

## Article

# Socioeconomic Effects of Good Governance Practices in Urban Land Management: The Case of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi and Gelan Towns

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**Abstract:** This study's objective is to assess the socioeconomic effects of good governance practices in urban land management in two particular Ethiopian towns. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to achieve this objective. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used to collect data, and the collected data were analyzed descriptively. According to the study's findings, the poor were hit particularly hard by weak governance in urban land management, since they could not afford to bribe authorities to acquire services or legal protection. Development was hampered by poor governance and corruption in the management of urban land, which raised business risks, decreased investment incentives, and restricted access to financing in the towns. Communities bribed officials to remove limits on land-use planning and to influence the decision to stop the implementation of environmental protection rules. Due to their unregistered land, the majority of suburban inhabitants did not pay property taxes. Similarly, since paying property taxes was seen as a necessary step in towns' regularization process, informal settlers were prohibited from doing so. As a result, residents in urban areas began to construct homes without registering their land and land rights. As a result, after being delimited to the towns, more landowners in peri-urban regions utilized their property for residential purposes and unlawful transactions, while fewer were using it for agricultural purposes. Consequently, due to poor governance in urban land management, land-related socioeconomic development was unable to be fostered.

**Keywords:** land management; good governance; socioeconomic effects

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## 1. Introduction

Access to land is very important for people, as it provides shelter and primary services [1]. Effective and efficient urban land management is critical for urban development and growth. This requires the land management process to be participatory, equitable, and transparent. The distribution and use of land are governed by land policies, which have been defined as rules for access to land and benefits from land. There is a two-way relationship between political objectives and land management. Land policy is formulated according to national political goals [2]. Land management serves as a set of tools that operate land policy instruments. Most urban land policies, approaches, and activities related to urban land management systems differ from country to country. However, they center on the same basic function of the systematic organization and official recording of land holdings [3]. However, the enormous social, cultural, and economic impacts resulting from land-rights-related problems have emerged as a major cause of concern for some developing countries [4]. Good governance in urban land management is one of the key reasons for inefficiencies in public land management. Benefits of good governance include reducing corruption, enhancing public trust, and protecting the environment. They also include increasing land tenure and supporting the poor, managing state assets, providing adequate public services, and conflict resolution [5].

In contrast, the authors of [5,6] argued that poor land governance results in poor urban planning and land reform. Land or land-related property is often the most important source of wealth and security. In developing countries, including African countries, secure property rights are undermined by poor governance. Overlapping laws and regulations, weak institutions, and incomplete property registration systems have created a fertile environment that lacks transparency [4]. Ethiopia's Urban Land Lease Law has been amended three times since it was first implemented in 1993. It was primarily aimed at promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of urban land management, and Proclamation No. 574/2008 and Proclamation. 818/214 was also part of this legislation. However, the aim of promoting good governance in urban land management appears to be a frightening legal prognosis due to gaps in the law itself and its implementation. Empirical studies indicate that urban land management does not promote good governance on urban land and prevents widespread unethical governmental practices [7]. The survey results were collected in various Ethiopian cities, such as Bahir Dar, Addis Ababa, Hawasa, Dire Dawa, and other cities in Ethiopia by [8–10], and they emphasized that gaps and weaknesses in the legal framework were expanding opportunities for urban land management and that land management, in general, was weak and faced a growing number of challenges. However, there is a lack of empirical research examining the socioeconomic impacts of good governance in urban land management. Theories that postulate good land management combined with secure tenure and increased economic growth are generally not evaluated. This study aims to assess the socioeconomic effects of good governance in urban land management with a focus on the towns of Gelan and Lega Tafo Lega Dadi, Ethiopia.

## 2. Related Literature Review

### 2.1. Overview of Urban Land Management

There are benefits of good governance, particularly in land management, although it is still difficult to see them [5]. These authors claimed that effective property management will aid the economic process, reduce societal poverty, protect land and natural resources, improve public services, and end urban land conflicts. Furthermore, in line with [11], which was cited in [3], effective good governance strategies can solve a variety of problems and disputes in urban land management. Furthermore, the authors of [12] emphasized almost the same benefits of sound governance in urban land management as [5]; the author agreed that effective governance is critical for dispute resolution, environmental protection, charitable foundations, poor welfare, government wealth management, and economic progress. On the other hand, the authors of [3] found that the characteristics of weak governance often appeared as a blurred line between public interest and personal benefit, inadequate policy and government performance frameworks, too many rules and regulations, unclear processes, and ultimately inconsistent development priorities. In addition, they agreed that flaws in governance encourage corruption, encourage arbitrary behavior, inhibit competition, and inappropriately allocate scarce resources. In addition, the authors of [5,6,13] described the consequences of poor governance in the land sector, including social misconduct, environmental degradation, obstacles to economic development, a decline in public revenue, legal uncertainty or land conflicts and land market failures, landlessness and inequality in distribution, informal land transaction costs, social instability, political instability, and reduced private sector investment. However, in Africa, where institutional restructuring and decentralization are common due to the fragility of states, the importance of improving good governance is clear, and institutional issues are crucial for urban land management. To ensure sustainable land management, integrated land management attaches great importance to good governance, efficiency, and effectiveness. The Ethiopian government may be a staunch supporter of decentralization. In 1991, Ethiopia introduced a decentralized system of government. The FDRE constitution first paved the way for a democratic presidential system that allowed citizens of all ranks to participate in social, political, and economic decisions. As a result, the constitution aims to promote self-government at all levels and public participation in the development of over-

arching policies and programs. The countries have created land management institutions with different areas of responsibility that support the decentralized governance system. In addition, organizations charged with planning, land-use control, dispute resolution, land allocation, and advocacy are named land stewardship institutions. Good governance is recognized as a critical component in minimizing the conditions of economic, social, and environmental imbalances in concert to promote sustainable development. Based on [3], if the institutions of land management are poorly equipped, the goal of sustainable development is also neglected. Good land management is necessary, as is enduring governance and sustainable development. However, according to [5], many developing countries show serious shortcomings in the implementation of governance. As a result, many organizations are required to participate in governance on an ongoing basis, with the government typically being viewed as a key actor [13]. All participants in governance practices must make full use of their skills and competencies to achieve the characteristics of these principles and reduce the impact of this land management system.

