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Executive Summary

The political economy aspects of urban agriculture (UA), particularly struggles over access to resources such as land and water, have been highlighted since the earliest studies of UA, but they are only beginning to receive adequate attention from researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. This document is an extensive study of land struggles and negotiations for urban agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. The text deals with the issue at multiple scales, exploring both the daily negotiations amongst farmers and between farmers and other land users (authorized or unauthorized), and land issues at the policy and planning levels where access to land is part of the urban struggle over space.

The purpose of the report is three-fold:

1. To review existing studies to collate scattered information on access to land for UA
2. To share the results of particular studies in Accra and the peri-urban area of Accra on conflict and cooperation around land resources
3. To review and analyze policy and make recommendations based on the literature review and research findings.

The report is designed to appeal to a wide audience including academics, researchers, development practitioners, municipal authorities and policy-makers. It is therefore divided into three discrete but inter-related parts. Although reviewing the entire document will provide the richest detail possible, each part is written in such a way that readers can elect to focus on one of them in particular.

Part A is a literature review. It explores a premise common in rural land tenure literature which argues that rights in land are rights through people. Part A examines urban land tenure / management literature from housing studies, and urban and peri-urban agriculture studies to uncover the myriad of social relations and networks which mediate access to land. In so doing it brings together scattered evidence from studies throughout sub-Saharan Africa. This perspective underscores new ways to think about access to land for UA: it uncovers social norms and rules regarding urban land tenure that can be harnessed by municipal authorities. It also suggests that policy-makers may need to only deal with certain sets of rights for urban farmers.

Part B discusses research findings from two studies in Ghana. The study of intra-urban agriculture tests the hypothesis that rights in land are rights through people by exploring tenure relationships in four different property regimes in Accra. The second study looks at tenure relationships in a peri-urban community outside of Accra. The findings uncover the specific types of relationships that are significant in this city. While tenure relationships are critical for accessing land at all the sites, the types of relationships, the relative security of farmers, their willingness to participate in specific interventions and their tenure-building practices all vary. This suggests the need for flexible interventions and creative policy to address multiple needs and concerns of urban farmers, and other land users and owners.

Part C focuses on policy options and recommendations from the Accra study. It explores plans and recommendations from other cities and shares the reactions of both farmers and government / municipal agencies in Accra to an array of policy options. Part C again reinforces the need for flexibility and creativity in order to assure that municipal authorities can regulate and service urban agriculture, so that the needs and concerns of farmers in different property regimes are accounted for. While it does not advocate a single approach, it encourages researchers and policy-makers to first explore the tenure relationships active in their cities and the types of rights farmers require, and then build flexible policies that harness pre-existing social norms to protect these rights.
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Part A: Literature Review
1. Introduction

While many UA studies identify access to land as a critical constraint for urban farmers, and women farmers in particular, few studies have attempted to explore the processes and practices that farmers engage in to access land for urban agriculture. In order to create effective and equitable policies, UA practitioners need to look at the interactions between actors to identify where, when and how individuals and groups successfully access urban land for agricultural purposes. The purpose of this study is to analyse the practices and processes (both formal and informal) by which individuals and groups access and control land for urban agriculture (UA).

In order to meet the needs of a wide audience, which may include academics, practitioners and policy-makers, the report for this study has been divided into three discrete but inter-related parts. Part A reviews studies of urban agriculture and urban land tenure/urban land management (primarily in the urban housing literature), to explore how cultivators access land for urban and peri-urban agriculture in a number of (primarily) African cities. Part B presents findings from research in Accra and its peri-urban area, engaging with the literature in Part A. Analysis of the research findings explores the resource relations of individuals, households, groups, communities, institutions and governments negotiating access to, and control over land. Part C explores a variety of policy options and planning activities in Africa and other cities and analyzes them using the findings from Part A and Part B.

The three parts of this report examine the resource relations of urban and peri-urban farmers in order to engage in discussions of policy and planning for access to land for UA. What appears at the micro-scale as a struggle over land, translates at a macro scale to a struggle over space and the meanings of a ‘city’. Understanding how micro-level struggles over land fit into macro-level struggles over space can lead to more equitable and efficient policies and planning directives.
State and municipal authorities can strategically intervene and harness locally specific forms of governance between farmers at various sites. In order to think through macro-level policy decisions in terms of micro experiences of policy in practice, it is important to:

• move beyond a study of norms and rule statements, and reflect on the lived experiences of negotiation, collaboration and conflict and,

• understand how individuals and groups of producers test the boundaries and limits of their relationships and agreements with land owners.

This report therefore engages in an analysis of the social relations of production in intra-urban and peri-urban farming, the practices of tenure building and the policy and planning efforts in cities throughout the world, focusing primarily on experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa. Analysis for this report draws upon a literature review, empirical evidence from research in the peri-urban area of Accra (Sept. 1999 - March 2000 and Nov. 2000), and from research among intra-urban farmers in Accra (June 2001 - Sept. 2001). The report includes text, charts and illustrative diagrams to explain the interactions between actors and the dynamics of land rights for UA.

Increasingly, scholars and practitioners are arguing that intra-urban and peri-urban agriculture need to be examined separately under the umbrella of UA so as to uncover the unique opportunities and constraints of these different spaces (Ellis and Sumberg 1998, Flynn-Dapaah 2001, Mbiba 2001). As Ellis and Sumberg (1998: 215) argue in their critique of the broad focus of urban agriculture literature, “peri-urban cultivation or grazing [should be] distinguished from urban, since there does exist a transitional zone round many cities, with important interchanges and market interdependencies between the peri-urban zone and both the urban economy and the rural economy.”

Likewise, Mbiba’s (2001) overview of the political economy of urban agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa devotes separate sections to the discussions of intra-urban land issues and peri-urban land
issues. Urban and peri-urban agriculture and land struggles are treated separately in this report because in spatial, social and political terms they are distinct spaces.

2. Conceptualizing Land Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa

A recent body of literature focusing primarily on rural and peri-urban areas in Sub-Saharan Africa has directly or indirectly challenged the policy environment around privatization of tenure and the debates about tenure security. These studies reveal that proponents of title registration fail to recognize that rights in land cannot be captured solely by looking at title documents because rights in land are rights through people (Adamo 1999; Berry 1989, 1993, 1997; Carney and Watts 1990; Flynn-Dapaah 2001; Haugerud 1989; Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997; Leach 1994; Mackenzie 1991, 1994, 1998; D. Moore 1993, 1996; SF Moore 1986; Okoth-Ogendo 1989; Schroeder 1999, Watts 1993). According to Okoth-Ogendo a narrow focus on the concept of ‘ownership’ in African land tenure studies does not capture the complexity of land rights in Sub-Saharan Africa. He argues that inquiry must “go beyond man-land [sic] issues which the doctrine of ownership implies, to encompass man-man [sic] relations” (Okoth-Ogendo 1989: 9). The above-mentioned studies reveal that land rights are not isolated from the everyday practices and negotiations over identity, labour, control of harvest, type of crops, household obligations, money and food. Rather, they are interrelated to such an extent that struggles over land are often played out at multiple sites, hidden from discussion which focuses narrowly on the concepts of ownership or even usufruct rights. In other words, access to land is about social and political relationships between actors. The above studies uncover the highly complex and fluid nature of resource struggles through in-depth analyses of practices and relationships.
Land Rights and Resource Relations in Urban and Peri-Urban Areas

Despite remarkable differences in urban land uses and conflicts, as well as planning and development mentalities, there is little evidence to suggest that social and political relations are not critical sites of negotiation and conflict in urban land and space struggles. To establish a framework for studying urban land tenure and property rights in developing countries, Geoffrey Payne (1997: 3) asserts that “[r]ights to land and property exist within a regime of rights in general. The key factor in any system of land tenure and property rights is therefore the relationship of an individual to the group, and of different groups to each other and the state, and their collective impact on land.”

The impetus for Payne’s study (and the majority of studies on urban land tenure and property rights) is to address the issue of housing and development - not urban agriculture. Nonetheless, in view of the evidence from peri-urban and rural resource relations, it is likely that his assertion equally applies to access to land for UA. While in some cases kinship or marriage ties might be less significant, other social networks, memberships, associations and entitlements are critical for successfully accessing land for urban farming. Based on research in Kampala, Uganda, Maxwell (1996: 182) suggests that in order to understand the means of accessing land, researchers must ask, “What are the social relations that permit and protect informal urban land use?” Even in cases where claims are made using customary laws, there is a need to explore how different people use these customary claims and with what effect. By identifying the actors engaging in negotiations over land for urban farming and exploring the relationships within and between actor categories, this study will engage policy-makers in questions about the social and political relationships that mediate formal and informal access to land for urban agriculture.
3. Access to Land for Urban and Peri-Urban Farming: Findings from Sub-Saharan Africa

This section of the paper reviews the literature on urban and peri-urban land struggles and negotiations to identify key tenure relationships and categories of actors who participate in negotiations over land in urban and peri-urban areas. The urban agriculture and urban land tenure/management literature have identified access to land and tenure security as key constraints and have uncovered some of the modes of access and transfer of land in the formal and informal land markets such as inheritance, purchase, lease, borrowing, squatting etc. However, only a few studies include an in-depth analysis of tenure and access relations - the political and social relationships that mediate access to land in urban and peri-urban areas through one of the above modes of transfer and access. At the same time, many studies have noted that social relationships, including social institutions (marriage, kinship, household, ethnicity), and memberships in formal and informal networks and groups (neighbourhood associations, labour pools, farmer’s associations, churches and employment unions), are critical factors in determining how, when and where people access land (Adamo 1999; Dennery 1996; Freeman 1991; Kalabamu 2000; Kasanga 1996; Linares 1996; Mabogunje 1992; Maxwell 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Mbiba 1995; Mianda 1996; Obosu-Mensah 1999 Omomah 2000). Several of these authors show the way in which new or existing relationships are fortified through practices that allow farmers to access land while providing a valuable service to the land holders. Use-rights arrangements serve the interests of land holders by providing additional protection of their holdings through continuous cultivation rather than leaving the plot idle and open to contestation and other uninvited uses (Adamo 1999; Bourque 2000; Maxwell 1995a, 1996). A few studies reveal that political relationships with members of ruling national parties or with local authorities mediate access to urban land (Freeman 1991; Larbi 1996; Mbiba 1994, Njambi 2001; Smith 2000; Streiffeler 1999). Mbiba (1994: 201), for example, asserts that
elected officials in Harare have used their powers to allocate urban lands to farmers as leverage for votes. Maxwell (1995a) notes that Resistance Councils (RC) in Kampala often corroborate the claims of user-occupiers and in a small number of cases RCs have allocated unoccupied lands to certain ‘deserving’ individuals. Freeman (1991: 73) cites an example whereby a member of the ruling party in Kenya held a six hectare farm in Nairobi, a very large farm by urban standards. Many of the social and political relations are only mentioned in passing or described briefly in much of the literature cited above. Nonetheless, it is striking to note the number of instances where these political and social relationships have been uncovered in intra-urban and peri-urban land struggles/negotiations.

**Formal Land Markets**

Before exploring informal access to land and the social relations that facilitate informal access to land, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the formal land markets. While some cities have formal land delivery systems, it has been noted in several instances that these are closed to agricultural uses or they are not appropriately efficient or cost effective for urban producers (Djabatey 1998; Kironde 1995; Mbiba 1995; Maxwell 1995a, 1996). Kironde (1995: 79-80) argues that formal land delivery in Tanzania is inconsistent and ad hoc with various officials within the Ministry, urban councils and even politicians handling plot allocation. Djabatey (1998: 110) demonstrates the complications of the land delivery system in Accra, which discourages all land users and especially farmers. The process for obtaining the title shuffles papers back and forth between national offices and municipal offices including

- Town and Country Planning Department
- Land Department
- Accra Metropolitan Assembly where it is passed between
  - the Senior Building Inspector
  - the Building Inspector
As Djabatey (Ibid: 111) points out, “these various agencies operate under different ministries and given the absence of any coordinating process, the total period of time to perfect land title is inordinately long.” He cites a study from the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi which claims the process can take up to four years (Ibid 111). Mbiba (1995) describes the formal system of cooperative registration in Harare for urban cultivators but notes that very few farmers, especially female farmers, access land through the city council. Rather, he claims (1995: 40), “[i]nformal networks were used to coordinate and regulate plot sizes and entry into the sector within any given locality.” (see also Smith 2000). He accordingly asserts that more research is required into the internal dynamics of plot access and the gate-keeping relationships between long-standing cultivators in Harare.

**Land Negotiations and Tenure Relationships in Intra-Urban Agriculture**

This section explores the findings of in-depth studies from cities in Kenya (Dennery 1996; Freeman 1991), Tanzania (Kironde 1995), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Mianda 1996), Kampala (Maxwell 1995a, 1995b, 1996), Zimbabwe (Mbiba 1995; Smith 2000) Ghana (Obosu-Mensah 1999) and Senegal (Linares 1996). In their diversity these texts capture some of the complexity of urban land tenure relations by uncovering a myriad of circumstances of negotiation and cooperation among farmers and between farmers and other actor categories. Evidence from Tanzania (Kironde 1995; Briggs and Mwamfupe 2000) also uncover the existence of an informal land market around Dar es Salaam where land is officially owned by the state. This land market has developed complete with land agents, however it is primarily attracting speculators and investors in the peri-urban area.
Details from studies of access to land for urban agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa reveal that social institutions, friendships, customary norms, informal networks and agreements of mutual benefit are particularly important.

Social institutions (kinship, conjugal ties, customary norms and ethnicity) as well as friendships between neighbours and work colleagues provide farmers with the means to access land through inheritance, borrowing, leasing and squatting. Social relations are critical for accessing land including public open space land where there is no known owner. Freeman (1993: 7) asserts that there was “no discernible economic, social or political system for the organized allocation of urban open space to cultivators other than mutual recognition of prior claims by ‘established’ urban farmers to plots of vacant ground they have previously worked.” However, his own surprise at female farmers’ long-standing claims to lands in Nairobi’s open spaces and his speculation (Freeman 1991) of a modern urban customary usufruct in Nairobi, casts doubt on this assertion. This suggests rather that some sort of social system does exist in informal urban land negotiations. Furthermore, based on findings from an in-depth qualitative study in Nairobi, Dennery (1996: 194) asserts that there is nothing arbitrary about the allocation and distribution of public open space plots in Nairobi. She claims (1996: 194) “[w]ho one knows becomes crucial to obtaining a plot. Individuals who do not have the appropriate social ties are shut out of food production.” She acknowledges that knowledge networks among long-standing producers, kinship and ethnic ties, and friendships among producers are the means through which new farmers, and current farmers who wish to increase their holdings, are able to access new lands.

Kironde’s (1995: 93) study of the land markets in Tanzania which focuses on both building and shamba land reveals that 24% of occupants inherited their lands while a further 14% were allocated lands by a relative or friend. He also notes that older residents, long-term migrants and
those born in Dar es Salaam were at a greater advantage compared to recent migrants. This suggests that a social system does exist which mediates access to knowledge and resources necessary for urban agriculture (see also Maxwell 1995b for similar evidence from Kampala). Maxwell (1995a: 280) even cites individuals who claimed to have inherited their squatter’s rights. Likewise, de Zeeuw et al. (2000) note that inheritance from relatives is an important way in which cultivators in cities access land. Mianda’s (1996) study on gender dimensions of land access for farming in Kinshasa shows that women negotiate the conjugal contract with their husbands in order to manipulate norms and obligations which allow them to access land and control production and proceeds from urban farms.

