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The Political Economy of Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture in Southern and Eastern Africa: Overview, Settings and Research Agenda[1]

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Abstract

This paper attempts to set parameters for a debate and research program on the political economy of urban and peri-urban agriculture in East and Southern Africa. It argues that the political economy issues at stake revolve not only around control and access to the land resource but also have to do with competing ideas about the city and the planning process. Control and ownership of this process as well as the outcome is a political process whose content affects the nature of urban and peri-urban agriculture in the region. The range of theoretical reflections on these issues are outlined together with current development concepts that could guide future research.   Reflections are made on options to the institutional location and organisation of possible regional research .

# 1.	Introduction and Settings of Urban Agriculture

## 1.1	Trends in urban agriculture research

This workshop's focus on the political economy of urban and peri-urban agriculture (UA) is a significant step towards a better understanding of the phenomenon and clearer possibilities for its management. Available literature shows that over the past ten years, there has been rapid growth in interest and activity on this subject. From the initial isolated research done by social scientists in the 1970s and 1980s (as outlined by Mougoet, 2000), the 1990s saw a rapid expansion in research activities and increased programme attention by development institutions (e.g. IDRC, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF); by International Governmental Organisations or IGOs (e.g. DFID, SIDA, GTZ); by various NGOs (e.g. SGUA, RELMA, ENDA), by national governments and departments (especially in Tanzania, Lesotho, Zambia and more recently South African cities of Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, Cape Town and Durban; see Jarlov, 1998).

In the 1990s, urban and peri-urban agriculture activities progressed from comprehensive descriptive documentation of practices such as Freeman (1991) to project work with farmers (as in the Dar es Salaam Urban Vegetable Project and Olson, 1996) and attempts at planning and policy integration (Mbiba, 1998, 1999c; Lee-Smith, 1998; Baker, et al. 2000).   IDRC features quite significantly in some of these initiatives both in Africa and worldwide. More recently, linkages with *training initiatives* (IAC, 2000-2001; Gundel and Butterworth, 2000) including the IDRC hosted Agropolis *research-training awards* and *methodological tools* for UA have emerging as new growth areas for the subject. In all this, only few studies (such as Webb, 1996) have made an explicit critique of UA.   Instead, the work has largely *glorified* the potential benefits of UA. At the same time, the work has criticised planners, planning and policy makers as major obstacles to the realisation of these benefits. Mbiba (1998) is of the view that the perceptions behind this criticism are unfortunate in that they are largely based on a poor understanding of urban planning and urban political economy as well as the diversity of urban social relations in different parts of the world over time.   The neglect of political economy analysis relative to the attention given to design, environmental and linguistic concerns is linked to a weak theoretical base for UA; an omission we have to rectify from now on.

## 1.2	Political Economy; the land, policy and planning dimensions

For an academic with an interest on UA, political economy entails an analysis of the aggregate societal and institutional relations that impinge on the production, marketing and consumption of both food and non-food products that are produced from urban and peri-urban areas (however these spatial are defined).   While we can identify some general recurring patterns in East and Southern Africa (ESA), we have to be aware that there is a great deal of regional variation and local diversity in the character and direction of these social relations.

This paper will take a broad view of political economy with the hope to capture key scale and sectoral variables that make UA a *contentious subject*. It will emphasise that the political economy of UA is anchored on distribution, control and access to the use of land assets or resources. Competition and conflict around this resource range from micro household levels through community-neighbourhoods, to macro national and international domains. It is within this range of scales that the political economy of UA has to be understood.

> In East and Southern Africa, whatever you do, you can only ignore the land issue at your own peril. Local people will use whatever they can to bring home this point. Recently, when some scientists in Kenya ignored this important dictum, 300 (three hundred) women took the drastic measure of undressing themselves and then confront the scientists … only then did the later get the point.
> *See 'Scientists down tools before naked protest' BBC News, Wednesday, 7th February, 2001. On-Line: http://www. news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/*

In addition to contests around the land resource, there is also an ongoing *ideological cum theoretical contest*. Earlier calls for theory (Mbiba 1995, 1998, 1999c) inspired by Sanyal (1986) have been echoed elsewhere although in reality little has been done to theorise UA. Clearly, such theorisation is needed to distinguish UA from rural agriculture (Mougoet, 2000) and to guide policy and planning. This implies an understanding of the various conflicts that underpin urban development and which urban policy seeks to manage. Simply put, political economy also has a lot to do *with the control and ownership of planning and policy making processes and outcomes*.

Therefore, a discussion of the political economy of UA and emerging research questions must be grounded in and be preceded by a debate on some theory of urban areas and urban planning. First, location is an important component in that relative to rural agriculture, urban agriculture utilises land resources where intense conflicts and interests prevail both among uses and users; for example the rich versus the poor, built development versus UA, golf and other recreational activities vs. UA. In a way, Mougoet (2000) and Richter (1995) appear to underrate this characteristic. The range of spatial scales and potential candidates for political economy analysis are at the micro house/household level, the community, public open space and the peri-urban level. Moreover, there is the crosscutting dimension of ideology and development discourse.

1.3 Paper outline

This paper will briefly outline some traditional and current approaches of the city and city planning and simultaneously identify how these conceptions feature in the ESA literature on UA. These are basically four, viz.; the **ecological model**, the **new urbanism**, the **collaborative or communicative** model and the **just city perspective** derived from a **political economy understanding** of urban areas. Various strands within this domain including extensions of Sanyals' work will be sketched. At the end, more space will be given to the political economy perspective; a view with a concern on '**who gains**' and '**who loses**' and '**how**' in the capitalist development of our cities. Once again, such gain or loss has to be gauged *vis a vis* access, control and use of resources especially land. The political economy of UA is basically about power relations and conflicts associated with control and use of this resource.

Leading on from this understanding, of urban areas, the paper will suggest some questions for future research together with the mode through which these can be implemented. As pointed out elsewhere (Mbiba, 1998), the fortunes of UA are outside rather than within it. Therefore, both research, policy and project work should lead to (a) a better understanding of different contexts within which UA occurs and (b) mainstream urban and peri-urban agriculture activities into existing institutions and ongoing activities. Our network of researchers and institutions that house them, can

be, (with slight modifications) very adequate vehicles through which to pursue new research and to engage with practitioners at local, city and national levels.

2.   Theoretical Perspectives: Cities, Planning and Urban Agriculture

Throughout history, conceptions of the city and of planning have '*zigzagged between   an emphasis on outcome*' or what the city should be and an emphasis on process (the methods of achieving desired visions).   Perspectives of what the city is (or is not) and the social and political forces that underpin its dynamism (i.e. political economy) appear as critique of the traditional models and is hardly used as a starting point for city planning.   Yet, at the end of their comprehensive research reviews of the 'urban crisis' in ESA, researchers have called for an understanding of cities that takes politics more seriously (see Halfani, 1996; McCarney, 1996; Mbiba, 1995).   Therefore this section will present an overview of the four dominant approaches to planning indicating views of the city upon which they are founded plus an emphasis on how UA literature exhibits aspects of each.   However, in practice, there are inter-linkages in these conceptions and approaches than is evident from sketches like **Figure 1**.

