coupling of structure and agency in one theory is a challenge. This dual structure was already discussed, and will be discussed further with regards to method.

Notwithstanding some of its more traditional and neo-marxist roots, Cox's critical theory can be combined with an interpretivist epistemology in general and a discursive approach in particular. Cox sees the world hegemony expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms that create the general rules. For the purposes of this research it could be argued that Cox's universal norms can be likened to the broader discourses in discursive institutionalism and PAA. Moreover, as argued above, Cox's theory can be seen to have a dual structure, where both structure and agency affect the observed outcome. This can be brought in line with a similar duality in discursive institutionalism, for discourses and institutions (and the coalitions behind them) are mutually constitutive.

Further, the way the two main concepts of global governance and fragmentation are used in this research, they can be considered theoretically and epistemologically agnostic, and hence are in no fundamental contradiction to the three theoretical approaches.

3 Methods

The approach in this research is qualitative as it will investigate how and why this specific global governance architecture is fragmented. The dependent variable in the research is institutional complexity in global land governance. This focus helps to explain⁵ the complicated structures around land grabbing as well as place it in a larger context.

The aim of the analysis is to provide a mapping of the existing global land governance architecture, and further analyse the causes for the given nature of the architecture. The first step of the analysis will screen the global land governance architecture based on Biermann et al.'s typology. The following steps will then focus on understanding the global land governance architecture based on discourses, coalitions, rules and power. An analysis on the causes leading to such fragmentation will then follow, drawing from the earlier steps. Mapping as a method will be based on the dual structure that combines institutions and discourses and hence reflects the theoretical basis of Discursive institutionalism and PAA. The analysis on the causes of fragmentation will then be mostly based on Cox's critical approach. Through these different steps the attempt is made to answer the two-part research question on how and why the global land governance architecture is fragmented.

In sum, four main steps will be taken in mapping the global land governance architecture. These steps will combine aspects from the concept of institutional fragmentation, the dual-structure of the policy arrangements approach, and the critical approach by Cox.

1. Screening the Global Land Governance Architecture
2. Identifying Discourses and Discourse Coalitions
3. Identifying the Dominant Discourse Coalition
4. The Dominant Discourse Coalition and Cox's idea of neoliberal hegemony

3.1 Screening the Global Land Governance Architecture

First, an institutional screening will be undertaken. This step aims to answer the first research question about the degree of fragmentation in the global land governance architecture. The screening will identify main institutions and organizations that are currently addressing the issue of land grabbing on the global governance arena. The method of screening an institutional complex in a particular issue area helps to provide insights into the causes of institutional complexity. Screening has proved to be a common analytical response in a number of studies on regime complexity (Orsini, 2013). It is the sensible first step of analysing an architecture, e.g. to clarify which actors are involved, and how they relate to each other.

⁵ As Wagenaar (2011) points out, interpretivist approaches can also intend to 'explain', rather than only 'understand'. Hence, as the main research question indicates, a part of this research aims to indeed *explain* the fragmented nature of this architecture.

The screening will be done according to the typology that Biermann et al. provide for assessing the degree of fragmentation. The typology includes three different criteria – institutional integration, norm conflicts and actor constellations. However, as the next step of the analysis will be looking into actor constellations in more detail, only the first two criteria will be used here. The first criterion looks at the degree of institutional integration and degree of overlaps between decision-making systems, while the second concentrates on the existence and degree of norm conflicts (Biermann et al. 2009). It is important to note that in empirical research, these ideal types of fragmentation are not clear-cut, and hence the boundaries between them can be fluid (Biermann et al., 2009, 21). The following table will illustrate the three different types of fragmentation based on the two criteria used in this research. As was mentioned in chapter 1, the different degrees of fragmentation are likely to show different degrees of governance performance. The potential consequences of fragmentation to speed, ambition, participation, and equity arguably vary depending on the degree and nature of fragmentation (ibid). However, in general it seems that while cooperative forms of fragmentation can entail both costs and benefits, conflictive fragmentation mostly has harmful effects on governance performance (ibid., 31).

Table 1 - Typology of Fragmentation of Governance Architectures

	Synergistic	Cooperative	Conflictive
Institutional Integration	One core institutions, with other institutions being closely integrated	Core institutions with other institutions that are loosely integrated	Different, largely unrelated institutions
Norm Conflicts	Core norms of institutions are integrated	Core norms are not conflicting	Core norms conflict

Biermann et al., 2009, 19

The scope of this research is limited to the international level, and hence the mapping will not be looking at regional and national institutions. However, as the majority of governance activity with regards to land grabbing is taking place at the global level, it will provide a quite comprehensive mapping of the issue domain at large. The screening will also only look at the existing global land governance architecture (consisting of the past five years), instead of comparing with earlier situations.

3.2 Identifying Discourses and Discourse Coalitions

Secondly, the discourses and discourse coalitions within the global land governance architecture will be analysed. This adds an important level to complement the institutional screening, and hence provides a more nuanced analysis of the fragmented architecture. Whereas for example Zelli and van Asselt have written about the causes of fragmentation with regards to the global environmental governance, this research aims to look at the deeper constitutive structures and discourses behind fragmentation. This part of the analysis aims to examine which discourses constitute the different institutions, and to what extent the observed fragmentation goes back to discourse contestation. The analysis will be based on the first three dimensions of the PAA – discourses, actors and rules of the game. As Hajer’s definition

of discourse coalitions entails these three dimensions, his work will be also used in this step of the analysis. The main emphasis of the discourse analysis part of this research is on discourse coalitions. This is based on the fact that the research has an institutional focus and hence placing emphasis on coalitions gives sufficient attention to actors in framing discourses and interacting with each other through the discourses. This step will be divided into two parts – identifying the overarching discourses, and identifying discourse coalitions. As these two parts aim to separately answer the second and third research question, together they will aim at answering the fourth research question on the extent to which the observed fragmentation reflects a contestation between the discourses and associated coalitions. This is also directly related to the first hypothesis that claims that the high degree of institutional fragmentation in the global land governance architecture reflects a considerable level of discursive contestation in this issue area.

3.2.1 Identifying the overarching discourses

The first part will identify the overarching discourses in the global land governance architecture, and hence aims to directly answer the second research question. These discourses will be further discussed, and closely linked to the discussion about discourse coalitions.

The policy *discourses* are defined as interpretative schemes that range from formal policy concepts and texts to popular narratives and story lines (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). PAA, like discursive institutionalism is based on a Foucauldian understanding of discourses, but developed further. For this research, Hajer's definition of discourses will be used. According to Hajer, discourse is an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena (Hajer, 1995, 60). They entail the norms and values, the definitions of problems, and approaches to solutions of the actors involved (Arts & Leroy, 2006, 13). Hence, discourses give meaning to a policy issue and domain. Discourse is perceived as both an outcome and a medium of human action (Hajer, 1995). Hajer argues that discourse analysis aims to understand why a particular understanding of a given problem gains dominance while other understandings are discredited (ibid). This view focuses on the constitutive role of discourse in political processes, and places the discoursing subjects in the center of the analysis (Hajer, 1995). In the case of global land governance, just as in many other domains, the policy arrangement contains more than one discourse (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). These discourses differ and possibly compete, which causes actors to group together in coalitions to “enhance certain discourses and constrain others” (ibid.).

Storylines give the impression of common understanding and seemingly reduce the discursive complexity of a problem (Hajer, 1995, 63). By identifying the main storylines, this part will map out the problem definitions, approaches to solutions, as well as norms and values of the main discourses. Through these aspects, the different central standpoints and responses to land grabbing will be discovered. As is pointed out by Liefferink (2006), discourses are relevant at two different levels; the first one refers to specific and concrete policy problems at stake, and the second one refers to general ideas about the organization of society. The aim is to identify the main storylines connected to each discourse coalition by using official policy papers, statements, and policy guidelines as the basis for a text analysis. The chosen material will be further elaborated on in section 3.2.3.

3.2.2 Identifying the main discourse coalitions

The second step will identify the main discourse coalitions. Identifying these coalitions will aim to answer the third research question about how discourses and institutions relate. As was mentioned before, identifying the discourse coalitions here will complement the institutional screening done in the first step. Analysing the coalitions will be based on the first three dimensions of PAA - discourses, actors, and rules of the game, or as Hajer would call it – storylines, actors, and practices. Hence this part will build on the first part of this step, where the main discourses and storylines are identified. Given the institutional focus of this research, it is important to identify the discourse coalitions and the actors involved in these. This is based on Hajer's 'argumentative' approach that focuses on the constitutive role of discourse in political processes and hence allocates a central role to the discoursing subjects (Hajer, 1995, 58).

