Solidarity, space, and race: toward geographies of agrifood justice

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9/2016

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Abstract
The editors of this special issue pose the cogent overarching question, what are the spatial dimensions of food justice? In essence, the questions 'what is food justice and how is it practiced?' cannot fully be answered without understanding space. The radical analysis implicit in food justice draws on an understanding of the social structures underlying inequalities evident in the socio-spatial organization of food systems. We suggest there are four inter-related nodes in networks of food justice organizing around which transformative change is happening or needs to occur: trauma/equity, exchange, land, and labor. These nodes were derived from our own sustained ethnographic research and the critical literature. Because a central concern in U.S. food justice mobilizing is the relationship between race and survival, we focus on the first intervention point (trauma/equity). Using case studies from Minnesota, USA, we propose ways the food movement might move toward racial justice. These include a) analysis of and discussion of power, b) acting from a progressive or global sense of place, and c) using the nodes above as entry points for building solidarity.
Key words: food justice, food movement, race, solidarity, global sense of place

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the editors for including our paper in the special issue and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions. Portions of this paper have been adapted from two earlier works (Slocum and Cadieux, 2015; Cadieux and Slocum, 2015); here, we develop an analysis of the social space of food justice. A draft of this work was circulated among the members of the Agrifood Reading Group at the University of Minnesota, whose critiques we used to improve the final paper. We thank Aurélie Gilles, who translated the first draft, Alex Silverman, who translated our amendments to it, and Camille Hochedez and Julie Le Gall, who translated the last draft.

1. Introduction

The spatial aspects of food provisioning have been central to U.S. food movement discourse and practice. In shorter supply chains, realized through farm-to-institution programs and farmers' markets, the food movement seeks to "re-localize" the food system. The local scale is imagined as more ecologically viable, economically self-sustaining, and accountable[1]. Accountability is derived from the trust relationships established among producers, processors, retailers, and consumers (Galli and Brunori, 2013). Urban projects to make food more accessible (cooking classes, mobile groceries, farmers' markets, gardening) are celebrated because they appear to address access to healthy food.

What has been called the movement's 'local fetish' has been thoroughly critiqued for its failure to understand how all places are created through relations of power (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). It is abundantly clear that the dominant food system functions through social hierarchies built on racial dispossession, the feminization of poverty and

[1] Local often refers to an underspecified and imagined spatial relationship assumed to be better because of its smallness and proximity. Sometimes local food refers to food sourced from farmers who live within a specific radius of a farmers' market, a town, or within a political boundary. Although this locality can be important for food justice and food sovereignty efforts, we argue that this is because of the specific relationships involved, and that justice is not automatically on the side of "small" or "local."

class exploitation – all socio-spatial processes as scholars have pointed out (Mitchell, 1996). Yet the spatial politics of the mainstream food movement is colorblind and market-oriented, privileging consumers and the places they eat and shop (Allen, 2003). Despite the strong desire to create and inhabit more equitable food spaces, the food movement often does not confront, and instead may reinforce, existing race, class, and gender inequalities (Clancy, 1994; Freidburg, 2003). This critique, coming from scholars and activists, has become increasingly recognized as a call for 'food justice'[2].

Today, diverse publics around the world increasingly embrace the broad principles of food justice, albeit in different terms with varying lineages. As an ideal, food justice is a radical critique of capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, exploitation, systemic racism, and patriarchy through the different but related registers of food sovereignty, food democracy, food solidarity, feminist food justice, and fair trade (e.g. fair food campaign). As its name implies, food justice seeks transformative change through greater control over food production and consumption by those marginalized in society.

We argue that this radical critique suggests the creation of agrifood spaces different from those of the current food system but also from those produced by the dominant (U.S.) food movement[3]. It might appear that agrifood space is a market, the kitchen, fast food retail, farms, a watershed, food 'deserts' and so forth. But none of these would exist were it not for the relations and processes that made them (agricultural policy, systemic racism, gender relations, assumptions about health, food movement

[2] Every time we use the word 'food' as an adjective, we use it in a systemic way that encompasses production (agriculture and processing), distribution, consumption, and waste—rather than saying, for example, 'agrifood justice.' For our purposes, agriculture is implied. That said, our examples focus more on NGO politics and practices in urban and rural projects, not the specifics of how to create *agricultural* justice with farmers or farm workers. Given the topic of this special issue, it seems relevant to point out that agricultural justice, as a project, has been well articulated and critiqued within the framework of food sovereignty and the human right to food and land. Agricultural (migrant) labor has been productively analyzed using the environmental justice framework. Central to creating agricultural justice is decommodification of land and food, with feminist, antiracist and agroecological cooperative, collective, and solidarity economies being proposed as alternative frameworks.

[3] The dominant or mainstream food movement in the U.S. refers to a constellation of individuals, NGOs, alliances, initiatives, companies, and government entities arranged in affiliations of different intensities and scales to support food security and sustainable farming.

organizing). This is why Doreen Massey argues that space is not only a physical location but is more accurately understood as "continually practiced social relations." Spatial politics is about changing the relations that constitute space (2000, p. 282). Food justice, then, would seek to create agrifood spaces that alter the current "power geometry," (Massey, 1994) in which the easier lives of some are enabled by the more difficult lives of others (see also Dejean, 2013). Critical to our argument, is that food justice would do so using a different *praxis* than what we have witnessed so far in the food movement. Thus to create a more equitable food system, food justice would apply analyses that explicitly take power and equity into account, resulting in different processes of engagement with marginalized communities as well as a different focus of effort. It would, first, directly build on antiracist politics, not add it as an afterthought (Slocum, 2006). Relatedly, it would work to create alliance on the basis of solidarity, a mode of action that is part of socio-spatially transformative practice.