2.1   The Ecological, Environmental Systems View of the City and Planning
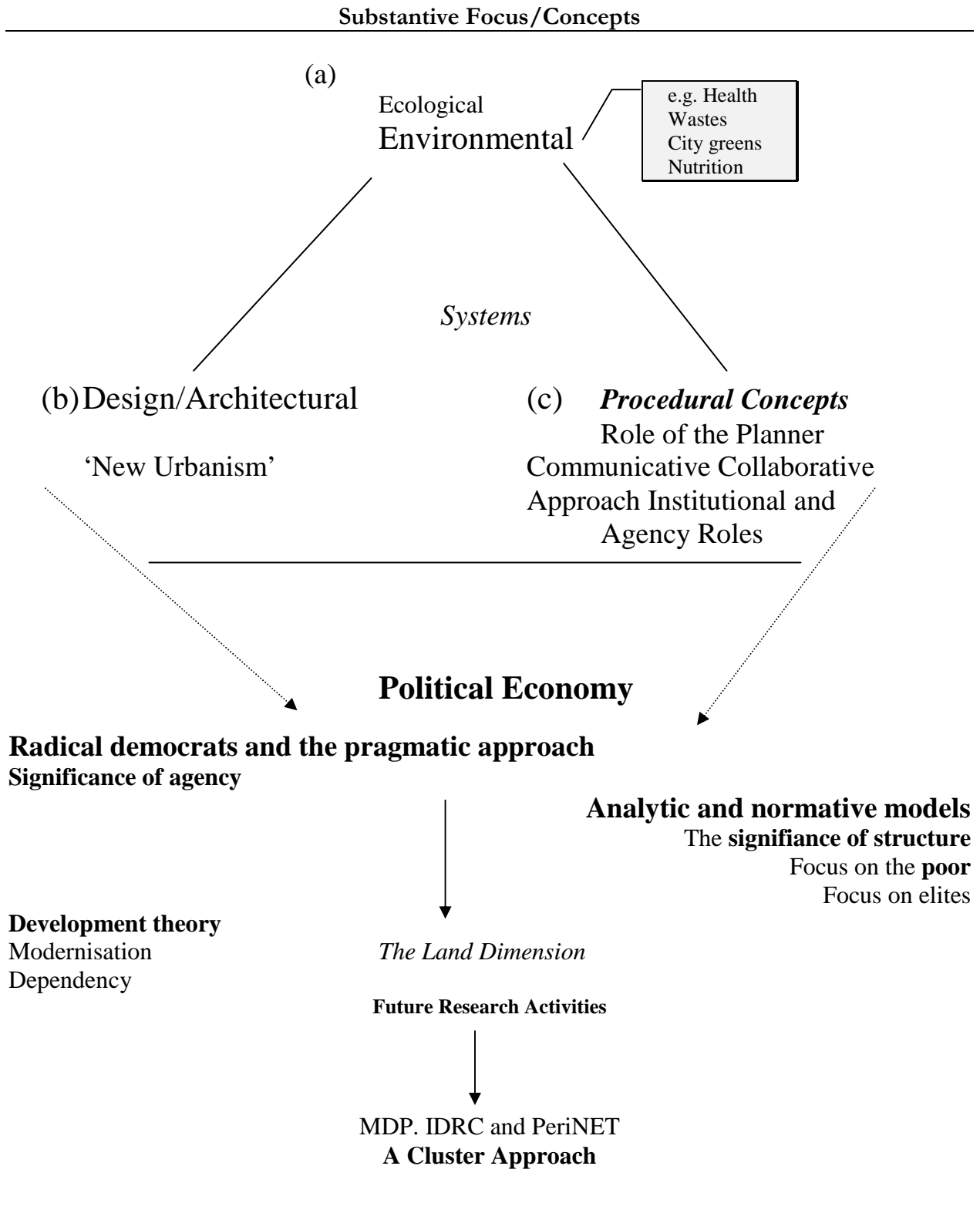Perhaps the most enduring view of the city is one that portrays it as a system of inter-related parts akin to the biological or ecological systems.   A favourite of transport planners, it also has sympathy from those who put emphasis on health and environmental aspects of the city. Indeed original city planning in Europe and the British Empire enclaves in Africa (Kenya, Harare, Lusaka etc) was anchored on a view that saw the city as a biological system with inputs, internal processes and outputs. Planning was based on technical, cadastral and improved sanitary standards with the goal to create a healthy disease free environment albeit for a social minority (those of European origin). Open spaces were seen as an ecological part of the system that would act as 'lungs' to purify and extract pollutants from the city environment.

The UA literature exhibits this ecological systems thinking. For proponents, UA is considered '*an effective tool to slow down the loss of biodiversity*' (Asomani-Boateng and Haight, 1999; Smit, 2000) through nutrient and waste recycling as well as improvement in the nutritional and health conditions of its residents.   For example, Asomani-Boateng and Haight, (2000) are convinced at the potential contribution of urban agriculture for solid waste recycling on condition that urban planners put in place appropriate policy responses.   With legitimacy derived from Agenda 21, this conception of urban areas and approach to UA partly inspires major urban management programmes such as in Lusaka and Dar *es* Salaam (Urban Vegetable Promotion Project).   There are hopes that city gardens will not only 'green and beautify' the city (Jacobi, et al. 2000) but also significantly improve nutrition status and strengthen community spirit.

However, achieving such disparate objectives remains debatable. Among the exceptional critics is Webb (1998: 8-9) who supports the view that UA's popularity with donors and development practitioners has much to do with perceptions that the phenomenon meets environmental criteria of sustainable development discourse than with empirically verifiable economic and material benefits to the urban economy.   Development practitioners seem to see it as an industry that could enhance sustainable urbanisation through waste recycling, use of derelict space and so on.

Despite the zeal associated with the environmental school, serious reservations remain that relate to health risks for consumers and ecological limitations identified (e.g. by Mazambani, 1982; Mosha, 1991; Mlozi, 1996).   A good deal of these risks arises from air pollution and use of polluted industrial waste water (Jacobi, et al. 2000: 1). Bowyer-Bower and Drakakis-Smith (1996) with respect to Harare and Mlozi (1996) on Dar *es* Salaam have elaborated on these risks together with

Substantive Focus/Concepts

(a)

Ecological
Environmental

e.g. Health
Wastes
City greens
Nutrition

Systems

(b) Design/Architectural

'New Urbanism'

(c) *Procedural Concepts*
Role of the Planner
Communicative Collaborative
Approach Institutional and
Agency Roles

Political Economy

Radical democrats and the pragmatic approach
Significance of agency

Analytic and normative models
The **signifiance of structure**
Focus on the **poor**
Focus on elites

Development theory
Modernisation
Dependency

The Land Dimension

Future Research Activities

MDP. IDRC and PeriNET
A Cluster Approach

those of soil erosion, disturbances in the hydrological systems and destruction of general landscape aesthetics (for a summary see Mbiba, 2000: 292-293). The 2000 RUAF/FAO e-conference discussions confirmed that other practitioners beyond Africa share these risk concerns and that definitive answers are still to be found.

2.2 'New Urbanism' – the Design, Engineering and Architectural Perspective

With time, the urban planning tradition broadened from mere sanitary concerns to ideal visions of spatial design typified by the 'garden city' concept of Ebenezer Howard, through to architectural design emphasis symbolised by the Le Corbusier tradition. The initial social reform motivations in the garden city concepts were soon overtaken by design, market and profit considerations. Although the garden city movement has elements in today's green belt (Britain's planning sacred cow) and can be associated with the environmental perspective, it is the design utopia that links it to architecture and engineers. In Africa, the design of new towns (for example Lilongwe, Dodoma, Abuja) and the many district growth points/service centres (for example in Zimbabwe and Zambia), reflect this grand design ideal. A key feature is the large space reservation previously criticised for promoting urban sprawl and economic waste.

'New urbanism' emerges partly as a critique of this urban sprawl and the underlying design principles. The view has an emphasis on a *'compact, heterogeneous city'* (Fainstein, 1999). Within the context of IMF economic austerity measures and World Bank market related motives to achieve 'more for less', densification of land use in Africa's cities has become a major urban policy. Resultant programmes have a goal to use previously large open spaces. The large spaces previously available for UA have disappeared or are disappearing fast. This goes beyond 'in-fill development' witnessed in Dar es Salaam (Briggs and Mwamfupe, 2000); in Nairobi (e.g. in Karen, Lengata, around Yaya Centre and so on) or in Harare' Warren Park North, Matidoda Park, Borrowdale Brook and so on (Mbiba, 2000: 286-287) to local level design of 'on-plot space.

