Chapter 3

01 02 03

05

06 07

08 09

> 10 11 12

> 13

14

20 21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

41

42

43 44 45

46

Connecting Social Justice to Sustainability: Discourse and Practice in Sustainable Agriculture in Pennsylvania

Amy Trauger

Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, The Pennsylvania State University, USA

Introduction

Sustainability and sustainable agriculture are terms frequently used to position small-scale, regenerative or local agriculture as alternatives to so-called conventional agriculture. While often debated and contested, most discourses of sustainable agriculture (including those in mission statements of organisations, advertising campaigns, etc.) position these alternatives as social, economic and environmental justice (Pretty 1995; Barham 1997; Hassanein 1999; Ritchie 2003). These discourses, however, are most frequently put into practice to make farming more environmentally friendly or more profitable and often both. Both objectives can be pursued simultaneously without much conflict between them, and the logic driving the adoption of such alternatives is clear: soils that are not healthy will not produce premium crops, and farms that are not profitable will not stay in business.

Farmers and activists, thus, are quite comfortable rehearsing the logical benefits of profit and fertility regarding business transactions and farm operations, but are less well versed at discussing the benefits and relevance of social justice to the way sustainable agriculturalists produce and consume food. The justification for incorporating social justice into sustainability often relates to things not explicitly linked to sustainability, such as religious convictions, civil rights concerns or charitable tax deductions. Exactly, what constitutes social justice in the discourses of sustainable agriculture is not well defined either. Whether it regards labour, poverty, racism, hunger, all of these things or something else entirely, is not clear. Consequently, the logical connections between social justice and the sustainability of farms and rural communities are not well articulated, and thus, they are not often well practiced.

Alternative Food Geographies D. Maye, L. Holloway & M. Kneafsey (Editors)

ISBN: 978-0-08-045018-6

Copyright © 2007 by Elsevier Ltd. All rights of reproduction in any form reserved.

In this chapter, I seek to clarify the meaning of social justice to sustainable agriculture through an examination of social justice in the literature and to discuss the logics of social justice through the discourses and practices of two case examples. My goal is to articulate social justice as essential to the practice of sustainability and develop conceptual frameworks that connect social justice to sustainability in the same way that economic and environmental justice are connected to sustainable farming and business practices. The research is based on one year of ethnographic research in two network communities embedded in the sustainable agriculture community in Pennsylvania: the Tuscarora Organic Growers (TOG) and the Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN). These networks illustrate movements towards and away from social justice, and I use observations of their social justice discourses and practice to discuss how social justice and sustainability can and do relate to each other. This chapter is by no means an exhaustive account of social justice in sustainable agriculture, and is meant to continue, and perhaps clarify, the terms in the conversations begun by scholars and activists working towards a more socially just agriculture.

The Research Site

Pennsylvania, with over 2.8 million rural residents, has the largest rural population of any US state (NEMW 2004), and 25% (approximately 11 million ha.) of land in the state is devoted to agriculture (ERS 2004). Pennsylvania also has a thriving sustainable agriculture community with plenty of fertile land, relatively easy access to the urban markets of the Mid-Atlantic cities and a celebrated tradition of small-scale agricultural entrepreneurship. The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), founded in 1991, is a regionally significant sustainable agriculture organisation with over 3000 members. PASA was formed explicitly as a 'sustainable' versus 'organic' farming organisation, because founding members felt organic farming was not sufficient to accomplish the broader goal of sustainability (Sachs, PASA Founding Member, Personal communication, March 2003).

The respondents involved with this study are generally: (1) members of PASA; (2) interested in or supportive of sustainable agriculture to varying degrees; and (3) directly involved with farming in some way. Criteria for inclusion in the study are membership or involvement in any of the two networks included in the study, or attendance at any of the events sponsored by either of the networks. The networks were chosen because of their articulation with sustainability in both theory and practice and their significance and visibility in the sustainable agriculture community in PA. Both networks are also historically and powerfully connected to this larger community, as both have founding members of PASA on their respective boards or steering committees.

The study area was chosen not only because of the large numbers of rural residents and the high level of interest in sustainable agriculture, but also because my residence in the area allows for the establishment of long-term relationships and the use of ethnographic methods. Participant observation was used with all networks under investigation and was the primary vehicle for data collection. Interviews (structured and semi-structured) and surveys were also used to collect network histories, participant perceptions and demographic information. All fieldwork and data collection were conducted in the year between February 2003 and February 2004. I participated in the development of the WAgN as

a founder, steering committee member and organiser, roles through which I was able to participate as both a member and a researcher. I lived and worked on the farms of members of the TOG cooperative for 3 weeks during the growing season of 2003, which allowed me to interview farmers and observe the activities of the cooperative.

The research was conducted as part of a larger dissertation project, the focus of which was the discourse and practice of social, economic and environmental justice in sustainable agriculture. In this particular piece, I focus on what kinds of logical frameworks must be in place to incorporate social justice more fully into sustainable agriculture. In other words, why does it make good (economic or otherwise) sense to incorporate social justice into the sustainability paradigm? And how can social justice be incorporated as a key component to sustainability on the farm, especially when social justice can conflict with other imperatives? From this, what can actors in network communities practising and subscribing to sustainable agriculture tell us about the challenges and processes of actually putting this into practice? Before answering these questions, however, a review of social justice and sustainability in the literature is warranted.

