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“As a Husband I Will Love, Lead, and Provide”

Gendered Access to Land in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Improving women's access to land is high on the agricultural policy agenda of both governmental and non-governmental agencies. Yet, the determinants and rationale of gendered access to land are not well understood. This paper argues that gender relations are more than the outcomes of negotiations within households. It explains the importance of social norms, perceptions, and formal and informal rules shaping access to land for male and female farmers at four levels: (1) the household/family, (2) the community, (3) the state, and (4) the market. The framework is applied to Ghana. Norms on household and family organization and on men's and women's responsibilities and capabilities play a key role in gendered allocation of resources. However, these norms and perceptions are dynamic and evolve jointly with the development of markets and changes in values of inputs such as labor and land. Theoretical models that represent the gendered distribution of assets as the result of intrahousehold bargaining should be revised, and extrahousehold factors should be included. From a policy perspective, laws that ensure gender equality in terms of inheritance and a more gender-equitable distribution of property upon divorce can play a key role in improving women's property rights. Yet, their impact may be limited where customary rights dominate and social norms and rules continue to discriminate according to gender.

Keywords: customary law, gender, household model, land rights, social norms

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1. INTRODUCTION

In most African countries, women own considerably less land and have less access to land than men (Doss et al. 2015). Improving women's secure access to land is considered to be a critical factor in achieving more gender equality. Research shows that it can increase female decision-making power in the household (Allendorf 2007; Doss 2013; Mishra and Sam 2016; Panda and Agarwal 2005), which in turn improves female, child, and household welfare (Doss 2005; Fafchamps 2001; Menon, Van der Meulen Rodgers, and Nguyen 2014). It is also seen as a major opportunity to increase agricultural productivity (Goldstein and Udry 2005; Holden and Bezabih 2009). Encouraged by these messages, researchers, policy makers, and development agencies are urgently seeking appropriate ways to enhance female land ownership.

Qualitative and quantitative research on gender increasingly moves away from the household as a single decision-making unit and, instead, analyzes detailed information from individuals within the household. A substantial body of research is now developing that employs different intrahousehold models to understand how women's access to land can be improved. It also estimates the impact of more secure access to land for women. Although this research has provided a wealth of information, most scholars and practitioners also agree that gender is essentially a social construct, which is established beyond the boundaries of individual households (Agarwal 1997; Kevane and Gray 1999; Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). Rather than through differences in preferences or power between men and women, the observed gender-related patterns may be explained by differences in men's and women's positions created through existing social norms (Kazianga and Wahhaj 2013). Yet, the principal role that social norms play in shaping men's and women's land rights is still absent in many studies. Where they are recognized, gender norms are mostly taken as given or seen as static, rather than as dynamic social constructs.

This paper focuses specifically on gendered norms, rules, and perceptions that influence access to land in four main domains: household/family, community, state, and market. Understanding why societies and communities prioritize men's or women's access to land will also aid in detecting pathways of success or failure of past and future interventions and will provide further insights into gender impacts of society dynamics, such as the individualization and commoditization of land, urbanization, and so forth. According to Agarwal (1997, 2), "Models and policies could go awry if intra-household dynamics are assumed (as they often are) to exist in isolation, without examining the extra-household socio-economic and legal institutions within which households are embedded, and how these institutions might themselves be subject to change".

In this paper, the theoretical framework is applied to Ghana, where there are substantial gender differences in access to land. In terms of ownership, 9.8 percent of agricultural parcels in Ghana are owned by an individual female farmer, compared to 83.1 percent owned by an individual male farmer (Deere et al. 2013). Yet, these numbers differ strongly across the country. The country's diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, agroecology, and input and output markets provides an interesting case study context. The paper is structured as follows: The research approach is discussed in Section 2. Section 3 explains the key elements of the framework. A general background on gender and land tenure in Ghana is provided in Section 4. Section 5 applies the framework to Ghana. Section 6 offers a reflection on the findings. Section 7 concludes.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

This paper is based on a review of the existing literature on gendered access to land and qualitative data collected by the author in rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana. Qualitative research was conducted from February to August 2015 using key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Land commissioners in Accra, Ho, and Tamale and a representative of the Civil Society Coalition on Land (CICOL) were also interviewed. The author also discussed tenure issues with customary chiefs, a queen mother, and individual farm households in the Eastern Region and interviewed customary chiefs in the Volta Region, Upper West Region, and Upper East Region.

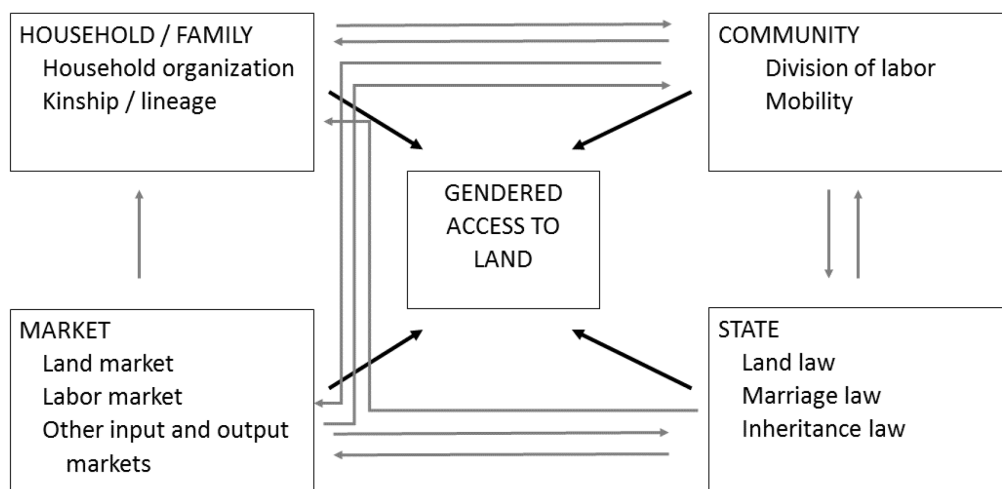
Gender-separated focus group discussions on land tenure and gender were held with 42 groups of 8 to 15 participants in seven different regions in Ghana. Care was taken to conduct interviews in the different agroecological zones with a diversity of ethnic groups in both remote and more urbanized communities. A few locations were chosen based on their proximity to case study sites of previous empirical work on land tenure and gender (such as Wassa in the Western Region or Akwapim in the Eastern Region). Because discussions were aimed at developing an in-depth understanding of drivers of gendered access to land, the author mostly followed a set of key questions that allowed further discussion on relevant issues raised. As fieldwork advanced, the guideline was adjusted to accommodate further points of interest. Each session lasted from 1.5 hours to a maximum of 2.0 hours.