## *2.2. Good Governance in Urban Land Management*

The concept of governance has prevailed since the recent inclusion of the consideration of social, economic, and ecological components of sustainability in the decision-making process. Urban land stewardship refers to a set of policies, procedures, and frameworks that determine who has access to urban land and what becomes of it, how decisions are made and implemented, and how conflicting interests in urban land are managed [13]. Good governance is mutually recognized as an essential component for minimizing the conditions of economic, social, and environmental imbalances in order to promote sustainable development. Based on [5], failure to maintain urban land management institutions can result in the sustainable development goals being violated. In line with [5], if urban land management institutions are not well organized, the goals of sustainable development may not be achieved. Sound land management is important for both good governance and sustainable development. However, as stated in the quotes of Deininger in [5,13], many developing countries have serious shortcomings in the application of governance [3]. Concluded that this circumstance also takes place within the frameworks of the land management systems in industrialized nations. Institutional arrangements, and with them the limitations of effective and efficient land management, are more recent problems in land management. The majority of institutional land management arrangements face difficulties, including an unclear land management framework and, occasionally and more importantly, the lack of a transparent goal or plan for effective land management. Despite using identical systems of democratic principles, good governance practices can vary from country to country [10]. Predicted that disparities within a land management system will result in permanently blurred governance. Given how vulnerable land management is to poor governance, particularly in developing countries, governance in urban land stewardship is, in some ways, crucial. Whether poor governance in developing countries—in which control of land is perceived as a means of securing political and economic power and privilege through deception—is associated with large or deep corruption is up for debate [13]. In addition, weak urban land management is associated with increasing levels of bribery and corruption in urban land management, particularly in emerging economies, in addition to growing unease about property rights. Consistently with research conducted by the authors of [4] in developing countries, cities are unable to produce enough cheap urban land, especially for people living in urban poverty, due to inefficiency and ineffective land management. In this situation, they emphasized how the poor can be overwhelmed by a weak institutional and legal framework, leaving them excluded and outside the law.

## *2.3. Approaches to Governance in Urban Land Management*

In the last few decades, the concept of governance has established itself wherever sustainability requires the consideration of social, economic, and ecological components in decision-making processes. Discussions on governance are currently ongoing in various

disciplines, although the definition and concept thereof remain controversial [3]. This study astutely pointed out that governance can be a complex concept, as it is described in different ways; therefore, the concepts of governance can be incredibly different, which, on the one hand, reflects the standards of effects that the general system of public services has on society and, on the other hand, may have implications for an appropriate institutional framework along the policy path. First and foremost, governance is indeed government. It encompasses multi-stakeholder participation, decision making, and policy implementation, and it emphasizes the full spectrum of relationships between formal and informal stakeholders. The results of several studies on land management often imply that technical, social, economic, and ecological understanding should support land management [14]. Stated their belief that good governance is important for effective land management. To achieve effective governance in society, good land management practices are essential. The lack of effective governance is one of the factors contributing to the scale-up of efficiency gains in public land management [7]. According to [15], when the public sector or the land market cannot provide land for residential and commercial activities due to subpar land management, a haphazard land market will inevitably emerge. Therefore, inefficient and ineffective urban land management in cities is generally caused by poor governance. Furthermore, in line with [4], overlapping land regimes, weak institutions, lack of accountability, and inadequate property registration systems encourage petty corruption and widespread misuse of limited public resources. They added that poor urban land management allows political elites and government officials to easily accept bribes (illegal payments) in return for services such as renting real estate to investors. In general, governments and non-governmental organizations need to work together throughout the policymaking process to confirm that the urban land management system is properly managed according to the principles of good governance.

#### *2.4. The Effects of Good Governance Practices in Urban Land Management*

In most countries, urban land is the most valuable resource. Development is significantly influenced by factors such as land management, property security, and access to land. Urban land management provides the framework for a productive economy and a thriving society. This means that it affects every aspect of how people make their living. Inadequate governance, however, often leads to the failure of urban land management systems, particularly in the regions that have been studied. Weak governance prevents urban land from being used effectively to generate income for society, putting the poor in a particularly precarious position and forcing them to remain on the fringes of and beyond the law. Incompetence in urban land management could be a significant obstacle to development, and it encourages good governance on urban land. Governance mistakes hurt society as a whole. On the other hand, excellent governance can promote economic processes and reduce corruption. Therefore, promoting good governance in urban land management is crucial. Much has been written about the value of good governance in achieving socioeconomic development, but relatively little has been written about the role that good governance plays in urban land management and how it affects socioeconomic development. Urban land management can be a component of a larger governance problem. Rights create the connection between people and the country. These rights are administered through land management. According to the idea of land governance, good land management promotes the economic process by ensuring that property rights are secured, raising money for the government, and utilizing capital from untapped resources. Similarly, tenure theory argues that improved incentives for easier land use and greater willingness and ability to speculate result in a positive relationship between the levels of socioeconomic performance and property security.

In addition, the authors of [5,13,15] discussed the results of lax government policies in the land sector. These included social behavior, environmental degradation, economic impediments, declining tax revenues, uncertainty about legal claims or land-related disputes, collapse of the land market, homelessness, unequal access to land, informal land

transaction costs, social unrest, political unrest, and a decline in private sector investment. As a result, good governance requires the involvement of various organizations along with the government, which is usually considered a key participant [13]. To achieve the characteristics of these principles and reduce the results of such land management systems, all actors in the practice of government must fully contribute their talents and competencies. For this reason, empirical studies investigating the outcomes of excellent governance in urban land management are scarce. Theories promoting secure tenure and good urban land management have not yet been thoroughly tested. The impact of property security on the economy has been studied; however, the results of various studies are contradictory.

### 2.5. The Urban Land Management System in Ethiopia

At both the federal and regional levels, Ethiopia's system is primarily hierarchical. It gives the regional government considerable autonomy over land management systems. Because there are regional differences in their systems and socioeconomic frameworks, each regional authority works to incorporate and interpret state ordinances while ensuring systemic harmony. Regional pronouncements enact detailed regulations that reflect local differences, while national land policy guidelines and legal frameworks provide more comprehensive commentary. The decentralization of powers toward regional and local governments creates space and flexibility to accommodate these differences.

Uncovered the land politics and legislative processes of the three governments in his most recent book (*Imperial, Derg, and EPRDF*) [16]. He claimed that there was little or no participation in state politics or in legislative processes. Advocacy groups are rarely contacted when proposed legislation affecting their lives is being considered in the Ethiopian legislature, which is the sole responsibility of the government. In contrast, Ethiopia's legal structure for urban land is encompassed by the constitution, and it adheres to federal land legislation governing both rural and concrete land. Since the 1970s, there has been a law defining and separating rural and urban land. Proclamation 47/1975, which was issued by the Ethiopian military government, aimed to nationalize all urban land and all houses outside the cities. As a result, Ethiopia has created various legal frameworks and institutions to manage and cultivate urban land since 1975. Many explanations have been canceled and replaced one after the other. Proclamation 455/2005, which dealt with compensation issues, Proclamation 721/2011, which dealt with municipal land administration/tenancy law, and Proclamation 818/2014, which restricted municipal land registration, are all applicable land statutes. There are state constitutions, laws, rules, and regulations. Rural and concrete lands, when considered as purely natural resources, are the sole property of the state and other people of Ethiopia according to Article 40 of the Federal Constitution. The main fear of governments in promoting state ownership is that the approach to personal property will end up in much of the urban property will be transferred into the hands of a tiny, lowly group of educated individuals, driving out small landowners and leaving them frustrated and without land. For this reason, the Institutional Framework for Urban Land Management does not assess how well the current legal and institutional framework for urban land policy promotes effective local land management and how well it promotes good governance in urban land management.