16 17 18

01

02 03

05

06

07

08

09

10

11 12

13

14

15

Discourses of Justice: The Moral Logic of Sustainability

19 20 21

22

23

24

25

26

27 28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

Sustainable agriculture is frequently defined as a social movement that draws together diverse groups (farmers and consumers) in pursuit of broad social, economic and environmental justice goals (Buttel 1993; Barham 1997; Hassanein 1999; Redclift 2000; Cocklin et al. 2002). There are many versions of these movements that articulate differently in different places, but broadly defined they include markets that shorten supply chains to the advantage of producers and/or production practices that aim to conserve resources, including and especially soil and water (Pretty 1995). While transforming the inequitable social, economic and environmental conditions produced by conventional agriculture are priorities for sustainable agriculture, environmental soundness is often privileged over other imperatives (Allen 1993).

The use of pesticides, chemical fertilisers and biotechnology and their associated environmental problems are cited by nearly all, and particularly early, activists for sustainable agriculture as reasons to change farming practices from chemical intensive to organic (see Carson 1962; Berry 1977; Jackson 1980; Pretty 1995). These new farming practices relied on local knowledge production for their development and sophistication, and as such, farmers form networks to facilitate information exchange (Hassanein 1997; Andrew 2003; Simpson et al. 2003). While better farming methods

37 38

41

42

43

44

45

46

¹My role as a founder and facilitator of WAgN made my role as a researcher challenging, given the inherent conflict between directing the organisation, and 'objectively' observing the activities of the organisation. Two realities, however, helped maintain a creative, rather than a problematic, tension between these two roles. First, the research methods were similar in many ways to focus group interviews and participatory action research. I did not allow my role as a researcher to influence any decision about the organisation. Secondly, my role as the ultimate 'insider' made my research role almost invisible, and my presence at meetings, observing and asking questions rarely created the sometimes artificial, and potentially biased, contexts associated with more conventional qualitative research methods. In the interest of full disclosure, as well, I continue my research with WAgN as a paid employee.

might improve environmental conditions, farmers must still produce a profit to stay in business and to be economically sustainable. Direct marketing, community-supported agriculture (CSA),² organic certification and cooperatives are a few of the ways in which farmers can realise greater profits directly and help reduce the risks of farming (Hinrichs 2000; Morgan and Murdoch 2000).

Some scholars argue that because of this emphasis on the technical aspects of agriculture (production and marketing practices) the economic and environmental justice goals are being met, but the social justice goals are not (Allen 1993; Allen and Sachs 1993; DeLind 1994; Sachs 1996). Social justice in the context of agriculture typically emphasises the social provision of quality food and nutrition to all people but also concerns issues of labour, education and oppressive social/cultural relations (Allen *et al.* 1991; Allen and Sachs, 1993; Delind, 1994; Shiva 1999; Feenstra, 2002). Allen (1993:11) argues that sustainable agriculture requires the "elimination of patriarchy, racism, and class exploitation – all of which maintain systems of power that reinforce the contradictory social relations on which nonsustainable food and agriculture systems are based". This includes, but is not limited to, the marginalisation of women from knowledge exchange and decision-making roles (Sachs 1983; Whatmore 1991; Leckie 1996; Trauger 2004), the exploitation of farm workers (Allen *et al.* 2003) and the persistence of hunger in the midst of unparalleled levels of food production (Allen and Sachs 1993).

Movements to engage with social justice include incorporating labour regulations into organic standards or other similarly labelled codification of agricultural practices (Henderson *et al.* 2003; Shrader 2005). Connected to this are movements to merge 'fair trade' with organic standards to protect farm workers from exploitation in the same way that independent producers are granted some forms of market protection with 'fair trade' initiatives (Raynolds 2000). The price premium for organic products can produce social benefits for producers beyond the financial, such as a greater sense of security, increased access to education, increased access to health care and so on, especially for producers in the Global South (Bray *et al.* 2002). The organic price premium, while benefiting farmers, can create a 'two-class' food system, where only the wealthy can enjoy the benefits of fresh, healthy food, and there are increasingly calls to extend access to low-income communities through community food security and local food systems (Gottleib and Fisher 1996; Allen 1999). Rural development is also an outgrowth of the increased financial security of farms practising organic or sustainable agriculture (Rosset 2000; Hillocks 2002).

While all of these initiatives engage with ideas of social justice, few articulate sustainability *as contingent on* social justice in the same way that fair prices or soil fertility are essential to the long-term viability of agriculture and agricultural communities. Allen *et al.* (1991: 37) write, "sustainable agriculture is one that equitably balances concerns of environmental soundness, economic viability, and social justice among all sectors of society". If sustainable agriculture is to truly achieve the social, as well as, economic and environmental objectives to which it aspires, it will require a much wider understanding of justice, one that incorporates, but also moves off the farm and into the social fabric of many communities as well. How to do this, however, is not clear, and may not be

²Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a form of marketing and distribution of farm products that involves the customers buying a share in the farm in exchange for an amount of farm produce weekly or biweekly.

