

UNDERSTANDING THE LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN IN THE LOCAL
FOODSCAPE: A CASE STUDY OF ACCRA, GHANA

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Women farmers in Accra, Ghana function in spaces that are delineated by gendered social, political and economic structures. It is essential for planners and policymakers to understand the gender dynamics involved, so as not to increase burdens on women's productive and reproductive roles on urban farms. This thesis problematizes the solitary subject of urban women in development, situating them into the context of Accra's urban and peri-urban spaces. My research draws on feminist theory to highlight the intersectionalities of women in Accra and the way that their individual experiences are impacted by homogenous development frameworks. The case study examines the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture in addressing the needs of women farmers in Accra. The findings of this study acknowledge various forms of empowerment and autonomy that women experience as urban farmers in Accra, and they highlight how the hybridity of urban agriculture is challenging mainstream urban development.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Urban Agriculture in Growing Cities: A Global Perspective	1
Purpose and Significance of the Study	4
Theoretical Framework	9
Scope and Organization of the Study	10
II. URBAN AGRICULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT	13
Defining ‘Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture’	13
A Landscape of Hybridity	16
Globalization, Urbanization and Urban Food Supply	18
Urban Agriculture as a Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy	20
Gender Considerations in Urban Agriculture	22
Situating Urban Agriculture in Accra, Ghana	24
Operation Feed Yourself	25
Urban and Peri-Urban Farming Today	27
III. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN AGRICULTURE	30
Feminist Thought in Urban Development	30
Women and Development in ‘Place’	32
Urbanization and Women’s Hybrid Spaces	36
Empowerment and Autonomy on the Farm	38
Intersectionality, Difference and ‘Lived Experiences’	42

Chapter	Page
IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	45
Data Collection	45
Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Sites.....	49
Dzorwulu.....	49
La	51
Kwabenya	51
Atomic.....	53
Data Analysis	54
Challenges and Limitations of the Study	54
V. WOMEN CULTIVATING THE CITY	58
A City of Contrasts	59
Women in the Local Foodscape.....	62
Feminization and Commercialization of Urban Agriculture	62
Intersectionality and (In)formality	64
Transcending Gender	64
‘Survival’ vs. ‘Commercial’ Farming.....	67
(In)formality and Marginalization	68
Hybridity and the Rural-Urban Interface.....	73
Labor Segmentation and ‘Double Burdens’	77
‘Men’s Work’	78
The ‘Double Burden’	79
Empowerment and Autonomy	81

Chapter	Page
Cultivating the City and Family.....	83
Changing Spaces and Expectations	85
VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	88
Intersections, Challenges and Empowerment.....	89
Resistance and the Urban Farm	92
Implications of My Research.....	94
APPENDICES	98
A. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	98
B. FARMER INTERVIEW SCRIPT.....	100
C. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM	103
D. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM IN TWI.....	105
REFERENCES CITED.....	106

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Picture of irrigated vegetable farm in the Dzorwulu urban farming site	49
2. Map showing the physical characteristics of the Dzorwulu urban farming site. ...	50
3. Picture of irrigated vegetable farm in Kwabenya, Ga-East District of Accra	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Urban Agriculture in Growing Cities: A Global Perspective

As rapid urbanization persists throughout the majority of today's large cities, concern over access to sufficient foodstuffs, employment and basic resources within urban areas has also grown. Governments and non-governmental actors have already begun to recognize the need for attention on urban development initiatives to meet the needs of growing populations in cities due, in part, to rural-urban migration. An increase of low-income and urban poor populations experience first-hand some of the growing pressures in acquiring sufficient and healthy food and livelihoods in today's largest cities. Rapid food price increases in 2007-2008 brought significant attention to a contemporary food crisis and focused policy change heavily on fixing the bottlenecks of rural food production and global food imports, while discounting the opportunities in improving urban food security initiatives. With over half of the world's population living in urban areas, policymakers across the globe are exploring ways to centralize the role of food production and distribution in cities more effectively and sustainably (Hovorka et al., 2009).

An outpouring of research and development initiatives during the last decade have found practical solutions and major benefits in urban agriculture (UA) activities in addressing some of today's urban development needs. While UA has existed in and around most cities for decades, the last 30 years has shown a dramatic increase of informalization of UA activities in growing cities, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa

(SSA) (Mougeot, 2005). A history of modernization and structural adjustment programs from the 1980s and 1990s, combined with ongoing globalization processes are often criticized for instigating a surge of rural-urban migration, shaping a flourishing informal sector in cities, including a growth of urban agricultural activity led by rural migrants. In many cities, urban households grow crops and raise livestock in order to produce food to supplement their incomes. Others engage in urban or peri-urban agriculture (UPA) operations in and around major cities, while playing a significant role in producing and distributing much of the urban foodstuffs through local urban and peri-urban markets. It is estimated that over 200 million urban farmers produce food for urban markets and account for 15-20 percent of global food production (Van Veenhuizen, 2006).

Researchers suggest that UA is useful in creating more sustainable cities by employing pro-poor solutions that encourage sustainable livelihoods systems, income generation, and urban food security. While some local governments through SSA are coming around to the proposed benefits of including UA in urban planning strategies, others continue to encourage more profitable real-estate development while pushing farmers and land cultivation further to the fringes of their cities.

Similar to UA, growing recognition of women's role in feeding urban populations is already helping to change urban policy frameworks in many cities. It is well known now that in addition to being the majority of rural farmers around the world, women farmers are also in the majority in cities throughout SSA (Hovorka et al., 2009). While frameworks for gender and agricultural development exist in the rural context, gender and agriculture activities differ in urban conditions and policymakers need to better

understand the dynamics involved before implementing rural-based development initiatives for women farmers in the world's cities.

Women are overrepresented in the urban informal sector and continue to comprise the majority of informal entrepreneurs, particularly as urban vegetable producers and market traders through SSA (Chen, 2008). A large number of female-headed households are vulnerable to food insecurity due to a lack of sustainable wage labor and support from local policy initiatives. Complexities surrounding women's experiences in urban agriculture stem from shifting cultural and gender dynamics in urban environments, which often hybridize women's identities, responsibilities, spaces and roles. Women's urban livelihoods are complex and not easily characterized, and the trade-offs many face between their productive and reproductive roles are often more acute in urban than rural areas (Maxwell et al., 2000). Women's barriers stem from their limited access to tangible and intangible resources, formal employment options, and the cultural division of labor at the household level. Growing literature pointing out the significance of urban agriculture happening in peripheral spaces surrounding cities are quick to suggest that farmers' livelihoods and roles are complicated by the hybridized space that straddles the rural-urban interface (Simon, 2008). Many of the women in the informal sector in the urban and peri-urban sector work and live in hybrid spaces¹ with gendered dimensions that shape their livelihoods and self-fulfillment.

Peri-urban spaces, in particular, do not fall into simple categories of typical urban or rural environments or with typical livelihoods for women. As many women farmers in

¹ I engage the concept of hybridity and hybrid space and lives through an understanding that urban and peri-urban lives and farming spaces have aspects of urban and rural life. These distinct features become blurred and interchange at various degrees.

cities are migrants from rural, often food-producing regions, their needs may differ from that of both the urban and rural women's needs. This only emphasizes the need for policymakers, NGO's and other actors to better understand the lived experiences of women farmers in UPA, if the goal is to help develop more sustainable livelihoods for them and their communities, before applying mainstream development initiatives that might increase their daily burdens. Current development initiatives are without gender and place and have done little to understand the experience of urban women entrepreneurs in the informal sector, and are therefore unlikely to appropriately address many of the challenges that women in urban and peri-urban Accra face.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Like many cities in Sub-Saharan Africa, Accra, Ghana is not only growing in population, it is also changing very rapidly. New urban development projects continue to marginalize those involved in informal vegetable production and marketing by pushing them further onto the fringes of government land. In addition, the informal sector is often characterized by low wages, insecure working conditions, and a lack of recognition by institutional officials. For women producing or marketing urban vegetables, socio-economic livelihood and food security challenges are typically more extreme compared to men.

Many women vegetable producers in Accra were negatively affected by the economic changes and restructuring brought on by neo-liberal and market-led policies in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs throughout the 1980s and 1990s, making income opportunities for both men and women much more difficult to find (Obosu-

Mensah, 1999). While urban agriculture is predominantly a women's activity in Sub-Saharan African cities, men dominate in urban food production in Accra, motivated by the need for a cash income from market produce. Women are less likely to participate in farming activities because of the arduous nature of labor involved. Women also have limited access to land, water resources and credit. Instead, women in Accra flourish within the informal urban foodscape as vegetable traders, market women and entrepreneurs, informal economic activity that is not only shaped by cultural and gendered labor divisions, but also by its economic viability and limited investment and risk opportunities.

Despite their contribution to the national economy, those involved in the informal sector, especially in urban vegetable production and marketing, continue to experience a lack of support from local and national policymakers, as informal sector activity does not fit into the dominant framework of contemporary development (Obosu-Mensah, 1999). There is a crucial lack of initiatives directed to address issues specifically related to working women's livelihoods in the informal economy and their role in achieving community and household food security. A conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of women in the informal economy is necessary in order to improve conditions in the informal sector and to design development strategies that address dynamic issues facing urban and peri-urban women who play a crucial role in the local foodscape².

² *Foodscape* is understood in this paper as the food landscape of a community that has important social, political, and environmental dimensions. The study of foodscape provides a look into how people encounter food and how people engage within different scales of food environments. "The foodscape of a community refers to the ways in which food is produced, purchased or obtained, prepared, and consumed, and the relationship between food and the individuals of the community" (Mikkelsen, 2011, p.211).

My research aims to shed light on the lived experiences of women farmers and the role of UPA in addressing their practical and strategic needs in Accra. I examine the livelihoods of women in the informal urban vegetable cultivation in Accra and how it shapes their urban experience and increases their autonomy or sense of power. In addition, I seek to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics and challenges that women entrepreneurs in the informal urban agriculture economy face and how historical and contemporary processes of development have helped to shape these conditions. As women in the informal sector in urban and peri-urban Accra continue to negotiate their role and livelihoods within these often marginalized spaces, dominant development strategies lack the ability to address the complex and hybrid environments and livelihoods that women vegetable producers experience.

This paper highlights the multifaceted role of UPA in the lives of women farmers in Accra and seeks to answer a series of research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of women farmers in Accra?
 - a. Who are women farmers and why do they farm?
 - b. How are women's experiences as farmers different than men's?
 - c. How are women empowered and how do they gain increased autonomy through urban farming in Accra?
2. What is the role of urban agriculture as an urban development intervention strategy?
 - a. How is UA challenging or not challenging mainstream urban development frameworks?

- b. What are the gender implications for employing UPA as a development strategy?

In my discussion, I argue that the women and experiences within urban farming in Accra are diverse and that UPA plays a multifaceted role in meeting both the practical and strategic needs of women farmers. Urban agricultural spaces in Accra offer a landscape of hybridity that, in some ways, challenges current urban development frameworks and assumptions about urban agriculture. I also argue that UPA used as gender development strategy must address both practical and strategic needs, lessening the risk of increasing women's burdens through its promotion. In addition, I argue that practical interests can also engage and instigate forms of empowerment and autonomy, rather than in a dichotomous manner.

While this study is unique to the lives and livelihoods of women in Accra, it also has significant implications for women in informal sector settings across African cities and beyond. Urban and peri-urban life proves to be a struggle for many women, particularly those involved in informal entrepreneurial activity that has yet to be recognized through formal policy-making by local and national governments. This lack of understanding of urban women's dynamic roles and challenges in urban environments that are constantly shifting and reshaping has significant implications for household food security conditions, as well. As women in cities continue to experience the pressures of global food prices and urban development, they must persist in renegotiating and sustaining their livelihood strategies.

Generally speaking, this case study raises important questions about the ever evolving and growing urban settings in cities throughout both the Global North and

South, and the framework of development that is used to address crucial concerns of sustaining food security and livelihoods for growing populations. Albeit with a focus on urban women's livelihoods, this research resonates with much of the emerging work in critical urban studies (Simone, 2010), which seeks to define what 'urban' is, and thus what defines urban activities like urban agriculture and vegetable production. Like critical urban studies, this case study on Accra, Ghana seeks to explore how policymakers and organizational leaders can have a better understanding of contemporary 'urban-ness' and ultimately move past predominant development assumptions that try to solve urban problems with rural development strategies.

I come at this study with a deep interest and experience in urban foodscapes and urban agriculture as a strategy for addressing food insecurity and food justice issues in local environments, as well as an interest in how gender and development initiatives that help to address food security needs. I hope my findings from the study will help to inform local policymakers and community organizations within Accra, so that this information will help to shape future policy decisions regarding women and other vulnerable groups within the informal sector and urban and peri-urban activities. The concerns that shape this case study are thus far under-explored, and I believe that this research will help to inform emerging studies and planning related to the themes within the case study.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout my analysis of women's gendered contributions to the informal sector in Accra, I will use a sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) as outlined by Sen (1981) and others (Harcourt, 2012; Hovorka, 2006, 2009; Oberhauser & Yeboah, 2011; Owusu, 2007), in order to address issues of sustainable livelihoods and food security for women. Challenges inherent to gender relations that shape women's livelihoods in urban areas are embedded in contemporary economic development practices. A discussion of these that is based in a SLA framework will help to evaluate women's well being, with attention to influential social, spatial and economic spaces. This approach will be useful in determining the impacts of development on women vegetable producers and traders that are tangible/intangible, direct/indirect, positive/negative, and intended/unintended. Similarly, a livelihoods approach to evaluating food insecurity frames issues of food access that spans diverse, yet interrelated dimensions, and will likely show how gendered dimensions shape livelihood strategies and successes. This framework informs my research by seeking to understand women's current livelihood strategies and priorities, as well as how these livelihoods are influenced by contemporary development processes and the diverse needs of stakeholder groups like women vegetable producers.

Throughout my analysis and discussion of development policies and women's role in the urban and peri-urban foodscape, I will use a variety of literature that draws from a feminist political ecology framework (Rocheleau et al., 1996; Hovorka, 2005; Harcourt & Escobar, 2005; and others). Gender is a significant organizing device of social interaction and spatial patterns, and a feminist political ecology draws out important gender divisions of social and economic roles, as well as interactions within

spaces and environments. A feminist political ecology framework helps to illustrate the lived experiences of women in the urban and peri-urban space in Accra, and how they experience their livelihoods as women vegetable producers in the spaces where production occurs. Integrating both frameworks will be particularly useful in understanding the evolving and unique experiences of women in urban environments, particularly those in informal and hybridized spaces within the urban setting.

Scope and Organization of the Study

In **Chapter II**, I define the perimeters of urban and peri-urban agriculture and describe its global trends in today's growing cities, particularly the growth of peri-urban agricultural activity and the rural-urban interface. I situate the study into the context of a globalizing and urbanizing Accra, in which urban farming practices and livelihood shift on a daily basis. I offer a history of UA in Accra, drawing links between global structural changes that occurred in Ghana to the individual localities within my research. I provide a review of literature that helps to frame UA and UPA within the framework of gender and development, drawing from work in SSA. Much of this literature offers analyses of the role that urban agriculture plays in women's urban lives in SSA and how mainstreaming attempts have helped to address practical and strategic needs for women in African cities.

Chapter III provides a comprehensive discussion of issues involved in the SLA and feminist political ecology frameworks. Included within the discussion are definitions of practical and strategic needs related to women's lives and how these needs connect with creating sustainable livelihoods for women in urban agriculture. The chapter

discusses the role of empowerment and autonomy through mainstreaming in urban agriculture, paying particular attention to the significance of women's intersectional identities in Accra's UPA scene.

In **Chapter IV**, I provide a detailed description of my research methodology and the locations where my research took place. I discuss the nature of my data collection, and the process of recruitment for my interview sample. I describe the challenges I experienced as an outsider doing research in Accra and the related limitations of this case study. In addition, I lay out the process that went into analyzing the data received from observational activities and participant interviews, with a brief introduction to some of the study's themes that were drawn from the data collected.

Chapter V provides a deeper analysis of women in UPA from the field, including an overview of UPA in Accra, Ghana and the role that women currently have in UPA activities there. A brief description of Ghana's political economic history provides an important context to the emergence of urban agriculture in Accra and how women have found themselves where they are today in Accra's urban foodscape. Short narratives of women farmers are included in the chapter, in order to illustrate way that many of these themes are represented in the women's lives, offering an individual ethnographic context for addressing the research question.