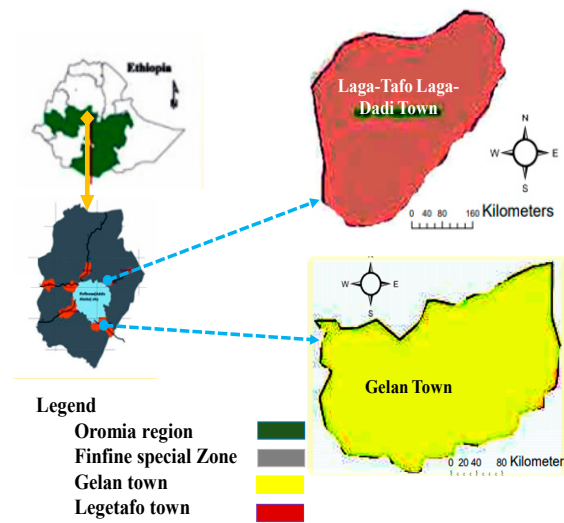
## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Overview of the Study Area

The towns of Gelan and Lega Tafo Lega Dadi have recently emerged as new cities. Gelan is located in the Finfinne Special Zone in Oromia Regional State, 25 km southeast of Addis Ababa or between 70 12-9014 N and 38032 39032 E. The town of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi, on the other hand, is in the special zone around Finfinne, which is 21 km northeast of Addis Ababa. The boundary of Gelan is physically connected to Addis Ababa and Dukam, and the total area of the town is 7516 hectares, whereas the town of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi is also connected to Addis Ababa, with a total area of 7444.53 hectares. Currently, the populations of Gelan and Lega Tafo Lega Dadi have increased to 64,729 and 40,864, respectively (Lega



Tafo Lega Dadi and Gelan Town Administration, 2022). The map of the study areas is shown in Figure 1



**Figure 1.** Map showing the locations of the study areas.

### 3.2. Research Design

The study employed a mixed qualitative and quantitative research approach in order to identify and understand gaps in good governance in urban land management and their effects on towns' socioeconomic development; this enabled the researcher to collect data from many people at one particular time. The researcher selected the two towns as study areas after critical observation of indices of good governance in urban land management to assess the gaps at the national, regional, and town levels. A descriptive case study was used based on the objective of analyzing the impacts of urban land management from the perspective of good governance. This research used quantitative data generated with a cross-sectional survey questionnaire and qualitative data collected through interviews with key informants by using structured interviews and focus group discussions. In this study, quantitative data were measured using a Likert scale.

### 3.3. Sampling Technique and Size

Non-probability and probability sampling techniques were used to select respondents from residents and administrators. The researcher specifically selected 22 key informants to be interviewed from the two towns studied, with 11 key informants each. The selected key informants obtained various interviewees from the offices of land management, the mayor, taxes and customs, law, the kebele/municipal administration, town planners, and the municipality, all of which they considered valuable providers of information. For the focus group discussion (FGD), eight employers from the local government offices and the kebele administrators from each town were interviewed; these included urban land management experts, municipal experts, finance and customs experts, legal officials, and kebele administrators from four kebeles (lower-level local governments) of the two towns. Systematic random sampling was used to identify respondents from each town and kebele. If the population contained an N-ordered element, a sample size of n was required or desired for the selection of the ratio of these two numbers, i.e., N/n, in order to obtain the sampling interval. The population for this study also included the heads of households in the two towns. According to the data from the two cities, the numbers of households in Gelan and L/Tafo L/Dadi were 8722 and 8173, respectively, for a total of 16,895. To calculate the household sample size, the study used the Yamanes formula (1967), as shown in Equation (1):

$$N = N / (1 + N(e)^2) \quad (1)$$

where  $n$  = the sample size,

$N$  = the population size, and

$e$  = the level of precision or the sampling error, which is  $\pm 5\%$ .

Hence,  $n = 16,895 / 1 + 16,895(0.05)^2$ , and

$n = 391$  (the questionnaires were distributed to 391 individuals from the total population).

The sample size for each town was determined from the total sample size based on the town's household size with the stratified sampling formula:

- $N_i = (n/N)N_i$ ,

where

- $N_i$  = the population size in the stratum,
- $n$  = the total sample size required for the study,
- $N$  = the total number of elements in the population with all strata taken together, and
- $n_i$  = the sample size in the stratum.

Accordingly, the sample sizes for the two towns were obtained as follows:

For Gelan town =  $(391/16,895) \times 8722 = 202$ ; for Lega Tafo =  $(391/16,895) \times 8173 = 189$ .

The details of the interviews are depicted in Table 1. A random starting point was used for each independent household ( $K = N/n$ ). This formula was used. In addition, the researcher added 20% to the sample size to increase the response rate, i.e.,  $391 \times 20/100 = 78$  questionnaires were distributed in addition to the number distributed for the specified sample size.

**Table 1.** The summary of interviews conducted with the key informant group.

No	Town	Role of the Interviewee in the Organization	Number of Interviewees		Customized Questions Presented to Each Organization
			Gelan Town	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi Town	
1	Mayors	City administrator	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, land disputes, credit markets, and social behavior?
2	Kebele administrator	Local administrator	4	4	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, land disputes, credit markets, and social behavior?
3	Municipal expert	Senior expert in a municipal office	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, land disputes, credit markets, and social behavior?
4	Land management officials	Chief executive of the land sector	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, land disputes, credit markets, and social behavior?
5	Land management expert	Senior experts in the land management office	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, land disputes, credit markets, and social behavior?
6	Town planner	The urban land-use planning process team leader	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, the environment, public revenues, tenure security, and land disputes?

Table 1. *Cont.*

No	Town	Role of the Interviewee in the Organization	Number of Interviewees		Customized Questions Presented to Each Organization
			Gelan Town	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi Town	
7	Revenue and customs office	Tax collection expert	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development and public revenues?
9	Justice office	Chief executive of the justice office	1	1	What are the effects of good governance practices in urban land management on economic development, tenure security, land disputes, and social behavior?
Sum			11	11	

### 3.4. Data Analysis Method

The qualitative and quantitative data collected from the respondents were evaluated descriptively. In the process of the mixed data analysis, qualitative data analysis was predominantly used. A total of 391 questionnaires were distributed for the household survey, and all questionnaires were returned and entered into SPSS IBM (Version 20) for statistical analysis. The results of the statistical values were displayed as percentages, tables, and graphs. In contrast, the data collected through interviews, focus groups, and secondary data were analyzed through interpretation and narration. The interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires were used as a means of triangulation.

