

URBAN LAND MARKET IN GHANA: A STUDY OF THE WA MUNICIPALITY

ABSTRACT

The urban land market in Ghana is largely underdeveloped. The paper examined the land market in Ghana using the Wa municipality as a study area. It executes this by reviewing the land market literature. It also employed questionnaires to collect data on the operation of the land market in the Wa municipality. It found out that the land market in the municipality is basically a market for bare land and that most of the land units are located in areas without basic infrastructural services. It also notes that the customary land sector is capable of allocating land efficiently to competing uses and users. However, the market is bedevilled with problems such as multiple land sales and boundary disputes as a result of limited documentation of land transactions in the municipality. It suggests that state policy interventions that will address the inherent market problems and not the institution of state bureaucracy in land management are required to make the land market operate efficiently.

KEYWORDS

Land Market, Land Acquisition, Land Values, Wa Municipality, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Land protects its owners against future uncertainties. It is a major means through which individuals and society at large accumulate wealth. Efficient management of land will provide security to individuals and facilitate the growth of urban centres. The procedures for accessing land may serve either as an incentive or a disincentive to investment in land (Abdulai and Ndekugri, 2007). Land allocation mechanisms impact on its development, the manner in which labour and capital are applied to it, and the distribution of the rewards of land use activities (West, 2000). Efficient mechanisms for allocating urban land will lead to improved urban environment. But, land cannot be efficiently managed without the existence of a vibrant land market. The operations of the land market impact significantly on the ability of nations to realize its developmental objectives. Land market provides the basis for improving resource allocation (Colin, and Ayouz, 2006). The market allocation of land in an urban area influences house prices and also the spatial form of the city (Filatova et al., 2009). A well functioning urban land market is essential for the growth and development of urban centres (Gough and Yankson, 2000). Efficient land markets are essential if nations are to attain socio-economic advancement. It plays a key role in the development of individuals and firms. Efficient urban land markets will therefore bring enormous socio-economic benefits to the residents of the urban area and enterprises. Poor mechanisms for allocating land will lead to housing and sanitation problems, and environmental decay (Antwi, 2002). The socio-economic implication of inefficient land market is huge (Gough and Yankson, 2000).

Despite the socio-economic gains from a well developed land market, the land market in Ghana remains highly underdeveloped. The land market in the country is characterized by limited information on the volume of transactions, the amount of land changing hands, the pattern of the distribution of land transactions, and land prices. Land transactions are shrouded in secrecy

(Mahama, 2006). The Ghanaian land market is not based on available information but on speculations. A site's special attributes or unique location is mostly not factored into its price. The price differential for adjoining sites of similar size or characteristics could sometimes exceed 40% (Mahama, 2006). Land transactions in the country are organized outside the formal economy and none of the formal institutions keep record of them (Antwi, 2002). There is a huge ambiguity over the operations of the Ghanaian land market. Land development precedes planning and planning laws are more often ignored (Mabogunje, 1992). Most of the land development activities are unplanned, resulting in haphazard development with insufficient infrastructure (Gough and Yankson, 1997).

There exists an inefficient and a very complex urban land market in Ghana. The land market in the country remains largely underdeveloped. The study examines the Ghanaian urban land market using the Wa Municipality as a case study. It identifies the problems inherent in the system. It determines whether the land market in the municipality permit smooth alienation of land to buildable land seekers.

THE STUDY AREA

The Wa municipality is the political capital of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The indigenous people in the municipality are the Wala's and the Dagaba's. Land in the Wa municipality is vested in the "tindana" or families ("tindana" means land owner; the plural is "tindamba"). The "tindamba" are the first settlers. There are five "tindamba" in the municipality. The "tindamba" are the allodial owners (hold the land in trust for the people), allocate land, are land priests, and settle land disputes between members of the "tindano". Families that have acquired customary freehold are responsible for alienating their family lands. All vacant virgin lands are vested in the "tindana".