First, the discourses connected to each discourse coalition will be identified. This will be done based on the previous step that more specifically concentrates on identifying the overarching discourses and storylines. Discourses and storylines play an important role in creating the coalitions among actors of a given domain as they help simplify the discursive complexity of a problem (Hajer, 1995, 63). The actors within these coalitions do not necessarily share the same ideological or political views, but for various reasons are attracted to the same set of storylines (Hajer, 1995, 65). Through the definition of the problem, the political conflict appears non-existent within the coalition. In the case of global land governance, the two main discourse coalitions identified in this research both consist of a quite heterogeneous group of actors with different standpoints. However, certain storylines are shared, and actors within these coalitions relate to each other through research, policymaking and political actions. As the dimension of storylines is already discussed in the first part of this step, they will be linked to the dimensions of actors and rules of the game/practices.

Next, the second dimension of PAA - actors will be considered with regards to the discourse coalitions. The aim is to identify the relevant *actors* involved in the policy domain, as well as their influence in the policy process. As this has partly been done in the screening, the aim is to complement the first step, and to further group these actors together according to their views on the issue at stake (Lieverink, 2006, 51-52). A text analysis of the policy documents of the main actors is overtaken to form an idea of the actors involved in each coalition. As the range and number of actors is wide, this part will concentrate on the main actors from each discourse coalition. It should be noted, that rather than grouping the actors in advocacy coalitions based on beliefs, the PAA approach specifically groups the actors based on discourses and storylines prevailing within the architecture (ibid.).

As the last part of this step, the third dimension of PAA - the *rules of the game* will be analysed with regards to the discourse coalitions. This dimension refers to mutually agreed formal procedures and informal routines of interaction within institutions (Lieverink, 2006, 56). It fits well with Hajer's idea of *practices*. As Hajer argues, discourse coalitions are formed if previously independent practices are being actively related to each other, and several practices get a meaning in a common political project (Hajer, 1995, 65). Hence, this dimension focuses on institutions and the ways in which they act within the architecture. Institutions are an important part of discourse coalitions, as they represent the more structured way of reproducing a discursive order (Hajer, 1995, 65). With regards to this dimension, governance instruments such as the PRAI and the Voluntary Guidelines will be given emphasis and attention, as they are arguably the most relevant procedures within the

architecture, and have brought together a variety of actors in an effort to govern land grabbing. These instruments illustrate the ways in which discourses are institutionalized in practices and policies. They also define the procedures and allocation of resources.

3.2.3 Selection of texts

The analysis on the discourses and discourse coalitions is based on text analysis. This will be based on analysis of main documents of the institutions, statements by country coalitions, statements by NGOs and industry, and academic analyses on the positions of actors. As this is part of the analysis aims only to form a broad understanding of the existing situation, no complex linguistic methods will be used here. This is not needed for the purpose of this study, and hence the focus of the analysis of the discourses and discourse coalitions will be on vocabulary.

Two sets of documents were chosen for the text analysis. First, key documents and publications from the main identified institutions and actors were chosen. The main publications addressing land grabbing from the identified main institutions (The World Bank, FAO, IFAD) will be used as central documents in the text analysis. These include the two main governance instruments, the PRAI and the Voluntary Guidelines that will be especially used with regards to the rules of the game. Central documents from the G8, the G20, and the G77 will also be used in order to be able to see preferences of these country groups for certain institutions. Second, statements from civil society and the industry were chosen. This includes statements from NGOs like Oxfam International, and FIAN global peasant movements like La Via Campesina, as well as major private actors such as Cargill and Monsanto. Especially useful documents are the 'Dakar Appeal against the land grab', and 'Why we Oppose the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment', as they represent a wide range of actors that have grouped together to voice their standing on land grabbing. Again, this will be done in an effort to see these actors' preference for certain institutions. This text analysis is clearly not an exhaustive one, and only concentrates on main institutions and a selection of different actors that illustrate the range of positions within the architecture.

Central documents of key institutions and actors were scrutinized based on actuality and representativeness. This means that there is an articulation of the phenomenon of land grabbing through published and up to date statements. Further, institutions and actors are assumed to represent the values and the mandate they articulate.

3.3 Identifying the dominant discourse coalition

The third step of the analysis aims to identify the dominant discourse coalition, and hence attempts to directly to answer the fifth research question. This step deals with the fourth dimension of PAA – the division of *resources* between the different actors. This is crucially linked to the concept of *power*. The main idea is that actors around a given policy issue are partly dependent on each other for *resources*, e.g. money, information, or political legitimacy (Lieverink, 2006, 54). As Arts and Buizer point out, power has to be considered as the ability of actors and discourse coalitions to mobilize resources in an effort to reach intended outcomes in social systems (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). Presumably these outcomes often refer to gaining a hegemonic position in a policy arrangement and hence advancing their preferred policies.

The formation of discourse coalitions is in itself a way to establish discursive hegemony among actors with an interest to a specific set of storylines (Hajer, 1995, 44). Through a strong discourse coalition, a particular understanding of a given problem gains dominance while others are discredited (ibid.). Hajer provides a simple two-step procedure to measure the influence of a discourse coalition. The first step is *discourse structuration* - if it is used widely to conceptualize the world (Hajer, 1995, 60). The second step is *discourse institutionalization* – if the discourse has solidified into institutions and organizational practices (ibid.). Based on these two criteria, this step will identify and analyse the dominant coalition. Given the space limitations, this analysis cannot deliver an exhaustive measuring of the power of each coalition. Instead, this is a rather abstract analysis of the coalitions and their resources. The next step will further build on the dominant discourse coalition by bringing in Cox's critical theory on the dominance of the neoliberal world order.

3.4 The dominant discourse coalition and Cox's idea of neoliberal hegemony

The fourth step is closely connected to the previous one about identifying the dominant discourse. This step will build on the analysis from the previous step and will analyse this identified dominant discourse with regards to Cox's argument on neoliberal dominance. The step aims to answer the sixth research question about the dominant discourse being reflective of Cox's expectations about the dominance of a neoliberal world order. In addition, the second hypothesis about the dominant discourse being expected to reflect a neoliberal discourse is based on this section of the analysis. The analysis will be based on Cox's neo-Gramscian ideas about neoliberalism, world hegemony, and the role of international organizations and the civil society in stabilizing or transforming the world order. Hence, the global land governance architecture will be linked to broader norms and discourses that govern broad global processes.

The broader neoliberal discourse and norms are institutionalized through powerful actors (such as the World Bank and the UN agencies) in the architecture, and further formulated into a hegemonic discourse (Bernstein, 2002, 2). Through this process the application of neoliberal norms and values, as well as favorable practices are facilitated and legitimated (Cox, 1993, 62). As Bernstein (2002) argues, it is crucial to identify the broader norms and discourses that institutions promote in order to understand the global governance architecture. These broader norms and the institutions and discourses that embody them ensure that mainly certain kinds of policy responses are enabled (Bernstein, 2002, 14).

The purpose of this step is to connect the earlier identified fragmentation and contestations within the global land governance architecture into a broader framework. While critical theory has a strong institutional focus in explaining hegemony and fragmentation, the analysis on discursive tendencies and discourse coalitions will be strongly connected to this. By applying critical reflections on the discourses and coalitions of the fragmented architecture, a more nuanced perspective will be offered in an effort to answer the overall research question.

3.5 Clarifications and limitations

The four-step analysis that has been described above will aim to answer the main research question as well as the six more specific questions. This last section of chapter three will now

consider some important aspects of the analysis, as well as the limitations that this research has.

3.5.1 Land Grabbing

The term ‘land grabbing’ refers to the acquisition or long-term lease of large areas of land by investors (De Schutter, 2011, 249). The scale of these sales is not a focus in this research, but it has been widely acknowledged that land grabbing is a widespread and escalating trend. The investors are assumed to be local elites, TNCs and other states. Again, the focus is not on the investors but on the global governance architecture around this trend. As was already noted in the introduction, it is recognized here that there arguably exists no uncontested term to label this phenomenon. Rather than referring to terms that, while suggesting a neutral approach may have biases of their own (e.g. large-scale land acquisition, global land rush), *land grabbing* is used throughout the thesis as the most commonly used term in the scholarly and policy literature. However, it is acknowledged here that land grabbing is an inherently political and historical phenomenon that is related to existing asymmetric power relations.

3.5.2 Time and Scope

As this is only the preliminary step towards analyzing the fragmentation of the global land governance framework from a more systematic and theory-based standpoint, the timeframe will be limited to the existing situation. Naturally the developments leading to the existing situation will be used as context and background, but the actual mapping will only take into account the existing situation. As was mentioned before, Cox’s approach would provide great tools to analyzing the *change* in discourses and their positions over time. This is clearly an important aspect to understand and further examine, but considering the scope of this research, this aspect would be topical for further research after this initial one. The scope of the mapping will also be limited to the international level. It is clear that regional, national and local levels have a strong impact on the overall existing situation around land governance, but for the purposes of this research, as well as the limited time and scope, this research will purely focus on the international level of land governance. In addition, it is clear that the issues of land governance reach several other fields too (e.g. agriculture, investment, human rights), the land governance architecture will here be limited to institutions, organizations, discourses, and instruments directly dealing with the issue of land governance.

