



Fundamental Functionings of Landowners: Understanding the relationship between land ownership and wellbeing through the lens of ‘capability’

Jyoti Rao

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010, Victoria, Australia



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ABSTRACT

Given land owners' resistance to the compulsory acquisition of land and the recurring debate on inadequacy of compensation, this research re-examines losses of landowners in terms of loss of functionings offered by land. The aim of this research paper is to understand the relationship between land ownership and well-being when seen through the lens of Sen's (1979) 'capability approach' and to identify fundamental functionings associated with land that are generalizable at global level. The relationship between wellbeing and functionings offered by commodities is the focus of Sen's (1979) 'capability approach'

Understanding functionings of land required inductive approach and primary investigation was performed through focus group discussions with participants from eleven different countries, who are currently pursuing doctoral research at the University of Melbourne. A holistic list of nine fundamental functionings of land was obtained towards the end of these discussions, which are: (i) Secure means to basic ends; (ii) Self-identity; (iii) Social capital; (iv) Social equity; (v) Political empowerment; (vi) Power to take decisions on land matters; (vii) Family's wellbeing; (viii) Personal comfort and convenience; and (ix) Psychological wellbeing

1. Introduction

Sen (1979) raises the question on equality (of what?) and argues that the definition of poverty shall be based on access to 'basic capabilities' and not 'basic goods'. Examples of 'basic capabilities' include "the ability to meet one's nutritional requirements, the wherewithal to be clothed and sheltered, the power to participate in the social life of the community" (Sen, 1979, p. 218). The achievement of these basic capabilities shall require food, clothes, shelter and societal linkages respectively.

In the context of Sen's 'capability approach', it may be argued that the land (as a resource) offers functions that shall fulfil 'basic capabilities', and many more. The importance of land ownership is highlighted by George (1880) in his writing that "the ownership of land is the great fundamental fact which ultimately determines the social, the political, and consequently the intellectual and moral condition of a people. And it must be so. For land is the habitation of man, the storehouse upon which he must draw for all his needs, the material to which his labour must be applied for the supply of all his desires; for even the products of the sea cannot be taken, the light of the sun enjoyed, or any of the forces of nature utilized, without the use of land or its products." Thus, land could be considered a 'complete' good that encompasses, partially or fully, functionings of almost all other resources. Although access to different 'functionings' certainly depends

on individualistic ability of the landowner, thus defining the capability (Sen, 1985). This could include individuals' physical, mental, financial, educational, social, political and other abilities.

The discussion on land ownership and its relevance for wellbeing is scattered under different strands of economics and social sciences including land economics, finance, real-estate, social justice, feminism and other similar fields. In the light of the discussion on 'capability', these discussions could be knitted together to create a fundamental list of functions of landownership. Although it is premature to state this but the 'fundamental' list could be useful in indexing the 'capability' of different units of the society, the smallest one being the individual landowner.

Differences in treatment given to private property rights in different countries would also create difference in the set of functionings achievable through ownership. Even within each country, different types of property title formats are practiced which bundle property rights differently, thus creating different functionings. Considering the diversity in political and legal systems, as well as differences in property title formats that are practiced in different parts of the world, it is concluded that absolute ownership of land offers maximum achievable set of functionings and any lesser bundle of rights shall generate functionings that will be subset to absolute ownership. Though property rights are typically interpreted by economists as private property rights, other forms, like community rights are important in many societies

E-mail addresses: jyoti.rao@unimelb.edu.au, jyotishukla123@gmail.com.

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(Besley and Ghatak, 2010). While the major focus of this research is placed on private ownership of land, it is acknowledged that in some societies subjective wellbeing conjuncts with community ownership. Therefore, the scope of discussion in this research is broadened to include functionings offered to individuals operating under community ownership.

As mentioned earlier, the objective of this paper is to understand land using Sen's 'capability approach' and to identify various 'functionings' that land generates for individuals. It is acknowledged that due to heterogeneity in individual circumstances and subjective preferences of each landowner, the value of each functioning will vary for each individual landowner and the context of geography will further differentiate subjective values attached to respective functionings. That said, this research identifies the wide range of functionings associated with landownership, that in the view of the society, are important for the wellbeing of landowners, irrespective of subjective differences in value of each functioning. Findings from this research provide a list of fundamental functionings that are common across different geographies that differ in private property right regime, as well as in the social and political structure.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the theoretical framework and creates the basic argument about the importance of an 'individual' person and her wellbeing. The discussion proceeds to provide a critique of the traditional utilitarian approach to welfare and then explains the 'capability approach' by Amartya Sen. The literature also includes a brief discussion on the relationship of land ownership with the 'wellbeing' of an individual, which is the main objective of this research paper. Section 3 explains the method adopted for this research. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with participants from eleven countries were conducted and discussions were analysed using Qualitative Content Analysis on NVIVO. Nine fundamental functionings were identified which are generalizable across all countries although the level of importance of each function may vary. The relevance of this research and the potential for future research is also discussed in the concluding Section 4.

2. Theoretical framework

From time to time privately held land is required for public purposes and it has for long been accepted that private rights should give way on occasion to the wider public interest. In theory, the loss to the individual is offset by the gain to the wider community of which the individual is a part. Maximization of social welfare is the economic justification for compulsory acquisition of private land (refer Blume et al., 1984 for details). Although human welfare (or wellbeing) is the essence of economic and philosophical discussions but there exists no consensus on the theoretical conceptualization and empirical measurements of welfare (Kuklys, 2005) (see Adler 2011 for different approaches to welfare).

Traditional economics identifies an individual's welfare with the goods and services the person possesses or consumes and the 'utility' that the person gets from its consumption (Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011). The concept of 'utility' existed earlier but it became clearly identified as a distinct philosophical school in the late eighteenth century with the publication of works of three most prominent early utilitarians – William Paley in 1785, Jeremy Bentham in 1789, and William Godwin in 1793 (Mulgan, 2014). Most popularly accepted principal of utilitarianism is the "greatest happiness principle" (Mulgan, 2014, p. 9) introduced by Jeremy Bentham.

"By utility is meant the property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain evil or unhappiness" (Bentham 1789, as cited in Mulgan, 2014 Mulgan 2014, pp. 10).