## 4. Result and Discussions

### Introduction

This study focused on the assessment of the socioeconomic effects of good governance practice in urban land management by focusing on the social, economic, and environmental aspects of towns. However, urban land management systems often fail due to weak governance, especially in these study areas. The survey results found in the study areas showed that the practice of good governance in daily activities has failed in terms of urban land management. Urban land management suffers from a lack of transparency and accountability due to the complexity of regulatory frameworks and the complexity of urban land policies. Therefore, the detailed results of the effects of weak governance on urban land management in the study areas are discussed in the following.

### Urban Land Management and Social Inclusion

The key informant interviews—particularly those with kebele officials who governed peri-urban areas—revealed that both towns lacked basic infrastructure and services because their residents did not follow land-use plans and did not receive the necessary building permits. As a result, they occasionally did not have access to services and employment prospects. Since their buildings were not registered, they were unable to obtain a kebele identity card. The implications of these studies found that weak governance in urban land management hits the poor particularly hard, as they lack the means to pay bribes to obtain services and cannot afford legal protection, particularly in order to exercise their land rights and defend themselves in land disputes. Residents often have no security on urban land or in the dwellings in which they live. The present study is consistent with the study conducted by [3,5]

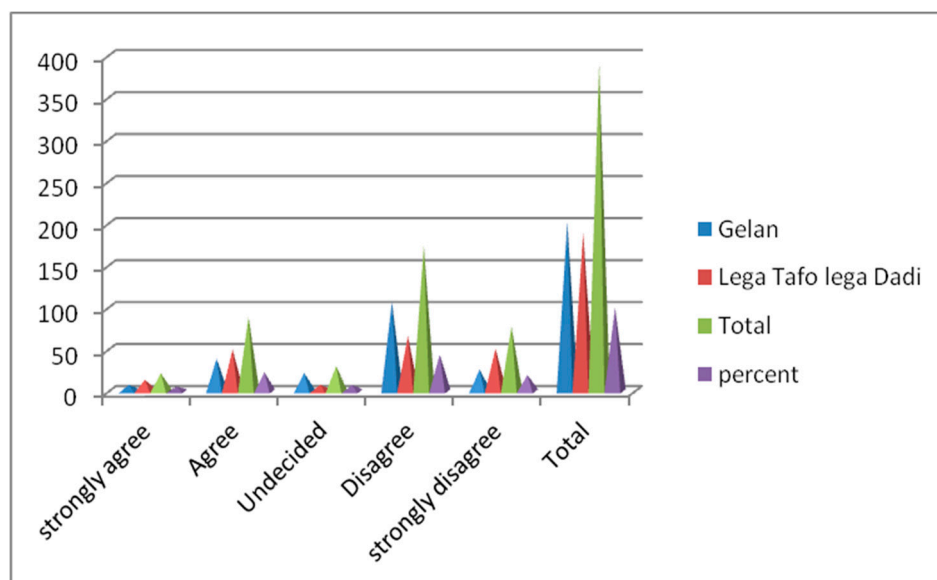
### Urban Land Management and Economic Development

These parts of the survey result focused on the extent to which urban land management promotes efficient land use and land-related economic activities. Moreover, the survey results showed that weak governance and corruption in urban land management constrained development by increasing business risks, reducing incentives to invest, save, and practice entrepreneurship, and distorting incentives in the towns of Lega Tafo, Lega Dadi, and Gelan. Furthermore, in the absence of an efficient urban land registry system, the commercial exploitation of urban land and access to credit were very limited. In towns, there was a system of urban land registration to facilitate land allocation for development



purposes, as well as for residential areas. The urban land registry included the sizes, locations, boundaries, and owners of properties, but this was not complete in these towns. Registered transactions took place between private individuals and between private and government entities that were related to land, but not for its sale, as land cannot be sold. The number of respondents using their urban land for commercial purposes was low due to a lack of registration and property security in the study areas. In addition, the interviews with key informants showed that using urban land for agricultural and other investment purposes decreased, even in the peri-urban areas.

As indicated in Figure 2, the respondents were asked to rate their opinions on efficient urban land management that would entail economic development. A total of 173 (44.2%) and 77 (19.7%) of the respondents chose “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, respectively, while 89 (22.8%) and 22 (5.6%) of the respondents chose “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 30 (7.7%) of the respondents chose “undecided”. Thus, from Figure 2, it was ascertained that the majority (173 (44.2%)) of the respondents confirmed that urban land management hampers economic development due to weak governance in urban land management.



**Figure 2.** The response rates of household (HH) respondents on the economic development of the town (source: HH survey, 2022).

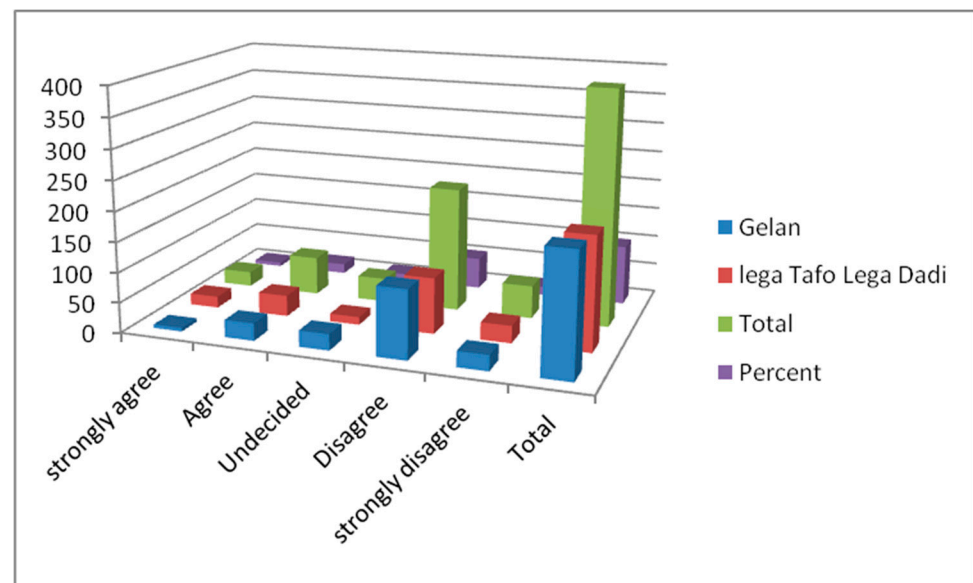
In addition, during the field observations, the researcher observed that urban landholders began to fence off their land for informal transactions and built shanty houses, as the urban land management practices were inefficient; this made the landowners feel insecure even after their land had been registered because expropriation of the land by the state was possible. Because the urban land cadastral system was virtually unenforceable, landowners and investors were not able to use their land efficiently and productively. In addition, peri-urban economic activities were affected due to the weak governance and insecure service delivery in these areas. Therefore, urban land management practices affected the efficiency of land use and economic activities in the towns of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi and Gelan (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Partitioned farmland prepared for sale in Lega Tafo Lega Dadi town. (Source: Field observations, 30 December 2022).