3.5.3 Actors

In the time and space given, it is impossible to take into account every actor that is involved in the global land governance architecture. For the purposes of our research question, it was more important that the main global governance institutions and actors were identified, so that they could illustrate the main tendencies and phenomena with regards to fragmentation. Hence, what will follow is not an exhaustive mapping of all actors in the field but rather the main ones as illustrators of the main groups/coalitions/dominant discourses/guidelines that are present. The identified main actors in global land governance are the World Bank, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). They are the drivers behind the endeavor to reach common global standards in land governance, and are hence central actors for the analysis. The main country groups such as the EU, the G8, the G20, and the G77 will also be discussed. In addition a range of civil society and private actors such as La Via Campesina, Fian, and Oxfam International will be discussed, as they illustrate the variety of different civil society

standpoints within the global land governance architecture. In sum, rather than carrying out a thorough analysis of the global governance institutions and actors, the focus is on the main actors and institutions, and the discourse coalitions between them.

3.5.4 Limitations

Although the theoretical approach combines a focus on both discourses and institutions, the main focus of the research is institutional, and discourses are seen as highly relevant in this regard too. Hence the part of the analysis that focuses on discourses is not as wide and comprehensive as it could be. This is partly due to lack of time and resources. Conducting a mapping that takes into account both agency and structure requires both time and scope, and in this case both are limited. However, a research that was based on idea of the dual structure was preferred and hence some other limitations were necessary. One main limitation is the lack of interviews. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the analysis of discourses with regard to this research will be based solely on text analysis. However, keeping in mind the institutional main focus of the research, as well as the time and space limitations, the research will still be able to provide a good analysis of the situation, and potentially provide a basis for further research.

4 Analysis

The analysis will be divided into four main steps. The first part focuses on the institutional screening of the architecture. The second step will connect this screening to a discussion about the discourses and discourse coalitions based on the first three dimensions of PAA. The next step will aim to identify the dominant discourse coalition based on the last dimension of PAA. The fourth and last step will then connect the earlier parts that have mapped the architecture to a broader framework based on Cox's critical theory on the dominance of neoliberal world order. As a whole, these four steps aim to answer the main research question, as well as the six more specific research questions.

4.1. Institutional Screening

4.1.1 Identifying the main institutions in global land governance

Land issues on the international agenda have always been contentious. Land reform, and especially the nationalization of privately held lands has long been a very ideological and politicized battle (Margulis et al., 2013). The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) organized by FAO in 1979 can be seen as the one of the earliest attempts to establish formal international governance around land issues (fao.org). WCARRD was unsuccessful in establishing an international framework for land reform and rural development, and with the introduction of structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, land issues remained outside international development agendas and lacked international interest (McKeon, 2013). It was only after World Bank's implementation of a market-led agrarian reform approach (MLAR) in the 1990s, and especially the 'Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform' (GCAR) by La Via Campesina and its allies in 1999 as a response to MLAR that brought land issues properly on the international level. This campaign revived agrarian reform in the international agenda, and contributed to the organization of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in 2006 by FAO (fao.org). The ICARRD formed the basis for international land governance, and made it possible for states and rural social movements to articulate a new normative basis for this (ICARRD, 2006 & McKeon, 2009). The process for possible voluntary guidelines on land tenure started after ICARRD, but finding political consensus on international rules was difficult (Margulis et al., 2013, 7). During the early 2000s, the World Bank, the European Union, IFAD, and individual countries' development agencies also passed their own land and development policies, already contributing to the fragmentation of the emerging global governance.

The global food crisis and the increased international attention on the global land grab (first brought to the attention of the media and larger public by GRAIN's publication '*Seized*') put the topic under the global spotlight (GRAIN, 2008). As Nora McKeon argues, the global food crisis revealed a global policy vacuum by pointing out the absence of an inclusive and authoritative global body that could deliberate on food issues (McKeon, 2013, 108). Hence, after 2008 there has been a heightened sense of urgency around establishing global land governance to control the global land grab. To add to the already complex field of issues and

actors regarding land grabbing, the recent changes in world order, such as the introduction of new players (new OECD countries, BRIC countries), and a shift towards multipolarity (replacement of the G8 with the G20), have made the process of establishing global governance around the issue ever more complicated (McMichael, 2013). In addition, the multiple uses of crops from food, feed, and biofuel are further making the topic complex, and difficult to govern (Borras et al., 2013). This in turn has brought a wide range of private actors into the field, that are also involved in governance initiatives through international institutions such as the World Bank and IFAD. It is in this interconnected setting of the global land grab, broader changes in world order, as well as the global food crisis that the first attempts at establishing international rules or instruments for the regulation of land issues have been made. So far the most notable global instruments for regulating the global land grab are the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respect Rights, Livelihoods and Resources (from now on PRAI) that were introduced in 2010, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (from now on Voluntary Guidelines) that were introduced in 2012. These will both be discussed in more detail in the following sections. In addition to these two main instruments, there also exist two private governance instruments that are regarded relevant: the Equator Principles (EPs) and the Roundtable Sustainable Biofuels (RSB) (EP, 2006 & RSB 2011). However, as in the current situation these two are not considered as significant as the Voluntary Guidelines or the PRAI, considerable little attention will be paid to these instruments during the analysis.

In sum, while there have been some attempts to establish global land governance since the late 1970s, it is only the past decade that has marked a rapid realization of the importance of succeeding in this. The aim now is to make sense of this emerging, yet already fragmented global land governance architecture through a dual approach of institutionalism and discourse analysis. After this, the architecture will be placed in a broader setting through critical theory in examining the causes of fragmentation in more detail.

4.1.2 Assessing the degree of fragmentation of these institutions

Like many other global governance architectures, the global land governance architecture is a non-hierarchical and loosely coupled system of institutions, and involves a wide range of different organizations, regimes, principles, norms, regulations and procedures (Keohane & Victor, 2011; Zelli, 2011, 255-6). Land grabbing rose to the global governance agenda fairly quickly after 2008, and ever since has developed into a fragmented and complicated architecture involving a multiplicity of actors (Margulis et al, 2013).

The mapping of the global land governance architecture has several steps, and starts off from Biermann et al.'s work on fragmentation, and specifically the typology they offer for defining the degree of fragmentation of a governance architecture. The next parts following Biermann et al.'s typology will complement this initial phase and go into more detail about the fragmentation of the land governance architecture. As mentioned earlier, this research uses a broader definition of international institutions that comprises international regimes, international organizations, implicit norms and principles in order to allow for the inclusion of non-state actors and initiatives when analyzing the architecture. The criteria of institutional integration and norm conflicts that define the degree of fragmentation will now be discussed individually in order to form a more comprehensive idea of the fragmentation of the global land governance architecture.

a. Institutional integration

With regards to the first criterion, *institutional integration*, the global land governance architecture falls mainly under cooperative fragmentation, as the different institutions and decision-making procedures are loosely integrated (Biermann, 2009, 19). The core institutions dealing with global land governance are the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The two are mutually involved in several governing initiatives and guidelines, the most notable of which are the PRAI and the Voluntary Guidelines.

The World Bank, in cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) introduced the PRAI in 2010, in reaction to the “sharp increase in investment involving significant use of agricultural land” (FAO et al., 2010, 1). In addition to the actors involved in the formulation of the PRAI, they were also supported by the G8 and G20. However, several actors involved in the global governance of land did not endorse the PRAI, and even openly opposed them and the World Bank (De Schutter, 2011, 254 & GCAR, 2010, 2). As many actors found the PRAI to be insufficient in protecting land rights and food security, the Voluntary Guidelines were introduced in 2012 through the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and came to be endorsed by a larger number of actors across the field (Seufert, 2013). The broader acceptance of the Voluntary Guidelines across the architecture compared to the PRAI was clearly a move towards more institutional integration across the whole architecture, as there were many actors who refused to endorse the PRAI.

In addition to the introduction of the Voluntary Guidelines, the CFS is a specifically important forum for better integrating the different actors within the architecture. The CFS is the main United Nations forum for reviewing and following up policies concerning world food security, and is developing to be the most inclusive global forum deliberating on food security issues (fao.org). Hosted annually by the FAO, the CFS brings together an unprecedented number and variety of actors, ranging from the World Bank and private actors to international and regional peasants movements, some of whom have never previously operated in the same governance spaces (McKeon, 2013). Although the World Bank’s participation in CFS discussions has been said to be hesitant and not very enthusiastic, it is still involved in the forum (ibid., 115). The rise in the importance of CFS has certainly contributed to a more cooperative nature of the fragmented architecture, and arguably has potential to further develop to that direction. As Philip Seufert (2013) argues, through the participation of the World Bank, all UN’s member states, as well as an institutionalized participation of a very large number of civil society organizations (CSOs), and even private actors, the CFS can be regarded as one of the most democratic institutional frameworks for global decision-making for international agreements. Hence it can be argued that with regards to institutional integration, the global land governance architecture falls mainly under the category of cooperative fragmentation. There is certainly at least loose integration between the different actors and decision-making processes across the spectrum, and the CFS is certainly enhancing this.

b. Norm conflicts

The second criterion based on *norm conflicts*⁶ is perhaps a more complicated one with regards to defining the type of fragmentation this represents. As a basis, all main actors ranging from the World Bank to peasant movements recognize that the current trend of land sales does have problems and risks that need to be controlled and mitigated. Especially with regards to the consequences for the rural population, food security, and the right to food, there is an understanding about the possible unfavorable risks of the process (FAO et al., 2010, 9). However, any further elaboration on how these risks should be mitigated and which principles and rules should be prioritized will reveal several differences and even clear conflicts among different actors' views within the architecture. In sum, it is agreed that regulation is needed, but based on what principles this should be done is not agreed on among the range of actors within the architecture. The World Bank among many other actors arguably sees the continuing investment in land as a priority, and the core principle behind their policies, whereas there is a considerable amount of actors that argue that human rights and food sovereignty should be the main principles that the whole governance should be based on (World Bank, 2010 & Patel, 2009).