METHODOLOGY

The paper reviewed literature on land markets with emphasis on Sub-Saharan African countries. Field survey was carried out in the Wa Municipality between March and July, 2010 to collect empirical data. Data were collected from purchasers of land in the municipality. The study was interested in recent land transactions. Land in the newly developing areas and older suburbs in the Central Business District (CBD) met this criterion. The study selected two (2) neighbourhoods each (as shown in Table 1) from the North, South, East, West and the CBD of the municipality. This ensured that the selected neighbourhoods truly represented the entire municipality. Data were gathered from 15 grantees in each of the ten neighbourhoods; a total of 150 grantees took part in the study. Questionnaires were used to gather data from the respondents.

Table 1: Study Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood	Selection Criterion	Neighbourhood	Selection Criterion
Chorkor	West	Suuriyiri	North
Mangu	West	Bamahu	South
Dukpon	East	Kuntah-extension	South
Sawaba	East	Zongo	Central
Dobile	North	Kabanye	Central

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

THE OPERATION OF THE GHANAIAN LAND MARKET

The property market in Ghana is a market for the acquisitions of undeveloped land. Antwi (2002) observes that 84.6% of respondents acquired a plot of land and developed it from scratch. Tipple et al (1998) notes that the market for completed properties is almost non-existing. There

is lack of market for real property in Ghana (Tipple and Korboe, 1998). Ghanaian customs and traditions are not in favour of property sales. The land market is complex and diverse, and it's associated with high degree of uncertainty and widespread disputes (Gough and Yankson, 2000). The land market is clouded with land value speculations, disputed ownership, unclear title to land, and litigations. The introduction of European tenure system which did not reflect local tenure structures is partly blamed for this (Antwi, 2002). Dale (1997) notes that the colonial authority's land policy reflected the experiences of the colonial masters and not indigenous practices. Colonial land policies resulted in a complex tenurial system that is shaped by both customary land laws and the British conveyancing system in the country (Larbi, 1995). There is therefore a dual land market in Ghana consisting of the state sector and the customary sector. As Gough and Yankson (2000) notes customary land tenure operates alongside Western tenurial systems, resulting in a great uncertainty surrounding land policies and objectives. Payne (1997) observes that the anomalies in the dual land tenure system became obvious with rapidly growing urban centres. The state of affairs in the Ghanaian land market is a reflection of the country's history, culture, ethnicity, political and socio-economic transformation.

A significant proportion of the population relies on the informal land market (about 87%) to meet their demand for residential lots (Larbi, 1996; Antwi, 2002). But this sector has poor record keeping habit; as a result multiple land sales abound in the land market. There is huge indiscipline and insecurity in the urban land market. It is not uncommon for purchasers of land to be entangled in land disputes (Gough and Yankson, 2000). The uncertainty in establishing the true owner of a given parcel of land; unscrupulous land sales; delayed delivery of infrastructure; indiscipline land agents; and corruption have led to an inefficient and distorted urban land market in Ghana (Center for Democratic Development (CDD), 2000). Multiple allocation of land, title disputes between customary landowners and government, absence of registered

documents, and the unavailability of reliable database of land owners are the major problems confronting the urban land market (Antwi, 2002). Purchasers of land in the Ghanaian urban centres are exposed to a huge risk of protracted litigation or loss of funds as the vendors may be incapable of transferring proper legal title to the purchasers.

THE CUSTOMARY LAND SECTOR AND THE GHANAIAN LAND MARKET

The traditional land sector supply the bulk of developable lands in the country. The traditional landholding institutions control over 90% of the total land area in Ghana (Kasanga, 2008). There is communal ownership of land in the traditional land sector (Kotey and Yeboah, 2003). There are multiple interests in a given parcel of land which may make it difficult for such lands to be sold. Myrdal (1974) for instance suggests that the customary land tenure system limits the opportunities and incentives for investment in land. The communal nature of customary land tenure is a disincentive to individual initiative and obstructs economic development (Kwadwo, 2006). There exists the notion that the traditional land ownership system does not permit individual ownership of land, which does not provide incentives to individuals to invest in land-based activities (Abdulai and Ndekugri, 2007). Customary landownership restricts the opportunities for obtaining and parting with land rights (Oduro, 2000). Traditional informal land transactions has led to rising land prices, lack of control over land transactions and limited the uses of land (Smith, 2007). Larbi (1994) suggests that traditional informal land transactions are responsible for the poor living environment in most Ghanaian urban centres. The communal land ownership has therefore constrained the development of the Ghanaian land market. It is partly based on the perceived inefficiencies of the traditional landholdings that there have been calls in the country for land reform including land nationalization (Abdulai and Ndekugri, 2007). It is argued that the state will be able to efficiently parcel out communal land to individuals for development. Many of the defects in the customary land sector could be cured through the

mechanism of government intervention to ensure effective and meaningful land distribution (Asante, 1975; Kwadwo, 2006).