While acknowledging that the challenges of operationalizing the

theory of 'welfare', Pigou (1938) postulated money as an "obvious instrument of the measurement" (p. 11) of welfare. Pigou (1938) acknowledged 'welfare' as a "thing of very wide range" (p. 11) and he considered this "part" of welfare as *economic welfare*. Thus, income became an important measure of utility level of each individual (Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011). The utilitarian approach towards wellbeing is contested by Sen for being too myopic in considering income and commodities as the major criteria of human wellbeing (Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011).

Using income as the empirical indicator of utility, Blume et al. (1984) found that under certain assumptions, no compensation for compulsorily acquired land is economically efficient. The model is subtler than this conclusion suggests but this result has received most attention for being unfair and unjust. In a more recent model proposed by Niemann and Shapiro (2008), they suggest that in limited circumstances, it is efficient and equitable to consider the positive effects of proposed public project on the values of acquired land parcels and compensate landowners at this enhanced value rather than at the market value.

While arguing against over simplistic traditional approach to social welfare, Sen (2003) complains that "the widely prevalent concentration on the expansion of real income and on economic growth as the characteristics of successful development can be precisely an aspect of mistake against which Kant had warned" (p. 41). Sen provides vigorous criticism to utilitarian approach (Konjovic, 2013) and explains his disagreement over following major pillars of the 'utilitarian' model (Wells, 2016; Sen and Williams, 1982):

- i *Consequentialism* – This is the theory of correct action (Sen and Williams, 1982), according to which, "actions should be assessed only in terms of the goodness or badness of their consequences" (Wells, 2016). Sen criticizes this method of achieving equality and instead suggests 'comprehensive consequentialism'. Direct consideration to consequences of an action would mean that the process, by which consequences are brought about, has been ignored. Overlooking the process would also lead to ignorance of the principles of fairness and to the respect towards 'individual agency' (Wells, 2016). For example, in the case of compulsory purchase of agricultural land for economic activities – say special economic zones (SEZ), the consequences (in terms of economic returns) may be good for the society but the process might ignore the principles of 'fairness' or well-being of original landowners whose lands get acquired.
- ii *Welfarism* – "Welfarism is the view that goodness shall be assessed only in terms of subjective utility" (Wells, 2016). Sen argues that since welfarism is concerned about an individual's notion about her life, it neglects people's 'reflective valuation' and 'actual physical condition' (Wells, 2016). He explains that self-perception is dependent upon the psychological state of an individual and is therefore vulnerable to 'adaptive preferences'. Meaning to say that people gradually adapt to their circumstances of material deprivation or social injustice and may claim to be entirely satisfied without realizing the difference between notional and actual/real satisfaction. Therefore 'adaptive preference' of individuals blurs the distinction between what they get and what they can sensibly expect.
- iii *Sum Ranking* – Utilitarianism require "simply adding up individual welfares or utilities to assess the consequences" (Sen and Williams, 1982, p. 4) and this property is called *sum-ranking* (Sen and Williams, 1982). This focuses on the maximisation of total welfare without regard to the pattern of distribution (Cohen, 1993; Wells, 2016). Sen, along with other liberal philosophers, argues that this approach ignores distinctions between persons and their ability to convert resources into 'welfare' (Sen and Williams, 1982; Wells, 2016). For example, a disabled person would achieve lesser level of welfare from public transport, as compared to a normal person. Therefore, with intention of maximisation of 'welfare', resources

would get concentrated in the hands of those who are efficient converters of resources into utility.

Later John Rawls, considered to be an important political philosopher of the twentieth century, proposed a broader definition for ‘good life’ and wellbeing in his ‘Theory of Justice’ (1972). As per Rawls theory, a few ‘primary goods’ were essential for the achievement of good life and these included (i) basic rights and liberties; (ii) freedom of movement and free choice of occupation; (iii) the powers of offices and positions of responsibility; (iv) income and wealth; and above all (v) the social bases of self-respect (Rawls, 1982; *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2012). Even though Rawls considered self-respect to be “the most important primary good” (Rawls, 1972, p. 440) a formal structure to the concept could not be provided and instead the focus shifted towards income and wealth (Konjovic, 2013). Apart from this, Rawls’s theory is constructively criticized by Sen for being ignorant towards distinctions in individuals’ ability to convert material resources to her usefulness (Wells, 2016; Konjovic, 2013; Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011; Robeyns, 2008).

Multiple approaches to identify human needs are widely discussed by different groups of scholars, majorly from the field of psychology and philosophy (Max-Neef, 1991), (refer Darity, 2008 for more details). Interrelationship between fulfilment of human needs and societal development has invited attention of political, social and economic disciplines, thus broadening the scope to include measures of human development (Max-Neef, 1991). American psychologist Abraham Maslow’s (1908-70) developed five level hierarchy of human needs ranging between most basic biological needs to most fulfilling self-actualization needs (refer Maslow 1943 for more details). British philosopher David Wiggins distinguished needs from desires (refer Wiggins, 1998 for more details), which is a similar argument to that made by Doyal and Gough (1991) on objective needs and subjective wants. Economists in general have confined the scope of identification of human needs and development to goods and services with a few exceptions like Lederer (1980) and Max-Neef (1991), who identified needs with objects, relations, activities and so on (Darity, 2008). Amartya Sen shifts the focus of economic debates from commodities to capabilities. Sen (1983) explicitly explains the sequence, from possession of commodity, to understanding its characteristics, to generating functionings and capability, and to achieving utility. He strongly argues that the third stage, that is generation of capability and functionings, is closest to identification with human development and the standard of living (Sen, 1983).

While traditional welfare economics associates well-being with resources (or commodities), the ‘capability approach’ identifies wellbeing with the freedom of choice or accessing multiple functionings which an individual considers valuable to her life (Sen, 1985). As per this approach, increasing access of an individual to a wider set of functionings shall enhance the capability of the individual, thus increasing her welfare (ibid). Sen replaces ‘commodity’ and ‘utility’ with ‘functionings’ and ‘capability’, respectively (Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011). The crux of disjoints between Sen’s approach and traditional welfare economics lies in the difference between “goods” and “functionings” and between “achievements (or utility)” and “freedom” (Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011).

Sen (1993) explains that “the expression (capability) was picked to represent alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or to be – the various ‘functionings’ he or she can achieve” (p. 30). The term explains the actual ability of a person to achieve various valuable functionings as a part of living (Sen, 1993). Wells (2016) interprets the meaning of ‘capability’ and ‘functionings’ and explains that ‘functioning’ is the state of ‘being or doing’ such as *being* well-nourished, *doing* bicycling. ‘Capability’, on the other hand, is “the set of valuable functionings that a person has effective access to” (Wells, 2016). ‘Functioning’ should be distinguished from both (i) the good (say a bike) which is in use, and (ii) the happiness resulting from the act of

using the good (Sen, 1985). Put simply, ‘capability approach’ is “shifting attention from goods to what goods do to human beings” (Sen, 1979, p. 219).