In **Chapter VI**, I provide an in-depth presentation of my findings and the themes that emerged from my participant interviews and other relevant data I collected from the field. My findings help to develop additional recommendations that address the lived experiences of women in UPA in Accra. These recommendations are informed by research outside of this case study, but are in part my own and based on the expressed

concerns of many of my research participants. I am not trying to speak for these participants in my study, but rather I cautiously attempt to highlight their words and experiences that are necessary in appropriately addressing their needs toward creating positive change in relation to the research question of this study.

CHAPTER II

URBAN AGRICULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT

Defining ‘Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture’

This chapter seeks to define UPA in a broad, international context, while providing a compilation of literature on its use as a development strategy within changing cities in SSA. I define UPA activities within the context of Accra, describing the types of crops, use of space, and demographic characteristics within the fabric of UPA. I situate Accra’s UPA scene into a history of political and economic processes with Accra that have really shaped the conditions for UPA today. This chapter provides a discussion about the role of UPA in the informal economy and how UPA has been affected by the rapid urbanization and rural-urban migration occurring within Greater Accra (UN-Habitat, 2014). A complete review of urban agriculture is beyond the scope of this paper, however, I do provide a frame of reference for the role of UPA in the context of economic, social and environmental development issues and planning. In addition, a review of current literature offers a perspective on past and present trends within the study and implementation of UA due to globalization and urbanization processes that are evident in many SSA cities today.

With over 40 percent of the urban population in SSA involved in some form of urban agriculture, local governments and policymakers can no longer ignore the processes and spaces of production that are contributing to this urban phenomenon (Foeken, 2006). The growing body of literature on UPA in SSA consists of diverse suite of case studies, each describing the nuanced spaces of production, social networks and

economic processes within particular African cities. Attempts to collect these localized studies by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and individual editors have helped to frame the conversation regarding urban agriculture through connecting and comparing various case studies throughout the Global South.

The most comprehensive literature to date exists as a result of various 21st century research and policy initiatives, including the AGROPOLIS project (1998), launched by IDRC, which encouraged and supported the study of urban agriculture across disciplines by graduate and post graduate students (Redwood, 2009). *Agropolis* (Mougeot, 2005) and the earlier *Growing Cities, Growing Food* (Bakker et al., 2000) both provide a collection of interdisciplinary studies ranging from policy intervention to gender analysis of UPA around the world. Similarly, RUAF's program, called Cities Farming for the Future (RUAF-CFF) was launched in 2005 as a global initiative meant to contribute to urban poverty reduction, employment generation and food security (Van Veenhuizen, 2006). The 4th World Urban Forum in 2006 complemented the attempts of both initiatives and brought forth some of the world's leading researchers and practitioners to talk about the dynamics of urban agriculture—its catalysts, potential contributions, and challenges within the urban setting. Of course, urban agriculture has existed in cities since much earlier, but recent 21st century initiatives designed to understand the dynamics and potential contributions of urban agriculture to pro-poor objectives are integrated within development frameworks for many multinational agencies like the WFO, UN-Habitat and FAO, along with growing international research organizations like RUAF, CGIAR, IWMI and national to local government institutions.

Urban agriculture and its related activities have been defined in various ways over the decades and across diverse disciplines, each illuminating particular goals for UPA. International development agencies and organizations, governments and local NGOs that work on projects within and related to urban agriculture typically refer to the following definition of UA for their goals:

Urban agriculture is an industry located within (intra-urban) or on the fringe (peri-urban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, which grows and raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products, (re-)using largely human and material resources, products and services found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources, products and services largely in that area. (Mougeot, 2000, p10)

The comprehensive definition provided by Mougeot may seem all encompassing. However, it demonstrates the degree of diversity to which UPA exists, as well as the diversity of the individuals and groups that engage in it. People from all walks of life participate in various aspects of UPA and for different reasons and with different results.

Urban agriculture is a dynamic compilation of farming systems that range from subsistence production and processing at the individual or household level to larger commercial farming operations. Small or large aside, UPA activities also exist within scarce or abundant land, water, and labor resource systems, as well as a wide range of policy environments that support or exclude its contribution and development. Also described in Mougeot's definition is the more recent inclusion of not only production in UPA but also processing and trade, and a growing emphasis by researchers on the relationships between the three phases (Cofie et al, 2008, p. 6). Many variables distinguish UPA from that of rural agriculture, especially the type of products produced, livelihood support, cropping calendar, proximity to market and other social and

environmental contexts. For this reason, scholars today argue that policymakers and planners must take heed from these differences and modify their processes and goals to fit the urban dynamics of many poor and low-income populations.

A Landscape of Hybridity

Complicating the understanding of UPA even more is the more recent understanding and investigation by researchers and scholars of the urban-rural interface, which is prevalent in much of current UPA environments, challenging the common polarization of ‘urban’ vs. ‘rural’ (Redwood, 2009, p. 5). There is no universal definition for the ‘rural-urban interface’, also sometimes referred to as the ‘peri-urban’, but it is clear that these spaces are usually located on the fringe of cities and are not rural but not yet urban. These spaces challenge implicit assumptions about the relationships between natural resources, economic activities, and social organization (Lerner & Eakin, 2011). Scholars and researchers are working to better understand the dynamics present in urban and particularly peri-urban production landscapes where individuals and families from rural areas engage in UA activities in an urban environment, some in city centers, while many are located on the fringes of urban boundaries (Lerner & Eakin, 2011; Lacey, 2012; Baker & Pederson, 1994; and Simone, 2010). The dynamics within these hybrid environments are difficult to fully understand as social, economic and environmental systems of UPA can change from farm to farm. Yet, a better understanding is essential to better supporting UPA livelihoods, challenges, and contributions as cities in SSA continue to grow and expand into more rural geographical systems.

Urban studies scholars also look at the interface of rural and urban spaces within the city, which generally refers to spaces within the Global South (Simone, 2010). In this case study, I characterize this context, in which urban farms combine typical elements of both rural and urban domains, as *hybridity*. Simone (2010) describes rural-spaces within the peri-urban (peripheral areas of the city) as “territories of transition and connection that function in several ways,” (p. 51) referring specifically to the social and political events that have contributed to these the fluctuation of these spaces. “Here, urban residents maintain some connection to a rural existence as a socio-cultural disposition” (Simone, 2010, p. 53). Farmers have a diverse set of social networks within the urban area, which blends their role as agriculturalists with the urban economy. In addition, the actual physical constructs of the farms embody a fusion of urban immediacy and rural processes. Urban vegetable farmers take advantage of the many opportunities in the lack of seasonality and close proximity to the urban market by growing perishable vegetables.

The landscape of urban farming also demonstrates a hybridity of formal and informal dimensions, as the government continues to play an increasing role in the urban agricultural scene. Urban farmers, although considered informal workers, constantly engage in formal and semi-formal networks through their interactions with government actors and agencies, local markets, and other urban institutions. While much of this case study focuses on the physical landscape of hybridity in urban and peri-urban agricultural activities, it also points to the many hybrid social and political processes that are evident on urban farms in Accra and throughout SSA.

Globalization, Urbanization and Urban Food Supply

UPA is not a new phenomenon in SSA since it played a significant role in pre-colonial cities (Rakodi, 1988, p. 495). It is only recently that researchers, urban planners, and policymakers have begun to integrate UA into development frameworks, particularly as current urbanization processes continue to increase pressures on urban food supply, land resources and sources for household income. A review of literature suggests that there seem to be two primary driving forces for people to take part in cultivating the city, especially those living in low-income or poor economic urban conditions: food security and income generation (Mougeot, 2005).

In cities in developing countries, migration is a major factor in the unprecedented pace of urbanization. Migrants from rural areas leave to seek better economic opportunities and employment in cities, creating a complex societies and livelihoods for diverse populations. Davis (2006) describes the massive urbanization within the Gulf of Guinea along the coast of West Africa, in which 17 cities in 1960 had a population of more than 100,000, and now there are more than 300 cities of that size (Davis, 2006). The ‘urban bias’³ development framework of the 1950s and 1960s sought to modernize economies, attracting people to places of investment an employment, resulting in major out-migration of people from rural areas (Redwood, 2009, p. 3). In addition, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in the 1980’s, especially in SSA cities, created economic environments where currency was devaluated, prices of basic goods increased and subsidies for food production were removed, erasing critical lifelines of low-income and

³ “Seen by the liberal planners as a way out of poverty, the transition of emphasis to urban development and the encouragement of industrial economic activity concentrated on cities” (Redwood, 2009, p. 3).

poor populations in both the rural and urban areas (Redwood, 2009, p. 4; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Maxwell, 1996). Many scholars argue that the economic stresses resulting from the implementation of SAPs and the divestment from social programs encouraged both rural-to-urban migration and the urbanization of poverty. According to Ravallion et al. (2007), poverty is becoming more urban, estimating that approximately one quarter of the poor in the developing world live in urban areas.

Processes of globalization succeeding this period of development and liberalization helped to create a complex food system, in which many populations in developing countries became vulnerable to adverse food price shocks, depending mostly on markets for their food supplies (Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010; Dessus et al., 2008). The most recent rapid food price increases in 2007 and 2008 opened the eyes of development institutions to the vulnerability of poor urban dwellers due to massive food imports and the lack of access and availability of food in local urban markets (Cohen & Garrett, 2010).

UPA has gained the spotlight in regards to some of these issues of urban food (in)security, primarily in regards to access and availability, because of what researchers and policymakers see as potential for shielding urban poor and low-income people from many of these shocks (Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). An overwhelming amount of literature suggests that UPA has played a major role in supplying urban areas with accessible food products, particularly perishable products (leafy vegetables, milk, fish, poultry, starches, etc.) in the past, and continues today to, in some ways, to counteract the effects of globalization, high food prices and poverty (Arku, 2012; Redwood, 2009; Mougeot, 2005; Van Veenhuizen, 2006; Hovorka, 2009; and others). Around 90 percent of leafy

veggies are produced and distributed through urban cultivation spaces, proving that UPA is a significant contribution to the urban economy and nutrition in many parts of SSA (Foeken, 2006). Of course, many urban and peri-urban farmers engage in small operations for subsistence farming, especially those engaged in backyard farming practices, and have direct access to affordable and available food products. Yet, research suggests that even in households where urban farmers are cultivating for commercial benefit, there exists a lower level of food insecurity, with fewer skipped meals and more balanced diet, nutritionally speaking (Maxwell, 2003). However, despite the incredible amount of research examining the link between UA and food security, the quantitative research and data available are actually very limited, citing only two major published papers (Maxwell et al., 1998; Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). Better understanding about this link is essential in designing the best use for UA in development goals as cities continue to grow and social and economic dynamics in those cities continue to change.

Urban Agriculture as a Sustainable Livelihoods Strategy

The phenomenon of UPA in SSA cities has paralleled a growth of an informal sector⁴ throughout African cities, encompassing various types of petty trading and production that occurs outside of government regulation (Tinsley, 2003). UPA in SSA is generally considered an informal activity, with a UNDP (1996) estimate of around 800 million people around the world engaging in agricultural activities in and around cities. The concept of the informal sector is important to the study of urban agriculture as it reflects historical and current policies, particularly the SAPs, that have limited access for

⁴ Defined here simply as income activities that exist outside of the formal sector, typically lacking support from local and national governments.

many in SSA to access formal work, pushing them to develop livelihoods outside of the formal sector. The informal sector is illustrative of the creative and innovative approaches that low-income and poor populations have developed in response to an adverse economic environment. UPA is an example of this, allowing for urban farmers to generate a small income and/or reduce the amount of income they spend on food provisions. However, as part of the informal sector, UPA and the people engaged in UA struggle for legitimacy, often experiencing negative responses by officials, who seek to prohibit UPA activities and ultimately push urban cultivation even further to the fringes of today's cities.

An alarming amount of research on UPA is comprised of multidisciplinary qualitative research approaches, examining the role of UPA in development through sustainable livelihood framework of analysis (SLA). SLA is a people-centered approach that explores structural issues affecting people's access to resources, including social, economic and political capital, with the goal of capturing the relationships between development, environment and livelihoods (Redwood, 2009). In addition, studies of UPA through an SLA framework suggest that UPA is often used as a 'survival strategy' or a coping strategy for many low-income and poor households and individuals, providing for them a buffer between them and the economic shocks that limit their income and food security (Adeoti et al., 2012; Freeman, 1993; Tinsley, 2003; and others).

Quantitative data collected from a study of four countries in Africa (Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, and Nigeria) by Zezza and Tasciotti (2010), however, suggests that income resulting from UA is smaller than the participation within UPA. By comparison to other countries outside of Africa, the four African countries experience the largest

income shares, and urban agriculture is a significant source of livelihoods for households in some of Africa's cities (Zezza and Tasciotti, 2010, p. 267). Although the authors describe many positive contributions that UPA can make to both food security and sustainable livelihood development, they also describe many of the limitations of urban agriculture to urban planning goals. The evidence presented in this study should urge planners and policymakers to cautiously advocate for the integration of UPA into urban development frameworks, while not dismissing the arguments in that favor UPA policy implementation.

Gender Considerations in Urban Agriculture

In working to create sustainable livelihoods and food security within urban areas, development frameworks must pay particular attention to the role of women in UPA activities. Hovorka (2005, 2006, 2009) along with many other UPA researchers have highlighted the importance of understanding the way that women influence and are influenced by UPA activity in the cities. 'Women Feeding Cities' has been an area of scholarship, led again by RUAF and CGIAR, that examines the interplay between UPA and gender dynamics. Women are the majority of urban farmers in many cities around the world, especially in SSA, and they play a large role in subsistence farming and household food security, along with food production for commercial purposes in and around cities (Hovorka, 2009). With this knowledge, researchers and policymakers in diverse disciplines seek to include UPA within a gender and development framework, hoping to tap into existing structures within women's lives to help create more equal and

sustainable livelihoods for urban women (Hovorka, 2006; Freeman, 1993; Tinsley, 2003; Rakodi, 1988).

Freeman (1993) considered the role of women cultivators when most studies on African urban development and the informal sector ignored them. Freeman describes the many impediments that women in UA experience throughout many African cities due to unequal access to necessary economic, social and physical resources. Both Freeman (1996) and Rakodi (1988) paid early attention to the incidence of rural women migrants involved in UPA and women's role within the urban informal sector (see more about this is Chapter III). In addition, research on women farmers in SSA cities suggest that women farmers are often more vulnerable than men, with little formal support and limited access to important physical, social and economic resources (Freeman, 1996; Hovorka, 2005; Tinsley, 2003).

Yet, an overwhelming amount of literature on gender and urban agriculture suggest that there are many benefits resulting from women participating in urban agriculture, with particular focus on household food security and income generation for women in the informal sector. Attempts by policymakers to mainstream women in UPA are designed in part by much of this literature, with hopes to integrate policies into UA that seek to reduce the degree of marginalization of women in informal UPA. This proves to be a difficult task in the light of contemporary globalization and urbanization concerns. Most important to note is the effect of these processes on the relationship between women and agriculture in cities. Although there is a significant amount of information on gender and agriculture relationships in the rural setting, both agriculture and gender dynamics are different in urban settings. "There is a diversity of cultural

values merging in urban areas such that traditional definitions of gender roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and behavior are not necessarily appropriate, and often become hybridized with alternative perspectives” (Hovorka, 2009, p. 1). Dynamics within women’s lives and their role in urban agriculture are complicated within both the urban and peri-urban environment, with diverse economic, educational, social, and ecological factors that shape their lived experiences. As a broad conversation about mainstreaming women in urban agriculture continues, it is essential to better understand how the effects of globalization and urbanization processes today should affect these policy decisions. The following chapter will discuss the relationship between gender and development and urban agriculture in more detail.

Situating Urban Agriculture in Accra, Ghana

Accra is the capital city of Ghana, located on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. The coastal climate in Accra provides ample climate conditions for many types of crop cultivation, including tropical fruits, leafy and non-leafy vegetables and many traditional staple crops fundamental to Ghana’s cultural foodscape. Accra typically has two yearly rainy seasons that occur between April to July and in October, with consistent hot temperatures between 80-100 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity during dry seasons, conditions that encourage shifting agricultural practices throughout the region due to potential flooding and droughts (Berry, 1995).

UA in Accra predates colonialism, when urban agricultural activity was banned by British colonists, except for an upsurge between the two world wars, when colonial officials encouraged locals to grow exotic vegetables for European forces and expatriates

in Accra (Asomani-Boateng, 2012; Asafu-Adjaye, 2012). Little change occurred within UA and official positioning of UA after Ghana's independence in 1957 and emergence into the Kwame Nkrumah era. It was not until Acheampong's regime in (1972-1979) that UA became an important factor in Ghana's economic and political independence. After Acheampong's coup d'état, harsh economic conditions, drought and a boycott on all food aid by the international community combined to create food shortage throughout Ghana. In response to the political and economic isolation, Acheampong's government developed and implemented the Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) program in 1972. The program was an ambitious attempt to demonstrate Ghana's self-reliance during the food shortage by encouraging Ghanaians to become self-sufficient through local food production (Berry, 1995).

