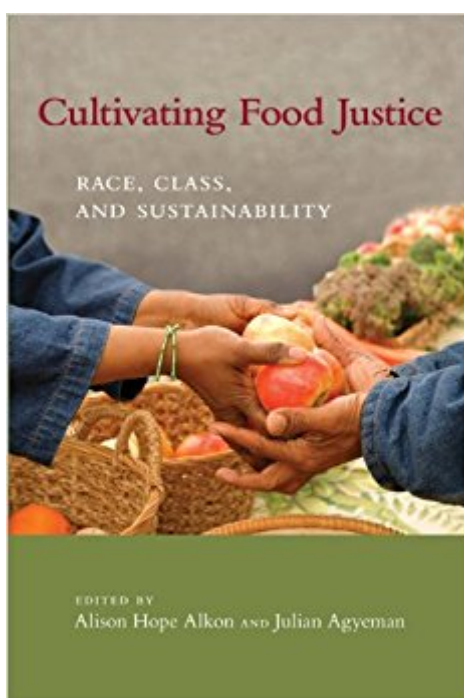


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Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, And Sustainability (Food, Health, And The Environment)



Synopsis

Popularized by such best-selling authors as Michael Pollan, Barbara Kingsolver, and Eric Schlosser, a growing food movement urges us to support sustainable agriculture by eating fresh food produced on local family farms. But many low-income neighborhoods and communities of color have been systematically deprived of access to healthy and sustainable food. These communities have been actively prevented from producing their own food and often live in "food deserts" where fast food is more common than fresh food. *Cultivating Food Justice* describes their efforts to envision and create environmentally sustainable and socially just alternatives to the food system. Bringing together insights from studies of environmental justice, sustainable agriculture, critical race theory, and food studies, *Cultivating Food Justice* highlights the ways race and class inequalities permeate the food system, from production to distribution to consumption. The studies offered in the book explore a range of important issues, including agricultural and land use policies that systematically disadvantage Native American, African American, Latino/a, and Asian American farmers and farmworkers; access problems in both urban and rural areas; efforts to create sustainable local food systems in low-income communities of color; and future directions for the food justice movement. These diverse accounts of the relationships among food, environmentalism, justice, race, and identity will help guide efforts to achieve a just and sustainable agriculture.

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Customer Reviews

Race, class, and history aren't foodie strong-points. Yet to turn the food movement into one that fully embraces justice, some difficult discussions lie ahead. The chapters in this splendid and rigorously researched book will help those conversations be better informed, and their outcomes wiser. (Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed and Starved* and *The Value of Nothing*)

The insights, critiques, and guidance presented in this book are timely and profound. *Cultivating Food Justice* offers a powerful analysis of the dominant food systems in the United States and of the largely white, middle-class alternative food movement that has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. On nearly every page of this book, the contributors share seldom heard stories of ordinary people organizing to produce healthy, sustainable, affordable, and culturally appropriate sustenance for all. Most important, the authors demonstrate that food justice and environmental justice are inseparable. (David Naguib Pellow, Don A. Martindale Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota; author of *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago*; coauthor of *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants versus the Environment in America's Eden*)

At a time when food politics are omnipresent and as urgent as ever, this collection delivers a stellar cast and bold set of ideas that weigh in on not just intellectually interesting questions, but also some of the most pressing issues facing people in their everyday struggles. It is a must-read for anybody interested in food politics and environmental justice. (Nik Heynen, Department of Geography and Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR), University of Georgia)

The diversity of theoretical and conceptual approaches, subjects, and authors is refreshing. The dimensions of ethnic identity, racism, and white privilege as they affect the access and control of food-producing resources is highlighted and suggests important new directions in theorizing the political ecology of food and agriculture....The blend of academic and activist chapters provides a good mix of theory, strategy, and tactics. (*Annals of the Association of American Geographers*)

The answers to our food system ills are not found simply in opposition to our current food system; community solutions that incorporate racial justice, from production to consumption, are required. I could not agree more. As facilitators of community building, planners have a responsibility to fill in the gaps in representation at the food movement "table" and understand the history of those coming (or not coming) to such a table. The insights in this book provide a foundation and direction for food system planners. (Jill K. Clark *Journal of Planning Education and Research*)

Cultivating Food Justice covers important ground previously lacking in food studies and movements, particularly with regard to critical theorizing about race, class, ethnicity, sustainability, and food access, thereby expanding understandings of food justice as both a field of scholarly inquiry and fruitful activism. (*American Studies*)

The case studies and theoretical discussions presented in this volume provide very useful insights for food activists, farmers, consumers, and

policy-makers regarding the political, economic, and social processes that have influenced our global food system and its related class and racial injustices. (Rachel S. Madsen Agriculture and Human Values)

Alison Hope Alkon is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of the Pacific. Julian Agyeman is Professor and Chair of the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University.

Covers topics often ignored by the food movement, a worthwhile investment.

Love this book

Outstading!

Thought provoking.

Excellent!

I picked this up for a book review for a nursing course focusing on Social Justice. It was an okay read. I liked that it covered omissions previously left in the subject of food justice. It is a collection of essays/articles by different authors edited by a couple of professors. This lead to the writing styles being disjointed, some chapters were much better than others. I'd recommend this as a required reading for a class, but not something to curl up with on a rainy day.