The characteristics of any good remain the same for everyone who possesses the good although the ability to access different characteristics may vary given the differences in individual characteristics and circumstances (Sen, 1985). Specifically talking about land, its characteristics are same for every landowner (operating in same property right regime) although the set of functionings generated from land are specific to each landowner, as demonstrated in the findings of (Rao et al., 2017). In the case of compulsory acquisition of land, functionings lost by the affected landowners’ and the value attached to each are subjective matters and as per the argument presented by Rao et al. (2017), fair compensation mechanism should satisfactorily reconstruct each functioning. In the context of applying capability approach to human development and adoption of subjective approach to the identification of functionings, Sen (1985) warns against individuals’ self-bias caused due to adaptation to personal circumstances. Adaptive preferences of individuals may lead to lower self-assessment of valuable functionings. To overcome the problem Sen (1985) suggests identification of ‘basic capabilities’, mentioned earlier, that are essential for life. On similar lines, this research aims at identifying generalizable fundamental functionings attached to land. While arguing for political principles that should underwrite constitutional guarantees, political philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2000) developed the list of ten ‘central capabilities’, which are life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over ones’ environment (political and material) (see Nussbaum, 2000 for more details). These capabilities command cross-cultural consensus from across the globe. This is strong evidence that supports development of fundamental functionings of land, generalizable across different societies, that set the lowest threshold of functionings of landowners. Functionings accessible through the ownership of land, as discussed under Section 4, shall contribute towards development of many central capabilities of Nussbaum (2000) and basic capabilities of Sen (1985). While discussing about central capabilities, Nussbaum (2000) acknowledges the importance of property as a tool of human functionings and writes that – “Land is frequently a particularly valuable source of self-definition, bargaining power, and economic sustenance ...” (p. 80). This research reinforces the importance of land as an important tool to many human functionings. In the case of compulsory acquisition of land its fundamental functionings should set minimalistic compensation, while fair compensation should satisfactorily reconstruct all additional functionings lost by the affected landowner, as argued by Rao et al. (2017).

As the first step towards identification of fundamental functionings of land, it may be argued that the bundle of property rights is the initial set of functionings offered by land. In the words of Barzel (1989), “property rights of individuals over assets (including land) consist of the rights, or powers to consume, obtain income from, and alienate these assets” (p. 2). Detailed inquiry of each of these rights is performed in this research. As mentioned earlier, these rights are bundled differently to create various types of property titles which grant varying levels of freedom to those who hold them. Given that absolute ownership (often referred as freehold or fee simple) is the highest achievable form of ownership, it shall generate the ‘universal set’ of functionings. Any other reduced form of property title shall combine functionings to varying levels from within this universal set. This research looked at the role of absolute ownership of land on the wellbeing of an individual and identified fundamental functionings derived by an individual, through private and/or community ownership of land.

3. Research design

Given the interpretivist paradigm of capability approach and the necessity of primary inquiry of functionings, this research adopted

qualitative technique for data collection and analysis, as explained in this section.

While it was important to conduct primary investigation, the selection of participant was crucial for this research which aims at identifying fundamental functionings of land across different countries. To overcome the subjective bias of respondents, purposeful sampling was used to select fifteen doctoral candidates at the University of Melbourne. The advantage of selecting doctoral researchers was that they were aware of the context of research and could articulate unbiased views, as demanded by this research.

Twelve out of fifteen respondents were professionally trained architects and planners, who possessed good understanding of property rights and land issues. A few respondents were experts on land matters and have had undertaken academic research on related topics. It is important to mention that their knowledge of property rights was contextual to the country of origin and their responses were in reference to the place of origin.

Selection of respondents was also guided by their country of origin. The intention was to select respondents from countries that spread evenly between rank 1 and 127 on the International Property Rights Index.¹ Final choice of eleven countries was made based on the availability of respondents from these countries (refer Table 1). The selected countries range between rank 15 and 111 and capture the differences in the level of protection to private property (refer Table 1). These countries together represent all major types of property right regimes, political systems, and income groups across the globe, thus allowing for the variety of functionings associated with land ownership in different parts of the world (refer Table 1). One may however, validate these by expanding the analysis to other countries and/or by including a larger sample for each country. This was out of scope of the present research due to constraints of availability of experts.

Majority participants were owners or were expecting inheritance of property in the country of origin. In addition to their personal experience of ownership, their professional training and/or doctoral research in the field of built environment and related disciplines significantly contributed to their understanding of property rights and its role in economic and social development, at individual and societal level at their country of origin.

Together their academic training, research background and personal experiences on land related issues enriched the discussions. While these researchers presented their opinion of the societal views at the macro level it may be argued that some of the specificities may have been missed. However, this does not limit this study given that the objective is to identify fundamental functionings that are generalizable at the global level.

Information was collected through five Focus Group Discussions (FGD) organised between June 2016 to October 2017 at the University of Melbourne. Discussion in group stimulated the thought process of the participants as well as of the researcher moderator, who was an observer in the process. Three discussants, each from a different country, were grouped together to discuss the topic. Transnational group formation reduced repetition of similar issues and widened the range of functionings derivable from land ownership. Regarding different types of property titles that often exist parallel in these countries, it was assumed that functionings generated by any type of titling system should get encompassed within the universal set of fundamental functionings generated by absolute ownership.

¹ Since 2007, yearly edition of the International Property Rights Index is constructed using three major components of legal and political environment; physical property rights; and intellectual property rights across 127 countries that account for 98% of world GDP, and 93% of the world's population (Levy-Carciente, 2017). Within 'physical property rights' index, there are three subindexes of protection of physical property rights; registering property, and ease of access to loans, of which the first subindex is chosen as the criterion for selection of countries for this research (refer Table 1). Global rank for this subindex for each selected country is stated in Table 1.

During the discussions, information on general societal perception on wellbeing associated with landownership was collected. There were two broad topics of discussions (i) Does ownership of land (or property, house) increases the well-being of an individual? How? and (ii) If the land (or property, house) is compulsorily acquired, then will it affect the well-being of the landowner? How? In addition to these, smaller questions or prompts were prepared with intentions to stimulate the discussions. The average duration of discussion was between forty to sixty minutes.