#### Urban Land Management and Environmental Protection

According to Figure 4 below indicates that, Respondents were asked to give their opinions on the extent to which urban land management avoided environmental degradation. A total of 207 (52.9%) and 55 (14.1%) respondents answered that they disagreed and strongly disagreed, while 64 (16.4%) and 25 (6.4%) respondents answered that they agreed and strongly agreed, and 40 (10.2%) answered that they were undecided. Thus, from Figure 4, it can be seen that the majority (207 (52.9%)) of the respondents confirmed that environmental degradation has occurred in the areas due to inefficient urban land management.



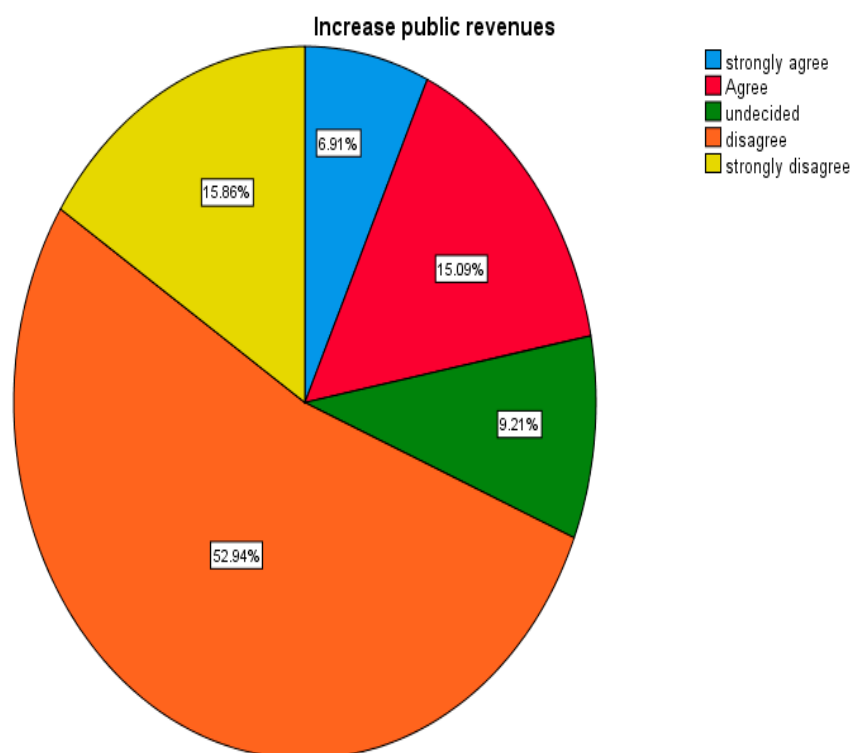
**Figure 4.** The response rates of respondents on the prevention of environmental degradation (source: survey results, 2022).

In addition, according to the survey results, there were two main reasons for urban land degradation in the study areas. The first reason was the lack of a concrete land-use plan. The urban planning had not been managed properly according to the statutory planning, and the town administrations had no awareness of the purposes of specific land uses or how to effectively deal with these issues. Investors demanded sites that were inconsistent with the land-use planning and were affected by the approval of the town administration, and many projects failed to persuade local communities to accept and implement them. Gradually, this resulted in governance problems among the residents and the growth of the towns. The other factor was the residents' awareness of environmental issues. The majority of the residents were only aware of physical environmental issues,

such as noise pollution and smoke, while solid waste and groundwater pollution are the elements that destroy natural systems in the long run.

#### Urban Land Management and Public Income

An interview with a key informant revealed that residents evaded taxes by making informal payments. Land-related property valuations for tax purposes were deliberately underestimated to reduce the tax burden. As indicated in Figure 5, respondents were asked to rate their opinions of the town's public revenues. A total of 207 (52.9%) and 62 (15.9%) of the respondents answered "disagree" and "strongly disagree", while 59 (15.1%) and 27 (6.9%) of the respondents answered "agree" and "strongly agree", and 36 (9.2%) answered "undecided". Thus, from Figure 5, it can be seen that the majority (207 (52.9%)) of the respondents confirmed that weak governance in urban land management reduced public revenue.



**Figure 5.** The response rates of household (HH) respondents on the public revenues of the towns (source: HH survey, 2022).

This study also analyzed the effect of urban land security on land income. The data showed that peri-urban farmers were not yet registered in the towns of Lega Tafo, Lega Dadi, or Gelan. Therefore, the majority of the suburban residents did not pay property taxes, as their land was unregistered. In addition, informal settlers were not required to pay property taxes because the town administrations believed that paying property taxes was a part of the regularization process, but they had lived in the towns for several years. There were streams of municipal revenues that were collected locally from property taxes. While state taxes were collected by regional branches of the Ethiopian Tax and Customs Administration (ERCA), municipal revenues were collected by the lowest echelons of the local government. Just as in urban areas, all taxes and fees collected at the municipal level ended up at the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development for budgeting and redistribution, alongside state taxes and other revenues, such as outdoor loans. The municipal taxes included property taxes. There were currently no so-called property taxes, although there was a council tax, which was also known as a roof tax or a townhouse tax. There were local sources of income related to property tax, such as rent for houses and rent for land, which made up a tiny part of the towns' budgets. The implications of these

results show that weak governance in urban land management reduces public revenue. This finding is in agreement with the study conducted by [5], but the incidence of this problem was high in the study areas due to the petty corruption in this sector.

#### Urban Land Management and Land Tenure Security

The rules and regulations that were reviewed showed that the relationship between people and the land is established through land rights, which are administered by the urban land management. The process of determining urban land rights begins with cadastral surveying and land attribution. The surveying office and the land registry did not perform these tasks. The cadastral office did not yet keep any cadastral or land registers in the study areas. Land transfers were not recorded by the land registry, though this should have been done with the technical support of the surveying office. The results of this research show that rights to ownership, transfer, leasing, mortgage, and efficient use of land were not properly available until urban land was registered. Most respondents from both towns answered that although they owned the land and built houses, they had no legal documents to guarantee their rights to use them. There was a risk of community violence over land and insufficient compensation in cases of forced acquisition of urban land. Abuses in urban land management offices jeopardized property security and increased the risk of land disputes. Timbering, falsification, manipulation of urban land documents, bribery, corruption, and favoritism were some of the problems prevalent in the urban land management, particularly in the town of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi. This increased urban land disputes, which accounted for 55 and 60 percent of court cases in the urban areas of the towns of Gelan and Lega Tafo, respectively. Similarly, the undervaluation of urban land in the urban area increased the risk of not receiving adequate compensation in urban land foreclosure cases or defaults on land transactions. As a result, risks were high in both towns, where the land registers were not secure, land information was not easily accessible, and the valuation of land set by the city was far from the market value. Therefore, the initial registration of urban land is essential for ensuring the security of land ownership. However, the system of urban property information collection and land valuation, as well as the behaviors and skills of workers, affects the rights of urban landowners.

