

## GLEANING IN PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS: HOW GLEANING HAS CHANGED AND IT'S POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE FOOD JUSTICE

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The practice of food recovery known as gleaning has experienced a radical change over the past centuries. What began as a divine commandment to allow the poor to harvest leftover crops, and eventually an enforced right in European kingdoms, exists today as a charitable act undertaken by non-profit organizations as part of the greater food assistance system. Gleaning often takes the same hierarchical form as the rest of food assistance: an active upperclass with control providing a service for a passive underclass, with little control over the food they are provided. The purpose of this study is to examine why gleaning has changed, and how it can be reincorporated into mainstream food assistance which counters the hierarchical nature, harkening back to the values of communal ownership and subsistence that gleaning originally had. Working with City Fruit to glean from Urban fruit trees in Seattle, I interacted with people at every stage of the gleaning process, and learned what they get, and what they want out of gleaning. Through surveying members of the public and reviewing historical and modern literature on gleaning, I came to the conclusion that for gleaning to advance food justice and not uphold existing power structures, three factors must be emphasized: the equitable accessibility of gleaned produce, the inclusion of those receiving food assistance in the harvest and organizational process, and the awareness of gleaning's potential for advancing food justice to those who can contribute to it, incorporate it into food assistance, and benefit from it.