All the discussions were audio taped and additional short notes were prepared by the researcher observer. In addition to that, participants were asked to fill in a response sheet and prepare a brief written summary of the views shared during the FGD. Detailed transcripts, prepared by careful listening of audio recordings, formed the main source of data. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) was performed using NVIVO software resulting in nine broad categories and twenty-six sub-categories towards the end. QCA is defined by Mayring (2000) as the bundle of techniques for systematic analysis of different types of content that consider manifest content as well as themes and core ideas found in text (refer Drisko and Maschi, 2015 for more details on this method). Cyclical process of text analysis, category formation, discussion (with academic experts), and modification of categories was adopted until clearly distinct categories were obtained.

4. Fundamental functionings of land

It is acknowledged that the wellbeing from landownership shall vary across societies given the differences in the property rights regime and the social, economic, political, legal, cultural, traditional and religious uniqueness. The discussions in this section shall cover these relationships holistically and identify those functionings which are fundamental to all landowners, although with varying level of importance. In summary, nine fundamental functionings of land are identified, the details of which are discussed in the following sections.

4.1. Secure means to basic ends

4.1.1. Livelihood security

"...in terms of well-being, land is a fundamental requirement" (Africa, FGD 5), said the participant from Africa, while explaining the importance of land for rural communities in Cameroon. For traditional land-based societies land is the securest means to livelihood as well as the source for food and shelter. To agriculturists, landownership provides opportunity for self-employed and security against hunger and poverty. The argument is also valid in urban contexts, particularly in developing countries which do not have effective public securities in place.

4.1.2. Security of physical space and protection from eviction and relocation

Ownership of land and improvements on it, like house or business, adds to the legal security against eviction and relocation. It also grants the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure, which is considered important for human development by Nussbaum (2000).

Although most developed countries guarantee shelter security, the role of private ownership is still considered important in providing stable location to a family. There is growing concern towards negative impacts of relocation on the wellbeing of family and children (refer Family Law Council, 2006; Pettit, 2000; Rumbold et al., 2012). Psychological and emotional comfort from stability of location of house was emphasised during group discussions – "I have moved a lot as a child and I just want one place that's mine forever." (Australia, FGD 4).

Locational stability is also important for businesses, particularly those which depend upon consumer relationships. Negative impacts of relocations in terms of loss of existing clientele and familiar

Table 1
List of countries.
Sources

| S. No. | Region | Global rank of selected countries based on protection of physical property rights ^a | Income Group ^b | Political System ^c |
|--------|-----------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Australia | 15 | High income | Constitutional monarchy |
| 2 | Malaysia | 31 | Upper middle income | Constitutional monarchy |
| 3 | Chile | 33 | High income | Democratic Republic |
| 4 | China | 47 | Upper middle income | People's democratic dictatorship |
| 5 | Sri Lanka | 57 | Lower middle income | Democratic Republic |
| 6 | Cameroon | 78 | Lower middle income | Democratic Republic |
| 7 | Nepal | 79 | Low income | Democratic Republic |
| 8 | Egypt | 93 | Lower middle income | Democratic Republic |
| 9 | India | 94 | Lower middle income | Democratic Republic |
| 10 | Iran | 97 | Upper middle income | Islamic Republic |
| 11 | Pakistan | 111 | Lower middle income | Islamic Republic |

^a Source: International Property Rights Index 2017, <https://ipri2017.herokuapp.com/countries>, retrieved 03/11/2017

^b Source: GDP per capita (current US\$), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>, retrieved 03/11/2017

^c Sources: Constitution of Australia, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/Constitution, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Chile, <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Chile.pdf>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Malaysia, [http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/uploads/files/Publications/FC/Federal%20Consti%20\(BI%20text\).pdf](http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/uploads/files/Publications/FC/Federal%20Consti%20(BI%20text).pdf), retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of China, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372962.htm, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of India, <https://www.india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/constitution-india-full-text>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Sri Lanka, <https://www.parliament.lk/files/pdf/constitution.pdf>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Nepal, <http://www.oagnep.gov.np/uploads/Constitution-of-nepal-2072%20Englishpdf>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Iran, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160915040829/http://www.iranonline.com:80/iran/iran-info/government/constitution.html>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Egypt, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvtr/Dustor-en001.pdf>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Cameroon, <https://www.prc.cm/en/cameroon/constitution>, retrieved 03/11/2017; Constitution of Pakistan, http://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf, retrieved 03/11/2017

environment were discussed during the FGD. In the context of compulsory acquisition of business, another respondent expressed concern towards disturbances to the business operation which are not always measurable and often remain uncompensated.

Legal security against eviction is crucial for the weaker segments of the society, including women. In socially stratified societies, for example India and Nepal, various forms of exploitation and discrimination are still prevalent and often women and members belonging to lower casts are victimised. Having legal ownership of land and property adds to their security and strengthens the position of the weak in the family and the society.

4.1.3. Financial security

In the words of the respondent from Egypt, “Land is a source of financial security and it’s a backup for anything that may happen in the future” (Egypt, FGD 1). Although the process of credit generation from land maybe cumbersome, particularly in developing countries where land markets are immature, the importance of land as a financial instrument is well recognized in all parts of the world. For example, in India, despite the distortions in the land market, land is the collateral for majority loans supplied by formal and informal lenders (Krishnan et al., 2017). Participant from Chile emphasised the importance of land for the poor who otherwise do not have access to formal credits. Use of property for credit generation is also important for agriculturists, household industries as well as small businesses (Krishnan et al., 2017).

Security of tenure, ownership being the highest achievable level, is globally acknowledged by policy makers as an effective mechanism for poverty reduction (refer Meinzen-Dick, 2009). As mentioned the participant from Chile, people in slums lack security of tenure which discourages them improving the property and seek long term personal and economic benefits linked to property.

Another important financial functionings, brought forward by Australia respondent, was in reference to senior citizens and retirees. For them, home (and real property) is their nest egg and they often use it for credit generation post retirement through downsizing, reverse mortgage and similar other financial instruments.

In addition to direct forms of financial security explained above, landowners observe indirect financial securities in ‘notional’ future benefits from land, as explained below.

4.1.3.1. Financial benefits linked with future development potential of

land. Given that land is scarce and the demand for space continues to grow, landowners are often very optimistic about the advancement of the development potential of land in the future even though the extent of remoteness and the nature of development is unpredictable.

