
Call For Papers

Justice spatiale – Spatial Justice

Special Issue: “Food Justice and Agriculture”

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This *Spatial Justice* special issue will focus on the notion of food justice, a notion that is well established in the research of English-speaking countries but has only begun to emerge in French-speaking ones. This notion stems from work in social justice (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010) and from discourse concerning the right to food (see also *food movement*), the risks of food insecurity in situations of poverty and precariousness, and the sustainability of food systems, primarily in North-American urban research. Research concerning developing countries has focused on other terms and other approaches, concentrating on hunger and food insecurity and addressing more urgent matters such as the food sovereignty of the population (Landy, 2006; Brunel, 2002).

An initial challenge appears immediately when defining food justice. As is the case with social justice and spatial justice, it seems easier to use negative formulations: food justice underlines first what is *denied* in the current food system (viz., inequality in access to food and in agricultural production conditions). Understood *positively*, it emphasizes the fair distribution of food resources within a given area, both in farming systems and in the supply chain. But this definition needs to be enriched, particularly by determining the spatial areas in which it is pertinent to use the notion

of food justice and to what kinds of actions it is appropriately applied. The first objective of this special issue is therefore to foster a better grasp of the spatial dimensions of food justice, in rural areas as well as in the urban ones.

We also identify a second regard in which there is a lack of knowledge about the links between food, agriculture and justice. Some connections between cities and rural areas, initiated by local players, have been analyzed in past research—e.g., the commercialization of small-scale productions in the developing countries (Chaléard, 1998; Janin, 2008; Moustier, 2002) and the short food supply chains or producers' markets in the developed countries (Boivin et Traversac, 2011; Maréchal, 2008). But interaction between consumers and producers is quite limited. Moreover, there is little research focusing on the way initiatives implemented by farmers to answer to the consumers' expectations could also create two-tier production and consumption areas, because of their different connections to the cities or to global supply networks. There is thus a lack of analysis concerning the abilities of local agriculture to reduce or enhance inequalities in and between metropolitan areas. What role do the producers' perceptions of consumers (and vice-versa) and the multiform exchanges between urban and rural areas play in the production of social and spatial inequalities? Furthermore, thinking about quality of food is necessary in thinking about "food access for everyone", but it doesn't come naturally in the recent studies about agriculture and the city. However, such a thematic raises a crucial issue for public health (e.g., food risks, use of pesticides, etc.) and also reflects new forms of inequality. Therefore, whereas food and agricultural questions are now considered from an urban research framework, this *Justice spatiale / Spatial Justice* issue offers us the opportunity to highlight the links between agricultural resources and food justice through the prism of production, commercialization, consumption and nutrition.

Lastly, the weakness of the link, so far established in the research, between food justice and environmental justice deserves to be underlined. Indeed, food represents our daily relationship with ecological systems, but it is not often associated with "nature", as an environment or as a way of subsistence. The relationship between food and environmental resources (including agricultural resources) is thus not well

identified. As a consequence, worrying about equal access to food resources does not imply worrying about developing better access to environmental resources. The last objective of this issue is thus to join food justice and environmental justice in one research framework, in order to consider inequalities of access to these resources in general.

Papers should concern developed, developing or emerging countries; and comparisons and transversal research are encouraged to go further than the classic chain-based approach. As most work on food justice concerns urban areas, the authors may also propose papers on rural and periurban areas, to contribute to an enhancement of the notion and to explore, in particular the link between agriculture and food justice.

We propose to debate along five main axes.

1. Theories, food justice and agricultures

Considering both the recent rise of the food justice notion (from studies on spatial justice) and its recent introduction into the research of French-speaking countries, the first axis focuses on the notion's theoretical framework. What common frameworks does food justice share with spatial justice, and is it possible to take food justice out of the activist context in which it has been developed? Beyond its critical dimension and the social and political commitment it supposes, what is the contribution of the food justice concept compared to other notions like hunger or food insecurity? What does this notion allow us to assert, reaffirm or highlight about the food and agricultural situations of areas at different scales and across the world? Why and how does the notion of food justice only appear at a late stage in France?

2. Agricultural resources facing food justice: what role for networks and flows?

Questioning food justice in a particular geographical area or by reference to a particular consumer group leads us to analyse food resource flows and particularly those of nearby or distant agricultural resources. Such an approach looks at economic and geographical access to the productive resources: do connections or disconnections in food systems (whatever the scale considered) and in supply

networks only matter when trying to understand situations of injustice? Is the city a necessary knot in these flows? Can rural areas provide new opportunities to build other kinds of flows?

3. Environmental justice and food justice

Focusing on the relationship between environmental justice and food justice leads us to consider reciprocal contribution of these two research topics. How does the increasing demand for local supply-chain and high food quality reveal new inequalities regarding air and soil pollution in the urban and periurban areas? Does soil quality reflect social and spatial inequalities that impact food quality? Why does the use of agricultural resources generate inequalities in the production of landscape, land tenure and symbolic representations? What kind of tool are initiatives by local authorities to preserve agricultural resources—urban gardening, for example? Are they tools that are intended to improve the urban landscape but that may hide a process of "green- gentrification"? Or are they tools for providing quality food for everyone, thanks to mass catering supply, for example? Does the new value (especially economic value) of urban and periurban agricultural land lead to further spatial fragmentations?

4. Governance, food justice and agriculture

A very broad spectrum of initiatives emerges from the institutional, private and civil society sectors to promote better food solidarity, from local to global—e.g., World Food Program, food stamps, "social grocery stores", food distributions, short supply chains for school restaurants. On the other hand, other initiatives highlight the increasing *control* on the food sector—e.g., through interferences between companies and consumers—whereas food sovereignty is now recognized as a crucial issue in developing countries. What is the relationship between the different key players and the agricultural resources? What are the different governance models in the food sector and which patterns of agricultural resources management do they try to impose? Do those initiatives and models build new injustices (e.g., in the social and medical field) or new forms of domination over consumers or producers?

5. Food justice, education and citizen initiatives: food justice as a tool to achieve social justice

The committed dimension of discourses and research on justice brings us to think about putting concepts in practice and about the role of agricultural resources in food justice initiatives. How different are the initiatives that foster greater food justice compared to the dominant food system? What role does agriculture play in that reflection? The food justice concept has a wide audience within schools; that's why we would like to encourage papers about initiatives in the field of education, awareness and training: how do those initiatives act as guidelines for involving people in achieving greater social justice, through a greater food democracy (defined as the involvement of the population in food initiatives)? How might a better understanding of agricultural areas and producers lead to change consumers' food patterns?

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