A few key summary statistics for this paper are calculated based on the sixth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6). The Ghana Statistical Service collected these nationally representative data from October 2012 to October 2013.

3. A CONCEPTUAL, CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF GENDERED ACCESS TO LAND

According to Meinzen-Dick and Mwangi (2008, 36), “Property rights are fundamentally about social relations. They are not about the link between a person and a thing (object of property), but rather about the relations between people with regard to a thing, or more particularly, with regard to the benefit stream that is generated.” At the most disaggregated level, individuals decide on access to and use of land either alone or as part of a group of decision makers (Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). These individuals are commonly (1) members of households and families, (2) members of one or several communities, (3) residents in a country, and (4) people whose livelihoods are generated in the presence or absence of markets. The domains are not mutually exclusive; instead, they overlap and interact, affecting each other and the persons within (Figure 3.1). It is in these four domains that rural men and women bargain for access to farmland through different modes of acquisition, such as family, community or state allocation, civil society or nongovernmental organization (NGO) programs, and market transactions (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014). Gendered perceptions, norms, and formal and informal rules in these four domains result in different access to land for men and women (Agarwal 1997; Deere and Doss 2006; Deere and Leon 2003; Rao 2006).

Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework of gendered access to land



Source: Adapted from Agarwal (1997).

Men and Women as Household and Family Members

The household is one of the most basic social structures of which men and women are a part (Doss and Meinzen-Dick 2015). It is recognized as a legal or social entity by communities and by governmental and nongovernmental institutions throughout the world. Who exactly forms a household differs across time and location, but in all of its forms, household members are assumed to work together to produce their livelihoods (Doss and Meinzen-Dick 2015). To a greater or lesser degree, the household is an area of joint consumption, production, and investment in which both labor and resource allocation decisions are made (Agarwal 1997). Male and female household members partly or fully rely on each other for the execution of productive and reproductive tasks within the household and on the farm.

In many households, an individual’s access to or use of land is not determined independently of other household members (Mishra and Sam 2016). Instead, access to and use of land by one household member also affects other household members in terms of access to land, labor, and other resources

(Kevane and Gray 1999). Hence, individuals may have to bargain with other household members for access to land held within their household, or they may have to seek consent from other household members in order to acquire land outside the household. The social and legal recognition of the household as a productive and reproductive unit, as well as gendered norms and rules regarding household organization, plays an important role in shaping the allocation of resources within the household (as will be discussed later in this section). Yet, even within and among communities with the same or similar gender norms, heterogeneity in household resource allocation depends on different preferences of household members and the different abilities of each individual to affect the decision-making process (Doss and Meinzen-Dick 2015).

The family¹ constitutes another basic structure that is customarily and statutorily recognized throughout the world. A family typically consists of individuals of different generations related through kinship and lineage. Who is considered to be a family member is subject to local norms and definitions. Certain events, such as marriage, divorce, or disputes, may cause individuals to be excluded from one family or become included in another family. Household members within the same household may or may not belong to the same family. To a certain extent, family members are expected to be supportive toward each other and form a social network that encourages livelihood security. Throughout the world, the family is typically an important source of access to resources.

In many societies, land is perceived as a family, lineage, or community resource rather than as a household or individual resource (Rao 2006). Even when farmers do not have outright ownership of land through inheritance or gifts from family or community members, farmers can access land for shorter or longer durations through cultivation rights on family land in the form of communal tenure. With communal tenure, individual members are allocated a specific parcel on which they have temporary or permanent use or transfer rights (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Women and men rarely have identical claims to land within the family because they have differentiated positions within the kinship system, which is one of the primary means through which they access land (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003).

Gender and Communities

Men and women are members of communities that hold certain perceptions and norms about the contributions, needs, and abilities of the members in their society (Agarwal 1997). A person will generally be a member of several communities simultaneously, based on location (such as the village), ethnicity, clan, or religion. Local norms and perceptions play a substantial role in shaping customary property rights institutions, as they define who is (and who is not) part of the family or community and what is (and what is not) acceptable in the community (Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). The body of rules defined by local communities for their internal organization and administration is generally called *customary law* (Joireman 2008). Such rules are not necessarily static or exogenous; rather, they have been adapted or transformed to adjust to changes in society (Agarwal 1997; Deere and Leon 2003; Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997; Quisumbing et al. 2001).

It is estimated that up to 75 percent of land in Africa south of the Sahara is held under forms of customary tenure (Joireman 2008). Family or community identity and land are strongly intertwined. The existence of family land or communal tenure can form a strong bond among people and reinforce ties within families and communities by limiting the rights of outsiders (Vandergeest 1996 in Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). Many of the customary rules governing access to land are rooted in perceptions and norms about the roles and responsibilities of people within a community and of different members within a household (Agarwal 1997). Gendered norms concerning household and family responsibilities, family membership, the division of household chores, and agricultural labor, as well as norms concerning mobility and so forth, can provide the rationale for a gendered division of land and other resources (Agarwal 1997; Deere and Leon 2003).

¹ Some sources use the terms *household* and *family* interchangeably (Agarwal 1997). This paper refers to *household* as the smallest unity of household organization—the nuclear household. *Family* refers to kinship relations.

Gender and the Role of the State

Governments increasingly expand statutory laws that recognize, assist, transform, or replace customary laws (Deininger, Hilhorst, and Songwe 2014; Joireman 2008). During the past decades, many African countries south of the Sahara have committed to affect land use directly through the installment of new land laws and land reforms (Deininger, Hilhorst, and Songwe 2014; Joireman 2008). Using property and family law, the state can further affect the gendered accumulation, control, and transmission of property (Agarwal 1997; Deere and Doss 2006).

Most land laws and land reforms in Africa south of the Sahara were designed with the objective of stimulating agricultural productivity, leading to improvements in food security, increasing rural incomes, and providing better economic performance of the agricultural sector (Deininger, Hilhorst, and Songwe 2014). In the past, resettlement programs, redistributive land reforms, and land titling projects have generally assigned the majority of farmland to men as household heads, thereby further deteriorating women's rights to land (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014; Meinzen-Dick and Mwangi 2008; Quisumbing et al. 2001). More recently, policy makers have intentionally designed land reforms to improve gender equality—for example, by automatic or compulsory joint titling of land by spouses (see, for example, Ali, Deininger, and Goldstein 2014; Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014; Pedersen 2015; Wiig 2013).