The conflict about these principles became apparent shortly after the publication of the PRAI, when a range of international and local civil society actors including research institutes, international NGOs and academics raised their voices in opposition to the PRAI. Along with a few other documents, the 'Dakar Appeal Against the Land Grab' from the World Social Forum 2011 was supported by more than 500 organizations from around the world (FIAN et al., 2011). By the time this document came out, it was becoming apparent that the principles, norms and rules according to which the global land governance should function are not agreed upon across the architecture. While recent developments such as the Voluntary Guidelines, along with the annual CFS with an unprecedented number of actors across the board taking part in it, are an attempt to bring the actors closer together, it remains clear that norm conflicts still exist. The voluntary non-legally binding nature of all existing guidelines and principles makes it possible for a variety of actors to be loosely integrated and involved in the same decision-making processes while still quite clearly conflicting on the principles and rules each actor and institution prioritizes. Hence, while the CFS is an encouraging step in the right direction, the global land governance architecture represents conflictive fragmentation when it comes to norm conflicts.

In sum, based on Biermann et al.'s typology, the global land governance architecture can be seen to border somewhere between conflictive and cooperative fragmentation. Given the nature of the CFS and the Voluntary Guidelines, they can certainly be seen as a way towards more cooperation, but perhaps are not enough to see the architecture in the light of obvious cooperative fragmentation. For the time being, the realities of how this architecture functions still strongly indicate conflictive fragmentation, and when looking beyond CFS and Voluntary guidelines, a considerable number of conflicts and divides exist. With regards to governance performance, it seems that while cooperative forms of fragmentation can entail both costs and benefits, conflictive fragmentation seems to mostly have harmful effects (Biermann et al. 2009, 31). Hence analyzing the degree of fragmentation and the potential causes for it is a

⁶ It should be noted that Biermann et al.'s concept of norms refers to sets of principles, norms and rules within the architecture, and will be used in this institutional screening. This should be not confused with the broader notion of norms referring to overarching discourses that Cox and Bernstein use.

necessary step in order to analyse the ways in which governance performance can be improved. As the research aims to theoretically approach these issues from a dual perspective combining institutionalism with discourse analysis, the next sections will examine the conflicts and divides of the architecture from a perspective of discourses and discourse coalitions. This will further enhance the understanding of the degree of fragmentation.

4.2 Discourses and Discourse Coalitions

Analysing the discourses and discourse coalitions within the global land governance architecture adds an important level to the institutional screening, and hence provides a more nuanced analysis of the fragmented architecture. This part of the analysis aims to examine which discourses and discourse coalitions constitute the architecture. When it comes to the contentious issues regarding land grabbing, many of the most debated issues are governance-related. There is a common understanding across the global land governance architecture that some sort of regulation is needed, but what this entails is a much more contested issue. As has been pointed out before, there is a multiplicity of initiatives and guidelines around how the current rush for land should be governed, there are serious differences between the primary positions.

4.2.1 Two overarching discourses

This part will identify the overarching discourses in the global land governance architecture, and hence aims to directly answer the second research question. This initial step will identify the two overarching discourses and the main storylines that constitute them. By identifying the main storylines, this part will map out the problem definitions, approaches to solutions, as well as norms and values of the main discourses. Through these aspects, the different central standpoints and responses to land grabbing will be discovered. The next part will then connect these discourses and storylines to the identified discourse coalitions.

a. Responsible investment - discourse

The responsible investment- discourse is based on the argument that the growing interest in land deals is a desirable phenomenon for both states, the corporate sector, and the host countries including their whole population (Deininger, 2011). The central point of the main storyline is that “Investment to increase productivity of owned-operated smallholder agriculture has a very large impact on growth and poverty reduction” (FAO et al., 2010, 1). In order for this to be realized the investments must be responsible and respect the rights of existing users of land and other resources. This can be ensured through global governance instruments such as the PRAI or Voluntary Guidelines. A fundamental assumption behind this discourse is that there exist marginal lands that can be made available to address the food-energy-financial-climate crises (World Bank, 2010). Hence, governance is based on two basic assumptions: clear property rights and the functioning of free market forces (Deininger, 2011). Essentially the storyline asserts that large-scale farming could ensure higher productivity, greater production, and efficient land-use. All this would in turn help improve food security globally. Hence, the problem definition according to this discourse is not the global trend of large-scale land investments, but the risks that can be largely avoided through regulation. Using the term ‘large-scale land acquisition’ to describe the phenomenon is in itself a part of the position of the discourse. The phenomenon is defined as a neutral and technical term that depicts contemporary land grabbing as an apolitical phenomenon.

The storyline regarding food security is a central one. The responsible investment - discourse states strengthening food security as one of their main goals, and considers large-scale agro-investment as an important tool to do so (FAO et al, 2010, 7). Food security is seen to contain four key elements: availability, access, utilization and stability (FAO et al., 2010, 6). The storyline admits to the fact that local food security and malnutrition will not be investors' key concerns, but with instruments such as the PRAI, local populations will benefit from the ways investors set up the agricultural production. Further, for these local initiatives to be realized, there must be a comparative advantage for the investor (FAO et al., 2010,7). Provision of new technology to the local population and smallholder farmers is also seen as crucial in improving food security (G8, 2012).

The purpose of regulation to this discourse is to “maximize benefits from large-scale investment involving land and related resources” (World Bank, 2010, 96). Facilitating recognition of rights, promoting transparency and broad access to relevant information, ensuring voluntary land transfers, and complying with minimum standards of environmental rights will be enough for these large-scale land investments to be desirable for all actors involved (World Bank, 2010, 95). Rule of law, industry best practice, human rights and workers' rights are to be respected by all parties involved in large-scale land investments (FAO et al., 2010, 13-14). The governance instruments are seen as a way to form cooperation between the public and the private, in a way that the public sector encourages and secures a safe and enabling environment for the investors (FAO et al., 2010, 7). Again, as is the case with the storyline on food security, the problems as well as solutions are seen as technical and administrative issues, rather than political or ideological debates and imbalanced power relations between the investors and the local population.

Creating an enabling environment for investment is seen as the most efficient way to benefit both the investors and the local population. Hence, the role of the state is seen as a creator of an enabling environment for investment (FAO et al., 2010, 7). The central argument here is that public benefits arise from successful large-scale agro-investment, and as long as the host countries provide an enabling environment, the investments will end up benefiting both sides of the deal. The important role of local smallholders in reducing poverty and hunger is also emphasized. In order to enhance efficiency, the productivity of these small farms should be increased through “more and better investment in agricultural technology, infrastructure, and market access” (World Bank, 2010, xiii), as well as transferring land to more productive users at low cost (Byamugisha, 2013). Hence, increased productivity based on market access and technology are seen as the main ways for poverty reduction and growth. In addition, it is argued that “many countries with large amounts of currently uncultivated land suitable for cultivation also have large gaps between potential and actual yields” (World Bank, 2010, preface). These lands can arguably be put into use in a way that again benefit both the investors and the local population. Transforming land into productive farmland through private capital, and the role of public sector in promoting investment in agriculture are seen as key goals (OECD, 2010, 26).

b. Human rights - discourse

The human rights- discourse is based on the assumption that the driver for the current expansion of production for food, feed, and biofuels is not meant to help the world's poor and hungry, but rather to guarantee further capital accumulation of corporate profit (Borras et al., 2013, 171). The central argument of the main storyline here is that land grabbing is an

inherently political phenomenon, and that the fundamental roots of this need to be questioned. Hence, the problem definition does not revolve around control of unintended consequences, but rather the whole phenomenon of land grabs is seen as the root of the problem. Technical and administrative solutions are seen to be insufficient in addressing a problem that is inherently political in nature. The main storyline concentrates on contesting the inevitability of these land grabs, and forming a human rights framework as the basis of the global land governance. Only by adopting a human rights-based approach to global land governance can truly pro-poor outcomes be achieved. Using the term ‘land grab’ is again already a part of this discourse and the storylines used. The term refers to something being unfairly taken, and is a “cogent reminder of the normative power of discourse and framing” (Margulis et al., 2013, 16).