But Antwi (2002) notes that the informal land market obeys the fundamental economic laws of supply and demand and that claims that it is responsible for high, escalating and arbitrary land prices are unfounded. The informal land market in Ghana possesses all the classic features of a market (Konadu-Agyemang, 1991; Larbi, 1995). Indeed, the informal land transactions reflect the demand and supply conditions of land in a given location but may be imperfect. Bruce (1993) points out that when land assumed value indigenous law gradually recognized the sale of land. The traditional land ownership system recognizes and upholds individual ownership of land. Traditional landowners respect the right of grantees in the land allocated to them (Abdulai and Ndekugri, 2007). Gyekye (1998) observes that communal land ownership structure is a private property right system in that it allows the individual members of the community to have an interest in it and take all the proceeds from the land allocated to them. Kasanga (2008) observed that even though land is communally held, families and individuals are effectively controlling land use decisions and investments. Practically, the community's allodial title is extinguished when a usufructuary title arises in a parcel of land and the community's interest becomes less substantial as the English Crown's ultimate ownership of English land (Woodman, 1985). Government bureaucracies are responsible for many of the observed problems in the land market (Kasanga et al, 1996) and not traditional landowners. The state sponsored land sector institutions became the medium for appropriating land for the bureaucratic elites and their close business associates (Amanor, 1998). The primary state agency for the supply of urban land has been largely ineffective, and is responsible for many distortions in land transactions and investment decisions (Kironde, 2000).

Migot-Adholla et al (1991) argues that most foreign anthropologists, colonial administrators, and nationalists have misrepresented the indigenous land tenure system. Ssekandi (2002) observes that the notion that customary land tenure does not permit individual property ownership was a convenient tool of the colonialist. The colonial powers disregarded the extent to which land was bought or sold even in the pre-colonial era (Kironde, 2000). Mabogunje (1990) noted that there are records of land sales in many African countries including Ghana in the pre-colonial era. The colonialist willingly failed to extend the protection of the right to individual property known under most European legal systems to the usufruct. This colonial tactics was inherited by the post-colonial state bureaucracy and has been pursued till today by some of the educated elites and nationalist crusaders. An inherited colonial era public policy was that land has no value unless developed. Kironde (2000) observes that colonial policy distorted land markets by adopting racially segregated land use patterns, as well as by taking steps to exclude Africans from urban land or limit their access to it. The land market received little attention because both colonial and post-colonial policy makers believed that market transactions in land do not take place within African societies; colonial policy makers believed that Africans knew no value in land, that they owned land only in usufruct (Kironde, 2000). Customary tenure was seen by the colonial authorities as the complete negation of freehold or other individual forms of tenure (Phillips, 1989).

THE STATE OF THE LAND MARKET IN THE WA MUNICIPALITY

The land market in the Wa Municipality is highly underdeveloped; it is highly informal and the market for completed properties hardly exists. The land market in the municipality is a market for bare and unserviced buildable lots. In the Wa municipality, infrastructure delivery follows development rather than development following infrastructure provision. This is due to the increased demand for building lots which have outpaced the supply of infrastructural facilities.

As Table 2 indicates 90.7% and 76.7% of respondents acquired bared land and land without access roads respectively. The 9.3% of respondents who acquired developed land did so mainly for the development value of the land; the existing properties on those lands were all decrepit.

Table 2: Nature of Properties and Availability of Access Roads

Properties	Respondents		Access Road	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Bare Land	136	90.7	Yes	35	23.3
Developed	14	9.3	No	115	76.7
Total	150	100		150	100

Source: Author's construct, 2010.

Most land acquirers in the municipality acquire land for the purpose of developing residential units. As shown in table 3, 88% and 12% of respondents acquired land respectively for residential and commercial property development. Also, 64% of the respondents acquired land for the provision of owner occupier housing units and 24% acquired land for the provision of rental housing unit.