Drawing on critiques of the food movement and our own research, we propose four intersecting nodes – trauma/equity, exchange, land, and labor – that are entry points for food justice organizing. In other words, these are areas where transformative change is happening or needs to occur in the ways we propose below. For practitioners interested in food justice, we suggest that these nodes also serve as focal points around which to investigate whether the spatial politics of the food movement is having a transformative effect. These are areas, finally, around which to build solidarity. This paper concerns the node 'trauma and equity,' which we unpack below. This special issue explores the connections between agriculture and food justice. Our paper suggests that one process creating rural and urban agricultural landscapes is systemic racism; without using this analytic lens, the food movement's favorite projects are unlikely to serve food justice [4].

[4] As the editors point out, this special issue affords us an opportunity to highlight the links between agricultural resources and food justice as well as make connections between food justice and environmental justice. To do both, we argue, requires addressing systemic racism and using it as *one* useful analytic lens to understand, for instance, migrant agricultural labor, land dispossession, and the struggles of smaller scale farmers globally. The importance of that lens has only recently become more widely apparent in the U.S. Here, the mainstream food movement traditionally identified the problem of

We first discuss methods (section 2) before we outline the food justice nodes (section 3) and then define race (section 4). Section 5 begins our discussion of the case studies. There, and in section 6, we offer examples of U.S. efforts to address inequity, indicate where they fell short, and propose ways to surmount the obstacles encountered. We conclude with a discussion of solidarity.

2. Methodology and methods

Our analysis in this paper derives from patterns that we independently recognized across our very different study sites and then collectively shaped into the argument we develop here. Empirical support for our claims comes from ten years of ethnographic and survey research conducted by the authors in the urban and rural upper Midwest and Northeast U.S. (Cadieux and Slocum, 2015; Slocum and Cadieux, 2015; Slocum, 2007, 2008, 2006; Cadieux, 2013a, 2013b); France (Gowan and Slocum, 2014; Slocum and Gowan, 2015); Canada (Cadieux, 2005, 2011); Aotearoa New Zealand (Cadieux, 2004; Cadieux, 2008); Eastern Europe and New Jersey (Blumberg, 2015, 2014a, 2014b). This research falls into the general areas of rural and urban development, antiracism advocacy, decolonizing practice, food studies education, alternative economies, and community-based, participatory action research on food policy. The research questions involved in these distinct projects concerned food movement analytic and strategic frameworks, and investigations of particular food movement spaces, such as farmers' markets, distribution networks, coops, and farm-to-institution initiatives. All three

the food system as smaller scale farmers losing their farms to banks after having lost against agribusiness' economies of scale and subsidized accumulation. This, indeed, is how the problem has been characterized in Europe as well. Though the struggles of agroecologically-leaning, smaller scale farmers must surely be recognized as a justice issue, their interests are not typically aligned with the situation of (undocumented, racialized, and impoverished) food chain workers. In light of the problem as defined, the U.S. food movement began with a focus on supporting higher prices for smaller-scale, sustainable farmers in hopes of enabling them to thrive in farming (as land prices rise), with a concomitant effort to get that food to urban, nonwhite people, identified as having a problem of access. This required relying on wealthier, white consumers whose ability to buy said food is partly the result of centuries of white privilege. The point is, agriculture and all the other parts of the food system cannot be just unless they are organized in ways that disconnect the relationship between privilege and land, housing, eating, work and wealth.

authors have carried out grant-funded analyses of food movement projects and research action as academics and activists. In each of these locations/projects, we individually conducted interviews, focus groups, surveys and participant observation, publishing these as separate accounts (see figure 1).

Figure 1 - Key themes from our research that inform our analysis of geographies of agrifood justice

Research	Methods	Node
Research directly informing the development of the nodes		
Antiracism and the food movement in the Northeast U.S. and MN 2003-2013	80 structured interviews, a national web survey of 500 organizations gaining 250 responses, 6 years participant observation in food movement conferences, meetings and committees	trauma, equity
Race, local food and the Minneapolis Farmers' Market 2007-2009	1 survey of 200 shoppers, 20 semi- structured interviews, participant observation at the market, in market staff meetings, and at HomeGrown Minneapolis listening sessions	trauma, equity
Southeast Minnesota Foodshed Planning Initiative 2009-2014	Participant observations at 25 public meetings, 70 surveys, and collaboration with 40-person research team over five years to assess local food movement priorities and possibilities in SE MN	exchange, labor
Farmers' markets in New Jersey, USA	On-going in-depth interviews with market managers and stakeholders	labor, exchange
Community Measurement in Urban Agriculture; Redefining Yield, Twin	Participation as garden measurer, organizational support, and on research team in community research network, where four different	land, trauma

Cities 2010-2015	organizations (with over six sites and ~20 participants each) loosely collaborated over five years to share methods and outcomes from public science projects demonstrating public benefits of urban agriculture.	
Research informing the development of our argument		
Food Resiliency and Urban Land Use Policy, Aotearoa New Zealand 2004, 2014	50 semi-structured interviews in 2004, accompanied by 10 years of policy analysis, participant observation, and replication of field study in 2014	land, trauma
Urban-rural continuum of productive land uses in Ontario 1999-2014	30 semi-structured interviews, land use analysis, and fifteen years of intervention research in policy education domains	land, exchange
Alternative food networks in Eastern Europe 2009-2014	40 semi-structured interviews, policy analysis, participant observation	labor, exchange
Alternative food economies in rural France 2011	22 life-history interviews with small scale producers and participant observation of markets, coops, and an organic fair	labor, exchange

The studies outlined in figure 1 provided us with a number of opportunities to investigate diverse social practices that constitute the relational spaces of the food movement. During the time frame of our research, the idea of 'food justice' emerged and became an important framing device for scholars (e.g. Alkon and Agyeman, 2011) and activists. We noticed that while some agreement seemed to be taking shape around what food justice means, the specifics of its practice often remained unexamined (Slocum and Cadieux, 2015). In addition to research focusing on food movement advocates and, to lesser extent consumers, we have spent considerable time in

conversation with farmers. For them, the justice issues typically concern the difficulty of making a living in the face of competition, state regulation, low prices, unavailable credit, the politics of local distribution options and rising land values. Although some farmers in Minnesota are engaged in labor certification processes like the Agricultural Justice Project, small-scale farmers sometimes use their hardship to justify exploitative labor arrangements (see also Harrison and Lloyd, 2013).

