

# **Whiteness, space and alternative food practice**

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## **Abstract**

The paper demonstrates how whiteness is produced in progressive non-profit efforts to promote sustainable farming and food security in the US. I explore whiteness by addressing the spatial dimensions of this food politics. I draw on feminist and materialist theories of nature, space and difference as well as research conducted between 2003 and the present. Whiteness emerges spatially in efforts to increase food access, support farmers and provide organic food to consumers. It clusters and expands through resource allocation to particular organizations and programs and through participation in non-profit conferences. Community food's discourse builds on a late-modern and, in practice, 'white' combination of science and ideology concerning healthful food and healthy bodies. Whiteness in alternative food efforts rests, as well, on inequalities of wealth that serve both to enable different food economies and to separate people by their ability to consume. It is latent in the support of romanticized notions of community, but also in the more active support for coalition-building across social differences. These well-intentioned food practices reveal both the transformative potential of progressive whiteness and its capacity to become exclusionary in spite of itself. Whiteness coheres precisely, therefore, in the act of 'doing good'.

Key words: race, whiteness, space, alternative food, feminist theory, farmers' markets