

**European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)**  
**5th ECPR Graduate Student Conference**  
**University of Innsbruck, Austria**  
**3 - 5 July 2014**

**ECPR Section “Perspectives on Foreign Investment in Agriculture:  
The Political Economy of Land Grabbing”**

**Call for Full Panels and Individual Papers**

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The organising committee invites full panels and individual papers for the section “Perspectives on Foreign Investment in Agriculture: The Political Economy of Land Grabbing” at the 5<sup>th</sup> ECPR Graduate Student Conference.

Deadline for submission: **20 January 2014.**

**Themes of the Section**

Foreign direct investment in agriculture for the purpose of large-scale commercial farming rapidly expanded in recent years. Commonly called ‘land grabbing’ it has been given publicity through comprehensive analysis within and across disciplines, including social sciences, the humanities and natural sciences. The concept of ‘land grabbing’ generally refers to distinct process-specific aspects of land transactions of state and communal lands to foreign investors in predominantly developing economies.

Land deals have been criticized for a variety of reasons including forceful deprivation of land and related livelihood options from previous land users, putting food and water security in the target countries at risk and giving rise to violent social conflicts. At the heart of such criticism lies the assumption that power asymmetries are misused to the severe detriment of local land users. These asymmetries may arise between investors and

local governments, but also between local governments and populations. More generally, institutional settings (corruption, property rights protection etc.) seem to play a very important role in this context.

The perspective of Political Economy allows for integrating concepts and tools from economics, political science, sociology and other disciplines to analyse the complex process of transnational land deals, and to understand the immanent asymmetries of power and conflict dynamics attributable to changing forms of land ownership and land use. Furthermore, the analytical approach of political economy may foster new perspectives on the role of institutional design options at different levels to regulate land use and land transactions.

The section seeks at combining interdisciplinary scientific approaches aiming at three fundamental areas:

**1. The role of states and governance**

(e.g. Corruption; Principles & Guidelines for Agricultural Investment)

**2. Water resources as target and driver of land investments**

(e.g. ‘Water Grabbing’; Virtual Water Trade; Green Revolution; Climate Change & Water Scarcity)

**3. New conflict lines within agrarian societies**

(e.g. The Role of BRICS; Peasants vs.

Commercial Agriculture; Food Crops vs. Energy Crops)

Given the complexity of the issue, this section combines different scientific approaches and shall provide a forum for interdisciplinary discussion.

### Modalities

You can propose

- a full panel that consists of 3-5 papers
- an individual paper for a section

To submit a full panel or an individual paper please follow the guidelines of the 5<sup>th</sup> ECPR Graduate Student Conference available at:

- <http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/gsn/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2013/11/GuidelinesAndDeadlines.pdf>

Please select the section S08 “Environmental Politics”.

### The 5<sup>th</sup> ECPR Graduate Student Conference

The 5<sup>th</sup> ECPR Graduate Student Conference will take place from 3-5 July 2014 at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. It is organised in sections and panels. The conference is open to **Master students, PhD candidates** and **young post-doctoral researchers**. The programme will include sections covering all main fields of political science, political theory, international relations and European studies.

- [http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/gsn/?page\\_id=92](http://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/gsn/?page_id=92)

### Organizers of the section

The section “*Perspectives on Foreign Investment in Agriculture: The Political Economy of Land Grabbing*” is chaired and organized by the **research group “The Political Economy of Land Grabbing”** based at the University of Freiburg and the Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute for Socio-Cultural Research, Freiburg, Germany.



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- <http://www.wipo.uni-freiburg.de/research/rg-landgrabbing>