

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN AFRICAN CITIES: EXPLORING THEORIES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES FROM SIERRA LEONE

WEEK 2 Urban land and informalities

STEP 2.1 Welcome to Week 2 (ARTICLE)

This week we will explore two fundamental topics for development and planning in African cities: the issue of urban land and informalities.

Land is one of the hottest political issues in many African countries; while rooted in colonial dispossession, the inequality of its distribution has often been maintained by post-colonial ruling elites. Dr Colin Marx will speak of the diversity of meanings, functions and values of urban land in African cities. Key concepts will be explained before getting perspectives on land in Freetown from Dr Victor Kabba from Njala University and Dr Alphajor Cham, from the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment.

After hearing the challenges of obtaining access to land in Freetown, we will explore how residents create land by reclaiming it from the sea. We will then move to a discussion of urban informalities, challenging mainstream definitions, and demonstrating the value of activities undertaken by informal settlement residents for the city.

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