Our methodologies are derived from our training in post-structural critiques of Science (Foucault, 1980) and feminist theorizations of identity/difference (Haraway, 1988). Specifically, our approach is shaped by a feminist and anti-colonial commitment to work along with, and not merely report on, the work of marginalized people whose understandings and practices are sometimes left out of scholarship (Young, 1990; Pratt, 2004). Committed to methods for studying and building theory that are useful to people involved in the work of creating more just food systems, we have sought to share the tools and knowledge systems of our discipline with members of the food movement as well as to learn from their perspectives (Cadieux, 2013b)[5].

3. Food justice nodes

On the basis of our fieldwork, as well as the research of other scholars and practitioners, we can identify four primary nodes at which food justice organizing seeks to intervene toward a more equitable food system (figure 2). These four are the result of a collaborative effort among ourselves, but they also developed very much in conversation with the practitioners whose work we both support and critique. Specifically, they come from listening to voices often peripheral to and critical of the

[5] We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for reminding us that our paper's argument may be perceived by readers from some scholarly traditions as more of a manifesto than as empirically grounded research. Our sentiments are near the surface of the writing not for any lack of rigor, but because our methodology recognizes that all research is partially subjective and that we have responsibilities in the way we carry out such research. As members of communities of practice, it matters how we name problems (e.g. systemic racism). Explicitly naming the ideological commitments and entanglements of participatory action research helps begin to make arguments such as ours more accessible to the wide range of people who negotiate food justice.

dominant food movement, as well as engaging with mainstream food movement practitioners. This process of scholar-activism has involved navigating our multiple positions of privilege and marginality within diverse food movement efforts. We have wrestled with the twin desires to define food justice on the one hand, and *not* speak for others or limit what other groups might consider food justice on the other (Cadieux and Slocum 2015). In discussing food justice organizing in this paper, we seek to advance the ideals embodied in the nodes, ideals that we see mobilized and impeded in our ongoing research/community involvement. It is in this spirit that we invite scholars and practitioners to engage with our analysis, acknowledging that our understanding of food justice is largely U.S.-centric.

We call these "nodes" because we imagine them as mobilizing points in constellations of overlapping networks engaged in the spatial practice of building an equitable food system. "Nodes in networks" is the way that Doreen Massey conceptualized a global or progressive sense of place. Places, she argued, are created through networks of time-space relations (Massey, 1994). For our purposes a node (trauma and equity) as point of intervention is not just a metaphor. It indicates the space of politics where people work to change the food system structured by social relations and altered by the different praxis evident in food justice organizing. Given the principles carried forward by food justice and its kindred concepts, we would expect interventions at these points to create agrifood spaces that *eventually* look, feel, and act radically different from the existing food movement. In referring to them, we save space and words by using the short hand terms: 'equity/trauma', 'exchange', 'land', and 'labor', and suggest what we mean by each in figure 2.

Figure 2 - Food justice organizing nodes – entry points for solidarities from which develop potentially different agrifood space(s)

Equity and trauma: acknowledge historical, collective social trauma and undo

persistent race, gender, religious, citizenship, and class inequalities:

Recognize the work of social relations of power as the first step toward dismantling privilege.

Acknowledge the leadership of people involved rather than take control of others' projects (White, 2011).

Remember that the history and expression of trauma varies locally and is fueled by the power of global hierarchies of privilege.

Enact policies that repair past injustices experienced globally today (e.g. reparations, Coates, 2014).

Land: create innovative ways to equitably control, use, share, own, manage, and *conceive of* land, and ecologies in general, that place them outside the speculative market and the rationale of extraction:

Understand 'resources' in a more-than-human relational context.

Support agro-ecological land use systems to build equitable societies (De Schutter, 2011; Agarwal, 2014).

Build on diverse knowledge systems to grow food, make change, and sustain societies.

Prevent food projects from stimulating gentrification; mitigate gentrification with community control (including but not limited to land trusts and reducing rent exploitation).

Exchange: recognize, design, and support exchange mechanisms that build communal reliance and control through cooperation, trust, and sharing economies that are not dominated by the profit motive.

Continuously dismantle the profit motive.

Counter (and ideally exceed) capital's expansionist tendencies and create capacity to take advantage of capital's crises.

Transfer financial surpluses within and between communal projects across space, so that benefits would be shared and augmented, and not privatized (MietshäuserSyndikat, 2015).

Labor: pursue labor relations that guarantee a basic (minimum) income and are neither alienating nor dependent on (unpaid) social reproduction by women or low paid dangerous work by people of color and the working class.
Undermine the productivist emphasis on work.
Protect and support the value of all labor; compensate fairly.
Create the conditions for abundant livelihoods through diverse support systems.

An analysis of inequality is central to food justice. Drawing on practitioner analyses, we add 'trauma' to convey the embodied, generational burden of social inequality (see Coates, 2015). For some groups, it may be most important to deal with the traumas of loss of young lives and language, land and livelihood, in order to develop the sense of identity and the capacity to build sovereignty for themselves. Building capacity to adequately acknowledge and heal trauma is an initial reckoning that, in our experience, mainly white majority groups might also undertake as part of the process of embarking on a land care or labor-focused project. It is not only white people who need to understand inequality and trauma, though their privilege may require more hard thought. For example, if a group comprised of African Americans were to attempt solidarity with Latino farm workers, all involved would benefit from understanding how relations of race, class, and nation differently organize the spatial division of labor and control of wealth. Having begun to mention race and racial inequality, we pause here to define race.

