



## Bridging good food and good jobs: From secession to confrontation within alternative food movement politics



Justin Sean Myers<sup>a,\*</sup>, Joshua Sbicca<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Marist College, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, USA

<sup>b</sup> Colorado State University, Department of Sociology, Fort Collins, CO 80523, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 1 July 2014

Received in revised form 2 February 2015

#### Keywords:

Alternative food movement

Food chain worker

Food desert

Food justice

Labor movement

Wal-Mart

### ABSTRACT

Much of the alternative food movement is predicated on a prefigurative politics of building alternatives to the conventional agrifood system, with only a smaller segment invested in a politics of confrontation with that very same system. In the context of actually existing agrifood relations, this raises a number of concerns. First, the movement often ignores challenging race and class inequality within the agrifood system in favor of realizing environmental sustainability and supporting small farmers. Second, corporate agribusinesses often co-opt the movement's consumer-centric and health-centric framings to legitimate low-wage big-box retail development in low-income urban communities. Third, the movement does not always recognize how low-income urban communities are developing language and tactics to shape local economic development. In this article, we investigate new alliances between alternative food organizations and labor organizations that use confrontational politics to demand greater food justice and economic justice in the conventional agrifood system. Specifically, we focus on struggles against Wal-Mart in New York City and Los Angeles and the discourse of "Good Food, Good Jobs," which is used to build alliances between alternative food activists and labor activists working to address the root causes of food insecurity and food deserts. We find that at the core of the Good Food, Good Jobs discourse is a politics committed to increasing the power and health of food chain workers, and more broadly, the communities within which they live, by rejecting the tradeoff between food and jobs, which empowers working class people to shape the development of their communities.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### Introduction: beyond just good food

Over the last decade popular buzzwords in much of the United States (US) alternative food movement (AFM) have been "buy local," "go organic," and "support local farmers." If you have read a food magazine or attended a food event odds are you have come across articles, shirts, stickers, or pins that put you on notice: "Meet Your Farmer," "Know Your Farmer," "Every Family Needs a Farmer." The USDA has even launched a "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" campaign. While this cultural diffusion gets people to think about where their food comes from and who grows their food, this discursive and strategic preference is also problematic because it reinforces the long-term bias within US culture toward the White yeoman farmer, and ignores the reality that most food chain workers are Black and Latino/a wagedworkers in the sectors of production, processing, and retail (Allen and Sachs, 1992;

Allen, 2004; Alkon and Agyeman, 2011; Alkon and McCullen, 2011; Liu and Apollon, 2011). Moreover, the working conditions and pay for these food chain workers are generally the worst, not just within the agrifood system, but the overall economy (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2012).

These problems are not addressed through a farmer-centric politics; in fact, they are intensified through the economic logics and spaces that emerge within the AFM (Alkon and McCullen, 2011; Guthman, 2011; Alkon, 2012). By prioritizing local smallholder agriculture, environmental sustainability, and an economic model of paying more for food the loudest voices in the AFM promote a niche market rooted in affluent, often White, consumers voting with their forks (Slocum, 2007; Guthman, 2008a, 2008b; Alkon, 2012). This foregrounds a prefigurative politics of flight, exodus, or counter power that invests the resources of the AFM into constructing new standalone local agrifood systems, which preferences secession *from* rather than direct confrontation *with* the conventional agrifood system (Kloppenborg et al., 1996; Allen, 2004; Lyson, 2004). Such a politics often reinforces a neoliberal consumer-based social change model and marginalizes the voices of

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [Justin.Myers@Marist.edu](mailto:Justin.Myers@Marist.edu) (J.S. Myers), [j.sbicca@colostate.edu](mailto:j.sbicca@colostate.edu) (J. Sbicca).

those in the movement fighting the structural conditions of the conventional agrifood system. In doing so, the AFM has generally ignored the working conditions and livelihoods of food chain workers in the urban centers where the AFM is most prevalent.

This oversight becomes particularly salient in the conflict over how best to combat food deserts, areas where activists and policy makers deem fresh, healthy, and affordable food hard to come by, if not altogether absent. The AFM often posits farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), urban agriculture, and corner store conversions as the solution, while Wal-Mart and Michelle Obama put forth big-box discount stores and low-wage capitalism as the solution. In either of these cases, the overwhelming focus is on supply side dynamics rather than demand side problems, which translates into efforts to create spaces of consumption where food can be brought to the poor instead of combating the economic inequality and poverty that creates food insecurity and food deserts in the first place. In doing so, both the AFM and Wal-Mart merely address the symptoms of poverty, food insecurity, and food deserts, and ignore a root factor, lack of good jobs.

This article documents two examples of new AFM alliances between food and labor activists that challenge race and class inequalities within the conventional agrifood system, specifically the lack of good jobs. The first is based in New York City (NYC) and the second occurs in Los Angeles (LA). These new coalitions are not focused on prefigurative or stand-alone alternatives, but on improving the conditions of work within the conventional agrifood system, and are brought together by the discursive frame of “Good Food, Good Jobs” (GFGJ), which unites notions of food justice and economic justice. Through an analysis of the GFGJ discourse in NYC and LA we document a more confrontational food politics than those epitomized by the slogans of buying local and eating healthy, one that seeks to prevent Wal-Mart from locating in low-income urban communities in favor of higher wage unionized grocery stores.

Alongside documenting the emergence of such alliances, the discourse and organizing device of GFGJ offers both theoretical and practical insights into a food politics that strives for economic security, social mobility, and public health. First, by linking economic insecurity to poor food and poor health the discourse strategically undermines Wal-Mart’s urban development strategy that exploits the public health crisis of diet-related diseases to address its economic growth crisis. The discourse thereby rejects the neoliberal consumer health framework used by Wal-Mart, which states that lower prices, instead of better jobs, is the best way to address food insecurity and food deserts. It also rejects the implicit assumption of Wal-Mart that low-income communities have to choose between good food and good jobs rather than being able to have both.

Second, GFGJ pushes against a model of social change that privileges secession. On their own, environmental and health centric discourses limit and concede many important structural battles on the ground that prefigurative solutions are preferable and sufficient. In avoiding the concerns of non-farmer food chain workers, there is a missed opportunity to build a broader based movement around matters of class and race inequities, worker rights, and control over the production, appropriation, and distribution of the social surplus. Additionally, the thin labor analysis in much of the AFM is a factor in why Wal-Mart’s healthwashing<sup>1</sup> has such a ready pull; local food advocates have primed consumers to focus on good food and good health and ignore labor rights issues.

<sup>1</sup> We use this term to refer to the practice of using health in order to mask socially or environmentally problematic practices. While health advocates will use this term to refer to misleading food labeling practices (e.g. “all natural”), we want to highlight how “healthy” food hides labor exploitation.

Third, activist’s notion and practice of GFGJ pushes scholars to consider the growth and transformation of the AFM through new alliances operating inside and outside conventional agrifood systems. If the AFM is invested in systemically improving the living conditions of communities that face poverty and diet-related diseases then it is important to challenge the actors that structure food environments and the distribution of wealth. This requires attending to confrontational forms of politics reflected in cross-movement alliances that include all food chain workers, emphasize labor rights, and prioritize economic justice.

### **Tension between secessionist and confrontational politics in the alternative food movement**

Over the past few decades, industrial agriculture has been subject to critique by a growing and networked group of farmers, environmentalists, consumers, and activists (Friedmann, 1993; Feenstra, 1997; Allen, 2004; Qazi and Selfa, 2005). This broad-based movement takes many different names: civic agriculture, slow food, food sovereignty, and food and environmental justice (Lyson, 2004; Shiva, 2005; Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010; Petrini, 2010; Wittman et al., 2010). We refer to these interconnected activists and organizations as the alternative food movement. Despite differences, there are common themes that bind the AFM together. In short, the AFM claims that corporate industrial agriculture harms the planet, farmers, democracy, and our bodies. It does so by degrading ecosystems, denying smaller agricultural producers the capacity to make a living, concentrating control of the agrifood system into the hands of a small number of corporations, and giving consumers diet-related diseases.

