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*Food Justice:
Looking Back, Looking Forward*

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Organic Valley (2015)


Speaker Honorarium & Writer



Food Justice: Looking Back, Looking Forward

Learning Objectives:

Participants will:

- 1) recognize the conceptual basis of food justice through recent justice issues that have been raised in national and international contexts;
 - 2) describe at least three considerations for food choices that positively impact food justice;
 - 3) Participants will identify three positive steps to support food justice.
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Food Justice: Looking Back, Looking Forward



<https://www.facebook.com/SNEBDSFS>

Why Food Justice?

“A people without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.”

– Marcus Garvey

Source: Bowens N. *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience, and Farming*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers; 2015, p. 76.

Food Justice:

- In 2000, the Editors of the journal *Race, Poverty, and The Environment* observed the environmental justice slogan that the environment is “*where we live, work, and play*” could be extended to “*where, what, and how we eat,*” i.e., food justice. (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2013)

Food Justice:

- “Under a food justice framework, access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is considered for its relationship to patterns of racial and class-based inequalities within society, from the built environment to institutional policies.” (Chen, Clayton & Palmer, 2015)

Food Justice:

- “Broadly, food justice extends community food security to consider the ways in which racial and economic inequalities pervade food system practices and processes, from production to food consumption to trade.” (Chen, Clayton & Palmer, 2015)

‘Creating A Bridge’

“Food justice, like environmental justice, is a powerful idea. It resonates with many groups and can be invoked to expand the support base for bringing about community change *and* a different kind of food system.

It has the potential to link different kinds of advocates, including those concerned with health, the environment, food quality, globalization, workers’ rights and working conditions, access to fresh and affordable food and more sustainable land use.”

Source: Gottlieb R, Joshi, A. *Food Justice (paperback edition)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; 2013, p. 5.

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina

Today's industrial-scale farms—called concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs)—house thousands of animals whose waste is periodically applied to “spray fields” of Bermuda grass or feed crops.^{2,3} The waste can contain pathogens, heavy metals, and antibiotic-resistant bacteria,^{4,5} and the spray can reach nearby homes and drinking water sources.

Source: Nicole, W. CAFOS and environmental justice. The case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2013;121:A182–A189. Available at: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/>

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina

The odor plume, which often pervades nearby communities, contains respiratory and eye irritants including hydrogen sulfide and ammonia.^{6,7,8} A growing body of research suggests these emissions may contribute not only to mucosal irritation⁹ and respiratory ailments¹⁰ in nearby residents but also decreased quality of life,¹¹ mental stress,^{12,13} and elevated blood pressure.¹⁴

Source: Nicole, W. CAFOs and environmental justice. The case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2013;121:A182–A189. Available at: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/>

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina

Although the Midwest is the traditional home for hogs, with Iowa still the top-producing state, North Carolina went from fifteenth to second in hog production between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s.¹⁵

This explosive growth resulted in thousands of CAFOs located in the eastern half of the state—squarely in the so-called Black Belt, a crescent-shaped band throughout the South where slaves worked on plantations.^{16,17}

Source: Nicole W. CAFOs and environmental justice: the case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*; 2013;121:A182–A189. Available at: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/>

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina

After emancipation, many freed slaves continued to work as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. A century later, black residents of this region still experience high rates of poverty, poor health care, low educational attainment, unemployment, and substandard housing.^{18,19}

Source: CAFOs and environmental justice. The case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2013;121:A182–A189. Available at: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/>

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina



This resident of Kenansville usually wears a facemask when he's in his yard because of the dust from the neighboring CAFO. Most studies suggest that communities already have high levels of poverty and large percentages of minority residents when CAFOs are built there. People who can afford to move away often do.

Source: CAFOS and environmental justice. The case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2013;121:A182–A189. Available at: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/>

CAFOs and Environmental Justice: The Case of North Carolina

The clustering of North Carolina's hog CAFOs in low-income, minority communities—and the health impacts that accompany them—has raised concerns of environmental injustice and environmental racism.²⁰

“[P]eople of color and the poor living in rural communities lacking the political capacity to resist are said to shoulder the adverse socio-economic, environmental, or health related effects of swine waste externalities without sharing in the economic benefits brought by industrialized pork production.”²¹

Sources: CAFOS and environmental justice. The case of North Carolina. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 2013;121:A182–A189: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/121-a182/> Also, see: Earthjustice – Petitioning the EPA on civil rights violations. Available at: <http://earthjustice.org/cases/2014/petitioning-epa-on-civil-rights-violations>

“If You Care About the Conditions of Farm Workers, It’s Probably Thanks to These Amazing People.”