4.1.3.2. *Opportunity to participate and speculate in the land market.* Speculative nature of land market and associated benefits were also recognized by participants in the FGD – “Investing (in land) is like betting. You are taking the risk and that is why you might get more than what you paid for” (Chile, FGD 2). While discussing losses associated with compulsory acquisition of property, the loss of opportunity to benefit from participating in the land market, particularly for businesses which thrive on it, were highlighted.

4.1.3.3. *Store of value.* Ownership of property hedges against inflation, as explained by the participant from Egypt – “Suppose if you have land and you have equivalent amount of money in your pocket or in bank account, then generally the land value goes higher than the money in your pocket or in bank account.” (Egypt, FGD 1). General societal notion, as revealed during FGDs, was that financial performance of land is better than other financial assets in the long run. Asset value of land together with its non-expiring physical life adds to the waiting power and confidence of the owner, as discussed during FGD 3.

4.2. Self-identity

During the discussions participants often associated their property with self-identity. In his popular work on psychology, William James (1890) explains that “a man’s Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account ...”. In the context of landowners, there were different ways in which participants identified ‘self’ with ‘property’ (land or house), for example – (i) identity associated with social status granted by ownership of property, especially if located in a superior neighbourhood (ii) identity associated with personalization of space to reflect one’s choices; (iii) identity with land or property in which one has invested labor; (iv) identity in memories built over time at a place, say house, neighbourhood, city or country (v) identity of self as a part of the territorial identity of the place of origin which has its own culture, tradition, religious practices

and norms, language, festivals, flora and fauna and so on (vi) identity of an individual as a part of the community identity, for example in the case of tribal societies. Further discussions on self-identity is taken up in the next section.

4.2.1. *Self-identity with possessions as memorabilia*

“Integral to a sense of who we are is a sense of our past.” (Belk, 1988, p. 148). Intangible experiences from the past are stored in tangible physical possessions (ibid). As per Nussbaum (2000) argument, being able to have emotional attachments to things is central to human development. Similar thought was shared by participants who thought that the role of possessions in creating or maintaining a sense of past is important for one’s development (Belk, 1988). Especially in the case of old aged people possessions help in achieving a sense of continuity and preparation for death (ibid). The level of attachment to memory evoking possessions grows with age because the opportunities to create new pleasurable memories in the future is reduced (Belk, 1988). Therefore, the negative impact on the wellbeing of old aged people, who have had a longer history of association with the property, may be much more devastating. In summary, acquisition of property with which owners have had long personal association causes serious damage to the stock of memories and in turn to the self-identity of the owners.

4.2.2. *Self-identity in social status*

Material possessions, including land and property, are often seen as symbols of social status which boost the relative importance of the individual or family in the society. Social status associated with ownership of property, especially at a superior location, was discussed by participants from Australia, Africa, and Pakistan.

Participant from Africa brought the point forward that the ownership of land by a family and its successors “also has a symbolic importance that it has to preserve the family name ... it’s an indication of family continuity” (Africa, FGD 5) thus maintaining family’s identity in the society.

4.2.3. *Self-identity with the personalization of place of occupancy*

There was good emphasis placed on discussions on being able to modify the “personal environment that you are going to live in for your life” (Australia, FGD 3). In the words of a participant, it is “human nature” to modify the place of occupancy as per one’s liking (FGD 3). She further explains – “You love to make it your own space and you have to customize things as per what you like, painting it in your own colour and you feel free to do that if it’s your own house ... Especially suburban houses that all look the same. People need to make the changes to make it their own.” (Malaysia, FGD 3). The association of self, with place of occupancy and role of physical space in identity creation is recognized in the works of Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981) and Proshansky et al. (1983).

4.2.4. *Self-identity with property in which one has invested labour*

James (1890) builds upon John Locke’s theory and argues that the most intimate possessions are those in which one’s labour is invested. Discontentment of losing house in which one has invested labour was strongly raised during group discussions – “It’s like I have invested myself, my personality and identity in that particular space, and that’s being taken from me! I can’t lose the tree I planted for instance.” (Australia, FGD 4).

4.2.5. *Self-identity as a part of territorial identity*

People have strong associations with their place of origin and identify themselves with the culture, traditions, language, food and festival of the place. Raising the discussions on customary traditions of birth and death in Africa, the participant mentioned that “it is important that I am implanted where my placenta was buried.” (Africa,

FGD 5). In Nepal, some rural communities, for example the Sherpa clan, are tied to the land for their religious belief in the God with which the village or the clan identifies itself. Ownership of land in the native village shall maintain the connection with the culture and traditions of the place. In worst cases, mass acquisition and dislocation of rural communities may cease the cultural identity of a place. In the Australian context, Zubrick et al. (2014) recognize the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community, for ‘social and emotional wellbeing’ of the natives.

Alongside providing territorial identity, another complimentary functioning of ownership, as discussed during FGD 4, was the way people use it to safeguard their territorial identity by excluding others from entering. This is also observed in a few urban neighbourhoods of south Italian cities, where owners safeguard the ethnicity of the place by not renting or selling the property to non-natives. At a larger scale, countries safeguard the cultural identity of the nation by regulating immigration of foreign nationals, as discussed during FGD 3.

Summarizing the discussions above it can be said that the role of material possessions in human development is very important, and includes the extension of basic states of existence of oneself, which are – having, doing and being, say for example having a gun, doing shooting and being powerful (Belk, 1988). Both Belk (1988) and Sen (1979) put emphasis on the functional role of possessions, which is the valuable states of doing or being. There are strong evidences which suggest that when possessions, with which one identifies oneself, are unintentionally lost or taken away, one develops a feeling of diminished self (Belk, 1988), as was expressed by participants during the FGD (refer Australia, FGD 4, under Section 4.2.4). James (1890) writes about the psychology of loss of possessions and states that “a part of our depression at the loss of possessions is due to our feeling that we must now go without certain goods that we expected the possessions to bring in their train, yet in every case there remains, over and above this, a sense of the shrinkage of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness, which is a psychological phenomenon by itself.” (p. 293). In the case of compulsory acquisition of land by public authorities, this feeling of reduction of self to nothingness is even more intense due to various reasons. Firstly, the sudden reduction in the power of landowners adds to the feeling of reduction of ‘self’. Unlike in the case of accidental loss of possessions due to theft or fire, which are neither intentional nor avoidable, the loss of property during compulsory acquisition, in the notion of landowner is probably intentional and avoidable though he is not given the power to control these losses thus intensifying the feeling of disempowerment and associated feeling of reduction of self – “Being forced to something might be a significant factor affecting my wellbeing.” (Egypt, FGD 1).