There is also speculation and evidence to indicate the principals of customary tenure regimes are translated into the urban environment (Freeman 1991; McAuslan 1998). McAuslan (1998: 31), for example, cites the research of van Westen in Bamako, Mali, where he observed that informal land access in spontaneous settlements adhered to customary principals which included seeking permission from the appropriate person in the community to assure traditional use-rights. McAuslan (1998: 31) argues “in most countries, since researchers have not investigated the position, policy-makers are groping in the dark as to what to do, and often decline to recognize the continued presence and vitality of customary law.”

It is telling that Obosu-Mensah (1999) devotes an entire chapter of his book to the effects of social networks on UA. He describes, for example, how migrants to the city must develop social networks in order to begin farming because this is the only way in which they can access necessary resources such as land. He compares his findings with Curtis’ (1995) study of male migrant workers in Nairobi who draw on social networks that cross the boundaries of the city and their rural homes so as to establish themselves in the city (in Obosu-Mensah 1999: 154). Obosu-Mensah argues in
the chapter on social networks that pre-existing relationships are important for new farmers to become involved in UA, and that while willing to create cooperatives, cultivators prefer to establish them around their pre-existing social networks because of the importance of establishing trust in these groups (154-155). His survey found that “75.5 percent of respondents preferred to form cooperative organizations with people they know: their current social network” (Ibid: 171). The characteristics of the social networks uncovered by Obosu-Mensah underscore the significance of kin, ethnicity, proximity (neighbours), and similar socio-economic background. Pre-existing relationships which integrate migrants into new urban social networks facilitate entry into the informal sector, including urban agriculture (Ibid: 161). Moreover he points to the moral obligations inherent in social networks of urban cultivators which require members to assist new arrivals, just as they were assisted when they arrived. Social exchange reinforces social solidarity leading to further assistance when shortages or other problems present themselves.

Informal networks and affiliations and political ties are also important mediators in urban land negotiations. Maxwell’s findings (1995a: 274, 1996: 87) reveal that the informal land market which deals in use-rights in Kampala exists primarily between users, not between owners and users. His findings highlight some of the cooperation that exists between users. Mbiba (1995) draws attention as well to critical informal relationships that are developed through affiliations outside of cultivation, but nevertheless mediate access to land. He cites in particular an example of a male farmer leasing farm land in the legal zone of Harare from a female landlord. The farmer is a member of the same Christian sect as the landlord who leases land to unemployed members of her church. Even for informally accessed land in the case of Kampala, the Resistance Councils are often key actors in land negotiations, acting as witnesses of the transaction. Maxwell (1995a, 1996) also notes a few cases where female farmers with informal access to land actively protect each other’s
claims; however, he does not provide any elaboration on how this is done.

It is likely that land rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, as in other countries, are locally mediated and governed by the interplay of informal rules and formal legal rules. This type of arrangement is demonstrated by Razzaz (1998) in Jordan where people in new suburban areas govern themselves and mediate conflicts by playing off the ambiguities of both systems. At the same time he points to the significance of social networks, through kin or the establishment place-of-origin based neighbourhoods. Key figures in the community helped to forge relationships or establish good reputations which allowed new arrivals to purchase land. According to Razzaz (Ibid: 85) “[a]n approach that could be described as legal centralism, which assumes that having no legal rights means having no rights at all, would fail miserably to explain how land is transacted and disputes resolved.” However, the same is also true for similar assumptions concerning informal rights and norms. This could certainly be the case in Ghana where, as Obosu-Mensah (1999) shows, a mixed-bag of enabling and discouraging legislation and lax enforcement allows cultivators to access some formal powers and interventions. The same may also be true in the cases of Harare where official opinion, enforcement of legislation and the laws themselves are inconsistent (see Mbiba 1994, 1995, 2000). Mbiba (2000: 296) argues that “[p]olitical decisions regarding urban agriculture have been erratic, contradictory and at variance with legal regimes and written policies.” It is likely that this ambiguity is the means through which cultivators manipulate formal and informal rules to access land.

While evidence is still sparse, there are also circumstances whereby employees are able to access land through their employers and company land endowments have been opened to the public for restricted agricultural purposes. Njambi (2001) cites, for example, the arrangement made between employees of the Kenya Railways. This parastatal allows workers to farm land within the
station and residential areas at a certain distance from the railway line. Since the late 1980s Kenya Railways has also been accepting applications from the public requesting land for urban agriculture. Responding to petitions from the public for farm lands, the management developed a lease process for farm lands in the form of cultivation agreements that must be renewed on an annual basis. A token fee, the amount depending on the quality of the land, is charged. According to Njambi (2001) the process is in affect on all railway lands in Kenya - urban, peri-urban and rural.

Findings from several studies have pointed to some interesting relationships of mutual interest that have developed between urban landholders or caretakers and cultivators. These arrangements allow cultivators to access land on the one hand while protecting the landholder’s claim to that contested space by ensuring that it is in continuous use and appears to be occupied. For example, Maxwell (1995a, 1996) found that the process of borrowing in Kampala followed a patron-client pattern, whereby borrowing was a part of broader strategies on the part of landholders to protect undeveloped land held for building or speculation from squatters who would make improvements to the land. Land holders fear that upon eviction these squatters will need to be compensated for the improvements. Figure 1 is a redrawing of Maxwell’s explanatory figure.

Figure 1. Owner-Borrower-Caretaker Model

Source: Maxwell 1996: 191
In many cases the landholder assigns a relative as a caretaker on the land. The caretaker then enters into an agreement with a cultivator to ensure that the land is kept under cultivation.

Interviewees did not cite ethnicity as a major factor; however, Maxwell notes that with few exceptions both parties in the patron-client relationship were of the same ethnicity. Maxwell does not mention much about the relationship between caretakers and cultivators. However, based on the findings discussed above, some sort of personal ties either through family, friends or other producers helped to facilitate the agreement between the cultivator and the caretaker, especially since trust is critical in this case. A nominal rent is often required in cash or kind; however, in some circumstances no fixed sum or amount of the produce is demanded. Cultivators merely provide gifts of produce to the caretaker after the harvest. The role that cultivators can play in protecting land that is set aside for other uses has been suggested as a policy option that could be formalized by urban authorities. Bourque (2000: 132) suggests that urban authorities can provide protected use rights to cultivators who guard the city against urban sprawl as the cultivator provides the “on-site enforcement against unofficial settlement.”

This example underscores that the continuous use of land is critical to ensure ongoing rights to land and to protect one’s claims from other land-seekers looking for housing land or farm lands. Informants in Maxwell’s (1995a) study assert the importance of ensuring that they keep lands under continuous cultivation, especially when they are involved in patron-client relationships. This is also the case when use-rights are based on prior occupancy recognized by the local authorities. Without demonstrating continuous occupation of the land, the user becomes vulnerable to other claims of prior occupancy on that land. Given that urban lands are highly contested, the continuous use of land has become a critical strategy for both cultivators and land holders. Linares (1995: 113) highlights cases in Ziguinchor, Senegal where land is acquired for housing but there is a delay in developing
buildings on this land. Individuals who acquire this land often grow vegetables, maize or groundnuts on this land in order to assert their claim. On the other hand, Mbiba (1995: 106) cites an example whereby a female farmer who only joins her husband in Harare for the dry season lost land she had been cultivating because of her absence. She claimed that since she had been away she was unable to stake her claim. It is these very dynamics that force many farmers to keep land under continuous cultivation regardless of the effects on the soils and the output as these risks are not as great as losing the land (Maxwell 1995a: 292).

The evidence from studies of intra-urban farming indicates that social and political relationships are critical factors that mediate access to land through a number of mechanisms including inheritance, borrowing, lease and squatting. The examples that have been discussed in this section suggest that research into the relationships between actors that facilitate access to urban land for farming needs to be explored in greater depth to allow for a study which captures tenure relationships in detail.

*Land Negotiations and Tenure Relationships in Peri-Urban Agriculture*

Although fewer studies have explicitly explored the dynamics of peri-urban agriculture, there are several studies which have examined the experiences of farmers in peri-urban areas. Unlike the literature on intra-urban farming, these studies focus explicitly (often exclusively) on land struggles, land access and land markets (Adamo 1999; Berry 1997; Briggs and Mwamfupe 2001; Flynn-Dapaah 2001; Kasanga et al. 1996; Maxwell et al. 1998; Roth et al. 1995). They therefore provide rich details and conceptual lessons for the study of land access. Of these studies, four (Adamo 1999; Flynn-Dapaah 2001; Kasanga et al. 1996 and Maxwell et al. 1998) draw evidence from research in the peri-urban area of Accra, Ghana. Evidence from the other studies are drawn from research in Kumasi, Ghana (Berry 1997); Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (Briggs and Mwamfupe 2001) and Banjul,
The studies from the peri-urban area of Accra, each focusing on different communities in the Ga District and Tema District, highlight the diversity of experiences in the peri-urban area of Accra and point to the unique circumstances of peri-urban land struggles as they are situated within the context of urban encroachment, compulsory acquisition of lands, and the social and economic impacts of structural adjustment in Ghana. While the study from the peri-urban area of Dar es Salaam focuses more on the development of a market for investment in land rather than agriculture, it provides details of the workings of an informal land market complete with land agents that arrange transactions.

Adamo (1999) and Berry (1997) lay important conceptual groundwork for exploring access to land and the social relations that mediate access to land by providing rich details of how people invest in social institutions, formal networks and informal relations. Drawing on field research carried out with tomato farmers in the peri-urban area of Kumasi, Ghana, Berry (1997: 1228) argues that it is not social institutions in themselves that allow for farmers to access resources, rather it is their ability to participate as members in these social institutions which mediates access to land. She claims that people should conceptualize social institutions not as structures but rather, as “constellations of social interactions within which people move, acquire and exchange ideas and resources, and negotiate the terms of production, authority and obligations.” In the stool land system of Ghana where citizens of a stool (land holding group) are entitled to the most favourable rights to land, Berry shares evidence of migrants (‘strangers’) drawing on the fluidity of the categories of ‘citizen’ and ‘stranger’ to contest their position in the community and therefore their rights to land (1997: 1235). Based on her research she suggests that far from seeing ambiguity in the categories of access as a hindrance, farmers coping with the economic and social uncertainty of the period of structural adjustment in fact rely on the flexibility and negotiability of social institutions, such as
kinship, ethnicity, custom, household and community in order to negotiate and re-negotiate rights to land.

While Adamo (1999) uncovered similar dynamics in the peri-urban area of Accra, particularly among female market gardeners contesting customary norms, in Kakasunanka she draws attention in particular to the ways in which women invest in formal organizations and friendships to access lands and protect their land claims. Since the land in Kakasunanka has been acquired by the state and allocated to the nearby military base, the stool system only operates among older residents with pre-existing claims to land. Recent migrants are unable to acquire land through customary stranger usufruct. New lands must be rented from individual soldiers, who were granted usufructuary rights to irrigated lands at the military base, or borrowed from older farmers. Adamo shows the multiple ways in which female market gardeners work the ambiguities of legal pluralism in Kakasunanka to facilitate multiple channels of access to irrigated farm lands from the military base and other plots of unused land. According to Adamo (1999: 137), “the plurality of legal structures in the peri-urban area of Accra has created new opportunities for women and men to negotiate rights to land through participation in a variety of social institutions (marriage, kinship, formal women’s groups) and informal networks, and through market-based transactions.” Women participated in the local chapter of the 31st December Women’s Movement which leased 60 acres of irrigated lands from the military base at a significantly lower (and uniform) rate than individual farmers were obtaining from soldiers. Through membership in the women’s group, female farmers were able to rent irrigated plots at a better rate. The women’s group also reserved a small portion of the land for a communal onion farm where members who contributed labour could share in the proceeds and subsidize the rental costs of their individual plots. Women also drew upon their relationships with fellow church members and neighbours, and developed ‘special friendships’ to
access labour and land for their market gardening. Adamo also cites several cases of ‘special friendships’ between older widows in the village with large land holdings and younger women with diminished access to land. The younger woman accesses a small portion of the widow’s farm (often borrowed rather than rented) for seasonal farming. According to Adamo (1999: 152), “these social relationships are mutually advantageous in that such land transfers enable elderly women to retain rights to household stool lands after their husbands’ deaths while providing less-securely tenured women new channels of access to stool lands in Kakasunanka.” The young female farmers protect widows’ rights to land by keeping it under seasonal cultivation or continuous use in order to ensure that the lands were not reclaimed by the chief of the Gbetseli stool who claims to be the true customary ‘owner’ of these lands. Adamo’s study reveals that access to land requires investment in social relations.

Maxwell et al. (1998) explore one particularly compelling example of land access in Abokobi, a community in the Ga District, located in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). The Presbyterian Church of Ghana holds title documents to the land, as it was the former site of the Basil Mission. An agricultural project started by the church in 1974 protects the ‘congregation lands’ for agricultural purposes. Formerly, access to land was restricted to Presbyterians who were members of the village. However, in recent years land for housing has been opened to all members of the community, and non-Christians and outsiders can rent farm lands. Five acre plots have been demarcated and a nominal rent is charged. Although the land is rented annually the lease is renewable and farmers often continue to rent the land until leaving by their own choice. Under the agreement with the local church board, farmers are restricted to annual crops and the church owns any improvements made to the land. The protected lands in Abokobi stand in marked contrast to neighbouring communities where farmers have seen their plots sold by elders and chiefs to outside
interests. In these cases the farmers receive no material benefits.

Exploring the land markets in the GAMA, Kasanga et al. examined the conflicts and practices in three communities in the Ga District where urban encroachment, transformation of land to non-agricultural purposes and/or the state’s compulsory acquisition of lands was marking these areas as highly contested spaces. They draw attention to the concept of bundling of rights, arguing that it is better to conceive of land markets as transactions in rights - not transactions in land. They define land rights as “a generally recognized and community sanctioned entitlement to undertake specific actions to enjoy the benefits that flow from the use of land” (1996: 54). Based on this idea they are able to explain why relationships with the community or the stool influence prices, conditions and opportunities for developing land in specific ways. For example, Gbawe is a community where the chief and elders have developed a reliable system for the land market that cooperates with the District Assembly and national authorities, including the Land Registry and the Regional Lands Commissioner. Outsiders can petition the chief on weekends and might be required to make several visits or wait long hours before securing a plot of land. On the other hand, citizens of the Gbawe stool and ‘strangers’ residing in the community do not follow the same process and are often granted several plots of land. According to Kasanga et al. (1996: 55), “Gbawe residents base their petition on the premise that they are already entitled to land. While the authors do not differentiate between the rights bundles of citizens and strangers (both insiders in the community), evidence from other studies in the Ga District show an internal differentiation within communities based on gender, ethnicity, and class (see Flynn-Dapaah 2001). In Gbawe, outsiders who secure a plot of land have the right to sell such a plot; however, insiders must petition the stool for that right prior to the sale. Table 1, reproduced from Kasanga et al., depicts an example of bundling of rights. As Kasanga et al. indicate, this list is not exhaustive, nor uniform for all rights transactions. For
example a business may be sold rights to land that are paid in cash, in materials, lobby support for the community, or improvements to infrastructure. The authors use this conceptualization to show the way in which a single parcel land can be conceptualized as several different goods with different prices depending on the bundle of rights on the land market.