The storyline around food sovereignty is arguably among the most important ones when it comes to this discourse. It captures the human rights-based approach (especially the human rights to food and land), as well as the focus on the complex and specific social relations behind each case. The concept of food security has been rejected, as arguably it has evolved to be an empty and misleading concept, where the solution for increasing food security is to increase agricultural “productivity” through large-scale intensive agriculture (Oakland Institute, 2009,18). Via Campesina defines food sovereignty as

“the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. (...) Food Sovereignty is the precondition to genuine food security.” (Via Campesina, 1996)

According to the human rights discourse, the storyline regarding food security in the responsible investment- discourse “captures the notion of hunger not as a deficit of calories, but as a violation of a broader set of social, economic, and physical conditions” (Patel, 2012, 2). Instead of this, food sovereignty focuses on inclusive processes, small farmers’ control and ownership of land and methods of production. Arguably, achieving food sovereignty and hence, genuine food security, “parliaments and national governments should urgently suspend all large-scale land transactions, resign the deals they already signed, return the misappropriated land to communities and outlaw land grabbing” (GRAIN, 2011a, 5). The discourse sees the economic context, in which for example the PRAI is embedded in, as inherently unsustainable, and hence suggests alternatives to achieve sustainable food and energy production (FIAN et al., 2011).

Similar to the responsible investment- discourse, this discourse sees global governance instruments as well as the role of the state to be highly important in managing the trend. However, the framing is radically different, as this discourse deploys these instruments to expose, oppose, and stop land grabbing (ibid.). The state’s role is similarly much different from the responsible investment - discourse, as the role of the state here is to intervene more forcefully on behalf of poor peasants. Enforcing human rights requires binding legal instruments that are implemented at the national and international level (FIAN et al. 2011). The discourse would hence prefer an international legal framework where the human right to food would be recognized and enforced.

Within this overarching discourse there arguably exist a more moderate sub-type of this discourse that still sees large-scale land deals as having potential, but more widely recognizes the need to mitigate the unwanted negative impacts, and argues for the need for a human rights-based approach (Oxfam, 2012). Linking small farmers to the wider markets is the key

idea to sufficiently develop the rural sector. This strand of the human rights- discourse also sees international governance instruments as the key to governing this phenomenon in the intended direction (Borras et al., 2013, 170). However, compared to the responsible investment -discourse that mainly just aims to secure the continuation of this trend, this strand sees the governance instruments as more urgent and tactical – finding best ways to manage this trend currently, in a way that benefits the most actors at once, including the rural poor (ibid.). Hence, in terms of principles and priorities, this discourse is wider and more heterogeneous than the first discourse, but diverges on many crucial storylines and principles.

4.2.2 Discourse Coalitions

This part will identify the main discourse coalitions and aims to answer the third research question about how discourses and institutions relate. Discourse coalitions are connected to the notion that actors are actively involved in the production and transformation of discourses (Hajer, 1995, 55) As Arts and Buizer point out, actors group together in coalitions to enhance the discourse of their preference at the expense of other competing ones (Arts & Buizer, 2009, 343). In the case of global land governance, the two main coalitions are identified in this research that both consist of a quite heterogeneous group of actors with different standpoints. However, certain storylines are shared, and actors within these coalitions relate to each other through research, policymaking and political actions. The two discourse coalitions will now be discussed based on the first three dimensions of PAA – discourses, actors, and rules of the game.

a. Responsible investment – discourse coalition

With regards to *discourses*, the responsible investment- discourse coalition is based on the responsible investment- discourse and storylines discussed above in section 4.2.1. As a whole, the responsible investment- discourse coalition is based on the precondition that land grabbing is inevitable, and despite the risks involved, all involved participants could majorly benefit from investments in land (FAO et al., 2010, 20). The coalition’s definitions and storylines have ‘homogenized’ the problem around land grabbing, and narrowed down the wider problem field (Hajer, 1995, 54). Hence, through this framing and storylines, the range of policy options are delimited, and it appears that the problem field and the debates around it are much fewer. The debates about policy become more and more limited to technical and administrative issues. The clear focus on investment and enabling market-access for farmers conveys a broader message about the way this discourse coalition views development. As Hajer argues, “seemingly technical positions conceal normative commitments” (Hajer, 1995, 55). This is arguably the way in which this coalition, viewing the whole phenomenon through technical and administrative lenses presents itself as a pro-poor solution in global land governance. The broader normative commitment to neoliberal policies and development models can be seen through the positions and storylines of the coalition.

As can be gathered from the sources used when discussing the main storylines of the responsible investment – discourse, this discourse coalition consists of a wide range of *actors*. The World Bank, along with strong support from the G8 and the G20, heads the responsible investment – coalition. The EU, OECD, IFAD, FAO, major private sector actors such as Monsanto and Cargill, many aid donors and some NGOs are also part of this broad and powerful coalition that arguably represents the mainstream view when it comes to global land governance. Importantly, the majority of the main international institutions side with this discourse coalition. The EU, in addition to supporting the PRAI, also further enforces the

responsible investment- discourse through its FDI policy that also arguably emphasizes investors' interests over obligations (FIAN et al., 2012). In addition, the recent developments have indicated a new forum with a broad actor-base to be gaining prevalence in the global land governance architecture. 'The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition' is a G8-led group supported by the World Bank, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), IFAD and FAO (G8, 2012). Major private actors such as Cargill and Monsanto have endorsed the alliance, and allocated funds for it (Cargill, 2012 & Monsanto, 2012). The alliance consists of many of the same actors that take part in the CFS, and even officially recognizes both the PRAI and the Voluntary Guidelines (ibid.). However, with the recent launch of a major new 'Scaling up Nutrition- initiative' (SUN) in 2010, it has been argued that there is an attempt to direct attention away from the CFS process (Chandrasekaran, 2013). As many of the civil society organizations as well as global farmers organizations remain absent from the new SUN- initiative, it can be questioned whether this will direct the architecture towards a more conflictive fragmentation.

With regards to the *rules of the game*, the responsible investment- coalition has arguably managed to reproduce its discourse in an efficient manner, especially through the PRAI. From the main global governance instruments that were discussed before, the PRAI clearly represent the storylines of the responsible investment – coalition. The World Bank identifies the PRAI with its risk-minimizing mechanisms and industry-led forms of governance as the best way to regulate land grabs (World Bank, 2010). As the PRAI have been widely endorsed by many of the main actors (World Bank, the G8-led New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the G20, the corporate sector and IFAD), who continue to see them as the basis for global land governance (G20, 2011 & Stephens, 2013, 190). This guarantees that its significance remains high even with the introduction of the Voluntary Guidelines.

So far, all the existing global governance instruments related to land governance are in the form of self-regulation initiatives, voluntary guidelines, codes of conduct, principles of investment or private certification schemes. The Voluntary way of governing is seen as the most effective tool, also with regards to getting investors and private actors to comply with the stated guidelines. It is widely accepted within the coalition that mandatory regulations, or other similar documents requiring obligatory compliance, are more difficult because 1) they will take longer to agree on, 2) they are sometimes diluted as a result, and 3) they are often difficult to enforce (IFAD, 2011, 9). The Voluntary Guidelines follow the earlier governance instruments in that "(they) do not establish new legally binding obligations or replace existing national or international laws, treaties, or agreements", and hence can be seen as being in line with the preferred mode of governance to this coalition (FAO, 2012, 2).

However, the Voluntary Guidelines cannot be seen to clearly represent either of the two coalitions. Unlike the PRAI, the majority of actors from both major coalitions have endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines. "Even when actors share a specific set of storylines, they might interpret the meaning of these storylines rather differently" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, 177). This notion is arguably very relevant when discussing the global governance instruments, and especially the Voluntary Guidelines. There are clearly actors from the Responsible investment- coalition that view the Voluntary Guidelines as a highly positive development, and see no conflict between them and the storylines they support. Voluntary Guidelines are certainly a step towards more cooperative action within the architecture, as it is arguably representative of a larger group of actors across different discourses. Notably they also do not clearly challenge the claim of the Responsible Investment – coalition that large-scale investments in land are essential for development (CSOPNVG, 2012). Hence many actors that

identify with the storylines of the Responsible Investment – discourse, and consequently largely agree with the PRAI, can be involved in the Voluntary Guidelines process. On the other hand, actors like The World Bank and the G8 that have formally endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines, have continued their attention and efforts to implement the PRAI as well as new initiatives aimed at increased transparency, despite the calls to instead begin implementing the Voluntary Guidelines (Stephens, 2013 & FIAN et al., 2013). These are arguably indicators that these actors are not interested in attempting to form a more cooperative global land governance architecture that cuts through discourse coalitions.

b. Human rights – discourse coalition

With regards to *discourses*, the human rights – discourse coalition is based on the human rights- discourse identified earlier in section 4.2.1. This coalition, similar to the human rights- discourse itself – is quite heterogeneous, and smaller sub-types can be identified from this broader coalition. As a whole, the discourse coalition opposes the neoliberal, market-driven view of global governance and development that the responsible investment- coalition inherently promotes. It is argued that “the PRAI give legitimacy to policies that put the government and country at the service of large investors (foreign and Domestic)” (GCAR, 2010, 5). As Künneman and Suarez (2013) argue, the current international responses to land grabbing have been insufficient as they only address some aspects of the problem, and focus on the land deals themselves, while leaving out crucial human rights-based problems. The international policy responses should no longer neglect the underlying economic and political drivers of land dispossession. While the responsible investment- coalition has ‘homogenized’ the problem and the global discussion to concern weak governance that simply needs to be appropriately regulated, the human rights- coalition aims to contest this framing and place the phenomenon in a broader context of truly pro-poor development, and true accountability (De Schutter, 2011). As the human rights- coalition is certainly less prominent in the current global land governance architecture, the recent developments such as the Voluntary Guidelines and the CFS might arguably be changing this dynamic.