The survey results showed that illegal transfers resulted in legitimate owners losing their rights. Informal transfers and ownership of land were not protected by law, and the protections afforded by common tenure were not all-encompassing for newcomers. Those who were able to use the urban land-use registration systems could strengthen their claims on urban land, even if the land was acquired through land grabs. As indicated in Table 2, respondents were asked to rate their opinions of urban land security as a result of urban land management. A total of 240 (61.4%) and 49 (12.5%) of the respondents answered “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, while 57 (14.61%) and 22 (5.6%) of the respondents answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 23 (5.9%) answered “undecided”. Thus, from Table 2, it can be seen that the majority (240 (61.4%)) respondents confirmed that weak urban land governance resulted in insecure ownership in urban areas.

In general, these results imply that the urban land management did not provide vested rights by ensuring property rights and reducing associated risks, and this cannot be sustained in the study areas due to the indivisibility of the principles of good governance in urban land management. These findings are in agreement with those of the study conducted by the [13]. Therefore, digitizing town land registers, establishing integrated information systems, providing employees with moral education, and monitoring and regulating their behavior can reduce misconduct, which town governments need to look out for to minimize risks.

**Table 2.** The response rate of respondents on tenure security and land disputes.

Tenure Security	Town of Respondents		Total	Percent
	Gelan	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi		
Strongly Agree	6	16	22	5.6
Agree	19	38	57	14.61
Undecided	13	10	23	5.9
Disagree	132	108	240	61.4
Strongly Disagree	32	17	49	12.5
Total	202	189	391	100
Reduce Land Disputes				
Strongly Agree	5	16	21	5.4
Agree	30	37	67	17.1
Undecided	19	12	31	7.9
Disagree	121	96	217	55.5
Strongly Disagree	27	28	55	14.1
Total	202	189	391	100

Source: survey results, 2022.

### Urban Land Management and Land Disputes

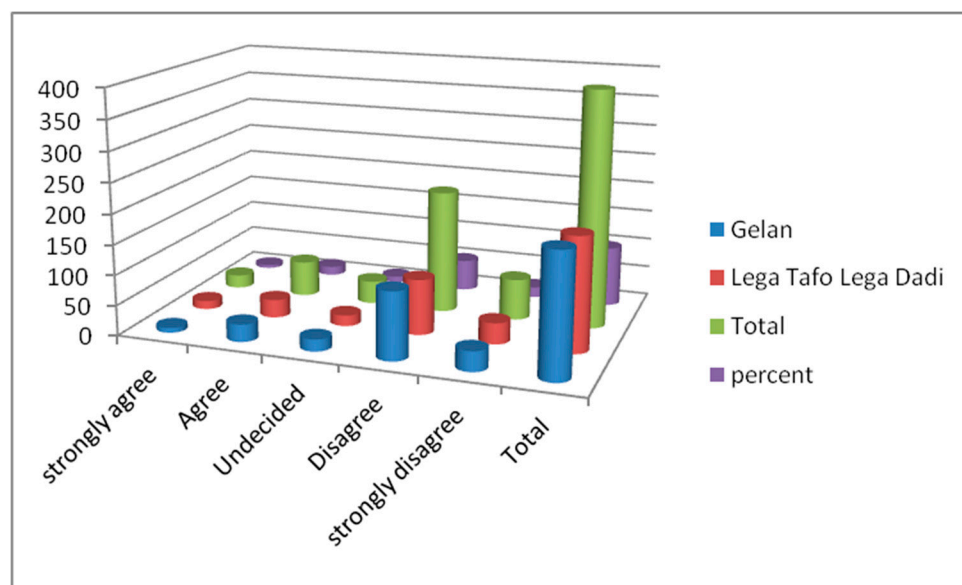
According to the land policy of the FDRE, state tenure remains the dominant influence on land tenure; therefore, the establishment of ethnic federalism has direct implications for urban land management, particularly concerning the rights of indigenous ethnic communities. In addition, common tenure systems have retained some influence on urban land management. The government has not attempted to strengthen customary tenure relations in urban areas as a means of pursuing its political goals. This study examined the overlap and divergence between laws and broader ideas used to justify customs, particularly the urban land rights of indigenous people. A case study of urban land disputes in the towns of Gelan and Lega Tafo Lega Dadi demonstrated that these right-wing ideas related to indigenous people remain most relevant to contemporary urban land debates, and that the communities involved in land disputes draw on these ideas to justify their claims to special resources. Meanwhile, the towns' responses to conflict have been highly ambiguous, failing to defend indigenous land rights consistently with state ownership and to align with the principles of ethnic federalism. As indicated in Table 2, respondents were asked to rate their views on how urban land management reduces land disputes in cities. A total of 217 (55.5%) and 55 (14.1%) of the respondents answered "disagree" and "strongly disagree", while 67 (17.1%) and 21 (5.4%) of the respondents answered "agree" and "strongly agree", and 31 (7.9%) answered "undecided". Thus, from Table 2, it can be noted that the majority (217 (55.5%)) of the respondents confirmed that weak governance in urban land management increases urban land disputes in both study areas.

The focus group discussions with both towns' targeted experts revealed that the other causes of the urban land disputes in the towns of Lega Tafo Lega Dadi and Gelan described in these studies were unfair compensation for displaced farmers due to public purposes, informal settlements, urban land rights for peri-urban peasants, non-recognition of indigenous land rights, overlapping land rights, border demarcation conflicts, and undefined public purposes. Although this study provides examples of displacement of indigenous people, their cultures and norms were not considered consistent with wider interpretations of ethnic federalism. However, there have been other cases in which the rights of indigenous people have been violated as a result of the state providing other immigrants with priority, most notably where the state promoted extensive urban investment. Disputes over indigenous rights, urban land rights, and the political implications of these issues are broadly similar to those happening in the rest of urban Ethiopia. The implications of this study indicate that the ambiguity surrounding urban land tenure creates significant uncertainty regarding the urban land rights of indigenous communities in urban areas.