Table 1: Rights Bundles in Gbawe, Greater Accra, Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIGHT</th>
<th>A Insider Land</th>
<th>B Outsider Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General right to inhabit an unspecified parcel in Gbawe</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Right to inhabit a specific parcel</td>
<td>Right to inhabit a specific parcel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Right to build a residence</td>
<td>Right to build a residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Right to build a small retail sales kiosk</td>
<td>Right to build a small retail sales kiosk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Right to transfer (rent, sell) residence to indigenous residents of Gbawe</td>
<td>Right to transfer (rent, sell) residence to indigenous residents of Gbawe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Right to rent residence to outsiders</td>
<td>Right to rent residence to outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Right to sell residence to anyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rights printed in italics are prerequisite and must be held before other rights in the same column can be acquired.
Source: Kasanga et al. 1996: 57

While the communities in this study are experiencing transformations in land uses from largely agricultural uses to urban uses, the study points to the complexity of land rights, and moreover the possibilities for policy-makers to think of an urban land policy for agriculture from a different perspective. Experiences of urban encroachment may suggest that transactions will follow a classical market approach to property transfer. However, these cases reveal that customary authorities, community identities and personal relationships are still critical factors. This assertion is also held up in studies of peri-urban communities in The Gambia (Roth et al. 1995). In this study
borrowing land between family members and renting-in were actually more common in the community closest to the built up area of Banjul. Both of these measures allow family members to retain their holdings in the face of urban encroachment.

Tenure Building Practices

Literature on tenure building practices is still relatively undeveloped; however, there is some worth discussing in this paper as it illuminates key aspects of the struggle for land in urban and peri-urban agriculture. Certain cultivation practices and types of crops are used as material and symbolic resources which reinforce claims to land and act as material evidence to support the accounts of farmers and the witnesses in their social networks. Whether or not farmers have any legal claims of ownership or usufructuary rights, in Sub-Saharan Africa where land is such a contentious issue, informal and formal rights often require the reinforcement of key practices. For example, as Maxwell (1995) shows, farmers in a caretaker relationship must constantly demonstrate their presence on the land through continuous cultivation. Adamo (1999) encounters female farmers with property in the peri-urban area of Accra entering into special friendships with other younger women to ensure that their large tracts of land were kept under cultivation and out of reach of counter claims from the stool authorities. Individual farmers also invoke certain farming practices or plant trees to increase their tenure security and simultaneous restate their claims to land. For example, Rakodi (1988) points to on-plot farmers in Lusaka who reinforced their claims to land by planting trees. According to Rakodi (1988:507), the residents felt that the tree-planting gave them “de facto security of tenure.” Evidence from two other studies (Gray and Kevane 2001 and Schroeder 1999) are particularly apposite for this discussion. Although these two studies are based on research among rural farmers, the evidence upholds findings from the research on urban and peri-urban
farming in Accra (see Part B) and adds to Rakodi’s analysis.

Gray and Kevane’s (2001) study from Burkina Faso is used to challenge prevailing literature on the relationship between individual property rights and investments in land (see for example Bruce and Migot-Adholla 1993). They show that investment in the land through improvements to the soil (use of manure, tree-planting and other soil inputs) is both a soil-building and a tenure-building strategy. Gray and Kevane (2001: 575) claim that “[b]y investing in soil quality, farmers are simultaneously building land rights.” More importantly they dispel the myth that migrants, who have less secure claims to land, are less likely to invest in land by presenting data from different sites which shows migrants using more manure to improve soil and purposively leaving more trees on their lands. According to Gray and Kevane (2001: 575), “Burkinabè farmers seem quite conscious of how intensification gradually strengthens rights to land. The longer one can stay on the field, whether one is a local or a migrant farmer, the more difficult it is to take the land away and the less authority lineages and communities have over the field.” Their study shows how certain farming practices reinforce claims to land by emphasizing the presence and occupation of the current land users. Gray and Kevane show the way borrowers strengthen their claims and migrants reinforce their rights to community lands.

Schroeder’s (1999) study is particularly interesting because it demonstrates some of the gender relations of power which are played out through tenure building strategies. In his case study of female market gardeners in The Gambia, he shows how male land holders use tree planting in an agroforestry project as a way to reinforce and reclaim their rights to land that women had borrowed for their gardens. Despite the fact that the men’s rights to the land were upheld by both custom and statute, they still participated in the agroforestry project by removing fruit trees planted by the
women and then replanting with their own trees (1999: 91-92). His research illuminates the way in which the cultivation of specific crops (permanent crops) take on multiple meaning within the context of intra-community and intra-household struggles over resources. Therefore while NGOs were promoting agroforestry for its environmental benefits, community members were also participating so that they could harness a symbolic resource which reinforced their material claims to land and labour.

4. Conclusion

Evidence from both urban and peri-urban land struggles reveals that transactions and transfers are complex. The discussion in this section indicates that a study of access to land for urban agriculture must explore these complexities and examine tenure relationships between individuals and groups that mediate access to land, identifying methods and practices that are both equitable and efficient. Table 2 summarizes some of the actors identified in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Social Institutions</th>
<th>Affiliations / Formal and Informal Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>kinship</td>
<td>A) With individuals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Registry</td>
<td>customary authorities</td>
<td>• special friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Assembly</td>
<td>ethnicity</td>
<td>• neighbours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruling Party Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>• care takers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Politicians</td>
<td></td>
<td>• patron-client relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance Councils</td>
<td></td>
<td>B) With groups or networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
<td>• women’s groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• informal producer networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C) With institutional land holders / owners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Kenya Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D) Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• informal land agents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research findings from studies across sub-Saharan Africa reveal a wide variety of relationships, practices and arrangements within particular cities. However, despite different arrangements within cities it appears that at most locations there is some sort of informal governance enforcing socially negotiated norms and rules of access. It is also apparent that social networks require the attention of policy-makers and practitioners since these networks will likely continue to operate even if formal systems are put in place. The question may then be, how can the State harness and support these social networks, and encourage formal organizations to assist their members (as in the case of the women’s group in Adamo’s (1999) study)? It may be necessary for planners and policy-makers to identify the wide range of social networks and formal affiliations within the city who mediate access to land to ensure that new legislation and policy does not exclude particular groups: women, ethnic minorities, immigrants etc.

The literature review in Part A will form a basis for the analysis of primary research findings. Part B analyses findings from two separate studies - one carried out in the peri-urban area of Accra and another at several sites within Accra under different property regimes. Part C will then engage in more depth in the policy question exploring options for official policy and planning for UA.
Part B: Research Findings
1. Introduction

Part A reviewed literature, primarily from sub-Saharan Africa, to uncover the formal and informal practices and processes through which women and men access land for farming in urban and peri-urban areas. Although the literature on this topic is not yet well developed, a few detailed studies and scattered evidence from broad studies of UA show that formal land acquisition may be far too complicated and lengthy a process for urban cultivators seeking off-plot land, and that informal land acquisition, mediated through relationships, is the preferred practice for accessing a plot of land. Table 2 (from Part A) uncovers the types of relationships identified in the literature which facilitated entry into UA.

Part A draws details from countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and The Gambia). It provides the conceptual and theoretical basis for the analysis that follows.

The theoretical underpinnings of the analysis of research findings draw mainly from the field of post-structural political ecology (Carney and Watts 1990; Mackenzie 1998; Moore 1993; Peet and Watts 1996; Schroeder 1999). These studies build on the early works of Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) which linked environmental degradation with political economy. However, drawing on feminist and post-structural critiques of early political ecology these scholars accord a central importance to locally-specific contestation of gender, class, ethnicity, community and other axes of social differentiation. Briefly, these studies emphasize the following key arguments:

- a struggle over a material resource, such as land or trees, is simultaneously a struggle over a symbolic resource
- custom is historically and spatially specific and a constructed category subject to ongoing contestation and negotiation within and between communities, households and the State
- that case studies can be analyzed as locally-specific experiences of macro level events and decisions which in turn reshape the macro level.

In this paper the theoretical framework adds value to the analysis by revealing that custom does not inherently exist but that it is something people exercise; customary rights are subject to ongoing negotiation as they are continuously contested by different residents in a community and re-articulated in new spaces such as urban areas. It underscores the significance of relationships for tenure security while also allowing for an analysis of certain practices which reinforce claims to land. Furthermore, by situating local case studies within the context of the broader political
economy, they reveal how these locally-specific incidents can inform and shape policy and practice.

2. Access to Land for Farming in Accra

The analysis for this section is drawn from the research findings of a project carried out for three months in 2001 during the late period of the rainy season. While the literature that discusses land for UA often distinguishes between on plot and off plot or urban and peri-urban, this research project explored land access from the perspective of property regimes (see for example Obosu-Mensah 1999). The focus here is exclusively on off-plot cultivation as opposed to backyard gardening\(^1\). The types of property regimes were identified through the final report for IDRC project 3149 “Urban Agriculture: Food Security and Nutritional Status in Greater Accra (Ghana).” The field research in Accra focused on three main case studies drawn from three different property regimes:

1. Private property - idle lands at the School of Hygiene, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
2. Public, open space property - Abossey Okai - Ring Road South Industrial Area
3. Customary land - La Stool Lands (near the Trade Fair Centre).

During the course of the research a fourth site was added, a type of public open space land which Djabatey (1998: 121) refers to as a utility land - “roadsides, transmission lines or airports… areas devoid of any physical development or possible encroachment.” The fourth site was at Dworwulu under the high tension lines on land owned by the Volta River Authority. In conjunction with the work at the four sites, key informants were interviewed in the Lands Commission; Ministry of Lands, Mines and Forestry; Metropolitan Directorate for The Ministry of Agriculture of the Accra

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\(^1\) While backyard gardening was not a part of this study I do not mean to suggest that it is not an important means of access, particularly in terms of struggles over space if new housing plots are too small to accommodate UA.
Metropolitan Assembly (AMA); Department of Town and Country Planning (AMA); the administration of the School of Hygiene; the MP and agricultural extension officer for the La Constituency; neighbouring land users; the Volta River Authority; and the chief and elders of the Ga Manshie Stool. Using group meetings, semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews the research explored the characteristics of producers including socio-economic differentiation, entitlements, participation and membership in formal and informal networks, farming experience, length of residence etc. Since urban farmers access land for a specific use, the research also explored the relationship between tenure arrangements and production systems, and the conditions or limitations on farming that are created by other land uses or tenure arrangements. Furthermore it explored the tenure-building practices of these cultivators. Reactions were solicited to several policy options including licensing arrangements, fixed-term agreements, cooperatives, rental agreements and land banks (these will be discussed in greater detail in Part C). For the purpose of comparison, each of the four sites will be examined separately so as to draw out the unique and locally-specific experiences of the farmers at each site.

2.1 Customary Tenure Regime - The La Stool Lands

The customary land holding group in and around Accra is the Ga. A large part of Ga lands in Accra, Tema District and the Ga District have been sold or appropriated by the state. According to Kasanga et al. (1996: 9) more than 50% of Ga lands have been compulsorily acquired by the State under the State Lands Act, 1962 (Act 125). Nonetheless, there continues to exist a group of farmers in Accra who exercise a customary claim to land. It is important to note that customary tenure is a legally recognized form of tenure in Ghana according to the National Land Policy (1999) and the Land Title Registration Law (PNDCL 152). This contrasts with experiences in several other Sub-
Saharan African states where customary tenure has been legally replaced by privatization and titling programs and state acquisition programs. It also means that farmers in Accra who can exercise customary claims are not merely re-asserting a customary norm, (as hypothesized in Nairobi by Freeman 1991 or in the van Westen study of Bamako cited in McAuslan 1998), they are exercising rights legally recognized in policy and legislation that are protected by the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Forestry, and by the Lands Commission.

The farmers on the La stool lands make a customary claim to their holdings which were acquired through inheritance following a construction of social/political history based upon the rights of first occupation or proving kinship to the first occupiers. Although Ga farmers continue to farm on inherited lands behind the Trade Fair Centre and adjacent to Burma Camp military base, much of the lands they claim as their own have been officially earmarked for the military. A representative of the Department of Town and Country Planning indicated that the military had recently revoked their interest; however, she felt that most of the land will be re-zoned for housing. This means that only the lands immediately bordering the Trade Fair Centre will remain undeveloped in the future because they are low-lying and unsuitable for development. An informant in the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands speculated that the military interest in the land was one factor protecting the farmers in the area from losing more land to residential development. Once the area has been re-zoned, the farmers will become more vulnerable. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the fact that the chief and elders of the stool, who organize land sales, do not envisage a future for farming inside the city, preferring that land for farming be safe-guarded at the outskirts of the city.
Members of the La Farmers’ Association and their Member of Parliament firmly assert their rights to the land and their interest in farming. The MP indicated that they contest any compulsory claim to the land because they have never been compensated according to the legal requirements for compulsory acquisition of lands. The interim Administrator of Stool Lands insists that UA needs to be considered more seriously since the new National Land Policy (1999) makes a commitment to preventing landlessness. The La Farmers’ Association is strongly advocating for the enforcement of a green belt which will help them to protect the lands. According to several key informants including the agricultural extension officer, the Metropolitan Director, Ministry of Agriculture for the AMA and a representative from the Office of the Administrator for Stool Lands, this area is already zoned as a greenbelt. The representative from the Department of Town and Country Planning did not confirm this.

Tenure Relationships and Tenure-Building on La Stool Lands

An exploration of customary land holding regimes in Ghana underscores the argument that rights in land are rights through people. Customary norms are exercised by the Ga through the stool, a symbol of both the land and the land-holding group. Land is a symbolic resource which is used to forge group identity, meaning that the language of belonging is the means through which individuals and families acquire and maintain access to stools lands (see Flynn-Dapaah 2001). None of the farmers in the La Farmers’ Association or the individual farmers who participated in semi-structured interviews held any documents for their land. While several showed interest in acquiring documents, they expressed a great deal of confidence in their land claims by appealing to the relationships which mediated their acquisition of the land. All of the participants inherited lands from parents and/or, in the case of some women, accessed the land through marriage. The following
In order to ensure anonymity, the names of participants have been replaced with codes. The letter reminds the reader of the site (C=customary, H=hospital, O=open space (Abossey Okai) and D=utility land (Dworwulu). Numbers were assigned for each interview.

remarks from an elderly Ga women, C-1, captures the importance of relationships for acquiring and maintaining access to land:

We don’t have documents [for our land]. Our father happens to be one of the old people so we don’t have a document covering the land… my father was Ga… the land is an inherited land. My father got it from his fore-fore-fore fathers.

She explains further how they protect their land from other interests without documents:

Where we are farming we have other relatives near us so everybody knows that the land belongs to us. There are other relatives who farm closer to our land and we are on very good terms so nobody can come to claim the land. I know that the father who begat me owns this portion of land.