Operation Feed Yourself

The Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) program had eventual spillover effects in urban farming. The most notable effect was the significant change of officials' attitude towards UA in Accra. The act of indirect state intervention increased officials' toleration of UA activity within Accra by demonstrating its role in supply local food supply, and sometimes in beautifying the city. Previously, city officials resented the presence of UA and were concerned with the harmful impacts of UA on the environment and human health. Most concerning for officials then, and still today, is the hazardous runoff and pollution of local water systems because of farmers' use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers. In addition, uptake of harmful chemicals from soils and the use of contaminated water from gutters and city drains for crop irrigation can create dangerous

health hazards for consumers (Obosu-Mensah, 2002). Officials' resented farmers' disregard for official zoning and licensing laws and also the socio-economic status of farmers. Obosu-Mensah (2002) maps the shift of officials attitudes toward UA in Accra, and suggests that the implementation of OFY, because of its role in increasing the number of elites in UA, helped to change public opinion and institutional recognition of UA. Previous assumptions by officials, researchers, and the general public were that farmers are mainly poor, uneducated and unemployed. Obosu-Mensah (2002) also illustrates the use of UA during a relatively unstable economic and political era to control worker unrest and to maintain available surplus labor. "By producing some of their own food, workers may not feel the realities of their exploitation, and be less willing to agitate for an increased salary" (p. 26). According to Obosu-Mensah (2002), the government also recognized the benefit of keeping residents formally unemployed through UA, so that they could maintain labor they would need for later industrial development.

In 1983, Ghana became one of the first African states to adopt the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored SAPs, which had many indirect effects on UA in Accra. Ghana's local foodscape changed with the liberation of markets and a decrease in public sector employment due to the neo-liberal inspired policies that lasted through the 1990's. Researchers suggest that, like many other African economies, Ghana experienced uneven development through the implementation of the SAPs, including a decline in living standards, increased poverty in urban areas, and reduced access to basic services for Accra's urban population (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000).

By cutting formal employment opportunities for both men and women, residents were forced to seek out alternative livelihood strategies, usually resulting in self-

employment in the urban informal economy (Owusu, 2007). An estimated 300,000 jobs were lost in the formal sector along with a drop in wages for men who could find formal work (Maxwell, 1998, 2000). Informal work was already vibrant before the implementation of market policies, but it grew 5.5% after, constituting a change in ratio of 2:1 (informal: formal) to 5:1 (Maxwell, 1998).

Urban and Peri-Urban Farming Today

The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) has an estimated population of over 4 million, with 2.3 million residents within the AMA boundary zone. It is one of the fastest and largest growing metropolitans throughout SSA with an average of 3.36 percent growth in the city (World Bank, 2013). It is the most urbanized city in Ghana and continues to expand outward, creating shifting and, sometimes unclear, institutional and regional boundaries.

UPA still has no place within the urban land use system, but it remains a significant aspect of the urban economy in Accra. Despite some growth in UA, there has been little change in government policies towards UA. In the 1990s a “Green Belt” area was demarcated within the Accra-Tema Metropolitan Area, serving as a barrier to urban development. In addition, Ghana’s Ministry of Food and Agriculture was decentralized and Agriculture Directorates, along with extension staff, were designated for each of the 10 districts and administrative regions throughout the city (World Bank, 2013).

Although local government acknowledges the contributions of UA to the local economy, it remains unregulated, unsupported and officials do not do much to promote or protect it. There is no comprehensive plan or document on UA, only byelaws that require

permission and inspection for health reasons. With support from the government, farmers continue to function within insecure political, economic and spatial environments. Some UPA sites have been cultivated for over 50 years. Yet, long-time farmers have seen significant changes in the last 20 years due to because of urban growth and real-estate development, as farmers continue to be pushed further to the fringes of the city. It is estimated that there was a 50 percent decrease in land cultivated between just 2001-2008 (World Bank, 2013).

Two major systems of UPA can be seen in Accra today: (1) large scale, intensive commercial production mainly located within the peri-urban areas and (2) small scale commercial or subsistence production scattered throughout urban and peri-urban environments (Cofie et al., 2008). Land that is not needed immediately or is unsuitable for urban development is typically used for urban farming, with more designated areas of cultivation in surrounding peri-urban farming sites. The government or local traditional leaders with whom farmers have informal rent/lease agreements own much of the land. Some of the more urban farming sites through AMA are more vulnerable to seasonal flooding or insecure land access.

Irrigated vegetable farming is the dominant agricultural activity, but UPA can also consist of mixed operations including backyard farming, fish farming, livestock farming, small ruminants and poultry, seasonal crop farming, aquaculture, and miscellaneous, such as snails, bees, etc. (Armar-Klemesu, 2000; Danso et al., 2002). Irrigated vegetable production is typically market-oriented and cultivated year-round in open spaces in urban and peri-urban environments (Cofie et al., 2008). There are seven major sites with the AMA and many more in surrounding city areas, each spanning around 100 hectares and

located along streams and drains that are often used for irrigating crops. Approximately 1000 farmers grow vegetables in Accra and are mostly men with only 10 percent women vegetable farmers (Obuobie et al., 2004). Around 600 of these farmers grow exotic vegetables (lettuce, onions, carrots, green peppers, spinach, cauliflower, cabbage). Others cultivate a mix of exotic and traditional or indigenous vegetables like *okro*, tomatoes, garden eggs (eggplant), *kantomire* (leaves of the cocoyam plant), maize, *ayoyo*, *alefi*, *gboma* and others that are central ingredients to many Ghanaian sauces. An increasing number of expatriate populations and an increased presence of vegetables in the Ghanaian diet have encouraged the farming of exotic vegetables. Exotic vegetables can be sold at higher prices, since the majority of vegetables are consumed by middle and upper class Ghanaians. UPA provides the city with around 90 percent of fresh vegetables, although it is unlikely that the low-income population benefits from this production as much as wealthier populations (Maxwell et al., 2000).

Farmers experience various forms of challenges on the farm, including pest and disease threats, access to credit, marketing, high input costs, access to land and tenure, safe and cheap irrigation facilities (pumps). The next section describes the role of women within the context of Accra UPA and the ways in which their roles help to shape the physical, social and economic structures of UPA in Accra.

CHAPTER III

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN AGRICULTURE

Feminist Thought in Urban Development

With the research questions of this study in mind, it is important to understand why women are important in the conversation about urban agriculture and how the global development context that has shaped the lives of women farmers in cities today. The paradigm of gender and development has experienced many diverse shifts of focus throughout its short history, particularly in the inclusion of local, ecological and environmental principles that affect women within the Global South. This chapter seeks to provide a brief history of gender and development's evolution and its role in defining the livelihoods of women in informal work and agriculture in SSA. I provide a deeper description and justification for the use of the analytical framework of feminist political ecology (FPE), and I provide a brief introduction to the processes and dimensions of empowerment and autonomy for women, which are a focus of this study.

The initial projects of development and globalization of the 20th century had a significant effect on the lives of women in the Global South, but it was not until later that scholars understood how these projects affected women. McMichael (2008) describes the interrelation of both processes of development and globalization as “an internationally orchestrated program of *national* economic growth, with foreign financial, technological, and military assistance” with a commitment to growing the global economy and protecting the economic and security interests of the west (21, original emphasis). Boserup's (1970) work on Women in Development (WID) marks the time when the ideological climate of development changed to recognize the women within

development efforts. Boserup (1970) and Tinker (1976) criticized the way in which the mainstream ideology of development projected onto women in the Global South a set of Western stereotypes of roles, ultimately failing to benefit them. The WID framework credits the modernization process of development during the 1950s and 1960s to further widening the gap between men and women's equality by ignoring women's productive roles in the planning process. The mainstream framework for development discounted and altogether excluded the informal productive work of women until feminist scholars (Boserup et al., 1970; Tinker, 1976) proposed the idea that development *needs* women in order to be successful.

Sen (1981), rather than describing the invisibility and exclusion of women from development, begged the question "Why were women excluded to begin with?" Sen's entitlement theory sought to define women's economic exchanges and their relationship to poverty in developing countries; it illustrated the unequal distribution of resources between men and women, proposing that women and men experience poverty differently and unequally (Sen, 1981). The concept of entitlements was a pivotal foundation for the framework of Women and Development (WAD) with major objectives to integrate women into development planning while simultaneously transforming mainstream development (Rai, 2011). A shift in feminist thought broadened the focus of women and development by looking at larger gender dynamics within development processes to understand women's inequality. For feminist scholars within the Gender and Development framework (GAD), development initiatives became an attractive vehicle to significantly transform social and gender relations that subordinated women within the globalized political and economic structure (Bhavnani et al., 2003). Further

consideration of culture within women and development studies emphasized the agency of women through their diverse productive and reproductive roles, with particular attention to women's active contributions to their local and cultural contexts (Bhavnani et al., 2003).

Women, environment and development (WED) was a precursory framework to feminist political ecology, which sought to create a transformational approach to development that considered non-economic factors and places women within the local, environmental context. Harcourt and Escobar (2005) and Agarwal (1998) examine the role of women within ecological and environmental systems, with a significant focus on women in agricultural development. WED scholars propose that a 'natural' tendency exists within women toward activities that help to conserve the environment, and should therefore have a more active role within the modern development framework. Other feminist scholars critique assumptions of what is 'natural' within WED through engendering women and men's interaction with and within their environments (Jackson, 1993).

Women and Development in 'Place'

Krishna (2012) draws on FPE principles, connecting the political, ecological and gendered concepts with women's sustainable livelihoods, suggesting that gender issues need to be more apparent within the SLA. The main body of SLA literature lacks the concepts of gender-power relations, particularly in regards to control and conflict over resources. A SLA approached shaped by FPE ecology principles used for this case study of Accra is meant to better describe women's role in spaces and places with a whole-

systems perspective, illustrating important issues and processes that affect their roles and the spaces in which they engage in their livelihoods. The two approaches also help to better understand how UPA plays a role in addressing women's practical and strategic gender needs within their livelihoods as urban farmers.

Feminist political ecology draws from all of these previous feminist development frameworks, and emerged in the 1990s to address the persistent processes of globalization and modernization and their effects on women in the Global South. FPE links the examination of gender dynamics in development with emerging critiques of sustainable development.

Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) is an interdisciplinary academic field and a critical framework to challenge uneven power relations in everyday ecologies. It is based on a strong but not exclusive focus on gender and an assumption of intersectionality and interrelationality. FPE continues to engender debates on political and economic development, agricultural transformations, technologies and environmental change. It highlights the importance of gendered knowledges, rights and politics in the analysis of environmental issues and addresses ecologically based political struggles at the intersection of multiple levels of individual to global (GESEC, 2011, p. 43).

The FPE framework considers the role of 'place' within gender and development discussions, and describes 'place' by what women define as their environment and what determines their livelihoods (Harcourt & Escobar, 2005). FPE scholars challenge the mainstream development framework, in which economic globalization and global markets define transformation for women. Instead, FPE considers the 'localities' that women face within their immediate environments, and how the 'local' is affected by global economic and political systems. Rocheleau et al. (1996) describe the ways in which human-environmental interactions and processes are gendered; men and women

experience the environment differently. As a result of their social and cultural identities and roles, men and women also experience different access and control over their ecological systems (Robbins, 2012). Feminist researchers cite examples of asymmetrical entitlements and resource control based on gender within local systems of UPA throughout SSA. Hovorka's (2005, 2006, 2009) research in Botswana highlights the experiences of women urban farmers and the multiple roles that they play in food production. In particular, she points out that the documented constraints for women are rooted in their subordinate socioeconomic status in relation to men (Hovorka, 2005). "The predominance of women urban farmers in many parts of Africa, for example, is ascribed to the fact that women still bear the main responsibility for household sustenance and well-being. Women also tend to have lower educational status than men and therefore more difficulties in finding formal wage employment" (Hovorka & Lee Smith 2006, p. 125). Other investigations of women in UPA describe the limited opportunities in land ownership and financial capital for women farmers in SSA and illustrate their tendency to rely on their own labor in planting, weeding and harvesting. In addition, women generally spend longer amounts of time in the production, processing, and marketing processes of UA, and their low incomes from UPA account for their lesser access to important inputs like seeds and fertilizers (Freeman, 1993; Hovorka, 2005; and Maxwell, 1996, 2000).

FPE theory draws upon other 'space' related aspects of UPA that are gendered, including the type and quantity of foodstuffs and the destination of the foodstuffs produced within local systems (Hovorka, 2005). Most case studies suggest that men tend to dominate operations that include high start-up costs while women are more represented

within smaller backyard market gardening spaces. In addition, male farmers in SSA typically direct their products to larger markets with higher commercial interests, while women participate in cultivation efforts that provide food supplements to households and to local markets and food traders. These examples demonstrate how the globalization of the market shapes local production systems, particularly as urbanizing cities and their diets evolve due these global processes.

Research in UPA has, in some ways, been overly concerned with problems in UPA that are directly related to strictly economic benefits for both men and women. However, by analyzing women's role in such a narrow model, this research has inadequately explained women's experiences with UPA systems, particularly within the locality. The motivation behind much of this research stems from the negative attitudes of governments toward UPA activity. As researchers have highlighted the economic benefits of UPA in the last 30 years, governments within SSA are becoming more willing to embrace food production within the informal sector and are actively zoning urban spaces for production purposes, while providing extensions services within and around the city. Yet, the economic bias within UPA literature, which suggests that production for the market is the most important benefit of UPA, is holding the local and global communities from addressing other important constraints that affect women's livelihoods within UPA, particularly within the household and local ecology.

Slater (2001) describes the multiples roles within the household and the community that women play, both of which affect their roles within UPA. Feminist research in the 1980s pointed out the gender division of labor within rural households, in which women bear multiple burdens of labor. Yet, as Slater (2001) points out, for

farmers originating from rural areas before developing operations within the city, “conflicts within rural households do not evaporate when people migrate to urban areas” (p. 639). As unemployment grows and living costs spiral, women in the Global South take up both the reproductive and productive roles within the household and their communities. Rakodi (1988) noted this early on and called for an analysis of UPA whereby urban cultivation is considered both as farming (production) and a part of daily food preparation (reproduction) (p. 498). For women in urban and peri-urban production spaces, changing lifestyles and gender relations within urban and modernizing societies only complicate these roles.

In my research, I am hesitant to assume that women farmers in the modern and cosmopolitan culture of Accra have the same constraints, opportunities, and roles as women in rural Ghanaian areas or areas outside of Ghana. By engaging in FPE scholarship, I seek to draw out the ‘lived experiences’ of women’s farmers to better understand both their productive and reproductive roles within UPA and how their urban or peri-urban environments shape these roles.

Urbanization and Women’s Hybrid Spaces

As mentioned in the previous chapter, women’s urban lives are complicated, and contemporary development framework does not always accommodate for the urban experience of women. This is particularly important to the study of women’s sustainable livelihoods in urban agriculture because, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the conditions within urban agriculture and peri-urban agriculture in today’s cities are complicated. In my research, I combine the feminist political ecology (FPE) and

sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) frameworks in order to address the challenges presented by urbanization processes within urban agriculture and gender and development. The issues of food security, livelihoods and urbanization in urban and peri-urban spaces have thus far been severely misunderstood, along with a more nuanced understanding of ‘urban-ness’ and women’s experiences within these spaces.

The FPE framework emphasizes the need for understanding rural-urban linkages and their changing nature, as they have effects on both gender relations and human-environment interaction with UPA spaces (Rocheleau et al., 1996). In my case study, I seek to offer a new look at gender and development by deconstructing the dominant development framework, which does not engage the lives and needs of many women within globalizing and urban spaces. Neo-liberal and market-based approaches typical of this development discourse perceive urban residents only as objects of development strategies and do not succeed in understanding the context and potential opportunities that are hidden within these small-scale urban spaces Lacey (2012). In particular, Lacey (2012) refers to the often forgotten urban and peri-urban spaces and the ways in which women participate within them. Food security strategies for urban areas are often based on rural conditions and do not address the real and evolving needs of women and others in today’s dynamic urban and peri-urban spaces. I seek to situate the role of women in urban and peri-urban agriculture in Accra in a more nuanced light, while engaging the nature and potential evolution of dominant development discourse. The needs and livelihoods of urban and peri-urban women farmers in Accra are unique and complex and require a realignment of development strategies that recognize the small-scale, hybridized, and informal spaces where women engage in their livelihoods.