4.3. *Social capital*

As a central capability to human development, Nussbaum (2000) discusses the importance of ‘affiliation’ – “Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship.” (p. 79). In addition to creating opportunities for social relationship building, ownership generates other valuable functionings that add to the social capital of the owner, as discussed in following sections.

4.3.1. *Formal and informal relationship building*

“If I am forced to move from somewhere then I lose my friends, my neighbours, the people at the shop that I used to go and talk with every day, that sort of thing.” (Australia, FGD 4). All these social bonds, arising from different sources, were considered important by the participants. An important source of social capital is informal relationships with friends, neighbours, and even with unknown people whom we meet and greet at common places like the grocery

store, or at the park. There are other formal sources of social capital which come from formal contacts with the doctor, the school teacher, and similar other sources on which one rely for purpose other than social relationship building, which gets developed over time alongside formal relations.

In addition to having “contentment in associations with the community”, as mentioned by a participant (Australia, FGD 3), social networks were considered important as support systems as well. Therefore, the establishment of social relationships serves dual purposes of selfless socializing, and reciprocal arrangements for support. In the context of compulsory acquisition and relocation, participants expressed concern over the loss of social capital which takes a long time to build.

Cox (2000) finds that the strength of social capital comes into play when community level actions are required to deal with conflicts, problems or changes, as discussed by many participants. In the context of community’s resistance to a fly-over project proposed in Mumbai (India), the strength of social capital of owner occupiers was clearly highlighted by the participant from India. Participants believed owner occupiers are usually socially organised and pursue matters concerning their property or neighbourhood more actively than as compared to passive owners or non-owners.

4.3.2. Ownership as a socio-cultural requirement

Social and cultural notions associated with the security that ownership of property brings along with it manifests itself in the form of social trends and norms. For example, “in China, land and house is very important. If a young man (who) does not have a house, he cannot get married. No girl wants to get married to him.” (China, FGD 1). Li (2016) explains the “cultural consensus” between homeownership and marriage in China. Often participants used terms like ‘social trend’, ‘culture’, and ‘tradition’ to describe the socio-cultural necessity of owning property which implies that ownership is perceived as personal and social achievement.

4.4. Social equity and empowerment

Various forms of social inequalities are prevalent in different parts of the world, of which issues in developing countries are intense and include caste-discrimination, social boycott, usurpation, and other social ills, as discussed by Moses (1995). For this research, social empowerment is defined as the power to overcome the fear of coercion from the dominator.

4.4.1. Empowerment for weaker sections of the society

Among various forms of inequalities, caste based discrimination are serious concern in socially stratified societies, like India and Nepal. As mentioned in the FGD, the intensity of discrimination in caste based societies is at times to the extent of practicing ‘untouchability’ and maintaining physical distance from those considered ‘untouchable’ for being lowest in the caste hierarchy (refer Ghurye 2016 for details on caste system in India). Legal, social, and economic reforms were introduced from time to time to boost social and economic autonomy among the weaker segments, and the positive role of landownership is well acknowledged in the process (refer Joshi, 1970; Radhakrishnan, 1981; Sivanandan, 1979; Stilwell and Jordan, 2004; Yadu and Vijayasuryan, 2016).

4.4.2. Empowerment for weaker gender

On being asked whether ownership of property empowers women, an affirmative ‘yes’ was the repose received from participants from India and Sri Lanka. They explained the reasoning as follows – “In a few divorce cases and even domestic violence cases, I think that (property ownership) does give you the power to say something... you could take some of those risks which generally we (females) are not able to take.” (India, FGD 5). Ownership of land grants legal power to

women to use land and its resources to her advantage and the authority to exclude others (say the partner, as discussed under Section 4.6.4) (refer Rao and Rana, 1997 for more details). As discussed during FGDs, these legal tools, as a subset of property rights, have often been used in many countries to empower women and raise their position equal to men, in the society and in the family.

While constitution in Cameroon embraces equality, the concept is not synced into the statutory and customary laws of the region which heavily outweighs rights of men on land and property (Cheka, 1996). Legal position of women is comparable to that of dependents or legal minors, thus constraining women for entering legal contracts concerning property, for example buying, selling and mortgaging (ibid). Poorly defined property rights for women makes them more vulnerable to poverty and disempowers them to become victims of domestic and social ills (ibid). Participant from Cameroon explained high level of discrimination against women and stated the societal view to be that “women are properties of men and a property cannot own another property”.²

In majority developed countries like Australia, the financial security for women is integrated in the legal system which mandates appropriate division of wealth and property among partners after divorce. However, the weak position of women in a partnership is explained in the report of World Health Organisation (2013) as per which approximately 23% women in High Income Countries,³ who have ever partnered, are victims of physical and/or social violence. Role of ownership in empowering women is evident from the findings of Braaf and Meyering (2011) – “many women considering whether to stay in or leave a violent relationship are influenced by how that decision will affect their housing. Recent research identifies domestic violence as the leading cause of homelessness among women in Australia. Women’s ability to access affordable accommodation is, in turn, a significant determinant of their future financial security.” (p. 43)

While the usual debate is on the need to empower women, there was issue of male disempowerment reported during the FGD 5. In the absence of property rights for males, as observed in matrilineal societies like in Kerala (India), widowed men are facing problems of homelessness as explained by the participant from India.

Above discussions support the argument that ownership empowers weaker segments of the society and helps establishing social equality. Ownership of property creates economic empowerment and autonomy which are necessary requisites to social empowerment, as explained by Stilwell and Jordan (2004). Stilwell and Jordan (2004) argue that even though not all socioeconomic inequalities stem from the unequal capture of the economic surplus associated with land and socioeconomic inequalities are also created due to unequal access to capital, educational and employment, the later are imperfectly correlated with wealth derived from land ownership. Ownership of some form of property (real or movable) by all citizens is strongly recommended by Nussbaum (2000) because absolute (monetary) value of property supports other forms of functionings, of which social empowerment is an important mention. Above arguments justify formal encouragement given to women and weaker classes, to acquire ownership (of land or real property) in developing countries like India.