Social Justice and Sustainability

06 07 08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

05

01

02

Much of the literature on social justice discusses "distributive" justice, or that which is concerned with the equal distribution of "good and bads" in society (Miller 1999:1). This refers not only to social benefits such as access to education but also responsibilities, such as military service or care for the elderly. Another aspect of distributive justice is providing individuals with "rewards proportional to their contribution" (Tyler 1999: 118). As such, distributive justice is concerned with achieving equity and preventing exploitation. These two frameworks suggest two ways of thinking about social justice in sustainable agriculture. The first is to share the risks and benefits of agriculture more equally between producers and consumers, such as in the CSA model. The second is to provide workers with compensation proportional to their contributions, which could include profit-sharing and decision-making authority about labour conditions, as is the case with apprentice models.³

AU1

AU2

Individuals tend to use their own internal measures of what is just and fair when they identify something as unjust or unfair, even when it is not in their self-interest, or when they are not the targets of injustice (Tyler 1999). Tyler explains, however, that people tend to be more concerned with issues of fairness and justice when dealing with those inside their own social group. Thus, he argues, group boundaries hinder the expansion of social justice across social groups, and as such, expanding group boundaries is key to expanding the scope of social justice. The sustainable agriculture movement is inclusive of many kinds of difference, due in large part to its position in left of centre politics, but 'family farming' continues to be idealised as the vehicle towards sustainable food production (Berry 1977; Jackson 1980; Pretty 1995; Mariola 2005). The persistence of these cultural frames endangers the future of the movement as the typically white male-headed-family farm continues to disappear from the agricultural landscape (ERS 2001). A social movement cannot grow when the borders of its cultural and collective identity are impermeable. As such, expanding the scope of 'who belongs' to sustainable agriculture not only expands the sphere of social justice but also enrols new consumers and advocates on the network.

The literature on social justice in general tends to overlook cooperation as a concept or framework for facilitating social justice. The literature on social justice in the food systems, however, stresses cooperation and cooperative models, as opposed to more capitalist frameworks, as ways to achieve social justice (Pretty 1995; Allen and Kovach 2000; Murray and Raynolds 2000; Simpson and Rapone 2000). Fair trade coffee cooperatives, for example,

40 41 42

43

44

45

³Apprentice labour is a unique category of labourers in sustainable agriculture. They are typically around 20 middle-to-upper middle class suburbanites (of all races/ethnicities, but the majority are white) who are interested in farming and/or have a desire to experience farm life and practice an environmental ethic. They work for room and board and a monthly stipend that is typically well below minimum wage. They are sometimes given a stake in the profits in the farm and are often recruited to be managers of a crew of labourers or are responsible for a particular crop on the farm.

 are ways in which small-scale peasant farmers obtain a fair price for their product and share the risks and benefits of farming in a socially just way (Simpson and Rapone 2000). Frances Moore Lappe (1990) writes that Darwin's observations on the benefits of cooperation and mutual aid to the survival of the fittest, are often overlooked in favour of discourses of competitive behaviours. While competition is purported to provide the highest quality product at the lowest possible price, the benefits that accrue from this strategy are tilted towards the consumer not the producer. Thus, cooperation amongst producers (in creative tension with competition from other cooperatives) can also provide some benefits to producers.

Three social justice interventions are clear for the sustainable agriculture social movement in this literature, and all have specific implications for the long-term growth and stability of the movement. First, distributive justice seeks to balance rewards with contributions. Currently, this philosophy is well articulated within the movement and manifested in the organic price premium, which usually benefits producers more than labourers. Labour exploitation makes organic production increasingly less expensive, and more widely practiced, which drives down the price premium. That this is happening is becoming well established, as Wal-Mart adds organic produce to its supermarkets, and organic production moves to the Global South (FAO 2001; Warner 2006). Distributing rewards proportional to contributions will make socially just agriculture more sustainable than simply 'organic' agriculture in the long term, as local food systems, CSAs, or community food security more equitably distribute the costs and benefits between producers and consumers in ways that certification schemes cannot do alone.

Secondly, the old models of rural, white-male-headed households are increasingly less viable forms of petty commodity production. Thus, new forms of agricultural production, such as cooperatives, urban farming and community food initiatives, are increasingly relevant and successful ways of producing food. 'Who belongs' and who practices agriculture is rapidly changing, and in the long term, diversity allows the movement to grow, expand and incorporate new constituencies, new consumers and new advocates.

Thirdly, farmers who cooperate with each other (and with natural systems) are increasingly more 'competitive' in the marketplace. This takes the form of marketing or producer cooperatives and/or the sharing of business, production and marketing practices in open educational settings. Sustainable agriculturalists increasingly share their 'secrets to success' with each other and increasingly reap the benefits of innovation. Cooperation in capitalist markets not only provides both economies of scale to small-scale producers but also facilitates the spread of innovation, which makes sustainable agriculture increasingly capable of coping with rapidly changing consumer demands.

Social Justice in Network Communities in Sustainable Agriculture

Tuscarora Organic Growers

The growing season of 2003 was the worst season on record for vegetable growers in Pennsylvania, as there were record levels of rainfall throughout the state. As Ed⁴ told me, however, the growers cooperative, TOG, to which he belongs was a source

⁴All first names only are pseudonyms. When first and last names are used, they are the real names of respondents, used with permission.

of security and a buffer for risks. "Smaller growers benefit from the other growers in the co-op in a year like this. The bigger growers can fill in some of the gaps and so the co-op can still make a profit, which benefits us all". The TOG form a marketing cooperative that delivers fresh, 'local' produce to a regional market in the Mid-Atlantic states. TOG was formed in 1988 by Jim and Moie Crawford of New Morning Farm and five other growers in south-central Pennsylvania. The central motivation for starting the cooperative was a need to expand and diversify the market for organic produce through wholesaling. The founding members felt that by acting cooperatively as a wholesaler they could capitalise on efficiencies of scale and shared resources. Currently, TOG has 13 member farms ranging in size from less than 1 ha. to more than 30 ha. All farms are certified organic and family owned and operated.