Empowerment and Autonomy on the Farm

With so many examples in UPA literature advocating for the integration of UPA as a development intervention, it is important to understand how the goals of these initiatives help to address the diverse needs of women farmers in UPA. In my case study, I examine the role of urban agriculture in women's lives and how it helps to empower them or increase their autonomy as individuals. The terms of empowerment and autonomy are often used interchangeably, especially when referring to the attempt to change women's 'status' and 'equality' within a particular context. One of the most common definitions of empowerment comes from Kabeer (1999) who describes empowerment as "the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (p. 437). Kabeer highlights not only the process of change involved, but also the agency of women to make these changes. Haque et al. (2011) suggest that, while gender equality is necessary to achieve empowerment and autonomy, it is not sufficient because it only creates the context for processes of change to occur (19). In a similar sense, Haque, et al. (2011) also suggest that women's empowerment does not always equal women's autonomy: While empowerment may be achieved through interdependence with existing structures and institutions or actors, autonomy implies independence from these (18). They argue that, while some factors can increase both empowerment and autonomy for women (ex: age), other factors, like education, may empower women but not increase their autonomy (Haque et al., 2011). It is important to distinguish between the ways that women are empowered through urban agriculture, as both

individuals and as a collective. It is more difficult to determine the level of which urban agriculture can help women to increase their ability to make their own decisions within their household and community and if that is something they desire at all.

The overlapping processes of empowerment and autonomy occur within various dimensions and at different scales of individual, community, and national contexts. Empowerment and autonomy are not unitary concepts and they do not always change at the same pace or in the same manner (Narayan-Parker, 2005). Dimensions that affect women's lived experiences include economic (income, assets, employment, etc.), social (status, networks, etc.), political (representation and participation), as well as psychological (self-confidence and self-efficacy) experiences (Narayan-Parker, 2005). For individuals, their experience within these dimensions may differ. My case study focuses primarily on the dimensions of household decision-making, household-economic decision-making, self confidence, and physical mobility, in order to both address the level of women's empowerment and individual autonomy.

Historically, feminist scholars have distinguished between practical (short-term efforts that address women's current conditions within their communities, with a particular focus on daily and material conditions) and strategic (long term endeavors that deal with gender affected conditions on a much more conceptual level) gender interests. Unlike practical gender needs, that address only women's issues in existing roles and

with existing divisions of labor, strategic gender needs aim at empowering and increasing women's capacity, while also analyzing the position of women vis-à-vis men and existing divisions of labor, in hopes of transforming them. Although the distinction between practical and strategic interests can be helpful in understanding the needs and roles of women within economic, political and social realms, it is also somewhat problematic. Within this approach, the assumption could be made that 'basic' needs or 'survival strategies' are separate from strategic needs and that they cannot simultaneously address problems at the social or cultural level (Escobar, 1995). Slater's (2001) alternative view on UPA illustrates the limitations of approaching the two interests as binary parts.

The processes of empowerment need not be linear or easy to distinguish in reality. It is most useful to think of empowerment as a complex and iterative rather than a linear process. Bearing in mind that achieving gender needs (those related to day-to-day survival) and strategic gender interests (interests related to the achievement of long-term goals) are rarely mutually exclusive, it becomes clear that the different processes of empowerment can be two sides of the same coin. Elson (1995: 193) conceives of the problem in just this way saying that "we need to beware of making too sharp a distinction between empowerment and coping" (Slater, 2001, p. 642).

Current literature that advocates for gender mainstreaming⁵ in UPA draws on examples for economic progress for women, without considering the role of UPA as a political and social tool for empowering women in urban and peri-urban spaces. Rakodi (1985) stands out in her attempts to caution against blindly advocating that women spend more time in

⁵ I define gender mainstreaming based on the UN definition (ECOSOC 1997) as follows: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

production, with the fear that this would create additional burdens on already existing roles and responsibilities for women in SSA. Freeman states that “women are likely to experience a severe disadvantage in the competition for wage jobs and high-paying informal sector occupations in large African cities,” and that migrant women are often constrained to accept low-paying and difficult informal activities like urban agriculture (1996, p. 9). Thus, Freeman, along with others are hesitant to advocate for UPA as a productive livelihood for women due to its small returns, suggesting that UPA could become a trap for low-income and unskilled migrant women. For this reason, many women engage in multiple livelihoods, often including related UPA activities, such as processing, trading, etc.(Owusu, 2007; Freeman, 1996). Sanyal (1987) and Hovorka (2005) illustrate the potential of UPA as a double-edged sword for women, as both a tool for empowerment and exploitation.

It is dangerous to assume that successful gender mainstreaming efforts in one location would be appropriate for all urban women farmers throughout SSA. Factors for women farmers within UPA vary through SSA, ranging from different ecologies that affect production processes to the sheer number of men and women involved in UPA. As described later in the paper, Accra’s urban vegetable production consists of few women farmers compared to men, in part due to related economic and social factors that encourage more women to be involved in vegetable marketing and trading as opposed to production (Danso et al., 2004; Drechsel et al., 2013). The fact that women in other SSA cities far outnumber women vegetable farmers in Accra is part of the motivation for this case study. In my research, I seek to understand the ways in which UPA affects women’s empowerment and autonomy, in order to better understand why there are so few women

involved in urban vegetable production. At the risk of burdening women through gender mainstreaming, it is particularly important to understand these factors before assuming that women will benefit from becoming more involved within UPA in Accra.

Intersectionality, Difference and ‘Lived Experiences’

A FPE approach to examining women’s lives in UPA also considers the influence of a ‘Western feminist agenda’ in development efforts that seek to empower women through UPA. Aguilar (2004) describes the tendency of Western feminists to cast women in the Global South as a homogenous category with little agency. The integration of a Western feminist agenda within a mainstream development framework has often encouraged the assumption that poor women in the Global South are only concerned with daily economic survival, and therefore have no goals beyond this. Sanyal’s (1987) criticism in the context of UPA raises a key question regarding how the support and promotion of UPA risks imposing or maintaining the conditions of inequality that gave rise to this activity in first place (p. 187). Similarly, Aguilar states that a “Feminist emphasis on empowerment and resistance, then, might be construed as a deceptive device that gives the illusion of an emancipatory agenda when there is none” (2004, p. 413). Today’s feminist scholars, including those directly involved in FPE research, emphasize the importance of considering the contributions and challenges of poor women and women in the Global South, while recognizing their agency for negotiating power, identity and social change within their particular localities (Aguilar, 2004; Escobar, 1995; Rocheleau et al., 1996; Hovorka, 2005; Harcourt, 2012).

FPE's places women in the center of development and global practices while being particularly attentive to their diverse 'lived experiences', a notion that considers the agency of women and consists of "a dynamic set of relationships through which inequalities are created and challenged, rather than a singular property that resides within an individual group or nation" (Bhavnani et al., 2003, p. 4). 'Lived experiences' draw from early concepts of 'intersectionality' within feminist thought, seeking to interrogate the intersecting identities within society, including ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, mobility, class and livelihoods. Each of these factors is fundamental to women's lived experiences, and FPE illustrates how these experiences are not always shared experiences. A nuanced examination of social processes embedded within women's lives and livelihoods is essential in planning policies that seek to address both the practical and strategic needs of women in the context of contemporary sustainable development initiatives.

In this case study, I strategically illustrate the life histories of women farmers in Accra to unveil the unique trajectories of women's lives and to understand whether and how they are empowered by their livelihoods in UPA. I am aware of the global power imbalances that position women in the Global South in spaces of marginalization and subordination and am intent of complicating the development framework within UPA so as not to reproduce these circumstances of inequality. By engaging in a FPE approach, combined with an SLA, I hope to offer an alternative approach to UPA as a development intervention for women in the Accra, which seeks to address both practical and strategic interests of women farmers simultaneously, and in a more nuanced and appropriate manner.

The next chapter demonstrates my commitment to providing an honest picture of women's role and livelihoods within UPA in Accra through the design of my research methodology. Within the design of my research, I continued to raise questions in response to the criticisms of development by relevant feminist scholars: does advocating for gender mainstreaming in UPA provide women with opportunities to achieve their desired levels of creativity and resourcefulness? Does the promotion of UA within gender and development strategies exploit or empower women? The next section illustrates how I am able to answer these questions and address concerns raised by FPE scholars.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

My research aims to shed light on the livelihoods of women in the informal urban vegetable cultivation in Accra and how it shapes their urban experience. The research methods for this paper were ethnographic in nature and were designed to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics and challenges that these women face and how historical and contemporary processes of development have helped to shape these conditions. As women in the informal sector in urban and peri-urban Accra continue to negotiate their role and livelihoods within these marginalized spaces, dominant development strategies lack the ability to address the complex and hybrid environments and livelihoods that women vegetable producers experience. Through the methods designed below, I seek to understand how women are empowered through urban agriculture and what role urban agriculture has as an urban development strategy for urban women.

Data Collection

During Summer 2014, I traveled to Accra, Ghana to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of women involved in urban vegetable production in urban and peri-urban spaces. Over the course of three months, I engaged in mixed qualitative research methods, including participant observation and one-on-one interviews. Mainstream analysis of gender and development issues often reflect only the macro-level of political economics and ecologies. Qualitative research that focuses on women's lived experiences allows for a fuller understanding of their lives and their relationship to the political, economic, social and environmental spaces. Through this qualitative research, I

gained a better understanding of how the macro political economic frameworks affect women farmers' daily lives. I chose to include the women farmers as my primary source for this study because they are experts on issues related to their livelihoods and their day-to-day experiences are essential to informing the research topic.

I engaged in participant observation in many of the same locations where I conducted interviews with participants. The goal of this was twofold: (1) to get a general sense of the site and the individuals; (2) to observe and note patterns of behavior and of the environment; (3) to develop trust and relationships with some of individual participants. I carried out approximately 20 hours of observation at urban farm locations, keeping field notes during my times on the farm to document my observations. These notes were later incorporated into a personal journal, in which I wrote more comprehensive and general observational narratives about the local culture, interactions with farmers, and other extemporaneous observations during my time in Ghana. When I was at the farm locations, I participated by helping with various agricultural activities, including harvesting crops and managing weeds, etc., all while interacting with farm workers, women farmers, and their families. The locations selected for this study were intentionally diverse, including both urban and peri-urban areas of urban agriculture and vegetable production, which is meant to demonstrate the role of the quickly urbanizing context in Accra and its effect on spaces where farmers and traders supply food for the city. Urban farms located in Accra Metropolitan Assembly included Dzorwulu and La, while the peri-urban locations included Kwabenya and Dome-Atomic areas, both part of the Ga-East Municipality.

During the last stage of my data collection, I carried out one-on-one semi-

structured interviews, with a mostly open-ended format, allowing for the flexibility to explore different topics with individual participants. I conducted interviews with 12 farmers (10 women, 2 men) who are involved in urban vegetable production or vegetable marketing. Each interview lasted between 45 -90 minutes depending on the length of responses that were given. Each interview was conducted in a quiet space on the farm. I was able to select participants based on the length of time worked (5 in each group: 0-1 year; 1-5 years; 5-10) and in diverse age groups because I believe these factors have an impact on their experience. I also interviewed two staff members of Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), one agricultural extension agent in Accra and one market extension agent in Accra. My interviews with the agents helped develop a framework for participant interviews and to better understand the food and agricultural system in Accra.

In the peri-urban areas of Accra, I employed the help of a MoFA extension agent, who helped me locate hard-to-find farms around Accra, in the Kwabenya and Atomic areas. The agent introduced me to the farmers and offered her time to drive me to each farm. I accessed the urban farms in the center of Accra by *tro-tro* along with the agent. From initial introductions to farmers with the agent, I used snowball sampling in order to take advantage of the strong social networks that exist in the local culture and in the informal work that these women do (Hennink et al., 2011). I developed a general, semi-structured interview script (see Appendix B) that was pre-tested by individuals not in the study sample. Each interview included roughly 20 structured, open-ended questions designed to elicit interviewees' perceptions and concerns about women's work as urban food traders and cultivators in the informal economy in Accra. The initial compilation of interview questions was based on my research questions and introductory literature

research. In addition, the questions were revised based on field notes and new insights from my participant observational experience to ensure comprehensibility and cultural appropriateness of the questions and to reflect the themes that emerged during the observational process. During interviews, I often probed specific areas of interest by asking unscripted follow up questions related to some of the original questions. I tailored each interview based on the nature of the participants' work and their responses to original questions. Therefore, some questions I asked during some interview sessions were not asked during others, which allowed me to collect a variety of important but different perspectives and themes on the topic.

Prior to each individual interview, I introduced myself in Twi and explained to the participant the purpose of my research, reviewing the informed consent (see Appendix C-D) and ensuring the confidentiality of their identities and interviews. I purposefully asked each participant at the close of the interview if there was anything that I did not ask that they felt was important to them to share. I hoped to provide a chance for the interview participant to share with me freely what was important to themselves and their work. After completing the interview, I asked for consent from each participant to take some photos of their farm, crops and of themselves and their farm workers or family. Before leaving Ghana, I returned to many of the farms and provided the participants with photos of themselves on their farms as a gesture of gratitude for their willingness to accommodate me and to help during my research. I also reviewed additional documents collected from RUAF (Resource Center on Urban Agriculture and Food Security) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) to help further inform my research with broader and more empirical data.

Urban and Peri-Urban Agricultural Sites

Dzorwulu

Dzorwulu is an urban farming location located in the center of Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and lies alongside the Onyasias drain. The land currently being cultivated in this area is split by the main road with a roaring of cars rushing through. I followed a set of old train tracks from the road, passing behind small houses, where families were cooking gari on open stoves and laying out laundry. This site is a spectacular integration of contrasts, where urban structures tower over the low-lying plots that separate exotic crops (Figs. 1-2). Rows of miniature lettuce plants are settled next to the GRIDCO power center and high line towers run across the length of the farm perimeters.



Figure 1. Picture of irrigated vegetable farm located in Dzorwulu's urban farming site.

Approximately 30 farmers grow a variety of exotic vegetables including lettuce, spring onion, cassava, cabbage and spinach. Only three of the farmers are women, all of whom began farming at this site since the implementation of Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) in the 1970's (Girdner, 1980). Since then, this location has served as a model farm for MoFA and was institutionally recognized through this initiative. Since the 1980s farmers have been informally farming on what is now owned by GRIDCO (a national electricity corporation). Farmers employ chemical fertilizers (many imported) and hybrid seeds and grow primarily for profit at the local markets around the center of Accra. Many of the plots here are irrigated, but water from the Onyasias drain is sometimes used to water



Figure 2. Map showing the physical characteristics of the Dzorwulu urban farming site.

during times of little rain. This urban farming site has been a popular site for research on urban agriculture, as it has an obvious affinity to that of mainstream urban farming operations.

La

La's farms are known as Accra's Okra city, with much of its cultivation dedicated to okra production for local markets and broader markets. Urban agriculture operations in La have also been a common site for research on urban agriculture, particularly in regards to land use and land ownership policies. Once the largest and most prosperous urban farming location with the AMA, La's urban farming plots are located in Southeast Accra with much of land being under customary land ownership. In the past decade, farmers here have experienced significant changes and a decrease in land cultivation due to encroachment, as more profitable real estate development continues to be prioritized over the cultivation for food. Unlike other urban and peri-urban farm locations I visited for this study, La's plots have a much larger percentage of women farmers, who are typically more affected by encroachment problems because of the labor required for them to move their operations.

Kwabanya

Kwabanya's farms are located in the Ga-East Municipality of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). Peri-urban farming landscapes are very different from the city center's urban farming locations. Kwabanya's farms are scattered throughout the

area, on the outskirts of the city, and reside between large residential areas. I visited three different farms located in Kwabenya with the help of a Ga-East Municipality agricultural extension agent. We parked the van behind the residential houses and took off along a trail through a small forested area, which opened up to a large expanse of fields full of mature cabbages and cauliflower (Fig. 3). Farmers who run these farms often live on their fields in small structures that provide them early morning access to their farm work. The landscape is more varied with rising slopes that sprout lettuce and cabbages and perimeters of the farm defined by lines of forested areas or residential boundaries. Similar to other farm locations closer to the city center, Kwabenya's farms are agricultural zones that include high-rise electric structures, owned by the local governments, who do not allow any structural building.

Farmers in Kwabenya's agricultural scene also grow exotic vegetables for some household use, but primarily for sale in surrounding markets, including lettuce, green peppers, spring onions, cabbage, carrots, and cauliflower. One of the three farms, however, grew primarily cassava plants, where she also processed the root crops into dry gari products for local sale. Chemical pesticide use is the primary solution for pest problems and most of the crops are irrigated by small irrigation systems in addition to rain fed irrigation. Farmers must often hand water crops by buckets full of water from close drains if rains subside for a significant period of time during the dry season. Farmers in this area are less organized than the farmers at Dzorwulu and La sites, although some are in the process of developing farmers associations for their small area of the city.