4. Race and food space

The use and definition of 'race' is different in American and European social science and

humanities scholarship; it may be more typical, for example, in Francophone scholarship to refer to ethnicity. In Europe, so discredited is the term 'race' that some have sought to remove the word from legal and public discourse (Hermanin, Möschel, and Grigolo, 2013). For us, however, the concept of race is necessary to expose and critique racism. Race is "the complex assemblage of phenotypes and environments rearranged by colonialism and capitalism … [and] the material and mental division of bodies into groups according to shifting criteria" (Saldanha, 2011, p. 453). All bodies are racialized; race refers to *any* phenotype. Race has been and continues to be *an* organizing principle of many societies (Morris, 2001; Sansone, 2003; Moore, 2008; Saldanha, 2007; Athreya, 2011; Fassin and Fassin, 2006). That is, in many places around the world, people systematically attach value to phenotype, resulting in categorization, segregation, and inequality (Saldanha, 2009). The criteria for categorization may shift, but discrimination, so far, remains a constant.

The spatiality of racism in the U.S. food system manifests in urban segregation and gentrification (Block et al., 2008; Massey and Denton, 1993), landloss for people of color[6] and tribal communities (Ayazi and Elsheikh, 2015), and a division of labor in which disproportionate numbers of women and men of color work in low wage food chain jobs and experience inadequate health care, poor health, disproportionate stress, impoverished built environments, and exposure to obesogens (Rankine, 2015; Guthman, 2011; Lo and Jacobson, 2011).

The history of how capital and racism shaped U.S. housing and urban development is eminently instructive in understanding race, health and the right to the city (Pulido, 2000). Gentrification doesn't just happen; it has to be enabled. In that process there may be an opportunity for food movement advocates to theorize its connections to institutionalized racism and act to create a different food space. When an

[6] This term is used in the U.S. to indicate an experience of racism. We use it interchangeably with non-white. None of these terms is perfect. The label "people of color" can suggest a similarity of experience or cohesion in activism that has not always obtained. However, there are, of course, similarities of experience in, for instance, the often traumatic exclusion from the benefits of white privilege.

overwhelmingly white group of residents of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, invited Whole Foods (an organic, expensive grocery chain) to their gentrifying neighborhood, some were aware that they would displace a supermarket that stocked foods for a diverse and less wealthy Latino population (Rey, 2011; Anguelovski, 2015). Similarly, in South Minneapolis, Seward Coop encountered resistance to an expansion into a location between African American and Latino neighborhoods. Conflict arose over the dissonance between the neighborhoods' need for affordable housing and other basic necessities and Seward's desire to attract more customers able to afford relatively expensive foodie fare and to pay for fairer wages. Tensions were partially alleviated by Seward's decision to hire people representative of the neighborhood's composition (Ramage, 2015; Mullen, 2015; Moore, 2006).

Our research and that of others (Guthman, 2008) has seen similar instances where progressive food movement activists do not seem to understand or want to learn of these connections even though they would be loathe to knowingly create exclusive spaces. This is how white privilege works; white people disavow only *explicitly* racist acts, remain ignorant of how systemic racism works, and thwart methods to remove their unmerited privilege (Pulido 2000). Insistence on organic or fair trade has to exist alongside an understanding of the spatial politics linking middle class white comfort to white rural poor and urban Latino diets. However, changing the phenotype of the people demanding the organic grocery chain does not, *by itself*, alter the racial state, white supremacy, or the manner in which racism runs through the spaces of society. And we cannot argue that whatever food work people of color do is necessarily for justice and not biopolitical, neoliberal, or unfairly derived from someone else's suffering. A nuanced analysis of race and racism is fundamental to a *practice* of food justice that changes socio-spatial relations.

Aspirations to forms of fairness, as opposed to foodie consumerism, have been important to some food movement work on food insecurity and sustainable farming (*cf.* Paddeu, 2012). As we noted earlier, there is now increasing recognition of the need for

justice to be at the heart of food organizing. However, our research finds great variety in people's capacity to understand the extent of structural change such fairness requires, and in their willingness to keep discussions of trauma and equity in active consideration. In these organizations, we find that gaps develop between ideal and action, between strategy and capacity, as people struggle to translate between reflection and action. Below we provide a few defining features of the case study site and then discuss the data.

5. Observations from the case studies: creating space for food justice

Identifying barriers to confronting trauma and equity in Minnesota

Our respective studies were located in urban Minneapolis and St. Paul (the Twin Cities), Minnesota and the more rural southeast part of the state. These studies formed one part of locally-focused research into a number of food system endeavors that we each undertook. In the former, Rachel Slocum conducted interviews and participant observation as a member of the MN Food and Justice Alliance. Begun in 2008, and encompassing most of the major local food-oriented nonprofits in the area, the alliance was created to confront racial injustice in the food system as well as address competition among nonprofits for projects and funding. The research was interested in how the issue of racial inequality would be addressed in policy and programming. In the SE MN Foodshed Planning Initiative, Valentine Cadieux engaged in survey and ethnographic research involving advocates for food security, sustainable farming and a local food economy. How the initiative dealt with the issue of racial and class inequality was one research question. Our observations are derived from these specific cases as well as previous investigations we have conducted (see section 2)

