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**The Impact of Urban Agriculture in  
Sustainable Cities.**

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INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO Y DE ESTUDIOS SUPERIORES DE  
MONTERREY

## *Abstract*

Faculty: Nanotechnology

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Leadership for Sustainable Development

### **The Impact of Urban Agriculture in Sustainable Cities.**

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The debate on the role of urban agriculture in the sustainable city discourse remains unresolved in the conventional literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to review relevant literature to clarify the role of urban agriculture in sustainable cities. The search for literature was guided by themes such as: a) urban agricultural practices, b) indicators for the measurement of sustainable cities, c) economic, social and environmental benefits of urban agriculture, and d) negative effects of urban agriculture on the city. The results from a synthesis of the literature indicate that urban agriculture supports the economic, social and environmental sustainability of cities. However, if the discussion gives credence to only the economic dimension of sustainability, then urban agriculture loses the debate. This is because the economic benefits of prime city land that is used for nonagricultural purposes (such as commercial or industrial) is profound. However, the social and environmental functions of responsible urban agriculture, particularly in reducing the rift between urbanisation and nature, may be difficult to quantify. These social and environmental functions underscore the importance of urban agriculture in the city landscape. The paper concludes by arguing that focussing on only economic sustainability in the urban agriculture-sustainable city discourse is a travesty of the idea of sustainable development. The paper presents practical steps that can be taken to preserve agriculture in cities towards their sustainability.

**keywords:** sustainable cities, compact cities, urban agriculture, urban land use planning

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# 1 Introduction

Globally, urban land attracts very high rent. This is attributed to rapid urbanisation and ease of accessibility (Trussell, 2010). Consequently, farmers who are unable to compete for lands due to their low bid rents, have been priced out of the urban land market (Amponsah, Vigre, Schou, Braimah, & Abaidoo, 2015a; Drechsel et al., 2008; Owusu, Bakang, Abaidoo, & Kinane, 2012). This is the central position of the William Alonso's bid-rent theory. The theory explains how land users are willing to pay high rents for an area of land in an open and competitive land market. Similarly, the theory of 'highest and best use' has been used to justify the allocation of city lands to uses that command high bid rent (Babcock, 1932; Barlowe, 1972; Fisher & Fisher, 1954). The theory expresses the need to allocate city land to uses that produce the largest net income over a given period of time (Fisher & Fisher, 1954). Therefore, city authorities give prominence to nonagricultural uses on the scale of city land allocation preference. Consequently, agriculture has been confined to the urban periphery and rural areas where the value of land is within the means of agricultural land users.

However, rapid urbanisation and its attendant sprawl, particularly in the global south, are threatening the sustainability of agriculture even at the urban periphery (Amponsah et al., 2015b; Liu, Yang, Li, & Li, 2017). Projections by the United Nations indicate that by 2020, the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America will be home to approximately three in four urbanites, and eight of the anticipated nine mega-cities in the world. Furthermore, by 2030, approximately twothirds of the world's population will live in cities. The expected increases in the city population will have implications for high demand for urban lands leading to their allocation to the highest and best use. Furthermore, agricultural land uses in the urban periphery will continue to be invaded by the more competitive land uses, which could have dire consequences on food security and poverty levels (Hoornweg & Munro-Faure, 2012).

From the discussion, urban agriculture can only be sustained if city authorities consciously integrate agriculture into the city land use planning and zoning processes. Nevertheless, the city authorities, particularly in the global south, have given little to no attention to agriculture despite their resolve to make their cities sustainable (evident in the Sustainable Development Goal 11). This could be explained by their apparent belief that the highest and best use of city land is not to allocate it to agricultural uses. This belief may have been fuelled by the lack of clarity in the narrative in the conventional literature about the role of urban agriculture in building sustainable cities. The literature on the effects of urban agriculture is contested between two divides. The first maintains that agriculture in cities performs economic, social and environmental functions, which contribute to the sustainability of cities. For instance, agriculture in cities in Sub-Saharan Africa supplements the nutritional needs of urbanites and reduces their food expenditure (Binns & Nel, 2013). In Yaounde in Cameroon, urban farmers consume almost a quarter of the vegetables they produce (Prain & LeeSmith, 2010), whereas in Ghanaian cities, urban vegetable farmers supply almost all the exotic vegetables (lettuce and spring onion) that are consumed in the cities (Darkey, Dzoemku, Okorley, Gyimah, & Bluwey, 2014; Drechsel & Keraita, 2014). The works of Ackerman et al. (2014), Opitz et al. (2016), Specht et al. (2013) and Ayambire et al. (2019) also highlight the role of urban agriculture in food security.

Besides the economic functions, urban agriculture is known to perform social and environmental functions. The environmental functions are in the forms of air and water quality enhancement (Lin, Philpott, & Jha, 2015), and pollination and biocontrol activities (Camps-Calvet, Langemeyer, Calvet-Mir, & Gómez-Baggethun, 2015; Lin et al., 2015). The social functions are evident in its support for political activism and volunteerism in cities. For example, a study showed that farmers in New York City are more likely to engage in voluntary works for community development than the general population (Obach & Tobin, 2014; Pole & Gray, 2013). Also, farms in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania serve as rallying grounds for political parties during election years (McLees, 2016). Dimitri et al. (2016) note that urban farms provide educational and community building functions (e.g. social missions).