Figure 3. Picture of irrigated vegetable farm in Kwabenya, Ga-East District of Accra.

Atomic

Farms in the Atomic areas of GAMA are also peri-urban farming operations located in the Ga-East Municipality of Accra's agricultural expanse. The area is located near the Atomic nuclear power plant and University and owned by local government, with 4-6 larger farms lined on both sides of a rough gravel road. The fields are comprised mostly of exotic vegetables with families living practically in the middle of their farms. The crops are similarly irrigated by small irrigation systems and rainwater and managed by chemical pesticide use. At the farms, I was able to speak with three different women farmers and two men who managed the majority of their farming operations. Since I visited very early in the morning, I was also able to speak with market women who rode

to the farms in taxis used to transport 1-kilo bags full of cabbage and lettuce to surrounding local markets or for wholesale to other market women.

Data Analysis

Upon returning to Oregon in September 2014, I transcribed all of the interviews that were obtained by using an audio recorder. During the transcription process I was simultaneously able to draw out some of the important and general themes across the interviews with participants in the field. After transcribing all of the interviews, I read through and reviewed all of the data, while making general notes about themes and unique insights or differences in data. I used many of the concepts from my previous literature review as points of departure (Charmaz, 2006), but relied mostly on the results of themes that emerged from coding the interview data. I systematically coded each interview for key words and phrases and then organized the data based on interview questions and shared themes, which highlight the many challenges and opportunities experienced in their work and their role in the local food system.

Challenges and Limitations of the Study

There were a number of challenges and limitations during my time in Accra that may have an affect on the results of my data collection. First, it is unclear how my position as a white, Western woman affected the results of my data and my interactions with research participants. I often was viewed as an outsider and was expected to answer for the “research fatigue” that some of the participants felt from their time with me and with previous researchers investigating similar issues. However, it is also possible that

my position as an outsider or “Obruni⁶” may have allowed for deeper probing of particular issues that participants would have been more hesitant to share with fellow Ghanaians because of suspicion of sharing information in close social networks.

The method of recruitment and sampling of participants was unscientific and could have limited the results of data collection by interviewing participants in the same social network. I tried to have several starting points, including interviewing participants at different farm or market locations in the city, to help diversify the pool of participants. This provided a broader range of perspectives, however, further research would benefit by discovering more diverse social networks.

Language was a limiting factor during the interview phase, as the range of English-language ability varied diversely. Although Ghana is technically an Anglophone country and many of its residents speak English, it is unclear exactly the level of English comprehension and speaking skills that many farmers can employ, particularly in an interview setting. I conducted all of my interviews in English and sought out participants who had a sufficient level of English to participate in the interviews. Selecting participants based on their level of English skills limited the diversity of my participants and most likely affected the quality and range of my data. I chose not to employ the skills of a certified translator during my data collection for two reasons. First, farmers in Accra have very diverse backgrounds and often speak different native languages, depending on their family and the location from which they migrated. Most of the farmers were migrants from primarily the Northern Region in Ghana and many also from the Volta Region to the east of Greater Accra. Thus, each individual could have spoken

⁶ Meaning “foreigner” in Twi language, predominantly spoken throughout the Accra region.

up to six different native languages, including English, Twi, Ga, Ewe, Gonja or Dagbani. Secondly, I did not have enough time or resources needed to elicit the help of certified translators for each language that needed to be translated and help them to complete the necessary steps required by the human subjects review board. Although the diversity of language in Accra limited my access to more diverse participants, I believe that there were more than enough skilled English-speakers to create a valuable pool of participants for the purposes of my research.

The short timeframe I had to conduct interviews and participant observation was also a limiting factor. More time was needed to develop relationships with participants and to explore more specific areas of interest in the research. Time also limited to the level of access I had to the particular sites of research, especially the farms. The farms were often difficult to get to without a car or locate without knowledge of the farms systems. Therefore, I had to rely on the available time in a MoFA extension officer's schedule to reach each farm, especially farms in the peri-urban areas of Greater Accra. Thankfully, with generous help from the officer, I was able to reach a sufficient number of farms in order to create healthy relationships with participants and to take the time to observe the activities on the farm.

This study focuses specifically on the livelihoods and urban experience of women vegetable entrepreneurs in the informal economy in Accra, Ghana, and thus the study will only discuss a specific type of experience that may not represent the challenges within other urban women's experiences or women in different locations. Framing this case study within a larger context of urban livelihood and gender and development discussions will only help to reveal a collection of comparative experiences, but it will not seek to

present solutions to related situations at a larger scale. Despite these limitations, my research is sensitive to the nuances of the interview sample that I was able to obtain during my time in Accra, and will allow for sufficient analysis that draws out many important factors involved in the case study of Accra's urban vegetable farmers.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN CULTIVATING THE CITY

In this chapter, I present the findings from my fieldwork in Accra and interviews with women vegetable farmers and city agricultural extension agent. My analysis creates a framework for my research questions and draws primarily from interviews with women farmers and is meant to respond to themes from existing literature. I find that some of my analysis is in agreement with existing literature. However, other parts of my analysis actually complicate or contradict some of the existing claims within literature about women in urban agriculture within SSA as well as Ghana. My observational and interview data revealed many themes regarding women in UPA in Accra, but I chose to focus on just four particular ones because they both represent significant parts of my data as well as address important dialogues in existing literature. These four themes include: intersectionality, hybridity, uneven burdens, and empowerment.

I seek to highlight the trajectory of women's involvement as farmers and related roles in the urban foodscape. Throughout the bulk of the section, I integrate common concepts from literature with the individual experiences of the women in this study. I include narratives of the women farmers I interviewed, which are meant to illuminate the diverse lives of women farmers in Accra and the complicated processes that shape their livelihoods within UPA. I hope these brief portraits help to demonstrate the agency they have within their lives and within local dynamics that entangle their livelihoods. The portraits, I think, are essential in illustrating and gaining a better understanding of the hybridity of women's lives due to the overlapping spatial, social, and economic concepts

that flow throughout the complicated rural-urban fabric. I also seek to highlight the ways in which their experiences are embedded within larger structures, hierarchies of power and effects of mainstream development that prioritizes the global market within local lives, livelihoods, and self-fulfillment. These pictures and expressions by the women are crucial to determining the role UPA in women's lived experiences, and ultimately, in understanding the gender implications for employing UPA as a livelihood development strategy and how this processes seeks to challenge mainstream development frameworks in Accra.

A City of Contrasts

At 6:00 am I catch the *tro-tro* at the intersection of American House Road and the Tema roadway. Already, the mini-mart across from my house is open and running, women are preparing street food from within their small vending structures, and the smell of roasting plantain wafts across my nose as I gaze across the broad and busy roadway. Thousands of people are driving or riding to work, pushing through the traffic, and pedestrians, preoccupied with their mobiles, wave off *tro-tros* that pass by. Commuters and people on the street are dressed in a mix of vibrant Ghanaian cloth designs and business suits and skirts. Accra is a tropical metropolis of contrasts, positing coastal slums and traditional markets against the backdrop of towering banks, bellowing roadways and a rich international community. Yet, the city's integration into a globalized and market-oriented community is not seamless. The diversity of the city is not a subtle integration of a cosmopolitan society. This is in part due to the unplanned

and seemingly ad hoc nature of development throughout the city's infrastructure and its people.

I am confronted by these contrasts everyday and there seems to be no part of the city that is exempt from these juxtapositions. Take my neighborhood, for example. My house is located in a well-to-do neighborhood in East Legon, close to the University of Ghana, and within walking distance of international restaurants, internet cafes, supermarkets, malls and heaps of NGOs that focus on every aspect of human existence. On my way to my internship at a local environmental NGO, I pass a wide array of both traditional and “modern” activities that occur just along the main road. The first stretch of my walk passes through a section of undeveloped land, where local farmers cultivate maize and common vegetables beneath lofty electric gridlines. Next to the field are small colorful structures and houses where laundry lines bounce in the wind and young boys home for summer break kick a football around the dusty, dirt road. Having frequented my walk everyday for almost two months, I have come to recognize the people along my walk, who, like me, work in the same spaces day-to-day. I greet the men working in the field as they call out “*Abena!*” (a nickname given, since I was born on Tuesday). The farm changes daily, as sections of invasive plants are pulled out to plant lettuce and cabbage seedlings. My fruit stand lady displays her pineapples, mangos and tangerines in creative structures adjacent to the field. As I wait for my pineapple to be chopped, I gaze out across the storm water drain that the farmers use to irrigate their crops. Bulging green cabbage plants line the length of the cement drain and a pile of trash smokes from the drain railing. “*Medasse*”, I say to thank the friendly fruit lady, and I continue on to work. I wait for a line of cars and colorful *tro-tros* to pass on the main road before

crossing, and as I wait, I watch one of the cars drive up to a woman turning plantains on a grill. The car sits and waits while the young woman carefully transfers the hot plantains from the grill to a small plastic bag and then the two exchange through the car window. The mates on the *tro-tros* hang out the sliding door, yelling “*circ-circ!*” and “*Medina! Adenta! Medina!*” at me as they speed past. Another friendly voice calls to me, and I turn to see my daily language partner, a woman selling street food from a small metal, glass box. “*Eh! Obruni! Ete Sen?*” (How are you?) “*Mache,*” (good morning) I respond. Everyday she asks me “*Wo co hen?*” (where are you going) to help me practice my Twi and I struggle to offer a response in good pronunciation.

Despite my limited language ability, Ghanaians I meet on the street, at work, or in the field have welcomed my curiosity and the small opportunities to teach me something about their local culture and themselves. Accra has embarked on a trajectory towards global citizenship that is a stark contrast to persistent traditional culture. Expatriates from around the world are based in the city and government planning efforts continue to build its global industry schemes throughout the landscape. Like most other features of Accra, even traditional culture in the city is a complex patchwork. Accra’s indigenous Ga population continues traditional fishing activities, while migrants from the Northern Region settle and enter market livelihoods in the multitude of *zongo*⁷ districts. The city is a complex hybrid of traditional culture and modern global influence, always shifting and always creating new opportunities and challenges for urban dwellers.

⁷ *Zongos* are designated neighborhoods or districts with diverse individuals that are essentially bound together by cultural practices in Islam.

Women in The Local Foodscape

The stark diversity of the city is also seen throughout its local foodscape. Mini-marts, fruit stands, street hawkers and vegetable traders line the streets selling a variety of food products to passersby. Food in the city comes in a number of forms and originates from diverse nearby and far-away places. A visit to the largest open-air markets in the city, the *Makola* and *Agbobloshie* markets, will illustrate a complex web of products, material exchanges, social networks and a blur of rural-urban activity. Women are the primary engineers of the local foodscape, serving as market queens, street hawkers, vegetable traders, as well as young porters from far-away regions. In some cases, they set the perimeters of food trading and other times they sell vegetables individually on the side of the road for a small day's profit. One thing is for sure: there is no singular identity for women in Accra's foodscape.

Feminization and Commercialization of Urban Agriculture

Although women in the informal economy in Accra dominate in trading and marketing, women also play a role in the field, helping to provide the city with vegetables that satisfy diverse and changing urban diets. Unlike many other major cities in SSA, where women dominate in urban cultivation, Ghana and much of West Africa see fewer women involved in UPA activities. Literature on UPA suggests that there are many reasons for this, pointing specifically to the arduous nature of labor involved in many parts of UPA. According to Obosu-Mensah (1999), before the 1970s, women used outnumber men in urban cultivation. She cites processes of urbanization and the political economy as main influences for women to enter into informal urban agriculture. As

formal wage opportunity in the city decreased, women were encouraged to take up low paying formal sector jobs. These jobs provided them with insufficient income and eventually led many to engage in UPA to supplement their food income. "...the African men were opposed to employment of women in the Civil Service. This was based partly on the fear that, women, with fewer financial commitments, will accept lower salaries than men, who will, as a result be unable to find work" (Obosu-Mensah, 2002, p. 32). As women began to engage fully in UPA, a "feminization" of UPA occurred, lowering the prestige of the practice.

Once UPA was acknowledged in the city as a viable activity for profit-making, the co-option of UPA by men increased, and soon UPA became what it is known as today in Accra: as "men's Work". Today, as the city grows and continues to increase the inclusion of vegetables in daily diets, growing and distributing exotic vegetables throughout Accra is often seen as a profitable activity. Men often dominate these activities in Accra, in part, because of the focus on commercialization of vegetables in the city, but also because of the changing mainstream and officials' attitudes of urban agriculture in Accra. In my interviews with women farmers who were married, some of the women told me that their husbands worked as a farmer outside of Accra, in agricultural production of export crops, like cocoa and palm oil, as well as mining operations that offer larger profits than urban farming. In their absence, their wives stay to cultivate the land and sell crops within the local markets, while caring for the children and the household. With a look into the history of Ghana's urban agriculture scene, the dominance of men in today's vegetable production in Accra suggests a gender-based asymmetry of entitlements that encourage men's control over cash crops in general,

especially as vegetables become more important and profitable within Accra's growing community.

Intersectionality and (In)formality

With such low numbers of women participating in UPA in Accra compared to other SSA cities, my research begs the question: Why do existing women in UPA in Accra choose to farm, despite the fact that urban cultivation in the city is 'men's work'? Why not choose a livelihood that is more lucrative for women like vegetable trading, as literature suggests? My experience interviewing women vegetable farmers in Accra helped me to deconstruct many of the assumptions held within dominant literature about who farmers are, why they farm, and how they identify themselves. Each of the farmers I met had their own unique story and past experiences. The pool of women I interviewed represents a diverse set of farmers, each with various socioeconomic status, motivations for farming, experience, education, household dynamics, and access to resources.

Transcending Gender

One of the most common assumptions is that they are recent migrants from rural areas and enter into farming because of its salience in their background. Many studies of UPA in SSA recount the role of migrant farmers in urban cultivation, but while most farmers in UPA in Accra are from rural areas, especially Northern Ghana, it is a myth that they travel to the city to start farming and have yet to be integrated into the urban economy. Although most of the women's stories begin in the village, their involvement in UPA is not dictated by their village backgrounds. My research suggests that most

women farmers with a rural background have some experience in traditional farming or backyard gardening, but did not enter farming as a livelihood until they were already integrated into the city for many years. Additionally, their experience farming in the village may differ greatly from the type of farming that they handle in the city.

One women farmer from the Kwabenya area recounts her journey from her home village and her experience farming there:

Oh yeah! I am from a farming area in the Volta Region. We grow rice over there. Rice, Cocoa, so we are farmers. So I was a trained child as a farmer. So the interest is there. No matter what type of farming. So that's how I came to farming.

Farming in the city has a different set of economic, physical and social dynamics that differ from rural agriculture and vary throughout urban and peri-urban farms. A large part of my research efforts were in trying to better understand the motivations for women to cultivate in the city, despite the many documented economic, physical and political challenges they face. Farming operations, compared to other typical informal jobs for women require a lot of initial capital. Despite their background in farming and their eventual trajectory towards farming later in life, many of the women farmers held previous jobs and livelihoods off the farm. The descriptions from women farmers below show that many of the women held work in other “feminized” jobs in the city before farming, including training and jobs as a seamstress and tailor and food traders.

Before I farmed, at my early youth, when I finished my elementary school, I was trained as a seamstress. But when I started that work and finished the training, I saw that that is not my area.

Some women, however, have very different job experiences prior to the livelihoods as farmers. These women engaged in various forms of work that are not commonly considered “feminine” and some of which were formal, wage earning jobs.

I became a businesswoman selling as an agent. But, I decided that this work did not make me happy. After that experience, from there, I decided that farming! I like farming!

Motivations for working as an urban farmer differ for many women. As demonstrated through the quote above, some women expressed a certain affinity to farm work and enjoyed the chance to engage in something they enjoy, compared to previous livelihoods they had. Yet, many others had different reasons for working in the field. During my interviews, I frequently asked the women farmers why they “chose” to become farmers. In some of the interviews, the women laughed and expressed how silly of a question they thought this was. For some women farmers, typically women who had lower educational levels and shared the farm with their husbands, they did not exactly “choose” to become farmers. Below are two farmers’ responses to this particular question.

Ha! Why did I choose this? I have not been to school, so I can’t do anything but farm work, except for trade. This is what I know how to do.

I was working on this same farm for almost 30 years now because I was born into it and at 10 years, I was farming.