World Bank and donor inspired projects have proceeded on a condition or demand for smaller plot sizes in new low income residential schemes so as to get more houses for less financial investment and with less demand on land. As summarised by Webb (1998) for example, in Lesotho the plot sizes were reduced from $1000m^2$ to $400m^2$; in Zambia, they went down to $324m^2$. In Zimbabwe, the minimum plot sizes were reduced from $300m^2$ (pre-1992) to $150m^2$ (Mbiba, 1995).

But these prescriptions have been highly contested both socially and politically, leading in Zimbabwe to a policy reversal in 1997. The general thrust in the UA literature is that design and economic imperatives in the new urbanism militate against urban agriculture and economic benefits associated with it. It has been criticised by those who see the home space as a 'multi-layered' production, consumption and reproduction space that is not merely a place to sleep. The reduced space standards are considered detrimental to children and women's needs; the two groups who spend most of their time there. The social and political contest on this issue arises from the disproportionate application of policy i.e. its implementation in low-income communities and less so in high income low density areas.

2.3 The Communicative-Collaborative Perspective

The communicative-collaborative model is more explicit as a procedural approach on how planning should be done rather than as a theory of socio-economic relations underlying the city. While it acknowledges the existence of divergent social-political groups in the city, it goes on to put emphasis on possibilities for *consensus building* in resolving problems. Attention is heaped on the pragmatics of planning especially the role of the planner (mainly in central government or local authority

departments).   It underplays the issue of social conflict and contradictions that are endemic in the peripheral capitalist cities of ESA. The assumption is that with negotiation, problems in the city can be resolved and progress made; hence the spotlight on the planner and the kind of leadership he or she provides (Fainstein, 1999).

In this conception, the demand is that of a planner who brings consensus among stakeholders and to achieve this without imposing his or her own technocratic, bureaucratic and paternalistic blueprint as in the case of the new urbanism or grand design spatial planning.   The assumption is that the planner has to be *a good listener and learner.* In practice, development planning inspired by this approach is characterised by a search for partnerships and *'best-practices'* where stakeholders are supposed to have made it. This has become a key plank in approaches of international multi-lateral and bilateral development organisations since mid 1990s with the UNCHS hosting one of the largest Best Practice programmes on cities.   Thus within this development agency discourse, the search for UA best practices is not surprising.

However, critics have been quick to observe that the 'participatory' ideas in communicative-collaborative planning have created more practical problems for the poor; more meetings – meetings - meetings – leading to burn-out and disillusionment among participants as nothing ever seems to get accomplished (Fainstein, 1999). Moreover, gender burdens have been placed/added on women who are incorrectly perceived as 'unemployed', always at home and can therefore have time to attend such 'participatory' platforms. In some cases, such as in district development committees, forums have been mere talking shops or platforms to tame political discontent rather than real avenues for tangible delivery of services.

If one were to take a purely collaborative approach to UA, the emerging research questions would include:
- ❑ In what places and under what conditions has UA been incorporated into urban planning processes? What aspects were incorporated, with what institutional frameworks to tackle the issue of access to land and its control?
- ❑ In what places have the above worked or failed and why?
- ❑ Are there cases where UA farmers have negotiated for land and failed or succeeded? What were the crucial structure-agency determinants of success or failure in each case?
- ❑ What opportunities are there from the above for replicability and transferability of experiences.

Even more critical is the observation that the communicative approach assumes a uniform distribution of powers among all stakeholders.   In reality, the ability to participate is mediated by assets at the disposal of each potential participant (information, access to expertise, access to finance, organisation and institutions, physical assets such as land, human resource such as education, health status and so on).   Such assets symbolise power whose distribution exacerbates in-equalities.   Without such power, community involvement or participation will not influence outcomes, hence can be deemed useless (McFarlane, 1993). The theory that we need for UA is not a procedural one (how to) but one which explains the existence and characteristics of the phenomenon. It must dwell on the power relations that characterise urban areas and to locate UA within it.

2.4   The 'just city' and political economy perspective

A brand of the contemporary just city movement many will identify with is that described by Fainstein (1999) as that of **'radical democrats'**. This calls for a radical form of participation that goes beyond stakeholder involvement as in communicative planning to one that can be seen as governance by civil society. It takes a conflictual view of society and considers that for positive change to happen, those excluded from power should fight for it.

Probably, the Karen-Lengata Residents Association in the south west of Nairobi could be a good example of such radical democracism (see Mbiba and Kinyungu, 2001). In the 1990s, various NGOs and civil society groups in Nairobi banded together to push for reform at City Hall. This was in response to perceived poor governance manifest in the physical decline of the urban environment and deterioration in service provision (water, refuse removal, housing, electricity, health etc). The reform efforts culminated in the *'Nairobi We Want Convention'* of 1993 (see Karuga, 1994). But despite these efforts, the urban crisis has got worse and not better. Responses by urban residents have ranged from despondence on one extreme to self-provisioning through violence and radical democratic actions on the other.

Karen-Lengata Residents took up this radical path where instead working in partnership with City Hall, they resolved to *'ditch it'*. Through court action in 1998, they obtained an injunction restraining City Hall from collecting rates from the area until service delivery has improved. Meanwhile the residents collect rates into a special rate account set up for that area. Residents of other working and middle class areas have started initiatives along similar lines. Although this view of the just city seeks greater control of decisions by residents, the modalities through which this is achieved still favour those with power; financial resources to sponsor court action, information and alternative ways of service provision in the interim.

The significance of agency

Therefore, from another angle, this is a perspective that puts faith in human agency's capabilities to bring about change no matter what the structural constraints maybe leading us to the theme of agency in peri-urban transformations that pervades most peri-urban studies. This is evident for example, in the analysis of informal land acquisition dynamics (Kironde, 1998) groups responses to economic opportunities in the peri-urban areas under conditions of structural adjustment programmes in Tanzania (Briggs and Mwamfupe, 2000) and in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 1997). The agency role of politicians, financiers and professionals is also an implied theme in studies of peri-urban land invasions in Nairobi (Gatabaki-Kamau, 2000; Gitau, 2000) or land grabbing and fraudulent conversion of public open spaces into private property (Klopp, 2000).

In contrast to the above pragmatic 'just city' dimension is a more **normative** analytical **political economy perspective**. Its focus on and demands for equity takes the form of a critique of the capitalist city. Policies and planning are criticised for being captive of business interests (Fainstein, 1999). Rather than prescribe a methodology, political economy analysis provides a critique of existing programs and activities. The key questions posed by this approach are on who dominates and who benefits from ongoing activities (e.g. UA) with a focus on groups defined largely in terms of economic interests and more recently by gender, race, age etc.

In the past, political economy analysis tended to brand everything with an economic growth focus as negative capitalist accumulation. Emphasis was on constraints imposed on the local level by economic, political and social structural conditions operating at the global level. Little consideration was given to the way in which the same structures could enable agency actions at state, community and household levels. This perpetuated a conceptual failure to see possibilities for a just city in which the state can be entrepreneurial as well as distributor of welfare. Secondly, it has led to a

dogmatic concern for the poor which misses out on the inter-linkages that exist between poor groups and upper income groups. In particular, political economy analysis has marginalised the middle class. For different reasons and from different analytical standpoints, donor driven projects also display this obsession with poverty alleviation in which the middle classes and the elites have no role; or if they do, are seen as villains aligned to global structural forces at the detriment of the local poor.