The discussion points to the profound role of urban agriculture in the sustenance of cities. This is, however, in contrast with the position of the scholars

who maintain that the contribution of urban agriculture to city sustainability is not momentous. For instance, Veenhuizen (2006) suggests that urban agriculture may increase the burden on women as they combine their household duties with agricultural activities. In addition, urban agriculture, particularly in the global south, has been known to fuel child labour and truancy in school (Edet & Etim, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2006). Furthermore, the excessive use of agro-chemicals (Obuobie et al., 2006; Yamusa, 2014) and/or the use of untreated wastewater for unrestricted irrigation (Amponsah, Vigre, Schou, Braimah, & Abaidoo, 2015a; Becerra-Castro et al., 2015; Mara & Sleigh, 2010; Ndunda & Mungatana, 2013) are known to have adverse health and environmental consequences. The discussion reveals the two-sides of the discourse on the role of urban agriculture in the sustainability of cities.

Based on the theory of 'highest and best use' and the arguments against urban agriculture, city authorities, particularly those in the global south, make little attempts to integrate agriculture into the city land use planning and zoning processes. For instance, Amponsah et al. (2015a, 2015b) point out that city authorities in Kumasi and Accra in Ghana do not include agriculture in the land use plans of the cities. Their emphasis has rather been on land uses that have high bid rents because these lands are perceived to promote the 'highest and best use' of urban land in tangible terms. However, using net income over a given period of time from tangibles (Fisher & Fisher, 1954) as the determinant of highest and best use of land may be misleading. The difficulty in measuring the present value of social and environmental services may lead to an underestimation of the importance of urban agriculture. In this case, the picture portrayed of urban agriculture in the city sustainability discourse may not be whole. The aim of this paper, therefore, was to attempt to clarify the nexus between urban agriculture and sustainable cities by considering the arguments for and against urban agriculture.

The paper is structured into six parts. The first is the introduction, which highlights the unresolved arguments for and against urban agriculture. The second section covers a conceptual framework for sustainable cities. The third section presents the materials and methods while the fourth covers an assessment of the nexus between urban agriculture and sustainable cities. The fifth section presents a discussion of the results of the study and their

implications for city land use planning while the sixth presents the conclusion of the study.



## 2 Conceptual Framework

This section of the article opens with an overview of urban agriculture and ends with a conceptual framework for sustainable city.

### 2.1 Overview of urban agriculture

The Food and Agricultural Organization (2003) defines urban agriculture as any production in the home or plots in an urban area. Central to this definition is the understanding that urban agriculture assumes the nature of farming and gardening in rural areas (Opitz, Berges, Piorr, & Krikser, 2016). Whether to consider peri-urban agriculture as part of urban agriculture or not is a subject that remains unresolved in the conventional literature. While some scholars and organisations limit their description of urban agriculture to only gardens and farms within the inner city (Cohen, Reynolds, & Sanghvi, 2012; Howe, 2002; Kaufman & Bailkey, 2000), others describe it to include agricultural activities in the peri-urban areas (Mok et al., 2014; Pearson, Pearson, & Pearson, 2010; Van der Schans & Wiskerke, 2012). Thebo, Drechsel, and Lambin (2014) make a clear distinction between urban agriculture and peri-urban agriculture based on geographical location. The authors indicate that peri-urban agricultural activities take places within a buffer of 10 to 20 km of the urban geographic boundary. Based on this distinction, the present study focuses on only agricultural activities that take place within an urban geographical boundary or is within 10 km range from a city's core. The work of Ayambire et al. (2019) gives a detailed distinction between urban and peri-urban agriculture.

The purpose of urban agriculture differs between cities in the global south

and those in the global north. In the latter, people farm typically for recreational or aesthetic reasons although farming for household food supply becomes pervasive during economic meltdowns (McClintock, 2010). In the former, farming is mainly to satisfy household food needs and for other commercial reasons (Amponsah, Vigre, Braimah, Schou, & Abaidoo, 2016; McClintock, 2010; Tornaghi, 2015). Typically, households in the cities in the global south farm on undeveloped lands, marginal lands and community plots mainly for food for household consumption whereas empty spaces of post-industrial landscapes are being used for agricultural purposes. Rooftops, balconies and more recently vacant lots, road medians, and parks are used for agricultural purposes in the cities in the global north (McClintock, 2010). In this context, urban agriculture is used in the present study to typify crop farming done through community gardens, allotments, backyard gardens and rooftop gardens.

## 2.2 Conceptualising a sustainable city

The concept of sustainable cities has its roots in the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development's (UNWCED) idea of sustainable development. The UNWCED summarised sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept has been a standard to strive for in many areas of human activity (Filion, 2017). It is a normative concept that determines the way humans should act towards nature, as well as the way they should be responsible towards one another and future generations (Baumgärtner & Quaas, 2010; Yigitcanlar & Dizdaroglu, 2015). However, Lew, Ng, and Ni (2016) suggest that numerous definitions of sustainability and sustainable development are sometimes sloppy, vague and narrow. This is partly due to the varied understanding of sustainable development and the numerous semantics in the institutional, ideological and academic definitions of sustainability (Mebratu, 1998). For instance, environmental economists believe in economic reductionism by undervaluing ecological goods while social ecologist is reductionist-holistic by focusing on the domination of people and nature. These beliefs translate into their conception of sustainability and sustainable development. Mebratu (1998), therefore, concludes from the varied conceptions particularly on the cosmic perceptions about the separate existence of nature, economy and society, are problematic for sustainability research. Again, the conceptual understanding

and perception of the environment (which comprises living and non-living things) and ecology (which refers to the relationship between living organisms and their environment) as synonymous has affected and continues to affect the conceptual understandings of sustainable development. These can undermine the understanding of a sustainable city since they are intertwined. For clarity, this study's focus on sustainable development considers its tripartite dimension (economic, social and environmental).