She equally points to the La Farmers’ Association as a community mechanism to ensure her rights to the land. She claims, “the reason we go [to the meetings] is so that everybody knows that I farm here and I too know that somebody farms there. For us to be each other’s keeper.” All of her remarks point to the significance of kin, ethnic and community relationships for securing land rights.

Another farmer, C-3, whose family land borders part of the Burma Camp endowment demonstrates the security that customary claims offer, as well as the significance of fostering trusting relationships. This man has two plots of land. One is a three acre site inherited from his father where he grows rain-fed staple crops and trees. The other site is on military lands around a man-made pool which holds the treated waste water from the barracks at Burma Camp. The pool is guarded by a military security officer who acts as a caretaker to ensure that children do not play in the water. Before farming around the pool where several other farmers also work, C-3 sought permission from the caretaker. According to C-3, the caretaker agreed to allow him to farm there.

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2 In order to ensure anonymity, the names of participants have been replaced with codes. The letter reminds the reader of the site (C=customary, H=hospital, O=open space (Abossey Okai) and D=utility land (Dworwulu). Numbers were assigned for each interview.
because the officer already knew him. Since C-3’s family land bordered this site, the caretaker knew him and felt that he could trust him. At this site C-3 is able to grow lucrative exotic crops year round using the water from the pond for irrigation. C-3’s case points to another important aspect in this discussion of land tenure for UA. Though the caretaker does not place any restrictions on what the eight farmers using this land can grow, farmers self-regulate because of their status on this land. Despite claims that they are quite secure on this land, C-3 will not plant trees. This is because trees in Ghana are recognized as a property and a permanent crop. C-3 only grows trees on the family land. The family land offers more security for investment because the claims are more certain.

Evidence from other studies indicates that in cases where citizens have contested land claims they assert their control over the land using the symbol of trees as properties or by making other kinds of investments in the land (Flynn-Dapaah 2001, Gray and Kevane 2001, Leach 1994, Rakodi 1988, Schroeder 1999; see also section 3 of Part B for more discussion on this idea). In contrast to the other three sites, described below, the La Farmers using customary norms can contest the State’s claims to the land, particularly since compensation is yet to be paid. The MP’s remarks are important: “It is our land. Because of the way the government acquired it [without paying compensation] we have the courage to do what we want.” The farmers in the customary property rights regime were the only group that freely and purposively planted trees. In combination with the support of family witnesses, trees give these farmers visual markers to support their claims, particularly in areas left fallow for a period of time. The La farmers were far more comfortable than farmers at some other sites leaving large amounts of land fallow as they practiced shifting cultivation. As the discussion below shows, the farmers at other sites are more vulnerable to leaving land unoccupied and invoke different tenure-building strategies to support their claims to the land.
Conclusion

On the one hand the La Farmers are accorded more security because their relationships are formally recognized through the legality of the customary tenure system in Ghana. On the other, they feel very vulnerable because they realize that some officials and their own leaders do not envisage UA in urban areas. The reservation of the land to the military has protected many farmers; however, further from the military base, encroachments are already starting by developers and sand winners. Since the military has now relinquished their claim to the land, and Town and Country Planning sees it being zoned for residential development, these farmers are in a precarious position. It is apparent that relationships are critical for the Ga farming on family lands from the stool and even borrowing land from the military. Although the customary claim allows farmers to use trees as symbols of their ownership and as a tenure-building strategy, the location and expanse of land, which may soon be made available to development, makes these farmers in some ways more vulnerable than the farmers discussed below.

2.2 Open-Space Cultivation - Abossey Okai

This site is a public open space site located adjacent to the Ring Road on the west side of the city. Town and Country Planning indicated that the area where these men are working is zoned as a recreational area but it is yet to be developed. The farmers grow mainly high-value exotic crops for sale to female market traders, although several also grow indigenous leaves. Seeds are purchased from the Ghana Seed Company. The cultivators irrigate the crops with water from the nearby storm gutter. The banks of this gutter are used as a dump and public toilet, and therefore the farmers’ use of this land is often criticized by the public because of the unsafe farming practice. Given their unofficial status on the land however, they have few options to arrange or develop better
irrigation systems.

By far these farmers are the least secure of any of the other farmers in this study. Although several have been at this site for over 25 years, they farm with constant reminders of their insecure status. Bulldozers and other industrial machines are constantly working in the background. Each year the Ministry of Works and Housing sends contractors to the site to desalt the gutter, often resulting in the destruction of crops yet to be harvested. The farms at Abossey Okai surround the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) which owns a large plot of land that extends beyond their fenced perimeter. ICGC and the farmers compete for some of the open space land to the north of the church where ICGC is extending their car park to accommodate increased Sunday traffic. Several farmers are still upset that the church was established on that land in the first place because they were formerly farming on that land. However, the area is zoned for worship and the church holds a legal title to their land.

The dispute with the church was a sensitive issue as the research project was underway. During the course of the research a portion of one farmers’ corn crop was destroyed by contractors. The farmers accuse the church of hiring the contractors to begin the expansion of the car park. The area of land in dispute is government land. The church claims that years ago when they originally expanded their car-park they recognized the unofficial rights of the farmers and realized it was their livelihood that was at stake. The church therefore paid compensation for the land. They claim that the farmers are moving back onto land they originally vacated. The administrator at ICGC stated they are open to paying more compensation and insists that the church waits until after the harvest before starting work. Their story is partially corroborated through the accounts of the farmers and personal observation. When the corn crop was destroyed, the farmers challenged the contractors
who stated that they were sent by the government not the church. Furthermore, besides the incident in question, the clearing done for the car park was indeed started after the harvest. The farmers, however, believe that the contractors were being dishonest because they knew the farmers could not challenge the government’s right to work that land. It is difficult to reconcile the stories as the church remains a symbol of insecurity and tension for the farmers.

Of all the research sites, this group of farmers was most enthusiastic about discussing their land problems and were open to most options. They claimed to be willing to pay rent, enter fixed-term agreements, join cooperatives, or acquire licenses. They never contested the State’s claim to the land, nor did they express interest in ownership rights. Several farmers indicated that with fixed term agreements they would invest more in the farms, plant longer cycle crops and, if the length of the agreement was sufficient (12-15 years), they would likely plant trees. They also indicated that they were seeking mechanisms that would accord them public and official respect as legitimate users of the land, such that they would be given due notice of regular maintenance activities and development plans. This would allow them to harvest in time or delay planting so that they would not lose their investment in seeds when the crops were destroyed prior to harvest. According to O-2

[i]f the government wants to do some work, if they come to tell us that they want to do some work on this part then we won’t plant anything on it... But nobody comes to tell us like that. When they come and we have planted things small then they just destroy it.

Another farmer claimed that the notice would prove that the government respects and values their work.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to measure the extent of the commitment of the farmers to take action. Whereas farmers at Dworwulu have organized themselves and called upon the Metropolitan Director to intervene in disputes, the farmers at Abossey Okai are looking for more external
assistance to ‘give them a cooperative.’ Formerly they were a part of the Vegetable Growers Association based at Dworwulu; however, they were unsatisfied with the level of support they received from the president in their land disputes and prefer to form an association just amongst themselves. Literacy issues and language barriers may inhibit this group of farmers from soliciting the help of government officials they do not know or undertaking legal requirements for forming cooperatives as none of them are Ghanaian nationals.

Land Relationships and Tenure Building Practices at Abossey Okai

This site provides reinforcements to Obosu-Mensah’s (1999) analysis of social networks and the entry of migrants into urban agriculture. All of the farmers at this site are originally from Burkina Faso. They all had some kind of pre-existing interpersonal relationships with at least one other farmer at the site either through kinship or friendship. Though none of these farmers were the first to work in the area, they all met relatives or friends from Burkina who introduced them to the site. Also several of these farmers claim temporary use rights to the land by virtue of the fact that they were the first to clear the land where they are working. Their assertions are supported by the other cultivators when outsiders claim the land for another unauthorized use. This can be seen as the re-assertion of a customary idiom widely recognized in many cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa.

While several of the farmers claimed that a pre-existing relationship was not necessary to access land, they also admitted that they are at this particular site because of a pre-existing relationship. It is apparent from the remarks of the following two farmers that a moral obligation facilitates access to land at particular sites within an individual’s social network.

O-5

As for me, if somebody comes and if only he is my ‘brother’ I’ll give him some part of the

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3 It is evident from discussions that the term ‘brother’ is used by these farmers to refer to both kin and countrymen.
land to farm. If my ‘brother’ comes to me and says he is in need of land, I can’t tell him he should go away, I’ll give him land.

O-2
When you are doing your land and your ‘brother’ comes to work then you must make some land and clear it for him.

These farmers reveal that moral obligations to people in your social network are critical for accessing land. O-3 also illustrates how this moral obligation offers returns even after someone retires from farming. He indicated that when he retired he would “give the land to a family member because if he gets some money he will give me some to feed myself.” Others indicated that, though not necessary, knowing someone who is already weeding in the area certainly helps a person to access land.

O-1’s experiences show the importance both of turning to social networks and to building relationships in order to access land. He participated in the study because he was meeting farmers at Abossey Okai during the research in order to access land. He had previously farmed at Korle Bu where he accessed land with the help of his brother who was employed by the hospital. Later he lost the land when apartments were constructed for the doctors. Following that he found a plot of land at Circle (an area of Accra around Kwame Nkrumah traffic circle). This land has also been destroyed now for the expansion of the gutter.

He chose the site at Circle because he saw the vacant land; however, there were farmers working around that site already. He could not merely begin farming when he saw the empty land. O-1 did not know any of the men at the site, but it turned out that these men were also from Burkina Faso. Here he describes the process he went through to access land at Circle.

I went to see some people over there. I engaged them in conversation for a very long time. They didn’t have any idea that I was looking for land. Then when it got dark I would just
go home. I didn’t tell them anything. I continued this for a period of time. So one day I broke the news to them that I need the land. They said okay I should look at the edges of the land and if I can weed I should go ahead and weed.

Although the farmers at Circle were his countrymen he was not automatically a part of their social network. In order to cultivate the land, he first had to cultivate the relationship. While he indicates that he was not seeking countrymen, nor would he have adapted his strategy with other farmers, there is no doubt that the common language and culture facilitated the development of a friendship which eventually allowed him to access the land at this site. His story is important because it underscores that seeing idle lands does not necessarily offer an entry point into cultivation. Since there were farmers working adjacent to the idle land, unwritten social norms required him to seek their approval first. In order to do this he needed to establish some trust and integrate himself into their social network. In his most recent attempt to access land he visited friends at Abossey Okai. Reflecting on the importance of a social network for accessing land he stated, “[i]f you are in need I think the first place you have to pass is [where you see] your countrymen or your brothers. That is why I came here. By all means if you know someone you’ll get land, if the person has pity for you.” At the time that I finished work at this site he had not started farming; however, that is not necessarily evidence that the strategy did not work. The land at this site is quite scarce because of the construction activities nearby. As Obosu-Mensah shows it is not necessarily reciprocation in a social network that matters, it is the willingness to reciprocate if you can (1999: 170).

Unfortunately, tenure building strategies among these open space cultivators are somewhat limited since they do not own the land or contest the claims of the state. These farmers are hesitant to put in any permanent improvements to the site such as trees or a more sturdy rest and storage structure. Relationships are the key to accessing and maintaining claims to land as the farmers are
committed to standing united against encroachers. Informal practices of inheritance also allow farmers to play with customary norms for transferring land which carries a lot of legitimacy amongst farmers in the area. Nonetheless, some farmers have planted a small number of papaya. For these farmers the strategically planted trees provide more than fruit or shade. They also would serve as markers that let other users know the land is occupied.

In addition, the cultivators here use several practices to allow them to leave parts of their land idle in the event that they cannot afford seeds or to rest the soil. Soil-building techniques are a part of tenure building strategies. O-3, who has 16 beds, claims that he would never leave all of them fallow. In times of shortages he would cultivate three of the beds so that “by all means if someone comes around they’ll see that I am the owner of the farm.” His strategy and the way he explains them illustrate two things: 1) the importance of limited cultivation in order to maintain his presence and therefore his claim to the land and 2) a complex understanding of rights in the sense that he never claims to own the land, but states that he ‘owns’ the farm (however temporary this may be in the face of the legitimate land owner’s claim to the land itself). Others said they would continue to apply fertilizer or manure to condition the land and at least maintain their presence at the site, or cultivate only a few beds of the indigenous leaves. The farmers also exchange seeds with one another when someone is experiencing a shortage so that they can still cultivate the plots. The strategies used at Abossey Okai have far more in common with the sites at Dworwulu and the School of Hygiene where the farmers cannot make claims to own the land as in the case of the customary land holding group.
Conclusion

The situation at Abossey Okai is particularly interesting because the farmers are reminded daily of their insecure status. It is also interesting because it is dominated by a group of Muslim men all of whom migrated from Burkina Faso. It strongly supports Obosu-Mensah’s (1999) thesis that pre-existing relationships form social networks for recent migrants which facilitate their entry into informal sector activities. O-1’s story in particular provides insights into the process by which people access land, revealing the importance of turning to social networks. It also shows that an individual interested in farming does not merely take up work when they see unoccupied land. He cultivated friendships with the farmers at Circle before ever raising the issue of accessing land. This suggests that contrary to Freeman’s (1991) assertion for farmers in Nairobi, there does in fact exist a social system for the organized allocation of land at any given location and unwritten rules of governance at each site. O-3’s comment that he ‘owns’ the farm also points to the feasibility of dealing with specific bundles of rights for urban farmers.

2.3 Private Property: School of Hygiene, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

The farming here is strictly small-scale rain-fed production of staple crops and some indigenous leaves. The majority of the farmers who participated in the study at this site were employed as groundskeepers, though officials and teachers also farm here. Employees farming on the lands allocated to the School of Hygiene at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital have a fairly positive relationship with their employers. While there is no official policy, UA is widely practiced at the School and all over the hospital grounds. According to the principal and vice-principals who are entrusted by the hospital administration for the upkeep of the grounds surrounding the school, they have no problem with UA so long as it is done safely. They permit food crops and other seasonal
crops and even fruit trees. Their only restrictions are a ban on wood lots or fodder production. Although strictly speaking land could be open to the public, the scarcity of land has resulted in an understanding amongst all the cultivators at this particular site at Korle Bu\(^4\) that the land is reserved for employees only and is relinquished upon retirement from the school. While the administration is not interested in seeing all lands put under cultivation, they recognize that the practice keeps snakes away and maintains the grounds. The main problem cited at this location is the lack of available land. Even the principal and vice principals who recently arrived at the school are hoping to access small plots of land for gardens.

The positive relationship between employees and the administration does not mean that the cultivators in the study have not experienced some problems maintaining access to land. One farmer, for example, was originally farming at another part of the Korle Bu campus when he and other farmers were given notice to leave the area to make way for the construction of the nurses residences. A couple of other farmers have had disputes with some of the residents of the houses near the School of Hygiene. They have been driven from the land next to some houses by residents who claim they are not permitted to be there. It is worthwhile to note, however, that a few groundkeepers were invited to farm in front of some houses to maintain the area and keep snakes away. Fortunately for the employees cultivating the School’s land, there is little chance of more development on the grounds due to lack of space.