Marriage, family, and inheritance laws provide another pathway for improving gender equality in property ownership and access to land (Yngstrom 2002; Meinzen-Dick and Mwangi 2008). There exist substantial differences in marriage and inheritance regimes within and across customary and statutory laws; yet, many of those laws do differentiate between men and women, resulting in unequal access to land (Deere and Doss 2006; Deere and Leon 2003; Deere et al. 2013). In most societies, land is predominantly allocated to or owned by men (Kevane and Gray 1999; Yngstrom 2002). Women are expected to access land through their husbands rather than directly through family inheritance or through land market transactions in their own name (Kevane and Gray 1999).

The approval of a new law does not necessarily ensure its effectiveness. First, it is critical that the law adequately reflects the realities of its citizens and is applicable to the respective target population. This may be challenging due to the existence of extralegal practices, such as customary marriages that have not been legally registered and recognized, or the presence of polygamous marriages, which are not legally accepted (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014). Second, it is critical that men and women are aware of the legislation and have the knowledge of how to claim their rights (Lastarria-Cornhiel et al. 2014). Third, the law must effectively be enforced. Women or men willing to exercise laws that conflict with strong social norms may refrain from doing so in order to avoid social repercussions from their family or their existing support network (Yngstrom 2002). Moreover, people may try to circumvent the effects of more gender-equitable laws. Roy (2015) found that, in India, fathers bypassed a gender-equal inheritance law through an increase in “gifting” of family property to their sons to avoid having to give property to their daughters.

Gender and Markets

Land markets have become more and more active in Africa south of the Sahara (Holden and Otsuka 2014). When farmers do not obtain sufficient or suitable farmland through nonmarket channels, they may revert to market systems, such as renting or buying, in order to access land. Women generally have less access to resources than men and are therefore at a disadvantage to engage in land market transactions. Several studies have reported other sources of positive or negative gender bias in land market transactions, aside from economic status (Deere and Leon 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997; Munk-Masden 1995, in Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). On the one hand, social norms and perceptions concerning household organization, women's economic status, and women's abilities may put women at a disadvantage in buying or renting land. Women have been reported to pay more than men for land of similar size and quality, and in some cases, landlords refused to rent or sell their land to women (Deere and Leon 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997). On the other hand, studies have shown positive bias toward women in rental markets—for example, due to positive perceptions of women's reliability of reimbursing rental fees or

due to the fact that women cannot claim ownership of the land (Giovarelli 2006, in Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010).

Rather than being restricted in access to land, many farmers have to limit the size of their farmland due to limited access to necessary complementary inputs to cultivate the land, such as hired labor or fertilizers, or to make investments to improve the land (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997). Women are often disadvantaged, as they usually have less access to cash, credit, and other forms of wealth compared to men and are more restricted in saving money from income-generating activities (Doss 2001b; Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010). This reduces women's access to land directly due to limited resources to buy or rent land and indirectly through the lack of complementary inputs.

Savings and credit institutions, and their attitudes toward gender, affect the composition of savings and wealth and the ability of women to accumulate wealth (Deere and Doss 2006). In addition, women are disadvantaged in the labor market. As compared with men, women's labor is less highly valued. Throughout the world, women face lower wages, are more often employed in temporary (as opposed to permanent jobs), and take relatively more time out of the workforce for household care or childcare (Deere and Doss 2006; Deere and Leon 2003; Doss 2001a; Rao 2006). Where agricultural labor is scarce and where women can provide a substantial amount of agricultural labor, women's contribution to the household is more openly acknowledged and translates into higher decision-making power, higher female wages, and greater access to land (Quisumbing et al. 2001; Yngstrom 2002).

Other gender-specific norms may constrain men's or women's access to the markets. Such norms include cultural restrictions on mobility for women, restrictions on communication between men and women, gendered marketing patterns of agricultural inputs and outputs, and predefined methods of bargaining and bargaining power between men and women (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997; Quisumbing and Pandolfelli 2010). Gender roles in society make it more difficult for women to recruit labor within the household or the community (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997).

4. BACKGROUND: LAND TENURE AND HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION IN GHANA

Land tenure in Ghana is characterized by diversity. Only a relatively small share of agricultural land is in the hands of the government or under private ownership. About 80 percent of the land in Ghana is estimated to be under customary tenure (Pande and Udry 2005). Customary land is in the hands of extended families either under the control of the family head (family land) or under the control of the traditional head of the lineage or clan (stool or skin land). Access to customary land is mostly organized under the form of communal tenure: individual members select or are allocated a specific parcel on which they have temporary or permanent use and transfer rights. Once land is allocated to an individual, the person who is farming the land has control over what is planted and harvested and the income generated by that plot of land (Carr 2008). Whether the person has guaranteed access to the same plot of land for a longer duration and whether that person is allowed to borrow, rent, sharecrop, gift, sell, or bequeath the land depend strongly on the community and the specific situation (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Traditionally, stronger rights are rewarded to a person investing labor or planting trees on the land (Pande and Udry 2005; Lambrecht and Asare 2015).

Ghana consists of three main ecological zones: the Savannah Zone (northern Ghana), the Forest Zone, and the Coastal Zone (southern Ghana). Land markets have not fully developed throughout the country. Especially in the more remote and scarcely populated areas in northern Ghana, land markets are virtually nonexistent. According to customary law, farmland in these communities is not to be sold or rented out. In more densely populated areas and closer to urban centers in the south of Ghana, however, land markets have developed more extensively. In these regions, farmers typically have stronger individual rights to family land, and in many communities, land can be rented, sharecropped, and sold (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Legally, both customary and statutory laws are recognized and overlap (Quan, Ubink, and Antwi 2008).

Households in Ghana typically contain a husband, wife, and children.² Other relatives or individuals can be part of the household, but households that consist of several married couples are rare. The occurrence of polygamous marriages has decreased over the past few decades (Doss 2005) to 4.7 percent of rural households in 2012 (GLSS 6). According to GLSS 6, although polygamy is uncommon in the Coastal and Forest Zones in southern Ghana (0.6 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively, of rural households), it occurs more frequently in the Savannah Zone in northern Ghana (13 percent of rural households). On average one-quarter of rural households is female-headed (26.1 percent). The Coastal Zone has the highest share of female-headed households (37.9 percent), followed by the Forest Zone (28.3 percent) and then the Savannah Zone (16.4 percent; GLSS 6).