This coalition consists of a wide and homogenous group of *actors*. The human rights discourse- coalition has clearly emerged as a response to the mainstream/neoliberal views of the private actors, country groups (the G8, the G20), and powerful institutions such as the World Bank and the UN organizations (IFAD, FAO). As has become clear from the documents used to analyse the main storylines of the human rights- discourse, the coalition consists of a wide range of actors - NGOs (FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Oxfam International), international peasant movements (Via Campesina and their regional allies), and various research institutions and think tanks (GRAIN, Oakland Institute, Transnational Institute). While the G77 has endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines, the group as a whole has not indicated a strong commitment to the human rights- discourse (G77, 2012).

Compared to the responsible investment- coalition, this coalition clearly lacks strong and influential international institutions from its actors. While the CFS has certainly increased the prominence and influence of this coalition, strong institutions such as the World Bank and IFAD arguably still dominate the architecture. However, actors such as Oxfam International and FIAN that have more resources than most of the actors within this coalition, arguably have more resources, and hence can certainly positively effect the influence of this coalition in global governance. The actors, and especially the international rural movements like Via Campesina are bringing the voices of local people (small scale farmers, landless people, subsistence farmers etc.) on to the global level, in a call to level the playing field. The joint

statements such as 'The Dakar Appeal against the land grab' (joined by over 500 organizations) and 'Why We Oppose the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment' (jointly published by seven international actors) are an indication of the vast number of actors that represent this discourse, and are determined to bring an alternative vision onto the global governance debates.

With regards to the *rules of the game*, the coalition sees the PRAI as irresponsible, insufficient, and as being in violation of human rights and international law (GCAR, 2010, 2). PRAI "is a move to try to legitimize what is absolutely unacceptable: the long-term corporate (foreign and domestic) takeover of rural people's farmlands" (GRAIN, 2011b, 1). In addition, the continuous emphasis on transparency is criticized, as it does not ensure investment deals are in any way accountable to the interest of the rural poor (Cotula, 2012). As the Voluntary Guidelines are still in their infancy, they are greeted with optimism, especially since they are seen to have the potential to remove the monopoly of defining policies away from the World Bank, and towards a more heterogeneous actor base (Via Campesina, 2012b, 1&10). Many actors within the human rights- coalition such as Oxfam International, Via Campesina, FIAN, and Focus on the Global South have openly endorsed and welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines, and actively taken part in the process of implementation that is only in its beginning phases. Hence, with regards to fragmentation, the CFS and the Voluntary Guidelines can be seen as enhancing cooperation between different actors, discursive tendencies, and coalitions, but the continued support for PRAI and others are an important reminder of the unwillingness of some major actors to move in this direction.

However, the Voluntary Guidelines are still viewed as a major compromise between the different discourses, tendencies and coalitions, and hence another insufficient governing tool to control land grabbing (Seufert, 2013). Only the implementation and interpretation of them will truly indicate which actors they will end up benefiting (TNI, 2012). Once any policies or guidelines are passed, they do not self-interpret or self-implement (Franco, 2008). Hence the political interaction of the actors involved in land governance will define whether these instruments will bring about more cooperative actions towards land governance. The vocabulary and concepts used in the Voluntary Guidelines (transparency, accountability, consultation etc.) are indeed so broadly endorsed by the large majority of the actors in the architecture that the true nature of these guidelines will only be seen after the interpretation. The process of interpreting the practical meaning of the guidelines will be highly political and strongly contested (Borras et al, 2013, 176).

While the Voluntary Guidelines are seen as a preferred alternative to the PRAI, the actors in the coalition argue that enforcing human rights requires binding legal instruments that are implemented at the national and international level (FIAN et al. 2011). The coalition would like to see an international legal framework where the human right to food as well as the human right to land (that has not yet been recognized under international law) would be guaranteed, and national governments would bear the greatest responsibility of regulating land grabs (FIAN et al, 2011 & Künneman & Suarez, 2013). Applying the human right to land would fundamentally challenge the legal doctrines and frameworks that currently govern land, and would legally empower many of the local groups trying to defend their land (Künneman & Suarez, 2013, 136). In sum, it could be argued that while the Voluntary Guidelines have some potential for the enforcement of policies preferred by the human rights- discourse coalition, there arguably exist no institutionalized practices that purely represent the goals and storylines of this coalition. This clearly weakens this discourse coalition, and the means to effect the global governance of land grabbing.

4.2.3 Summary of discourse tendencies and discourse coalitions

Table 2 – Two main discourse coalitions in global land governance

	Responsible investment	Human Rights
Problem Definition	Regulation needed to minimize negative consequences of weak governance	The whole phenomenon should be questioned
Definition of the phenomenon	Large-scale land acquisitions	Land Grabbing
Main Concepts	Responsibility, Transparency, Food security	Accountability, Food Sovereignty
Role of Global Governance	Facilitating, voluntary, market-based, technical and administrative	Legally binding, human rights –based
Role of the State	Supporting, Enabling investment	Main regulator
Broader Normative Commitments	Neoliberalism, market-based solutions to global issues	Human rights, pro-poor development, strong state
Existing Governance Instruments	PRAI, The Equator Principles, Roundtable Sustainable Biofuels, (Voluntary Guidelines) ⁷	(Voluntary Guidelines)
Degree of Discourse Institutionalization	Strong	Weak
Actors and Institutions	World Bank, FAO, IFAD, G8, G20, EU, UNCTAD, IFPRI, Monsanto, Cargill	La Via Campesina, Transnational Institute, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, GRAIN, Oxfam International

This section of the analysis has identified the two overarching discourses as well as the two main discourse coalitions that constitute the global land governance architecture. Combining this section with the earlier analysis on institutional fragmentation, a more comprehensive

⁷ As the Voluntary Guidelines arguably represents neither of the two discourse coalition, they have been placed in brackets for both coalitions.

picture of the existing architecture can be formed. It also confirms what the institutional screening already indicated; the degree of institutional fragmentation in the global land governance architecture is high, and in many ways conflictive.

Table 2 sums up the main storylines and positions of the two discourse coalitions, illustrating the considerable contestation between the two. The two discourse coalitions do agree on the need for global governance, but the contestation regarding problem definitions, solutions and governance instruments is considerable. While the discussion around global land governance mainly revolves around debating different policy instruments and ways of regulating land grabs, an analysis of the main storylines also indicates some deeper divisions based on broader normative commitments between the two coalitions. The two discourses derive from different ideological and political bases and fundamentally differ on the ways in which land grabbing should be dealt with. As was stated in the first hypothesis, the high degree of institutional fragmentation in the global land governance architecture arguably reflects this broader discursive contestation in this issue area. This will be discussed and analysed further in the following sections that will aim to identify the dominant discourse coalition, and connect the global land governance architecture onto a broader setting.

4.3 Power and Resources – Identifying the dominant discourse coalition

This part of the analysis aims to identify the dominant discourse coalitions, and hence to directly answer the fifth research question. As Arts and Buizer (2009) point out, resources, as the fourth dimension of the PAA approach, is crucially linked to the concept of power. Power is here considered to be the capability of actors/discourse coalitions to gain a hegemonic position in a governance architecture and hence be capable to advance their preferred policies and their definition of reality. The formation of discourse coalitions is in itself a way to establish discursive hegemony among actors with an interest to a specific set of storylines (Hajer, 1995, 44). Through a strong discourse coalition, a particular understanding of a given problem gains dominance while others are discredited (ibid.). The identified discourse coalitions will now be analysed based on Hajer's two-step procedure to measure the influence of each coalition in order to identify which discourse coalition is dominant.

Based on the analysis on the discourses and discourse coalitions, *the responsible investment – discourse coalition* is arguably the hegemonic and dominant one, as both of these conditions are satisfied. With regards to *discourse structuration*, the storylines of the coalition are widely used and accepted, and through them the discussion around land governance has largely been reduced to discuss the problem of weak governance in global regulation. 'Large-scale land investments' are seen as inevitable and necessary for development, and win-win scenarios of this sort of investments are considered very likely. These global governance storylines are also widely affecting regional, national and local governance, as the policies of the World Bank and others are implemented through the EU, the G8, aid agencies, and regional development banks such as the African Development Bank. Hence the problem definition and proposed solutions of this coalition have been successful in delimiting the discussion on global land governance issues to the definitions and concepts that their storylines support. This is not to say that the problem statements and suggested solutions are not questioned by any actors in the architecture, but their discursive power is arguably very strong and storylines widely accepted.