In recent times, the sustainable city concept has assumed prominence. This is evident in the Sustainable Development Goal [SDG] 11, which is "to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". The concept's growing prominence is fuelled by rapid urbanisation of the world and the associated effects on environmental quality. The implication is that sustainability should be a crucial objective every development endeavour should strive to achieve (UNHabitat, 2013). In this regard, the primary goal of urban development should be to make cities and their ecosystems healthy and sustainable (Hiremath, Balachandra, Kumar, Bansode, & Murali, 2013; Jovanovic, 2008; Smith, 2015; Thornton, 2011). However, the discourse on urban development and urban sustainability has resulted in a plethora of studies equating the sustainable city concept to the new vision of a compact city. This seems to be a conceptual contention like the definition of sustainable development.

The main idea behind the compact city concept is to have a city that is energy-efficient and less polluting because of the proximity of houses to the market centres, shops and work places (Neuman, 2005). The focus is on compactness, which will result in less travel, efficient use of public transportation and ultimately reduce emissions (Abdullahi, Pradhan, Mansor, & Shariff, 2015; Chang, 2016). Typically, compact cities have less space for green-infrastructure due to the inherent physical and institutional obstacles that limit the quantity and quality of amenity vegetation (Jim, 2004). Studies have also shown that compactness can have adverse effects on domestic living space, affordable housing, and increased crime levels (Chhetri, Han, Chandra, & Corcoran, 2013; Lin, Lin, & Yang, 2006). These effects are contrary to

the principles of a sustainable city, which emphasise a balance among economic development, environmental protection, and equity in income, employment, shelter, basic services, social infrastructure and transportation (Hiremath et al., 2013). In this regard, we do not use a compact city interchangeably with a sustainable city in the present study.

The confusion between sustainable city and compact city prompted the authors of this study to provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the meaning of a sustainable city. As stated earlier, the nuanced conception of sustainable development affects the meaning of a sustainable city. This results in the concentration of indicators that reflect a limited number of dimensions (Tanguay, Rajaonson, Lefebvre, & Lanoie, 2010). However, Hellstro (2000), concludes that it would be unfeasible to try to compile all indicators from all available databases. Therefore, scholars tend to specify on some criteria/indicators based on the focus of their studies and their ideological orientations. For instance, Hellstro (2000) proposed a six study-specific criteria for measuring sustainable urban water management. These criteria are: a) health and hygiene, b) cultural contribution, c) spreading of toxic compounds to water and soil, d) use of natural resources, e) cost benefits, and f) functional risk. The criteria are study-specific and not crosscutting. Many other scholars and organisations use a variety of criteria to define sustainable cities (see: Green City Index, Global City Indicators Facility and the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability). The nuances in the sustainable city indicators are attributable to varied conceptual understanding of a sustainable city discussed above (Alberti, 1996; Egger, 2006; Evans & Marvin, 2006; Portney, 2002).

Models and indices are also backed by conceptual views. As such, there is the need to try to complement the strengths and weaknesses of several indicator-sets to derive a more robust and comprehensive model for measuring sustainable city. The use of indicators is also relevant because they provide a much more detailed and quantitative way of measuring the sustainability of a city. Therefore, in this article we review some of the existing models (the Green City Index, Global City Indicators Facility and the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability) to develop a framework that adequately identifies the indicators for a sustainable city. This framework serves as the basis for the discussion of the role of urban agriculture in sustaining cities.

### 2.2.1 The Green City Index

The Green City Index is regarded as one of the robust models for the identification of a sustainable city (Huang, Wu, & Yan, 2015). It comprises 30 indicators, which are grouped under eight categories. These categories are a) environmental governance, b) carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), c) buildings, d) transport, e) water, f) waste and land use, g) energy and h) air quality (refer to Supplementary Table 1). The strength of this model lies in its ability to be applied in several geographical contexts. The index has been the basis for the following reports: African Green City Index, Asian Green City Index, European Green City Index, German Green City Index, Latin American Green City Index, and U.S. and Canada Green City Index (Huang et al., 2015). The wide application of the model, its comprehensiveness and attribute as a “strong sustainability indicator” Huang et al. (2015, p. 14), were the main reasons for considering it in this paper.

Furthermore, there are some inherent linkages among the suggested indicators. One indicator has effects on the outcome of another. For instance, the indicators on carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which aims to reduce emissions, are directly linked to the indicators on transportation and air quality. The use of non-car transportation and increased use of green transport will most likely result in the improvement of air quality. This can also lead to the strengthening and sustenance of a green action plan. Again, the indicators on energy are directly linked to the indicators on buildings. The management of energy consumption and the increase in the use of renewable energy are most likely to translate in energy efficient buildings if used in those structures.