Similar to other regions worldwide (Udry et al. 1995), a unitary model that characterizes the household as a single production, consumption, and income-pooling unit does not adequately represent the realities of households in Ghana (Chen and Collins 2014; Doss 2001a, 2005; Takane 2002a). The household can be seen as one consumption unit under the control of the household head in terms of basic necessities, such as food, clothes, school fees, and medical care (Takane 2002a; Clark 1994, 107). Yet, household members typically do not pool all of their income, and farmland is not jointly held (Takane 2002a; Clark 1994, 107). Adults strive to have at least a small individual source of income to ensure a minimum degree of financial independence in decision making over personal expenditures (Clark 1994, 107). Land rights are held by an individual or by families or lineages; they are rarely held jointly by spouses in a married couple (Takane 2002a; Deere et al. 2013).

² Several authors describe the practice of duolocal marriages, in which husband and wife live separately, especially with reference to the Akan ethnic group in southern Ghana. However, the author's fieldwork, as well as empirical evidence from other authors, does not find evidence that this duolocality is still commonly practiced in present-day rural households in Ghana (see, for example, Takane 2002a), except in polygamous marriages (Clark 1994, 104).

5. HOW DO SOCIAL NORMS AFFECT GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO LAND IN GHANA?

This section applies the conceptual framework to the context of Ghana. The first subsection clarifies specific *customary* norms and practices that affect gendered access to land within the household and the family, lineage, or clan. Due to the partial overlap between the family, lineage, or clan, the relevant aspects are covered jointly in the first subsection. The second subsection explores how gender norms in the community affect access to land for men and women. The third subsection covers key elements of the state's legal framework that affect women's access to land, as well as interactions with gender norms and community characteristics. This section concludes with a discussion of the role of gender norms in accessing different input and output markets.

The Household, Family, and Lineage

Social Norms and Perceptions on Household Organization

A projection at a wedding in Accra, October 2015, showed the following message:

As a husband I will love, lead, and provide. –Ephesians 5:25–29; I Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 5:8

As a wife I will help, manage, and love. –Genesis 2:18, 21–22; I Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4

Despite the specific religious context, these quotes reflect the gendered view on household organization in Ghana: the husband must act as household head and is responsible for providing the main income for his family; his wife should assist and support him in this role (Clark 1994, 101–102). To a greater or lesser degree, this gendered model of household organization is found throughout the world. Similar norms of household organization have been recorded in other African countries, such as in Burkina Faso (Kazianga and Wahhaj 2013) or Mali (Guirkinger and Platteau 2014), and in many other countries in Asia, Europe, and South and North America (for example, Brines 1994; Deere and Leon 2013; Kabeer 1999; Reynolds 2002). In rural Ghana, livelihoods depend, for a large part, on agriculture, with land and labor as key productive assets (Hill and Vigneri 2014). Men's responsibility as household head provides the rationale for explicit and implicit rules that favor male access to land and labor within the household.

In a typical rural farm household, most or all of the farmland is under the husband's control, though women can also hold some land in most regions of Ghana. A parcel of land generally has a predetermined purpose, which falls in roughly three categories: (1) revenues or crops for household food consumption, (2) revenues for household or farm investments, and (3) revenues for private expenses of household members. The first two categories are commonly under the control of the household head and often coincide. Other household members are expected to provide substantial labor contributions on this land. The household head can occasionally decide to use part of the revenues from these plots for his or her private expenses and does not necessarily justify all expenditure decisions to other household members. The third category is under control of a specific household member—typically, the husband, wife, or another adult household member. Not all households or household members have individual plots for private expenses. Individual male- and female-managed plots are more frequent in polygamous households. Especially in the northern regions of Ghana, women rely almost solely on their husbands for access to land, and they require approval from their husbands to cultivate land that does not belong to the household. According to a male farmer in the Hohoe District:

The portion of the joint revenue with the man is for the family upkeep, children's education, health and that is where you prepare your capital down for the next season. If I have in mind a plot to build to help the family, I will not go to the woman, contribute this or contribute that. It is my responsibility to do that for the family.

In order not to be ridiculed by peers and to maintain authority within the household, male household heads are pressured to ensure that their agricultural production is greater than that of any other household producer (Carr 2008). In his study in the Central Region, Carr (2008) found that men tend to allocate themselves three to four times the amount of land that they allocate to their wives. Evidently, there are households in which women contribute equally or more to the household budget than their husband, but it is considered inappropriate to state this publicly, as it would embarrass the husband.

Men also have priority in using household labor to cultivate on their land. Women have to prioritize working on the land for household purposes over working on the land for their private income. Access to more female labor is one of the reasons mentioned for men to engage in polygamous marriages. A husband can decide to reduce the size of his wife's parcels when she does not provide sufficient labor on the household land or when she refuses him small amounts of cash from her private revenues. According to a female migrant worker in the Ejisu District:

The size of the man's land is bigger than yours [woman]. If the man's land is three parts, yours will be one part. For the size of the woman's field given to her by her husband, the husband looks at the strength with which the woman is farming to help. If he sees that the woman is really farming well, then he knows that if he gives you a bigger portion of the land, we [husband and wife] can work hard. If he gives you a bigger portion and you are not able to work hard, his farm will not grow and yours will also not grow. So the next season when it is time for farming, he will give the wife a smaller portion of the farmland.

In addition to assisting their husbands on the farm, women are expected to prepare food for their families (Clark 1994, 105; Pickbourn 2011; Takane 2002a). Even though the husband is supposed to provide for the basic food ingredients in cash or in kind, it is ultimately the wife's responsibility to make sure that each meal is of appreciable quantity and quality. In most communities, she will complement the basic staples with other ingredients such as spices and vegetables (Pickbourn 2011), which she cultivates herself or buys on the market. Depending on the ingredients and the budget received from the husband to prepare meals, some women use a substantial amount of their private crops and income to maintain adequate levels of household food consumption (Pickbourn 2011) or to assist in payment of other expenses, such as medical expenditures or school fees.

Women's responsibilities in the household and social restrictions on women's mobility limit the geographical areas in which they can cultivate land. It is common for men to cultivate land at large distances from the homestead and to spend several nights at a shed in the field during planting and harvesting periods. Such practices are not easily accepted for women. Men may therefore benefit from a much larger area in which they can access land through both market and nonmarket modes of land acquisition. Moreover, women prefer to cultivate near the homestead, and their land is more likely to be in the close vicinity of village boundaries. This land is more vulnerable to compulsory acquisition for village expansion and development.