Yet no matter how much we try to exclude the middle class and elites from poverty reduction projects/programmes, they will always find their way in ! There is abundant documentation in the housing sector (the so-called downward raiding of houses initially targeted for the low income), cases in drought food relief and more recently in all the 'Social Dimensions of Adjustment' programmes. The middle class and elites cannot be excluded because of the nature of our societies where positive, reciprocal inter-relations exist at the household, family and community levels. Beyond this, networks and client-patron relations put the poor in vulnerable positions once the donors disappear. In our societies, under normal circumstances, the middle class and those who make it into the elites league have an obligation to support the welfare of the poor.

The point is that the middle class and elites should not be seen from a negative angle but rather as 'social capital' at the disposal of communities. The simple message for UA programs/projects is that while acknowledging the differential nature of our society, we have to proceed in a way that:

(a)   Embraces entrepreneurship and economic growth or wealth generation simultaneously with concerns for equity.

(b)   Capture our elite and middle class as a resource (or social capital) that has a contribution to make towards poverty alleviation and increased urban food security. The role of these groups in any projects should be factored into project conception and not be left to chance; the interests and aspiration of the middle class have to be captured.

2.5   Enter Development Theory

Related to the ecological–environmental sustainability discourse is a development dimension theory of UA (Sanyal, 1986) which according to Webb (1998) has been imposed on urban areas by development institutions without much empirical analysis of the claimed benefits. He suggests that this popularisation came at a time of increasing doubts on the viability of the 'development as growth paradigm' dominant up to the 1970s. The critique argues that in UA, development institutions have found a 'new life' – linking the phenomenon to poverty alleviation, urban nutrition, environmentalism, informal sector employment and gender issues. While there is some validity in this analysis, we have to remember that UA has been and will remain a component of urban land use.

However, the critique by Webb (1998) moves us back to the basic question theoretical questions of what UA represents and how we should interpret it (Sanyal, 1986). Even as a survival strategy, researchers concur that the poor do not benefit much (Tinker, 1994; Mbiba, 1995; Mlozi, 1996 etc.). Early economic development theorisation was framed within the context of the informal sector and heavily influenced by the ILO's focus on labour. An extension Sanyal (1986) is aptly presented elsewhere (Mbiba, 1998) where the basic the analysis is derived from either modernisation or dependency theory. In both instances, we have to note that focus was on intra-urban agriculture activities, on subsistence and not on 'for market' production. Issue such as land were not considered in this scheme.

Both perspectives are presented in **Table 1** noting that both have strong foundations in the economic view of the city. Secondly, they use different arguments to arrive at the same conclusion

that rejects urban agriculture; different methods but consensus on the conclusions ! Today the situation is different; we appear to have different methods and different conclusions making it difficult to get a consensus for the way forward.

TABLE 1:	Different Theories, Same Conclusion: How about Practice ?	
	Modernisation Proponents	New Marxist View
View of the City	City as a symbol of economic development; to be clean, organised and formal	City as an arena of exploitative economic relations with the local level playing out global capitalist forces and relations. Accumulation by a few proceeds through exploitation of the majority (labour). Rather than pay labour adequately, capitalists shifts the burden to the labourers so that they maintain themselves.
Response to UA	UA represents backwardness, a rural culture and lack of integration into systems of advancement	UA is 'extra market means' for labour to reproduce itself. It maintains the capitalist status quo and increase the vulnerability of labour.
Verdict on UA	Reject UA and the informal sector generally. Blame the poor and those participating in such activities for damaging the economy, the environment and the city.	Reject UA. and informal sector activities generally.
Action and Policy	Destroy UA; destroy all informal activities including squatter settlements, shebeens, pirate taxis, street hawking, and affirmative shopping e.t.c. No compromise. More recently, where destruction fails, formalise them.	Mobilise workers to demand their fair share of benefits from the workplace; seek greater equity in the capitalist system of economic relations. The solution for UA and other informal activities is outside rather than within the sector.

For modernists, UA in its subsistence form is symbolic of rural backward habits; is practised by recent rural to urban migrants; it damages the urban environment, aesthetics and should be discouraged through destruction without compromise. On the other hand, for the new Marxists UA represents a means for labour to reproduce itself; a burden which should be borne by the capitalists rather than labour. Thus supporting UA is tantamount to support of exploitation of labour; making labour work twice namely at the factory first and then at home. New Marxists argue that if labour were remunerated adequately at the work place, then there would be no need to engage in UA. Further, participation in UA weakens the capacity of labour to fight capital as energies are spent in struggles to survive and in intra labour fighting for trivial resources such as land for UA. Despite rejection by both groups of theory (most of who are present today) urban agriculture has flourished. The graphic description with which Sanyal described the activity is very apparent in every city and settlement throughout Southern Africa.

Sanyal's work and subsequent research by others has dealt with some aspects of these two perspectives; rejecting some components and accepting others. Unlike in the modernist view, it has been demonstrated that UA practitioners are older city residents, are propertied households, the middle and upper income groups rather than the poor of the poorest, destitute, lodgers or recent

immigrants to the city. Secondly, rejection of UA (or informal sector in general) has not worked. Instead, official attitudes have been softened and now the vacuum relates to policies on how best to exploit the sector's potentials and integrate it with the rest of the economy. We now recognise that, like any other economic activity, UA has both negative and positive externalities. How to accommodate it while minimising the negative externalities is the arena of contradictions in most situations now. Aspects of these theoretical perspectives will be invoked in subsequent sections that deal with the peri-urban domain.

3. The Land Dimension
3.1 Introduction
Writers and commentators on the needs and prospects of UA have put across an array of obstacles or constraints to UA that range from lack of policy support, lack of knowledge and credit to negative attitudes or perceptions from sections of the public. However, one would agree with Webb's (1998: 4) assertion that land remains one of the most controversial issues associated with UA. and that several themes are prominent in the UA land relationship, namely:
  (a)   the potential that urban land holds for UA
  (b)   the potential that UA holds for diluting, solving or exacerbating the rural land problem.
  (c)   reduction of plot sizes and associated implications for UA
  (d)   the notion that UA can be practised on small pieces of land etc.
A 1998 experts workshop on UA in East and Southern Africa (RELMA, 1998: 29) also identified *'land tenure problems and conflicts over the use of scarce urban land'* as one of the five priority areas that needed closer research attention.

Land is important not only because it's a resource of fixed supply, but also because it is a robust resource whose access and control gives the beholder power. By robust asset/resource (Mbiba, 1999) we mean that its value can be transformed from one mode to another, be transferred from place **A** to place **B** and from time **T1** to time **T2**. Agriculture is an activity which can within a short time (e.g. one year) transform land into food resource or cash from sale of produce. The intrinsic value of land as well as output from it can be converted into monetary value for immediate use elsewhere e.g. in Europe, America, and Honolulu. It is this value that makes its control and access a highly competitive affair.

Probably, the beast approach to a fruitful discussion of the political economy of land issue is to utilise the basic spatial typology of UA as generally agreed in the definitions (Mbiba, 1995: Mougoet, 2000; Asomani-Boateng and Haight, 1999; etc) that identify:
  (a)   intra-urban agriculture that can be either on-plot or off-plot.
  (b)   peri-urban agriculture.
The conflicts and challenges associated with each domain differ and so too are the actors involved. The categorisation between peri-urban and intra-urban types of agriculture and the significance of land within each of them is endorsed by Grossman et al. (1999: 2) who note that, for off-plot UA, "urban gardeners have to be satisfied with small patches of land but competing land uses may threaten their existence and cause harsh legal conflicts and even crop destruction". There are issues of official policy that may not be very clearly understood as well as eviction by developers, by built environment plus other uses that can play higher rents for the space.

3.2   Urban Agriculture and the Intra-Urban Land Question
At it's the lowest level, this involves agricultural activities on small spaces around the house or property (backyard, front garden, roof-tops, verandas etc) now commonly defined as on-plot UA. At the institutional level, the dominant focus in the literature is on the health-environmental problems (plus nuisance) likely to emerge from on-plot agriculture especially where livestock rearing

is involved. Otherwise neighbours and policy makers seem not to have problems with this sector of the industry.

