Food Sovereignty and Urban Agriculture: Understanding Interlinkages and Exploring Implications in the South African and Ghanaian Context

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Abstract:

South African and Ghanaian cities present highly unequal places and exclusionary dynamics seem to be essential parts of the machinery that makes them tick. While both countries are normally considered as food secure on a national level, the reality in cities presents a different picture. Against this background, urban agriculture initiatives are considered as vivid building blocks for food sovereignty. While the discourse on food sovereignty is rather incipient in South Africa and Ghana, the struggles on the ground for affordable and healthy food, access to land and water for cultivation in cities need to be dismantled and integrated into the bigger picture.

This research project applies a relational lens on the motivations and functions of urban agriculture in an agri-food system strongly shaped by dominant interests of corporate power, socio-economic and historical particularities. Guided by the theoretical approach of the ‘right to the city’, the concepts of ‘food sovereignty’ and ‘agrarian citizenship’, this study puts an emphasis on the active role of the people in transforming the urban food system. In this respect, it is essential to expand the study of food sovereignty beyond its rural roots and investigate places where food sovereignty is less expected. Empirical research focuses on an urban agriculture initiatives in both countries. The purpose of this study is to understand the construction of food sovereignty grounded in everyday life and active citizenship of urban food producers.