01

02

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

40 41 42

43

44

45

46

While the standards defining organic agriculture outline a set of farming practices that can help farmers obtain a price premium for their products, they provide no guidelines for rectifying economic inequality in the food system, and some would argue that they perpetuate inequality. It has been argued that the price premium on organic fruits and vegetables produces a two-class food systems, where farmers and labourers produce food they cannot afford to purchase. To make food less expensive and still realise a profit, farmers try to find less expensive forms of labour. Due to the labour intensity of organic practices, large farms especially rely to a greater degree on 'cheaper' labour than smaller farms usually employ, and the cheapest labour to be had is migrant Mexican labour.⁵ Apprentices are also a cheap source of labour, as they are paid by the month, not the hour, and often are responsible for decision-making about some aspect of the farm operation.

Three of the largest farms (>6ha.) currently use migrant Mexican labour or have used migrant labour in the past. Three farms (two of them > 6ha.) also use apprentice labour. The majority of the migrant labourers work as 'field crews', and their primary work is picking produce in the field, but they also participate in transplanting, weeding, preparing fields for cultivation or other kinds of labour-intensive work. Apprentices also perform this work but are involved to a greater degree in decision-making and supervision of labour crews. All those I interviewed about the use of migrant labour, which included farmers, apprentice farmers, local wage labourers, truck drivers and customers, justified the use of migrant labour in organic agriculture with some derivative of "Americans just don't want to work this hard". Consistent with this message, all of the farms using migrant labour reserved the hardest work for them. This typically included hand harvesting, such as the tomato harvest featured in Figure 3.1. Farm apprentices also did this work, but on farms where apprentices performed the majority of the labour, the day was divided between picking in the cool of the day and packing produce in the packing shed during the heat of the day. Apprentice farmers were also able to negotiate more favourable working conditions for themselves, as they were often 'in charge',

⁵The majority of migrant labourers in the TOG network are recruited from the Mexican migrant labour community drawn to the area by work in the Chambersburg, PA fruit orchards. Chambersburg, in south-central Pennsylvania, is climatically well suited for fruit production and supplies the large mid-Atlantic consumer market with peaches, pears and apples. Labourers I spoke to started at \$7.50/hour, which is above minimum wage, but still below the poverty level for a family of three.

Elsevier AMS

01 02 03

46 Alternative Food Geographies: Concepts and Debates



Figure 3.1: Migrant field crew: migrant Mexican labourers picking organic tomatoes.

19 20 21

22

23

24

25

26

27 28

30

31

32

33

34

35

36 37

38

39

41

42

43

44

45

46 47

18

whereas migrant labour was always under the supervision of a crew leader, typically a white male.

Because migrant labourers are perceived to be willing to work hard, are there to fill a demand for labour and have no recourse to change their situation on the farm, there is no need to change the working conditions that 'Americans' find intolerable. What the 'good work ethic' discourse glosses over is the fact that Mexican migrant labourers may not want to work this hard either. No one wants to work this hard, not even those who are willing to do it. The migrant labourers I spoke to told me that they felt they worked too hard because "we work so late every night, six days a week. We don't have time to have fun, go to the beach, relax" (Antonio). Apprentice farmers, who have a much greater influence on their working conditions, on the other hand, do not feel they work too hard. "We don't feel exploited because we are learning while we work. We also get all of our food and housing costs covered and we get a share of the profit if the farm does well" (Debbie). The irony of the "hard work" discourse is that the largest category of labour on farms in the network is family labour (36 people), followed by local wage labour (21). Migrant labourers (14) and apprentices (13) are actually the smallest categories of labour in the network. Apparently, Americans are willing to work this hard, even for little or no pay, as is the case for most family labour.

The scale of the operation or the diversity in crops often dictates the use and management of particular kinds of labour. However, cultural discourses often determine and/or legitimise certain labour practices as well. The stereotype of 'hard working' migrant labourers and 'lazy' Americans is an obvious example. A more subtle version of this was the shared sense of cultural identity between farm owner/operators and apprentices that was not evident between farm owners and migrant labourers. For example, apprentices frequently shared meals with owner/operators, while migrant labourers were invited to glean the fields for their meals. In addition, apprentices, ostensibly because of their aspirations to be farmers, were given decision-making authority for the farm, while

Elsevier AMS Ch03-I045018 Job code: AFR 26-3-2007 12:01p.m. Page: 47 Trimsize: 165 × 240 MM

Connecting Social Justice to Sustainability 47

the migrant labourers were not, in spite of their aspirations to have farms or continue farming in Mexico.

Overall, the economies of scale and high levels of market orientation (the largest farms also produced for large wholesale markets at a higher volume) drive some farms to employ a diversity of low-wage labour strategies. In some cases, labourers who are viewed as culturally distinct from the owner/operator of the farm are employed, and the labour practices reflected and reproduced this cultural distinction. As a result, very little control of the production, or over working conditions, is extended to these rural 'others'. In contrast, smaller-scale farms with more community-based markets (CSA) not only pursue other labour strategies that attempt to reduce the level of exploitation but also cultivate a sense of shared cultural identity between workers and employers. As such, the white, middle class, 'American' apprentice farmers (who are as likely to be 'migrant' as the Mexican labourers) are extended agency within the farm operation and are less likely to be constructed as 'others'.