Table 3: Reasons for Acquiring Land

Reasons of Land Acquisition	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Owner Occupier Housing Unit	96	64
Rental Housing Unit	36	24
Commercial Property	18	12
Total	150	100

Source: Author's construct, 2010.

Land Values in the Wa Municipality

The price of land in the Wa municipality varies with date of purchase and the neighborhood. As shown in Table 4, the price of a 0.25 acres building lot cost GH¢3000 in Zongo and GH¢1200 in Bamahu in 2010. The highest land value was recorded in Zongo, one of the haphazardly developed, aesthetically unpleasant, and decayed neighborhoods in the municipality. The higher land values at Zongo may be due to its location in the Central Business District (CBD) and the fact that it has been the focus of business and commercial property developers since 2001. The lowest land value of GH¢1000 was recorded in Mangu. In terms of neighborhood characteristics, Mangu compares well with Zongo. The significant variation in land values between Mangu and Zongo in 2010 may be due to their distance from the CBD and the high competition for land at Zongo. The price of land in the municipality has also been rising with time. For instance, between 2008 and 2009, and 2009 and first quarter of 2010 land values respectively increased by 66.7% and 25% at Kabanye. The mean land values in the municipality also increased by 60.6% between 2008 and 2010.

Table 4: Land Values in the Wa Municipality*

Neighbourhood	Land Values (GH¢)		
	2008	2009	2010
Suuriyiri	800	900	1200
Mangu	600	800	1000
Dukpon	7,00	1,000	1,200
Bamahu	6,00	1,000	1,200
Dobile	750	1200	1500
Chorkor	1,000	1,200	1,500

Sawaba	1300	1600	2000
Kuntah-extension	1500	1750	2,000
Zongo	2,200	2,500	3,000
Kabanye	1,200	2,000	2,500
Mean Land Values	1065	1395	1710
S.E. of Mean	159.5	174.6	206.3
Median Land Values	900	1200	1500
Annual increase (mean land values)	-	30.98%	22.58%

Source: Authors Construct, 2010, * 1US\$ - GH¢ in 2008, 1US\$ - GH¢ in 2009, 1US\$ - GH¢ in 2010

Sources of Land in the Wa Municipality

The customary land sector dominates in the Wa municipality; the supply of buildable land is done basically by traditional land owners. As shown in Table 5, all the 150 respondents acquired their land from the customary land sector. As many as 58% of the respondents acquired their land from the Tindana; 16% exercised their inherent customary right as family members; and only 2% acquired their land from the chiefs.

Table 5: Land Grantors in the Wa Municipality

Grantor	Grantee	
	Frequency	Percentage
Tindana	87	58
Family Land (Acquired as of right)	24	16
Family Head	36	24
Chief	3	2.0
Total	150	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

Customary Land Acquisition Duration

It takes relatively a short period of time for developers to acquire land from the customary land sector. It takes a short period of time for the grantor and the grantee to agree on the provisos of the grant. As Table 6 indicates, 70%, 14%, and 4% of the respondents respectively concluded their land acquisition process within 1 month, between 1 and 2 months, and between 6 and 12 months. The customary land sector therefore allows for an expeditious transfer of land in the municipality. This is good for landed property investment in the municipality.

Table 6: Customary Land Acquisition Duration

Duration (Y)	Number of Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
$Y \leq 1$ month	105	70
$1 < Y \leq 2$	21	14
$2 < Y \leq 3$	12	8
$3 < Y \leq 6$	6	4
$6 < Y \leq 12$	6	4
Total	150	100

Source: Authors Construct, 2010

Mode of Financing Land Acquisition in the Wa Municipality

Most land acquirers in the Wa municipality financed the acquisition from their own savings (sweat equity, transfers from family members, and support from friends). Table 7 indicates that 66% of respondents acquired their land through households' savings and only 18% of respondents acquired their lands via a bank loan. The financial institutions have provided very limited financial intermediation to land acquirers in the municipality.