Overall, the dominant political logic within the US AFM incorporates components of civic agriculture, locavorism, and slow food, and reflects a secessionist wing of the movement that is pro-farmer, pro-sustainability, pro-good food, and consumer and market centric. The primary concern of this wing is the negative effects that emerge from the alienation of the food producer and consumer from each other and the land; a problem whose solution is said to require the relocalization and repersonalization of food production and consumption (Kloppenburger Jr. et al., 1996; Allen, 2004; Qazi and Selfa, 2005; Hinrichs and Lyson, 2007).

The catchword for this relocalization process is the “foodshed,” which embeds food relations “socially, economically, ethically, and physically...in particular places” (Kloppenburger Jr. et al., 1996: 38). Ecologically, localizing food with smaller biodiverse farms will embed food production in local ecosystems and improve the sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems. Economically, such farms can use direct retailing like farmers markets, CSAs, and farm to school and restaurant programs to capture more of the food dollar. By moving toward a lower volume higher price model rooted in biodiversity small farmers are able to become ecologically as well as economically sustainable. Politically, local food rooted in an economically independent middle-class of small farmers is presumed to recreate “civic capital” and community relations. With this comes increased democracy at the town level as inequality in employment, income, and power is minimized through preventing the polarization of economic and political structures into wage-laborers and corporations. Physiologically, local food that is minimally processed is claimed to be higher in nutrients and lower in the salts, sugars, fats, and oils of many processed foods found in grocery stores and fast food restaurants. Consequently, local food is healthier food and can reduce the prevalence of diet-related disease.

To realize these goals, advocates often call for the AFM to work from interstitial food spaces in the hopes of developing emergent transformations. This requires AFMs, as “movements of self protection,” to prioritize the dual processes of “secession” and “succession” (Kloppenburger Jr. et al., 1996: 37). The principle of

secession is based on producers “disengage[ing] from the existing food system” and creating alternatives to the conventional system, such as those mentioned previously (Kloppenburger et al., 1996: 38). Secession helps set the foundation of the foodshed. The second process, succession, requires consumers to reallocate their commitments and resources away from the conventional agrifood system and toward alternatives. That is, it preferences supply side solutions to problems within the conventional agrifood system. For ease of use, we refer to this dual process as secessionist politics.

Despite its prominence, the secessionist politics of the dominant wing of the AFM is not the only political logic in the movement. The AFM is riveted by tensions between a secessionist wing that privileges prefigurative actions, avoids engaging the state, and focuses on voting with one’s dollar and a confrontational wing that seeks systemic change within the conventional agrifood system, emphasizes the positive regulatory power of the state (e.g. through leveraging some of the 200 US food policy councils), and prioritizes labor rights and economic justice (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002; Johnston, 2008; McClintock, 2014; Sbicca, 2014). This confrontational wing has raised several critiques of the secessionist wing, based on the limits that such a model places on: building political power, challenging corporate control of the agrifood system, and developing progressive demand side solutions.

First, food localization projects do not always reduce inequality but may actually reaffirm or intensify inequalities (Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2003; Dupuis and Goodman, 2005; Qazi and Selfa, 2005). This is not due just to insider/outsider dynamics and how these dynamics are classed, raced, and gendered; the AFM’s economic model of paying more for food may prevent the participation of lower income communities (Hinrichs, 2003; Slocum, 2006, 2007; Alkon and McCullen, 2011).

Second, the AFM’s motto of “voting with your fork” has produced a missionary politics of “bringing good food to others.” In these food projects middle and upper class White outsiders emphasize making proper food choices through nutrition education programs while opening a few farm stands and farmers markets in lower income communities (Guthman, 2008a, 2008b, 2011). The consumer orientation behind such projects creates solutions based on a lack of education, despite evidence that price points and limited disposable income are key barriers to consumption of local produce (USDA, 2001; Briggs et al., 2010; Alkon et al., 2013). Lower income families already pay a higher percentage of their income on “food at home” than do middle and upper income families (Goldstein and Vo, 2012). Expecting them to pay more for food without increasing their income contributes to a regressive economic and food politics.

Third, AFM practices predicated on secessionist politics often operate alongside conventional food spaces in a non-antagonistic manner and even face the prospect of co-optation. Despite the growth of the AFM, the conventional agrifood system is larger, more powerful, and more concentrated than ever before (Howard, 2009; McMichael, 2011). This is increasingly apparent with the conventionalization and industrialization of organic food (Allen and Kovach, 2000; Delind, 2000; Guthman, 2004; Howard, 2009; Johnston et al., 2009). Therefore, while the AFM has developed strong networks to create new supply chains, these networks tend not to prioritize building broad based coalitions that can challenge the existing political and economic forces shaping the conventional agrifood system.

Fourth, small farmers, environmental sustainability, and good food consumerism are privileged over economic justice and labor oriented politics that focus on the conditions of food chain workers (Harrison, 2011; McMillan, 2012; Holmes, 2013; Jayaraman, 2013; Gray, 2014). Relatedly, millions of conventional food chain workers lose a powerful political ally that could help advance a fair food ethic for more than just farmworkers (Jayaraman, 2013; Gray,

2014). In short, a consumer-based political logic that avoids challenging corporations or the state at the point of labor overlooks the important role conventional food chain workers play in connecting ecological, economic, political, and physiological critiques of industrial agriculture.

Advocates of a confrontational political logic seek to recenter the AFM on how to change the structures of the conventional agrifood system to realize environmental sustainability and social justice. This more confrontational wing seeks state-based reforms that shape food labor conditions, demand side approaches that make it easier for consumers to eat healthy and sustainable food, and structural changes that ensure the long-term sustainability of agricultural practices. These activists often push for labor rights, seek to ban pesticides, aim to remove genetically modified seeds or label the products containing such ingredients, and/or ensure public policy maintains food safety (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010; Nestle, 2010; Schurman and Munro, 2010; Harrison, 2011).

In what follows, we focus on food activists who confront the state and Wal-Mart over the issues of economic inequality, food deserts, and labor exploitation. In their eyes, an AFM that privileges local food and small-farmers and ignores urban food chain workers misses an important opportunity to bridge a range of concerns that can improve conditions within the conventional agrifood system while building support for alternative agrifood systems.

## Methods

Data for this article comes from two separate projects with overlapping interests and methods. While the contexts in NYC and LA vary, they are both major metropolitan areas with significant racial and ethnic diversity, large working class and working poor populations, historically strong labor movements, and more recently, influential alternative food movements. They are also both key urban markets for Wal-Mart’s growth strategy and in each city there have been pitched political battles over the siting of Wal-Mart stores, which offers insights into more labor based confrontational discourses and tactics in the AFM.

The first author’s data on Wal-Mart in NYC emerges from ethnography, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and archival materials. For over two years, he spent three to four days a week as a volunteer at the food justice organization East New York Farms! (ENYF!) and a community gardener at Hands and Heart Garden in East New York. He assisted ENYF! staff, youth, and community gardeners in the planting, growing, and harvesting of produce from urban farms and community gardens as well as its sale at the ENYF! farmers market and farm stand. He also participated in monthly meetings for the organization as well as the garden, served as a facilitator for garden meetings, and attended monthly skill-based workshops and town hall meetings. Alongside the fieldnotes derived from these experiences, he conducted 10 interviews, lasting between one to four hours, with ENYF! staff and community gardeners. He also collected archival materials including internal documents of ENYF!, reports from civil society organizations, and electronically accessible newspapers.