The logical connections between sustainable agriculture and social justice are clear in this case. TOG increasingly use migrant labour as markets for organic produce become increasingly competitive, and the downward spiral of increased production and deflation of prices continue to force the use of cheaper labour. In this case, TOG moves away from concepts of distributive justice and, while still very successful, is practising the sort of competitive labour practices that may potentially undermine its own success, as well as the success of the movement in general when social justice for farmers is premised on organic price premiums. TOG, however, also practices other forms of labour management, such as apprenticeships, that ultimately produce more and better farmers. Apprentices come from all kinds of backgrounds, which expand the circle of 'who belongs' to women and racial minorities. As such, TOG strengthens and broadens the social community of sustainable agriculture. Also, TOG functions as a cooperative in a competitive and capitalist market, and the success of the cooperative is clearly linked to its ability to share resources, markets and expertise. Thus, the value of cooperation is a key component not only to the long-term sustainability of the organisation but also to the movement itself. I turn now to another organisation which struggles with these same issues but in an entirely different context.

Women's Agricultural Network

The Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN) is a cooperative extension-affiliated programme developed in Vermont in 1994 that has since diffused to Maine and Pennsylvania. All three organisations are dedicated to supporting women farm owners/operators with educational programmes. These include business planning workshops, online courses, discussion groups, technical assistance, newsletters and conferences. Women are generally seen as an underserved population in agriculture, as farming is still strongly associated with masculinity. WAgN is an organisation devoted to rectifying this marginalisation by providing the support and resources that traditional agricultural organisations do not provide to them. WAgN connects isolated farmers and functions as a support system and a source of information and shared resources. Pennsylvania WAgN has grown rapidly since it was founded in 2003, and as of this writing boasts 631 members.

02

03

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20 21 22

23

24

25

26

27

39

Ch03-I045018

Alternative Food Geographies: Concepts and Debates

Job code: AFR

By developing a dense network of opposition and opportunity, WAgN changes some of the patriarchal contexts of agriculture by enrolling individual actors, media and information technologies and commanding resources at various spatial scales. WAgN changed the context for educational programming for women in agriculture in Pennsylvania (as it has in Vermont and Maine), and this agency has been emergent from, and an effect of the network (for individuals and for the collective). No individual could have accomplished WAgN's objectives alone, but these accomplishments have been dependent on the emergence of leaders from within the collective. Leaders assume leadership; there are no elected positions or chairs, and all decision-making is made by consensus or by staff on advisement from members and is guided by periodic strategic planning by the steering committee (see the meeting, for example, featured in Figure 3.2). This loose framework opens multiple directions of progress and innovation, as those with expertise (i.e. farmers with knowledge to share host field days, or faculty write grants to fund programming).

WAgN is self-consciously committed to providing social justice by resisting the patriarchal and misogynistic worldviews embedded in both sustainable and conventional agriculture.⁶ However, identifying for whom WAgN works underscores the larger question of 'social justice for whom?'. The Pennsylvania WAgN chapter's mission statement identifies the broadest possible group: "women in agriculture", and departs from the Vermont and Maine chapters' missions explicitly stating "women farm operators".

⁶WAgN is embedded within the sustainable agriculture community in Pennsylvania in various ways, but resists explicit identification with sustainable agriculture only. Currently, all of WAgN's funding comes from sustainable agriculture and 'small farm' programme areas of the USDA, all founding members are members (some founding members) of PASA, and WAgN's programmes generally all fall under sustainable agricultural practices, broadly defined, such as direct marketing, pastured livestock, CSA development, organic conversion, etc.



Figure 3.2: WAgN in action: WAgN Steering Committee at a strategic planning retreat.

Trimsize:165×240MM

Pennsylvania WAgN's mission statement glosses over a relatively heated debate among the former steering committee members over who WAgN should serve, and what underlies this tension is a desire to target a community that does not conform to the patriarchal paradigm of conventional agriculture.

Liz, a farmer, has strong opinions on this issue and identifies the audience as "women who self-identify as directly involved in agricultural enterprises", and "women who want to become actively involved in farming of some kind". Angela, who is not a farmer, nevertheless also articulates a strong position on this issue: "The primary audience should be farmers, because what is the point of ag educators or ag researchers without farmers? Farmers are agriculture and should be the primary focus for a women in agriculture group". Emmy, an apprentice farmer, who looks to WAgN as a source of mentors, echoes Angela. "I would like to see more full-time women farmers. It's disheartening to want to be a farmer and not see any examples of people doing it as a full time job". The positioning of women farmers as the primary constituency illustrates the construction of a woman farmer identity against the identity of 'farmwife', or a woman primarily in supportive roles who conforms to the patriarchal model of the family farm.

Another strongly and widely held opinion is that it should be "all inclusive" (Emmy), even among those who think it should be restricted, as Emmy's case illustrates. Laurie, along with several other members of the steering committee, had reservations about excluding any interested party:

The population we should serve is females involved in agriculture. This will be farmers/producers (livestock, food, and fibre), farm managers, agri-business owners/employees, ag educators, and hobby farmers. I wouldn't want to exclude any female that has some tie to or involvement with agriculture.

In general the steering committee was split along the lines of those who wanted it to be clear that farmwives were not explicitly excluded, and those who wanted no part of the sexual and gender politics of traditional farm organisations that reify the subordinate roles of women on farms. All members, however, because of WAgN's conscious efforts against the explicit exclusion of women from education, knowledge and authority struggled with the idea of excluding anyone (even men) for reasons that may be entirely consistent with WAgN's project. Members have criticised programmes for tacitly excluding men, and WAgN was encouraged by partner organisations to advertise programmes with a 'men welcome' caveat. This is ironic given that the other activities of these organisations regularly support programmes that do not attempt to invite women at all. This tacit exclusion is precisely the kind of patriarchal paradigm that WAgN positions itself against.