However, there are some complications with the use and measurement of some qualitative words such as comprehensiveness, ambitiousness and extensiveness. Without clarity on how these words are measured, the use of the model to conceptualise sustainable city leads to inconclusive and subjective outcomes. Another weakness of the model is its overemphasis on energy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with little attention to measures of health, happiness and quality-of-life (Science for Environment Policy, 2015). Sahely and Kennedy (2007) also observed that the model, like many of the in-vogue models, focusses primarily on environmental impacts and do not include an extensive treatment of economic and social issues. However, the assumption underpinning this model is the tripartite relation among the environment, economy and society. This means that the indicators suggested in the Green City

Index could have spill-over benefits. For instance, being able to comply to the standards set by the indicators can improve standard of living in cities. Managing emissions, waste production and water has implicit implications for health, safety and the economy. Therefore, not being explicit on health, happiness, quality of life indicators and the supposedly limited attention to economic and social issues arguably do not undermine the relevance of the Green City Index for measuring sustainable cities. However, the lack of direct and conspicuous consideration for health, happiness, and quality of life indicators makes the model amendable to varied application and ultimately challenges its relevance for holistic city planning purposes. To address the rather obvious weaknesses, the review covered the Global City Indicator Facility, which mainly covers the social aspects of urban life

### **2.2.2 Global City Indicators Facility**

Unlike the Green City Index, the Global City Indicators Facility attempts to cover all aspects of urban life, with significant emphasis on economic and social measures of sustainability (refer to Supplementary Table 2). The model conceptualises a sustainable city based on strong economic and social structures. The Global City Indicators Facility was created by the World Bank, working with the Japanese Trust Fund. Compared with the Green City Index, its weakness lies in the limited focus on pollution or air quality, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, clean and renewable energy consumption and environmental governance. However, if cities consider indicators on wastewater, water and particulate matter emissions as suggested in the Global City Indicators Facility, they may accrue direct and external benefits to capture all the environmental indicators suggested by the Green City Index. In addition, the Global City Indicators Facility was designed to focus on cities with over 100,000 inhabitants and lacks a standardisation, which makes it difficult for cities to share best practices and learn from each other (McCarney, 2009). However, this does not dispute its importance in the sustainable city discourse. In fact, Fox and Pettit (2015) state that the goal of the Global City Indicators Facility is to attain a common set of indicators for all cities globally. This makes the Global City Indicators Facility relevant in the sustainable city discourse.

In another vein, the Green City Index and the Global City Indicators Facility agree on the use of specific indicators such as particulate matter concentration, solid waste, transportation, wastewater, water consumption and energy. However, they do not cover aspects of embodiment and enough food and

flora and fauna. These are essential requirements for sustainable cities (Ackerman et al., 2014; Opitz et al., 2016; Specht et al., 2013). The implication is that the Green City Index and the Global City Indicators Facility complement each other to identify a robust set of indicators to measure the sustainability of cities. The weaknesses in these models and the earlier contentions in the literature on compact cities and sustainability precipitated the review of the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability.

### **2.2.3 Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability**

The Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability is a method used for assessing the sustainability and for managing projects directed at socially sustainable outcomes. It has been used by several cities such as Johannesburg, Melbourne, New Delhi, São Paulo and Tehran and by several organisations such as the UN Global Compact Cities Programme, World Vision and Save the Children to understand and support sustainability efforts (KPMG International, 2016). It is based on 28 indicators (refer to Supplementary Table 3), which are subdivided into four broad categories. These categories are politics, culture, economics and ecology. A scale of critical, being the least, and vibrant, being the best, is used alongside the indicators to rank development efforts.

The inadequacies of the Green City Index and the Global City Indicator Facility in not providing for embodiment, sufficient food and flora and fauna have been covered by the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability. The strength of this index is its global list of indicators as well as its suitability for different countries. An analysis of the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability shows some similarities with the Green City Index and Global City Indicators Facility in terms of the considerations they give to health, education, gender, technology, infrastructure, waste, water and air. Again, the indicators under the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability are complementary. For instance, actions targeted at reducing emissions and waste are more likely to improve the habitat, settlements, recreation, identity and organisation of an area. However, the Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability, unlike the Green City Index and the Global City Indicators Facility, does not cover into details the aspects of environment, energy management and civic engagement.

Relevant as these and many other models (such as the Improvement and

Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE) Cities in Motion Index, Gross National Happiness Index and Sustainable Society Index) are in the measurement of the sustainability of a city, the indicators used to measure a city's sustainability vary. This is evident in the observed differences in indicators among the three models covered in this study. This is because the way systems and a city function depend on information flows within them (Meadows, Randers, & Meadows, 2004). Therefore, choosing which indicators to measure is a crucial determinant of the behaviour of a system or city (Meadows, 1998). Due to this, some suggestions have been made on how to measure a sustainable city since all the indicators are not fixed and applicable in all places and situations. For instance, Tanguay et al. (2010) suggest a method of survey-based selection strategy for Sustainable Development Indicators (SuBSelec). Here, researchers must: a) choose the most cited indicators, b) cover the components of sustainable development and the pertinent predetermined categories and c) choose the simplest sustainability indicators to facilitate data collection, understanding and dissemination. Furthermore, Olsson, T., Aalbu, and Bradley (2004) suggests the need to make sure selected indicators are: a) relevant to decision making, b) clear in value, c) adequate in scope, d) feasible, e) simple, f) adequately communicated, g) democratic, h) multidimensional, i) distributional, j) forward looking, k) physical, and l) comparable. However, Olsson et al. (2004), recognised the difficulties in indicators meeting all the above listed criteria; thus, concluded that the criteria should serve as a guide not a standard in selecting the most applicable.

The criteria presented by scholars (such as: Olsson et al., 2004; Tanguay et al., 2010) as well as the suggestion by Hellstro (2000) served as a guide in selecting the indicators for this study. For this reason, the paper presents a framework that merges the indicators for measuring a sustainable city to cover the economic, social and environmental dimensions of a city. The merged framework (Fig. 1) presents the indicators that were used to assess the nexus between urban agricultural and sustainable cities. Overlaps were addressed by taking only one indicator. This however underscores the strength of the indicators in question.