The Family and Lineage

In Ghana, family and lineage still play major roles in the transmission of land and other property, as well as in the allocation of financial assistance and social support (Clark 1994, 95). Rules governing access to land within the family are built on the views on men's and women's roles in the household and family. Ideally, at any time in their life, women are supported by men. As a child, her father must provide for her. Upon marriage, her husband has to act as the main provider of the household. When a woman is divorced or widowed, male relatives should provide support to her. Compared to men, it is therefore seen as less

important for women to accumulate wealth (Clark 1994, 101), which justifies giving less access to land for women and allocating less fertile land to women. The result is higher tenure insecurity for women plot holders compared to men (Goldstein and Udry 2008). Land for women is mostly granted at a minimum basis to ensure her subsistence rather than to support her in maximizing her agricultural income (Clark 1994, 95, 101).

Explicit rules regarding family membership are needed to determine who can access family resources. According to Ghanaian customs, children are members of either their mother's or their father's family or lineage, but not both (Kutsoati and Morck 2012). In the patrilineal system, a man's children are considered his blood kin and members of his family. Children will inherit their father's property, and the man's lineage is responsible for caring for his widow and children. Women are generally allowed to retain access to a part of their husband's land when he dies, especially when a woman has young children to care for. Yet, the rights to the land are commonly viewed as a means for such women to support their children, rather than as land allocated to the women individually. Once the children become adults, they will take over cultivation of the land as rightful members of the family. A woman's good relation to her family-in-law is important for maintaining rights to marital property (Kutsoati and Morck 2012). Examples of patrilineal ethnic groups in Ghana are the Dagomba, Dagaare, and Konkomba in northern Ghana; the Ewe in the Volta Region; and the Ga in the Greater Accra Region (Figure 5.1).

In the matrilineal system, kinship is established through female bloodlines (Kutsoati and Morck 2012; La Ferrara and Milazzo 2014). The Akan, one of the main ethnic groups in southern Ghana, are matrilineal. A woman's property will be inherited by her children. Children belong to the mother's lineage, and they should therefore be supported by her father, brothers, or uncles. A man's property is inherited by his sister's son or another person within his lineage, rather than by his own children (Kutsoati and Morck 2012; La Ferrara 2007; La Ferrara and Milazzo 2014). As a woman in the Ejisu District (Ashanti Region) explained: "The husband belongs to a family and suppose he dies; his family may come in and say the land belongs to our brother or son so they are coming for it." Yet, men can ensure that at least part of the self-acquired land or family land will be inherited by his children or wife, either by making in vivo transfers or by preparing an oral or written will, provided that it is approved by the man's family members (Kutsoati and Morck 2012; La Ferrara and Milazzo 2014; Lambrecht and Asare 2015; Quisumbing et al. 2001). In response, children strategically increase parental transfers to induce land donations before the default (matrilineal) inheritance is enforced (La Ferrara 2007).

As a general rule, family land remains within the respective families. Who will retain the land upon divorce or death of one of the spouses plays a key role in farmers' decisions regarding which land to cultivate and the choice of crops on the land, especially for the establishment of tree crop plantations (Lambrecht and Asare 2015; Quisumbing et al. 2001). The establishment of perennial cash crops, such as cocoa, palm oil, or rubber, is labor intensive and only yields returns on investments after several years. Planting perennial crops gives more secure tenure rights to the land and avoids land being taken over by another member of the lineage or community who has cultivation rights to the land (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Farmers prefer to farm on self-acquired land over family land, because they have stronger rights on private land, and family members cannot refuse them to transfer the land (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Establishing a plantation on the husband's family land ensures his access to the land upon divorce; but in a matrilineal system, it does not give his wife or children any rights to the land upon his death. Likewise, a couple may have access to the wife's family land to establish a plantation, but after divorce, the husband will not be allowed on the land regardless of his past efforts. Upon the wife's death, the children will inherit the land in a matrilineal system but not in a patrilineal system (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Especially in matrilineal societies, male farmers use alternative means to transfer land to their wives and children.

Figure 5.1 Main language groups in Ghana (corresponding with main ethnic groups)



Source: SIL International (2015).

Upon marriage, women customarily move to their husband's house or home village. Marriages in distant villages can make it harder for women to use their family land for cultivation and to receive support from their family. In cases where households face the choice of cultivating either the husband's or wife's family land, distance to the farm may play a decisive role. Moreover, in some of the patrilineal ethnic groups, after the traditional marriage, women are considered to leave their own family and become a member of their husband's family (Duncan 2004). From that moment, her husband and his family are required to provide her with land. This further reduces women's claims to their fathers' or brothers' land and the possibilities to access land through their own networks.

Ghana hosts roughly 100 different ethnic groups (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). Many social norms and perceptions are similar for different ethnicities in Ghana, such as the views on household organization and on patriarchal household and family structures. The most well-known distinctive features of these groups are their patrilineal and matrilineal kinship structures. The degree to which these norms are translated into social rules and result in gender differences in access to land varies. The customary land tenure system also comprises considerable diversity throughout the country (Lambrecht and Asare 2015). Field observations and summary statistics show that gender differences in access to land are highest in patrilineal ethnic groups in the northern regions and in more remote areas. In the Savannah Zone, as little as 12 percent of agricultural land has a female holder (GLSS 6). Especially in Upper East and Upper West Regions, it is extremely rare for women to own land or to have strong rights to the land they cultivate. Women depend strongly on their husband and male relatives for access to land. Several male and female respondents in these regions expressed doubt about whether women were allowed to register farmland in their own name. At the same time, land markets are not very active in many communities in these regions, and smallholder farmers who own private land or who register their land are rare (Lambrecht and Asare 2015).

In the Coastal and Forest Zones, 28 and 25 percent of agricultural land, respectively, has a female holder (GLSS 6). Communities in the Volta Region also follow the patrilineal inheritance system; however, compared to women in northern Ghana, women in the Volta Region have relatively stronger rights to land. It is more accepted for women to rent or buy land, and land markets are more active. The highest share of women owning land is among the Akan, the main matrilineal ethnic group in Ghana. Among the Akan, about 30 percent of agricultural land has a female plot holder. In addition to the matrilineal inheritance practices, these communities differ from others in the presence of active land markets and a high demand for female labor. For years, farmers in Ghana have been migrating to find sufficient and suitable farmland, with northern Ghana long being a region of outmigration (Wouterse 2010). To a large extent, migrant farmers follow the norms of where they emigrated from, as opposed to following those of the areas they migrate to, especially in terms of household organization and inheritance.