WAgN's struggles over identity and inclusivity reflect a broader struggle in the women's movement over identity politics within women's groups. Identity politics tend to divide women along the lines of membership in racial, class or sexual identities. Within the community of women in agriculture, women identify themselves as 'farm women', 'farm partners', 'women farmers' and so on. As illustrated above, identity politics divides women who identify primarily as women farmers from women who identify primarily as wives. WAgN members loathe to reproduce the conditions of exclusion that marginalised women in the first place but fear welcoming those who conform to the gender roles that WAgN helps women resist. The politics of exclusion

AU3

02

03

05

06

07

08 09

10

11

12

13 14

15

16 17

18

19 20

21 22 23

24

25

26

27

39

Ch03-I045018

Job code: AFR

sits in uneasy tension with an ethic of inclusion, but WAgN officially attempts to subvert the injustices of exclusion by welcoming as wide an audience as possible.

Running counter to this conflict over identity is, rather paradoxically, an overarching ethic of cooperation. Women farmers, who often have much to learn about farming, are enthusiastic educators of each other. Far from being concerned about sharing their hard-earned secrets to success, women leap at the opportunity to network with other women and engage in peer learning events. Because they are often not taken seriously in largely male-dominated social contexts, they actively seek opportunities to build a peer group with other women. Women farmers consistently prefer the kinds of learning environments that feature hands-on, intensive, multiple-direction learning, and WAgN is premised on a farmer-to-farmer education model where farmers teach most of the workshops, with assistance, when necessary from relevant 'experts'. The young women changing the oil of a tractor in an equipment workshop shown in Figure 3.3 illustrate the team learning WAgN helps foster.

This is well illustrated by feedback from women who attended the National Women in Sustainable Agriculture conference in Burlington VT in 2005. WAgN was able to fund the travel and attendance of 20 women farmers from Pennsylvania, and members (including myself) of PA-WAgN were part of the conference planning committee. One participant wrote in her post-conference evaluation: "The networking opportunities with receptions and dinners were exceptional. The best part of the conference was meeting other women". Another woman translated this interaction into innovations on the farm:

There were many things about the conference that inspired me to want to make changes to my operation]. These were: 1) how open, friendly and helpful most women were about sharing their experience and expertise; 2) stories of how women have struggled so hard to achieve what they have accomplished; and 3) how happy women in [agriculture] can be despite many challenges.



Figure 3.3: Tractor equipment workshop: WAgN members learning about equipment maintenance.

02

05 06

07

08

09 10

11

12

13

14

15

16 17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

Ch03-I045018

One participant made explicit connections between the social support activities of networks such as WagN and the long-term survival of agricultural businesses. "Watching all the women interact and discuss major issues, made me realise that without sustainable practices there will be no soil to grow food, [and] without a profitable business there will be no money to pay the bills and remain in agriculture". The general reaction to the (almost) women-only space of the gathering was one of wonder at the openness and willingness of women to share with each other, and the almost complete lack of competitiveness in both formal and informal interactions.

Again, movements towards and away from social justice are clear within WAgN, and the relevance of social justice to the future and the sustainability of the organisation and the social movement within which it is embedded are manifest. WAgN is explicit about sharing leadership, and no formal hierarchy exists within the organisation. Leadership is 'taken' by actors within the organisation, and as such, the distribution of rewards is typically proportional to the contribution. The rewards, however, are intended to be distributed throughout the organisation to the membership. Because of the fractures over 'who belongs' as a woman farmer, these rewards are not always evenly distributed to those who could benefit from them. Expanding the scope and scale of the community to a wider group is crucial to the long-term health and sustainability of the organisation, and WAgN risks its future by excluding potential constituencies. Despite fissures regarding its political identity, WAgN members enthusiastically share with each other all manner of information about their farm operations. This creates a situation where many, rather than few, can succeed, which is central to the long-term health and sustainability of agriculture, WAgN, and the sustainable agriculture social movement.

25 26 27

Conclusions

28 29

> 31 32

> 33

34

35

36 37

41 42

43

44

45

46

Social justice and sustainability are sometimes at cross purposes to one another. For example, using labour-intensive, environmentally friendly practices may require farmers to employ cheap labour to remain competitive in the marketplace and sustainable in an economic sense. Social justice, however, does not have to be mutually exclusive of sustainable practices, and the organisations discussed above illustrate well that 'everyone does better, when everyone does better'. As such, sustainability can and should incorporate social justice as a logical practice, rather than simply a moral obligation. Literature on social justice highlights equal distribution of responsibility and benefits, broadening the scale and diversity of the community and cooperating across differences and in competitive contexts. All three of these ideas have logical and tangible benefits to the sustainability of farms, organisations and ultimately the social movement that go beyond simply being the 'right thing to do'.

In both examples, the organisations are involved with practices that move simultaneously towards and away from a socially just sustainable agriculture but illustrate well the logical connections between social justice and long-term sustainability. In the TOG cooperative, farmers employing apprentices produce new generations of farmers and compensate them with skills and experience rather than capital. By working with farms who increasingly use migrant labour (the source of which may not be guaranteed in the future), TOG also moves away from sustainability and social justice by relying

on systems of political, economic and cultural oppression that both produce migrant labour in the first place and perpetuates a downward spiral in prices that necessitates cheaper and cheaper labour. On the other hand, cooperation between farmers is clearly related to the success of the organisation, and the production of new, experienced young farmers through apprenticeships is clearly a boon to the long-term success of the social movement.