### 3 Methods

The study is based on a systematic review of secondary data. The term secondary data is used in this study to refer to data that are used to address research questions that are different from the ones the original collector sought to answer (Vartanian, 2011). The search for the secondary data was guided by phrases such as: a) urban agricultural practices, b) indicators for the measurement of sustainable cities, c) economic, social and environmental benefits of urban agriculture, and d) negative effects of urban agriculture on the city. At the end of the search, 189 articles/reports/books related to urban agriculture and sustainable cities were used.

The literature on indicators for sustainable cities was screened for commonalities and differences towards building a conceptual framework, which was used to analyse the nexus between urban agriculture and sustainable cities. The conceptual framework was developed from the following models: a) the Green City Index (Supplementary Table 1), b) the Global City Indicators Facility (Supplementary Table 2) and c) Global Compact Cities Circles of Sustainability (Supplementary Table 3). The framework integrates the strengths of each model and together addresses the inherent weaknesses of a single model. The indicators were then categorised into three, namely economic, social and environmental to reflect the concept of sustainable development (Fig. 3.1). The three dimensions are referred to as themes in this article. The literature was analysed by subjecting each of the content analysed to the specific indicators under the sustainable city themes.

The literature was drawn from several geographical locations with different agro-climatic, economic, social and environmental characteristics. Lessons from these places underscore the importance of urban agriculture to the sustainable city discourse. For instance, in the global north, the importance of urban agriculture is more environmental in nature than socio-economic. However, the social and economic functions of urban agriculture are more

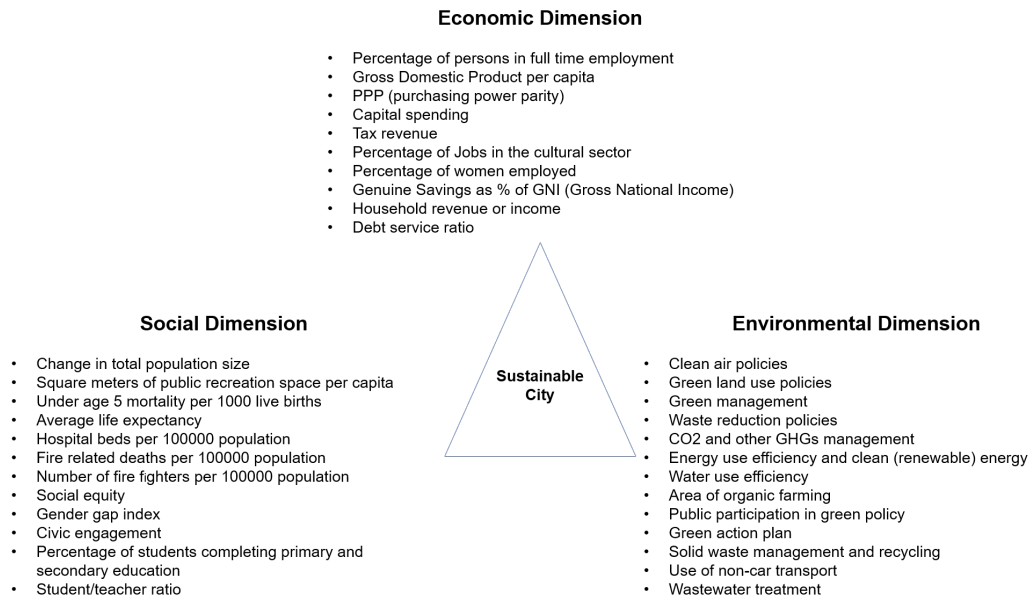


FIGURE 3.1: Sustainable City Framework.

pronounced in the cities in the global south. Despite these differences, the conceptual framework in the present study brings together economic, social and ecological indicators and can be applied in every city. The selection of the crops to cultivate to achieve the sustainability goals would however be based on the local climatic conditions.

## 4 Analyses

As presented in Fig. 3.1, the indicators for measuring a sustainable city are categorised into economic, social and environmental. This section of the paper discusses the nexus between urban agriculture and sustainable cities with reference to the indicator-sets under each of the themes.

### 4.1 Urban agriculture and economic sustainability of cities

#### 4.1.1 Full-time employment

Urban agriculture provides employment, and has thus become a major means of livelihood, for people in many cities particularly in the global south (Darkey et al., 2014; Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). An estimated 2100 farm labourers in Morogoro and 6400 in Mbeya, Tanzania are engaged in urban agriculture as either attendants or fodder collectors (International Labour Organization, 2013). Similarly, approximately 120,000 low-income households (including farmers, garland makers and garland sellers) in Manila, Philippines depend on jasmine production for their livelihoods (IPC, 2007). Many examples of urban agriculture's role in employment creation abound in the conventional literature (see: Amponsah et al., 2015a; Carr, Potter, & Nortcliff, 2011; Sinclair, 2010; Tiongco, Narrod, & Bidwell, 2010). The general observation is that urban agriculture's role in employment creation is widespread in the global south as depicted in Table 4.1.

Not only is urban agriculture a source of employment to farmers but also to stakeholders along the value chain (Fig. 4.1). Community and farmers' markets and door-to-door delivery of food baskets in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are examples of jobs created in the commercial sector by urban agriculture (International Labour Organization, 2013). Similarly, majority of vegetable farmers in urban and peri-urban Ghana deliver their produce to wholesalers, who are predominately women, at the farm-gate (Abaidoo et al., 2009; Amoah, Drechsel, Henseler, & Abaidoo, 2007; Amponsah et al.,

TABLE 4.1: Number of people engaged in urban agriculture in the global south. Source: FAO (2007).