Both of these farmers, like others, spoke about their family’s involvement in the farm and their continual livelihoods as farmers, despite, what they described as limited options for other livelihoods. The majority of farmers who shared this reason for farming had farm operations in peri-urban areas and lived very close to the farm if not on the exact land where their crops are cultivated. In contrast, the

three farmers I interviewed at the Dzorwulu site in the city voiced that their previous experience as MoFA employers encouraged them to work as farmers. All three of them had begun farming in 1972, when the OFY was implemented by the government at that time. Their participation was not motivated by an already-defined livelihood or by limited opportunities in other formal or informal work. They began farming, not as pure economic subsistence, but rather, in part, because of their belief in becoming self-sufficient as individuals and a nation through producing their own food. They had extensive knowledge as farm agents and took advantage of the government-provided subsidies for seeds, fertilizers, and other initial farm inputs, which are no longer available from the city or national government.

‘Survival’ vs. ‘Commercial’ Farming

My research sample provided a seemingly consistent variation in socioeconomic status, suggesting that women from all walks of life begin farming in the city, albeit for different reasons. The women also had varied levels of education, ranging from only primary education to middle/junior high to higher education and beyond. This data complicates the notion of the ‘poor’ and ‘uneducated’ farmer that has been pervasive in development literature, particularly in regards to women. UPA is often seen by governments and researchers as a practice of poor migrants from villages who have no access to other formal or informal livelihoods and are in immediate economic need. Previous literature of UPA in SSA simplifies the reasons for participate in urban farming activities, creating an inapt dichotomy between ‘survival’ and ‘commercial farming’.

The farmers' backgrounds did little to determine their entry into either of these categories, and regardless of socioeconomic class lines, women farmers, in every case, suggested that they farm for both reasons. Their livelihoods as farmers demonstrate a particular focus on generating income from the farm by selling vegetables that take a lot of inputs and attention, compared to other crops. Their farming operations are serious commercial ventures, meeting a need for a growing population in Accra who prioritize vegetables in their diets. In addition to their entrepreneurship goals, all of the women in my study described how their livelihoods as farmers provided food for themselves and their families for cheaper than they would be able to pay in the market.

Almost all of the farmers, except the farmers in Dzorwulu, however, suggested that they experience difficulties in making their livelihoods and income as farmers meet the demands of their household and operational costs. Despite these concerns, most of the farmers said that they have not thought about leaving their work as farmers for something else. This incongruence may be due to a number of reasons, including seasonality of farming income and multiple livelihoods strategies, which I will describe in a later section of my analysis. The diverse stories from the women farmers in this study and their description of motivation to farm highlight some structural forces beyond their control, but also personal decisions that lead them to farm.

(In)formality and Marginalization

With little support from the government, informal livelihoods for most Ghanaians continue to be unregulated and insecure. Today in Ghana it is difficult to distinguish between formal and informal activities. Government actors and markets are in some

ways linked and often interdependent. The formal-informal duality is full of paradoxes for many Ghanaians, particularly those who have combined incomes as individuals. However, as Overa (2007) points out, informalization is not a reliable indicator of poverty. It is important to deconstruct the assumption that informality is equivalent to marginalization. The urban agriculture as an informal economic activity boasts people from all walks of life, with some UA farmers who are actually quite wealthy. As mentioned in the last section, since the implementation of OFY, even government officials have taken part in urban farming activities around the city. These descriptions of previous livelihoods and socioeconomic roles within their local framework also contradict many notions about women in informal urban work.

My research offers examples of the ways formal and informal processes occur in UPA spaces. (In)formality represents the nature of power expressed with consideration of who, where and how factors. There are many forms of power that operate indirectly on the farm, affecting women farmers in various ways. Processes inherent to formal and informal networks are woven together and overlap throughout urban and peri-urban spaces, especially on the farm. Although the livelihoods of the farmers are considered informal, they have many important relationships with stakeholders and processes originating from other formal types of spaces and networks.

One example of this is in women's access to land available to cultivate their crops and their livelihoods. The data from my interviews highlight the diverse relationships women have in order to access land for farming. Some women lease or rent the land from customary landowners or chiefs in the areas. Others use land demarcated by the government. In order to keep the land and continue cultivating vegetables, farmers are

constantly negotiating with landowners to decide how much money to pay for a year's worth of use, or how much of the land they are allowed to cultivate. The women in my interviews confirmed that, in terms of land access, women's experiences do not differ so much, since men and women have the same access. Many researchers have suggested that, since most land for cultivation belongs to the government, it depends not on gender, but on their ability to lobby to get the land (Obuobie et al., 2004). Yet, part of the ability to lobby well for land depends on the farmer's relationship with the landowners. Both the literature and the women in my research study suggested that owners tend to privilege men because of their ability to cultivate larger plots and more profitable crops than women, particularly in the peri-urban areas. The work required to cultivate vegetables, require larger and more expensive inputs and physical labor, the women farmers suggest, that is often very difficult for women to complete.

Formal and informal networks merge also through the involvement of the government. Since the change of attitude by officials regarding UPA in Accra, the government has participated in UPA in various ways. The most apparent was the implementation of OFY, which offered subsidies to farmers, helping some women farmers to cover the capital needed for initial farm inputs. The government also negotiates with farmers who cultivate land sections owned by local governments. Additionally, the government successfully decentralized their agricultural services and offers extension service for all districts of the city. Some of the women farmers in the study stated that MoFA agents sometimes visit their farms to talk to them. According to one extension agent, the agents are designed to be between extension and research, offering advice to farmers, but also taking the problems expressed by farmers to the

office to forward it to research. In my interviews, many farmers suggested that they appreciated the support from extension agents, but find them unreliable in helping them with practical needs, noting especially the costs of farm inputs. “People from the government come and make promises but then they don’t do anything about it.” Other women suggested that they do feel like the government supports them in their work. Most urban and peri-urban farms lie in spaces where the government prohibits building, due to high-tension wires and electrical units. According to one farmer, before the government put in the high-tension system, she had to deal with a lot of land squatters who would live on her land and destroy sections of crops by building small living and sleeping structures. However, she suggests that today, she has to deal with squatters less because of her relationship with the government, which often takes care of squatters.

As it is dry, the land squatters are trying to come in. And they’re fighting me because they want to be on the land. So, it was the GRIDCO who brought the high tension wires in, and has released me from that burden. It was around 2002. Oh yes, [the government] supports me. All those land squatters are coming, I report to them. I have to report to them because the land belongs to them and they give it to me. So the land case is different. So when I report to him, they do what needs to be done.

Government interests on farms are evident in land planning process, along with other formal agencies like real-estate developers who encroach on cultivated lands and the water and river authorities who dictate water use from drains and pipes for irrigation also play a part in shaping the spaces, work and lives of farmers. Additionally, local government actors and research institutions like RUAF or IWMI and the University of Ghana seek to address the many concerns about UPA regarding the safety consumption of urban vegetables. Health concerns about the sanitation of water and use of chemicals in the urban production process have driven formal stakeholders to work with farmers in

better ensuring the safety of their produce in the markets and reducing environmental pollution and contamination from heavy chemical fertilizer use. Although government byelaws do not ban or promote UPA directly, they require open-space farmers to get permission from the government health assembly, which also occasionally inspects farms throughout the city.

The local market systems also play a significant role on the farm. Many women farmers seek opportunities for income generation during times of crop failure or *glatt*⁸, most turning to vegetable trading to supplement their income. Typically, market women and middle women (i.e., wholesalers) come to the farm spaces to harvest and transport crops for sale. Many women farmers both sell to other market women and trade in local markets themselves when they find time.

I sell at the market, the vegetables and fruits. I have so much that I sell some and sell to other market women. The market women give less price, because they have to take transport and pay to take to the market, so when they come to buy the produce they buy for very low. But when I go to the market, I can sell at what I want. I also go out and buy mango and pineapple to sell at the market.

Although vegetable trading is also generally considered informal, there are many internal formalities involved in trading that flows to the farm as well. ‘Market Queens’ typically help to set prices for food products that are sold in the markets and therefore regulate and set specific structures for buying and selling processes in the local foodscape (see Clark, 1994).

⁸ This term was used by all of the interview participants. I was unable to find a definition for it but understand it as the following: *Glatt* refers to the conditions of the market when there is an abundance or overflow of the same crops and other products, which causes sellers and traders to buy and sell products at a lower prices. *Glatt* occurs mostly during the rainy season in Accra, when water-demanding vegetables (i.e. cabbage) are more productive and farmers have larger quantities to sell, compared to the dry season when there are smaller quantities because of environmental conditions.

Formal and informal spaces within the city and UPA are hardly mutually exclusive and, as demonstrated above, often interdependent. Farmers in Accra interact daily with many different actors and many different forms of (in)formality, all of which shape the processes, challenges, and opportunities involved in their work. I would also argue that the formal structures that infiltrate the farm can have gendered systems that both benefit and burden women.

Hybridity and the Rural-Urban Interface

We pulled into a dead end from a dirt road with large rain-filled potholes. As I stepped out of the van, I looked around the residential housing on one side of us, and then turned to the opposite side to see a vast field in front of me, a hill on the horizon and a small forested area separating me from the field. The field boasted rows of green crops and was subtly immersed in to the fabric of the middle-class housing around its perimeter. I sought out a woman farmer in this field, after hiking a bit through the small muddled section of trees. Farmer Bernice works on this urban farm in Kwabenya, considered a peri-urban environment. Her farm covers a one to two acre span of cultivated land that stretches around the bottom of a large hill, with fields of cabbage and sweet peppers that creep almost vertically up the hill. Based on her look, it's obvious that Bernice spends a lot of time traversing the sides of this hill. Yet, as she walks up the smaller hill to the door of her farmhouse, settled in her worn rubber boots, muddy jeans and colorful head wrap, she lacks any visible evidence that this work and that hill make her tired. Instead, she smiles at me—a big Ghanaian smile—and holds her hands out to

catch the raindrops falling from a clouded sky, telling me that I have brought blessings to the farm.

At first glance, one might imagine being transported to the village by gazing across Bernice's farm, but this illustration really points to the complicated spatial hybridity of many urban and peri-urban farms in Accra. UPA in Accra combines diverse spatial, social and economic dynamics with features of rural and urban lives, spaces and interactions on the farm. Spatially, conditions are unique in urban agriculture compared to rural agriculture. Typically there is less space available to grow crops for commercialization. Although many farmers grow similar crops to those from rural areas (maize, cassava, etc.), they also commit the majority of their land to growing very different types of crops with much different needs, in terms of water, cycles, and inputs. Unlike rural commercial farming, farmers in Accra grow crops with shorter growing cycles that usually last from 4-6 weeks, which is beneficial for many reasons. Not only do farmers, then, have multiple crops that can be cultivated year-round, the short growing cycles also are important for farming on land that is rented or leased and, for many farmers, insecure. Growing vegetables in the city presents many opportunities for urban farmers and may seem somewhat advantageous to that of the rural agricultural spaces. However, it also posits many challenges that are unique to urban areas. Urban farmers are likely to experience scarcity and inadequate quality of resources, mainly water and land, because of other urban processes that shape these spaces.

Social networks and interactions on the farm also illustrate a blend of rural-urban exchanges, most notably in the use of labor on the farm. When visiting Kwabenya and Atomic sites in the peri-urban areas, I quickly realized that most farmers and their

families both work and live on or near the farms themselves, similar to rural agricultural spaces. In contrast, farmers in the urban farms in La and Dzorwulu used people outside of the family for labor and lived off the farm, sometimes 10-20 kilometers away.

However, the lines between the urban and peri-urban areas are not so clear, since these differences were less present in some than others. Family dynamics for the women farmers I interviewed were diverse. Some women stated that their husbands worked and mostly lived away from the city, often in the village doing agricultural activities, leaving them to supervise and manage the farm and their children while away. Modernizing processes in Accra's contemporary history have also changed the role of children on the farm. Many farmers had young children who stayed with them on the farm, helping out from time to time when they were on break from school. However, farmers with older children stated that they saw them less often and that their children helped little, if at all, on the farm because they were working in formal, non-farm jobs or going to school.

Women farmers have diverse social networks, both in farm and non-farm spaces, particularly since many of the women I interviewed also participate in part-time trading at nearby markets. Compared to rural areas, women experience fewer barriers in accessing resources like land, and some have more options for other types of livelihoods or combined livelihoods. A consistently modernizing and globalizing Accra is representative of shifting understandings of gender roles and responsibilities. Yet, women have clearly not been provided with full access to land tenure, despite the fact that they are not prohibited from accessing land. One farmer notes:

You know, normally, women don't own land. Their husbands own the land and give them a portion. But in my area (Kwabanya), the one woman will go to one woman who's been able to lease a piece of land, when she's

doing the farming. But most women, their husbands give them a portion of whatever land they are farming.

In many ways, the women farmers seem to have integrated into part of Accra's modern, urban society as it is generally understood, but in many ways they still experience cultural and social struggles in access full resource benefits.

Economic aspects of the urban and peri-urban farm also offer a wide array of possible exchanges between rural and urban conceptions of the political economy of the farm. As previously mentioned, women farmers have a greater ability to diversify their income generating activities by combining both formal and informal work. In many cases, women do not even need to leave the farm to exchange products with customers. Their markets are close, and because of the growing urban population, an ever-increasing need for urban food supplies creates, in a way, more reliable markets than women farming in the village might experience. For women who need to leave the farm, they also have advantageous transportation options, and many use taxi services to transport their vegetables to market spaces. In contrast, it is obvious that urban farmers received much less economic support because of their smaller operations and supply and their limited access to financial assistance for farm inputs. Urban farmers are also integrated into an urban cash economy, which requires immediate capital to continue operations, pay for farm and non-farm costs, and especially to purchase food. Their cash flow is constant and hard to track, and sometimes women do not know from day-to-day how much money they will have for purchasing farm inputs and daily nourishments.

The urban farm is an open dialogue between multiple rural-urban realities that often engage both modern and traditional processes. Degrees of hybridity vary from farm to farm, but each hybrid space and the hybrid lives have gendered

dimensions within Accra, some of which are currently in flux. These hybrid dimensions are aspects of daily life that women farmers are constantly negotiating as their livelihoods continue, embedded in diverse and fluid physical, cultural, political and economic spaces and structures.

Labor Segmentation and ‘Double Burdens’

Despite regular assertion within literature and through my interviews that there is little difference between genders in Accra’s UPA scene, my time doing fieldwork and probing through interviews with women farmers told a very different story. I have already discussed the multiple understandings of women’s access to land, but the overwhelming agreement is that women have the same access as men. However, there are clearer gender differences in the roles and responsibilities of women on the urban farm. Traditional roles of men and women in Ghana offer some form of explanation for the dominance of men in vegetable farming in Accra. Most communities consider it to be ‘men’s work,’ especially if the goal in farming is commercial trade. Many women that come from rural areas and find themselves on the farm in the city are still embedded in gendered expectations. Obuobie (2004) points to the cultural constraints of women who migrate from Northern Ghana, suggesting that in some ways it is still not acceptable for women [from this region] to farm alone in the city. Women are often still considered farm ‘helpers’ and do work on their husbands’ farms, where they focus on home consumption crops, as opposed to crops grown for commercial trade (Obuobie, 2004). Below, I discuss the perception of labor on the farm that is considered ‘men’s work’ by both men and women farmers and the challenges and opportunities that women farmers experiences in

their labor activities on the farm. In addition, my visits to the farm painted a seemingly clear picture about the responsibilities that women take over in regards to household and family processes.

‘Men’s Work’

Researchers on women in UPA in Accra charge the arduous nature of labor involved in urban agriculture as the main reason why women do not participate in UPA activities as a livelihood (Obuobie et al., 2004; Danso et al., 2004). Due to the fact that vegetables require more care and manual labor, men overwhelmingly monopolize farms in Accra. Men and women farmers carry out different farm activities and in different ways. Interviews and observations on the farm confirm that most women do not engage in labor that is considered ‘men’s work’, including land preparation, which is mainly manual. Land clearing and watering are often difficult tasks for women. Instead the women farmers focus on tasks that involve less physical labor, including weeding, transplanting, and sometimes watering. For farming operations owned by women, the farmers must employ labor to complete many of the more demanding tasks on the farm. However, as the women in my interviews frequently expressed, it is difficult to afford the costs associated with getting labor to do these tasks.

The main challenges is that ...Number one...it has been a challenge because the nature of the place here, nobody is ready to work. So the challenge for me is, me myself to work on the land. You call for labor, the people are not ready. So, it costs me, and anybody who comes to work charges you heavily! And there are no means there for me to bring them. So it's a big challenge for me, so I have to force myself by overworking myself. But by the grace of God, he took me through all that. And the other challenge is that when I finish and the land is now dry, because now all the water is draining to drain.