The second author’s data on United Food and Commercial Workers 770 (UFCW 770) and struggles over Wal-Mart in LA also comes from ethnography, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and archival sources. He spent three months as an intern with UFCW 770, during which time he also had regular interaction with Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) and Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE).<sup>2</sup> Over the course of 20–40 hours a week, he undertook administrative office duties such as developing maps and

<sup>2</sup> FCWA is an alliance made up of organizations fighting to improve food chain worker livelihoods. LAANE is an organization working to improve the economic security of working class people throughout LA.

surveys, calling strategic community partners to participate in various demonstrations, assisting with preparation for meetings with community activists and business owners, visiting workplaces, and participating in union and alliance protests. In addition to fieldnotes that recorded day-to-day operations and conversations, 19 interviews, lasting one to two hours were conducted with union leadership, organizers, and key strategic partners. Last, he collected and analyzed archival sources to reconstruct and verify relevant histories. These include internal records and documents, virtual materials such as Facebook postings, media coverage such as newspapers, and non-profit and government reports.

### **Background: Wal-Mart's food desert challenge to unionized labor**

There are many different organizations and interests working to end food deserts, but one of the most visible is Wal-Mart. Although it did not begin in grocery retailing, Wal-Mart has made significant inroads into the industry since the 1990s. Today, the company is the single largest purchaser of US agricultural products and a little over half of its sales come from groceries (Food and Water Watch, 2012). Wal-Mart is also the biggest customer of Dean Foods, General Mills, Kraft Foods, and Tyson Foods. In 29 domestic markets Wal-Mart controls 50% of grocery sales, while nationally the company controls about 33% of the grocery market; its closest competitors, Kroger, Safeway, and SuperValu, each control four to nine percent (Lichtenstein, 2010).

Although the social and economic effects of Wal-Mart are mixed (Bonanno and Goetz, 2012), public perception backed by an increasing number of studies suggests that the company contributes to driving down the living standards of millions of people globally. These processes have been particularly apparent within the grocery retail sector (Wood, 2013). Grocery retail has long served as one of the few sectors where people without a college degree can earn livable wages, receive a range of benefits, and work in a safe environment. One reason for this is the historic power of unions to expand and maintain union density through the growth and decline of US manufacturing (Vidal and Kusnet, 2009).<sup>3</sup> For instance, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which primarily represents grocery retail workers, is the second largest private sector union in the US. However, the entry of Wal-Mart into grocery retailing has forced major supermarket chains in low-income areas – most of which are unionized like Kroger – to reduce prices and employment, which sometimes leads to exit (Ellickson and Grieco, 2013). At the same time, the entry of Wal-Mart can decrease retail employment levels and reduce wages and benefits (Artz and Stone, 2006; Neumark et al., 2008). Wal-Mart's unionized supermarket competitors have used this shifting landscape to seek concessions from workers in order to stay in business, partially because their economic performance diminishes with the entrance of supercenters (Volpe, 2014). One of the overall impacts for workers is that as Wal-Mart has increased market share, union membership levels have not kept pace with core industry leaders, and their bargaining power has weakened (Hurd, 2008). In short, Wal-Mart is a direct threat to unionized grocery retail workers and shifts the food work landscape for working class communities away from middle class mobility.

Despite the negative consequences of the “Wal-Mart effect,” it is precisely its purchasing power, market saturation, and logistical networks that are being leveraged by Wal-Mart and Michelle Obama and framed as an asset that can eliminate food deserts and counter the public health crisis of diet-related disease (Obama,

2011; Wal-Mart, 2011a, 2011b).<sup>4</sup> Wal-Mart has stated that it will open or expand between 275 and 300 stores serving over 800,000 people in food deserts by 2016 (Wal-Mart, 2011b). This expansion is on top of the company's claim that it has already opened 218 stores in food deserts since 2007, which would take the total from 2007 to 2016 to over 490 stores serving 1.3 million people. Proponents argue that healthy, and to a degree, organic food, can become affordable through Wal-Mart's economic model premised on low prices, low wages, high product turnover, and high volume sales. Contradictorily, the entry of Wal-Mart into communities is associated with increases in poverty (Goetz and Swaminathan, 2006), which is the condition under which many scholars contend food deserts are produced in the first place (Walker et al., 2010).

Wal-Mart's diagnosis – that food deserts are unhealthy spaces in need of big box stores – reflects a broader neoliberal corporate strategy to convince the public that solving these problems requires the expansion of corporate consumption spaces rather than equitable economic development (Ken, 2014). The major problem with the Wal-Mart/Obama framing is that it is a cover for a necessary act of market expansion for a company struggling with economic stagnation (Holt-Giménez, 2011). From the 1960s through today, Wal-Mart's growth has occurred primarily in rural and suburban areas that have started to reach the limits of market saturation: same-store sales have declined for nine straight quarters, from 2009 to the second quarter of 2011, and for all four quarters during 2013. Anticipating this growth problem, Wal-Mart started looking in the early 2000s to expand into urban areas. Yet, since these urban areas are also traditionally the home of unions, Democrats, and liberals who are often opposed to Wal-Mart, the company has sought to use the language of combatting food deserts to break down these barriers to growth (Holt-Giménez, 2011).

Wal-Mart's efforts have not gone without notice though; they have been met in many instances with contestation by alternative food organizations, labor unions, city officials, community groups, and small business organizations. These groups have championed an alternative logic to Wal-Mart's supply-side economic model and anti-labor practices. In contrast to a stand-alone healthy food discourse, which is usually associated with secessionist strategies, a diverse set of activists and organizations in NYC and LA have articulated the discourse of “Good Food, Good Jobs” to support a confrontational politics that unites food, environmental, health, and labor concerns around the notion of economic and food justice.

### **There will be no Wal-Mart plantations, for there are no slaves, in East New York, Brooklyn**

East New York is located in the easternmost section of North-Central Brooklyn. Home to more than 183,000 people, the community is 51% Black, 39% Latino, 2% White, with a large number of the Black and Latino/a residents identifying as Caribbean (NYCDP, 2012). It is also a low-income community struggling with poverty, unemployment, and crime due to a legacy of redlining, urban renewal, and planned shrinkage (Posner, 1977; Eisenberg, 1999; Pritchett, 2003; Thabit, 2005). In East New York municipal disinvestment and white flight entailed grocery store flight and real estate redlining became de facto food redlining. Access to and affordability of fresh healthy produce emerged as a problem because the community either contained bodegas that sold no produce at all, was dominated by fast food restaurants, lacked grocery stores, or had a few grocery stores that primarily sold expired,

<sup>3</sup> There has still been a slow decline in union density in grocery retail, from 34% in 1983 to 17% in 2011 (Volpe, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> That food causes obesity (e.g. food deserts/food swamps) is highly contested (cf. Guthman, 2011).

moldy, and spoiled foods (Pratt Planning Studio, 1996; Gecan, 2002, 2003; NYCDPC, 2010).

East New Yorkers were not content with this situation though and have sought out access to fresh and affordable produce through protesting existing stores, shopping outside the community, and growing their own produce in backyard and community gardens (Gecan, 2002, 2003; Thabit, 2005; NYCDPC, 2010). They have also supported the city's efforts to create healthy bodegas, green street vendors, and use financial and zoning incentives to lure grocery stores and supermarkets back to their neighborhoods. Yet when rumors began to circulate that Wal-Mart was targeting East New York, community residents aligned with politicians, unions, community organizers, and small businesses to prevent such an occurrence based on notions of racial and economic justice, in spite of the fact that Wal-Mart would bring fresh affordable produce to the community.<sup>5</sup> For these groups, addressing food deserts means more than just access to produce.

Two outspoken critics of Wal-Mart were City Council speaker Christine Quinn (D – Manhattan) and City Council member Charles Barron (D – East New York). At a rally supported by the UFCW and led by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), Christine Quinn stated her opposition to a company with a history of racial and sexual discrimination, low wages, and employee reliance on public subsidies,

Wal-Mart's corporate philosophy...runs counter to the core values of New York City...Now we...need to get more retail establishments, particularly those that sell supermarket food good for people...[b]ut...we [a]re clear about the types of supermarket jobs we wan[t] and that we wan[t] them to be assets to the community...That simply is not Wal-Mart (Lombardi, 2010).