With regards to *discourse institutionalization*, it is clear that major institutions such as the World Bank, IFAD, and other UN agencies have solidified the discourse in their policies. The G8 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” (Margulis et al., 2013, 9). Clearly the PRAI represent the storylines of the dominant coalition as well, and through these policies the discourse can be seen to have fully institutionalized into concrete policies.

The human rights – coalition has emerged as a response and an alternative to the Responsible investment – coalition and is attempting to challenge its hegemonic position in global land governance. It is clear that the power relations between these two discourses are highly asymmetric, with the majority of the leading/dominant international institutions constituting the Responsible investment – coalition. The capacities of the human rights - coalition to create and control global land governance are much more limited, and so far they have not managed to create major institutions or policies that reflect the coalition’s storylines and norms. In addition, backdoor lobbying and aggressive media work to influence governance processes is used by many private actors, while many of these tactics are out of reach or not accessible for the civil society organizations and international farmers organizations (Margulis et al., 2013, 11). However, the current developments at the CFS, as well as the establishment of the Voluntary Guidelines as an alternative to the PRAI are certainly a step forward for the coalition. Again, it should be remembered that as such the Voluntary Guidelines are a major compromise between the different discourses and institutions within global land governance, but the interpretation and implementation of them will indicate which discourse it will end up supporting.

As one of the weaknesses of the human rights-coalition is the lack of resources to maintain a strong presence in global land governance, maintaining a broad support for the human rights-focus within the coalition is very important. As Nora McKeon (2013) argues, during the coming years it will be important to find ways to build alliances with resource-rich NGOs, without letting them take over the agenda and space from the existing human rights-coalition. This is highly topical for the identified sub-sections within the discourse as well as the coalition. While it is important for the human rights- coalition to have a broad enough actor base that includes these resource-rich NGOs, these sub-sections of the coalition arguably border between the two main discourses, and hence it is important to ensure that the main storylines are still shared among these actors. In addition, some have argued, that the increased complexity that defines current global land governance, will favor less structuralized and institutionalized actors and discourse coalitions, and that the global land grab might be providing the opportunity for a strong human rights approach (Margulis & Porter, 2013; Künneman & Suarez, 2013). This is naturally only one view, and it remains to be seen how the global land governance architecture will develop in the coming years. What is clear is that the contestation between the different discourse coalitions based on their broader normative commitments will continue to take place, and possibly even intensify.

4.4 Hegemonic World Order and Global Land Governance

This section will connect the identified fragmentation and contestations within the global land governance architecture into a broader framework, and aims to address the last research question about whether the dominance of the responsible investment- coalition reflects Cox’s

expectations of the hegemony of a neoliberal world order. Critical theory is used here to connect the analysis of this domain onto a larger world order. This part of the analysis has a clearly structural and institutional focus, that complements the analysis on discourses and discourse coalitions. This part is especially closely connected to the previous section (4.3) on the dominant discourse coalition. As the focus here is also on power, this analysis based on Cox and Bernstein simply contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the fragmented architecture and the dominant discourse coalition.

As Bernstein (2002) argues, it is crucial to identify the broader norms that institutions promote in order to understand the global governance architecture. While powerful institutions such as the World Bank can be seen as the starting point for facilitating and legitimating the broader norms, cooperation with a wider set of actors further broadens the reach of these commitments (Bernstein, 2002, 14). As was argued earlier, the storylines identified in connection to the two main discourse coalitions indicate the underlying normative commitments. The identified dominant discourse coalition has arguably institutionalized and legitimated the broader neoliberal⁸ norms onto the global land governance architecture. Minimal regulation of voluntary nature, market-driven solutions, investment-facilitating role of the states are arguably strong indicators of underlying neoliberal norm commitments. This answers the last research question, and supports the second hypothesis that suggests that the dominant discourse coalition can be expected to reflect a neoliberal discourse.

However, given the way neoliberalism is defined here, it is perhaps too simplified to argue that the dominant discourse coalition represents purely neoliberal norms. After all, the responsible investment- discourse does agree that the global land grab needs to be regulated to a degree. One reason for this might be that while only two broad discourse coalitions are distinguished in this analysis of the architecture, they become broad categories where qualifications and relativizations are necessary. For example, what is understood by one of the central concepts of the discourse - 'reponsible' – can vary across different actors within the same discourse coalition. As was pointed out by Hajer, "actors (that might perceive their position and interest according to widely different discourses) are for various reasons attracted to a specific set of storylines" (Hajer, 1995, 65). Hence, the dominant discourse coalition can entail a range of different views, some closer to fundamental neoliberal norms, and some less so. Another reason for this might be that neoliberal dominance with regards to this architecture is better characterized as a 'soft' neoliberal dominance where some social aspects and governance over markets is welcomed. Regardless, the dominant discourse arguably still derives from a set of broader neoliberal norms and reflects those values to a degree. Hence, the broader dominant norms are relevant here when discussing the possible explanations contributing to the fragmentation.

Bernstein notes that in the field of environmental governance, civil society groups, frustrated with the capability of international institutions to address the concerns, have created more radical forms of opposition to challenge the legitimacy of existing institutions (Bernstein, 2002, 13). These forms of opposition often directly oppose the broader neoliberal idea of globalization and the norm-complexes behind current policies (ibid.) The human rights –

⁸ Neoliberalism refers to a form of market fundamentalism where the market is seen to be morally and practically superior to government and any form of political control (Heywood, 2003, 55)

discourse coalition is doing clearly this - attempting to disestablish the hegemony of the neoliberal responsible investment – discourse coalition. They too have a broader normative basis behind their storylines and main concepts. The human rights – basis, the strong involvement of states, along with food sovereignty are in clear contradiction with neoliberal norms. This counter-hegemonic attitude is captured well by a statement of the ‘Global Alliance Against Land Grabbing’:

“(…) Our Land and identities are not for sale (...) There is no way to attenuate the impact of this economic model and of the power structures that defend it. Those who dare stand up to defend their legitimate rights and survival of their families and communities are beaten, imprisoned and killed. (...) The struggle against land grabbing is a struggle against capitalism.” (Via Campesina, 2012a, 21-22)

It is clear that this discourse coalition is not disagreeing with just the specific policies of the responsible investment – discourse coalition, but the whole neoliberal normative basis that these policies are built upon. Hence, it seems unlikely that true and deeper cooperation between the two main coalitions will arise. As the human rights – discourse coalition mainly consists of CSOs, Cox’s view of civil society providing the ones disadvantaged by globalization an arena to raise their voices and seek alternatives, applies accurately here (Cox, 1999,10). This is clearly what the human rights – discourse is doing, and the recent developments including the increased attention on the CFS and the Voluntary Guidelines instead of the PRAI, are an encouraging sign for the coalition. The role of the PRAI and Voluntary Guidelines in legitimating discourses and creating cooperation will be discussed in more detail next.

The hegemony of the responsible investment - discourse coalition is arguably further broadened through governance instruments such as the PRAI and the Voluntary Guidelines. The PRAI has been widely endorsed within the responsible investment – coalition, and hence further constructed cooperation between the many actors within the coalition. This has again legitimated and spread the broader, underlying norms. The Voluntary Guidelines reach across coalitions, and have been endorsed by a significantly broad spectrum of actors from both coalitions. While there are many connections to be made between the Voluntary Guidelines and the normative neoliberal framework, it cannot be argued that they only represent the broader neoliberal norms. Especially with the implementation only being at its early stages, and the World Bank showing limited commitments towards this process, it seems like the Voluntary Guidelines truly are an instrument that cuts across two discourse coalitions.

However, with regards to Gramsci’s notion of *transformismo* (assimilating potentially counter-hegemonic ideas by adjusting them to the policies of the dominant coalition), it could also be argued that the Voluntary Guidelines along with the CFS are a part of the neoliberal process of assimilation. As Cox notes; “Hegemony is like a pillow: it absorbs blows and sooner or later the would-be assailant will find it comfortable to rest upon” (Cox, 1993, 63). Hence, whether UN-based developments of the CFS along with the Voluntary Guidelines are evidence of real change towards a more cooperative global land governance architecture across discourse coalitions (and hence a less hegemonic coalition), or a hegemonic mechanism, arguably remains to be seen. Connected to this is Cox’s notion of civil society as being both the shaper and shaped of the world order (Cox, 1999). As much of the CSOs are deeply rooted in the normative commitments of the human rights- discourse coalition, it is in fact CSOs (mainly NGOs) that largely construct the sub-type of the human rights- discourse that is arguably quite fluid. Whether these actors will end up becoming an agency for stabilizing and legitimizing the hegemonic neoliberal norms, or an agency for supporting the

counter-hegemonic voices of the human rights – coalition is arguably still unclear (Cox, 1999, 10-11).