Region	Number (million)	Principal live-hood
Sub-Saharan Africa	11	Commercial vegetable growing or dairy farming
Northern Africa and the Middle East region	6	Horticultural and livestock products (fruit, vegetables and poultry)
South Asia	11	Perishable high-value commodities such as milk and fresh vegetables
East and South-East Asia	7	Perishable high-value commodities such as milk and fresh vegetables

2016). These wholesalers in turn sell the produce to retailers, food vendors and households as depicted in Fig. 4.1. The farm produce is conveyed from the farm-gate to the open markets by transport operators.

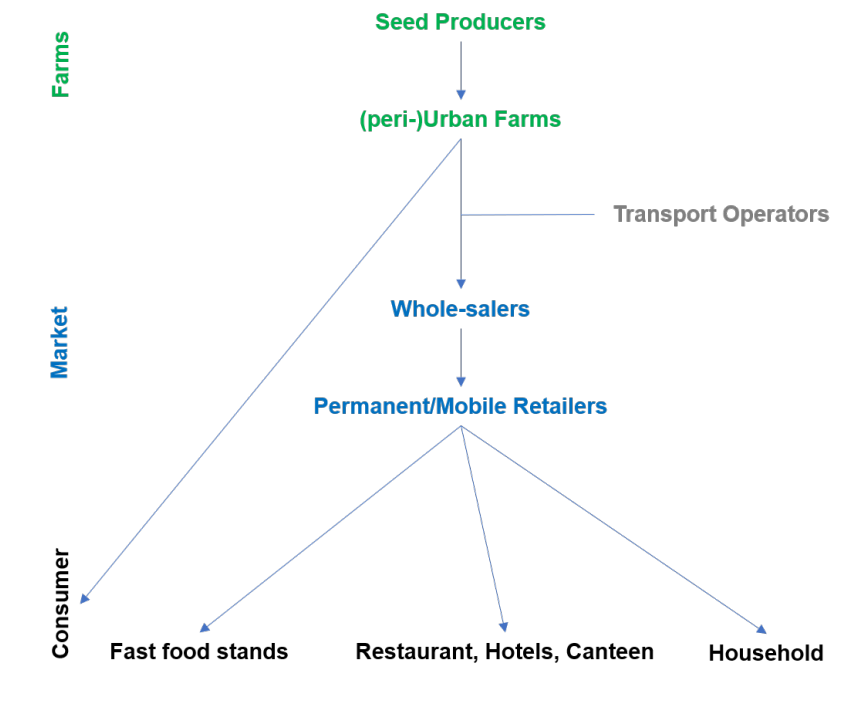


FIGURE 4.1: Fabrication process of carbon nano-wires to achieve through the proposed dissertation.

The discussion so far suggests that urban agriculture makes a profound contribution to the employment of the labour force in the global south. The situation differs from the cities in the global north because the narrative in the conventional literature suggests that the motivation for urbanites and city authorities to promote agriculture in these cities lies in its ecological functions

as well as its support for leisure and recreation (Pearson et al., 2010). The implication is that the role of urban agriculture in employment creation in the global north may not be as profound as it is in the global south. This is because, urban agriculture in the global north is not economically-centred but rather centred on its environmental functions. Nonetheless, recent studies give indications that the functions of urban agriculture in the global north is gradually shifting from leisure and recreation to more of urban sustainability and economic resilience (Lovell, 2010; McClintock, 2010). The increasing focus on economic resilience means that the contribution of urban agriculture in the global south and north appears to be converging even though there are variations across cities. Nevertheless, if the agricultural lands had been used for non-agricultural purposes, the employment effects may have been more profound. For instance, industrial and commercial activities on these parcels of land may have made more profound contributions to employment creation.

#### **4.1.2 Employment for women**

According to Prain and Lee-Smith (2010), two out of every three urban farmers in Yaounde, Nakuri, Maputo, Nairobi and Kampala are women. Generally, these women farmers engage in subsistence farming with the objective of meeting the family demand for fresh, nutritious and chemical-free food (Gamhewage, Sivashankar, Mahaliyanaarachchi, Wijeratne, & Hettiarachchi, 2015). The rest of the urban women farmers sell the excess produce for income. However, agriculture could be a burden to these women due to the numerous roles they perform at the household level. The argument does not pertain to agriculture but also applies to almost all the economic activities the women are engaged in. The implication is that without addressing the issues that foster gender inequality, women's engagement in agriculture in the cities could be a burden (Veenhuizen, 2006). There must therefore be a conscious effort by policy makers and social advocates to help minimise the pressure on women emanating from the combination of household chores and economic activities such their involvement in urban agriculture.

Generally, commercial urban agriculture is dominated by men as depicted in Table 4.2. In contrast, women are dominant at the market and food vending stages of the supply chain (Drechsel & Keraita, 2014). It can therefore be deduced that commercial agriculture in the cities in the global south is gendered and thus makes a profound contribution to employment for both

women and men. However, as the economic arguments have always been, if the agricultural lands were used for nonagricultural purposes, more women may have been employed. This argument lies at the heart of the theory of ‘highest and best use’ of urban land.

TABLE 4.2: Gender in urban agriculture in selected cities. Source: Drechsel et al. (2006).