Table 2: The Land Dimension

Spatial level	Key Concerns	Theories/Concepts e.g
On-plot	❏ Size and adequacy ❏ Design standards ❏ Infrastructure provision and standards ❏ Health and environmental issues ❏ Control and access	Modernisation Dependency
Off-plot Public 'Open Spaces' Community Spaces	❏ Ownership and control ❏ Networks and client-patron relations ❏ Environmental issues	" "
Peri-Urban Zones Regional Dimension	❏ Urbanisation ❏ Commercialisation of production and land markets ❏ Control and access to resources ❏ Globalisation ❏ Land tenure conversion and conflicts ❏ Institutional gridlock ❏ Ecological footprint	**Modernisation** Peri-Urban Change, Commercialisation and globalisation of peri-urban activities is good for economic growth; new opportunities come with title deeds etc. **Dependency** Peri-Urban Change is exclusionary, exploitative and leads to poverty, marginalisation of locals, plus breakdown of local institutions **Structuration** Both of the above are possible; agency can reproduce held change the direction of impacts

However, as briefly outlined in the discussion on the 'new urbanism', land for on-plot agriculture is highly contested. Webb (1998) and others argue that there is a weak empirical base to support the

notion that UA can be practised on small pieces of land to generate significant levels of output for the market. An earlier section of this paper has already explained how design standards championed by engineers/architects and cost recovery imperatives of structural adjustment programs all militate against UA. This has been seen as an arena of ideological, empirical, theoretical, political, gender and generational struggles that seem to be won by those with power.

The next intra-urban domain is that of off-plot agriculture; that which utilises open spaces within the defined boundaries of the city. These are highly contested spaces or resources. It is a domain where complex problems of lack of land are intertwined with lack of access although Mougoet (1994b: 111) considered that 'the lack of access to land is a greater problem that lack of land'. A general perception is that these lands are public land and should be available anytime for anyone. While some of the land may be public (state or local authority owned) and appear vacant, proponents of UA have to be reminded that ultimately somebody (person or institution) has ownership and/or control over it. It is this somebody who will have the final say on whether UA can proceed on the land.

As Webb (1996: 5) put it, there has to be a correction *of 'the myth of urban open space'* there is nothing like a no man/woman's land. Open or vacant is context specific and dependant on the eyes of the beholder. There is no open space and we have to look to ownership, access dynamics, tenure niches, values and the identities people attach to these lands. We should however note that the idea of 'no man's/woman's land has led to serious historical disasters that are root causes of some of Africa's complex contemporary conflicts from as far north as Somaliland through the Great Lakes Region, the Great Rift Valley belt, the Zambezi, Limpopo, Vaal Basins and all the way to Cape Town.

The battle for urban public spaces
In cities like Nairobi and Mombassa political actors have usurped the system of land use planning and allocation from institutions of local administration and governance. Land for informal markets, trading, housing, urban agriculture or services is allocated as a patronage resource by the ruling party machinery. This has extended to use of public land including sections of Karura forest (one of the high value ecological reserves of Kenya). Land that is public land is transferred outside legal institutions/procedures to private developers using chicanery and violent methods reminiscent of settler colonial days. Indeed, in Nairobi and Kenya in general, documentation by Mazingira Institute and research publications (see Klopp, 2000) the public, squatters, urban cultivators, market traders others who have lost land in this manners have formed resistant strategies that remind one of the Mau Mau days. Klopp (2000) reports that people now realise that they do not have control over both rural and urban land that is their birthright (they realise UHURU not yet).

In Uganda, the 1998 Land Act and the constitution were designed to protect the poor from loss of their lands. However, private developers (especially international) feel the procedures to be fulfilled are too cumbersome and they are therefore not keen to invest in ventures that require land. The arbitrary removal of squatter settlements and destruction of vegetable gardens is equally rampant in present day South Africa. While the patronage regime is not as evident as in Kenya, it is clearly visible in the Harare case. There, groups like ZANU PF women have some kind of unlimited access to councillors and city officials. Over the years, they have been allocated plots of land on which to cultivate. Similarly, members of co-operatives have been allocated cultivation and residential plots. Those that do not belong to or sympathise with the ruling party have not had easy access to the same resources. Therefore, access to decision makers and influence on the political systems and the urban planning process are key issues that needs to be understood within the prevailing political context. Many supporting the idea of UA seem not to be aware of this very important fact.

> **The research questions that could be asked include:**
>
> ❑ What are the patterns and dynamics of intra-urban land ownership and how do these impinge on UA?
> ❑ Through what mechanisms and channels (and with what effect) do actors get access to land for UA or are excluded from it?
> ❑ In a given local context, what are the preferred access and ownership arrangements for the utilisation of intra-urban land?
> ❑ Given observation that individualistic patterns of control appear to prevail over collective approach to land use, should there be an increase in the 'on-plot' land space at the expense of the off-plot ?
> ❑ Should there be formal institutionalisation of ownership of current individualistic control of off-plot public lands?

The literature on intra-urban agriculture clearly shows that the open spaces are contested spaces, that empirical evidence is not conclusive as to the economic viability and environmental safety of UA products emanating from these spaces. Further, it is seen more as subsistence production and survival strategy where benefits from comprehensive promotional support will remain doubtful. Despite this subsistence nature, there is general agreement that as noted by Mougoet, 1994: 5) even if ESAP were to end now and employment conditions improved, UA would persist. The question is, what factors explain the persistence of UA today and in the future ? In the future, it will be explained to a large part by the commercial and profit motive; a dimension whose viability is more guaranteed in the peri-urban areas.

3.3   Peri-Urban Agriculture and the Land Question
3.3.1   'Food for the cities' and the constraint of peri-urban land conflicts
Writing with specific reference to future policy for Harare, Mbiba (2000: 297) concluded that:
> In spatial terms, the strategy should be centred on peri-urban areas where land is more readily available. The target for policy and programs should be to increase food production and make it available, affordable and adequate in both quantitative and qualitative terms throughout the year

To this food for the cities initiative, would be added clear land use guidelines protecting undue conversion of agricultural land to built development. However, although land may appear abundant in the peri-urban areas, this is not always the case. Certainly, it is not readily available due to similar problems of ownership and control that affect intra-urban land. Peri-urban areas suffer not only from social contests for control and access but also from pressures of urbanisation and globalisation. Urban growth in terms of population increase puts high demand for settlement land, services, refuse dumps and so on.

In all countries of East and Southern Africa, peri-urban landowners have been quick to realise that building rental rooms is more profitable than using the same plots for agricultural production. Thus one can observe both a formal and informal real estate market in the region. Informal activities are not an exclusive domain of the low income and the poor as evidence from Nairobi and Harare will show. Land invasions take place with facilitators from professionals and elite groups; often with one elite group colluding with the poor to dislodge a regime of old elites (see Gtabaki-Kamau, 2000, on peri-urban land invasions in Zimmerman and Mathare Valley north east of Nairobi). Presently,

private landowners and developers are converting peri-urban coffee farms into high-class residential areas such as Runda Estate (north of Nairobi). This happens initially outside official land use plans. Thereafter, by coercion, corruption or some form of administrative fiat, the developments are 'regularised'. Harare has its own share of such cases including the unresolved issue of the Highfield petrol filling station development and the widely reported peri-urban land occupations variously caricatured as 'land grabs' and so on.

The literature on UA is generally oblivious to these land related socio-political pressures and concentrates more on those arising from sprawling built development. For example, the major publication on peri-urban agriculture in Africa by Grossman et al (1999) did not cover any of the above issues of land aspects and the political economy of UA. Instead, it focused on ecological issues, incomes and survival strategies of the poor, marketing and the role of producer associations as vehicles for policy lobbying.