Mr. Barron has used less diplomatic language when speaking about Wal-Mart, calling the company a "roving plantation" that is not welcome because "there are no slaves in East New York" (Stewart, 2011). He has also publicly critiqued the Wal-Mart/Obama alliance for using the public health crisis of diet-related disease to reinforce low-wage development models in Black communities,

[F]ar too often when you travel through low-income communities like ours you see McDonalds and fast food. This fast food is killing us...creating obesity and diabetes...when you walk around, get off the subway, all you see is fast food...Michelle Obama might be right about food but she is wrong about Wal-Mart. We want jobs and work that allows you to unionize, have a pension, a living wage, there is nothing better than a living wage.

In order to stop more low-wage development in East New York, Mr. Barron has tried, with the aid of his wife, Assemblywoman Inez Barron (D – East New York), to block Wal-Mart's entrance by preventing a land sale between the city and Related Companies, whose Gateway Center complex would have Wal-Mart as an anchor store (Tracy, 2010). Because the City Council has no official power to block who Related Companies leases space to and since the city already approved the shopping mall project one of the major plays left – besides community organizing to create a pro-union anti-Wal-Mart climate – has been to refuse to allow the land transfer to occur.

<sup>5</sup> This capacity of Wal-Mart was tacitly supported by Mayor Bloomberg but he used little political capital to ensure Wal-Mart moved into East New York. Given high unemployment rates and lack of grocery stores in the community, local politicians and religious and community leaders met with Wal-Mart in closed-door meetings in an attempt to ensure local hiring and above average wages. While not all community residents were anti-Wal-Mart they were worried about local economic impacts and whether Wal-Mart jobs would be pathways out of poverty.

Alongside politicians, unions have played a particularly important role in organizing to keep NYC Wal-Mart free. The International President of the UFCW, Joe Hansen, emphasized that good jobs are fundamental to creating access to and affordability of good food,

[T]he First Lady's commitment to addressing childhood obesity in the U.S. is laudable...But with income disparity between the rich and the poor at more extreme levels than during the Great Depression, Wal-Mart must be held accountable for...[it] is more responsible than any other private employer in our country for creating poverty-level jobs that leave workers unable to purchase healthy food or provide a good life for their families (UFCW, 2011).

In NYC, this has meant UFCW Local 1500 working with the NYC affiliate of Jobs with Justice to launch the *Good Food, Good Jobs* campaign.<sup>6</sup> A central part of this campaign involved working with the Mayor, the City Council Speaker, the Department of City Planning, and a coalition of community groups to create the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) initiative that provides financing and zoning incentives to expand grocery stores and supermarkets in underserved communities. Speaker Quinn has reaffirmed UFCW's claims that the FRESH initiative cannot solely be a good health campaign, but should also be an economic justice project where food can be strategically employed to create good jobs, "We talk a lot about getting people food, so they can feed their families. Now let's use food to get people jobs, so they can afford to feed their families" (Quinn, 2009).

Another group pushing back against Wal-Mart is Wal-Mart Free NYC, a coalition of unions, community based organizations, faith-based organizations, elected officials, and small businesses. Bertha Lewis, who works for the coalition and previously worked with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), was vehement in her opposition to Wal-Mart's entrance into the city based on wanting good jobs, not just any job,

Their strategy now is urban expansion, which is code word for black and brown neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods, places that they believe are not as powerful politically, that have high unemployment and poverty, so that they can come in and be a predatory retailer. For years, a red line was drawn around these neighborhoods, and they didn't have access to credit. It's almost the same language now. It's "Aww, you don't have access to fresh food" and "Aww, you don't have access to affordable goods. Let Wal-Mart help you." It's a cynical race-based ploy...we're not here for a Wal-Mart plantation. There was full employment on plantations, but we're not going to do that here (Scola, 2012).

In addition to political officials, unions, and economic justice organizations, the food justice organization East New York Farms! (ENYF!) has supported efforts to prevent Wal-Mart from locating a mere two miles from their network of urban farms and community gardens. While ENYF! politics are focused on building an alternative agrifood system through local sustainable agriculture and community-led economic development they also form alliances with organizations working to transform the conventional agrifood system and improve conditions for food chain workers. Most recently, workers at the local grocery store Farm Country and organizers for New York Communities for Change (NYCC) used their space in a successful campaign for back wages and unionization.<sup>7</sup> Sarita Daftary, the project director of ENYF!, does not believe that Wal-Mart has much of a positive role to play,

<sup>6</sup> Jobs for Justice is a national network of local organizations that utilize grassroots organizing to realize workers' rights, economic justice, and democracy.

<sup>7</sup> NYCC is a coalition of organizations across New York City and Long Island that use direct action, legislative advocacy, and community organizing to fight for social and economic justice for low and moderate income communities.

[R]ight now it's really hard for me to think of a way that Wal-Mart could be reformed to be part of the food justice movement. . . [which emphasizes] people having ownership and decision making power. . . [A] giant like Wal-Mart is always going to stick it to producers. . . and that's why they want to be so big because they can set their price. So that's never going to be compatible with a just food system. And then the way they treat their workers, which is also connected to their size. That they can just dominate the employment market. . . and do what they want with wages.

Despite Wal-Mart's deep pockets and savvy marketing campaigns their effort to locate in East New York ended in defeat, reminiscent of the company's failed attempts to enter Queens and Staten Island in the mid-2000s.<sup>8</sup> Pro Wal-Mart consumers were not organized and sympathetic politicians were generally unengaged in shaping the public image of Wal-Mart, often working behind the scenes instead. Accordingly, Wal-Mart was largely left alone to run a campaign with no local roots and a Mayor who was unwilling to act to guarantee their success. The fact that the Wal-Mart Mexico bribery scandal broke during these pitched battles further hindered the company's success. Community and union mobilizations, vocal City Council opposition, and the anti-Wal-Mart declarations of the 2014 Democratic mayoral candidates all created roadblocks, that, for the time being, are insurmountable. In a city with a long history of immigrant rights and union organizing, immigrant entrepreneurialism, and welfare state politics, Wal-Mart's big-box, low-wage, low price discourse was too anachronistic. In a city with the highest rates of inequality in the US, the promise of cheap products eventually rang hollow, as people understood you need a good job in order to put good food on the table.

Rather than Wal-Mart, a unionized ShopRite supermarket will anchor the Gateway Center II complex, the largest suburban style shopping mall in NYC. The store will be 90,000 square feet, three times the square footage of all the existing grocery store space in East New York, and employ 300 full-time and part-time workers who will have better wages, health care, and pension benefits than Wal-Mart employees (Massey, 2011). Consequently, unlike Wal-Mart, ShopRite was framed as an "asset to our local community" (Herman, 2012) by Joy Simmons, Charles Barron's chief of staff, praised by Speaker Quinn as "a company with a history of responsible business practices" (Rogers, 2012), and applauded by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz for "creat[ing] union jobs at a time when we need them the most" (Collins, 2012). For all involved, combating food deserts meant good jobs, for only through living wages could people obtain access to the good life, which included good food.

### Offering Los Angeles Wal-Muerto Kale does not substitute for good jobs that combat poverty

Los Angeles is the largest of 88 cities in Los Angeles County, and embodies the metropolitan area's racially diverse and economically stratified character. The city is largely Latino/a (47.9%) with sizeable White (28%) and Asian (13.9%) communities, although the Black community has halved over the last thirty years to 8.5%. While the overall poverty level is 20.2%, it is higher for Blacks (24.9%) and Latino/as (25.4%) and tends to vary widely by neighborhood.<sup>9</sup> In neighborhoods that lack well paying, secure jobs, there also tends to be fewer healthy and affordable food options and

higher rates of diet related health problems (Bassford et al., 2010; Blue Ribbon Commission, 2008). This grocery deficit persists in many low-income communities of color despite efforts to bring in unionized grocery retailers and hundreds of millions of dollars of unmet demand for good food (Shaffer, 2002; Social Compact Inc., 2008). This exists due to land use development patterns in LA favoring suburbanization and auto-centric transportation, White only restrictive covenants and redlining leading to residential segregation, and the flight of supermarkets to the suburbs (Shaffer, 2002). Exacerbating access to good food is an inability to afford it in part because of a decline in union density and labor standards in the LA grocery retail sector as Wal-Mart and non-union specialty and ethnic chains began infiltrating LA County throughout the 2000s.<sup>10</sup> This follows broader California trends associated with store closures in major chains like Albertsons, unionized chains choosing not to reinvest available cash in wages and benefits, and the rapid growth of partially unionized Costco (Jayaraman and FLRC, 2014).