In this area, I have seen many women leave the farming here because of how hard the work is. It takes a lot of determination and hard work to do

the tasks you need to do to grow and sell the vegetables. I try to find labor, but if I can't pay for someone to come into do the work, then I must change and grow only some parts of my plot and not others.

As the farmer above suggested, many women farmers choose to scale down their cultivation in order to cope with limited finances for labor costs, while having the alternative to complete the tasks themselves, if necessary. It is common for women farmers in Accra to grow fewer water-demanding crops and more crops that need less water resources, which are a heavy strain on women in the field. The La UA site is a good example of this as there are many more women farming there than other areas throughout and around the city. La is also known as the “okra city” because of how many farmers, mostly women, cultivate traditional *okra* plants. The trade-off for women who want to make a living from farming is that these less water-loving plants are far less profitable than the exotic vegetables that men dominate in commercial farming.

As urbanization processes continue to change the face of UPA in Accra, women feel the effects. According to Danso et al. (2004), women are often given unfertile lands to cultivate, where they implement soil improvement to increase the fertility of the land. Then, “the men collect the fertile land and reallocate the unfertile portion of the land to the women for cultivation” (p. 8). As real-estate development continues to encroach on city farms and farmers are forced to shift cultivated land to undeveloped areas, women continue to be pushed out of the work on the farm due to the arduous labor involved in preparing the land.

The ‘Double Burden’

Labor segmentation by gender also exists outside of direct farm activities, where women primarily care for the household and family needs. Women’s experience of the

farm is significantly different compared to men in the way that they integrate both productive and reproductive roles within their daily-lives.

When I wake up, as a woman, the first thing is to see to the house very early. I did that very early. I start preparing before the day's break. So when I close in the evening, I have to see what I can put down, so that when I wake up early down I continue that so that I can have enough time to enter the work early. Because the house chores are number one for me, as a woman. Let's say food: whether we are many or not, even me alone, my family will have to eat. So I have to see that, at the end of the day, first, how am I going to plan ahead for tomorrow? So maybe there are some things you do in the evening, since you wake up early dawn. Then you continue. So that you can have early work hours for the work. Because, if I didn't plan like that, you see that if I didn't finish the kitchen side or maintaining the house before going to the work, it will hinder the early time working on the farm. So, you can't sleep early, number one. You have to wake up early, number two. Before you can manage your farm.

The women I interviewed reached consensus in describing the responsibilities of men and women as defined by traditional and cultural expectations. Household reproductive activities are almost entirely carried about by women consisting of many tasks such as cooking, bathing their children, washing clothes, and other typical household activities. During my interviews with just two male farmers, neither of them brought up household responsibilities that they needed to complete on a normal basis.

It's just by grace that we get by. So we need help. Already the home work is there. Automatically whether you like it or not you have to do it. It isn't like a man, when he finished working the farm. In our village, when he is finished, he just takes his dress and walk home. But the women take the cassava, the firewood, the baby on the back and carry it, she goes to find water and to the kitchen to do the kitchen work and to make the food to give the man to eat. Because the idea is that formerly the woman is in the kitchen doing the kitchen work, so it is the man who has gone to the farm and come back, so as they come back the woman has to see to the man to feed him. But right now, the women are working and they are doing the double work. It's not easy! It's not easy my sister! It's a problem. It's a constant challenge. So when the laborers are there, you will supervise what they need to do, then at least it removes the stress because we are stressing ourselves.

In addition to the reproductive household responsibilities of women and the productive roles on the farm, many women also engage in off-farm activities, like vegetable trading. Danso, et al. (2004) concluded that women typically spend more hours working on the farm than men. These farm work hours are then combined with hours spend trading at the market and taking care of their children and household structures. I gleaned from my interviews the level of exhaustion that some women farmers experience because of the amount and duration of combined productive and reproductive roles they play on the farm everyday. In analyzing the ways in which UPA can address both the practical and strategic needs of women farmers or potential women farmers, it is important to look critically at the multiple roles that women play. The benefits of gender mainstreaming efforts in UPA would be unproductive if women are burdened by double or triple responsibilities.

Empowerment and Autonomy

Farmer Nancy insists that farming is the only kind of work she was born to do. And based on my experience with her and in watching her work, I have no reason to suspect otherwise. She, not surprisingly, was able to successfully lobby for land owned by the local Chief. Her description of the land during the first few years of farming paints a much different picture than what I saw during my visit. After developing the land with limited hand tools, rice and other similar water-loving crops were much of the only crops she could grow because of the marsh-like topography of the farm. The farm lacked any available drainage for heavy rainfall, but Nancy took it upon herself to manually alter the land and, with some help—but not much—she dug a 400 meter

drainage ditch towards the base of the hill. From then on, she evolved her farming practices and began cultivating vegetable crops for herself and Accra's city dwellers. Today she has developed irrigation systems for her farm and grows a variety of cabbage, green peppers, cucumbers, cauliflower, carrots, plantains and other vegetables you would commonly find in typical Ghanaian dishes.

During my fieldwork, I was encouraged by the many stories women told about what they contributed to the land, their families and their communities through their work as farmers. Simone (2010) describes the “emergency” of daily urban life that I find also shapes the diverse lives of the farmers I interviewed. Simone suggests that there is an emergence of opportunities for resourcefulness that is inherent to urban livelihoods. In light of the women working on the field in and around Accra, I seek to highlight their agency in helping to shape and create within their local environments, communities, and also to larger structures. Women in Accra are finding power in many ways on the farm and they find it in daily subtleties. The farm and the changing nature of ‘urban-ness’ in Accra offer many of the women I met a place where they can exercise their creativity and they help to develop innovative ways to deal with social, economic and ecological processes along the way. Farmer Nancy's example shows how women farmers are actively changing the spaces, both physically and conceptually, in which they work, live and sometimes play. The hybridity of urban and peri-urban networks also provide women the flexibility to try different strategies to meet both their practical and strategic needs daily. In the examples and dialogue I provide here about women's empowerment through UPA, I am cautious to romanticize their experiences in these spaces. As described already, there are many challenges that women face, both personally and

structurally, as farmers in Accra. However, in my interactions with women farmers throughout the city, I had many opportunities to discuss the ways in which each farmer enjoys her work on the farm, and I want to include these voices in order to illustrate the capacity that the women have to change their situations, if deemed necessary, and the ways in which they find power to continue the work that they enjoy.

Cultivating the City and Family

I enjoy doing this work. The best part for me is when I get a good harvest, I get good market and I'll be able to get some money. When I see the crops on the field, I become happy. And when you get them growing, people also get something to eat. My house also gets something to eat.

Women farmers in Accra have described in detail the ups and downs of urban farming as a livelihood and income generating strategy. Their feelings about the work vary, as their incomes fluctuate and as they must negotiate between the many responsibilities and priorities they must address in their lives. However, during both good and bad periods typical for work on the farm, women farmers find renewed interest in the ways they can contribute to the dietary needs of their families and of their communities. Almost every farmer I interviewed told me that they enjoy farming in the city because they can provide their families with food from the farm. They also point out their role within a constantly growing city, and take pride in the fact that they are offering healthy food for many people in their community.

Financial success, however, is a major priority for every women farmer who is engaged in commercial operations, no matter the size of the farm. Many women described to me the ways in which they gain some freedom through income generating activities on the farm. Women who were married often seemed excited that they could

help to reduce the financial stresses of their husbands. Others hoped to keep receiving extra money from the farm that they could keep for themselves, although, typically they used this money to pay for their children's and other household expenses that were not sufficiently covered by their husband's 'chop money' contributions. Financial successes for most women farmers helped them become proud of their work and livelihoods as farmers and feel a sense of independence, something they had not felt in previous jobs. It is not strictly the financial resources or other productive resources that create this feeling for women farmers. Money and access to resources alone do not satisfy their need for addressing structural problems of marginalization or uneven burdens. Rather, their income from the farm helps them to further enable them to demonstrate agency and to create more enabling environments for themselves, depending on their individual experiences and interests.

For many women whose husbands were away from the home and working outside of the city, they felt like they had more autonomy in terms of making household decisions and household economic decisions. Although not specifically stated in the interviews, many of the same women farmers demonstrated the ability to have almost complete autonomy in their physical mobility and in choosing to move throughout their farms as well as off the farms to engage in more diverse social networks. For women who lived and worked with their husbands on the farm, their level of autonomy because of their work was unclear, as well as their desire to achieve more autonomy within their household and community.

Changing Spaces and Expectations

During my visits to the farms, I paid attention to the ways in which women interacted with their environments. For some women, human-environment interactions on the farm provided them with many different feelings. Almost all of the women interviewed expressed a sense of individual autonomy that falls into a psychological dimension and the ways in which urban farming experience has helped them become self-confident. I describe two common responses by women about how they feel about the farm and what they like about working with material features of the farm: peacefulness and pride.

Despite the many labor challenges for women farmers in Accra, these women farmers have had a significant hand in changing the physical landscape of the farm. Farmer Nancy, as previously described, expressed incredible pride in the work that she has done over the years and how she has helped to create a more productive and enjoyable landscape on her farm.

Well, they were selling the lands because it's a building area. So when I came here, at that time the place was not developed. So, actually, this place is a muddy area, which is designed for no-building. So, if I tell you that the place would be like this, you wouldn't believe because I just took initiative. I was working on it, working on it, and it is like this now. We have worked a lot here. Because it was very, very muddy that even I those days, you can't plant vegetables. It was only the rice. So as we did a drain, for the water to pass. Because when we have got the land like this today.

For many women, the farm is a spiritual experience, providing them with a sense of hope that, no matter the challenge, they will manage. I frequently inquired from the women how, if they lose profits after selling their crops, are they able to pay for the inputs they need to continue planting. The most common responses demonstrated their faith in themselves, as well as their faith that God would provide them if they only prove some

creativity in their own solutions. One farmer even suggests that women grow better crops than men.

God has blessed women! What I notice is, when I plant, the harvest is really good, better than the husband's. It's only god who blesses. Before I plant, I pray to God. But maybe men don't have time to pray before planting, so that's why mine is better.

Since many woman have had multiple experiences in other jobs before coming to farming, they expressed a sense of happiness that they suggest they can only get from the farm. For many women, the sheer physical evidence of crops makes them feel like their livelihoods are important and successful. Similarly, many women describe how the open space offered by the farm, in contrast to the often close quarters within the city, provides them a sense of relaxation and peacefulness. Simply looking out at the rows of crops and the healthy green landscape makes themselves feel healthy and secure. One farmer describes the difference in social interactions that she enjoys as a farmer.

The exciting thing about my work is that nobody will come if she goes to take maybe clothes or something to sell, and the person will say 'hey, give me my money', but I'm here calmly and whatever I get I sell. I have no problems with anybody. It's peaceful.

In the sometimes hidden quarters of the city, where farmers cultivate their crops, they are somewhat sheltered from the business of the city, and they take advantage of the ways in which they can pick and choose between daily activities, whether it be preparing crops for harvest or engaging diverse costumers who travel to the farm to buy their crops.

The diverse processes of empowerment and autonomy that women experience as farmers in Accra, do not always outweigh the challenges. When I recall my experience on their lands, it is hard to ignore the many significant ways in which they engage and often embrace these challenges. After almost every visit on the farm, the women farmers

would offer me fresh produce that they would harvest on the spot as a gift. Without trying to romanticize their livelihoods, I engaged my data in a way that would point to women's expressed concerns and the ways in which their farming experiences help to address them. My analysis is by no means exhaustive of the experiences, opportunities and challenges that women experience in these hybrid spaces. Rather, I seek to use individual experiences as a way to complicate the homogenous nature of development in the context of Accra's UPA scene. In the next section, I provide a further examination of the major themes I presented here—intersectionality, hybridity, uneven burdens, empowerment—and to describe the implications of my research analysis along with recommendations for further study and policy engagement based on my findings.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Almost 20 years ago, Escobar criticized the constrained development framework and called for an imagining of ‘a new domain which finally leaves behind the imaginary of development, and which transcends development’s dependence on Western modernity and historicity’ (1992, p. 21). Through this study, I seek to offer an alternative perspective on the development within UPA and the potential roles and opportunities for women within UPA spaces. I provided a review of literature that explored popular notions of agricultural activity within the ‘urban’ and the potential for UPA to help in creating sustainable livelihoods for many in growing cities in the Global South. I also offered a comprehensive illustration of contemporary feminist thought on women’s role in development and the ways in which they transcend essentializing development frameworks that, too often, have resumes burdening and ethnocentric structures for women instead of supporting more emancipatory agendas for women in the Global South, especially in SSA. After describing the history of urban agriculture in the context of Accra, I provide a detailed analysis of my research. My findings focused on four major themes throughout the study, including intersectionality, hybridity, uneven burdens, empowerment. These themes are essential to understanding how UPA addresses the strategic needs for women in UPA in Accra and what the gender implications are for employing UPA as a development strategy in Accra. In addition, my findings illustrate the ways in which urban agriculture challenges mainstream development and ways in which it does not.

In this chapter, I provide a brief summary of the themes that emerged from my research and fieldwork in Accra. I describe the implications of my research at the local and global scale and connect them to other themes within the major literature associated with this study. In addition, I offer my own recommendations for how to most appropriately approach gender and development strategies within UPA and the diverse lives of women in urban areas.

Intersections, Challenges and Empowerment

In my research, I sought to engage in an ethnographic study of women farmers in Accra. My findings helped to create an interesting dialogue between the individual farmers I interviewed and the growing body of literature on urban agriculture and gender and development. In my initial phases of research, I assumed a level of disconnection between the individual lives and lived experiences of women farmers in Accra and the general notions of women working in the informal sector in the Global South. This exploratory aspect of my study was crucial to gaining a better understanding of the multiple and diverse social, ecological, economic, and political realities that exist on the farm and in the livelihoods of women farmers in Accra. Sylvester (2006) criticizes the way in which global development trends homogenize women as the subject, creating a stick figure that is without place and that is acted upon through various development strategies. Urban women complicate long-held assumptions of development subjects, which continue to be shaped to engage within the global market.

My findings show that there is no amount of homogeneity within UPA in regards to the women farmers as subjects. The women farmers in this study transcend simplified

gender assumptions, through their participation in UPA and in their extremely diverse backgrounds, motivations, challenges and opportunities. Although most of the women farmers in Accra originate from rural areas, it is irresponsible to suggest that their only motivation for farming is because of their presence in the village and their inability to enter into other urban livelihoods. Rather, evidence from my research suggests that women farmers enter into the field for personal reasons, having had other jobs before, and take advantage of the knowledge they have to do that.

Women farmer's social, economic, and political identities intersect in many ways before and during their role as farmers. The women in this study had diverse educational backgrounds, formal and informal experience, and processes for entering the farm. These intersectionalities deconstruct previously held notions that condemn farmers and informal works to be poor, uneducated and unemployed. Women engage in power structures on a daily basis the both benefit them and burden them, depending on their socioeconomic status and other factors. Their roles within the informal network are woven throughout other larger formal structures, which help to shape their farms and their livelihoods.

Processes of urbanization and modernization through a political economic history of Ghana have contributed to a shifting 'urban' identity in UPA, in which distinctive rural networks are interwoven with urban networks in the physical, social and economic sense. Women farmers experience a multitude of apparent rural features on the farm, but the challenges and opportunities existing in the urban and peri-urban spaces impact their lives and work in this crossroad of rural agriculture and urban economic environments. Women's close proximity to large markets offer them many different opportunities for distributing their crops and developing important income generating strategies to cope in

times of less promising agricultural profit. Physical constraints on their farm both help and hurt them in the local economy and demonstrate the many gendered flows throughout the farm.

The nature of labor on the farm is a well-understood cause for such low participation of women in UPA in Accra. Arduous labor and physicality needed to prepare beds for planting, watering, and other intense physical tasks create many challenges for being successful as farmers. Their limited access to financial and material resources force women farmers to employ outside labor and to be strategic in the way that they farm their land when no help is available. Labor segregation does not stop on the farm, however. My findings are in agreement with feminist development literature that warns of the potential for placing double or triple burdens on women in the Global South. Western feminist agendas disregard many cultural, social and political aspects about women in developing countries and inform inappropriate policies and frameworks that urge women into the global market economy while increasing their already uneven burdens within productive and reproductive roles. In Accra, in particular, women farmers already are seeking to balance the household and family responsibilities they have with creating a productive farm operation to sustain and grow their personal and commercial goals.

