

Food Security and Food Sovereignty

1. Continuing discussion of Young, “Five Faces of Oppression.”

Procedural justice: civil rights to democratic participation on equal terms, due process, bodily integrity, etc.

Distributive justice: distribution of important things such as health care, wealth, access to education.

- Principles: what makes for a just distribution?
- Extent: Intergenerational justice, global justice

Social justice: justice in social relations.

- Five faces?
- Collective self-determination

Environmental justice: justice towards non-human agents or ecosystems

New reading, Kyle Powys Whyte, “Food Justice and Collective Food Relations,” *FES*.

2. Elements of Food Justice

Farm-to-fork continuum: “Food systems are complex chains of food production, distribution, consumption, and the recirculation of food waste.” (123)

How do we think of justice within the system(s)? What are the requirements of food justice? (92, 123)

Possible elements:

- a) Everyone should have access to sufficient safe and healthy food for an active and healthy life.
- b) Everyone should have access to culturally-appropriate food.
- c) Everyone who works in the food system (from farm workers, slaughterhouse workers, grocery store workers, truckers, restaurant servers, garbage collectors/sanitation workers), should be paid livable and fair wages and work in safe conditions.
- d) Everyone should have the opportunity to participate equally and in culturally-appropriate ways in the social institutions that shape how the food they eat is produced, distributed and used and how food refuse is recirculated. (124)
- e) The production, distribution, consumption, of food and the recirculation of food waste should occur in ways that are environmentally responsible and show due care to the land, animals, other societies, and future generations. (93-4)

What sorts of justice and injustice are relevant in each case? Why are all of these part of food *justice*?

3. Food Security¹

Recall that we discussed in connection with the Singer and Sen articles that achieving food security is not a matter of providing foodstuffs, but of providing entitlements. This also addresses the issue Duflo (et al) raise: an entitlement gives one access to a good, but doesn't require one to make use of that access. One might forego that access or trade it for something else.

What are the arguments for (b)?

4. Food Sovereignty

Whyte argues that food systems are embedded in culture, and in order to respect an individual, we should respect their culture. (Culture allows “persons to achieve good lives in ways that they could not achieve through their individual efforts alone.” (125) It also provides us a context for developing identities and

¹ Information on food security in the US: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/>. Globally: <http://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security>

relations integral to their identities.) To disrupt an individual's culture is to violate their rights and the rights of the community to create and maintain a collective form of life.

Collective self-determination refers to a group's ability to provide the cultural, social, economic, and political relations needed for its members to pursue good lives. Food contributes to collective self-determination through its integral roles in family and ceremonial life, as a source of nourishment and income, as a facilitator of trust and good will in society, as a carrier of a group's heritage and knowledge, and as a vital good that political leaders are entrusted to protect through laws and policies. (125)

...the value of foods is not just that they provide goods such as nutrition, the fulfillment of cultural preferences, and financial stability. In the case of manoomin, the food is a kind of hub whose value lies in how it can bring together many of the collective relations required for people to live good lives. (127)

4. Violations of Food Sovereignty

- Settler Americans have pressured Anishinaabe to abandon ricing (economically through commercial rice production and false advertising, through environmental degradation, destruction of habitat, appropriation of land, etc.).
- These activities are unjust because ricing practices are central to Anishinaabe cultural life, and Settler Americans don't have a morally weighty reason for their interference.
 - "The fact that others derive benefit from interfering with a group's collective food relations is not itself a morally weighty reason to do so. Furthermore, this morally weighty reason should be one that the affected group, in this case the Anishinaabek, would accept as a legitimate reason." (129)
- "...food justice not only involves establishing food sovereignty based on establishing a group's unique food relations, but also ensuring that other groups acknowledge and take responsibility for the ways in which pursuit of their own collective self-determination can commit food injustice." (131)
 - There is an inevitable interdependence between groups within "food webs." (132) How should we "enact intergroup responsibilities in relation to diverse groups"? (132)

5. Questions

1. What if a group's internal practices are unjust? "What does justice demand when there is a conflict between the group's self-determination and sovereignty...on the one hand, and equality and self-determination of individual group members on the other hand?" (111)
2. What if cultures have developed unhealthy food practices that result in health care challenges that will place economic and labor pressure on the national health care network. Is intervention allowed?
3. How do we account for food deserts in urban areas? Are there violations of food sovereignty in these cases? What is the best response to food deserts?

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