Table 7: Mode of Finance for Land Acquisition

Mode of Finance	Number of Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Bank Loans	27	18
Household Sources	99	66
Free (as of right)	24	16
Total	150	100

Problems in the Customary Land Sector

The acquisition of land from the customary land sector is associated with problems such as multiple land sales, conflicting ownership claims, boundary disputes, and cumbersome procedures. Out of 150 respondents, 42 (28%) indicated that they encountered problems in the land acquisition process. Out of this, 59.5% and 19.1% of grantees respectively had problems with conflicting ownership claims and multiple land sales.

Table 8: Problems in the Customary Land Acquisition Process

Problem	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Multiple Land Sales	8	19.1
Conflicting Ownership Claims	25	59.5
Boundary Disputes	4	9.5
Cumbersome Procedure	5	11.9
Total	42	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

The State of Land Documentation in the Municipality

The documentation of land transaction (in the traditional land sector) in the Wa municipality is very limited. A significant proportion of land transactions are not documented by the customary land owners or by the state land agencies. As Table 9 indicates, as much as 48%, 38%, and 19.3% of respondents respectively have not registered their land, registered with the Lands Commission, and registered with a CLS. The lack of documentation on a significant proportion of land transactions is responsible for the various land related conflicts in the municipality. The CLS's that were established under the Land Administration Project (LAP) which was initiated in 2003 are making giant strides in recording customary land transactions in the Wa municipality. It must however, be noted that not all the customary land owners have joined a CLS; as a result, their land transactions are not recorded by the CLS. Also, documentations by the CLS's are not integrated into the formal land documentation processes, but they provide useful data on land transactions.

Table 9: Documentation of Customary Land Allocations

Status of Documentation	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
No Documentation	72	48
Registered with Lands Commission	49	32.7
Registered with Customary Land Secretariat (CLS)	21	14
Registered with both Lands Commission and a CLS	8	5.3
Total	150	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

As Table 10 indicates, the respondents who have not registered their lands with the Lands Commission cited perceived delays and frustrations (32.3%), financial constraints (37.6%), not necessary (18.3%) and post-acquisition litigations (11.8%) as their reasons for not registering their lands with the commission. Also, 79.3% and 14.1% of respondents who did not register their lands with a CLS respectively indicated that their grantors are not members of any CLS and the acquisition of family lands as their reasons for not registering with a CLS.

Table 10: Reasons for not Registering Land

Reasons	Respondents			
	Lands Commission		Customary Land Secretariat	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Financial Constraints	35	37.6		
Not Necessary/Family Land	17	18.3	17	14.1
Delays and Frustrations	30	32.3		
Post-Acquisition Litigations	11	11.8	8	6.6
Grantor not a Member of CLS			96	79.3
Total	93	100	121	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

As shown in table 11, buildable land seekers have negative perceptions about the public land sector. This may account for why none of the respondents acquired land from the state sector. Even the 9.1% of respondents who had positive perception about the public land sector acquired land from customary land owners. These negative perceptions are disincentives for the documentation of land transactions in the municipality.

Table 11: Land Seekers Perceptions of the State Land Sector

Perception on the State Land Acquisition Process (%)					
Transparent	Not-Transparent	Corrupt	Not-Corrupt	Declined Comments	Total
3	22	59.2	6.1	9.7	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2010

The customary land sector is thriving in the municipality because it is adapted to indigenous institutions and capacities, responsive to the needs of physical developers and it is able to reduce bureaucracies and costs. It does not create a shortage of buildable land; it is associated with less bureaucratic and inexpensive processes; and makes land easily accessible to the majority of home builders. Majority of the residents of the municipality connects well with the customary land sector than state bureaucracies. The customary land sector is able to effectively and expeditiously allocate land to competing uses; it thus facilitates the socio-economic development of the municipality. The market obeys the economic principle of demand and supply. The land market in the municipality, however, has some teething problems that have constrained its ability to efficiently allocate land to land seekers. The claim that the customary land sector does not allow the alienation of land to prospective developers was not observed in the municipality. The issue may not be that the customary land sector militates against the development of land market but that officialdom has refused to recognize or give adequate attention to land transactions within the customary land sector.