A mariachi band performs under a United Farm Workers (UFW) banner at a rally in Salinas, California, in 1975. The UFW was cofounded by American Labor leader Cesar Chavez (*Photo: Cathy Murphy/Getty Images*). Source: Greenaway T. March 28th 2014.

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/03/28/ufw-legacy-and-modern-food-labor>

Fair Food Program



The *Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program* is a unique partnership among farmers, farmworkers, and retail food companies that ensures humane wages and working conditions for the workers who pick fruits and vegetables on participating farms. It harnesses the power of consumer demand to give farmworkers a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, and to eliminate the longstanding abuses that have plagued agriculture for generations.

<http://www.fairfoodprogram.org>

Fair Food Program Partners

(as of July 13th 2015)



Fresh Market (2015)

Walmart (2014)

Chipotle Mexican Grill (2012)

Trader Joe's (2012)

Sodexo (2010)

Aramark (2010)

Compass Group (2009)

Bon Appetit Management Company (2009)

Subway (2008)

Whole Foods Market (2008)

Burger King (2008)

McDonald's (2007)

Yum Brands (2005)

<http://www.fairfoodprogram.org/partners/>

Food Sovereignty:

- The right of persons to “healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.”
- Its focus requires examining the distribution of power in a food system and intervening to build local and community-based food systems that guarantee economic, social, and cultural rights, including rights for women, indigenous groups, and racial minorities.
- Some researchers describe the work of labor rights activists (e.g., **Food Chains Workers Alliance**) as falling under the food sovereignty frame (Holt-Gimenez and Wang, 2011; Chen, Clayton & Palmer, 2015).

Food Chains Workers Alliance:

“The Food Chain Workers Alliance is a coalition of worker–based organizations whose members plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food, organizing to improve wages and working conditions for all workers along the food chain.”

Our food system should:

1. Be democratically controlled;
2. Be managed by more cooperative ownership, less private ownership;
3. Provide local, healthy, sustainably produced food that is beneficial to both people and the environment;
4. Allow all to work with dignity, livable wages and meaning.

<http://foodchainworkers.org>

Conceptual Framework



AGROECOLOGY *is the integrative study of the ecology of the entire food system, encompassing ecological, economic and social dimensions.**

It focuses on working with and understanding the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment within agricultural systems. By bringing ecological principles to bear in agroecosystems through ecological intensification, novel management approaches can be identified, building on key interactions and strengthening “virtuous cycles” in agricultural production that would not otherwise be considered. – International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition (FAO, 2015)

*Francis C., Lieblein G., Gliessman S., Breland T.A., Creamer N., Harwood, Salomonsson L., Helenius J., Rickerl D., Salvador R., Wiedenhoef M., Simmons S., Allen P., Altieri M., Flora C., Poincelot, R. Agroecology: The ecology of food systems. *J. Sustain. Agr.* 2003;22:99-118.

Agroecology

- With its ecosystem foundation, the science of agroecology has become a powerful tool for food system change when coupled with an understanding of how change occurs in society...
- Agroecology has become much more than a science for developing better, safer, and more environmentally sound food production technologies.

Source: Gliessman S. Agroecology: growing the roots of resistance. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*. 2013;37(1):19–31. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10440046.2012.736927?journalCode=wjsa21>

Agroecology (cont'd)

- Agroecology is also a social movement with a strong ecological grounding that fosters justice, relationship, access, resilience, resistance, and sustainability.
- Agroecology seeks to join together the ecological and social cultures that helped human society create agriculture in the first place.