Minnesota is the site of considerable work on sustainable food systems[7], a landscape dominated by commodity agriculture and extractive industries, and stark racial inequalities. The state's politics tend to be progressive. Notably, faith-based and secular sponsorship of refugees from East Africa and SE Asia has resulted in the second highest concentration of Hmong and highest of Somali people in the U.S. arriving into this 86% white state. In U.S. terms, the state was an early adopter of regional planning to confront the urban-suburban resource divide. But policy and prejudice have resulted in wealthy spaces that are more racially segregated (white) than poor ones (Goetz, Damiano, and Hicks, 2015). The differences between African American and white graduation rates and standardized test scores, health indicators, home-ownership and unemployment are among the worst in the nation. The dominant and best funded sustainable agriculture, food security, and anti-hunger organizations are illustrations of the critique that the food movement tends to be more white, affluent, and educated than average Minnesotans, creating white spaces where people shop and organize. Meanwhile farm and food chain workers (people who pick, process, package, distribute, serve, and clean up associated waste) are more likely to be people of color, undocumented, and/or newer immigrants. These groups are marginalized in rural communities still heavily invested in Scandinavian/Northern European identities that have had considerable difficulty publicly addressing demographic shifts brought by immigration and persistent equity issues remaining from colonization (LaDuke, 2004). This investment without a concomitant reckoning with racism is a formidable barrier as we discuss next.

Barriers to practicing food justice evident from our work reveal the way that the nation's foundational racism thwarts transformative change. The most obstructive barrier is a hesitancy to acknowledge, analyze, and address structural violence, a feature we have noted across our U.S. research sites. For instance, the majority of food movement

[7] This focus is exemplified by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and the Lamberton Station (the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center), which has been studying organic cropping systems for over 50 years.

leadership interviewed in the Northeast U.S. recognize the role of systemic racism in the food system, but saw their work as confronting a more powerful and important adversary, the corporate agrifood regime (Slocum 2006). Commodity agriculture's adversarial status is only sometimes understood in justice terms, and is more often framed in terms of environmental impact or health effects. And even those willing to address structural violence do not always know what to do – or what might be most effective – to change it. Twin Cities food movement advocates who joined the Minnesota Food and Justice Alliance (MFJA) were willing to put antiracism in their mission statement, but not to commit to analyzing how racism works and where it might be most possible to intervene. Survey results showed that members of the Southeast Minnesota Foodshed Planning Initiative were aware of the structural challenges facing migrant labor, but it was difficult to sustain interest when working groups were proposed to address these challenges. Instead, participants' comments revealed that these coalition members were most interested in addressing the problems of white society before those of non-dominant groups. The specific, proximate institutional barriers we found include the:

a. Failure to engage in an antiracist praxis based on an understanding of structural violence;

b. Ease of doing typical food projects compared to the seemingly overwhelming task of seeking food justice;

c. Silencing of food justice analysis through charity;

d. Desire to act on behalf of dominant groups, not those marginalized (e.g. Latino and other nonwhite, sometimes undocumented farm laborers);

e. Difficulty establishing alliances across racial and class difference.

Food movement advocates may undermine action on food justice by using the idea only superficially. For the MFJA, the attraction of vermiculture and hoop houses shifted attention from policy and programming that would confront racism. These two types of projects are important initiatives of an African American led organization (Growing

Power) that the group wanted to replicate but without Growing Power's analysis or connection to the local nonwhite community. In SE MN, local food provisioning and anti-hunger advocacy were both significant focal points for people striving to connect their food efforts to social justice. But engagement with a local food bank (charity) caused the group to decide they had done enough food justice.

Even when food justice was identified as important, and local organizations doing food justice (e.g. migrant labor rights) were identified, connecting with these organizations was often de-prioritized and displaced in conversation. In the case of both the MFJA and the Foodshed Planning Initiative, organizers acknowledged failures to attract grassroots membership, but did not seek alliance with relevant organizations. Instead, as is common in the food movement, they relied on nominal invitations 'to the table' without connecting to others' already existing work. This replicates the failure to inquire what 'they' were already doing that the MFJA and the Foodshed Planning Initiative could have supported instead of developing another white food movement space. Part of the difficulty in forming alliance is the physical and psychological racial distance (segregation) referred to earlier, which cannot be underestimated but can be addressed. The institutional structure of food movement work is another factor. These efforts tend to require intense competition for grants, strict conformation to rules made by grantors, and short-term quantitative evaluative mechanisms. This structure prevents the process we suggest, which is time consuming, and best discernible through more nuanced measures (e.g. compared to five years ago, who is in your network now and what roles does everyone play).

Alliance and the making of just food space

Agrifood landscapes (nonprofits, food processing plants, dinner tables) altered by the generative process of creating alternative power geometries will require building networks that typically do not exist for the reasons discussed thus far. The nodes proposed earlier are entry points for creating and building the solidarity necessary to

food justice. Solidarity is more than alliance, but central to it. Notwithstanding the difficult nature of working for equity and acknowledging trauma, there are practical avenues that organizations might pursue. The elements we find that increase capacity to build solidarity and alliance include:

a. A process that acknowledges power differences among actors;
b. Recognition of the need to work for systemic change based on an understanding of inequality;
c. Actions taken in solidarity;
d. A practice of alliance-building with justice-oriented groups; and
e. Collective actions to anchor ongoing collaboration.

The "geographies of power through which solidarities are fashioned [always shape] the character of the political alternatives they generate" (Featherstone, 2012, p. 30). Therefore, we suggest, first, that there is a process involved in the practice of food justice for which 'who benefits?' is a good beginning question. This question is the start of a conversation about power, which is necessary to institutionalize equity, whether the context is internal to an organization, in relationships with 'beneficiaries,' or in the building of coalitions. Those organizing for food change need to be intentional about creating space for the aspirations of the people with whom they work. Concerns about whether the process toward food justice is worth all the time it takes are most effectively met with the trenchant point that without addressing justice, food projects will not be successful.

Second, knowing the geography of racial inequality may help a (predominantly white) group become more visible to potential allies and better able to act in solidarity (as well as avoid solutions in search of a problem). Research is necessary to an understanding the materiality of institutionalized racism. It is on the basis of research and analysis that a group can pose good questions, determine useful points of intervention, and find issues on which to express solidarity. Such study may lead to particular analyses, questions and ways of engaging with a community (see examples in section 6).