Gender in the Community

Community Leadership

Throughout Ghana, household, lineage, and community leadership are male-dominated (Clark 1994, 100). According to tradition, women cannot be family heads, clan heads, or chiefs (Brydon 1996; Ray 2003). There are few or no powerful functions for women in the family, clan, or community. The queen mother is the highest official position for women in the Akan traditional political hierarchy. This position was later mimicked by other ethnicities and called "woman chief" (Brydon 1996). Yet, queen mothers and woman chiefs have considerably less power than male chiefs and are not allowed to participate in the regional and national Houses of Chief (Ray 2003). The most important function of the queen mother among the Akan is the role of "kingmaker"—that is, in the selection of the chief. The influence of queen mothers and woman chiefs is restricted to specific female matters. Only when strictly necessary can women temporarily act as regents within the chieftaincy structure until a suitable male candidate is installed (Ray 2003). Key decisions for the clan or community are made by a council consisting mostly or

entirely of men (Brydon 1996; Duncan and Brants 2004). Decisions over land are considered to be “men’s business,” even among the matrilineal Akan (Brydon 1996; Clark 1994, 100–101). Women cannot perform many of the traditional rituals that are performed when land is taken into use or when it is transferred to new owners.

Gendered Division of Labor, Crops, and Mobility

Each community holds certain perceptions about which agricultural and nonagricultural activities are more suitable for men, women, or both. Men are commonly perceived as being physically stronger compared to women, and men do most of the activities that are physically demanding, such as clearing land or planting trees. At the same time, these physically demanding jobs ensure that men have stronger individual rights to the land (Quisumbing et al. 2001). Moreover, clearing and preparing the land are necessary for cultivating any parcel of land that is put into use after a period of fallow. Women either depend on their husbands and brothers or need to hire labor to help them with these activities. As a woman in Ejisu District (Ashanti Region) explained:

The men have more plots than the women. If the women have the resources, which is money, their plots can be bigger than their husbands. It is also because the men have more energy than the woman in terms of farm operations [land clearing and land preparations]. Except that the woman has enough funds to hire labor to do the clearing or to do the land preparation.

Activities such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, and selling small quantities of crops at the market are considered female tasks (Clark 1994, 285). These tasks are not explicitly rewarded with stronger land rights nor with a higher private income. Women spend a considerable amount of their time and energy on these tasks, further reducing their time to work on the fields or to engage in other remunerative activities. This again lowers their claims and opportunities to access more land. Interestingly, in cocoa-growing areas, the high demand for women’s labor to establish cocoa farms has been accompanied with increases in female ownership of land. Women are respected for the labor that they invest to establish their husband’s cocoa farm; as a reward, they are often given a portion of land by their husband (Quisumbing et al. 2001).

Although there is no strict division between men’s and women’s crops in Ghana, to some extent, cropping systems are gendered (Doss 2002). The gendered pattern of crop cultivation is mostly related to specific characteristics of the crop relative to other crops commonly grown in the region, such as agronomic characteristics and marketability (Carr 2008). Men are mostly engaged in more remunerative crops or farm those crops that are perceived to contribute most to household income. Cropping patterns are also popularly explained in terms of strength required to cultivate a specific crop. In the north, for example, men and women farmers emphasize that it is the men’s responsibility to provide staple food crops, such as yam, cassava, and sweet potato, for the household. Some activities associated with the staple crops, especially mounding and ridging, require a great deal of strength and are therefore mostly done by men. Other crops, such as spices, vegetables, and groundnuts, are more often cultivated by women to add flavor to the meals or to sell in small quantities in the market.

In the cocoa-growing areas of the Western Region, however, men mostly manage the cocoa farm, while women are responsible for cultivating the main food crops for the household. Cocoa farming is generally a profitable activity, and the revenues can be used to finance the main household expenditures. In addition, the cropping activities related to cocoa are seen as more strenuous compared to other crops (Hill and Vigneri 2014). According to a female farmer in the Hohoe District, “The home care, particularly caring for the children and school [in terms of medical expenditures, school fees, and so on], is for the man because he holds the cocoa money. The woman takes care of food and the man takes care of other expenses. The bigger expenses is for the man, and the smaller expenses is for the woman.” Unlike the gendered division of crops and agricultural activities in the north, the cultivation of yams is mostly done by women, and the digging of yam mounds is a female task.

The gendered division of labor and crops has also adjusted to changes in the community and the market. For example, respondents in the Volta Region explained that women are now encouraged to cultivate cash crops, whereas in the past this had not been well regarded. At present, children attend school more frequently and for a longer duration, increasing the need for cash to pay school fees. Another example is rice, which was previously a female crop, cultivated mostly in marshland areas. Men would rarely enter the marshlands and did not show interest in cultivating on marshland. With the application of improved technologies, however, rice has become more profitable, and farming of rice has been mostly taken over by men. Access to marshlands is more highly contested now than previously.

Religion

Religion is deeply embedded in the daily lives of most Ghanaians. The majority (71 percent) of people in Ghana are Christians, followed by Islam (18 percent; Ghana Statistical Service 2012). Tradition and religion are not strictly separated, and customary and religious norms have mutually influenced each other over time. Although there is little literature on the topic, this section makes two points based on the fieldwork.

First, Islam and Christian religions express an explicit view on household and family organization (as described earlier in this section). These religions support the view of the husband's responsibilities as household head and the supportive and reproductive responsibilities of the wife. According to focus group participants in Ghana's different regions, Christianity has played an important role in reducing the number of polygamous marriages, reducing marital violence, and increasing respect for women. Several authors suggest that the introduction of modern religions (Christianity and Islam) has affected customary inheritance practices, as neither Christianity nor Islam is easily reconciled with a matrilineal system of inheritance. Jointly with modern legislative influences, these religions may have played a role in decreasing matrilineal inheritance practices (Duncan and Brants 2004; Feder and Noronha 1987; Muilerman and Gockowsky, 2011).