Source: Gliessman S. Agroecology: growing the roots of resistance. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*. 2013;37(1):19–31. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10440046.2012.736927?journalCode=wjsa21>

Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems –
Volume 37, Issue 1, 2013

Special Issue: Agroecology and the
Transformation of Agri–Food Systems:
Transdisciplinary and Participatory Perspectives

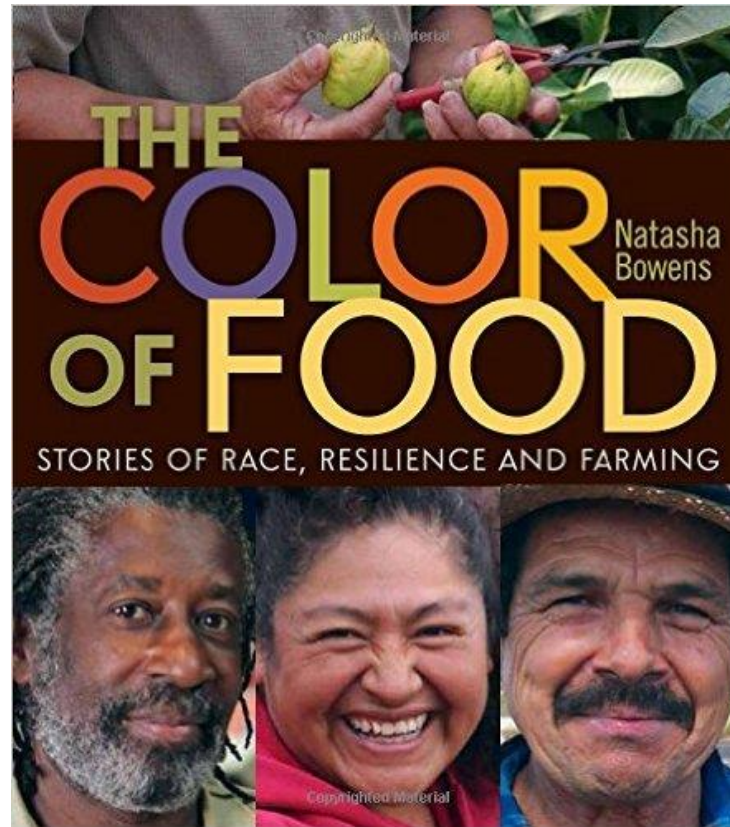
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wjsa21/37/1#.VafYXyzbLIU>

Mendez VE, et al.

**Agroecology as a Transdisciplinary,
Participatory, and Action–Oriented Approach**

THE COLOR OF FOOD

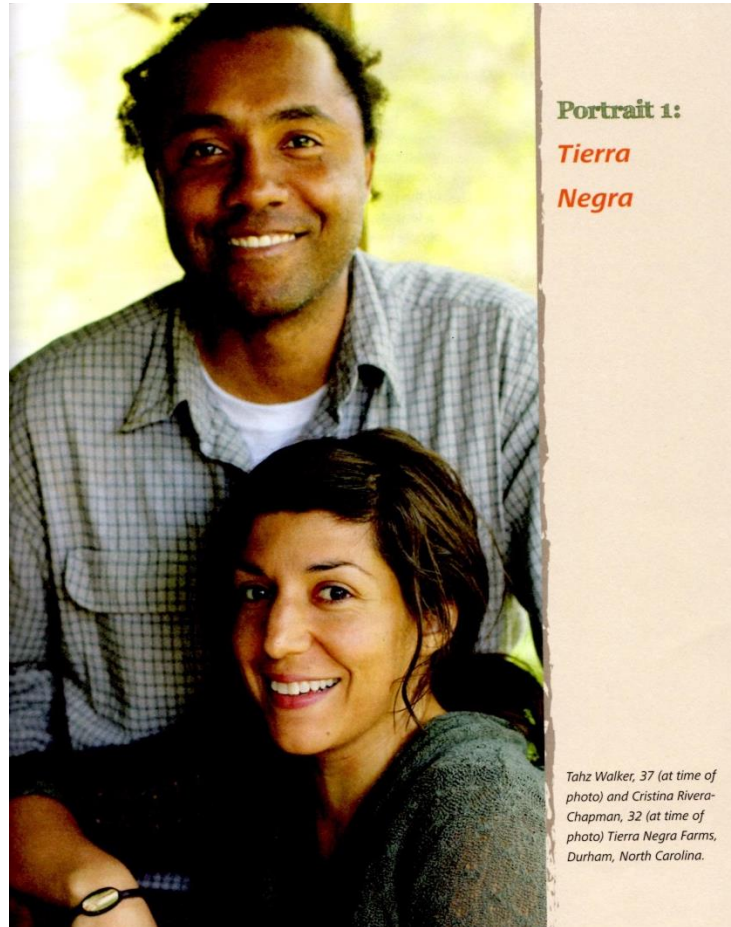
Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming (2015)