IMPROVING THE LAND MARKET IN THE WA MUNICIPALITY

Exclusive action of the customary landowners or the public sector cannot lead to the creation of efficient land markets in the municipality. North (1996) argues that transaction cost under both formal and informal processes affects agents' decisions and performance on the land market.

Both formal (land policies and regulations) and informal (culture, values, traditions and perception) constraints may restrict the alienation of land for development purposes (Healey, 1992; Van der Krabben, 1995). Kombe (1994) indicates that the formal system is inefficient, subject to malpractices, but it also supplies only a small proportion of land to land seekers. The bureaucratic land alienation process is uneconomical and inefficient (Kaittila, 1987; Kombe, 1995). Satterthwaite and Hardoy (1989) observes that the relevance of policies depend on the benefits that the citizens will obtain from their application. Viable options for improving buildable land supply are those that are commensurate with the conditions that exist in the local social-economic environment (Kombe, 2000).

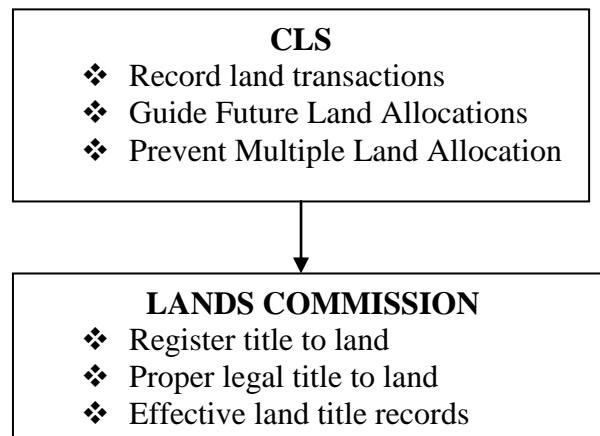
Policy interventions must address the inherent market problems but not disturb the land ownership system in the municipality. Land nationalization is not the solution to the problems confronting the land market. There is a huge potential that state bureaucracies will undermine the smooth operation of land markets through subsidies, political manipulation of the land alienation system and a neglect of the grass root actors. For it to be successful, a land policy must be appropriate for the people and reflects their socio-economic characteristics. It must not undervalue the role of the forces, processes and actors in the land market. A neglect of the grass root actors has the potential of creating tension between traditional land owners and developers; create security problems for developers; and leads to a system where land acquirers may have to pay for a given parcel of land twice (pay both the state and traditional land owners) before being able to develop their allocated state lands (land guards and area boys menace).

Policy makers must therefore focus on assisting the traditional land sector to overcome its inherent problems. Most of these problems could be addressed through an improved system of documenting land transactions. Customary land sub-division and transactions must be regulated

to help ameliorate the cost of chaotic land development and irresponsible dealings in the land market. This will ensure an efficient and market in the municipality. The framework for controlling land uses have been adequately provided in the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act, 462). Similarly, the Customary Land Secretariats (CLS) and the Land Title Registration Law 1986 (PNDCL 152) provides sufficient framework for controlling land transactions and documentation. The most important thing is the full implementation of these frameworks.

The CLS provides a mechanism for recording land transactions less expensively and in a manner devoid of bureaucratic tendencies at the traditional land owners' level. This ensures proper recording of land transactions and does contribute to curtailing multiple land sales in the municipality. The CLS medium also permits the adjudication of land disputes through customary processes. Most of the protracted land litigations in the law courts could be addressed expeditiously and at a lower cost through the dispute resolution mechanisms of the CLSs. The CLS must be strengthened, encouraged and their staff adequately trained to effectively document customary land transactions. The proposed structure of land documentation is as shown in Figure 1. At the land owners' level, it will ensure efficiency by eliminating multiple sales and the associated disputes. It therefore suggested that the regulatory environment must make it mandatory for all customary land owners to create and maintain a well functioning CLS. At the national level effective records of all land titles and their routes would be established. This requires that the Lands Commission is resourced, improves its efficiency, and purge itself of the negative public perceptions about it.

