

Editorial

# Land Perspectives: People, Tenure, Planning, Tools, Space, and Health

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The global agendas on land and related issues (including agendas on land degradation neutrality, New Urban Agenda, climate change, United Nations' decades on ecosystem restoration, and Sustainable Development Goals) are vulnerable to being neglected due to the current global focus on eradicating the COVID-19 or coronavirus pandemic. The actions needed to reposition these agendas on a realistic path to sustainability require an understanding and the application of land perspectives in the various development policies being implemented in different national and local contexts. Land perspectives entail the potential ways (both differences and similarities)—geographies, situations, viewpoints, and approaches—necessary for (re)engaging land issues as core factors of socioeconomic and environmental developments. This is why the importance of people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health should be critical themes for investigation by scholars wherever they may be around the world and in whatever discipline they may come from, hence the relevance of this Special Issue.

This Special Issue (SI) of the journal *Land* is entitled Land Perspectives: People, Tenure, Planning, Tools, Space, and Health. The focus of the SI is crucial for understanding the influence of planning on people through its shapes tools, space, tenure and health. Conceptualized from a land perspective, the SI provides a broad way of investigating land management, land administration, land governance and policy issues. It also provides a multi-faceted lens of these issues—from urban, peri-urban, and rural lenses. The urban-to-rural dimension of land studies is crucial because it embodies streams of knowledge that support rural–urban co-governance and development. The SI covers these topical issues at various scales (local, national, and global). It was curated to investigate three critical questions. First, it answers the question: What exactly do people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health imply? Second, it responds to the question: What relationships do people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health share? Third, it uses empirical and literature evidence to present the land perspectives of these issues from all over the world. The first question posed above can be answered by synthesizing all the articles published in this SI.

- People: Land and people have a relationship which is an eternal topic of geography and many other disciplines. On the one hand, people live on and use land in all aspects of their livelihood and existence on earth. On the other hand, land (the base of the environmental system) requires human activities to enjoy various forms of ecosystem services. Therefore, the people aspect of this SI recognizes that experts are interested in administering, managing, or developing land resources because of people. Humans in their various communities (people) are not just the actors in improving socioeconomic living conditions. They are the reason or motivation for engaging in multiple aspects of development (i.e., social, economic, and environmental development). Some articles in this SI have considered research exploring land-and-people relations from spatial, social, and geographical angles.