“Radical simply means grasping things at the root.” (p. 155)

– Angela Davis

Tierra Negra Farms (near Durham, NC)



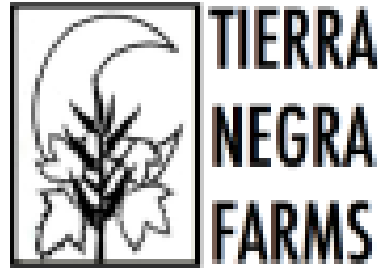
Portrait 1:

*Tierra
Negra*

Tahz Walker, 37 (at time of photo) and Cristina Rivera-Chapman, 32 (at time of photo) Tierra Negra Farms, Durham, North Carolina.

Source: Part 6: Generation Rising. Bowens N. *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers; 2015, p:159.

Tierra Negra Farms (near Durham, NC)



- Working to build food sovereignty at the community level.
- Some key elements include: Inter-generational connections, relationship and trust building, ‘healing work,’ multiple visions, and the ‘right solutions’ (i.e., solutions have to come from the community).

Source: Part 6: Generation Rising. In: Bowens N. *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers; 2015, pp:155–169. Also, see –

<http://tierranegrafarms.org>

Tierra Negra Farms

“Healing Work”

“I feel like that’s where also a lot of the healing work is really important too. Especially for people of color around land and farming, which has been incredibly oppressive, and there’s deep family history in that.

Joining a community of farmers or community garden project with a diverse group of people and not acknowledging the internalized oppression and racism that folks are carrying around is absurd.

Sometimes when we’re fighting against it, we still pass it down if we’re not doing the processing. It’s not something that you can check off a list. There aren’t road maps; it’s different for different people.”

– Cristina Rivera–Chapman

Part 6: Generation Rising. Bowens N. *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers; 2015, p. 159.

Agriculture Justice Project & Food Justice Certification



http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org/?page_id=13

Why Food Justice Certified?

Transparency = Trust



http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org/?page_id=13

Food Justice Certified Label

Sets rigorous standards for the respectful treatment of farmworkers, living wages, safe working conditions and collective bargaining rights.

The standards take into account:

- Rigorous standards for respectful treatment of farm employees
- Fair pricing for farmers
- Fair and equitable contracts for farmers and buyers
- Clear resolution policies for all throughout the food chain (e.g. farmers and business owners/managers and workers)

Source: <http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org/>

Food Justice Certified Label

The standards take into account (cont'd):

- A ban on full-time child labor altogether with full protection for children on farms
- Living wages for employees
- Safe working conditions
- Commitment to continual improvement
- Environmental stewardship through organic certification

Source: <http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org>

Jordan Brown's Farm – The Family Garden *“Taste the Fairness in North Central Florida’s* *Watermelons”*



Source: Agricultural Justice Project. June 9th 2015. Available at:
<http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/06.09.15-The-Family-Garden-For-Website.pdf>

Environmental Justice:

“Environmental justice means that every member of society, of the current as well as future generations, has the right to clean water to drink, pure air to breathe, lifelong food security, and all the richness of biodiversity to live with,” ...[Dr. Debal Deb – an ecologist turned farmer] says.

Source: Varma G. Seed Savior. In India, one man is keeping alive hundreds of varieties of heirloom rice. *Earth Island Journal*, Spring 2014. Available at:

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/seed_savior/

Environmental Justice Case Study Dr. Debal Deb (“India’s Rice Warrior”) –



Source: *Dr. Debal Deb – India’s “Rice Warrior”* (March 2014).

Available at: <http://www.seedsoffreedom.info/dr-debal-deb-indias-rice-warrior/>

Environmental Justice – International (cont'd):

- Deb's "Seed Ark" is a testament to nature's mind-boggling fecundity and ancient farmers' horticultural knowledge.
- Stored in the earthen pots are varieties that can withstand changes in temperature and climate, differences in soil nutrients, water stresses, and even ones with much-valued special aromas.