3.3.2 *Globalisation, urbanisation and contests for peri-urban land in ESA.*

The contest in and pressures on peri-urban land that impact on UA arise also from globalisation, the related *commercialisation of activities* in the peri-urban areas (be they formal or informal). Palmer (1996) concurs that with the advent of IMF/World Bank forced Economic Structural Adjustment programmes (ESAPS) and since the 1980s, the whole of Southern and Eastern Africa has been opened up for globalisation forces leading to greater land based conflicts especially around towns (Palmer, 1996). Globalisation and liberalisation of national economies has witnessed the increase in western oriented production and consumption activities such as horticulture in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Moyo, 1997; Barret et al. 1999); conservationist and eco-tourism programmes in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa. These market activities are highly integrated with the world economy and require ready/easy access to urban-based infrastructure and institutions. Consequently, peri-urban locations with access to airports, market facilities and general infrastructure are the most desirable/appropriate activity areas leading to heightened competition for land there.

At the local level, the city's *ecological foot print* is also most visible in the peri-urban areas through activities such as sand mining, timber and wood extraction, dumping of urban wastes, informal settlements and construction of dams to supply city with H.E.P and water. Impoverished urban workers increasingly use their knowledge and urban derived resources to access peri-urban land for income generating ventures (Simon, 1995; Mbiba, 1999b) especially on land under communal tenure. An emerging trend throughout the region is therefore one of increased commercialisation of peri-urban land uses and greater commodification of land rights. Even lands under communal tenure are being privatised and fenced off (Palmer, 1996:3; Simon, 1995). This points to the need for greater attention on the 'elites' in Africa; not only from the view of 'villains' but as positive agents in the development process.

There is general agreement that ESAPs in Africa have exacerbated socio-economic collapse and poverty; with studies concentrating on the low-income groups (Gibbon, 1995). Yet, as amply exposed by Munijin (1995) with respect to the middle classes, ESAPs have seriously affected managerial, bureaucratic, business and political elites as well. One view suggests that in promoting ESAPs, one primary objective of the IMF and the World Bank was to undermine the national influence of these elites (Tacoli, 1998) since they were considered an obstacle to perfect operation of market forces. With ESAPs, the socio-economic security of these 'elites' is no longer as guaranteed as was the case before the 1980s; donor and state centred resources that were previously available have dwindled relative to increasing demands.

For these groups, peri-urban areas are potential/alternative 'theatres of opportunity and accumulation'. As observed by Swindell et al. (1999) in the case of Nigeria, such opportunity and profits are possible in the commercial agricultural sector. Using their *authoritative resources* (such as local knowledge, social networks, and information), abundant cheap labour and *allocative resources* (such as savings, pensions, property assets, and loans) they can earn high rewards from investment in the urban hinterland and regional markets. The way these opportunities are exploited has been described by some writers as corruption (see Klopp, 2000). Expectations of economic benefits from such activities need to be better understood and inform policies that attempt to tackle Africa's land question (Moyo, 1995; 1997) and phenomena such as urban-rural linkages and continued maintenance of communal land rights by the urban upper classes (Mbiba, 1999b:181-198). The challenge for governance and sustainable livelihoods in the urban periphery is to go beyond a focus on the poor *per-ser* and to investigate networks that link the various actors in a given locality.

Another feature is the increase in large peri-urban mining activities for example in Uganda and Zimbabwe. In addition, construction of large dams in the peri-urban zones to meet urban water requirements (Mbiba, 1997, 1999a; Mbiba and Kinyungu, 2001) not only displace local communities but create conditions conducive for intensive commercial agricultural production. The result is a greater competition for land in the peri-urban zone; a process whose impacts on local communities remain a neglected research and policy domain despite its critical importance as a determinant of local political conflicts.

Recent research shows that envisaged economic benefits arising from these activities have to be balanced against the loss of land and livelihoods by local communities and other vulnerable groups particularly women and the rural poor (Maxwell et al. 1998). Despite its negative colonial derived attributes as highlighted by Cheater (1990) and Simon (1995) *communal land remains a significant source of livelihood* and is a 'safety net' for the majority urban poor (Tacoli, 1999; Curtis, 1995; Smit, 1998; Potts and Mutambirwa, 1999; Mbiba, 1999b). The loss of and exclusion from access to this resource has significant implications for poverty and poverty alleviation programmes in the region. Integrating peri-urban communal lands into the global economy without exclusion of local communities is an issue requiring closer policy attention throughout Southern and Eastern Africa.

Between 1990 and 1997, almost all countries in the region instituted Land Commissions or Land Bills of one form or other in a bid partly to improve land tenure governance. Ensuing debates have shown that urban and peri-urban lands are largely excluded from these initiatives which remain largely rural biased. However, peri-urban land conflicts are widespread and poised to increase and women remain the greatest losers (Palmer, 1996; Maxwell et al. 1998). The later is a dominant feature despite a growing wave of urban-based gender focused lobby groups and research in the region. At the same time, corruption and lack of both central and local government capacity (even in South Africa) are critical obstacles to accountable and sustainable peri-urban land programmes. **There are issues of local capacity and unresolved questions of how to deal with traditional systems and cultures, gender relations and centre-local relations in a sensitive and sustainable way.**

However, evidence from West Africa shows that were capacity exists, good governance can minimise the loss of land and livelihoods in the urban periphery such that local communities in those areas participate in and benefit from the new globalisation related activities. Where this is not possible, conflicts lead to greater environmental degradation, poverty, civil strife and even wars. Consequently, there is need to create a forum for debate of peri-urban land management in Southern and Eastern Africa and mainstream this into the traditional land question. Such a debate should be based on a grounded knowledge of the profile, patterns and processes of peri-urban land dynamics in the region. This should capture both structural and agency dynamics (local versus

global) that impinge on peri-urban land and highlight relationships or linkages which can be useful frameworks for any micro or sectoral initiatives. There are very significant regional and city wide variations as well as common threads which should be identified and shared to provide lessons for other contexts, for regional research, policy and advocacy initiatives.

> The objective of the research agenda would be to gather and collate information for use as a knowledge base in debates on peri-urban land in Southern and Eastern Africa. It will/should sketch the dominant theoretical perspectives on peri-urban land development and identify major themes around which existing and future peri-urban land management debates could be pursued. Such themes include peri-urban land markets, land values, land disputes, land use, and tenure, institutions and governance.

Implicit in the literature are two dominant interpretations of the meaning and implications of contemporary peri-urban dynamics in Africa. These are the modernisation and dependency derived perspectives and Structuration..

3.3.3 *Modernisation, dependency, Structuration and the research questions.*

Modernisation theory views peri-urban change (e.g. commercialisation of agriculture, commodification of land rights) as a positive process which leads to transformation of the local economy. As outlined by Palmer (1996), these World Bank/IMF sponsored approaches consider communal tenure as backward, wasteful and an obstacle to entrepreneurial endeavour. The theory argues that benefits to households will increase as their activities change from agrarian subsistence to modern ones integrated with the world economy. Western style individual title would increase security and credit worthiness. Similarly, the entrepreneurship and emerging markets are supposed to broaden the tax and revenue base for local authorities such that resources for service provision and infrastructure become more available. Therefore, individual, family and corporate benefits would translate to community and national benefits in the long term.

The research questions would focus on entrepreneurial peri-urban activities including entrepreneurial urban agriculture and to explore concepts like market maturity of any selected sector (housing, land, food marketing etc).

According to the **dependency theory** derived perspectives, rapid urban growth, commercialisation of peri-urban activities and land markets are considered destructive to local household livelihoods and institutions. On the basis of empirical evidence, this view argues that local households and institutions are ill-equipped in terms of resources, (knowledge and skills) to enable effective participation in the emerging local economy (Palmer, 1996). This is largely due to persisting structural in-equalities and the selectivity of globalisation forces. Under these conditions of diminished capacity, a few local and international individuals or institutions dominate and monopolise the local economy (Moyo, 1997). Corruption and unaccountability are said to be a prevalent associated features. Central governments are either complicit or weakened by the logic of prevailing globalisation forces such that affected communities have no one to protect their rights.