In sum, it can be argued that the two main coalitions have their foundations in broader normative frameworks that are conflicting. Further, answering the last research question and supporting the second hypothesis, it seems that the dominant Responsible investment – coalition derives its basis from norms based on neoliberal values such as market-based solutions and self-regulation. The norm conflicts and contestations between the two coalitions are clearly visible in the architecture with multiple forums, actor constellations, decision-making bodies, and most clearly the governing instruments. This connects back to the first hypothesis discussed earlier in section 4.2.3, that asserted that the high degree of institutional fragmentation reflects a considerable level of discursive contestation in this issue area. Here the discursive contestation specifically refers to the deeper discourses that Cox sees as universal norms. Each coalition on a broader level acts according to these norms, that on a fundamental level are conflicting, and hence are reflected in the high degree of institutional fragmentation. While the CFS and the Voluntary Guidelines are taken as a positive development with regards to further cooperation across the architecture, the norm conflicts are arguably so significant that true and deep cooperation, and for example the establishments of legally binding governance instruments, seem unlikely. These norm-based reasons for the conflictive fragmentation of the global land governance architecture are difficult to overcome in order to transform the architecture towards a more cooperative manner. As was argued by Biermann et al. (2009), the governance performance of a given architecture is harmed where conflictive fragmentation is present.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary and Findings

The aim of the research was to deepen the understanding of the nature of global land governance and the contestations that exist within this architecture. The main research question was dual in nature, aiming to analyse the degree of fragmentation of the global land governance architecture, as well as to explain this degree of fragmentation through a discursive analysis. Understanding the reasons behind fragmentation are important in being able to analyse the consequences for this, as well as the possibilities of responding to such fragmentation. Through the discursive institutionalist analysis the architecture was mapped through identifying the main institutions and discussing the discourses and discourse coalitions related to them. This was then connected to Cox's critical theory with the aim to understand the underlying normative commitments behind the coalitions in the fragmented architecture. The theoretical framework created for this research aimed to provide a new innovative way to analyse the fragmentation and further understand the global land governance architecture.

Through the initial institutional screening it was discovered that the global land governance is an architecture of high and conflictive fragmentation, which directly answers the *first research question* about the degree of fragmentation. It was also argued that as a consequence, the governance efficiency of this architecture might be negatively effected by this. This partly also answers the main research question. As was noted in the introduction, as well as in section 4.1.1, the issue area of land grabbing is complex, and cuts across a variety of areas from development and investment to human rights and agriculture. In addition, the emergence of 'flex crops and commodities' within the international food regime connected to the recent interlinked global crises on food, fuel, climate and finance is increasingly contributing to the complexity of the architecture governing the global land grab. While these underlying circumstances are arguably contributing to the fragmentation of the architecture, a deeper analysis of the discourses and institutions was needed to better understand the fragmentation, and especially the conflictive nature of it.

Through the first three dimensions of PAA – discourses, actors, and rules of the game, – the aim was to better understand the observed conflictive fragmentation. With regards to the *second research question*, the responsible investment – discourse and the human rights – discourse were identified as the main overarching discourses within the architecture. With regards to the *third research question*, these discourses were seen to be reflected in two discourse coalitions both consisting of a wide range of actors and institutions. Through the storylines connected to these coalitions, some broader normative commitments behind these coalitions were also identified. With regards to the *fourth research question* about the extent to which the observed fragmentation reflects a contestation between the discourses and associated coalitions, this part of the analysis provided some insights. Table 2 in section 4.2.3 illustrates the clear conflicts between the discourses and associated coalitions based some of the main issues at stake (problem definitions, approaches to solutions, broader normative commitment and values of the main discourses), and hence can be seen reflect conflictive fragmentation. These findings are in line with the *first hypothesis* that expected to see the high

degree of fragmentation in the architecture to reflect a considerable level of discursive contestation in this issue area. In sum, by identifying the discourses and discourse coalitions, a better and more nuanced understanding of the fragmented architecture could be formed.

A further analysis of these two coalitions with regards to resources and power provided an answer to the *fifth research question* about the dominant discourse coalition. The analysis indicated that the responsible investment – discourse coalition with the backing of most of the main international institutions is the dominant coalition with most influence and resources in global land governance. In addition to the factors pointing to this from the analysis of the storylines, actors and rules of the game, the two-step procedure based on discourse *structuration* and *institutionalization* indicated towards the dominance of the responsible investment – coalition. This aspect was further connected to Cox’s critical theory in an effort to link the global land governance architecture to a broader setting and overarching discourses. After discussing Cox’s and Bernstein’s ideas of the hegemonic world order, and the role of international institutions in spreading this broader neoliberal discourse, it was argued that the dominance of the responsible investment – discourse could be seen to reflect Cox’s expectations, and hence the last research question was addressed. This was in line with the *second hypothesis* that expected to see the dominant discourse coalition reflecting a broader neoliberal discourse. However, as was discussed in more detail in section 4.4, the responsible investment- coalition cannot be seen to reflect purely neoliberal values, as the coalition agrees to the necessity to control land grabbing to a degree. With this notion in mind, the observed connection between broader neoliberal discourses and the dominant discourse coalition arguably still adds to the understanding about why the architecture is highly fragmented. Especially with regards to understanding the conflictive nature of the fragmentation, the neoliberal basis of the dominant coalition will arguably make it highly unlikely for the two coalitions to find a truly cooperative way of governing the global land grab.

In sum, the overarching research question about the degree of fragmentation and the ways in which this can be explained through a discursive analysis has been answered through the more specific research questions throughout the analysis. Through a discursive institutionalist-approach this thesis aimed to provide a nuanced analysis of the existing global land governance architecture, and the reasons contributing to the observed conflictive fragmentation. It has been discovered that the degree and nature of fragmentation with regards to this architecture is high and conflictive. The reasons for this are arguably complex, but the analysis of the main discourse coalitions provided some insights of the potential reasons for this. Along with the conflictive ideas on the policy level, the deeper normative commitments arguably add on to the conflict. Bringing in Cox’s critical theory and connecting the discussion onto a broader arena of global political economy, a broader understanding of the possible reasons contributing to conflictive fragmentation were discovered. Clearly the fact that so many different aspects were analysed made this research only a broad overview about the existing situation. However, given the dual focus on both institutions and discourses, this research has provided an approach that takes into account a broad range of factors in one analysis.

5.2 Limitations

Given the time and scope of this research, the different aspects and parts that contributed to the analysis were all limited in their depth. The institutional screening, along with the different

parts of analysing the discourse coalitions were all limited. Arguably this research could be seen as an overview, where all parts could be analysed more in-depth in a broader research. In addition, only the main discourses and discourse coalitions were identified, whereas there would arguably be many discourse tendencies and nuances within these broader groupings. For the purposes of this research, it was however useful to identify the overarching and major discourses and coalitions. Likewise, concentrating mostly on the major actors and institutions meant that the analysis on the dimension of actors was limited. Especially with regards to different country-positions as well as non-state actors and the private sector, a more extensive analysis of these could certainly be useful. Perhaps the single most significant limitation of this research is the reliance on text analysis only, when analysing the different discourses and coalitions. As was discussed before in section 3.4, interviews are an important aspect of conducting an in-depth discourse analysis, and the lack of them is certainly a limitation. Again, as the scope and time of this thesis was very limited, the preference was to provide an analysis based on several different aspects and factors, rather than concentrate solely on discourse analysis. Adding interviews to this research would hence certainly create a deeper understanding of the different views represented.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

With regards to further researching fragmentation and the global land governance architecture, one clear suggestion for further research would be to analyse the consequences of the observed conflictive fragmentation for global land governance. Zelli and van Asselt (2013) discuss the consequences of fragmentation with regards to global environmental governance, and Orsini (2013) specifically addresses consequences of fragmentation with regards to different kinds of actors in forestry and access to genetic resources. This kind of further research with regards to global land governance would arguably provide valuable insights into how fragmentation should be understood and dealt with in this specific architecture. In addition, further research on how fragmentation can and should be dealt with would be arguably very valuable.

Another interesting aspect for further research would be to look into the ways in which the architecture, and the nature of fragmentation have changed. The change in the way in which the discourses have evolved, and the way in which different institutions and actors have been positioned over the course of time, would arguably provide useful insights as to the current situation. Both Discursive institutionalism (along with PAA) and Cox's critical theory provide a great basis for analysing the aspect of change, and hence this would be a good continuation of the existing research on the current situation. For example, Arts and Buizer (2009) used PAA to analyse discursive change and continuity in global forest governance.

Further, connecting the analysis of the global level to regional, national, and local levels would arguably be useful. Land grabbing is an issue of high importance on all levels of governance, and all levels are connected to and affected by the way land grabbing is governed on a global level. Hence, understanding how and to what degree this observed conflictive fragmentation and discourse coalitions are reflected on the other levels of land governance would again provide a more nuanced understanding of all the different aspects and issues at stake.

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