Confrontation with these realities needs to be understood in the context of the watershed 20-week grocery retail strike in 2003, and the subsequent unsuccessful battle to keep Wal-Mart out of Chinatown. The 2003 strike pitted UFCW's 70,000 Southern California members directly against Albertson's, Ralphs, and Vons and indirectly against Wal-Mart, as the grocery chains used the threat of Wal-Mart to justify reducing wages and benefits, particularly after Wal-Mart announced in 2002 that it would build 40 Supercenters in California by 2008 (Cleeland and Vrana, 2005). Workers ended up losing the strike, but UFCW and its allies rebounded over the next decade by expanding their organizing strategies and alliances as well as challenging Wal-Mart directly. As a result, the UFCW won back its 2003 loses in later contract negotiations. Moreover, with the exception of one Wal-Mart in Baldwin Hills, the company has been largely unsuccessful in its attempts to enter LA until it opened a Neighborhood Market (a smaller retail format) in the central neighborhood of Chinatown in 2013.

The nature of these multipronged struggles reveals the complications of bridging concerns about poverty, healthy food access, and the rights of communities to direct economic development. Nevertheless, given the specter of Wal-Mart, a network of resistance expanded after the 2003 strike to include alternative food, community based, public health, and religious organizations, as well as politicians and artists. Reflecting such shifts in the AFM, Joann Lo, Executive Director of FCWA and Vice President of the LA Food Policy Council's (LAFPC) Leadership Board contends,

More and more food workers are organizing to demand better wages and working conditions and better food. Supporting their campaigns is one way to join in on collective action. All people in the food system – whether consumers, producers, or workers – should be able to afford good, healthy food.

[BTFB, 2014]

Such a framing binds those who care about food justice and economic justice.

Just like in East New York, activists worried that Wal-Mart would harm union members and increase overall poverty levels in members' communities. Jae, an organizer and political operative for UFCW 770, believes there is a corrosive impact when Wal-Mart locates in economically marginalized communities, "It affects the entire food system. . . It's almost like a silent killer, the race to the bottom. If it takes on these communities, it will slowly affect others." The UFCW strike provided an added boost to a big box ordinance proposal by Councilmembers Eric Garcetti (D – 13th District) and Ed Reyes (D – 1st District) to stave off a local race to the

<sup>8</sup> Wal-Mart contributed "donations" to environmental organizations and youth job programs in the hopes of winning support from city council members and city residents.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics come from the US Census Bureau from either the 2010 Census or the 2007–2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

<sup>10</sup> This mirrors California trends. Non-union market growth between 2006 and 2013 is 48% for discount, 35% for natural/organic/gourmet, 11% for Latino, and just 6% for traditional (Jayaraman and FLRC, 2014).

bottom. Garcetti claims one reason for the ordinance is that Wal-Mart's low-wage labor model requires state subsidies,

They're a Goliath, but we're a Goliath, too, and we want to send them a message. We don't believe their business model is good for the kind of economic development that we want in the places where we need it most. And we want people to realize that the 10 cents they may save on a jar of pickles could mean paying another \$5 in taxes for all the extra visits to local emergency rooms.

[Sanchez, 2004]

The ordinance passed in 2004 requires big box stores over 100,000 feet with more than 10% of their floor space selling non-taxable merchandise (i.e. most groceries) to undergo economic impact reports and public comments and hearings. Such initiatives strengthen local democracy by requiring community input into local development proposals. Although Wal-Mart has opened in other cities with similar requirements, the intensity of the strike and the ordinance represent widespread opposition to weakening grocery labor standards, as well as the power of UFCW 770 and its allies to restrict the company's entrance into LA, at least in its supercenter format.

While Wal-Mart was stymied for many years, it exploited the "use by right" clause in local zoning laws to enter Chinatown, a robust immigrant enclave. Instead of going through the required review process to build a Supercenter, Wal-Mart avoided extensive government review for a Neighborhood Market by simply taking over a building already zoned for such uses. An array of activists once again mobilized. Although they convinced the City Council to pass unanimously an emergency ordinance to prevent any permits for "new formula retail uses," right before the vote opponents learned that a last minute permit was issued to Wal-Mart the previous afternoon. With the suspicious timing of events, labor activists such as Diego, an organizer with UFCW 770, conclude, "That kind of power is only ushered from the Mayor's office." On the day of this vote, a representative for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa avoided commenting on the Wal-Mart decision, stating the mayor supports "bringing fresh and healthy grocery options to all of Los Angeles" (Zahniser, 2012).

This event set into motion renewed efforts to take back the language of food deserts and decenter its conflation with consumer access by demanding community rights to good jobs because such jobs make acquiring good food possible. Jill, a communications specialist for the advocacy organization LAANE argues,

A lot of times food and worker's rights become separated. . . [I]f you say to a worker, "You are not going to get more than \$8 an hour and no health benefits," those people are going to be able to barely afford to put food on their own table, yet they will still be surrounded by it at work. . . If a company really wants to set up there, they shouldn't be adverse to the community being taken care of on a very basic level. . . [H]aving grocery stores with good jobs is part of the solution.

Such issues were also linked to culturally relevant economic development. With many locally run full-scale grocery stores and smaller markets already in the neighborhood, activists from the Chinatown Community for Equitable Development and their political allies were concerned that Wal-Mart would lead to their closure. As US Representative Judy Chu (D – 32nd District) said at a pre-Chinatown protest press conference, "Because Walmart is able to get its low prices and sell its cake for \$1.99, [nearby] businesses will go out of business" (Katz, 2012). Issues of poverty and equitable development resonate deeply for Representative Chu and others with family who benefited from this immigrant enclave's autonomous business climate.

Despite the widespread and vocal opposition to Wal-Mart, opponents were unable to prevent the Neighborhood Market from opening. One reason for this was opposition by Councilmembers Jan Perry (D – 9th District) and Bernard Parks (D – 8th District). Unlike representatives in similar historically Black neighborhoods lacking many grocery stores, such as East New York, they wanted *any* food and jobs rather than *no* food and jobs. They refrained from voting in a last ditch effort to issue a temporary building permit restriction, votes that would have halted Wal-Mart. These challenges in bridging good food and good jobs arise despite community dissatisfaction with Wal-Mart. As Girshriela Green, a Wal-Mart associate explains, "We're still dependent on welfare, food stamps, and we work. Yet, we still don't make ends meet. . . They sell dreams that's not real" (Katz, 2012).

Such contradictions present activists with the opportunity to build more broad-based organizing strategies for equitable economic development in LA, attempts made easier by a discourse that bridges good food and good jobs. At a June 2014 special briefing and discussion of a report commissioned by UFCW's Western States Council on the state of California's grocery retail sector, attendees included anti-hunger, food justice, housing rights, labor and public health advocates, as well as academics, grocery workers and politicians. John Grant, a longtime labor leader in UFCW 770, summed up the desire of these interested parties and allies for a "comprehensive solution." He went on to say, "It is not enough to say, 'No' [to low-wage grocers]. . . [T]hat does not solve the problem of communities lacking access to food. . . It doesn't make a damn bit of difference how much kale is in that brick and mortar. . . people aren't going to be able to buy it." Ultimately, there was recognition that alliances need to organize continually around how poverty creates public health problems. As Clare Fox, the Director of Policy & Innovation at the LAFPC, stated, it is important to "relate a living wage job to improvements in public health outcomes." While not a direct result of a GFGJ discourse, recent victories such as the food procurement policy adopted by the city of LA and by LA Unified School District reflect a more confrontational political logic predicated on building trust and deeper AFM networks. The policy mandates that institutions adopt the Good Food Purchasing Pledge to increase local food purchases that meet high animal welfare, environmental, labor, and nutritional standards. This creates new opportunities to increase the number of local food producers and good jobs in more conventional sectors of the local agrifood system, which incentivizes supporting good employers and increasing access to healthy food.

