Background

Land reform and land tenure are once again high on the development agenda. Postsocialist countries in Asia and Europe have undergone radical land reforms over the past decade and a half, seeing a massive transfer of land rights from state and collective units to private actors. Countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America recognize customary land rights by local communities by issuing formal titles to them. Policy-makers in Latin America and South Asia introduce new legislation to strengthen the rights of tenants and improve the functioning of land rental markets. This renewed attention to land issues has caused the World Bank and European Union, among others, to issue new land policy statements.

The linkages between land reform and land tenure, on the other hand, have long been the subject of research. Agricultural economists have analyzed the effects of land tenure on agricultural and forestry practices (Godoy et al. 1998; Feder and Nishio 1999; Otsuka and Place 2001). Anthropologists and rural sociologists have examined the complex nature of local land tenure systems and their interplay with land use practices (Fortmann and Bruce 1988; Peters 1994). Much of this research has been centered on the individualization of rights, land registration, and tenure security in agriculture and agroforestry in Africa.

Current research on the linkages between land reforms, land tenure, and land use advances significantly beyond the earlier focus. Agricultural economists now look into the effects of protected areas and community land titling on land use (e.g., Deininger and Minten 2002). Social anthropologists and rural sociologists examine land relations in not only Africa but also Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia (van Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999; Hann 2003). Geographers and other spatial analysts analyze land reform and land tenure as a factor driving broader land use change (Nelson et al. 2001; Walker et al. 2002). Policy researchers examine the political economy of land registration in a variety of contexts (Ho and Spoor forthcoming).

Therefore, land reform and land tenure figure prominently not only in development policy but also in development research. In addition, the research has significantly moved beyond the debate about land registration and tenure security in agriculture and agroforestry in the 1980s and early 1990s. Research on the linkages between land reforms, land tenure, and land use
now involves more disciplines and takes place in a broader variety of geographical contexts than twenty years ago. This confluence of research offers the opportunity for a coordinated assessment. Such an assessment will make a significant contribution to knowledge about the effects of land reforms and associated dynamics in land tenure and land use. It will also generate important insights for the design of land policies that improve the productivity and sustainability of land use.

**Concept**
The special journal issue seeks to synthesize state-of-the-art knowledge about the linkages between land reform, land tenure, and land use. It will bring together insights from multiple disciplines, including agricultural economics, development studies, geography, rural sociology, and social anthropology. The issue will include a number of cutting-edge empirical studies from these disciplines on the linkages between land reforms, land tenure, and land use in a variety of settings in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. These will be complemented by review-type articles written by senior scholars.

**Competition in the market place**
There is a boom of publications on land reform, on land tenure, and on land use. Yet there is no publication yet that brings together these issues in a coordinated assessment involving multiple disciplines and studies from a broad variety of geographical settings. The proposed special issue will be the first to gather analyses by anthropologists, development researchers, economists, geographers, and sociologists on the linkages between land reform, land tenure, and land use.

Anthropologists and rural sociologists have produced several new volumes on land tenure in recent years. The volume edited by Juul and Lund (2002) examines the ambiguity of land rights in Africa. The volume edited by van Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann (1999) investigates the relations between land rights and economic development in Southeast Asia and Oceania. The two volumes edited by Hann (2002, 2003) situate property relations in the broader agrarian transformations of postsocialist Europe. The proposed special issue will include key insights and recent findings from these works, as those contribute to knowledge about the linkages between land reform, land rights, and land use.

The effects of land tenure on land use have long been a subject of research in agricultural economics. Most of the research has been published in the form of individual articles. An exception is the recent compilation by Otsuka and Place (2001), which summarizes key insights from a series of empirical studies on agriculture and agro-forestry in Africa and Asia. The proposed special issue will include cutting-edge research in agricultural economics. In contrast, it will not take in more macro-oriented analyses of land reform in agricultural economics (e.g., Byres 2004, Childress 2002, Swinnen et al. 1997, de Janvry et al. 2001). The macro orientation sets these analyses apart from the focus of the special issue on understanding the linkages between land reform, land rights, and land use.

The special issue will also integrate recent advances in the emerging field of land change science. The new insights gained by the way of improved analytical approaches and through better data availability have been documented in a number of special issues, including the ones edited by Veldkamp and Lambin (2001), Barbier (2001), Haberl et al. (2001), Nelson (2002), Veldkamp (2004), Walker (2004), and Verburg and Veldkamp (2005). None of these issues, however, has included direct reference to land reforms.

Policy researchers in development studies have also reacted to the new emphasis on land policy. A forthcoming special issue edited by Ho and Spoor deals with the political economy of land registration. Another special issue on property rights is in the process of preparation
under the leadership of Benjaminsen and colleagues. These special issues are very complementary to the proposed one, but they have a different thematic focuses and do not seek the inclusion of multiple academic disciplines to the degree this issue will.

**Contributions**
The special issue will have a brief introduction explaining its origins and presenting short summaries of the individual articles.

**Review-type articles** will discuss research on the linkages between land reforms, land tenure, and land use from different perspectives. The following authors have been invited to author such articles:

- John Bruce on changing donor policies on land reform and land tenure
- Frank Place on research in agricultural economics
- Pauline Peters on research in social anthropology
- Gerald C. Nelson on research in land change science

The remaining articles will be cutting-edge empirical studies on the linkages between land reform, land tenure, and land use. The papers will be recruited through an open call and come from the disciplines referred to above. In addition, they will examine the linkages in a variety of geographical settings, including postsocialist and postcolonial contexts and countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

**Publication process**
The preparation of the special issue will take three steps. The first step will be the recruitment of cutting-edge empirical papers. Potential authors are invited to submit paper proposals to Thomas Sikor (thomas.sikor@rz.hu-berlin.de) or Daniel Müller (d.mueller@rz.hu-berlin.de) by November 30, 2005. The proposals should have a length of between 1,000 and 2,000 words, state the major research questions and findings, and briefly summarize the empirical setting, method, and results of the underlying study. Sikor and Müller will inform authors about the acceptance of the paper proposals by December 20, 2005. They will also use the accepted paper proposals to approach the editors of suitable journals about their interest in the proposed special issue.

The second step will take the form of a workshop in Berlin on May 25-27, 2006. All authors will be invited to participate in the workshop together with John Bruce, Frank Place, Pauline Peters and Gerald C. Nelson. The workshop will serve the discussion of the review-type articles and empirical papers, which will be circulated four weeks in advance. The authors will be given some time after the workshop to revise their papers.

As a third step, all papers will undergo individual review in the second half of 2006. The set of revised manuscripts will be submitted to the journal editor at the end of 2006.

**Important deadlines:**

- 30 November 2005 Submission of paper proposals to Sikor/Müller
- 20 December 2005 Sikor/Müller invite app. 15 authors to prepare full papers
- 21 April 2006 Authors submit full papers to Sikor/Müller
- 25-27 May 2006 Workshop in Berlin

**References**
Childress, M.D. (ed.), 2002. Policy Questions for a Second Decade of Rural Change in Central/Eastern Europe