This book arrived very timely and in great condition. It was in better condition than I expected it to be in and I feel very satisfied. Thanks.

Alkon and Agyeman have done a masterful job compiling the chapters that make up Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability. Although there have been a smattering of articles employing the "food justice" concept over the past five years, it was not until last year that Gottlieb and Joshi published the book Food Justice, also on MIT Press. Cultivating Food Justice builds off of this book by providing a critical exposition that attends to positionality within the agrifood system, and helps to expand our understanding of food justice by linking race, class, and gender at multiple

scales, often blurring boundaries between spaces and experiences of production and consumption. As Alkon and Agyeman note in the Introduction, this book "help(s) to nurture fertile soil in which a polyculture of approaches to just and sustainable agriculture can thrive. The book is organized in three parts. The first part, "The Production of Unequal Access" investigates the way that racialized systems of exclusion interact with capitalism to create not only food insecurity and hunger, but inequality in who gets to own, control, and grow food on land throughout the United States. For example, in the chapter by Norgaard, Reed, and Van Herten, they explore the racialized environmental history that produced hunger in the Karuk community: "outright genocide, lack of recognition of land occupation and title, and forced assimilation." Minkoff Zern, Peluso, Sowerwine, and Getz also contribute to food justice scholarship with their concept of agricultural racial formations. They explore how Chinese, Japanese, and Hmong farmers' dispossession of their lands is racialized either explicitly or implicitly through a set of laws, policies, or practices that impact specific Asian American groups. The second part, "Consumption Denied" focuses on the inability of people of color to purchase healthy and/or culturally appropriate food. McClintock contributes to the literature through his concept of "demarcated devaluation" whereby industrial, residential, and food retail capital flows out of communities contributing to a loss of control and autonomy over local spaces of production and consumption. The next chapter takes us out of the flatlands of urban Oakland and into California's rural farm spaces where Brown and Getz investigate the paradox of farmworker food insecurity. These authors clearly make the case that the structural causes of immigration policy, the "ideological construction of a racialized agricultural working class" and "the global economic system in which the domestic dynamics of food production are embedded" produce food insecurity. The third part, "Will Work for Food Justice" presents the reader with a set of chapters dedicated to how poor people and people of color are working to create more just and sustainable alternatives to the dominant agrifood system. This is the heart of the book. I think that these five chapters are the most important chapters because they get the reader to begin thinking through how the food and farming movement is going to have to address a deeper set of structural concerns if food justice is to be achieved. The first chapter explores efforts to dismantle racism through sustainable food systems (Morales), while the second looks at the role that two Black Nationalist religious organizations play in developing autonomous community food security strategies that focus on improving the livelihoods of black people (McCutcheon). In what I consider to be one of the best chapters in the book, Mares and Pena argue for the importance of integrating sovereignty and autonomy into food justice strategies and scholarship through "exploring how diasporic and immigrant gardeners mobilize deep senses of personal and collective identity while employing

place-based agroecological knowledge in urban spaces." Harper's chapter pushes food justice scholarship to consider the politics of eating meat, specifically, the colorblind claims by vegans that often ignore race and class privilege. In this chapter, Harper provides qualitative data that supports the claim that, "food justice cannot be a reality, vegan or not, if the overwhelming white food movements, fail to engage in antiracism and critical whiteness-awareness activism." Dethroning the urban bias of much food justice scholarship, McEntee shows how poor whites construct a rural notion of food justice, traditional localism. This chapter shows how the intent of people matters in how they view the agrifood system and in turn how they want to change it. For traditional localists, they see access barriers tied to the availability of soil, water, and land resources, which therefore informs their priorities to obtain fresh, affordable food through gardening, hunting, and/or reciprocal exchange with friends. The last part of the book, "Future Directions" pushes theoretical and activist boundaries to address the deeply structural realities of race and class by reevaluating how we understand anti-oppression efforts, how we understand justice, and how we understand food sovereignty. Although two of these chapters have been published in different forms elsewhere (Guthman's article and Holt-Gimenez's article), they offer important insights. First, that white cultural discourses need to be recognized in food justice efforts if racial and ethnic inequality is to be solved. Second, that a world-wide movement integrating the strategies and perspectives of food sovereignty struggles is needed to not just address symptoms of the corporate food regime, but to confront it head on, transforming human/food relations into a more just and sustainable food regime of the future. The most subtle chapter comes from DuPuis, Harrison, and Goodman with their concept of "reflexive food justice" that "works within an awareness of the tensions between different definitions of justice, environmental and bodily health, and good food...(and) responds to changing circumstances, imperfectly, but with awareness of the contradictions of the moment." Overall, this book provides a much needed addition to the food justice literature. Not only does *Cultivating Food Justice* highlight the importance of moving beyond colorblindness, the heterogeneity of individual and group constructions of being in the world as consumers and producers of food, and the necessity of bodily and community autonomy, but it reveals the contested and myriad intersections between race, class, and geography, the importance to pay more attention to food and farmworkers, the need to move beyond market-driven strategies to change the agrifood system, and the significance of the food justice movement to directly confront the dominant food and farming movement.

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