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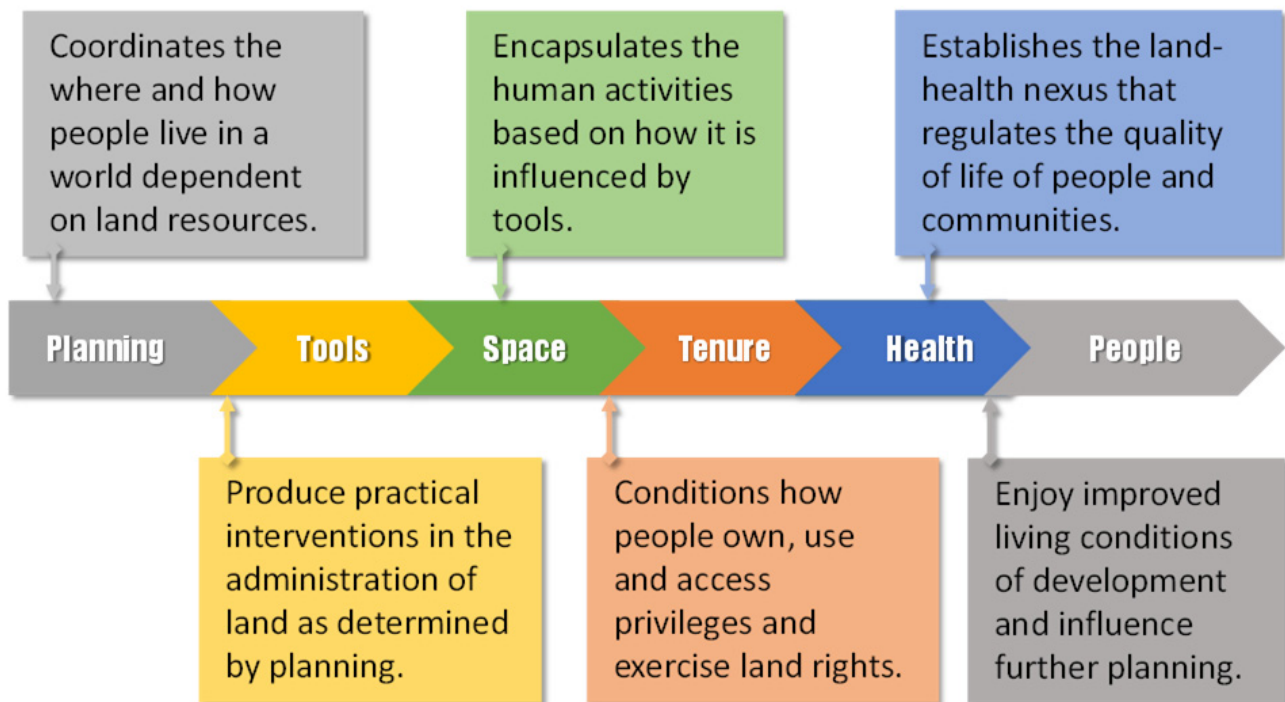
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- **Tenure:** Land tenure stands at the heart of the development in rural and urban areas. This is because owning, using, accessing privileges, and exercising land rights are crucial dimensions of wealth creation. How people use and exercise rights over land has a tremendous influence on the direction of their development. Land tenure (including its associated property rights, historical, land-use, tenure security, institutions and political dimensions) is necessary for grasping the how-to aspect of improving the living conditions of people who own, use and exercise various rights on land. This SI provides a platform for developing theoretical and practical knowledge on improving tenure security by collating expert ideas and experiences from multiple scholars from different parts of the world. The authors of articles in this SI have considered case studies that unravel transferable experiences across the globe to ensure cross-regional knowledge building.
- **Planning:** Planning and planners face a critical question under the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. How can modern urban planning improve the people's wellbeing and health. This requires that planners return planning to its health and wellbeing roots. Answering this question places more responsibilities on the planning profession and their role in the land and health nexus of resolving contemporary problems. Some articles submitted to this SI considered planning issues beyond their traditional boundaries and delved into all aspects of planning that connects to land, including health matters.
- **Tools:** Land is not only the physical earth with its above-and-below resources. It serves as a tool or a practical way to intervene in land administration problems. In developing country contexts, the need for practical tools that respond to country-specific conditions is necessary to facilitate the management of spaces in urban and rural areas. Articles with a methodological focus on land-use approaches (and organization of natural resources) are essential for this SI. Such articles can suggest practical ways for improving the challenges people face.
- **Space:** The spatial dimension of land studies is a crucial aspect of science that consistently demands renewed research attention. This is because there is a tendency for experts to focus on spatial planning while leaving out the development aspect of how people adapt to space use. The need for a more inclusive process in spatial planning should ensure that inclusive development becomes the outcome. Scholarly works that engage in bottom-up decision making that are mediative and based on consensus building are worth investigating. This SI attracted articles that spatially analyzed environmental scenarios for socio-spatial justice in human societies.
- **Health:** The land–health nexus of research existed long before now. However, investigations into the outbreak of COVID-19 or coronavirus are rapidly evolving. This has led to investigations into land–health relationships and how land issues influence the quality of life of people and communities. Some articles in this SI probed the health and wellbeing dimensions of land management and land administration to tease out how land uses, and the exercise of land rights (or lack of it) influence individual and community wellbeing.

The issue of relationships is essential because, by dwelling on this, the SI contributes to advancing the borders of cross-, inter- and multi-disciplinarity across all genres of studies connected to land. The question “What relationships do people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health share?” is also answerable by analyzing the evidence from all articles published in the SI. We use Figure 1 to illustrate the relationship between *people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health* (from a land perspective).



**Figure 1.** The relationship between people, tenure, planning, tools, space, and health (from land perspective) (authors' illustration).

As shown in Figure 1, planning is the starting point of influence for development. It coordinates where and how people live in a world dependent on land resources. It leads to creating tools that produce practical interventions in land administration as determined by planning. Tools then shape space to encapsulate human activities based on how tools influence it. Space influences tenure (the condition concerning how people own, use and access privileges and exercise land rights). Tenure influences health (positively or negatively). It establishes the land–health nexus that regulates the quality of life of people and communities. Finally, enjoy all forms of improved living conditions or development options. Noteworthy is that people go on to influence further planning for their future. This relationship indicates that planning and people are critical factors in development. Land is the resource for development.

To understand how land serves as a resource for development, it is necessary to dwell on the third (and final) question. In this regard, we present snapshots of the articles published in the SI and their key findings below.

**Article 1:** Land Tenure Security and Health Nexus: A Conceptual Framework for Navigating the Connections between Land Tenure Security and Health by Dachaga and de Vries [1]. This article used evidence from existing literature to show that land tenure security can influence health outcomes via four pathways—infrastructure access, environmental justice, psycho-ontological security, and social cohesion.