² As per the decision in a court case of 1986 (Appeal No BCA/62/8) “The wife is still regarded as part of her husband’s property. That concept is underscored by the payment of dowry on marriage and on the refund of dowry on divorce.” (Cheka, 1996, p. 42)

³ “High-income countries are classified by the World Bank based on the gross national income per capita calculated using the World Bank Atlas method” (World Health Organisation, 2013). Following high income countries were included in this research: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Isle of Man, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

4.5. Family's wellbeing

4.5.1. Interpersonal relationship building

FGD participants discussed that ownership of property is important because physical property, especially home, preserves physical record of life events of many generations and is the memorabilia of experiences gathered together by a family. "Let's say that you have a holiday house and every year, for two generations, the whole family goes for two weeks to the beach holiday house ... that's important because it creates a place for your family ... which is different to inheritance and financial value" (Australia, FGD 3). This may deepen the understating of one's own family history and harness interpersonal relationships within the family thus improving the overall wellbeing of the family.

4.5.2. Security for future generations (bequest)

Ownership of property ensures financial security to the future generations that inherit the property. "May be that's why it (ownership of property) is so sentimental because you are not thinking just about you rather you are thinking about the next generation ..." (Chile, FGD 3). In Australian context, "people think that the house of their parents will come to the children and will be sold for money. Or the children will move into the house or one child will move in and sell the other half to the other child or something like that. So yes there is inheritance." (Australia, FGD 3).

4.5.3. Wealth effect of land and property on household's wellbeing

Participants argued that financial security from ownership of property increases confidence of spending on things which enhance the quality of life. Societal belief, as expressed by participants, is that strong financial foundations make possible planning and achieving larger goals in life. Wealth effect of property was acknowledged by the participant from Egypt – "if you have land, you can dream of a house. When you have one land, you can think of another. All this is a way to increase the quality of life. So you can hope and plan for the future and you have the tools to realize that and reach and achieve that goal one day. To be connected with hope and dream is very important. So this will be a way towards achieving something." (Egypt, FGD 1).

4.6. Power to take decisions on land matters

4.6.1. Control over one's physical environment

Multiple expressions were used by the participants to express the importance of having control over one's physical environment, particularly in the case of a residential property – "Personal environment that you are going to live in for your life you want to be able to modify that to your own requirements." (Australia, FGD 3). Ownership awards the opportunity to make physical improvements to the land or property thus providing tools to fulfil one's requirements, which may change over time.

4.6.2. Decision making power on the use of property

Within the legally permissible uses, landowners usually have the choice of uses to which the property can be put. An interesting example discussed by participants was in the context of subletting private property to AirBNB⁴ – "(as per a newspaper article in Australia) the court has said that if you are a tenant you cannot sub-lease your apartment to AirBNB" (Australia, FGD 4). Thus, ownership of property provides opportunities to the owners to use it in their best interests.

4.6.3. Involvement and influence on matters that can cause externalities

Landownership grants the opportunity to the landowners to

⁴"Founded in August of 2008 and based in San Francisco, California, Airbnb is a trusted community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodation around the world — online or from a mobile phone or tablet." (Source: <https://www.airbnb.com.au/about/about-us>, retrieved 11th Nov 2017)

participate in the decision-making process and influence decisions causing positive or negative externalities to the property. Landowners' power to challenge (in the court) the nature of project for which private land is compulsory acquired; and to rightfully participate in the decision-making process for development projects, particularly those involving landowner's property were a few important functionings that were discussed. Other examples discussed during FGD include a case from India where landowners could stop a flyover project from coming into their area.

In the context of compulsory acquisition, participant from China expressed the need for meaningful involvement of landowners early in the process because that would make them feel authoritative on land matters.

4.6.4. Power to exclude others

Ownership encapsulates the legal right to exclude outsider from using or entering the property. During the FGDs, participants mentioned about different types of exclusion that are practiced by owners while safeguarding their self-interests. At a small scale, "if it's your house versus if it's a shared house then you have no control on who comes in it." (Malaysia, FGD 3). In a different context, Rao and Rana (1997) found that on role of property rights in empowering rural women in India is important because it builds their capacity to challenge male oppression and domestic violence. In doing so, the power to exclude them physically and legally from accessing land or house shall be important.

At the community level, participants discussed the power of landowners to exclude or to challenge the public authority from acquiring land and stopping the project from entering their land. On similar lines of discussion, the rights of tribal communities may be mentioned who safeguard their natural habitation and exclude others from entering or modifying their environment.

4.6.5. Neighbourhood building and place making

Level of involvement and motivation of landowners towards improving and maintaining the neighbourhood is believed to be higher than that of non-owners who have temporary association with the place. Ownership also makes them feel more rightful or 'empowered' to participate in decisions and initiate actions which have long term impacts on the neighbourhood. This was explained by the participant from Chile, who said that: "... an owner will feel more interested in doing these things because they see it as a benefit in the long term." (Chile, FGD 2). An extreme example of behaviour of temporary settlers is observed in slums, as discussed by Chilean participant. Lack of security of tenure and uncertainty of the duration of association with the place of occupancy significantly reduces dwellers' investment, both physical and financial, in improving the house and the neighbourhood.

4.7. Political empowerment

An important capability identified by Nussbaum (2000) is to be "able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association." (p. 80). The role of landownership in political empowerment at various levels of politics were discussed by the participants, as summarized in this section.

In the case of compulsory acquisition of land, "the owner who owns the house but doesn't necessarily live in it will have less political leverage than someone who lives within a house and owns that house. Both will have more influence than a renter who just lives in that. So, in that very small setting, there is an influence." (Australia, FGD 2). Therefore, ownership gives stronger voice to the landowner who may then influence some major decisions at the societal level.

In stratified societies like India and Nepal, the role of landownership is crucial in political empowerment of the weaker segments, especially those belonging to lower castes, as discussed during the FGD. As

discussed earlier, landownership grants economic empowerment and autonomy, which in turn strengthens confidence to voice their opinion against dominant groups. In addition to that, landownership imparts freedom to express political opinion and extend support to political ideologies of any leader or party (ibid). For example, Dalits of Karanai village (Tamil Nadu, India) installed a life-size statue of political leader B R Ambedkar on a piece of land owned by them, to express their support to the political philosophies.