### Urban Land Management and Access to Credit Markets

The survey results showed that weak governance in urban land management encouraged people to seek a higher loan-to-value ratio for urban land that was offered as collateral than banks would prudently lend or a larger loan than the borrower's income would justify. Informal payments allowed people to receive unfairly inflated collateral valuations or false income declarations, increasing the vulnerability of the banking system. This research analyzed the effects of weak governance on land value, access to credit, and investment. The valuation of urban land for tax purposes, as determined by the municipal land offices, had not yet begun. That being said, the FDRE constitution does not allow access to credit without building property on land, so access to bank credit is not as widely available, but landowners are not benefiting as much as they could. As indicated in Figure 6, respondents were asked to rate their opinions on access to mortgage markets. A total of 204 (52.2%) and 68 (17.4%) of the respondents answered "disagree" and "strongly disagree", while 59 (15.1%) and 22 (5.6%) of the respondents answered "agree" and "strongly agree", and 38 (9.7%) answered "undecided". Thus, from Figure 6, it can be seen that the majority (204 (52.2%)) of the respondents confirmed that land credit markets did not exist due to weak governance in urban land management.



**Figure 6.** The response rates of household (HH) respondents on the availability of a credit market for the land of the towns (source: HH survey, 2022).

Since Ethiopia's constitution does not allow access to funding with banned land, some communities that had built property on their lands did not have access to collateral, as there was no land value or cadaster without completing the leases. The results showed that a favorable environment for investment was not being created, as land ownership had become insecure. Therefore, land-related economic activities indicated that investment would not increase, as land registration had not yet started. In summary, since urban land ownership had become insecure, land values were not increasing, access to credit was not encouraged, and investment and income did not increase. In addition, access to institutional credit was not enough to drive investment unless it was properly communicated. As long as the land was not registered, the landowners did not want to make long-term and large investments because they could lose their property at any time. On the other hand, access to credit institutions without investment in land was not allowed according to the FDRE land policies.

### Urban Land Management and Land Staff Work Ethic

According to interviews with key whistleblower groups, problems with corruption were commonly found in the urban land administrations of the cities of Lega Tafo, Lega

Dadi, and Gelan. These were found to be related to systems for land certification papers, the lack of integrated urban land information systems, and inappropriate urban land valuation, the lack of good governance values among staff, and income from land. The data showed that the municipal property tax was traditionally the main source of revenue for both municipalities. This indicated that land registration revenues increased since land regulation had recently started in some zones. In both towns, there was no rating system, and there was a lack of reliable information about the urban real estate market and of a specialized workforce; the use of inappropriate valuation methods led to undervaluation of properties, which was related to the social behavior of the land staff. Consequently, the revenue collected by the state was less than the actual revenue that it could generate. However, complicated procedures for certifying city lots and high transaction costs kept transactions from being registered, and the undervaluation of lots in the towns also reduced potential revenue. Issues such as bribery, fraud, and misconduct existed in both towns, as revealed by the focus group discussions with certain respondents. This indicated that the urban land management in both towns was not free from problems. However, Lega Tafo Lega Dadi had more problems than Gelan according to these polls. As indicated in Table 3, respondents were asked to rate their opinions on the effects of urban land management on the social behavior of urban land staff. A total of 225 (57.5%) and 57 (14.6%) of the respondents answered “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, while 53 (13.6%) and 18 (4.6%) of the respondents answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 38 (9.7%) of the respondents answered that they had doubts. Thus, from Table 3, it can be stated that the majority (225 (57.5%)) of the respondents confirmed that there were problems with the social behavior among urban land management employees as a result of weak governance. This implied that there were problems with the social behavior among urban land management employees as a result of weak governance.

**Table 3.** The response rates of respondents on the social behavior of the land staff.

Brought Positive Social Behavior	Town of Respondents		Total	Percent
	Gelan	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi		
Strongly Agree	4	14	18	4.6
Agree	27	26	53	13.6
Undecided	25	13	38	9.7
Disagree	121	104	225	57.5
Strongly Disagree	25	32	57	14.6
Total	202	189	391	

Source: survey results, 2022.

#### Urban Land Management and Land Speculation.

The survey results showed that urban areas—in Ethiopia in general and in the study areas in particular—have been growing very rapidly over the last decade, which has resulted in the need for more land for housing and other non-agricultural activities in suburban and urban areas than ever. This has several transformational implications for transitional areas near the towns, including the engulfing of local communities, the exchange of urban land rights, and the change in use from an agricultural to a built ownership system. The outskirts were also the sites of fighting for land among speculators from different backgrounds. As indicated in Table 4, respondents were asked to rate their views on how urban land management reduces land speculation in towns. A total of 216 (55.5%) and 48 (12.3%) of the respondents answered “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, while 68 (17.4%) and 19 (4.9%) of the respondents answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 40 (12.8%) answered “undecided”. Thus, from Table 4, it can be seen that the majority (216 (55.5%)) of the respondents confirmed that there was a high level of land speculation in the towns due to weak governance. Therefore, this implies that weak governance in urban land management brought high levels of land speculation into the towns.

**Table 4.** The response rates of respondents on land speculation.

Reduce Land Speculation	Town of Respondents		Total	Percent
	Gelan	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi		
Strongly Agree	7	12	19	4.9
Agree	25	43	68	17.4
Undecided	25	15	40	12.8
Disagree	124	92	216	55.5
Strongly Disagree	21	27	48	12.3
Total	202	189	391	100

Source: survey results, 2022.

#### Urban Land Management and Prevention of Informal Land Markets

The survey results indicated that in these peri-urban areas at the urban–rural interface, the common and interconnected characteristics of land tenure, management/planning, and governance can complicate the delivery of better conditions. Peripheral areas tend to be areas of rapid change, as they are characterized by diverse land uses and tenure structures with overlapping or fragmented systems of urban land management and governance. This transition caused land markets to expand and land to become increasingly commercialized. As a result, urban land transactions became more common in suburban areas, and there was increasing pressure to subdivide land into smaller lots to increase the supply and financial returns. The areas of urban land and property rights can differ markedly from rural areas, often moving from shared ownership structures in more distant rural areas to more individualized forms of ownership structures in urban areas.

As populations in areas grow and community boundaries expand, peri-urban areas can bring local authorities into contact with areas that have traditional tenure relationships for which local government tools are inadequate. This can manifest itself in increased land-related conflicts and disputes, indiscriminate and unregulated urban land development due to land-use change, illegal land transactions, and the proliferation of informal settlements, all of which contribute to increased land tenure insecurity. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that the physical boundaries of the urban areas often did not coincide with their administrative boundaries, and urban and peri-urban areas often failed with their separate administrative courts in Gelan and Lega Tafo Lega Dadi towns, which had different resources, capacities, and political leanings. This undermined the ability of the urban land management to record tenure rights, conduct land-use planning and enforce its results, and maintain land management through land and property taxes. The multiple land tenure systems made it difficult to overcome these land management weaknesses, as the roles and responsibilities were unclear or subject to competition. This also prevented attempts to plan and provide infrastructure and services that would be conducive to economic growth and poverty reduction, including adequate provision of roads, water and sanitation infrastructure, and housing. As indicated in Table 5, respondents were asked to rate their views on how urban land management prevented informal land markets in the towns. A total of 199 (50.9%) and 68 (17.4%) of the respondents answered “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, while 76 (19.4%) and 18 (4.6%) of the respondents answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 30 (7.7%) answered “undecided”. Thus, from Table 5, it can be seen that the majority (199 (50.9%)) of the respondents confirmed that the informal land markets increased from time to time as a result of weak governance in the towns.