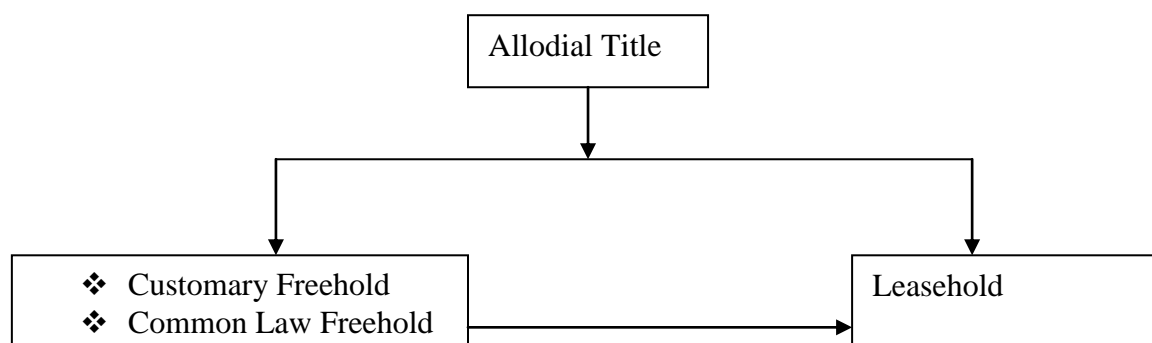
Figure 1: Proposed Stages in Land Documentation



Source: Author's Construct, 2010

It is also important, that the PNDCL 152 which makes it compulsory for land owners to register their land titles be fully implemented. PNDCL 152 permits the registration of customary land under the corporate name (stool, skin, clan, family). It is germane that these allodial interests (the highest interest in land) are registered prior to registering the lesser interest in land (freeholds, leases). This will make it possible for land owners' root of title to be adequately established by prospective buyers. It will effectively address the problem of conflicting claims to land in the municipality. It will help address the land dispute situation in the municipality on a more sustainable basis. The present practices where lesser interests are registered without registering the interest from which they were carved have introduced more chaos in the land market. The route of title in the customary land sector is as shown in Figure 2. With this route of title, it remains unexplained while the registration of leaseholds and freeholds could commence under the PNDCL 152 when no attempt has been made to register the allodial title. One would expect that the process of registering land under the PNDCL 152 would have been systematic.

Figure 2: Route of Title in the Customary Land Sector



Source: Author's Construct, 2010

If the teething problems in the customary land sector are addressed, the market will function more efficiently. Perhaps, the customary sector will be more efficient than the state structure which is highly bureaucratic and clouded with perceived corruption. The state institutions are perceived by many as a means of expropriating land of the ordinary citizens and the poor for the benefit of the political elites, the rich and the most powerful.

CONCLUSION

The land market in the Wa municipality is a market for unserved bare lands. The market is dominated by the customary land sector. Though the market is capable of allocating land effectively and expeditiously to competing demands, it has some inherent problems such as multiple land sales and boundary disputes that need to be addressed by state policy interventions. The paper suggests that state interventions such as the expropriation of customary land must be avoided. The institution of state bureaucracy is not the solution to the inherent problems in the land market. Interventions that will promote the documentation of land transactions and the easily accessibility of such information by prospective land acquirers are

needed if the inherent problems in the land market are to be resolved. The paper is of the opinion that land market will operate efficiently if the problem of not documenting land transactions is addressed.

REFERENCES

Abdulai, R.T. and Ndekugri, I. E. (2007). “Customary Landholding Institutions and Housing Development in Urban Centres of Ghana: Case Studies of Kumasi and Wa”, *Habitat International*, 31: 257–267

Amanor, K. (1998). “SAP and the changing political economy of land in West Africa”, Paper presented at Conference on Structural Adjustment and Socio-economic Change in sub-Saharan Africa, Copenhagen, December.

Antwi, A. (2002). A Study of Informal Urban Land Transactions in Accra, Ghana, *Our Common Estate*, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Foundation.