Third, active translation by advocacy groups for immigrants, laborers, or other justice-oriented NGOs helps to induct food movement activists into justice work. Obviously the former might not want to help, perhaps with good reason. Having the resources for such induction is crucial as we noted earlier. Given the good possibility of defensiveness in such alliances, establishing guidelines for uncomfortable conversations is critical. The Minneapolis-based Movement Center for Deep Democracy uses exercises asking participants to commit to 'having each other's backs' throughout such discussions. In essence, this means that in conversations around race trauma, people feel able to enter the conversation knowing that even if they do not get the conversation 'right,' they will be supported in articulating their experiences of trauma and their questions about it. Finally, having a local project that provides concrete tasks as well as a platform to explain to the broader alliance how those projects meet the ideal of social justice can serve to keep the ideal of equity in play.

We find that there are great numbers of very interested people 'joining' the food movement yet, particularly in the case of white enthusiasts, many tend to have had little exposure to solidarity practice. Therein lies both great potential and enormous challenge for a food justice based on solidarity.

6. Discussion: producing the spatial politics of food justice

Differentiating the spatial politics of food justice from the food movement

The dominant food movement has privileged the local scale and the healthy 'consumer' body, suggesting that consumption, distribution, and regulation should be localized as it was in the pre-WWII romanticized past (see Deverre and Lamine, 2010). In so doing, it implicitly conflated 'more local' with 'more just' on the assumption that shorter supply chains ensure better social relations (DuPuis, Goodman, and Harrison, 2006). Its embrace of the consumer fails to see that, for neoliberal capitalism, people are irrelevant if they cannot consume – and many cannot. Much was made of the

relationships that could then develop between farmer and eater and the assumed improvements in food quality that such proximity bought. This spatial vision, and the farmers' markets, CSAs/AMAPs (Community Supported Agriculture/Association pour le maintien de l'agriculture paysanne), and farm-to-institution programs associated with local food exhibit a certain myopia, limited as they are to a bounded 'healthy food' radius. Strategies that rely on market mechanisms and consumers indicate another key locus of change for the food movement: the body. Bodies wealthy in time, money, and knowledge who are able to consume fresh, local food are central to the food movement's spatial politics. At the same time, those often heavy, typically poor, and disproportionately nonwhite bodies that do not eat this food are the targets of campaigns that pathologize and stigmatize rather than attack this power geometry.

Thus with its focus on consumer-driven market mechanisms and the racialized space of the healthier body, the dominant food movement's spatial politics has been non-relational. And, at the level of the organization, antiracism advocates within the food movement argued that power and resources were concentrated in white-led nonprofits who provided for nonwhite beneficiaries (food security), but did not seek to share or transfer power and ownership to them (Mascarenhas, 2002). Indeed, that we are using the term 'food justice' today is due in large part to the efforts of activist and academic antiracism advocates.

Food justice would suggest a different approach; rather than 'bringing good food to others' as a mode of redemptive action, food justice would pursue equity locally and globally by analyzing and acting upon structural inequalities. The spatial politics of food justice recognizes the relationality of place and the 'power-geometries' of foodscapes. A relational understanding sees place as an on-going process resulting from interconnections with other places and "the successions of meetings, the accumulation of weavings and encounters" that create its uniqueness (Massey, 2005, p. 139). It disavows essentialist understandings of place, which ascribe a fixed and static characteristic to places (Massey, 1994). The concept of power-geometries argues that

some people and locations have greater control over the flows of people, money, things and ideas constituting places. Greater control over flows cumulatively creates the forms of land, labor, and exchange relations of past, present, and future food spaces.

Using Massey's analytic framework, we suggest that the spatial politics of food justice would not characterize the problem as 'lack of access' in a 'food desert'[8]. Instead, it would see the socio-spatial processes involved in the food system for what they are – nutritional apartheid (Garrett, 2008; Kurtz, 2013), abandoned bodies in sacrifice zones (Harrison, 2008), or race war (Wadiwel and Tedmanson, 2013). The solution, or the space of change, then, would not be a supermarket, farmers' market, or healthy eating program aimed at certain bodies in a circumscribed location. If access is a function of wealth and income disparities disproportionately experienced by women and people of color (not proximity to a store with fruit that accepts food stamps), then the solution becomes finding a way to eliminate systemic racialized and gendered poverty more directly, such as a guaranteed basic income (see Weeks, 2012), or in the case of Europe, protecting and *expanding* existing social welfare and worker-centric programs.

This broader analysis linking income, race, gender, and survival is now gaining greater recognition. We see the spatial politics of food justice practiced in movements connecting across the food chain such as the Fight for Fifteen (and a union), the Food Chain Workers Alliance and the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United. In the NGO context on which this paper focuses, we see it in analyses, for instance, of the Food Justice Committee of the Brooklyn-based Greene Hill Food Coop's questions: "Does the storefront look like a white space?" and "Discussion of gentrification—is this the issue we should be focusing on?" (Greene Hill Food Coop, 2013). From North Oakland, California the NGO Phat Beets writes: "[a]s a food justice organization, Phat Beets Produce does not only work to support small farmers and farmers of color … we also

[8] 'Food desert' is a term given to places devoid of supermarkets and farmers' markets that provide people with fresh food. But like other words that fix the meaning of space (e.g. inner city, trailer park), it obscures the racialized, gendered, and classed processes that created places without affordable and/or nutrient dense food, not to mention ways to make a living. The concept is also problematic because it assumed that corner stores do not carry anything worth eating.

work to critique the institutionally racist policies that have led to the lack of access to healthy food in historically low-income communities of color in the first place, specifically North Oakland." Similarly, Planting Justice, also in Oakland, has produced a series of papers exploring the connections among race, war, colonialism, bodies, and prison. During the April 2015 protests in Baltimore over the death of yet another black man in police custody, Free Farm, a mostly white group associated with Food Not Bombs, supported protesters through 'culinary solidarity' – by bringing them food. Like these other collectives, the Freedom Food Alliance in upstate NY operates on an analysis of state violence (Penniman, 2015). These organizations have studied and sought to make explicit links to oppressive processes using food production and consumption as a *means* toward their amelioration. Through food, they may also create the breathing room necessary to build another world.

