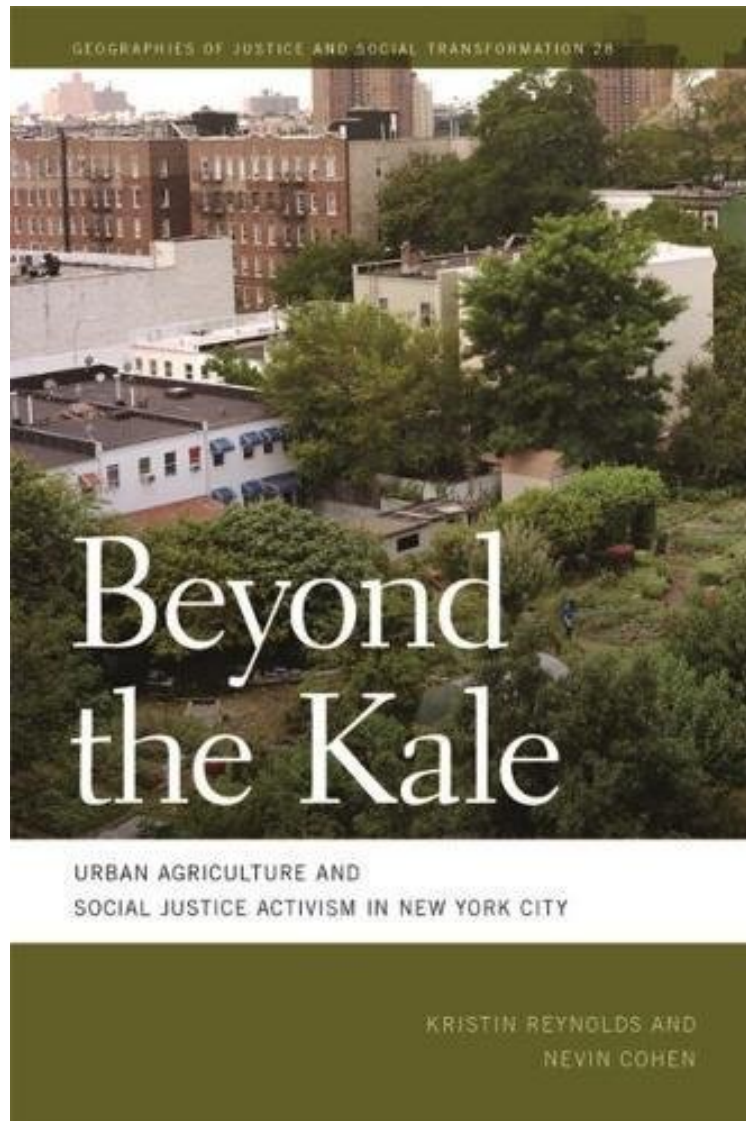


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## **Beyond the Kale: Urban Agriculture and Social Justice Activism in New York City (Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Ser.)**

*Kristin Reynolds, Nevin Cohen*

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it would be worth my time, and all praised *Beyond the Kale: Urban Agriculture and Social Justice Activism in New York City* (Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Ser.):

Urban agriculture is increasingly considered an important part of creating just and sustainable cities. Yet the benefits that many people attribute to urban agriculture—fresh food, green space, educational opportunities—can mask structural inequities, thereby making political transformation harder to achieve. Realizing social and environmental justice requires moving beyond food production to address deeper issues such as structural racism, gender inequity, and economic disparities. *Beyond the Kale* argues that urban agricultural projects focused explicitly on dismantling oppressive systems have the greatest potential to achieve substantive social change. Through in-depth interviews and public forums with some of New York City's most prominent urban agriculture activists and supporters, Kristin Reynolds and Nevin Cohen illustrate how some urban farmers and gardeners not only grow healthy food for their communities but also use their activities and spaces to disrupt the dynamics of power and privilege that perpetuate inequity. Addressing a significant gap in the urban agriculture literature, *Beyond the Kale* prioritizes the voices of people of color and women activists and leaders whose strategies have often been underrepresented within the urban agriculture movement and it examines the roles of scholarship in advancing social justice initiatives.

Challenging the increasingly mainstream view of urban agriculture as an extension of the new food movement that consists of young, middle-class white homesteaders and pioneers, Nevin Cohen and Kristin Reynolds identify how communities of color have their own rich history and contemporary forms of an urban agriculture directly linked to a deeper desire to bring about community change and social justice. The authors do more than provide an account of this alternative view of urban agriculture; rather, they critically yet constructively engage the movement while trying to energize its efforts to achieve food system change and environmental, economic, and social justice. (Robert Gottlieb coauthor of *Food Justice*) *Beyond the Kale* is a much-needed antidote to the often a bit too celebratory writing about urban agriculture. Through the voices of their research subjects, the authors show that a frank discussion of the race, class, and gender politics of this burgeoning food movement is no less than an imperative. (Julie Guthman author of *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*) The existence of race- and class-based disparities among farming and gardening groups is nothing new. What is new is Reynolds and Cohens meticulous, critical urban agriculture scholarship and activist analysis focused on New York City urban agriculture programs that advance social justice goals and are led by people of color and first-generation immigrants from regions of the Global South, with deep roots into their respective communities. (Professor Julian Agyeman author of *Introducing Just Sustainabilities: Policy, Planning, and Practice*) About the Author Kristin Reynolds is a visiting assistant professor of Environmental Studies and Food Studies at The New School and a lecturer at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Nevin Cohen is an associate professor at the CUNY School of Public Health.