However, despite the many challenges and nuances that are represented within my research, women are excited about their contributions as farmers. They are creative and resourceful as urban citizens and seek to change the physical, social and political landscape in which they are embedded. They take advantage of the opportunities for economic and household autonomy and the ability to merge their productive and

reproductive roles by providing food for the family from their farms. They also negotiate their situations in a male dominated sector by challenging mainstream notions and finding peace and pride within their work as farmers who are cultivating the food supply for their fellow urban dwellers.

Resistance and the Urban Farm

During my first visit to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) in Accra, I met with a woman who offered to help me get in contact with MoFA extensions agents who work in the field. On the phone before our visit and in the office during our meeting I explained to her that my research interest was in women in urban agriculture. She was eager to connect me with agents and farmers, but somehow she seemed to misunderstand my intentions. She initially tried to connect me with a farmer in the rural Volta Region of Ghana, suggesting that the agent could connect me with many women farmers there. I reminded her that I was not interested in rural agriculture, but rather urban agriculture. Yet, she insisted on connect me to rural farmers and assured me that there would be many women I could interview there. This went on for a while until another woman in her office sensed my frustration and encouraged the MoFA worker to connect me with someone in Accra, in the city. Despite the woman's clear confusion in my interest in agricultural within the city, she graciously changed her approach and introduced me to the extension agent who worked with farmers in Kwabenya and Atomic agricultural areas.

This initial interaction with the government in Accra demonstrated to me the general perception of agriculture in the city. Because of its location and lack of export

cash crops, urban agriculture continues to fall short of being considered “agricultural”. For many actors, like MoFA, agriculture occurs in the rural. However, my analysis of women in urban agriculture provides a different view of the realities within agriculture that occurs in the city. As I have already mentioned, urban agriculture has existed in Accra at least since the colonial era. Although urban agriculture, even within Accra, is playing a larger role within the urban economy, identity and development, local officials and other actors continue to see UA as an alternative, and sometimes problematic, aspect of the urban context. A review of development literature within Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that UA is often being incorporated within the framework of urban development. Even in Accra, the MoFA has seen the importance of providing extension agents to urban agricultural sites. Yet, the actual contribution of urban agriculture to the local economy remains unclear and under-researched. Although urban agriculture is, in some ways, a standard part of development, it is rarely framed that way.

The hybridity of urban agriculture’s landscape illustrates some of the reasons for this disconnection. Contemporary development processes continue to imagine a strict dichotomy between the rural and urban landscape and social, political, and economic experiences. Through my observation on the farms and in my interviews with farmers, it is clear that this dichotomy is non-existent, and that urban agricultural spaces in Accra, depending on their urban or peri-urban locations, convey a hybrid landscape that combines elements of both rural- and urban-ness. With this in mind, any approach to increasing the role of urban agriculture into urban development schemes should take these hybrid landscapes and the experiences of farmers in mind.

Implications of My Research

In this thesis I have sought to problematize the solitary subject of urban women in development, situating them into the context of Accra's UPA networks. My research draws on the feminist schools of thought that point to the intersectionalities of women in the Global South and the way that their individual experiences are impacted by mainstream, homogenous development frameworks. It combines emerging notions of urban studies with a sustainable livelihoods analysis through women's lived experiences. Individual stories of women have been essential in tracing the impacts of larger global political economic processes of neo-liberal interventions on the local, gendered ecologies, economics and social networks in Accra. By examining existing livelihoods of women in urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) in Accra, I have sought to address some of the concerns of feminist scholars who are cautious in casting women as a unitary category without agency and choose to engage the diverse rural-urban and informal-formal spaces in which women farmers exist today.

Through my findings, I conclude that the degree to which UPA addresses women's practical and strategic gender needs varies in terms of women's socioeconomic status and the additional expenses within the household that keep some women from circulating enough profit to purchase necessary inputs for the farm. Women farmers function in spaces that have been somewhat delineated by gendered social, political and economic structures, which can place increased burdens on women who seek farming as a livelihood. However, my research also finds many opportunities for women to act on the forces that would otherwise marginalize them, especially as they negotiate their roles as women in a men's world. My argument is based in Moser's suggestion that "it is

critical to recognize that practical gender needs only become ‘feminist’ in content if and when they are transformed into strategic gender needs” (1989, p. 1804). Planning gender and development strategies and interventions should seek to address emancipatory strategies that seek to embrace women’s agency and autonomy in setting the agenda, rather than just conforming mainstreams ones.

My findings suggest that, indeed, some women struggle to meet basic needs for themselves, their families and their farms on a daily basis. Implementation strategies should be focused on the self-identified practical needs women, in order to support also their long-term strategic goals. The women I spoke to in Accra offered many suggestions for implementations that could help them establish stable livelihoods as farmers. Many of the suggestions by women were similar and called for financial assistance and small-scale credit schemes that would help them afford the most basic farm inputs during times of limited profit and *glatt*.

The worst part is finance. If I can’t get started with good finance, then I won’t have a good harvest.

Us farmers, they don’t give us loans. They feel farmers don’t get enough to be able to pay back their loans.

In my fieldwork, I observed women engaging UPA to cope with many of their daily struggles, using their small profits to provide nourishment to the families, pay for school fees, and access non-food items for the household. Women in this study have diverse struggles, and each cope with their daily struggles in a way that is most appropriate for their own livelihoods and self-fulfillment goals. They are socially and economically disadvantaged as farmers, compared to men, because of labor capacity and access to credit or major resources. However, my data suggest that urban farming spaces offer

them flexible ways for them to change their circumstances and reconceptualize their roles within their local ecologies and social networks.

Based on my findings, implementation strategies for women who choose to support themselves as farmers in UPA should both address the everyday struggle of women in the informal economy and the self-identified trajectories of desired change in their relation to men in the immediate locality. As described in my research, UPA offers women in Accra the opportunity to pursue a variety of personal goals that include both meeting basic needs and reaching a desired level of socio-economic empowerment, autonomy, and personal well-being. Planners seeking to implement UPA as a development strategy for women in Accra must attend to the multi-faceted potential of UPA and the great differences of women involved. Similarly, women's strategic needs cannot only be met through increasing only their access to financial or productive resources. Based on the multiple productive and reproductive roles that women farmers described in this study, empowerment strategies should also consider the significance of increased educational opportunities, knowledge, and skill development for marketing and business management, which many farmers expressed interest in receiving from extension agents or by developing farmers groups in their areas. UPA should only be promoted with a larger emancipatory agenda at the forefront in order to address and move past gender-biased status quo, which has great effect on women's access to productive and reproductive resources in the city.

My purpose in this study is to shed light on the UPA scene in and the little-known experiences of women farmers in Accra. I offer an analysis of individual experiences for a jumping of point for scholars, researchers, and planners who struggle in addressing

women's development needs within a continuously globalized and urbanizing world. In addition, I sought to demonstrate the ways in which urban agriculture both challenges and does not challenge the mainstream strategy for urban development. Further areas of study are necessary, as well, to best understand the needs and personal goals of women farmers. Some space for further research is evident in the role of local ecologies on women farmers and a further exploration of the human-environment interaction is necessary to afford women worthwhile opportunities as farmers. Lastly, examinations on the effect of current policy and gender mainstreaming efforts is incredibly important to this topic, in hopes that cities can find productive and enriching ways to support women farmers.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
CFF	Cities Farming for the Future
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
FAO	United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization
FPE	Feminist Political Ecology
GAD	Gender and Development
GAMA	Greater Accra Metropolitan Area
GHS	Ghana Cedi
GRIDCO	Ghana Grid Company Limited
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OPF	Operation Feed Yourself
RUAF	Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UA	Urban Agriculture
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPA	Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture

WAD	Women and Development
WED	Women, Environment, and Development
WID	Women in Development

APPENDIX B

FARMER INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Woman Farmer Interview Description		
Interview Number: _____	Farm Location: _____	
Food Crop(s) Type: _____		
Address or Location (Description): _____		
Date: _____	Day: _____	Time: _____

Interview Script

Hi. I am Lacey. I am from the United States and I'm a student. I am in Ghana to learn more about the urban agriculture in Accra. I would like to learn about women food producers and their work as farmers in Accra. You are being invited to participate in this research as a representative. It would be greatly appreciated if you would participate? I will try not to take more than 30-45 minutes of your time.

The goal of this interview is collect information about you and your farming business. This information will be used to create a short story about your life and experiences growing food. This will include why you have chosen to become a farmer, what you do as a farmer, what types of food items you grow and a little bit about your life to give your story context. This interview will be recorded, to make it easier for the researcher. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is completely voluntary. No personal identification information will be accessible or released to anyone other than the researcher and research assistant. I will not share your name with anyone.

Interview Questions

1) Is it okay if I record this interview?

Farming Experience - General

2) Can you tell me a little bit about your work as a farmer?

- a. How long have you been farming?
- b. How long have you been doing it here?
- c. Is this the only location you do business?
- d. Are you self-employed?

3) Can you tell me about a typical day for you?

- 4) What are some challenges that you experience in farming?
- 5) How much time during one week do you do your work? During one day?
- 6) Why did you choose to do this work?
- 7) How did you come to work on this land?
- 8) Where do you get the materials needed to grow the produce?
- 9) Do the food items that you grow change with season?
- 10) How do you typically market your produce?
- 11) Do you ever deliver food to customers? How do you do this?
- 12) Which food items do you grow most frequently? (Top 5)
- 13) Do you ever lose money on crops? What are some of the reasons for this?
- 14) What do you do if you lose money on produce? Do you have other strategies?
- 15) How do you think your work is important to your family or your community?

Family/Household

- 16) If it's okay, can I ask you some questions about your life and family, so I can better understand your story?
 - a. Are you single? Married?
 - b. With whom do you share a household?
 - c. Do you have any children? How many?
 - d. What is your level of education?
 - e. Do you use money you make from farming to support them?
 - f. Do you have another job? Or have you had one in the past?
- 17) Can I ask you a little bit about eating at home?
 - a. How many meals do you prepare at home everyday?
 - b. Are there other ways that you and your family eat meals during the day (hawkers, market, fast food, restaurant, etc.)
 - c. Does anyone else in your house purchase or bring home food?
 - d. Do you grow or raise any of own food at home? (garden, trees, etc.) What types?
 - e. Do you always have enough food for yourself and your family?
 - f. Do you keep any of the food you've grown or sell for yourself or family members?

g. What percentage of income do you spend on food for yourself and your family?

18) How has farming in Accra changed since you first started?

19) As a woman, do you feel like your experience in farming is different than men? In what ways?

20) Are you a part of a union or collective (co-op) that helps to support your work?

21) Has your work ever been affected by new development projects? (buildings) How did these changes affect your work?

22) Do you feel like the local government supports your work as a farmer?

23) What are some thoughts you have about how local government could make your work better for you?

24) Is there anything that you would like to share that I didn't ask about? Maybe about your business, your family, or your self?

25) Do you have any questions for me? Anything that you would like to know?

*Can I take your picture with my camera? I will not share this with anyone. This is only for myself to remember our conversation.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

Hi, my name is Lacey Johnson. I am a graduate student at the University of Oregon in the United States, and I want to know if you will participate in my research study. This is a study about the experience of women urban vegetable producers in Accra. I am asking you to participate in this study because you work as a vegetable producer and you have a deep understanding of the issues faced by women farmers. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an interview with me regarding your work and livelihood as a vegetable producer/trader.

This interview should last only 30-45 minutes. Would it be okay with you if I used the information we talk about in my study? This is completely voluntary and you may say no if you do not want this information used in the study.

If you agree and we start talking and you decide you no longer want to do this, we can stop at any time. You can also skip any question that you do not wish to answer. I will not identify you by name in my notes or the audio recording of this interview, and will not use any specific information that would make it possible for anyone to directly identify you. Any reference to your occupation or social position will be vague and general, and I will take care not to reveal any information that would allow an outsider to personally identify you. I will retain the audio recordings of our interview on my encrypted and password-protected laptop until I have completed transcription of the interview, at which time I will destroy the audio recordings. I will retain the written transcription for the duration of this project in order to complete my analysis, but this transcription will not contain any specific references to your identity.

In order to avoid exposing you to any potential risk, I will not ask you to reveal sensitive information you are uncomfortable sharing, and will not record your name in either my notes or the audio recording of our interview. To an outsider, your participation will be completely anonymous. There are no direct personal benefits expected from your participation, either.

Through this study, I hope to increase the awareness of the lived experiences of women vegetable producers in Accra, and this may be viewed as a potential indirect benefit resulting from your participation.

Do you have any questions for me regarding my project or the anticipated risks and/or benefits of your participation? Is there any additional information you would like to request from me before we continue?

Do you agree to participate in this research study?

Will you allow me to make an audio recording of this interview? If not, may I take handwritten notes?

I have a written copy of this verbal informed consent process for you, if you would like to keep a copy or read it over before we continue. It also contains University of Oregon and my contact information, in case you have any questions regarding your participation in this study, or should you decide to withdraw your information from this study at a later date.

Thank you so much.

Lacey Johnson
lej@uoregon.edu
United States Phone: 001 (402) 719-1563
Ghana Phone: 055 4488 146

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM IN TWI

Maakye/Maaha/Maadwo,

Me din de Lacey Johnson. Me kɔ sukuul wɔ suapong a ɛwɔ Oregon, USA abrokyire maamu, na me pɛsɛ me ne wo twetwe nkɔmɔ ɛfa nhwehwɛ mu bia meyɛ yi ho. Nhwehwɛ mu yi fa mbaa a wɔwɔ koro kesie mu a woyɛ ndɔbae ɛne adetɔn ho adwuma wɔ Nkran. Mere bisa wo nsem yi ɛfise woyɛ adwuma a ɛfa ndɔbae dua/ anaa se wo tɔn ade/ anaa so se wowɔ nimdie kɛse a ɛfa mbaa adetɔn fo ho.

Saa nsembisa yi be di mbre eduasa (30 minutes). Se mede mbuayɛ a wode bɛma me no yɛ m'adesua ho adwuma a ɛbe yɛ wo de anaa? Saa nsembisa yi ɛnnye ɔhyɛ nti wo be tumi aka se daabi se wonnpɛse me de wo mbuayɛ no yɛ adwuma.

Se yehyɛ ase se yɛekasa na woyɛ w'adwen se wommpɛse yɛ toa so a wo tumi ka. Se nsembisa bi wɔhɔ na wommpɛse wo bua a wo tumi tra kɔ nea edi so. Nsem a mebisa wo yi memmfa wo din ɛmmba mu na afei so kasa a woka no memmfa wodin mbata ho, senea ɛbeyɛ a obi ntumi nnhu se ɛye wo na wo kaa saa nsem no. Mede kasa yi beto me Laptop ɛfidie so na mede ahyensodeɛ bi atosɔ senea ɛbeyɛ a obi ntumi entie bi, na se mewie dea meyɛ no a mɛsee no. Osuahɔ a meyi ɛfi wo mbuayɛ no mu no mede beyɛ adwuma na aboa me ama metumi ewie me nwhewhe mu no.

Senea ɛbeyɛ a nsunsuanso biaa ɛmmba woso wɔ abre a woyi nsem yi ano yi me mmbisa wo nsem a wommpɛse ɛkɔ abɔnten. Obiaa nni hɔaa obehu se wo na woyii nsem yi ano, afei so mfasoɔ pɔtee bi nni hɔ a wobɛnya enimenim yi ɛfa saa nsembisa yi ho.

Me pɛsɛ mɛfa saa adesua yi so bɔ dewuro fa nea mbaa adetɔn fo a wɔwɔ Nkran ɛfa mu, na wo mbuayɛ be boa ɛde mfasoɔ bebre wo a wo nnhu no enimenim yi.

Wowɔ nsem bisa bi ma me a ɛfa madesua yi ho anaa nsusuansoɔ anaa ɛmfasoɔ a ɛwɔhɔ ma wo w'abre a woyi nsem yi ano? Asem bi wɔhɔ a wopɛse wo bisa bio asana y'atoaso a wo tumi bisa. So wogyɛ tum se wo be ka saa adesua yi ho wɔ abre a woyi saa nsembisa yi ano?

Ana wo be ma meho kwan ama mede ɛfidie arecordi mbueyɛ a wode be ma me yi anaa wo be pɛsɛ me de pen ɛbe kyerɔ.

Makyerɔ saa nkrataa yi a merebisa wo ho nsem yi bi ama wo, nti se wopɛse wo de bi sie a ɛkwan da ho saa ma wo, anaa wo pɛsɛ wo kenkan mu asaana ya toa so? Afeinso se wo pɛse wo ne me di nkita ho ɛwɔ saa nhwehwɛ mu yi ho anaa se wo pɛse wotwe nsem a wode ama me yi san a me number ɛne me sukuul no nso number ɛwɔ krataa yi so.

Medaase papaapa.

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