

housing in Addis Ababa with the high-end ‘skeleton’ skyscrapers of Kigali and the ‘scramble for property’ in Kampala. These differences are explained with reference to the national distributions of power, strategies of urban legitimacy and extent of political informality in each city. The analysis does raise the question of the extent to which there is an overarching logic to the use of land and property in African cities, particularly among the urban majority. Nevertheless, Goodfellow’s analysis of high-end and large-scale property development offers the most sustained comparative treatment yet of the politics of land and property in urban Africa. This book is a landmark contribution to our understanding of the political economic dynamics shaping African cities.

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We are not Starving: the struggle for food sovereignty in Ghana by JOEVA SEAN ROCK
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We are not Starving is a very easy-to-read and compelling ethnographic account of the controversies, contradictions and politics encompassing genetically modified organism (GMO) introduction and related policies such as the Plant Breeders Bill in Ghana. In the book, Rock discusses these political tensions within the frame of the contentious legacies of colonialism and state-making; multinational corporations and donors who are shaping the goal and discourse on biotechnology, patents and agricultural development; and the agency of local actors who are challenging the ‘benevolent’ donor-driven narratives and unsustainable GMO projects – many of which have failed anyways. Although I find the book’s title about food sovereignty not quite an adequate representation of its content, it is understandable since Ghana’s local food sovereignty movement has been instrumental in shaping the GMO debates.

The book shows how the persistent donor and state depiction of African and, for that matter, Ghanaian farmers, their food and culture as backward has been a common feature of slavery, colonialism and neoliberalism, thus highlighting the continuities of these eras. A significant theme in the book is external actors’ strategies to influence the policy environment for GMOs in Ghana. Here, Rock emphasises the communicative practices of pro-GMO brokers and boosters purposefully established by multinationals/donors and often housed in scientific institutions to promote the passage of biotechnology laws in the name of development. Amid the contestations and public doubts, activists hammer on these corporations’ commercial and private sector interests. Building on examples of contextually inappropriate and externally driven crop variety trials (rice) that failed, Rock extends the discussion on global power relations to patents and the anxiety of Ghanaian scientific researchers whose lack of resources affects their independence and extent of influence in biotechnology projects of which they are considered as partners with multinational corporations.

‘Our stomachs are being Colonised’ – a chapter heading in the book embodies the critique of civil society activism on the subject, notably from the Food Sovereignty Ghana, Ghana Association of Food Producers and the broader Food Sovereignty Platform. Without romanticising traditional farming, it reveals the

real infrastructural challenges facing the agricultural sector and how civil society groups evaluate global power structures and the diminishing policy space of the state. It would have been of added value for readers unfamiliar with the Ghanaian civil society space had the book provided a good contextual understanding of the existing membership, base and traction of the Food Sovereignty Ghana (FSG) and related farmer-based organisations and coalitions. Rock does not question or explore this in her book, and we do not see much about the differentiated interests of other farmer-based organisations. In other words, even outside of the GMO debate, what was FSG's membership strength, interests and visibility? By spearheading the GMO debate, and especially with the legal actions, FSG's popularity rose, but like many others, they continue to struggle to establish strong support for their activism. In the introduction, I expected the narrative of the history of food sovereignty to extend to FSG and Ghana's Food Sovereignty Platform and how their constitution shapes their specific demands on GMOs. This would have provided a more convincing explanation for the platform's collapse than a corruption cover story at the leadership level.

The book concludes with an attempt at a theoretical explanation of the complicated interests and different visions of GMOs, Plant Breeders' law and the new Green Revolution for Africa. Although oversimplified in its definition and appearing as an afterthought, Rock introduces the theory of disidentification citing the work of Muñoz (1999) and Pêcheux (1982) to illustrate some of the nuances of the local debates – that which transcends simplistic notions of pro- or anti-GMO, and the globally driven hunger discourse, to deliberations on innovation, epistemic justice, food security, financial and technical independence, and strategies to address recipient fatigue.

Rock's almost ten years of engagement in the GMO discourse in Ghana is reflected in the rich insider accounts of the messy politics driving the biotechnology debate and policies in Ghana. I like it for the balanced portrayal of both corporate power and grassroots agency. However, occasionally, I questioned the representativeness of the statements of the individuals who, through the methodology adopted, had become mouthpieces for their civil society organisations in the book's narrative. Nonetheless, *We Are Not Starving* is a must-read for political economists and scholar activists looking to validate their suspicions about GMO promotion in Africa and strengthen their activism. It will, undoubtedly, be a source of deep reflective insights for agri-nutrition professionals and scientists, some of whom may be so neck-deep in biotechnological experiments that they lose track of the socio-political contexts within which they operate.

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Legitimation as Political Practice: Crafting Every Authority in Tanzania by KATHY DODWORTH Cambridge University Press, 2022.

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Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa increasingly take on state-like tasks, becoming part of the infrastructure of local governance. Yet despite their ties to the state, the same NGOs at times also attempt to act as representatives of society, advocating for communities against the state.