Consequently, the loss of institutions and livelihoods leads to greater poverty, landlessness, destitution and proletarianisation. The rapid changes are taking place within a poorly developed administrative and governance structure. The changes also overwhelm those institutions that do exist. The result is a breakdown of governance, rise in corrupt practices, marginalisation or exclusion of the majority from the new economic opportunities. Increased poverty and environmental degradation are inevitable. From a social movement dimension, the bulk of affected peoples in Africa are left out from the rising tide of 'grass roots' movements and activism against globalisation. This contemporary activism is 'elitist' in character, its methods and language selective

vis-a-vis the African communities. Our challenge is to bridge the activism gap and to understand how affected communities restructure their institutions and livelihoods within the context of these world driven changes.

The third perspective, **Structuration**, argues that both processes (positive trickle down and negative underdevelopment) do take place but the magnitude and direction in any given context depends largely on the extent to which actors (both local and global) respond to the challenges; the question of structure-agency interaction. Recent studies in west African context such as that of Ghana have concluded that in cases where leadership is well informed and willing to act in the best interest of the community, the increase in the value of land arising from commodification of peri-urban activity can have a positive impact on the community (Maxwell, et al. 1998: 28) However, where this is absent, loss of land and livelihoods will occur. This points to the need for investigation and investment in local capacity building and governance.

The point to underline is that "although capitalism is the dominant mode of production in Africa, it has so far failed to replace pre-capitalist social and cultural formations" (Mabogunje, 1994: 31). Consequently, agency within an African context is circumscribed by structural forces from two main sources, viz.; globalisation forces and process on one hand and the socio-cultural influences on the other. These have to be recognised and their influence evaluated when dealing with the political economy of land.

Structuration considers that in response to globalisation forces, structural conditions (e.g. in the political economy and culture) can be either constraining or enabling. The challenge is to investigate how such constraining or enabling processes operate at the local level. Such an investigation would have as its goal an improvement in the governance of peri-urban change so that the new livelihoods provide both basic needs and economy to the peoples affected. It should be a framework to resolve the conflicts associated with localisation of globalisation forces in Africa.

4.   Reflections on Research Frameworks and Approaches
4.1   Focus and modalities
Our deliberations on the political economy of urban and peri-urban agriculture with special reference to the land dimension are an explicit recognition that the problem with or for UA is not agriculture as such but the context within which it is done. The way forward has to follow two inter-related strands viz;

Focus 1: that there is need for research on intra-urban agriculture issues e.g. how to increase productivity, production techniques, marketing techniques etc.

Focus 2: that urban and peri-urban agriculture's success will be dependent on the context and diversity of local dynamics especially around land, governance and institutional success to resolve associated conflicts.

Although these two are complimentary, Focus 2 calls on social scientists (lawyers, planners, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, linguists, historians, gender experts, administrators etc.) to improve our knowledge on the context within which peri-urban agriculture will operate. In doing so, both diversity and difference at local and regional levels should be explored.

Secondly, the approach should try to marry new research modalities and motivations with existing ones and to boost medium to long term research capacity for local /regional research, dissemination of research results and policy influence. These points will be elaborated on below.

4.2   Research Frameworks, Approaches and Capacity Enhancement

In the field of urban agriculture and African research in general, there has been a tendency by both local states, NGOs and international development institutions to undermine rather than enhance the research capacity in university institutions (Stren, 1994). A detailed review will however show that IDRC is among the few international institutions that have pursued development research with a commitment towards local ownership and capacity building. Its AGROPLIS awards scheme initiated about four year ago is a recent testimony to commitment for training and capacity building in African research centres. The research proposal emerging from our ongoing debates should offer opportunity for IDRC to broaden and consolidate ideals behind Agropolis and for the rest of us to build on that initiative.

Most researchers do not want to be accountants; they want resources to use for research activities and to invest time on those activities, to publish, to engage in academic debates and dialogue with practitioners and policy makers. In MDP we have a regional institution whose links with governments and local authorities in the region are well known and respected. With IDRC support, the MDP has a window of opportunity to link up with regional and international researchers to pursue research whose results would inform and strengthen its dialogue with practitioner partners in the region. MDP does not need to do research itself but should have the right links to good researchers.

We have experiences of working with different structures for dispensing with research resources that include:
(i)   giving full budgets to each individual researcher
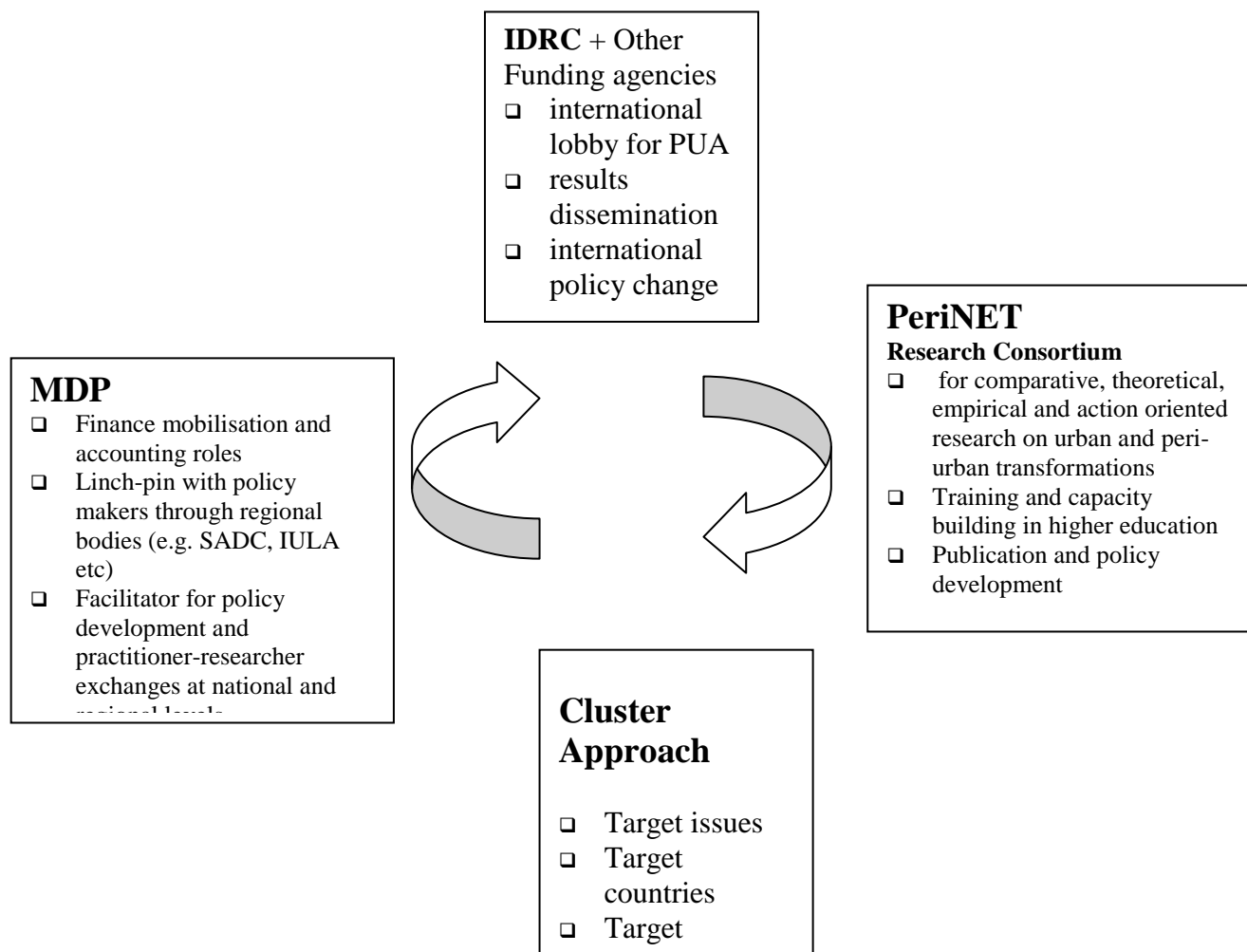(ii)   giving budgets to selected universities or research centres
In our current deliberations, we have the opportunity to link up MDP with a network of researchers where MDP could play the role of a 'clearing house' for research resources as well as act as *linch-pin between researchers and policy makers* in the region. Since 1998, researchers in the ESA region have realised the importance of collective research efforts and regional research capacity building on urban and peri-urban transformations. The Urban and Peri-Urban Research Network (PeriNET) emerging from this initiative has several researchers with interest on urban and peri-urban agriculture. Although its research agenda is much broader that UA, it covers the most significant contextual issues that impinge on UA viz; peri-urban land, governance, globalisation, livelihoods etc. There is significant common ground that IDRC and MDP could tap on.