Neocolonial relationships (export cash cropping, standardization, land grabs, marketization of food infrastructure, and contract farming) that feed the wealthier north drive farmers from the land and toward the U.S. and Europe where they become agricultural labor (Wise, nd). In the new EU member states of Eastern Europe, farmers receive lower subsidy rates than others farmers in the old EU member states, but they still compete in the same market. While EU agricultural policy has promoted the dismantling of supply management policies and furthered uneven development by instituting unequal funding schemes, farmers have resisted. For example, during the recent round of reforms to the Common Agriculture Policy, Baltic farmers launched a campaign to demand equity and justice in EU agricultural policy (Blumberg, 2014a). However, farmers in the EU have struggled to enact a spatial politics of food justice and solidarity, often preferring instead to organize by defending their national, sectoral, or agri-export-oriented commodity group interests. This defense of narrow interests heightens competition, creating more losers than winners. Instead, the expansionary tendencies of capital need to be exceeded by dismantling privilege and expanding equity in agricultural livelihoods. It is with this idea in mind that movements like La Via

Campesina seek to create agrarian solidarity with agroecological, smaller scale farmers around the world in order to intervene in the EU and WTO against the neoliberal agrifood regime. Most recently in this progression of expanding the embrace of this vision, La Via Campesina seeks to connect this regime to migrant worker rights (see also the Agricultural and Rural Convention 2020).

Fair trade projects acknowledge and attempt to remedy some of these inequalities, but food justice involves practicing a more comprehensive ideal enabled by a global sense of place that enrolls people in responsibility for co-maintaining ecologically and socially livable food spaces all along food supply and waste chains, not only at the privileged endpoints of food trajectories. Success in such projects is largely due to transparent and accountable institutionalization of responsibility relationships along the food chain, something food sovereignty alliances have done particularly well. Where fair trade has failed is in abandoning emphasis on this more-than-market-exchange relationship in favor of economistic models of payment palatable to large food processors (Howard and Jaffee, 2013), and hence undermining commitments to *expand* fairness by instead relying only on a small premium for nominally more ethical production. Confronting the global hierarchies of privilege that have materialized through spatial inequality between places necessitates more than just fair trade; it also requires *reparations* for past injustices that can better level the playing field to create healthy and sustainable food production processes.

Though not reparations, the example of a successful class action case against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for practices that dispossessed Black farmers of their land addresses dispossession by providing payments to tens of thousands of people (see Carpenter, 2012). Apart from this example of outright discrimination in the recent past, rising property values and current tax rules make land ownership extremely difficult for farmers without inherited land or significant capital. Minnesota is one of the last states in the U.S. with effective rules in place to prevent corporate ownership of farmland. It does so by stipulating that farms must be owned by family farmers, not corporations

(e.g. pension funds such as TIAA-CREF or any non-family entity). The Minnesota Farmers Union and the Minnesota Food Association, among other NGOs, worked with the Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture to create exemptions to these rules in order to support immigrant, of color, women and new farmers[9]. These exemptions have allowed collective operations (e.g. the Hmong American Farming Association farm in Vermillion, MN, USA), however, the advocacy in support of the exemptions was done in ways that did not overturn the existing rule, which is itself considered a mechanism for equity. Smaller-scale agroecological farming networks in the U.S. have nowhere near the collective power they do in some parts of Europe, which is why these successes are so important. Both are examples of action on each of the four nodes: enabling access to land by more marginal groups through rule changes or redress, recognizing different modes of labor and exchange arrangements (MN example), and acknowledging and acting on the need for equity in the social production of food and farming spaces.

Solidarity and the spatial politics of food justice

Building community' is a phrase we often hear in dominant food movement discourse on food system change. But who is the community, where does it end, and what is its politics? What will building community *do*? Depending on the answer to these questions, the project may be more or less transformative. Evident in work that *calls* itself food justice is an intent to be 'together at the table.' But what is togetherness a gesture toward? In community building, or togetherness at the table, it seems accepted that relationships are key to social justice. The strategy suggests that through encounter, one person can be convinced of another's humanity, making progressive social change possible. This emphasis on relationships is in keeping with the food movement's strategy to change the food system one meal, person, neighborhood or 'community' at a time.

We can well imagine the individual benefit, and do not deny the profound importance

[9] https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=500.24

of face-to-face encounters to inspire empathy. Yet by this logic, we would need to meet a poor person to understand poverty and, more importantly, to develop policy to transform people's lives. To build change, person-by-person, community-by-community, undermines the capacity to pursue food justice because it requires constantly reinventing and re-establishing the reasoning for justice. Solidarity, to us, must mean something much more than the arousal of empathy through contact.

This one-by-one strategy seems particularly misguided when we consider that many white food movement activists are significantly *not* invested in nonwhite groups' well being, as evidenced by the failure to critique or work on the socio-spatial processes enabling white privilege. Recent analyses show that residential policy from the federal to local level has created ever more dense clusters of white wealthier people (Goetz *et al*. 2015). This spatial division of people along race and class lines diminishes white and wealthier people's sense of responsibility for the rest of society (Gloor, Lauzeral, and Leveugle, nd). From gentrification to trade agreements, privilege arranged these spaces, unfairly making some lives easier as a direct and indirect consequence of others' lives becoming more difficult (Massey 1994).