Country	City	Female (%)	Male (%)
Benin	Cotonou	25	75
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	38	62
Cameroun	Yaoundé	16	84
Cote d’Ivoire	Abidjan/Bouake	5-40	60-95
Gambia	Banjul	90	10
Ghana	Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tamale	10-20	80-90
Guinea	Conakry, Timbi-Madina	70	30
Mali	Bamako	24	76
Mauritania	Nouakchott	15	85
Nigeria	Lagos/Ibadan	5-25	75-95
Sierra Leone	Freetown	80-90	10-20
Togo	Tsévié, Lome	20-30	70-80
India	Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru	17	83

#### 4.1.3 Income generation and gross domestic product

Several households in both developing and middle income countries opt for urban agriculture as a source of livelihood (Abaidoo et al., 2009; Foeken & Owuor, 2008; Raschid-Sally & Jayakody, 2008a). Drechsel and Keraita (2014) point out that two out of every three urban vegetable farmers in Accra, Ghana had no intentions of leaving the job even if they were offered regular salaried employment. Based on this and many other factors (such as limited employment opportunities in the formal sectors, flexibility in work schedules, etc.), Amponsah et al. (2015b) conclude that vegetable farming in Kumasi, Ghana’s second largest city, had become an employment destination for many.

Amponsah et al. (2015b) conclusion could be attributed to the higher incomes the farmers earned from the agricultural activities in the cities. For instance, Keraita, Jiménez, & Drechsel (2008) identified that urban farmers in Ghana earned twice or more the incomes of their counterparts in rural areas. This appears to be the case in several other cities in the global south as indicated

in Table 4.3. The earnings enable the urban farmers to contribute to national income. For instance, YiZhang and Zhangen (2000) found that 2.7 million urban farmers contributed 2% of Shanghai's gross domestic product. Similarly, para grass production and sale in Hyderabad, India contributes an estimated annual income of USD 4.5 million to the city's economy. In Hartford, USA, urban agriculture is estimated to contribute between 4 and 10 million dollars in gross domestic product (Nugent, 1999).

TABLE 4.3: Incomes earned by urban vegetable farmers in six cities.  
Source: Ensink et al. (2004); Buechler & Devi (2005); Drechsel et al. (2006); Keraita, Jiménez, & Drechsel, 2008.

City	Annual income per ha (US\$)	Annual GNI per capita (US\$)
Nairobi in Kenya	1770	645
Dakar in Senegal	2234	773
Kumasi in Ghana	420-1920	522
Hyderebad in India	830-2800	771
Haroonabad in Pakistan	840	931
Guanajuato in Mexico	1935	7755

The value of urban agriculture to a city's gross domestic product may not be significant when compared to non-agricultural land uses. This could be a justification for the pricing out of agriculture in city land use planning processes. However, as indicated earlier, gross domestic production and other economic indicators underestimate the actual contribution of urban agriculture to city development. The approach excludes ecological and social dimensions of urban agriculture. Probably, if these dimensions could be valued and added to the value of urban agriculture, then urban agriculture could be as valuable as other land uses.

#### 4.1.4 Savings and expenditure

A study by Prain and Lee-Smith (2010) revealed that households who consumed the produce from their farms in Kampala in Uganda and Yaounde in Cameroon were able to save part of their incomes. Once individuals farm on their own, there is no need to spend money to buy some agricultural commodities. On this basis, Smit, Nasr, & Ratta (2001) maintains that households who engaged in farming in cities in Zambia saved between 10 and 15% of food costs. Furthermore, studies in Bangalore, Nairobi, Lima and Accra revealed that savings coming from own food production enabled households to purchase other types of food (World Bank, 2013). For instance, households

in Bangalore were able to save between 1.30 and 80.00 USD per month (World Bank, 2013) whereas farmers in the cities in Kenya were able to save between 7 and 14 USD per month (Freeman, 1993). These savings are spent on other household items that contribute to improved quality of life.

It can be observed from Table 4.4 that expenditure on food in Bangalore, Accra and Nairobi for households who engaged in urban agriculture was below the average of 50–70% for the urban poor (FAO, 2007). The situation in the cities in the global north may be different given that urban households are driven by leisure and recreation to engage in agriculture cities. In these cities, households spend minimum proportions of their incomes on food, which implies limited contribution of urban agriculture to household savings. The savings may however originate from transportation. The literature indicates that households spend less on transport to obtain or transport food as compared to the other household items. Hamilton et al. (2013) had earlier observed that savings occurred as a result of the reduction in transport cost for the urban farmer. The savings result from the amount these farmers would have otherwise incurred if they were to travel to procure the items, they produce themselves. Furthermore, urban agriculture means some farm produce are now closer to consumers than if the produce were to be supplied by rural farmers. This will therefore reduce travel cost and time to access food items by urban dwellers.

TABLE 4.4: Expenditure pattern of urban agriculture households in some selected cities. Source: World Bank (2013).

Expenditure item	Selected cities		
	Bangalore	Accra	Nairobi
Food	29.2	36.5	39.4
Utilities	16.8	12.3	13.1
Education	11.5	16.7	16.9
Health	10.4	8.2	5.1
Clothes	8.1	7.7	3.0
Shelter	7.0	3.2	18.9
Loan/debt	6.2	1.4	0.4
Transport	4.6	7.9	2.5
Other	3.3	0.8	0.2
Family events	2.1	4.5	0.2
Domestic help	0.7	0.8	0.2



#### 4.1.5 Tax revenue

Taxes are very important elements in managing developmental activities in cities. Taxes collected through urban agriculture covers all the actors along the produce supply chain. It is worth noting that, national income from taxes from urban agriculture can be directly linked to the expenditure farmers make and the employment obtained.