\(^4\) Discussions with other researchers from the University of Ghana revealed that at other parts of the hospital campus outsiders come to farm.
Land Relationships and Tenure Building Practices at the School of Hygiene

What is striking about this particular site is the re-assertion of customary principals for the local governance of the land. Grounds-keepers and the administrators recognize one of their colleagues as chief farmer. They defer to him in meetings, he assists others to access land and he plays the role of a symbolic leader. Although the administrators are looking for land, they admittedly do not have the right to take land away from one of the other users. Those who are on the land first have the right to relinquish land or deny someone access to the land. Of the eight farmers who discussed their experience in semi-structured interviews, half sought formal permission from the old administration, three of the others knew that the activity was permitted and one was a tutor who acts as an assistant to the administration and understood the administration’s position on the issue. Amongst themselves it was agreed that a new cultivator needs to seek permission from the person occupying the land before they begin farming on it, even if it appears to be fallow or confirm with the person farming adjacent that the land is unoccupied.

In group meetings and individual interviews they often emphasized the importance of trust and good relationships. H-1 states for example, “I know them. They know this man [himself] is doing his farm, so if they see someone trying to come inside his farm they won’t allow him to go there and take it.” The farmers indicate that in the city, as was the case for O-1 above, a person looking for land at a particular site who is not already familiar with the cultivators working there must first spend time talking to them and establishing a relationship. It could be a few months before they can raise the question of accessing land. If the farmers are already a member of the social network they can raise the issues immediately as O-1 did with the farmers at Abossey Okai. The men working at the School of Hygiene also assert that documents do not always work - a good
relationship is more important. Since papers only hold up in court and few people in their circumstances feel they can afford the time and money to take cases to court, documentation does little to help them. These farmers argue that someone is in fact more secure with a good relationship and no papers than vice versa. The relationships these men foster with colleagues who also farm at the site may have important long-term payoffs. Most indicated that they would let a friend or neighbouring farmer know when they were retiring so that they could pass the land along. Several were particularly interested in seeing a relative or friend working there so that, as H-2 stated, “he can take it so that if food comes he can give me some small.” This discussion illuminates the importance of relationships for local governance of the distribution of land.

These farmers appear to be satisfied with the security their current relationships offer. At the same time, some of them indicated that they are interested in more formal recognition and agreements with the administration. It was felt that it would facilitate better communication with the administration to offer notice of upcoming work and to offer more security to individual farmers in their struggles with other farmers. Reflecting on the importance of more formal relationships that assure use rights, H-7 stated, “[r]ight now it is hard for me to say to someone ‘no don’t weed there’ because it is not my land.” Formal use rights would give H-7 more authority to drive away encroachers.

These farmers do not contest the ownership rights of the hospital and openly declare that it is government-owned land. It is not claims of ownership to land that is the main problem for these farmers but competing claims to use rights. Given the scarcity of land around the School and the hospital in general, it is problematic to leave any land fallow even if the soil is depleted or the person cannot afford seeds. Though some indicated in the latter case that they would borrow money
from relatives or seeds from another farmer, in the case of the former people must combine soil building strategies with a tenure protection strategy. All the participants in the group indicated that if the soils needed a rest period they would allow one year during which time they would continue to work it a bit by adding fertilizers or manure on top. The following year they will plant again. It seems it is difficult for farmers here to leave land fallow for extended periods in comparison to farmers at other sites because of the tight competition for land at Korle Bu.

**Conclusion**

This particular case study points to the potential for promoting positive relationships between employers and employees so that idle lands can be put under cultivation. The experience reinforces that widely accepted unwritten norms govern rights to land. The case also suggests that minor interventions, including formal statements and policies accepting the practice, could enhance the ability of gardeners at the site to exercise the power of the norms they use to govern land rights, particularly in disputes with neighbouring land users, such as tenants in the houses, and to prevent other farmers from encroaching on the land. This may allow farmers to leave areas fallow without as much worry. At the same time the case reinforces that rights in land are rights through people by showing that documents could be largely ineffective when relationships are not strong.

**2.4 Utility Site: Under the High Tension Lines at Dworwulu**

This site was explored in the study because it was recognized by other researchers as an area where farmers were relatively secure. The site is comparatively large, occupying lands on the east and west sides of Achimota Road. The land at this site is owned by the Volta River Authority, a public corporation. While the Volta River Authority does not openly condone farming under the high tension lines because of potential hazards, according to an informant in the company, they
“officially turn a blind eye.” Since the risks are small and there have been no incidents in the past thirty-five years, the company does not prevent people from farming at the site. The corporation recognizes the numerous benefits the farmers bring to the site, lowering costs for security and grounds keepers and ensuring that no unauthorized buildings are put up at the site. The VRA notifies farmers when any maintenance work is planned. Farmers are not permitted to grow trees because they are working under the high tension power lines. Key informants and several farmers estimated that people have been cultivating the land here for thirty to forty years. Farmers cultivate in the rainy season and the dry season producing mainly exotic vegetables for local markets and certain Chinese vegetables for traders who sell produce to Chinese and Japanese fishing vessels.

**Tenure Relationships and Tenure Building at Dworwulu**

As in other cases, relationships were one of several key entry points for the farmers at this site. While some farmers, including a female farmer interviewed for this study, came to the site eighteen years ago while working with the Ministry of Agriculture on a pilot project, others relied on social networks in their residential neighbourhood to access some land at Dworwulu. D-1, the woman who started with the Ministry of Agriculture, stayed at the site when the program was canceled and she was laid off nine years ago. She shares a water tap with 5 other farmers. She is now a part of the social network at the site and indicated that when she is ready to retire she is not likely to simply abandon the land. Rather she will pass it to someone who approaches her from the site or leave it to a neighbouring farmer.

Many of the other farmers on the east side (closer to Achimota Road) were introduced to the site through pre-existing relationships in their residential neighbourhood. D-2 and D-3 began farming here while still attending school. D-3 came to work as a farm hand for a man he knew from
fishing. He in turn introduced D-2 to this farmer so that he could also work as a farm hand. When the original farmer retired he divided the land between his helpers. D-2, who also hires young farm hands, will do the same thing when he retires. It appears that this is not an uncommon occurrence. According to D-2 and D-3 many of the farmers around them are from the same residential neighbourhood. Although people here hire farm hands, they will not accept applicants who come to the site. D-3 stated they do not like to take in strangers because they need to know the person is trustworthy. His comments lend further to support to Obuso-Mensah’s observation that people prefer to deal with people within their social networks. Evidence from other sites suggests that people can integrate themselves into existing social networks in the area but this requires them to spend time working on relationships before raising the topic of farming.

Although there is an elderly farmer who plays the symbolic role of chief farmer at the site, there are also younger leaders for the east and west side who were elected by the farmers to offer advice and represent the group to officials. According to D-3, the leader for the east side, the group is very interested in establishing themselves as a cooperative and were in the process of filing papers. D-3 felt that the voice of a group was stronger than that of individuals and raises respect in the eyes of authorities. Experiences working as a group in past disputes have likely reinforced his opinion. For example, two years ago when the Ministry of Works and Housing was moving in equipment to desalt the gutter, the group, whose crops had yet to be harvested, brought their concerns to the Metropolitan Director, Ministry of Agriculture for the AMA. The Metropolitan Director contacted the appropriate office and worked out a rearrangement of the work schedule so that the maintenance of the gutters at Dworwulu was pushed back a couple of months. Farmers were able to harvest and the gutter work was still completed before the rainy season started. According to the Metropolitan Director the cost of this change was one million cedis (approx. 400USD in
D-1 was able to provide insights into the gender dimensions of UA in Accra. Past research in IDRC project 3149 and observations in the field reveal a relatively low number of female producers compared to the findings in Eastern and Southern Africa. With the exception of Ga women at La, very few women were observed farming. Ga women can situate themselves within the context of kin and conjugal networks which allow them to access land. It is clear that the Ministry of Agriculture pilot project assisted several women to access land at Dworwulu where most of the other farmers are men whose families originate from the north of Ghana. Women at other sites may find it more difficult to enter a social network or work at a particular site as in the case of Abossey Okai, for example, where all the farmers are male and Muslim. Certain religious norms may make it difficult for women to work at that site except in certain instances when wives help their husbands with specific tasks such as planting or harvest. D-1 indicated that several women started farming at the site when they were employed by the Ministry of Agriculture, but she is one of only six who remained after they were laid off. She suggested that other aspects of UA simply do not make it attractive or feasible for a lot of women, especially those with young families. She pointed to the fact that income from farming is not constant and many women in the urban cash economy seek income generating activities where the pay-offs are more consistent. In the south of Ghana in particular women are notorious for their stronghold on trading (see for example Clark 1994; Robertson 1984). Her remarks corroborate findings from a study in the peri-urban area of Accra (Flynn-Dapaah 2001) which found that women emphasize activities such as market trading and petty commodity trading which were flexible, have a fast turnover and give them regular access to cash issues that are increasingly important since the implementation of the Economic Recovery Program (ERP).
The security of the Dworwulu farmers is evident in a number of measures they have taken to invest in their farms. Although many farmers still use gutter water, some responded to negative public opinion by arranging with the Water Company to set up metered taps and hoses to irrigate the farm. Groups of farmers share a tap and then split the water bill evenly between them. The rising cost of water is a far greater concern for this group than land security. Another visible testament to the relative security of the farmers is the small concrete warehouse constructed at the site. According to D-3 everyone contributed money for the construction and share the materials there. This small warehouse is used by approximately twenty farmers to store supplies, tools and seeds at the site. The VRA have not worried them about the warehouse because it is small and used exclusively for storage - not shelter. As in the cases discussed above, these investments may be seen as both symbols of security and strategies to maintain security as it reinforces the presence of the current farmers at this site and it reinforces the social solidarity forged at the site through the social network.

**Conclusion**

Dworwulu provides additional evidence to support the argument that social relations and relationships mediate access to land at different sites throughout the city. While it points to an opportunity to encourage more use of utility lands, it is clear from the VRA’s position that it is difficult for corporations to officially show their support. It is arguable that of all the sites explored in this study the farmers here have the most tenure security. This has likely allowed them to invest more in the farms, for example, making arrangements with the Water Company to install taps and meters so that they can water their crops. Key issues that arise from this site are social networks in residential neighbourhoods and the importance of trust.
2.5 Conclusion

The extent to which farmers at the four different sites had secure tenure ranged from poor to good, although none of the sites had uncontested claims. Even the Ga fear encroachment, future authorized development, sandwinning for the construction industry and counter-claims by the military. This is the case despite a customary claim to land that allows many to use the language of ownership - a language not open to other farmers in Accra. Relatively speaking the farmers at Dworwulu and the School of Hygiene have more security than the farmers in the open space at Abossey Okai, and it may be argued more security than the Ga on the La stool lands.

By examining each case separately the unique characteristics of each site were highlighted and at the same time, each case supports the argument that relationships mediate access to land. Table 3 summarizes the findings for each site for easy comparison. It is clear that examining access to land from the perspective of different property regimes uncovers a diversity of experiences and a range of tenure security. Nonetheless it is important to recognize the commonalities between the different sites. These include:

- recognition of the rights of first occupation;
- the need to seek permission from farmers already in the area;
- reliance on social networks; and
- desire to pass land to a specific person rather than abandon it.
Table 3: Summary of Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key relationships / social relations in the social network</th>
<th>Tenure Building Strategies / Symbols of Tenure Security</th>
<th>Profile of Farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customary Lands: La Stool Lands</strong></td>
<td>• tree planting</td>
<td>• male and female</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 100% Ga</td>
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<tr>
<td>• kinship</td>
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<td>• ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• marriage</td>
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<td>• borrower-caretaker (military lands)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• La Farmer’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>• agriculture extension officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Private Property: School of Hygiene</strong></td>
<td>• treating the soil while leaving it fallow</td>
<td>• male only</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• borrow money from relatives to farm</td>
<td>employees only</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• share seeds</td>
<td>mainly migrants from North and Togo</td>
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<tr>
<td>• employer</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• tenants in houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• fellow employees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public OpenSpace: Abossey Okai</strong></td>
<td>• reducing the number of beds</td>
<td>• male only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• treating the soil while keeping it fallow</td>
<td>all migrants from Burkina Faso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• farm indigenous vegetables</td>
<td>all Muslim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• share seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>• kinship</td>
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<tr>
<td>• friendship</td>
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<td>• country men</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Utility Land: Dworwulu</strong></td>
<td>• constructing a small permanent warehouse</td>
<td>• majority male</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• maintaining soil on unused lands</td>
<td>but some female</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• tap water arrangement with the city</td>
<td>mostly migrants from the North</td>
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<tr>
<td>• residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• neighbours</td>
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<td>• friendship</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• employer (Ministry of Agriculture)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Association</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The evidence from all four sites reinforces the argument that rights in land are rights through people. It suggests that policy options must capture these dynamics in order to engage in the UA process that is unfolding already. While policies must be flexible and sensitive to the diversity of locally-specific forms of governance, it is also necessary to find ways of opening opportunities for people who may fall through the social networks which mediate access to land. The findings from these sites will be analyzed further in Part C: Policy and Planning.

3. Land Struggles/Negotiations in a Peri-Urban Farming Community: Afuaman

Afuaman is a farming community in the Ga District, part of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area. The community is located at the end of a second class road way, 13km northwest from the Awoshie junction off the Kwame Nkrumah Motorway. While the roads are poor, the community has become increasingly connected to urban markets as local transportation between the village and the city centre has improved from a sporadic weekly service to multiple daily routes. Even though the land in Afuaman was compulsorily acquired by the state in 1975, the customary land holding regime (known as stool lands in Ghana) continues to operate as the mechanism through which community citizens and migrants access land for agriculture.

The findings from this study are based on research carried out between September 1999 and March 2000, with a follow-up trip in November 2000. The research explored the gender aspects of land struggles in Afuaman as they were constructed, contested and articulated at household, community and national scales. I used in-depth qualitative methods (focus groups, semi-structured interviews, key informant meetings) and an actor-oriented approach in an iterative research process. This study was historisized within the period of structural adjustment, and targeted a peri-urban community because literature (Adamo 1999; Kasanga 1996 Manuh 1994; Maxwell et al. 1998)
suggested that peri-urban areas were increasingly seeing conflict over access to land and other productive resources.

Tenure Relationships in Afuaman

As with the La farmers, residents in Afuaman access land through the stool land system. In this type of property regime, social relations are critical for individuals and households negotiating relationships with the stool. ‘Natives’, ‘strangers’ and ‘pioneers’ are three main customary categories which mediate access to land in Afuaman. They are used within the community to describe relationships with the stool. A person using the term ‘native’ is claiming to be a member of the land holding group, indicating that they trace their lineage to the stool through one of their four grandparents. The term ‘stranger’ describes migrants, or the offspring of migrants. Those who claim the identity of ‘pioneer’ are migrants who by virtue of their early arrival in the community have been able to situate themselves closer to the stool by assuming a caretaker role in the period when the community was established. Although these categories are meant to convey clear divisions, in everyday experiences they are contested and negotiated by persons differentiated by gender, marital status, class, ethnicity and age so as to re-negotiate relationships with the stool and secure better access to land (see Berry 1997).