We would propose, instead, a spatial politics based on a broader solidarity, something that seems to be currently missing from the U.S. food movement, yet an aspect that appears crucial to more successful food justice organizing. In examples where food justice seems to be practiced, solidarity is based on understanding, acknowledging, and reworking the materiality of inequality and the way relational power functions. In practice, it means facing the difficult task of understanding and dismantling racism. This requires actively recognizing relationships among issues, institutionalizing methods that allow questions to be asked, and creating alliances with social justice advocates.

The ideal of justice is a universal principle that, as it travels globally, is taken up differently depending on the context. Following Anna Tsing's ethnographic approach of "see[ing] how universals are used" (Tsing, 2004, p. 9), it is important to show how food justice becomes engaged through the situated knowledge of those involved in its use.

Even if European and North American agrifood movements shared a similar concept of food justice, we would anticipate that European organizing around trauma and equity would be different given Europe's foundational and contingent traumas (including colonialism, genocides, the Holocaust, Stalinism) as well as different racial politics (including Islamophobia and xenophobia) and many different ways that racialization makes white, Roma, black, Jewish etc. visible across the region.

Solidarities are translocal "interventions in the material relations among places" in the interests of equity (Featherstone 2012, p. 18). With its focus on a (local) place, the food movement operates where people live as well as where 'the global' is formed. These are places from which many creative and far reaching experiments are being attempted (St. Martin, 2009). As others have argued, the spaces encouraged by the food and social or alternative economy movements (CSA, barter, LETS, edible schoolyards, land trusts, buying clubs, etc.) create social ties and a space for experimentation, "zones of transformative care" (Tsing, 2012, p. 45) and potentially new forms of social relations and alliances (Laacher, 2002; Slocum and Gowan, 2015; Cadieux, 2013a). The "rigorously organized anarchic collectives" that are Italian Solidarity Purchase Groups (GAS) seek to "transform sectors of [capitalism] into economies of trust, in which reciprocal respect, solidarity and co-production shift economic practice away from the sole consideration of profit maximization" (Grasseni, 2013, p. 109, p. 29 respectively). Some of these groups have sought to purchase in solidarity with migrant orange grove laborers in Sicily. Despite the upheaval Greeks are experiencing and the strengthening of the far right, we note the example of Greeks joining migrant strawberry pickers to successfully challenge exploitative living and working conditions (Gialis and Herod, 2014). These efforts to produce progressive space work at the nodes we have outlined (equity/trauma, exchange, land, and labor) to acknowledge relationships across food spaces and to perform solidarity in the transnational power geometries of food that have materialized through global hierarchies of race, class, and gender.

Though we see great potential in these possibilities, it is also apparent that there are solidarity gaps. Just as local-only solidarity is insufficient, so too are networks that build on privilege. GAS participants tend to be white and middle class (Grasseni 2013) and in the Aude's valleys, renowned networks that enable communal reliance through economic cooperation, barter, and non-alienated work are difficult for some to integrate (Cazella, 2001; Slocum and Gowan, 2015). As precarity increases in France, we hear of political leaders calling for an end to public assistance, while the suburbs remain places of harsh exile for people from the postcolonies (Gloor, Lauzeral, and Leveugle nd). Though European movements to protect farmers and workers inspire us, the example of Fortress Europe, formidable above the waves beneath which so many migrants now lie, suggests a dire need to expand solidarity beyond the white, Christian, documented, Western Europeans it currently seeks to protect. Equally untenable is a localized solidarity that excludes Ukraine, Turkey, Greece and the other countries – called PIIGS, a racializing term (Stavrakakis, 2013) – and instead forces them to accept the punitive measures of the IMF, Central Bank, and E.U. power centers. After the evisceration of the Greek state, the network building that has been necessary to recreate structures to sustain life after debt may *look* like the positive examples we have mentioned above (see Badiou and Kouvelakis, 2015). And surely these measures build politically and socially progressive spaces. But like similarly impressive creations in Eastern Europe and the global south, they may arise out of urgent necessity because the state is brutal, absent, or both, and desperation reigns. Universal rights declarations stand ready, but they need the force of translocal solidarity networks to demand the right to come ashore, create a life, and refuse austerity.

7. Conclusion

To practice food justice means to change agrifood space. Past and present socio-spatial relations structure food systems everywhere in deeply unequal ways. Racial inequalities, created under imperialism and colonialism, are today found in neocolonial extractive,

austerity-based, agrifood development regimes that are among the most important to alter. Food justice, as a radical ideal, seeks to transform these relations, often mobilizing around four nodes–equity/trauma, land, labor and exchange. The spatial politics of food justice involves both a *process of engagement* with people locally and globally and the creation of different modes of exchange, valuations of land and labor relations. The nodes are *entry points* for translocal solidarities that must be (and are being) created to secure justice. Though we do not want to write off smaller scale efforts such as those we cautiously lauded above, there is a need to refocus struggle around major changes at these four nodes. Our analysis of case studies from Minnesota, USA, and research we have conducted in several other places shows the difficulty of understanding and altering systemic racism, an action key to creating food justice. In light of groups' struggles to link justice aspirations to solidaristic action, we offer methods that groups can use to analyze and discuss power, organize around a progressive sense of place, and create meaningful alliances. Without these, there can be no (food) justice. Our emphasis on changing practice should not be misconstrued as an argument for merely improving the food movement's typical projects with a symbolic coating of antiracism. Though evidence of solidarity can be seen our studies, as well as in Greece and Oakland, on Soulfire Farm and in La Via Campesina's networks, the need remains to expand solidarities using food to claim justice.

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To quote this article: "Solidarity, space, and race: toward geographies of agrifood justice", *justice spatiale | spatial justice*, n°9, January 2016, http://www.jssj.org

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