### **Discussion and conclusion: producing spaces of hope through the politics of good food, good jobs**

The US AFM has long privileged environmental sustainability, saving small farmers, and eating healthy food through a consumer centric politics that elevates nutrition education and paying more for local food. This politics has generally emphasized a prefigurative politics of secession from rather than confrontation with the conventional agrifood system. Additionally, this secessionist politics has generally ignored or deemphasized broader social and economic justice concerns within the alternative and conventional agrifood systems, particularly those of food chain workers and lower income urban consumers in food deserts.

The politics of GFGJ aims to address this weakness within the AFM by changing the framework through which people see the symptoms and causes of food deserts, and lower income communities in general. Additionally, a GFGJ approach opens up space for new alliances within the AFM as well as political tactics and strategies used to address food deserts. Reflecting such shifts, activists in NYC and LA have worked together to reorient food desert

discourse away from the supply side dynamics of low prices or simply creating healthy food spaces toward a demand side dynamic of living wages. In doing so, they underscore that the root causes of food deserts are tied to the structure of the economy in low-income communities, that of bad jobs or no jobs. While not discounting the creative food acquisition strategies of low-income urbanites, the GFGJ approach responds to findings that the major barrier to healthy food is cost (Alkon et al., 2013). The solution to increasing access to good food for low-income communities is creating good jobs that will provide upward class mobility. A grocery store in and of itself does not end food deserts, the type of grocery store matters. Living wage jobs are an important component to solving both the economic problem of poverty and the public health problem of diet-related disease.

The GFGJ discourse, in linking food justice and economic justice, is a bridge that enables coalition building between diverse organizations and activists desiring greater voice and power in community level and citywide development. It represents a creative politics of possibility that breaks down barriers in the AFM and opens up “spaces of hope” (Harvey, 2000) to push for systemic solutions and alternatives to problems within the conventional agrifood system. Such a discourse illuminates the recognition by those facing many intersecting problems that more comprehensive solutions require what Alkon (2012) refers to as a “cross-pollination” between social justice and sustainability and what Cole and Foster (2001) call a “transformative politics” that empowers previously marginalized communities. Relatedly, the discourse can be seen to represent one of a variety of what Carolan (2011) calls “rainbow evolutions,” which are more adaptive and resilient locally contextualized solutions. Additionally, the discourse elevates more confrontational political logics within the AFM. This is especially relevant in light of food justice scholarship that places economic justice at the heart of AFM struggles (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010; Harrison, 2011) and calls by scholars for greater attention to the instances where those concerned with food justice ally with workers to advance economic justice (Alkon and Agyeman, 2011). In short, GFGJ pushes the farmer-centric and supply side consumer orientation of much AFM activism and scholarly analysis to include urban food chain workers and demand side labor solutions.

Framing the solution to conditions of food and economic insecurity in low-income urban communities through a comprehensive lens rejects strategies that would divide communities and social movements. By demanding good food and good jobs, activists positively frame the desire for food justice and economic justice. In turn, this helps regenerate and expand the AFM through a politics that supports alternatives as long as there is comparable confrontation with powerful political and economic forces. There is a place for a prefigurative politics of secession, but without strategies to redirect value produced by workers and without engagement in the political arena, the opportunity for creating agrifood systems that offer good food and good jobs for all seems unlikely. The practice of creating socially just and sustainable foodsheds benefits from bridging consumer and labor politics in alternative and conventional food supply chains.

The message behind GFGJ is that combating poverty and diet-related disease does not require free markets and trickle-down economics. It requires that communities have power over how markets operate, because this will allow the value produced by workers to be redistributed from corporations, Wall Street, and the elite toward workers. In turn, workers will use that captured value to afford housing, preventative healthcare, and good food, send their children to college, take sick days, and enjoy vacations. In doing so, the GFGJ discourse mirrors and gains support from a strong push at local, state, and federal levels to increase the minimum wage, which is emblematic of a vibrant economic justice movement challenging neoliberal development models. Take for

instance the fact that the new mayors of LA (Eric Garcetti – D) and NYC (Bill de Blasio – D) are both publically opposed to Wal-Mart and for increasing the citywide minimum wage.

Despite the emergence of the GFGJ discourse and its possibilities for transforming the way we understand food deserts and the alliances and politics of the AFM, there are several external and internal barriers to the discourse. Externally, food activists deploying GFGJ must combat the allure of “any job is better than no job.” As seen in LA, communities suffering from poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity often lack the political and economic leverage to hold out or struggle for living wage jobs. This power dynamic threatens the ability of a GFGJ discourse to realize justice for workers and create the conditions for community-wide upward mobility. Moreover, it is precisely the dependency and vulnerability of marginalized communities that Wal-Mart capitalizes on with its proposals to quench the hunger of food deserts through low prices. In this sense, activists demanding good food and good jobs face uphill battles against corporate-state growth-coalition dynamics, as seen in the case of both Mayor Villaraigosa and Mayor Bloomberg tacitly supporting, and Michelle Obama explicitly supporting, Wal-Mart development in the name of improving public health.

Internally, campaigns for GFGJ might benefit from moving beyond mere bread and butter interests to encompass a holistic labor, food, and ecological politics. Doing so could help GFGJ become the discourse grounding vibrant blue-green coalitions. We have shown how the GFGJ discourse builds power by bringing together coalitions of different activists and organizations because it does not focus on a single issue, which means that its politics reach beyond fragmented and siloed AFM sectors. While the concept is inherently multifaceted and open, and has the possibility to link together a wide range of issues, such as living wages, workplace safety, food safety, public health, and environmental degradation, questions remain.

First, will campaigns for GFGJ expand to include who decides not only workplace conditions but also a company’s sourcing requirements (e.g. local, organic, small-farmers, living wages for farmworkers)? If the discourse only encompasses negotiating labor contracts in terms of wages and benefits, and specifically for grocery store workers, then campaigns for GFGJ might have less of a substantive effect on the structure and sustainability of food production. Rather than merely leveraging good food for labor, activists would need to leverage the power of labor for sustainability. Given the current framing and implementation of GFGJ we have yet to see a robust confrontational politics that tries to reshape grocery store sourcing dynamics according to labor and environmental standards.

Second, rather than merely uniting grocery store unions and urban AFM organizations, will GFGJ be broadened to bring together grocery store unions, farmworker, food processor, environmental justice, and immigrant rights organizations? Such alliances could significantly shape working conditions within the conventional agrifood system and revive a progressive and social justice oriented community-based unionism. In targeting only one point of the conventional agrifood chain GFGJ is limited, in scope and therefore its abilities to combat poverty and inequality. So far, our cases reveal the use of GFGJ by only a limited set of workers and communities deserving of economic justice.

Third, can a GFGJ discourse be used to increase reflexivity within the AFM regarding its own labor practices? Currently, many small family farms rely on undocumented immigrant labor while urban agriculture experiments rely on volunteer labor and both operate on slim profit margins that make the work economically precarious. Yet, much of this free or underpaid labor is made invisible through a politics that privileges local food grown by small farmers. While campaigns for GFGJ are encouraging AFM

organizations to realize economic justice within the conventional agrifood system, will the same organizations expand the GFGJ discourse to work for economic justice within the alternative agrifood system? Given the often precarious economic dynamics that shape small-scale farming and the health and environmental reasons for why consumers buy local or organic, trying to fuse local food with just food for all food chain workers has had limited gains.