While a ‘native’ should be able to claim straightforward rights to land in Afuaman, and most men and women who are Ga have managed to do so, KQ’s story shows a different outcome. While she is a Ga, she is relatively poor compared to other residents and her husband is a migrant. She lost a large part of the land she inherited from her father when it was sold by the elders to sandwinners. Her husband also lost land when it was sold to developers. The following excerpt from her interview

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5 I use the term ‘native’ because it is the language used by people in Accra to describe citizens.
6 Throughout this section I have substituted names with fictional initials to ensure the anonymity of the participants.
underscores the roles the different relationships play in resource relations.

They sell the land with the crops on it. When they came to win the sand on our land, they sold our plot of land which had cassava and potato planted on it. That’s why my husband has nowhere to farm. He is a stranger. They said since he is a stranger they would take the land from him. As far as I’m concerned since both my parents come from this village not all has been taken away from me. They took half of mine in that manner because my father was dead and my mother too so there was no one to stand up for me.

Two things are evident here. First, as a ‘stranger’ her husband has been unable to negotiate an adequate relationship with the stool to secure his land holdings. Second, as a poor woman married to a migrant KQ has been unable to exercise the negotiating power of her claim to be a ‘native’ as effectively as other women and men in the community.

Migrants in Afuaman are mostly satisfied with their relationships with the elders and the community, farming for subsistence crops and local markets without any sharecropping or rental arrangements. They are free to pass land to their children and it is rare (though as KQ’s husband can attest, not unheard of) for lands to be taken away from them when they are clearly being used. This comfortable relationship is illuminated by the following remarks by a female migrant expressing her concerns over the possible relocation: “Obviously we feel at home here, we do all our work here where we’ve made or acquired property like oil palm plantations.” While all residents insist that they will not move to be subjects under another stool, migrants may be particularly concerned since they have already managed to negotiate open and meaningful relationships with the stool in Afuaman.

KQ’s experiences as a ‘native’ contrast sharply with those of ‘strangers,’ JT and his wife IT. Their stories reveal the negotiability of the category ‘stranger’ which is used to distinguish citizens from migrants. Not only does their experience point to the contestability of these categories, it also reveals that the term ‘stranger’ is not used to connote an outsider status. Rather, the term stranger
qualifies a specific insider status. JT and IT have 3 different plots of land, including a woodlot, and small mango and cashew plantation. Both are very involved in community groups, taking on leadership roles in local organizations and development projects. IT owns and operates the canteen in the village and also engages in petty trading. She is the elected leader of two formal organizations active in the community. JT is one of the wealthiest men in the community, pensioned from a government job, he now works with the District Assembly. Although they have had some disputes with the elders over land, they have been able to work through these struggles by drawing upon their relative wealth and leadership roles within the community. According to JT, “we are being accorded, at a certain level in the society, a kind of accreditation. It gives us a lot of recognition. So when the land issue came on so that my wife had to come and tell me, when I went there, the way they treated others was not the way they treated me.” Although they are considered ‘strangers’ JT and IT have developed a stronger relationship with the stool than KQ and her husband because of their relative wealth and their ability to invest in multiple institutions and relationships which favour secure access to land. This type of social investment has been shown by Berry (1989, 1993) to be increasingly important during periods of economic uncertainty as in the period of structural adjustment.

What is also illustrative in the experience of JT and IT is the gender dynamics of resource relations. The land dispute to which JT refers above concerns his wife’s participation in the agroforestry project. Since trees are widely recognized as properties, ‘strangers’ are discouraged, and in most cases forbidden, to plant trees. Although IT was planting trees on her own land (acquired long ago through her husband), she was asked to bring her husband before the elders to discuss her participation in the project. Migrant women in particular conveyed the need to have a male representative to access land or settle disputes with the elders. KQ shows that this is
occasionally the case for citizens as well since she reveals that her poor, migrant husband is not an adequate representative now that her parents are deceased. Although IT is a well-known and respected member of the community she relies on her relationship with her husband to ensure her ongoing access to land. The findings point to the gender dynamics of social networks and offers additional tools to read into the gender relations of urban agriculture in Accra.

Residents in Afuaman also work relationships in order to protect their claims. As KQ’s experience shows, even residents who can claim the identity of ‘native’ must protect their claims to land. With growing land pressures in the peri-urban area of Accra, residents must ensure that their land appears occupied to keep away encroachers and to ensure the elders do not revoke the rights to that land so they can sell it. KQ’s husband had left his land fallow for several years before it was sold. Likewise NA, a Ga from Afuaman, left land fallow for a few years while working in a factory job and returned to find it was sold. KG, a citizen of Afuaman, helps older relatives to maintain tenure security by cultivating their idle lands. The result is a situation which is mutually beneficial because it gives KG access to more land. In addition to the land he inherited from his father he is also cultivating land belonging to an uncle and to a cousin. Although he has no formal arrangement with them, he shares harvests when the season is good. The following excerpts from his interviews show how kin cooperate with one another to ensure tenure and livelihood security.

The one here was given to me by my paternal uncle. He’s now old. In order to prevent the land being taken over by someone, he asked me to farm it. That’s what I used to plant okra… He just told me to ‘be’ there. At the end of the season when the harvest is good, I give him something. But he hasn’t told me to give him something at the end of the season. He’s like my father. Today if I have something, I have to give him something… It’s [also] community land, but he is the chief priest of the village. He began farming that plot from ‘infancy’. Since he has been farming there, it appears as if he owns the land… I consulted him prior to farming that land that he should give the land to me to farm it since he could no longer farm. He then told me to go ahead and farm lest some other people would farm it without his consent. He told me to be there and report any trespassers to him… A cousin,
even gave me a portion of his land... I’ll work there till he tells me to take over completely, then maybe we’ll enter into an agreement. He told me he could no longer farm so I should go and take over otherwise someone else would do so.

Although his uncle is an important figure in the community, he still relies on his kin network to protect his claims to the land. KG acts as a witness to his uncle by guarding the land with his presence while increasing his own holdings and ability to cultivate more land.

Elders and community members rely on relationships rather than documents to acquire and maintain access to land. One participant indicated that documents do not establish access to land, they can merely act as a witness to the claim in the event of a sale. Within the community documents are not a part of resource relations. Elders are not totally against documentation. They in fact prefer clear documentation for sale and lease agreements with outsiders. However, within the community they prefer to see that the holdings are registered to the stool and the customary system of land transfer continues. As the discussion above indicates, residents in the community draw upon their participation in social institutions and the negotiability of custom to ensure ongoing access to land. The findings correlate with Berry’s (1997) argument that “membership in social institutions creates opportunities for people to engage in negotiation/struggle, rather than guaranteeing outcomes (subsistence, identity, etc.) or reproducing stable consistent social relationships.” She argues that researchers should see indeterminancy and ambiguity as important components of institutional capacity and resource access rather than seeing them as obstacles to secure access and sound decision making.
Tenure Building Strategies

The tenure-building strategies in Afuaman are particularly interesting because of the multiple layers of struggle that can be identified through the analysis of one particular development intervention in the community. As Schroeder (1999) demonstrates development intervention are given new meanings as they are incorporated and reinterpreted within the context of inter- and intra-household resource politics. Just as Gray and Levane (2001) show that investments in farms may have multiple purposes which include environmental remediation and tenure building, the residents of Afuaman have multiple motivations for participating in a new agroforestry project. An analysis of a three year (1998-2001) community agroforestry project led by the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) reinforces that tree planting is an important part of protecting and building tenure security within households, the community and in an ongoing struggle with the state over the compulsory acquisition of land. Through the agroforestry project relationships and their meanings are re-negotiated by individuals and groups seeking to assert new claims and reassert existing claims to land. The agroforestry project has become both a community strategy and an individual strategy for articulating and re-negotiating land rights.

The representative from ADRA specifically stated that participation in the program, launched in 31 communities in the Ga District, was conditional on having undisputed land resources. The NGO was unaware that the land in Afuaman has been acquired by the State and that the Ministry has been working in recent years on a relocation plan. ADRA started the project to target food security, environmental conservation, health and nutrition, and community cooperation. Seventeen people in the community are participating in the project. Of these seventeen participants, eight are ‘strangers’ and eight are women who include four of the ‘strangers.’ Initially the members of the
agroforestry group explained their participation in the project to reflect the NGOs priorities. However, in a later discussion of the customary norm that trees are properties, the leader of the group explained that the overriding reason the community participated in the project was to send a message to the State that they were not planning to relinquish their land. Not only were trees planted to send the message that residents felt they owned the land, they also reinforced their claims because the State promises to compensate for trees. Participants and informants in the Ministry of Lands and Forestry and the Department of Town and Country Planning doubted that the Water and Sewerage Corporation, to whom the land has been allocated, can afford to pay compensation for these new plantations and pre-existing oil palm plantations (especially in addition to reconstructing the buildings and infrastructure of the village which may already prove too expensive). Participants made it very clear that the recent campaign to construct concrete houses and to plant trees was a deliberate attempt to stop the relocation process.

The trees have also been used as a tenure-building strategy by ‘strangers’ and women. This has required in the case of the ‘strangers’ new arrangements with the elders to reinforce their relationships and identities as ‘strangers.’ In the struggle with the State the participation of ‘strangers’ is required for community solidarity. However, if the community can use the idiom that trees are properties to reinforce their land claims vis-a-vis the state, then ‘strangers’ can also access the same idiom to reinforce their claims vis-a-vis the stool. After the project was started and the elders realized the local level implications of the strategy, all of the ‘strangers’ were summoned to see the elders and work out a sharecropping arrangement. According to JT,

they only called the strangers to come and sign an agreement because the land doesn’t belong to them...When we do certain types of cropping on the land they can easily take it away from us but when we do this long-term it means that we are taking the land from them. That is why we have to sign an agreement.
Within the context of the community’s struggle with the State it was necessary for the elders to re-negotiate their relationship with ‘strangers’ and reassert their authority as the administrators of stool lands.

Similarly the project may have provided opportunities for women to access a particular tenure strategy which they do not or cannot normally access. A few elderly women supported their husbands’ oil palm plantations because they were seen as providing a pension for their retirement from farming. Typically women emphasized crops that were seasonal, short cycle, flexible and lucrative and in fact claimed that women were not very interested in trees. Their remarks do not make sense in view of the fact that nearly half of the participants in the project are women. Women face a symbolic obstacle in acquiring properties such as trees as well as a financial obstacle in terms of the start-up investment for a tree farm. The agroforestry project may have allowed women to overcome both of these obstacles. In the first instance the seedlings were provided to the group on credit by the NGO. Participants are expected to pay back their debt after the first harvest in 2001. More importantly, women were able to access additional land for the trees from their husbands. In doing so they masked their own strategic use of the trees as property norm by calling attention to their public support of the community’s efforts. This may explain why women down-played their interest in planting trees during other moments in the research process. The dynamic of course raises the question: what happens to women’s efforts if the community is successful and their individual strategies are suddenly more transparent? The multiple layers of the tenure strategies in Afuaman point to the richness and complexity of resource relations and uncover the variety of scales at which different relationships and practices are made meaningful.
**Conclusion**

The evidence from Afuaman shows that social relations and community relationships are critical for accessing land. The findings illustrate that custom must be analyzed in terms of the everyday experiences of people negotiating customary categories and, in so doing, negotiating their relationships with one another. The results of an in-depth study reveals the richness, fluidity and flexibility of customary law. Since, as has been shown in the literature and in the findings from the study of intra-urban agriculture in Accra, customary norms are reasserted in urban resource relations by farmers at different sites, this discussion adds value to the over-all analysis of access to land for UA. Residents draw on their participation in social institutions such as marriage, ethnicity, kinship and class and participation in formal organizations to access land and protect their land claims.

4. **Conclusion**

Table 4 summarizes the key relationships which mediated access to land at all five of the sites discussed in Part B. It underscores that rights in land are rights through people and suggests that policy-makers need to engage with this idea in order to establish efficient and equitable policies which meet the needs and address the unique circumstances of farmers in different property regimes. It also points to key relationships and social networks that authorities can utilize to implement programs and policies.
| Customary Lands: La Stool Lands | Social Institutions: kinship, ethnicity, marriage  
Government: agricultural extension officer, MP  
Formal Relationship: La Farmers’ Association  
Informal Relationship: Borrower-Caretaker |
|-------------------------------|
| Private Property: School of Hygiene | Formal Relationships: Employer-Employee  
Informal Relationships: Tenants in Residences |
|-------------------------------|
| Public Open Space: Abossey Okai | Social Institutions: kinship  
Informal Relationship: friendship, countrymen |
|-------------------------------|
| Utility Land: Dworwulu | Social Institutions: ethnicity  
Government: Ministry of Agriculture  
Formal Relationships: employer, Association  
Informal Relationships: residential neighbours, friendship |
|-------------------------------|
| Customary Land: Afuaman (Peri-Urban Area) | Social Institutions: kinship, ethnicity, class, marriage, age  
Formal Relationships: Community-Based Organizations, development projects |

The evidence from Accra suggests that farmers are comfortable accepting the notion of bundles of rights (see Kasanga et al. 1996 and Part A) since few of them contest the claims of the legitimate land owners. Only farmers with a customary claim to land adopt the language of ‘ownership’ of the land. Rather, farmers at Abossey Okai (the most vulnerable farmers) are asking for specific rights which will ensure fair notice of development and maintenance plans and increase their ability to exercise legitimate authority vis-a-vis the claims of unauthorized land users and contractors. They only make rhetorical claims to ‘own’ their farms - in so far as they are able to continue to use the land. Similarly, cultivators at the School of Hygiene are looking for systems which allow them to exercise more authority vis-a-vis claims by other cultivators. At Afuaman,
community members are satisfied with their abilities to negotiate land rights amongst themselves and are only looking to adopt formal procedures in their dealings with outsiders. Part B provides a rich, in-depth examination of the land rights and tenure relationships in these different sites in order to illuminate already existing systems and procedures for negotiating land rights based on social institutions, social networks and formal and informal relationships.

Land laws in Ghana already accommodate the notion of multiple land rights and interests on a single plot. Although only one allodial title can be registered within the boundaries of a single plot, the Land Title Registration Law (PNDCL 152) allows for the registration of multiple interests including use-rights and sharecropping agreements, lease and rental arrangements and customary titles. While this legislation has its own problems, including limited enactment since 1986 and some questions about its underlying principals (see Flynn-Dapaah 2001), it is important to recognize that Ghana already has the necessary mentality to incorporate the idea of rights bundling and multiple rights to a single plot of land. The law has some problems but it is an interesting tool for adaptation to the UA context, if people want to focus on registration systems for use rights and fixed-term agreements.

There is a generally positive attitude toward UA among authorities in Accra. Unfortunately, there is no cross-sectoral policy, let alone statements or official positions on UA, in many of the departments and ministries included in this study (see Part C). The findings from the two Accra studies discussed here point to the need for a flexible policy which can incorporate different property regimes and locally-specific governance of informal rights and norms. The evidence presents opportunities and challenges for policy-makers and practitioners. However, harnessing the already existing informal mechanisms and practices for accessing land, and then targeting activities to
enhance inclusivity and equity, may be key to implementing a successful, economical and sustainable policy for UA in Accra.
Part C: Policy and Planning
1. Introduction

Part C focuses attention on policy and planning issues by reviewing the options and practices found in literature and sharing the reactions to some of these policy options from farmers, municipal authorities and civil servants participating in the Accra study (see Part B). Specifically, the research in Accra explored the following planning and policy options:

- green belts / land reserves
- land banks
- licensing
- cooperatives
- fixed-term agreements
- land rents
- encouraging governments offices, businesses and private land owners to make idle lands available for farmers.