In tribal societies, the ability to safeguard and expand the territory is the demonstration of sincerity, which strengthens the voice of the landowner (or rather the land user given that land is jointly owned by the community) in the community, as mentioned by the participant from Africa: “Perhaps, you were too reckless or your father was too reckless and maybe he sold most of the land and in that case you lose some kind of political strength that would have come to you as a result of you owning or having access to too many lands.”

Political power may be derived from large landholdings, as discussed during FGD 5: “... if you are owning half of Melbourne, you can use it as the basis of telling the people “I am the son of this soil, I can promote your interest, I can support women in the community”, and your son might become the mayor or the governor or the regional (leader) of that locality.” The level of involvement of large landowners in the political decision making, for example developments on and around their land, is distinct. Perry and Wiewel, (2005) explain the case of United State and find that large universities with substantial landholdings have acted as a collaborator in urban development of the region.

Stilwell and Jordan, 2004 discuss the appropriateness of Henry George’s theory, which suggested strong correlation between landownership and wealth inequality, in the modern society and find that it is partially applicable in the rural and urban context. For example, in Australia farming land is concentrated in the hands of a few very wealthy corporations and individuals (Stilwell and Jordan, 2004). Concentration of land and wealth in turn wields political power or say on matters concerning land. In Indian context Joshi (1970) argues that the land reforms bestowed formidable power to medium landowners and big peasants who exercise “direct control over the economic system” and wielded “enormous political power, from the village base, to the top levels of the power structure”. Therefore, the influence of landownership may be observed at different levels in the political structure, depending upon the social, economic and political environment of the regions.

4.8. Personal comfort and convenience

4.8.1. Suitability of property and location for oneself

Participants expressed that in the process of selection of ownership property, with which one wishes to have long term association, a careful analysis of suitability of location and physical characteristics of the property is made. The choice of location is based on nearness to work, school, family and similar other factors of subjective importance, which if lost shall negatively affect the wellbeing. Accessibility is an important factor in large cities particularly if transport facilities are underdeveloped, for example in Mumbai.

4.8.2. Acquaintance with physical space and environment, developed over time

An important aspect of wellbeing was discussed in FGDs in relation to personal acquaintance developed over time with physical elements of habited space and its surrounding areas. Familiarity with the physical environment enhances wellbeing in multiple ways, as expressed by the participants – “when I live in a place for long time I definitely turn that place into a lived space which means that the social things and material things have interacted with each other. I can feel my way because I am so familiar with the atmosphere.” (China, FGD 4). Another participant added, “I suppose it is also like, in my local area I know where

everything is. So, if I need a doctor I know where the doctor is, if I need to catch public transport I know (where it is). So, all of those things are my territory so it makes my life easier because I know it.” (Australia, FGD 4)

Familiarity and acquaintance with physical space can be a very crucial for those who require special assistance in developing that in the first place, for example visually impaired. Since acquaintance is directly linked with the duration of time spent at a place, the role of ownership becomes important.

4.9. Psychological wellbeing

4.9.1. Feeling of psychological calmness

Many participants mentioned that ownership of property provides psychological calmness, comfort, and security, which may be an outcome arising from all above functionings put together – “As a person who has both owned and rented property, I think owning property increases my psychological comfort ...” (Australia, FGD 4).

4.9.2. Sense of achievement and proud

There is a sense of achievement in being able to own something as expensive as land or property: “It’s the Chilean dream to have their own house. It’s like the maximum achievement one can have ...” (Chile, FGD 3).

4.9.3. Dignity and self-respect

For some, ownership is “dignity thing as well. Its dignity as supposed to homelessness.” (Malaysia, FGD 3). In the opinion of another participant, “as soon as you own something, you can say that I am not homeless. Potentially is you are renting you can always be homeless as soon as you are kicked out of your home.” (Australia, FGD 3).

4.9.4. Intrinsic, extrinsic and contributory value

Another interesting discussion was around intrinsic, extrinsic and contributory value of property. Though the discussion was more on the philosophical definitions of value, participants developed an understanding of ‘intrinsic, extrinsic and contributory’ value of land, and the wellbeing brought along with it. In summary, ownership of property has many real as well as notional benefits that add to the psychological wellbeing of the owner.

5. Conclusion

In the context of land and property, functionings offered by ownership are extensive and this research identified fundamental functionings from within the set of subjectively valuable functionings that are generalizable at the societal level, across many countries. However, the extent and nature of these functionings will vary depending upon the socio-political and legislative treatment given to private property rights in each country.

The relationship of land ownership and wellbeing is identified explicitly in nine fundamental functionings discussed above, which include (i) *Secure means to basic ends*; (ii) *Self-identity*; (iii) *Social capital*; (iv) *Social equity*; (v) *Political empowerment*; (vi) *Power to take decisions on land matters*; (vii) *Family’s wellbeing*; (viii) *Personal comfort and convenience*; and (ix) *Psychological wellbeing*. These findings may be useful in developing policies on social, economic, political empowerment for the weaker segments of the society which may include tribal communities, women, and trans-genders.

In the context of compulsory purchase of land, these discussions shall be useful in developing understanding of profound losses of functionings associated with the loss of land. The existing compensation mechanism has negligible consideration for the loss of ‘functionings’, the impact of which on the wellbeing of affected landowners is devastating. In the light of discussions on the ‘functionings’ of landowners, acquisition of property would mean the acquisition of valuable

functionings of the landowner. Referring to the definition of fair compensation suggested by Rao et al. (2017), satisfactory reconstruction of all fundamental functionings is crucial.

Given the contemporary approach to compulsory purchase compensation, it is very ambitious to argue the case for compensation based on the characteristics of the person, rather than on the characteristics of the property. Referring to a case discussion in the United States Wyman (2007) explains that under the existing mechanism, the taking compensation is for the property and not the person. Basing the discussion on Sen's (1979) 'capability approach' this research argues that the taking compensation should neither be for the commodity nor for the person, and instead for the functionings of the person, generated by the land.

The empirical operationalization of these theoretical discussions on 'capability' requires further research (Anand et al., 2011; Basu and Lopez-Calva, 2011; Kuklys, 2005). In the context of measuring welfare with the use of 'capability' indicator, Sen (1979) expresses that "the problem of indexing the basic capability bundles is a serious one. It is, in many ways, a problem comparable with the indexing of primary good bundles in the context of Rawlsian equality." (Sen, 1979, p. 219). Findings from this paper identify fundamental functionings of landowners which could be useful in mapping the 'capability' of different units of the society, the smallest one being the individual landowner. Development of this theoretical framework should facilitate practical application in the future.

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