WAgN is also committed to producing a future of farmers, but of a different cultural stripe than most conventional farmers, and highlights the importance of expanding who belongs to the 'justice' community of sustainability. Expanding the social justice community expands the space in which to distribute the goods and bads of society. Expanding the community also helps grow the movement, expand the network and creates further and future nodes of change and agency. WAgN, however, struggles with internal divisions over identity and belonging, which if unresolved, can jeopardise the future of the organisation, and is not conducive to social justice or sustainability. On the other hand, cooperation and distribution of responsibilities and benefits throughout the organisation are hallmarks of WAgN's organisation and are central to its long-term success and relevance as an organisation. The beneficial logic of expanding the agricultural community to include 'others' cannot be writ larger on the landscape as women farmers with diverse operations grow in number at the same time that male-dominated conventional agriculture continues to be in crisis.

In both cases, the movements towards socially just sustainability involve changing conventional paradigms around the production of food, which include both labour and property relations. TOG use an apprenticeship model which 'produces' new and well-educated farmers, in addition to the crops planted, harvested and marketed with their labour, and the capital that accumulates to the farm operation from their labour. WAgN challenges the family farming model by introducing a new cultural frame for the category of 'farmer'. In spite of the struggles over who exactly qualifies as a farmer, WAgN's existence and popularity challenges the definition of the 'family farm', and the ownership structure and the divisions of labour that implies, and thus the way the farming household is organised. In both cases, TOG and WAgN offer alternatives to conventional views of the farm as a place of production, and thus impinge on what is meant by social justice on both the scale of the household and on the scale of the community of farmers.

Sustainability implies perpetuating something in the future, and thus a distribution of costs and benefits through time. Justice, however, implies sharing across human (and non-human) communities, and thus suggests a distribution across space. This tension lies at the heart of the difficulty with incorporating social justice into sustainability frameworks, because it requires that we expand the boundaries of our communities. The time dimensions of sustainability are presumably infinite, but where we draw the line in space around the social justice community is less clear. Is it the household, the neighbourhood, state, nation, the world? What is clear, however, is that as the scope and scale of the sustainable agriculture community grows, so do the responsibilities to and benefits of that community. Whether we can address the challenges this presents is difficult to say, and we will probably never know if we have accomplished our goals in the future. Given this, Barry (1999) suggests that the only way to go about this is to assess the present situation, make changes and find ways to extend these visions into the future. The examples outlined here illustrate that inclusivity, plurality, equality and cooperation are crucial and necessary aspects of a sustainable agriculture in the future.

References

Ch03-I045018

01 02 03

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14 15

19

21

23

24

25

31

35

36

37

38

- Allen, P. (1993). Connecting the social and the ecological in sustainable agriculture. In P. Allen (Ed.), Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability (pp. 1–16). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Allen, P. (1999). Reweaving the food security safety net: mediating entitlement and entrepreneurship. Agriculture and Human Values 16, 117–129.
- Allen, P. and Sachs, C. (1993). Sustainable agriculture in the United States: engagements, silences, and possibilities for transformation. In P. Allen (Ed.), Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability (pp. 139-168). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Allen P. and Kovach, M. (2000). The capitalist composition of organic: the potential of markets in fulfilling the promise of organic agriculture. Agriculture and Human Values 17, 221 - 232.
- Allen, P., Dusen, D., Lundy, J. and Gliessman, S. (1991). Integrating social, environmental and economic issues in sustainable agriculture. American Journal of Alternative Agriculture 6, 34-
- Allen, P., Fitzsimmons, M., Goodman, M. and Warner, K. (2003). Shifting plates in the agrifood 16 landscape: the tectonics of alternative agrifood initiatives in California. Journal of Rural Studies 17 19, 61–75. 18
 - Andrew, J. (2003). Key features of the regional producer network for enabling social learning. Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture 43, 1015–1029.
- 20 Barham, E. (1997). Social movements for sustainable agriculture in France: a Polanyian perspective. Society and Natural Resources 10, 239-249. 22
 - Barry, B. (1999). Sustainability and intergenerational justice. In A. Dobson (Ed.), Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Sustainability and Social Justice (pp. 93-117). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Berry, W. (1977). The Unsettling of America. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Bray, D., Sanchez, J. and Murphy, E. (2002). Social dimensions of organic coffee produc-26 tion in Mexico: lessons for eco-labelling initiatives. Society and Natural Resources 15, 27 429-446. 28
- Buttel, F. (1993). The sociology of agricultural sustainability: some observations on the future of 29 sustainable agriculture. Agriculture, Ecosystems, and Environment 46, 175–186. 30
 - Carson, R (1962). Silent Spring. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cocklin, C., Bowler, I. and Bryant, C. (2002). Introduction: sustainability and rural systems. In I.R. 32 Bowler, C.R. Bryant and C. Cocklin (Eds), The Sustainability of Rural Systems: Geographical 33 Interpretations (pp. 1–12). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- 34 DeLind, L. (1994). Organic farming and social context: a challenge for us all. American Journal of Alternative Agriculture 9, 146-147.
 - ERS (Economic Research Service) (2001). Structural and Financial Characteristics of US Farms: 2001 Family Farm Report. Available online at: http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ aib768/(accessed 11/27/05).
 - ERS (Economic Research Service) (2004). Pennsylvania State Fact Sheets. Available online at: http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/PA.HTM, United States Department of Agriculture (accessed 1/21/04).
- 41 FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (2001). World Markets for 42 Organic Fruits and Vegetables. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 43 and International Trade Centre.
- 44 Feenstra, G. (2002). Creating space for sustainable food systems: lessons from the field. Agriculture 45 and Human Values 19, 99-106.
- 46 Gottleib, R. and Fisher, A. (1996). Community food security and environmental justice: searching 47 for common discourse. Agriculture and Human Values 13, 23-32.