Other recommendations and practices from cities in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa are discussed in this report. In addition, Part C reviews key findings from the Accra study which show that rights in land are rights through people. At each site in the study there is a locally-specific form of governance for land rights which could be included in a formal policy addressing access to land for urban agriculture. This suggests that a concept such as institutional radicalization, which is used in debates over land and housing, may also be useful for urban agriculture. This concept allows lawmakers to capture pre-existing governance structures for the application and policing of new legislation and policy.
2. Background: Land Rights and Tenure Relationships for Urban Agriculture

Part A and Part B explored the hypothesis that rights in land are rights through people by examining the social relations of production in urban and peri-urban farming. The literature in Part A uncovered an array of social and political relationships which mediate access to land (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Types of Urban Tenure Relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Social Institutions</th>
<th>Affiliations / Formal and Informal Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◦ Local authorities</td>
<td>◦ kinship</td>
<td>A) With individuals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Land Registry</td>
<td>◦ customary authorities</td>
<td>◦ special friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ District Assembly</td>
<td>◦ ethnicity</td>
<td>◦ neighbours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Ruling Party Members</td>
<td>◦ conjugal ties</td>
<td>◦ care takers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ National Politicians</td>
<td></td>
<td>◦ patron-client relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦ Resistance Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>◦ Military</td>
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<td>◦ Military</td>
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Part B focused on the specific relationships that mediate access to land in and around Accra (see Table 6). Part B analyzed concrete data from two different studies, one on intra-urban agriculture, and the other on gender and land struggles in the peri-urban area of Accra. The evidence from both studies underscores the critical intervention of social networks and social institutions. Certain formal and informal relationships also play a role in making idle lands available to the
participants in the study, be it an employer, a friend or a countryman. At the same time, evidence, particularly from the peri-urban area, shows how memberships in formal organizations (not necessarily related to farming or land tenure) help women and men to forge stronger relationships with land holders allowing for more secure land rights on the part of borrowers and migrants.

Table 2 also makes apparent some of the key commonalities between the different sites.

Table 6: Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customary Lands: La Stool Lands</th>
<th>Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Institutions: kinship, ethnicity, marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government: agricultural extension officer, MP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Relationship: La Farmers’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Relationship: Borrower-Caretaker</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Property: School of Hygiene</th>
<th>Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Relationships: Employer-Employee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Relationships: Tenants in Residences</td>
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<tr>
<th>Public Open Space: Abossey Okai</th>
<th>Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Institutions: kinship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Relationship: friendship, countrymen</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility Land: Dworwulu</th>
<th>Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Institutions: ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government: Ministry of Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Relationships: employer, Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal Relationships: residential neighbours, friendship</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customary Land: Afuaman (Peri-Urban Area)</th>
<th>Key relationships/social relations mediating access to land and resource relations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Institutions: kinship, ethnicity, class, marriage, age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Relationships: Community-Based Organizations, development projects</td>
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It is evident from the results of the studies that

- land rights are social rights negotiated and re-negotiated in each locality
- land rights are part of social networks and relations that extend across farming sites, homes, communities and businesses
- tenure security is enhanced by norms and practices which reinforce existing
relationships and rights

- a system of local governance exists at each site within which farmers exercise their rights to land.

Parts A and B also explore tenure building practices that are used in conjunction with tenure relationships to access land and increase tenure security. Examination of these tenure building strategies points to the ways in which farmers occupying land in specific property regimes self-regulate in terms of cropping choices. For example, farmers on public open space and private property in Accra openly acknowledged that they do not own the land and therefore they do not invest in trees. Farmers with a customary claim to the land (a claim upheld in Ghanaian policy and law) do plant trees since they can contest the claims of others. Tree planting and other permanent investments are both symbols of their status on the land, and tenure building strategies since they reinforce land claims. Farmers who cannot adopt the language of ownership through customary law assert their authorized or unauthorized use-rights with soil building strategies and continuous cultivation of seasonal crops.

3. Tenure Relationships; Implications for Policy Development

Analyzed together the literature review, drawing from studies throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and the research results from Accra, make it apparent that the UA land question presents both challenges and opportunities for planners and policy-makers. The findings in Part A and Part B suggest the need for policies that are flexible to the locally-specific arrangements of access and community governance in different property regimes, but nonetheless provide clarity and allow for coherence between the multitude of municipal departments and government Ministries which deal with, or are affected by, urban and peri-urban agriculture. It is clear from Mbiba’s (1995) study of UA in Zimbabwe that it is problematic in the case of Harare to establish a single system, such as a
cooperative system, for all the socially and economically differentiated resource users.

The research findings from Accra also make it clear that farmers are demanding certain bundles of rights (see Kasanga et al. 1996, see also Part A) which concern the temporary use of the land rather than rights to own the land. Of the five study sites discussed in Part B, only the Ga farmers at Labadi and in Afuaman were contesting claims to own the land using customary rights. In other countries of sub-Saharan Africa where customary law has been replaced with other tenure systems - individual freehold or state ownership - it may mean that all farmers in the city are seeking specific bundles of rights concerning their use of the land. Kasanga et al.’s (1996) concept of bundles of rights, points to an opportunity for policy-makers, municipal authorities, businesses and NGOs to take action to ensure that farmers have the necessary set of rights to ensure their livelihoods and protect their businesses without jeopardizing the rights of the land owner to release the land or develop it.

Strategic intervention may not require too much additional work on the part of authorities or businesses. The evidence in Volumes One and Two illustrates that at any given site there is some sort of local governance which enforces the socially constructed norms and rules for accessing land. These are not likely to disappear even when formal systems are put into place. Therefore, as stated in Part A, the question to ask is how can the State harness and support local social networks and encourage formal organizations to assist their members to access land? Institutional radicalization may provide policy-makers with the conceptual tool to work with the already existing governance of land rights. According to Mabojange (1992: x), “institutional radicalization refers to change processes which seek to preserve the obvious forms of existing institutions while radically transforming their substance.” He also states that “the State must work deliberately and
purposefully through institutions and practices with which society is already familiar” (Ibid: x). In the case of UA, this implies that new policies should find ways of working with existing social practices transforming them minimally to ensure compliance with new regulations or procedures necessary for the State to adequately enforce, monitor and service urban agriculture. The complex language of institutional radicalization may not be necessary to incorporate already existing practices and norms for negotiating land rights. Given the financial and human constraints many governments in sub-Saharan African cities face, it would seem logical that systems are adopted which require the least interference of municipal authorities as possible. This is precisely the approach adopted by municipalities in Europe where Home Gardener Associations lease land from the municipality under certain conditions and the land is then sub-leased to gardeners. The conditions and rules of the municipality and the association are governed and enforced by the association at each site, not the municipality. This makes the program manageable and cost-effective (Urlich Sabel-Koschella: SGUA communication Oct 26 2001). Cities in sub-Saharan Africa may wish to consider elements or adaptations of this type of program in order to capture locally-specific norms and practices within the city that ensures a reasonable amount of flexibility to address different property regimes, production systems and needs of cultivators in the city.

4. Exploring debates in policy and planning

In terms of planning and policy development the discussion of access to land moves beyond the individual and locally specific land struggles discussed in Part B to encompass a discussion of struggles over space. As guest editor Beacon Mbiba suggests in UA Magazine Vol. 4 (2001: 4), “rather than claiming space for urban agriculture, ways to share space with other users has to be sought” (emphasis in the original). Urban agriculture raises many spatial questions, the most
significant being how do we see urban spaces? How do planners, practitioners and politicians envisage the city? Mbiba’s (2001) exploration of the political economy aspects of UA explores four different views of the city in order to engage in questions relevant to the political economy of UA in Eastern and Southern Africa. Likewise in an analysis of urban agriculture in Lilongwe, Potts (1989: 325) suggests that “one of the key factors affecting the nature of environmental and conservation practices in Lilongwe is its development as a ‘garden-city’.” The commitment in Lilongwe to maintaining the city’s image has made it difficult to visibly incorporate low-income settlements and informal economy practices such as UA into the city. Jarlov (2001) suggests that Western concepts of the industrial city are inappropriate in South Africa and other developing countries. She suggest that more suitable systems “must be systems that enable not only entrepreneurs and employed people but also unemployed people without the resources to earn a decent living. Instead of the industrial city concept, it ought to be a mixture of agricultural, industrial, and handicraft systems, where the limits between producers and consumers, work and recreation, housing areas and work places are weakened or nullified” (Ibid: 10). Several other studies have also noted that inconsistent enforcement, vague statements regarding official attitudes and a lack of cohesive and coherent cross-sectoral policy and legislation are critical gaps in the administration of UA in African cities (see for example Kironde 1995; Mbiba 1994, 1995, 2000; Obosu-Mensah 1999; Potts 1989). In terms of land tenure and property rights, urban authorities are often presented with a challenge to satisfy basic human needs as well as economic uses and entrepreneurial interests. As Doebele (1987: 8) points out, land tenure is “at every moment, for every society, a question of striking a balance between the need for social control and fairness in access to land, and an equally pressing need for private initiatives to ensure efficiency, and satisfaction of the human yearning for territorial control.”
Accessing Land for UA: Recommendations and Practices from Different Cities

Recently UA planning, policies and processes have garnered increasing attention from UA practitioners, organizations and municipal and national authorities (see for example Bakker et al. 2000; MDP 2001; UA Magazine 2001 v. 4; Quon 1999, IDRC Project #4155 “Urban Agriculture and Feeding the Latin American and Caribbean Cities: Best Practices and City Consultation”). Recent informal discussions within the Support Group on Urban Agriculture (SGUA) have also dealt with some of the practical implications of implementing policies which facilitate access to land, including conditions, restrictions and rules for community gardens. It is increasingly being recognized that UA can be viewed not only as a challenge to urban planners, municipal authorities and other stakeholders in urban property rights, but also as a potential ally or tool to assist planners and protect lands from other more permanent unauthorized uses - a situation which proves to be mutually beneficial for current and potential urban gardeners and farmers who desire (more) secure land (see Bourque 2000, Mbiba 2001; Streiffler1999). De Zeeuw et al.’s (2001: 166-168) summary of the workshops and plenaries at the Growing Cities Growing Foods UA policy conference lists a number of general policy recommendations which could be modified to fit the particular circumstances in a given city or State:

1. Revise existing zoning bylaws and integrate UA into zoning plans
2. Promote UA as a temporary use of public and private lands
3. Promote multifunctional land use and encourage community participation in the management of urban open spaces
4. Include space for individual or community gardens in new public housing projects and private building schemes.

As Drescher (2001: 8) points out, “a single blueprint cannot be prescribed for this [integrating UA]
as future activities would have to select a spatial and sectoral focus relevant to the local context.”

Recommendations and practices have emerged from a number of city-specific studies which add details to those listed above, as well as additional recommendations arising from specific studies. Table 7 shares recommendations and practices from selected cities in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.\footnote{This is not an exhaustive list of all recommendations, policies and programs but a selective list showing several potential and actual policies and programs that have been implemented in various cities.}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country / City</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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| Ghana, Accra: (Obosu-Mensah 1999: 208-209) | • signboards at every potential farming area indicating from which government office farmers should seek permission before cultivating the land so that farmers are registered to the site and can be properly warned before the land is developed.  
• provide tax relief incentives to private land owners to encourage them to rent land to urban cultivators  
• enact a by-law stipulating a minimum three months notice before retrieving the land for other uses  
• for apartments (increasingly popular in Ghana) the government should stipulate special building codes that ensure that land at the site is set aside behind and in between the buildings for urban cultivation |
| Tanzania (Mlozi et al. 1992: 293)       | • officially allocate urban lands for UA  
• urban authorities should protect and improve usable land for cultivation  
• small urban groups should form cooperatives to ensure the delivery of services and resources including credit |
| Tanzania, Dar es Salaam (Jacobi et al. 2000: 276-277) | • medium-term lease arrangements  
• official campaigns should target business with large tracts of unused or under-used land to allow UA |
| Democratic Republic of Congo (Streiffeler 1999: 178) | • temporary use licenses for public land that is not yet ready to be developed  
• designate land around public buildings for agricultural purposes  
• urban cultivators should form cooperative organizations to access land |
| Country / City                          | Practice / Policy / (Pilot) Programs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Zimbabwe, Harare (Mbiba 1995: 36)      | • form a cooperative and register with the local authority for plot allocation and permission |
| Cuba (Gonzales et al. 2000: 334)        | • municipal laws have been changed to ensure that people who wish to farm have the legal priority to occupy unused land |
| Ecuador, Quito (Dubbeling et al. 2001: 32) | • farmers pay symbolic rents for municipal lands  
• 10% discount on property taxes for private lands under cultivation  
• long-term (5-10 years) use-rights agreements for municipal lands used for agricultural activities coordinated by producer associations and agro-industries |
| Rwanda, Butare (Pottier 1989)          | • Village Pilote de la Faim in Rango a housing estate in Butare provides accommodations and garden space for 75 households |
| Tanzania (Mougeot 2000)                | • permanent land use in new public housing estates |
Table 3 provides useful recommendations and practices; however, some of these (Quito, Ecuador, for example) are only at the pilot stage and are still being thought through in terms of practical aspects of requirements and restrictions (Marielle Dubbeling: SGUA communication Oct 25 2001). Others, such as the cooperative system in Harare, have already been criticized because they have been largely ignored by producers. Chaipa (2001: 18) argues that the cooperative system in Harare is “more of a manifestation of the ruling parties experimentation with socialist ideologies, than a carefully thought out planning intervention to address the needs of citizens.” While Pottier (1989: 461) argues that the Village Pilote de la Faim should be “treated as a potential blueprint for future town planning,” he also points to problems with the implementation of the pilot program, particularly restrictions on certain cropping practices using banana groves and bans on the production of indigenous sorghum and the crops grown in association with it.

5. Reactions from Accra to Policy Options

This section shares reactions to several policy options presented to stakeholders in Accra including cultivators, land owners, municipal authorities, politicians and State officials. The following options were explored with various groups in Accra:

- green belts / land reserves
- land banks
- licensing
- cooperatives

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8 Pottier (1989) criticizes the programs reliance on hierarchical knowledge which focuses on imported crops and cropping systems and values the knowledge of the agricultural extension services while dismissing the knowledge of local farmers and women. The project has therefore been largely unsuccessful, and difficult for new residents. However Pottier believes that the planning behind the project could be an important way of addressing land and food shortages.
The earlier research in the peri-urban area of Accra focused on gender and land struggles in an agricultural community. The research engaged specifically with the new National Land Policy and the Land Title Registration Law (PNDC L 152). The policy options listed in this paper were not explored with this particular group. The participants in this study wanted documentation for limited purposes, mainly for dealings with outsiders and to ensure that alodial title to the land was registered to the customary land holding group (the stool). Internally, the residents preferred the use of unwritten customary norms which allowed for ongoing negotiation of land rights which were necessary to deal with the social, political and economic uncertainty of their particular geography and historical period. For more details of this particular analysis see Flynn-Dapaah 2001.