Bruce, J. W. (1993). Do indigenous tenure systems constrain agricultural development? In: C. Donald, & T. J. Basset, *Land in African agrarian systems* (pp. 35 }56). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Centre for Democratic Development (2002). Organizational Study of Land Sector Agencies. CDD: Accra

Dale, P. (1997). “Land Tenure Issues in Economic Development”, *Urban Studies* 34(10): 1621-1633

Colin, J. and Ayouz, M. (2006). “The Development of a Land Market? Insights from Cote d'Ivoire”, *Land Economics*, 82 (3): 404-423

Filatova, T., Parker, T. D., and Van der Veen, A. (2009) “Agent-Based Urban Land Markets: Agent's Pricing Behavior, Land Prices and Urban Land Use Change” *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* vol. 12, no. 1 3

Gough, K. V. and Yankson, P. W. K. (1997). “Continuity and change: socio-economic and environmental consequences of urban growth in the peri-urban area of Accra, Ghana”, Final report to the Danish Council for Development Research.

Gough, K.V. and Yankson, P.W.K. (2000). “Land Markets in African Cities: The Case of Peri-urban Accra, Ghana”, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 13, 2485– 2500,

Healey, P. (1992). An institutional model of the development process. *Journal of Property Research*, 9, 33–44.

Kasanga, K.R. (2008). Land Policy and Land Management from the Traditional Perspective in Ghana, a Paper Presented at the University of Leeds, April, 2008.

Kasanga, R. K., Cochrane, J., King, R. and Roth, M. (1996). “Land market and legal contradictions in the peri-urban areas of Accra, Ghana: informant interviews and secondary data investigations”, *Research Paper*, Land Tenure Centre, University of Wisconsin-Madison; LARC, UST, Ghana.

Kaittila, S. (1987). Land delivery mechanism in Tanzania, implications for socialist state. *Habitat International*, 11(3), 35-59.

Kironde, J.M.L. (2000). “Understanding land markets in African urban areas: the case of Dares Salaam, Tanzania”, *Habitat International* 24:151-165

Kombe, J. W. M. (1994). The demise of public urban land management and the emergence of the informal land markets in Tanzania: A case of Dares salaam city. *Habitat International*, 18 (1), pp. 23:43.

Kombe, W. J. (1995). Formal and informal land management in Tanzania: the case study of Dares Salaam city, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Dortmund, Dortmund.

Kombe, W.J. (2000) “Regularizing housing land development during the transition to market-led supply in Tanzania”, *Habitat International*, 24, 167-184

Konadu-Agyemang, K. (1991). “Reflections on the Absence of Squatter Settlements in West African Cities: The Case of Kumasi, Ghana”, *Urban Studies*, 28(1):139-151

Larbi W O (1994) Urban Land Policies and Delivery of Developable Land in Ghana, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Land Management & Development, University of Reading, UK

Larbi, W. O. (1995). “The Urban Land Development Process”, Our Common Estate Series, London: RICS

Larbi, W. O. (1996). “Spatial Planning and Urban Fragmentation in Accra”, *Third World Planning Review* 18(2): 193-215.

Mabogunje, A. L. (1990). “Perspective on urban land and urban management policies in sub-Saharan Africa”, *World Bank Technical Paper* No. 196. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Mabogunje, A. K. (1992). "Perspectives on urban land and urban management policies in sub-Saharan Africa", *World Bank Technical Paper*, No. 196, Washington, DC.

Migot-Adholla, S., Hazell, P., Blore, B., and Place, F. (1991). "Indigenous land rights systems in sub-Saharan Africa: A constraint on productivity", *The World Bank Economic Review*, 5(1), 155–175.

North, D. C. (1996). *Institution, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Reprinted.

Payne, G. (1997). *Urban Land Tenure and Property Rights in Developing Countries: A Review*. London: IT Publications/ODA.

Quarcoopome, S. S. (1992). "Urbanization, land alienation and politics in Accra", *Research Review*, 8, pp. 40–54.

Tipple, A. G., Korboe D, Willis, K. and Garrod, G. (1998). "Who is Building What in Urban Ghana", *Cities* 15(6): 399-416

Tipple, A. G. and Korboe, D. (1998). "Housing policy in Ghana: towards a supply-oriented future", *Habitat International*, 22, pp. 245–257.

Van der Krabben, E. (1995). *Urban dynamics: A real estate perspective: An institutional analysis of the production of the built environment*. Center for Economic Research, Tilburg University.

Woodman, G. R. (1985). Customary law, state courts, and the notion on institutionalization of norms in Ghana and Nigeria. In A. Allot & G.R. Woodman (Eds.), *People's law and state law*.