Ch03-I045018

Alternative Food Geographies: Concepts and Debates

- 01 Hassanein, N. (1997). Networking knowledge in the sustainable agriculture movement: some 02 implications of the gender dimension. Society and Natural Resources 10, 251-257.
- 03 Hassanein, N. (1999). Changing the Way America Farms: Knowledge and Community in the Sustainable Agriculture Movement. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. 04
- Henderson, E., Mandelbaum, R., Mendieta, O. and Sligh, M. (2003). Toward social justice and 05 economic equity in the food system: a call for social standards in sustainable and organic 06 agriculture. Available online at: http://www.cata-farmworkers.org/english%20pages/ socialjus-07 ticestandardsOctober2003.doc (accessed 6/10/06). 08
- Hillocks, R.J. (2002). IPM and organic agriculture for smallholders in Africa. Integrated Pest 09 Management Reviews 7, 17-27. 10
- Hinrichs, C. (2000). Embeddness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural 11 market. Journal of Rural Studies 16, 295-303. 12
 - Jackson, W. (1980). New Roots for Agriculture. San Francisco: Friends of the Earth.
- 13 Leckie, G. (1996). 'They never trusted me to drive': farm girls and the gender relations of 14 agricultural information transfer. Gender, Place and Culture 3, 309–325.
- 15 Mariola, M. (2005). Losing ground: farmland preservation, economic utilitarianism, and the erosion 16 of the agrarian ideal. Agriculture and Human Values 22, 209-223.
- 17 Miller, D. (1999). Principles of Social Justice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 18 Moore Lappe, F. (1990). Food, farming and democracy. In R. Clark (Ed.), Our Sustainable Table (pp. 143-160). San Francisco: North Point Press. 19
- Morgan, K. and Murdoch, J. (2000). Organic vs. conventional agriculture: knowledge, power and 20 innovation in the food chain. *Geoforum* 31, 159–173. 21
- Murray, D. and Raynolds, L. (2000). Alternative trade in bananas: obstacles and opportuni-22 ties for progressive social change in the global economy. Agriculture and Human Values 23 17, 65-74. 24
- NEMW (NorthEastMidWest Institute) (2004). Rural population as a percent of state total by state, 25 2000. Available online at: http://www.nemw.org/poprural.htm (accessed 3/25/04). 26
 - Pretty, J. (1995). Regenerating Agriculture: Policies and Practices for Sustainability and Self-Reliance. Washington DC: Joseph Henry Press.
- 28 Raynolds, L. (2000). Re-embedding global agriculture: the international organic and fair trade 29 movements. Agriculture and Human Values 17, 297-309. 30
 - Redclift, M. (2000). Sustainability: Life Chances and Livelihoods. New York: Routledge
- 31 Ritchie, M. (2003). A Search For 'True Security', Keynote address at the Pennsylvania Association 32 for Sustainable Agriculture Annual Conference, 7 February 2003.
- Rosset, P. (2000). The multiple functions and benefits of small farm agriculture in the context of 33 global trade negotiations. Development 43, 77–82. 34
- Sachs, C. (1983). The Invisible Farmers. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Ellanheld. 35
- Sachs, C. (1996). Gendered fields: rural women, agriculture, and environment. Boulder: 36 WestviewPress. 37
- Shiva, V. (1999). Monocultures, monopolies, myths and the masculinization of agriculture. Devel-38 opment 42, 35-38. 39
- Shrader, R. (2005). Social justice in agriculture forum. Cooperative Grocer, 116. Available online 40 at: http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/(accessed June 2005).
- 41 Simpson, C. and Rapone, A. (2000). Community development from the ground up: social-justice 42 coffee. Research in Human Ecology 7, 46–57.
- 43 Simpson, I.H., Kay, G. and Mason, W.K. (2003). The SGS regional producer network: a successful 44 application of interactive participation. Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture 43, 45
- 46 Trauger, A. (2004). 'Because they can do the work': women farmers in sustainable agriculture in 47 Pennsylvania, USA. Gender, Place and Culture 11, 289-307.

Elsevier AMS Ch03-I045018 Job code: AFR 26-3-2007 12:01p.m. Page:55 Trimsize:165×240MM

Connecting Social Justice to Sustainability 55

Tyler, T. (1999). Social justice: outcome and procedure. International Journal of Psychology 35, 117-125.

Warner, M. (2006). Wal-Mart eyes organic foods. New York Times, 12 May 2006.

Whatmore, S. (1991). Farming Women: Gender, Work, and Family Enterprise. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Academic and Professional.

Elsevier AMS Ch03-I045018 Job code: AFR 26-3-2007 12:01p.m. Page:56 Trimsize:165×240MM

Elsevier AMS query3 Job code: AFR 26-3-2007 12:23 p.m. Page:1 Trimsize: 165×240 MM

01	Chapter No: 03	
02 03	Query No.	Query
04 05	AU1	"Tyler 2000" has been changed to "Tyler 1999" in accordance with that given in the reference list. Please check.
06 07	AU2	"Tyler 2000" has been changed to "Tyler 1999" in accordance with that given in the reference list. Please check.
08 09 10 11 12	AU3	Please check whether the sense of the sentence (in quotes) "Farmers are agriculture and should be the primary focus for a women in agriculture group" is OK.
13 14		
15		
16 17		
18		
19 20		
21		
22 23		
24		
25		
26 27		
28		
29 30		
31		
32		
33 34		
35		
36		
37 38		
39		
40		
41 42		
43		
44		
45 46		