State

Ghana's statutory laws related to property rights are essentially gender neutral or positively affirm property rights of spouses and children. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana does not discriminate between men and women and explicitly guarantees all persons the right to own and inherit property. The constitution also states that a spouse shall not be deprived of a reasonable provision out of a spouse's estate, whether or not there is a will. Spouses should have equal access to property jointly acquired during marriage, and such assets should be distributed equitably between the spouses upon dissolution of the marriage.

The Intestate Succession Law (ISL; PNDCL 111), enacted in 1985, is the most widely mentioned law in Ghana that protects women's access to marital property. The ISL states that when a person dies without any oral or written will, any self-acquired property, except for the house and the household items, should be distributed according to a specified rule among four parties: the spouse, the children, the surviving parent(s), and relatives, in accordance with the customary law.³ In practice, this is commonly simplified to one-third for the spouse, one-third for the children, and one-third according to the customary tradition (Quisumbing et al. 2001). ISL provides an improvement for widows, who customarily did not inherit from their husbands; yet, it does not mention how the inheritance of the children should be divided among the different siblings (Deere et al. 2013).

The application and effectiveness of the constitution and the ISL in protecting women's and children's property rights is limited due to several factors. First, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana recognizes both statutory and customary laws, which overlap and contradict in several areas. As with

³ Originally, the rule was nine-sixteenths to the children, three-sixteenths to the surviving spouse, one-eighth to the surviving parents, and one-eighth according to the customary tradition. The 2008 draft revision of the ISL foresees 40 percent to the children, 35 percent for the surviving spouse, 15 percent to the surviving parent(s), and 10 percent according to customary practices.

several other property laws, the ISL does not apply to any stool, skin, or family property, meaning that it can only be applied to a limited share of Ghana's land (Kutsoati and Morck 2002). Second, knowledge within Ghana about the ISL is absent or incomplete, and women are less knowledgeable about the ISL as compared with men (Kutsoati and Morck 2002). Third, the enforcement of laws requires access to advisory services or government officials and the necessary resources to pay for any advisory or legal services (Kutsoati and Morck 2002). Moreover, similar to the customary law mentioned earlier, statutory law is easily circumvented by in vivo gifts or the preparation of an oral or written will. Fourth, women or children may be refrained from pursuing their statutory rights in order to avoid social repercussions (Kutsoati and Morck 2002). Finally, even before introduction of the ISL, several cultural practices were already in place that allowed children and spouses to obtain land from their respective father and husband. Especially among the matrilineal Akan, where neither wives nor children customarily inherit land from the husband, other systems—such as in vivo transfers (also called gifts) and the preparation of oral or written wills—were commonly used to protect wives and children upon death of the husband (Quisumbing et al. 2001).

The diversity of marriage arrangements in Ghana provides additional hurdles to the applicability, use, and enforcement of statutory laws protecting the property rights of spouses and children. Few couples are legally married in Ghana. The customary marriage is most common, though couples are also frequently found to live in a consensual union without being married (Duncan 2004). A substantial number of households in Ghana are polygamous, even though polygamy is not officially allowed in Ghana. The Customary Marriage and Divorce Law (PNDCL 112) recognizes customary marriages, provided that they have been officially registered or that oral or documentary evidence exists that can confirm the marriage. Yet, although registration is relatively easy, it is not common. Registering a marriage is seen as a proof of mistrust within the relationship and bad intentions of the wife. Although gathering oral or documentary evidence on a customary marriage is generally easy, it may be a costly and cumbersome legal procedure.

Markets

Women are often at a disadvantage in terms of access to economic resources; therefore, women face more difficulties when participating in land markets as compared with men. Women generally enter marriage without cash or productive assets, unless they were able to make some personal savings before the marriage. As a male farmer in Sissala East District (Upper West Region) explained: “Women are allowed to buy land if they can pay for it, but none of the women here have enough money.” Men often provide starting capital to their wives to cultivate land or set up a business (Duncan 2004), but even if land is bought from household income, it is generally considered the husband's property. Any formal or informal type of documentation will register the land in his name.

As mentioned earlier, statutory laws governing property rights and land title registration in Ghana are gender neutral. Theoretically, land markets are also gender neutral. Therefore, conditional on economic status, men and women should not face any differences in their ability to engage in land market transactions. However, most land is customary land, and land transactions still primarily occur within the sphere of custom rather than according to the statutory framework. As part of their responsibility as household heads, men are required to provide their wives with sufficient land for cultivation, and women are not encouraged to take initiative in searching for land themselves. According to a female farmer in Ejisu District, who had migrated from the north:

Our husbands gave us the lands on which we are farming. Our husbands go to look for the land and give it to us to work on. If the woman wants extra land to farm on, she will have to tell her husband that if I get a land, I will also like to establish my own farm. Once you have a husband, you need not to go ahead to do the negotiation. It is your husband who has to do it for you.

Because the husband is supposed to provide the family's main income, it is deemed unnecessary for women to own or cultivate large portions of land. Although it is rare for women to buy a plot of land, it is not uncommon. For example, during fieldwork in Volta Region, the author met an unmarried woman who had migrated to that region and bought her own farmland. Women are not necessarily prohibited from owning or buying land or from renting or sharecropping land on their own initiative; yet, other men and women may respond to such actions with suspicion or ridicule. In many communities, it is considered disrespectful for women to bypass their husbands to acquire land. As a woman from a migrant household from the Ejisu District explained: "Getting a land of your own as a woman, as for me, I don't believe because you [woman] work together with the man. You do all your movements together, so it is always the man who will have access to the land before you get some. So, as for me, I don't believe that." A chief in the Central Region insisted that, although it had never happened before, a woman could register land in her own name in his community. She should, however, be accompanied by her husband as a witness. Respondents specifically stressed that they did not want to contribute to the dissolution of marriages. Absence of the husband during the registration of land raises suspicion of marital disputes, and a woman's private ownership of land strengthens her position to divorce.

It is frequently suggested that the individualization of land rights and the increase of land market transactions is deteriorating women's access to land (see, for example, Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997). Despite difficulties that women face in the land market, empirical evidence from Ghana does not support this hypothesis. Quisumbing et al. (2001) and Hill and Vigneri (2014) found that individualization of land rights does not weaken women's rights to land and that gender discrimination in land transfers has strongly reduced among Akan ethnic communities in Western Ghana, where land markets have most strongly developed. In his case studies in the Western Region, Takane (2002b) concluded that there is a trend toward more economic equality when land markets are more active.