**Article 2:** *Resource Opportunity in China's Market Transition and Governance: Time Factor in Urban Housing Inequality* by Zhou and Xiong [2]. In this study, the authors investigated the influence of real-estate purchase factors (such as time, organization, human capital, and political capital) on real estate value and the appreciation of real estate in China. They found that time influences the prior possession of resources in the early stage of market transformation.

**Article 3:** *Agricultural Land Transition in the "Groundnut Basin" of Senegal: 2009 to 2018* by Faye and Du [3]. This article reveals the transition features of agricultural land use in the Groundnut Basin of Senegal from 2009 to 2018, especially the impact of urbanization on agricultural land and the viewpoint of farmland spatiotemporal evolution.

**Article 4:** *Values-Led Planning Approach in Spatial Development: A Methodology* by Auzins and Chigbu [4]. This study proposes a methodology for introducing a values-led planning approach in spatial development. It presents and discusses the essential elements required to design methods for values-focused planning.

**Article 5:** *Building on “Traditional” Land Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Rural Ghana: Adaptive or Anachronistic?* by Asaaga [5]. This research explores the importance of traditional dispute resolution institutions in land-related disputes in southcentral and western Ghana. It highlights practical ways to incorporate traditional dispute resolution in Ghana’s overall land governance setup and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Article 6:** *Global Markets, Local Issues: The Hegemonic Process of Agri-Food Construction to Present Challenges* by Fracarolli [6]. This article uses dialectics to analyze the historical process of agrarian systems according to their complexity, origins and effects of hegemonic interests in the agri-food markets. It shows that markets evolve from different trade types as the capitalist system also evolve, changing the mechanics of trade and functions of food production.

**Article 7:** *Performance Evaluation of the Urban Cadastral System in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* by Chekole et al. [7]. This study evaluated the performance of the urban cadastral system of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model. They found that the most bottlenecks to organizational achievement are the strategic plan, quality of leadership, bureaucratic processes, and supply of resources.

**Article 8:** *Rural Development from a Gender Perspective: The Case of Women Farmers in Southern Spain* by Valenciano et al. [8]. This article probed the land-based women’s working conditions in Spain. It found that women workers in the fruit- and vegetable-handling sector are satisfied with their jobs. It presents a local development model for increasing women’s empowerment in the land-based labor market.

**Article 9:** *The Integration of New-Type Urbanization and Rural Revitalization Strategies in China: Origin, Reality and Future Trends* by Chen et al. [9]. This article reviews the classic theories and cognition of the research on urban–rural relations at home and abroad. It outlines the stage evolution characteristics of urban–rural relations in China.

**Article 10:** *Digitization as a Driver for Rural Development—An Indicative Description of German Coworking Space Users* by Hölzel and de Vries [10]. The research investigated the conditions of users of coworking spaces in Germany. It found that the choice of working in rural coworking spaces draws on benefits and opportunities for its users in the aspects of avoiding social isolation, separating private and professional life and reducing commuting challenges.

**Article 11:** *Land-Use Change and Health Risks in the Process of Urbanization: A Spatiotemporal Interpretation of a Typical Case in Changzhou, China* by Yang et al. [11]. This study established the relationship between urban land-use changes and health in the context of Changzhou, China.

**Article 12:** *Land Tenure Disputes and Resolution Mechanisms: Evidence from Peri-Urban and Nearby Rural Kebeles of Debre Markos Town, Ethiopia* by Agegnehu et al. [12]. This study analyzes the nature, types, and causes of land tenure disputes and the resolution mechanisms in peri-urban and nearby rural areas of Debre Markos town in Ethiopia.

**Article 13:** *Analyzing the Effects of Institutional Merger: Case of Cadastral Information Registration and Landholding Right Providing Institutions in Ethiopia* by Chekole et al. [13]. This research is based on a survey conducted with the directors of the two institutions and their employees to determine how to reduce the effects of data duplication and provide one-window services (among other factors) to improve efficiency in the Ethiopian land markets

**Article 14:** *Determinants of the Land Registration Information System Operational Success: Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia* by Abab et al. [14]. This research assessed the most extensive digitalization program for rural land registration in Africa. It revealed that system

quality, information quality, service quality, and perceived usefulness of the program have positively and significantly influenced the acceptance and actual use of the system.

Articles published in this SI can become multi-disciplinary reference material for in-class and on-field learning in land studies. The SI contains 14 positively evaluated (peer-reviewed) articles as listed above. Each article presents 14 lessons learned from across Africa, Europe and Asia. All scholars within the land profession—whether in the business, geography, sociology, area studies, anthropology, planning, engineering and the built environment disciplines—are encouraged to read, use and apply these lessons in their different roles in the land sector.

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