Despite these barriers, with the emergence of GFGJ campaigns, the Real Food Challenge at colleges and universities, and the Fair Food Program of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, among others, it appears that there is a renaissance in labor oriented confrontational political logics within the AFM unseen since the 1960s and the United Farmworkers Union. Will any of this have lasting impacts? Time will tell, but in the meantime, there is a need for further investigation into the potential transformation of the AFM by documenting, theorizing, and probing the political potential of these new confrontation based alliances and their pursuit of more healthy and fair agrifood systems.

## Acknowledgements

Both authors would like to thank all our participants for sharing their stories, struggles, and hopes. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions. Obviously, any oversights or mistakes are our own.

## References

- Alkon, A.H., 2012. *Black, White, and Green: Farmers Markets, Race, and the Green Economy*. University of Georgia Press, Athens.
- Alkon, A.H., Agyeman, J. (Eds.), 2011. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Alkon, A.H., McCullen, C.G., 2011. Whiteness and farmers markets: performances, perpetuations... contestations? *Antipode* 43 (4), 937–959.
- Alkon, A.H., Block, D., Moore, K., Gillis, C., DiNuccio, N., Chavez, N., 2013. Foodways of the urban poor. *Geoforum* 48, 126–135.
- Allen, P., 2004. *Together at the Table: Sustainability and Sustenance in the American Agrifood System*. Pennsylvania State University, University Park.
- Allen, P., Kovach, M., 2000. The capitalist composition of organic: the potential of markets in fulfilling the promise of organic agriculture. *Agric. Hum. Values* 17 (3), 221–232.
- Allen, P., Sachs, C., 1992. The poverty of sustainability: an analysis of current positions. *Agric. Hum. Values* 9 (4), 29–35.
- Artz, G.M., Stone, K.E., 2006. Analyzing the impact of Wal-Mart supercenters on local food store sales. *Am. J. Agric. Econ.* 88 (5), 1296–1303.
- Bassford, N., Galloway-Gilliam, L., Flynn, G., CHC Food Resource Development Workgroup, 2010. *Food Desert to Food Oasis: Promoting Grocery Store Development in South Los Angeles*. Community Health Councils, Inc., Los Angeles.
- Blue Ribbon Commission, 2008. *Feeding Our Communities: A Call for Standards for Food Access and Job Quality in Los Angeles' Grocery Industry*. Alliance for Healthy and Responsible Grocery Stores, Los Angeles.
- Bonanno, A., Goetz, S.J., 2012. WalMart and local economic development: a survey. *Econ. Develop. Quart.* 26 (4), 285–297.
- Beyond the Farm Bill, 2014. Profile Joann Lo. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Minneapolis. <<http://www.beyondthefarmbill.org/profile/joann-lo>> (accessed on 06.06.14).
- Briggs, S., Fisher, A., Lott, M., Miller, S., Tessman N., 2010. Real food, real choice: Connecting SNAP recipients with farmers markets. Community Food Security Coalition and the Farmers Market Coalition.
- Carolan, M., 2011. *The Real Cost of Cheap Food*. Earthscan, New York.
- Cleeland, N., Vrana, D., 2005. Wal-Mart ceo takes his case to California. *Los Angeles Times*. February 24, 2005.
- Cole, L., Foster, S., 2001. *From the Ground up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. NYU Press, New York.
- Collins, L., 2012. Walmart will not be coming to East New York. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. <<http://www.brooklyn eagle.com/articles/walmart-will-not-be-coming-east-new-york-2012-09-19-145200>> (accessed 12.05.14).
- Delind, L.B., 2000. Transforming organic agriculture into industrial organic products: reconsidering national organic standards. *Hum. Organiz.* 59 (2), 198–208.
- DuPuis, E.M., Goodman, D., 2005. Should we go “home” to eat?: toward a reflexive politics of localism. *J. Rural Stud.* 21 (3), 359–371.
- Eisenberg, M., 1999. *Being Left in East New York: Tensions between Race and Class in Community Organizing, 1954–1980*. Dissertation, Graduate Center City University of New York, New York.
- Ellickson, P.B., Grieco, P.L.E., 2013. Wal-Mart and the geography of grocery retailing. *J. Urban Econ.* 75, 1–14.
- Feenstra, G., 1997. Local food systems and sustainable communities. *Am. J. Altern. Agric.* 12 (1), 28–36.
- Food and Water Watch, 2012. *Why Walmart Can't Fix the Food System*. Food & Water Watch, Washington.
- Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2012. *The Hands that Feed Us: Challenges and Opportunities for Workers along the Food Chain*. Food Chain Workers Alliance, Los Angeles.
- Friedmann, H., 1993. After midas's feast: alternative food regimes for the future. In: Allen, P. (Ed.), *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability*. John Wiley and Sons, New York, pp. 213–233.
- Gecan, M., 2002. *Going Public: An Inside Story of Disrupting Politics as Usual*. Beacon Press, Boston.
- Gecan, M., 2003. The discovery of power. In: Terkel, S. (Ed.), *Hope Dies Last*. The New Press, New York, pp. 233–242.
- Goetz, S.J., Swaminathan, H., 2006. Wal-Mart and county-wide poverty. *Soc. Sci. Quart.* 87 (2), 212–226.
- Goldstein, J., Vo, L., 2012. How the Poor, The Middle Class and the Rich Spend their Money. <<http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2012/08/01/157664524/how-the-poor-the-middle-class-and-the-rich-spend-their-money>> (accessed 12.05.13).
- Goodman, D., DuPuis, E.M., 2002. Knowing food and growing food: beyond the production–consumption debate in the sociology of agriculture. *Sociol. Rural.* 42 (1), 5–22.
- Gottlieb, R., Joshi, A., 2010. *Food Justice*. MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Gray, M., 2014. *Labor and the Locavore: The Making of a Comprehensive Food Ethic*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Guthman, J., 2004. *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Guthman, J., 2008a. Bringing good food to others: investigating the subjects of alternative food practice. *Cult. Geogr.* 15 (4), 431–447.
- Guthman, J., 2008b. If they only knew: colorblindness and universalism in alternative agrifood institutions. *Prof. Geogr.* 60 (3), 387–397.
- Guthman, J., 2011. *Weighing. Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Harrison, J.L., 2011. *Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice*. MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Harvey, D., 2000. *Spaces of Hope*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Herman, C., 2012. Walmart Backs out of Opening Store in Brooklyn. <<http://www.wnyc.org/story/237540-blog-walmart-backs-out-opening-store-east-brooklyn/>> (accessed 10.05.14).
- Hinrichs, C.C., 2003. The practice and politics of food system localization. *J. Rural Stud.* 19, 33–45.
- Hinrichs, C.C., Lyson, T.A. (Eds.), 2007. *Remaking the North American Food System: Strategies for Sustainability*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Holmes, S., 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Holt-Giménez, E., 2011. Walmart's Food Deserts: Greening the Bottom Line. *Huffington Post*. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/food-desert-walmart\\_b\\_910832.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/food-desert-walmart_b_910832.html)> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Howard, P.H., 2009. Consolidation in the North American organic food processing sector, 1997 to 2007. *Int. J. Sociol. Agric. Food* 16 (1), 13–30.
- Hurd, R.W., 2008. *Collective Bargaining in the Era of Grocery Industry Restructuring*. United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Washington, DC. <<http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles/284/>> (accessed 22.04.14).
- Jayaraman, S., 2013. *Behind the Kitchen Door*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Jayaraman, S., Food Labor Research Center, 2014. *Shelved: How Wages and Working Conditions for California's Food Retail Workers Have Declined as the Industry Has Thrived*. Food Labor Research Center, Berkeley.
- Johnston, J., 2008. The citizen–consumer hybrid: ideological tensions and the case of Whole Foods Market. *Theor. Soc.* 37 (3), 229–270.
- Johnston, J., Biro, A., MacKendrick, N., 2009. Lost in the supermarket: the corporate-organic foodscape and the struggle for food democracy. *Antipode* 41 (3), 509–532.
- Katz, M., 2012. Protestors Say Walmart will Ruin Chinatown Culture and Local Businesses. <<http://blogdowntown.com/2012/06/6813-protestors-say-walmart-will-ruin-chinatown>> (accessed 05.05.14).
- Ken, I., 2014. A healthy bottom line: obese children, a pacified public, and corporate legitimacy. *Soc. Curr.* 1 (2), 130–148.
- Kloppenburg Jr., J., Hendrickson, J., Stevenson, G.W., 1996. Coming in to the foodshed. *Agric. Hum. Values* 13 (3), 33–42.
- Lichtenstein, N., 2010. *The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business*. Picador, New York.
- Liu, Y.Y., Apollon, D., 2011. *The Color of Food*. Applied Research Center, New York.
- Lombardi, F., 2010. Quinn, Labor Activists to Wal-Mart: FUHGEDDABOUTIT! New York Daily News. <<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2010/06/quinn-labor-activists-to-wal-m.html>> (accessed 26.08.12).
- Lyson, T.A., 2004. *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. University of New England Press, Lebanon.
- Massey, D., 2011. ShopRite Jockeys with Walmart for Brooklyn Site. *Crain's New York Business*. <[http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20110201/REAL\\_ESTATE/110209989](http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20110201/REAL_ESTATE/110209989)> (accessed 20.08.12).
- McClintock, N., 2014. Radical, reformist, and garden-variety neoliberal: coming to terms with urban agriculture's contradictions. *Local Environ.* 19 (2), 147–171.
- McMichael, P., 2011. *Development and Social Change*. Sage, Thousand Oaks.