Property taxes have been identified as a city's main source of income (World Bank, 2015). Urban agriculture contributes significantly to tax revenues from property taxes. According to Liu (2008) and Voicu and Been (2008), urban farms and community gardens contribute to the increase in home values. For instance, the presence of gardens in California contributed to the rise in property values as much as 9.4

Transportation taxes are also paid by urban farmers who transport their goods within or outside the urban area. Some urban farmers indirectly pay transportation taxes through the purchase of fuel for irrigation or the transportation of farm goods and services. Additionally, the wholesalers or retailers engaged in the sale of the urban agricultural produce pay taxes to city authorities. In Kumasi, a city in Ghana, wholesalers and retailers who operate in the open markets pay taxes in the form of market tolls (tickets) (Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah, 2012). The amounts paid ranges from 5 to 10GHp (0.01 USD–0.02 USD) a day and are paid to the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. Similarly, in the United States, the income that is obtained from urban farming does not represent a separate kind of income. They are determined and taxed like income from other businesses of a comparable size apart from some detailed regulations regarding farm income. However, national subsidies for soil, groundwater or environmental protection, care for wild animals or forests are sometimes tax-free for the farmers (Andersen, Asheim, Mittenzwei, & Veggeland, 2002). In a similar vein, some municipalities (Rosario in Argentina and Cagayan de Oro in The Philippines) use tax exemptions as a means of promoting urban agriculture.

Useful as the taxes may be, taxes to the cities may be more if the agricultural lands had been used for non-agricultural purposes such as commerce or industry. The tax exemptions could also be avoided if the lands were used for non-agricultural purposes. Such arguments are underpinned by the theory of 'highest and best use' which focuses on only the direct economic benefits

derived from the use of land. These theories suggest that allocating land for urban agriculture deprives its access for other more economically beneficial uses such as industrial, commercial and residential uses. This explains why a rise in the value of urban agricultural land is mostly associated with the change in use from agriculture to alternative land uses (Nugent, 2000).

## **4.2 Urban agriculture and social sustainability of cities**

### **4.2.1 Educational functions**

Golden (2013) suggests that urban agriculture provides a medium for learning experiences, youth development and educational programmes. Agricultural projects in California and Philadelphia in the United States of America are used to highlight the role of urban agriculture in education (Bradley & Galt, 2014; Ober Allen, Alaimo, Elam, & Perry, 2008; Travaline & Hunold, 2010). These educational services are directed towards teaching the citizens where, how and by whom the food they eat is grown so as to enable them make informed decisions about their food systems. The agricultural projects in the cities serve as avenues for children and adults to acquire practical skills on food production and processing.

Furthermore, through their social networks, urban farmers who have had the benefits of education by research institutions impart the knowledge to their counterparts. For instance, urban vegetable farmers in Kumasi in Ghana who have participated in research activities on the World Health Organization's Multiple Barrier Interventions have transferred the knowledge to their counterparts who were not part of the training programme (Amponsah, Vigre, Schou, Braimah, & Abaidoo, 2015a). This is used to highlight the replication effects of such research projects on the larger community.

Urban farmers' earnings from agriculture are used to support their children in school (Prain & Lee-Smith, 2010). A study conducted in Sri Lanka by Gamhewage et al. (2015) concluded that 22% of urban farmers prefer to expend their savings on the education of their children to spending on household possessions. Similarly, in India, some women contribute approximately 23% of their share in household education expenditure from the incomes they earn from urban agricultural activities. Another study in Kampala, Uganda also concluded that urban male farmers and female farmers spend 26% and

12% of their incomes respectively on the fees of their wards in school (Devi & Buechler, 2009).

Nevertheless, urban agriculture, particularly in the global south, is known to fuel child labour and truancy in school (Edet & Etim, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2006). For instance, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, children have been found to engage in urban agriculture at the expense of their education. Similarly, child migrants have been found to be engaged as farm labourers on urban farms in Kumasi, Ghana (Amponsah et al., 2016). Yet, in these countries, child labour is prohibited. The higher returns from the urban agricultural activities could be an explanation for their attractiveness to children, especially migrant children.

By enforcing the child labour laws, the children can take advantage of the free and compulsory universal primary educational policies and programmes in these countries to enrol in schools (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013; Rodeghier, Hall, & Useem, 1991). This will ultimately enhance the educational functions of urban agriculture towards social sustainability of cities.

#### **4.2.2 Civic engagement**

A growing body of literature points to the increasing importance of community supported agriculture in civic engagements. For instance, Obach and Tobin (2014) and Pole and Gray (2013) found that people in New York City who were engaged in urban agriculture were more politically engaged and more likely to volunteer in their communities compared to the general population. Similarly, in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, urban farms were used as political gathering spaces in the run up to the 2010 elections. In fact, some farms had small concrete platforms that were used for political rallies. Despite these observations, Pole and Gray (2013) maintain that generally, the desire for organic foods is the motivation for people to interact with urban farmers other than civic engagement. Obach and Tobin (2014) add that consumers of urban agricultural produce are less likely to engage in charitable giving than the general population. The authors conclude that if the motivation for engaging in urban agriculture is economic, then it is less likely to promote civic engagement.

The narrative points out that economic reasons including household food security, employment and income generation are the main motivations for

people's engagement in urban agriculture (Abaidoo et al., 2009; Amoah et al., 2007; Amponsah et al., 2016; Darkey et al., 2014; International Labour Organization, 2013; Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). On the other hand, the reasons for agriculture in the cities in the global north are more inclined towards leisure and ecological functions (Hamilton et al., 2013; International Labour Organization, 2013; Walker, 2015). In this regard, urban agriculture's role in civic engagement may be more pronounced in the global north than the global south.

## 5 Discussion

## 6 Conclusion

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