**Table 5.** The response rates of respondents on illegal land sales.

Reducing Illegal Land Sales	Town of Respondents		Total	Percent
	Gelan	Lega Tafo Lega Dadi		
Strongly Agree	7	11	18	4.6
Agree	27	49	76	19.4
Undecided	19	11	30	7.7
Disagree	126	73	199	50.9
Strongly Disagree	23	45	68	17.4
Total	202	189	391	100

Source; survey result, 2022.

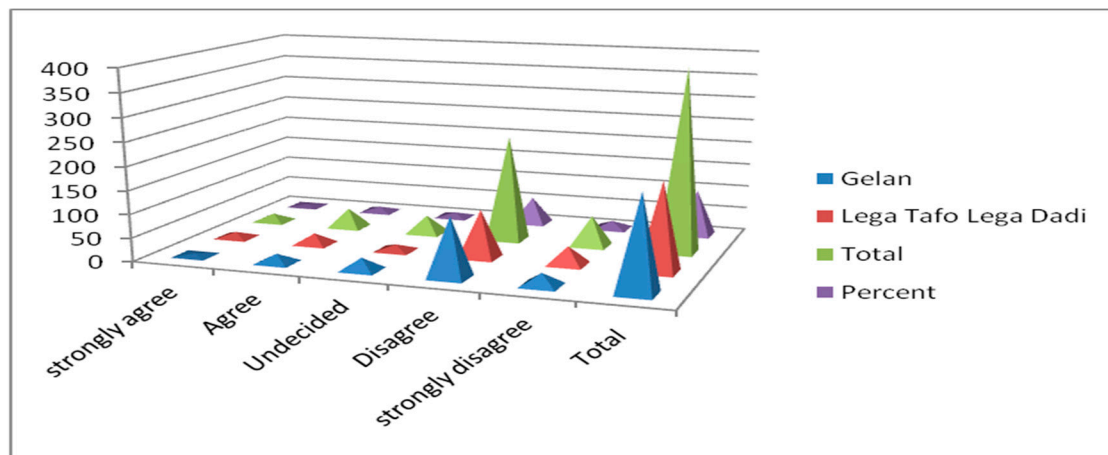
Furthermore, the rapid pace of change in these peri-urban areas highlighted any underlying issues in urban land tenure arrangements, land management, and governance, such as overlapping mandates, conflicts in land tenure systems, weak land management capacities, and broader issues in the political economy that could stall positive reforms. The implications of these results indicate that weak governance in urban land management resulted in an increase in informal land markets from time to time.

#### Urban Land Management and Informal Settlements

The interviews conducted with the key informal groups and the FGDs revealed that, as the urban communities settled and grew, housing needs become continuously increased from time to time. The critical question that needs to be addressed is the extent to which towns efficiently manage an urban land-use system, which can have a definite impact on urban growth. The survey results showed that a weak urban land management system accelerated informal settlement in urban areas. The proliferation of the poorly controlled development of human settlement has led to many environmental and health-related problems.

Figure 7 shows that uncontrolled development of settlements caused physical disturbances, inefficient land use, excessive encroachment of the settlements on good agricultural land, environmental degradation, and pollution risks in the study areas. In addition, the lack of space and accessibility made it difficult for the government to deploy social and economic services to these areas. As indicated in Figure 8, respondents were asked to rate their views on how urban land management reduced informal settlements in cities. A total of 228 (58.3%) and 65 (16.6%) of the respondents answered “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, while 42 (10.7%) and 17 (4.3%) of the respondents answered “agree” and “strongly agree”, and 39 (10%) answered “undecided”. Thus, from Figure 8, it can be noted that the majority (228 (58.3%)) of the respondents confirmed that poor urban land management caused the growth of informal settlements. These findings imply that the poor urban land management system accelerated informal settlements in towns. The proliferation of the poorly controlled development of human settlements led to many environmental and health-related problems.

**Gelan****L/T/L/Dadi****Figure 7.** The expansion of informal settlements; Lega Tafo Lega Dadi and Gelan, 2022.



**Figure 8.** The response rates of household (HH) respondents on the informal settlements in the towns (source: HH survey, 2022).

## 5. Conclusions

The role of urban land management in securing urban land tenure and its impacts on urban land use, social inclusion, urban land value, and access to financial credit, investments, and income were the subjects of this study, which looked at the effects of urban land management from the perspective of governance. The registration of municipal land, ownership, land usage, property transactions, leases, and credit rights for the banking industry were all established. However, the majority of the urban communities had already started constructing homes without registering their property and land-use rights. Additionally, the likelihood of outside aggression and government takeover without just compensation significantly lowered landowners' confidence in the security of their property rights. According to the towns' government delineations, the number of landowners in peri-urban regions who used their property for residential and commercial reasons increased, while the number of landowners who used it for agricultural purposes was somewhat reduced. Similarly, while paying property taxes is a requirement for regularization, the effects of urban land security on land income showed that the majority of suburban people did not pay property taxes, since their land was unregistered. As a result, the risks are greater in cities where land registers are not secure, land information is difficult to access, the town's appraisal of designated land is significantly below market value, and the systems for collecting information on city property and appraising land are similar. Workers' behavior and skills also have an impact on the rights of urban landowners. Additionally, since informal land ownership and transfers are not protected by law, genuine landowners who have been the beneficiaries of legal urban land transfers have lost their rights. In addition, because informal land ownership and transfers are not protected by law and because joint ownership only offers partial safeguards for newcomers, illicit transfers of urban land have led to the loss of rights for legitimate proprietors. Overlapping land rights, informal settlements, non-recognition of indigenous land rights, unfair compensation for displaced farmers due to public purposes, and indefinite public purposes were the case when it came to urban land disputes in the towns, among other causes. Therefore, due to poor governance in urban land management, it was not possible to support land-related socioeconomic growth. To manage the transition along the continuum of land rights, strengthen local capacities for recognizing and managing diverse tenure systems, and protect rights while allowing new entrants access to land, governments could support activities aimed at strengthening tenure. They could also work to improve community-level capacity for conducting land-use planning, such as by implementing more community-based practices and improving data use and management. The government should create a comprehensive planning system that includes a socioeconomic development plan, and land-use planning should control where it makes sense to locate specific services, in addition to addressing environmental



deterioration. Further studies are needed for further research on the contributions of good governance in the urban land management sector, as well as changes to the livelihoods of urban communities.

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