Accessing input and output markets may be more restrictive for women than accessing land in order to cultivate more land. This finding is mostly related to the fact that women have relatively fewer claims to household labor and less access to cash or credit compared with men (Hill and Vigneri 2014). For example, rather than access to land as such, women commonly cite lack of cash to hire labor for clearing land as the reason for cultivating a small parcel of land. Because men are typically in charge of the household budget and women only have a small private budget, women may need to bargain with their husband for cash to hire labor or to buy other inputs to cultivate their land. Private plots are perceived to be of secondary importance compared with the land dedicated to the family; therefore, priority will be given to dedicate household resources to cultivation of the household's or husband's plots. Women's production will thereby be limited, further reducing women's private income from their plots. Finally, women's abilities to save money from off-farm work are also limited. Even with more women participating in nonfarm income-generating activities, evidence from northern Ghana shows that men's nonfarm income is higher, on average, than women's nonfarm income (Owusu, Abdulai, and Abdul-Rahman 2011), and women earn significantly less than men for an hour of work (Abdulai and Delgado 1999).

6. SOCIAL NORMS AND WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND: REFLECTIONS

This paper has argued that, to a large extent, differences in access to land for men and women in Ghana are directly or indirectly driven by social norms, rules, and perceptions about men's and women's roles, responsibilities, and capabilities in their households, families, and communities. From this perspective, what do we measure when we measure men's and women's land? What do gender differences in access to land really mean? Is equal access to land a synonym or a prerequisite for gender equity?

Access to land is not a straightforward concept, nor is it easily measured. In many communities in Ghana, where land is primarily under customary tenure, those who choose not to farm will leave their portion of land to those who are in need of farmland. If needed or if they would have the means to do so, male and female farmers may be able to access land in the future that they are presently not cultivating. Household members make choices about where and where not to farm; depending on the specific situation, it may be a rational decision to farm on land accessed through the husband's family rather than through the wife's family or rather than the wife gaining access to her own piece of land.

Several empirical studies have shown that women's land ownership matters for intrahousehold decision making. In a study on Ghana, Doss (2005) showed that increasing women's share of farmland in the household increases the budget shares on food and education and decreases budget shares on alcohol and tobacco, clothing, and household durables and nondurables. In such cases, are household members better off or worse off compared with other households? Do women want to further increase their responsibility to earn income for the household? On the one hand, male and female discussants agreed that private income can be spent at the owner's discretion and that it therefore increases the decision-making power within the household. On the other hand, they also insisted that individual decision making and not sharing income between husband and wife signifies a bad relationship. Women who farm a relatively large share of private land compared with their husband's land may have little to expect from their husband in terms of household contributions and therefore maximize their own production in order to provide for the family.

Similarly, at the community level, Rao (2006) argued that women's improved access to land does not necessarily signify gender equality. Instead, it may point to a shift in the valuation of land and agriculture as livelihood resources and activities. The "feminization" of agriculture may be a result of unequal opportunities outside the agricultural sector, with men being more likely to engage in off-farm activities. To the contrary, in Ghana, especially in peri-urban areas, the author found that many women preferred to engage in off-farm work rather than in agriculture. Men would explain that it was their task to farm for the household and prided themselves if their wives could engage in other income-generating activities outside of agriculture. Moreover, by engaging in nonfarm activities, women could play an important and well-appreciated role in smoothing the seasonal liquidity effects of their husbands' agricultural income.

In essence, allocation rules that primarily aim to allocate land to the person who can use land more effectively are a way of increasing households' and communities' economic efficiency. If all members of the household and family necessarily need to contribute equally to productive and reproductive tasks and must divide resources equally, the household or family, as a unit, becomes unacceptable and loses the benefits of complementarity that household and family members generally exercise. Hence, there is clear rationale for the division of responsibilities and resources within a household; however, this should not necessarily be linked to gender, nor should it come with differences in decision-making power. The main reason for aiming for equal asset ownership by men and women is that it might make expenditures and welfare more equitable within households. This is presumably context specific, because in some societies, women may not have any income and yet expenditures might be equitable. A regulatory framework that can ensure that both productive and reproductive efforts are acknowledged and that productive and household assets are divided more equitably after divorce or death of one's spouse or family members can moderate such inequities in expenditures and welfare. However, effective implementation of statutory law may be challenging in many communities that still mostly rely on customary law to transfer property.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Quantitative and qualitative gender research has increasingly moved away from the household as a decision-making unit and now analyzes detailed information from individuals within the household. Different intrahousehold models and frameworks are developed and used to analyze drivers and impacts of gender (in)equality. Such models are based on the understanding that households are spaces of both cooperation and conflict, consisting of different household members with different preferences, needs, and abilities (Sen 1990). In these models, decision making strongly depends on the bargaining or decision-making power of the different household members.

This paper argues that gender relations are more than outcomes of negotiations within households, and that social norms, rules, and perceptions play a key role in explaining gender differences in access to resources. The author applies the framework to study gender differences in smallholder's access to farmland in Ghana, focusing on four main domains: (1) the household and family, (2) the community, (3) the state, and (4) the market. Gendered norms on household organization, with men as the main providers for their households and families, provide the rationale to prioritize male access to key productive assets, such as land and labor. Patrilineal and matrilineal rules on family membership determine the distribution of family land and enforce strategic decisions on cropping patterns within the household. Perceptions on the abilities of men and women to perform agricultural activities affect the gendered division of labor and land. Because male activities are more physically demanding, men are more commonly rewarded with stronger rights to land and revenues.

To some extent, views on household organization and division of labor are universal; yet, how they are translated into gender differences in access to resources varies substantially. Social norms and perceptions are dynamic and adjust to changes in livelihood opportunities. The development of markets and changes in the value of inputs such as labor might change norms or values that affect gender differences in access to resources. Stronger individual rights to land, more active land markets, more off-farm income-earning opportunities, and higher value of female labor are linked with more access to land for women. To a greater or lesser extent, legal mechanisms can counter the effects of social norms and rules held by communities, or they may speed up ongoing transformation of social norms and rules. In the long run, interventions may not be effective without changing norms and perceptions.

The argument that gender differences in access to land are mainly driven by social norms and perceptions invites rethinking of how to interpret women's relative access to land within the community or across different communities. Does equality in access to land equal gender equity? Are women with more access to land necessarily better off? True gender equity would require a change of norms and rules that allows both men and women to access sufficient resources such that each has an equal chance to positively affect his or her livelihood. Whether more gender equality in access to land can be the cause or will rather be the consequence of more equitable gender norms and perceptions remains an empirical question.

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