Source: Varma G. Seed Savior. In India, one man is keeping alive hundreds of varieties of heirloom rice. *Earth Island Journal*, Spring 2014. Available at: http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/seed_savior

Environmental Justice – International (cont'd):

“He is one of the people committed to the larger picture of food justice and social change in our food systems,” says Dr. Stephen Gliessman, Professor Emeritus at University of California–Santa Cruz, and a leader in the field of agroecology. “His work is a model for others in the movement.”

Source: Varma G. Seed Savior. In India, one man is keeping alive hundreds of varieties of heirloom rice. *Earth Island Journal*, Spring 2014. Available at:

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/seed_savior

Seeds of Freedom & Seeds of Sovereignty (Documentaries)

Seeds of Freedom (The Gaia Foundation)



<http://www.gaiafoundation.org/product/seeds-of-freedom-dvd>

Seeds of Sovereignty: a film from The Gaia Foundation and the African Biodiversity Network

“A story of hope, revival and commitment. A journey to restore seed and food sovereignty in Africa. A guide to anyone looking to secure agroecological farming systems around the world.”

<http://www.seedsoffreedom.info/more-films/seeds-sovereignty/>



IT'S TIME TO GO
BEYOND THE PEEL.

Join the Banana Revolution

- Increasing numbers of small-scale farmers are cultivating their bananas under the principles of “agro-forestry” – i.e., interspersing bananas with cacao and citrus trees, and cultivating organically and under shade to protect the farms’ natural ecosystems and the health of producers and consumers.
- The entrepreneurial and socially-conscious organization – El Guabo Association of Small Banana Producers (Ecuador) is gaining ground (innovative fair-trade organic banana program).

Sources: Fair Trade Certified – El Guabo, Ecuador

<https://www.msu.edu/~realfood/El%20Guabo-Ecuador%2004.pdf>

Join the Banana Revolution - <http://equalexchange.coop/blog/join-banana-revolution>

Action Steps to Support Food Justice Become an 'AgroEcological Educator'*

1. Become a 'seed keeper' – <http://www.seedsavers.org> or start a 'seed library' – <http://seedlibraries.weebly.com>
2. Grow a garden in your backyard or with a diverse group of people where you live (e.g., community/school garden).
3. Join a CSA – Community Supported Agriculture farm – go to: <http://www.localharvest.org>
4. Partner with local farmers/fishers who sell to direct markets; participate in a 'farm-to-institution program' – e.g., farm to hospital, farm to preschool/school, farm to college.

* 'Agro-Ecological Educator' – a term taken from R.A. Wight (2014) – based on a community-development framework inspired by the work of Paulo Freire, an educator & philosopher from Brazil who was a leading advocate of 'critical pedagogy' (i.e., Freire was a social change agent who worked with people to discuss ecological, economic, and personal health implications of food choices).

Action Steps to Support Food Justice

Become an 'AgroEcological Educator' (cont'd)

5. Host a screening of a food system documentary (e.g., *Food Chains*; *Food for Thought – Food for Life*; *Growing Cities*; *Hungry for Justice – Spotlight on the South*; *Seeds of Freedom*, etc.).

6. Purchase agricultural products from the ***Agricultural Justice Project*** – via **Food Justice Certified** label, farms & businesses, if available where you live:

http://agriculturaljusticeproject.org/?page_id=13

7. Support agricultural/food co-operatives and fair-trade certified products when making personal and institutional food and beverage choices.

Action Steps to Support Food Justice Become an 'AgroEcological Educator' (cont'd)

8. Review infographics & fact sheets available from *2014 Food Day, "Real Food, Just Food,"* at: <http://www.foodday.org/resources> & *2015 Food Day Organizer Guides* are available as well.

9. Learn more about "*Civic Ecology*" – Cornell University Civic Ecology Lab: <http://civicecology.org/> – "is founded on the belief that humans can act to enhance the social-ecological systems of which they are a part."

"Cleanups, community gardening and related [civic ecology](#) practices where people demonstrate care for their community and for nature are becoming part of national and global [civic renewal and civic environmental](#) movements." (Krasny, 2015)

Food Justice – Food for Thought

“Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

– PAULO FREIRE

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?