**Background to the Research in Accra**

The research in Accra was mainly exploring the hypothesis that rights in land in urban areas are rights through people (see Part A and Part B). The four sites included in the study in Accra were characterized by different property regimes:

1. Customary Land Holding Group: La Farmers
2. Private Property: School of Hygiene, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
3. Public Open Space: Abossey Okai

In order to capture the unique experiences of individual farmers and groups of farmers in each property regime and at each location, the research used mainly qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews, farmer profiles and focus group meetings. For this reason some of the policy options were explored in greater details at specific sites. In addition to the cultivators, key informants were interviewed from the Lands Commission, the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands (Ministry of Lands, Mines and Forestry), the Metropolitan Directorate for The Ministry of...
Agriculture of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the Department of Town and Country Planning (AMA), the administration of the School of Hygiene, the MP and agricultural extension officer for the La Constituency, neighbouring land users, the Volta River Authority, and the chief and elders of the Ga Manshie Stool.

For easy reference Table 8 presents the reactions of farmers at the various sites to the policy options. The table underscores some important issues that need to be considered by policy makers. First and foremost, it is evident that farmers working under specific property regimes or farming for specific purposes were interested in different mechanisms or programs to ensure their tenure security. Customary land holders make claims to ‘own’ their land and are not interested in programs such as licensing. They are looking to the State to protect their claims to the land - a request which is in keeping with the provisions of the National Land Policy committed to avoiding landlessness. Their priority is therefore a green belt, properly sign-posted and enforced. While they do not see cooperatives as necessary for accessing land, they use the La Farmers Association as a mechanism to exchange information and receive training and resources. Farmers at Dworwulu are relatively secure; however, they see the benefits which a cooperative can bring to the people at that site. These farmers have relied on their organization to intervene in potential land disputes and to communicate with officials. While they have never had disputes with the land owner (Volta River Authority) they have called upon the Municipal Director for Agriculture to intervene in dispute between themselves and the Ministry of Housing and Works over the yearly maintenance of the gutters at the site - an activity which could have destroyed their crops (see Part B for details). Cultivators at the School of Hygiene see themselves as small-scale gardeners engaging in subsistence production. They were the least interested in any intervention that required a human or financial commitment. Since the administration permits and participates in UA, the cultivators feel relatively secure. Although
there is a social network mediating access to land at this site, they expressed little interest in formalizing the group because of the commitment this would involve. The farmers at Abossey Okai who farm exotic vegetables year-round for market sales were interested in any reasonable intervention or system that would increase their security on the land and enhance their authority vis-a-vis other unauthorized users. These farmers were the most vulnerable of the four groups included in the study. They are particularly concerned by the lack of respect they have received from contractors and neighbouring land users, and they wish to receive proper notice of development plans and maintenance activities at the adjacent gutter.

In all cases farmers asserted a certain degree of individuality which needs to be maintained even if they must be organized in some manner. Moreover, there are farmers who are not interested in committing time or money to organizations which do not produce immediate benefits. Issues of trust are also a hindrance to formal organizations. For example, a farmer at the School of Hygiene was wary about joining groups where he did not know the members well. He claims that the success of a group “[d]epends on the group. If the group makes an agreement with one man and there is no difference and cheating we can work together. But if there is cheating inside it won’t work.” This discussion, as well as the evidence discussed in section three, suggests that successful policies and legislation must be flexible enough to incorporate multiple needs and desires of farmers.
Table 8: Farmers’ Responses to Policy Options

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Belts/Land Reserves</td>
<td>Strong proponents of a green belt - need sign posting and proper enforcement.</td>
<td>Gov’t needs to reserve good quality land.</td>
<td>Gov’t needs to reserve good quality land.</td>
<td>Gov’t needs to reserve good quality land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Banks</td>
<td>Might use them but not likely if it is not near their home or workplace. Need to know and trust the people where you are farming, especially if you cannot be there regularly.</td>
<td>Might consult but use of land depends on location and people there. Not with individual, private land holders b/c they do not want to be in the middle of land disputes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td>Not applicable (these farmers use their own land).</td>
<td>Perhaps if assigned by the School or hospital admin - but documents not always effective.</td>
<td>Agree if it provides security and enhances legitimacy.</td>
<td>Willing: farmers will need assistance with forms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperatives</td>
<td>Have a Farmer’s Assoc. that works with the extension agent and the MP, however not all farmers can or want to join a group.</td>
<td>Not interested.</td>
<td>Agree if it provides the necessary security.</td>
<td>Already in the process of formalizing a cooperative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-term Agreements</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>Interested in such a system to provide more authority among users and to facilitate communication.</td>
<td>Would invest more in farms and ensure they are given proper notice of maintenance or development.</td>
<td>Not applicable (land cannot be developed).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Rents</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>No - they do not make money from their farms.</td>
<td>Agree if it provides necessary security.</td>
<td>Not an issue here but would pay at other sites if land is good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Land Owners to Make Idle Lands Available for Farmers</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>Program could work but no more lands are available at this site.</td>
<td>Support as a means to get more land, but it should be inside the city. Not with individual, private land holders b/c they do not want to be in the middle of land disputes.</td>
<td>Support - will also travel to the peri-urban area if land is good.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key informants also discussed many policy options in semi-structured interviews. A number of important issues arise and are reinforced by the insights of the key informants. In a best-case scenario, a coherent, shared, cross-sectoral policy for UA is required. This could also be the case in other countries where regulations affecting UA are formed on an ad hoc basis or laws are inconsistent or the policies and practices of one department (appear to) contradict those of another. Mbaye and Moustier (2000: 247), for example, point to the fact that Dakar has no formal framework or written policies to deal with urban agriculture. As Drescher (2001: 8) points out, it is necessary to see UA as an official or formal activity in order to integrate it into urban planning. Kitalla (et al. 2001: 23) show support for Drescher’s argument in Dar es Salaam where the implementation of The Strategic Urban Development Plan (SUDP) shifts thinking away from a Master Plan mentality that sees UA as a transitional urban land use, to one which recognizes it as a formal and valuable activity in the city. This has led to more strategic efforts to regulate, encourage and support UA.

Table 9 presents the reactions of key informants to different policy options. All of them recognize the value of urban agriculture to cultivators, to urban residents and some could see the value of UA to the city and planning. However in addition to shortages in finances, human resources and capacity, the departments are hindered from taking any action because their own departments lack any policy or official position on UA, let alone sharing a position or policy with other government stakeholders. They do not consider UA (however important) because it is not yet seen as part of their program or mandate. Only the customary land holders have constitutional, legislative and policy protection of their land rights through the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands. Several government informants stated that public education to rally support for UA and a policy were the critical starting points that would allow them to implement programs and procedures for cultivators to access land and other resources, and to provide tenure security and other services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Option</th>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Lands Commission</th>
<th>Admin. of Stool Lands</th>
<th>Metropolitan Directorate</th>
<th>Town and Country Planning</th>
<th>MP and Extension Officer for La</th>
<th>Volta River Authority</th>
<th>Chief and Elders of the Ga Manshie Stool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Belts/Land Reserves</td>
<td>Green belts are a part of planning but they are not specifically for UA. It is difficult to talk about reserving land for UA but peri-urban is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Some urban areas could be designated for UA.</td>
<td>Support greens belts (must be enforced). May require govt to compensate owners who cannot develop because of the regulation. Need to zone for agric. Already encourage peri-urban chiefs to conserve land for their subjects.</td>
<td>Support green belts, zones and parks.</td>
<td>Green belts and perhaps some lands zoned for recreation. Could have zoned for UA but it was not an issue in the past and when the need came up competitive prices favoured building.</td>
<td>Support green belts but people seek the highest economic use for the land. Need to consider paying some type of rent to owners as an incentive to insure that the land is not sold for development.</td>
<td>Reserve land at the outskirts or in green belts - intra-urban land is for development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Banks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td>Could be a future role for this department.</td>
<td>Support - once it is legitimized then they can be serviced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A - their subjects already have the necessary rights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperatives</td>
<td>Need cooperatives for communication.</td>
<td>It is easier to deal with groups for the purpose of enforcement of regulations and providing improvements.</td>
<td>Need farmers to be organized so that issues can be discussed and they can inform them of low-risk areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Already deal with a group</td>
<td>N/A there are already a legally recognized group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed-term Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Rents</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Land Owners to Make Idle Lands Available for Farmers</td>
<td>UA may allow government to strategically place farmers in low-lying areas to prevent unauthorized development.</td>
<td>Advocates custodial arrangements.</td>
<td>This department only deals with public land - they do not handle allocations on private land.</td>
<td></td>
<td>An option where land is still available.</td>
<td>Risky to formally endorse UA at their site because of hazards of high tension power lines. They officially turn a blind eye.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
On a general level, farmers at all sites strongly emphasized the need for a coherent policy and extensive public education to ensure that agriculture is seen as a legitimate land use in the city. This is an attitude shared by key informants in all departments. According to the informant at the Lands Commission, now is the time to recognize the contribution of UA to the economy and to seriously consider UA in planning. This requires official consultation between different departments and levels of government. The work of the Metropolitan Director for the Ministry of Agriculture, Accra Metropolitan Assembly is, however, laying the ground work to come up with a policy for the AMA. His three year work plan addresses technical issues, marketing, extension, youth, land-use planning and UA policy development. The plan calls for cross-District collaboration, particularly for animal vaccinations and pest control. Planned activities will include local study tours of farmers, surveys for appropriate lands and agricultural extension for new pilot communities. It is evident that the timing in Accra is ideal for legitimizing UA in official policy and in public perception by establishing a cross-sectoral policy and using the media to elevate the status of urban agriculture in the eyes of the general public. This alone would allow vulnerable farmers to exercise more power and authority vis-a-vis other unauthorized land-users and to direct their concerns to the appropriate office or authority.

The responses of various stakeholders and the findings discussed in section five point to some challenges which need to be addressed. The first challenge is finding ways to open land to people who fall between the gaps of existing social networks. One solution here may be to follow the example from Adamo (1999), where female farmers accessed irrigated land from the military by sub-leasing plots from the local women’s organization. In this particular case the women’s organization negotiated to rent a large plot of land from the military. This was then sub-leased by members of the organization. The women paid less than they would have had they each negotiated with individual soldiers and the rent charged was equitable among the members. The association also took into account economic disparity to ensure that poorer women could still rent some of this
land. At the same time, the association also helped women to access credit by negotiating loans with the Agricultural Development Bank. Finally the active involvement of the local organization helped women to negotiate their commitments to their husbands by elevating the importance of their agricultural activities. The municipal authorities may need to investigate NGOs which can become more involved in similar programs.

The other issue is the need to balance many cultivators’ wishes to maintain relative autonomy and the need of various departments to see people organized. It is important to recognize that the desire of government and municipal agencies in Accra to see farmers organized is not primarily for land delivery, but for communication, enforcement of health and environmental regulation and to provide services. This may just require some more creative approaches that will offer the same results as a cooperative system without burdening farmers. If farmers are hesitant to join formal cooperatives or associations, the body responsible for UA could establish different systems. For example, the city could ask that each site elects one or two people to act in as ‘site captains’¹⁰. Site captains would attend meetings with the Metropolitan Director and act as a liaison between the farmers at a particular site and the appropriate administration who would provide fora to discuss problems, needs and to relay development plans to the farmers at a specific site. In Accra where the Metropolitan Director of the Ministry of Agriculture, AMA, is supposed to be the first point of inquiry for farmers, the relationship between this office, farmers and other departments and stakeholders needs to be clarified and strengthened. The site captain meetings could provide a venue to streamline communications for various departments. The city may need to consider some sort of compensation (in cash or kind) to the site captains, who can be elected on an annual basis, to ensure their full participation. It is apparent from the interviews in Accra that, if the system works effectively such that farmers see early gains from it, they will support it. Presently there is

¹⁰This would be similar to a ‘street captain’ program established by some universities in Canada to keep students living in concentrated areas of off-campus in touch with university concerns and community concerns directed to the university (see for example Queen’s University, Canada)
an agricultural extension officer for each of the six sub-metros in Accra. These extension officers could liaise with the site captain in between meetings to maintain communications at each site. The program would create a new channel for communication and allow agricultural extension officers to focus on technical interventions and servicing of sites. Such a program could be seen as a relatively non-intrusive way to harness the already existing norms and rules at a particular site by cooperating with the current informal symbolic and practical leaders at each site.

Recommendations

In Accra it is necessary to recognize the different needs of farmers in various property regimes. Several recommendations arise from the foregoing discussion. In order to maintain flexibility, harness the already existing governance at each site, protect land holdings and increase the availability of land for new farmers, I suggest the following:

1. Formulate a cross-sectoral policy on UA and assign one office to co-ordinate the policy and liaise with farmers.

2. Launch a public education program using radio, television and print media to advertise the official position and raise the legitimacy of UA in the eyes of the general public.

3. Sign post vacant government lands with information concerning minimum period prior to development and directing farmers to the appropriate office in the event of inquiry or dispute (this should be a central office).

4. Sign post lands zoned as green belts and develop mechanisms to enforce zoning and provide incentives to leave the lands undeveloped.

5. Establish a minimum period for delivery of proper notice to develop lands, as well as procedures for registering notice with the Metropolitan Director on sites with a set minimum number of farmers (i.e. 10 or more farmers).

6. Formally permit UA on undeveloped government land using fixed term agreements and licensing programs.

7. Encourage private land owners to allow cultivation on unused or underused land by offering tax incentives and assist administrators with policies and procedures to deal with UA on their sites.
8. Encourage NGOs to lease irrigated lands on behalf of farmers who can then sub-lease it at a fair and consistent price. NGOs can establish rules for these sites.

9. Establish a ‘site captain’ program to facilitate communication, regulation and servicing of different sites and provide fora for farmers to articulate concerns and needs and bring forward land disputes.

6. Conclusion

There can be no blueprint across sub-Saharan Africa given the variety of property regimes. The findings discussed in Part C suggest the need for multi-stakeholder fora to create effective and equitable policies. Evidence from across sub-Saharan Africa (see Part A) underscores that social relations and social networks play critical roles in the urban agriculture land question and that they need to be properly investigated and incorporated into policy for UA. In-depth studies exploring the multiple means of access in different property regimes and farming systems, such as that in Part B, provide rich evidence to inform policy debates. It is also apparent that a balance between farmers’ autonomy and the needs of authorities must be addressed in more creative ways than simply mandating cooperatives. UA challenges law-makers and municipal authorities to be innovative and to find ways to regulate UA while recognizing the social and economic benefits to farmers and for themselves. In cities like Accra where UA is generally accepted by authorities, the challenge is to develop a cross-sectoral policy and means of co-ordinating UA through a central body which communicates with all interested parties. More attention needs to be payed to uncovering locally-specific needs, rules and capacities to participate in a formal UA program. This may require experimentation and re-design, using pilot programs and additional research as mechanisms to test multiple solutions and interventions within the same city.
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