- McMillan, T., 2012. *The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields and the Dinner Table*. Scribner, New York.
- Nestle, M., 2010. *Safe Food: The Politics of Food Safety*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Neumark, D., Zhang, J., Ciccarella, S., 2008. The effects of Wal-Mart on local labor markets. *J. Urban Econ.* 63 (2), 405–430.
- NYCDP, 2010. NYC Full Service Grocery Store Analysis. New York City Department of City Planning. <[http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/pdf/nyc\\_store\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/pdf/nyc_store_analysis.pdf)> (accessed 29.08.12).
- NYCDP, 2012. Brooklyn Community District 5. New York City Department of City Planning. <<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/lucds/bk5profile.pdf>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Obama, M., 2011. First Lady Michelle Obama Announces Nationwide Commitments to Provide Millions of People Access to Healthy, Affordable Food in Underserved Communities. The White House. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/07/20/first-lady-michelle-obama-announces-nationwide-commitments-provide-milli>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Petrini, C., 2010. *Terra Madre: Forging a New Global Network of Sustainable Food Communities*. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction.
- Posner, P., 1977. *The East New York Charette: A Case Study of a Conflict between Integration and Community Control in Educational Planning*. Dissertation, School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick.
- Pratt Planning Studio, 1996. *Pitkin Avenue: Filling the Gaps*. Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, Brooklyn.
- Pritchett, W., 2003. *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Qazi, J.A., Selfa, T.L., 2005. The politics of building alternative agro-food networks. *Food Cult. Soc.* 8 (1), 46–72.
- Quinn, C., 2009. *Foodworks* New York. <[http://council.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/foodworksny\\_12\\_7\\_09.pdf](http://council.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/foodworksny_12_7_09.pdf)> (accessed 12.05.14).
- Rogers, C., 2012. Walmart Pulls out of Gateway Plan. [http://www.canarsiecourier.com/news/2012-09-20/Other\\_News/Walmart\\_Pulls\\_Out\\_Of\\_Gateway\\_Plan.html](http://www.canarsiecourier.com/news/2012-09-20/Other_News/Walmart_Pulls_Out_Of_Gateway_Plan.html). (accessed 10.05.14).
- Sanchez, R., 2004. Los Angeles ready to say no to Wal-Mart, may ban opening of giant 'supercenters'. *Seattle Times*, February 5, 2004.
- Sbicca, J., 2014. The need to feed: urban metabolic struggles of actually existing radical projects. *Crit. Sociol.* 40 (6), 817–834.
- Schurman, R., Munro, W.A., 2010. *Fighting for the Future of Food: Activists versus Agribusiness in the Struggle over Biotechnology*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Scola, N., 2012. Inside WalMart's Slow, Quiet Campaign to Crack New York City Capital. <<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/culture/2012/04/5773123/inside-walmarts-slow-quiet-campaign-crack-new-york-city>> (accessed 29.08.12).
- Shaffer, A., 2002. The Persistence of LA's Grocery Gap: The Need for a New Food Policy and Approach to Market Development. UEPI Center for Food and Justice, Los Angeles.
- Shiva, V., 2005. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. South End Press, Cambridge.
- Slocum, R., 2006. Anti-racist practice and the work of community food organizations. *Antipode* 38 (2), 327–349.
- Slocum, R., 2007. Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum* 38 (3), 520–533.
- Social Compact Inc., 2008. *Los Angeles Neighborhood Market Drilldown: Catalyzing Business Investment in Inner-city Neighborhoods*. Social Compact Inc., Washington, DC.
- Stewart, H., 2011. City council to Walmart: 'we will not be your slave workers'. *The L Magazine*. <<http://www.thelmagazine.com/TheMeasure/archives/2011/02/04/city-council-to-walmart-we-will-not-be-your-slave-workers>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Thabit, W., 2005. *How East New York Became a Ghetto*. NYU Press, New York.
- Tracy, T., 2010. *Polys play 'stall-mart' to Keep Retail Giant from Brooklyn*. New York Post. <<http://nypost.com/2010/12/22/pols-play-stall-mart-to-keep-retail-giant-from-brooklyn>> (accessed 29.08.12).
- UFCW, 2011. A Statement from Joe Hansen, UFCW International President Challenging White House. United Food & Commercial Workers. <<http://www.ufcw.org/2011/07/20/a-statement-from-joe-hansen-ufcw-international-president-challenging-white-house/>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- USDA, 2001. *Improving and Facilitating a Farmers Market in a Low-Income Urban Neighborhood: A Washington, DC, Case Study*. USDA.
- Vidal, M., Kusnet, D., 2009. *Organizing Prosperity: Union Effects on Job Quality, Community Betterment, and Industry Standards*. Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC.
- Volpe, R., 2014. Supercenters, unionized labor, and performance in food retail. *Ind. Relat.: J. Econ. Soc.* 53 (2), 325–355.
- Walker, R.E., Keane, C.R., Burke, J.G., 2010. Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: a review of food deserts literature. *Health Place* 16 (5), 876–884.
- Wal-Mart, 2011a. Walmart Launches Major Initiative to Make Food Healthier and Healthier Food More Affordable. <<http://walmartstores.com/pressroom/news/10514.aspx>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Wal-Mart, 2011b. Walmart to Open up to 300 Stores Serving USDA Food Deserts by 2016; More than 40,000 Associates will Work in these Stores. <<http://walmartstores.com/pressroom/news/10635.aspx>> (accessed 20.08.12).
- Winter, M., 2003. Embeddedness, the new food economy and defensive localism. *J. Rural Studies* 19 (1), 23–32.
- Wittman, H., Desmarais, A.A., Wiebe, N. (Eds.), 2010. *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community*. Food First, Oakland.
- Wood, S., 2013. Revisiting the US food retail consolidation wave: regulation, market power and spatial outcomes. *J. Econ. Geogr.* 13 (2), 299–326.
- Zahniser, D., 2012. L.A. council votes too late to block Chinatown Wal-Mart project. *L.A. Times*. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/mar/24/local/la-me-walmart-chinatown-20120324>> (accessed 05.05.14).