We have to consider options of how PeriNET members can collectively and formally incorporate a research-training component to boost post-graduate research in the region. Obviously, we are not saying that IDRC should put all its resources in PeriNET or that all participants be members of PeriNET. We are urging IDRC and MDP to consider a more formal relationship with PeriNET as one potentially beneficial component of operations to pursue innovative action oriented research on urban and peri-urban change in ESA. Our collective experience shows that capacity building through training and networks is a winner since the more of us there are that take this debate to different places, then the more mature and effective that debate becomes. We have already seen it with UA since the early 1990s.

Beyond the academic value, this work has political, economic and policy relevance at both local and international levels. It pursues sustainable human settlements issues noted in Agenda 21 and in the UNCHS (Habitat) report, 1996. The central role of land in the urban-rural linkage continuum and potentials for economic development is a theme recognised in the World Bank Report (1999) and recommended for further attention by other donors and development institutions such as DIFID, SIDA and UNDP. Consequently policy makers and other key actors would find the research of

interest. This increases the chances for wide utilisation of the results during and after the project as well as enhanced conditions for future partnerships between research, funders and policy makers.

Figure 2: Towards the Future

IDRC + Other Funding agencies
- international lobby for PUA
- results dissemination
- international policy change

PeriNET
Research Consortium
- for comparative, theoretical, empirical and action oriented research on urban and peri-urban transformations
- Training and capacity building in higher education
- Publication and policy development

MDP
- Finance mobilisation and accounting roles
- Linch-pin with policy makers through regional bodies (e.g. SADC, IULA etc)
- Facilitator for policy development and practitioner-researcher exchanges at national and regional levels

Cluster Approach

- Target issues
- Target countries
- Target

4.3   Recap on research questions
4.3.1   The Contextual questions

Throughout the paper, research questions were posed (see also the text boxes).   However, this section will revisit some of those. As recognised by PeriNET, in the context of rapid changes associated with globalisation and commercialisation in Africa, peri-urban areas are major zones of conflict and opportunity with regards to;

- land demands and tenure transitions
- economic production activities including horticulture
- demands for housing and other material inputs by urban dwellers
- environmental impacts of the above (the ecological footprint)
- cultural identity, diversity and transformation of African peoples.

The socio-economic and political dilemmas in Africa generally and its peri-urban zones in particular are anchored on land. Consequently, the first phase research objectives following this workshop are/could be multi-fold, viz.;

- on the basis of secondary data, to gather and synthesise the impacts of globalisation on peri-urban lands in Africa
- to isolate key dilemmas associated with the above and identify 'best practice' cases to resolve them.
- in partnership with selected city authorities and local institutions, carry out primary research with a view to develop mechanisms through which peri-urban land transformations could proceed in a sustainable manner i.e. equitable, promoting economy and cognisant of future needs.
- to explore the extent to which local culture could be used as a resource for conflict resolution in the general governance of peri-urban lands.

Resources permitting, it would be ideal to utilise cases from large cities as well as small urban settlements; from all sub regions of Africa i.e. Francophone and Anglophone West, East and Southern Africa; Lusophone and Arab Africa. For Peri-NET the debate and dialogue with practitioners will take a cluster 'cluster approach' whereby seminars and workshops that use regional research results are brought to bear on selected cities with a view to influence resolution of prevailing local development problems.

4.3.2   Entrepreneurial urban and peri-urban agriculture
A key plank of the research challenge is to address poverty issues and opportunities for employment. The production of agricultural produce for the market in urban and peri-urban areas of ESA is widespread but yet poorly researched.   With the label entrepreneurial urban and peri-urban agriculture (partly as used by Kaufman, J. and Bailkey, 2000), the research objective is to investigate the nature and characteristics of entrepreneurial urban and peri-urban agriculture and to highlight ways the operators have overcome constraints related to land water and institutional repression if any. This is an objective couched within the modernisation theme and using a communicative-collaborative approach.

It will identify the way activities are organised, the type of agriculture practised, production techniques, organisation and marketing channels.   Thirdly, the studies will draw lessons for replication in terms of land use planning, urban economy and general food security for cities. Within the chain from farm to city, what opportunities exist for greater employment generation? What is the constituency of consumers for the various products that come from peri-urban areas.

4.3.3   Institutional conflicts
Peri-urban areas are zones that usually lie under rural administrations but whose functionality is largely urban. When confronted with negative or costly issues, the urban authorities do not want to be involved.   However, where it happens that employment is likely to be created or where opportunities for increased tax revenue are envisaged, then the urban authorities will use everything in their power to take away such activity from their rural neighbours.   Central governments are complicit in this game where rural people and their institutions end up as losers. The research questions seek to examine existing arrangements for dispute resolutions of peri-urban land conflicts especially where investments are concerned and identify how best local knowledge could be used to enhance resolutions that benefit local livelihoods and institutions.

5.   Conclusion
The paper outlined key theoretical perspectives on the city and its management so as to facilitate a better understanding of the role and impact on urban agriculture of the actions taken by various actors in the city.   The rise to prominence of urban and peri-urban agriculture in Africa is linked to the urban and employment crisis.   However, while acknowledging that there is a situation of 'cities in crisis', a political economy understanding encourages us to seek opportunities that also prevail in

that context. Land is a central resource and variable around which that crisis and the opportunities revolve; be it in terms of urban agriculture, real estate and so on.

Therefore, the political economy of urban agriculture is largely circumscribed by the political economy of land. This hinges on or is mediated by ownership and tenure patterns whereby we observe a greater prevalence of contests when land is in greater demand among uses and users particularly where the land is in the public domain. Due to a variety of factors including scarcity of resources for urban agriculture, access and control of land takes a variety of forms that have been described under themes such as self-provisioning and patron client relationship. The later seeks to highlight relations between those with power and those who need land and on how the markets and sub-markets for land are shaped by these relationships. Whether the power is located within the official city councils or not is a feature that differs from city to city.

Research interest should extend beyond land in the public domain to that which is privately owned. For urban agriculture, this includes access and use of on-plot land by different groups in the city (e.g. high income versus low-income households). The role of middle classes and the elites and entrepreneurial agriculture are some topics identified for closer attention. Emerging research questions were put in text boxes or as bullet points through the paper.

The paper also proposed that future research should focus on capacity building and partnerships between MDP, IDRC and a network of researchers in or with an interest on peri-urban transformations in East and Southern Africa. Such work would employ a cluster approach and building on ongoing activities among the three group of actors. These concluding remarks will be revised after the workshop in March 2001.

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