



BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR:

What You Should Know about
the People Who Feed You

DISCUSSION AND STUDY GUIDE

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COVER PHOTO: Scott Olson/Getty Images

USING THE GUIDE

About the Book includes a synopsis, a background on the author, and descriptions of both the organization featured in the book—ROC-United, and its campaign for food and worker justice, The Welcome Table. This section also lists key themes addressed in the book, major topics addressed in each chapter, and a list of key characters introduced in the book.

The **FACILITATION TIPS** provide guidance on creating a participatory and engaging discussion, along with some pointers for addressing topics that can sometimes be challenging to discuss, such as racism, sexism and immigration.

The **SAMPLE DISCUSSION FORMATS** provide options for how to structure your discussions, with different time constraints.

The **GENERAL OVERVIEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** can be used for leading discussions about the overall contents of the book. Addressing a few questions deeply may be more fruitful than addressing all of them broadly.

The **THEMATIC DISCUSSION GUIDE** provides a set of specific questions related to each of the nine key themes addressed in the book.

The **STUDY QUESTIONS** focus on the characters and stories presented in the book, exploring in more depth the content presented in the book.

These are followed by **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** that address personal reflection, conceptual synthesis, and broader social implications.

The **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES** section provides suggestions for supplemental learning beyond the classroom or community meeting setting.

The **ACTION AND ADVOCACY OPTIONS** section provides a menu of activities for people who want to engage in action or advocacy to support the rights of restaurant workers, sustainable food, and ethical eating practices.

The **FURTHER READING** section lists related readings that can be added to academic course syllabi.

The **RESOURCES** section lists a variety of organizations where more information can be accessed.

The **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT RESTAURANT WORKERS** section provides some further background that may be helpful for discussion leaders.

Lastly, there's a brief **SURVEY** at the end of this guide. We want to hear your ideas for building effective eaters/diners organizations and expanding the food and worker justice movement.

ABOUT THE BOOK

SYNOPSIS

How do restaurant workers live on some of the lowest wages in America? And how do poor working conditions—discriminatory labor practices, exploitation, and unsanitary kitchens—affect the meals that arrive at our restaurant tables? Saru Jayaraman, who launched a national restaurant workers organization after 9/11, sets out to answer these questions by following the lives of ten restaurant workers in cities across the country: New York City, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, Detroit, and New Orleans. Blending personal and investigative journalism, Jayaraman shows us that the quality of the food that arrives at our restaurant tables is not just a product of raw ingredients; it's the product of the hands that chop, grill, sauté, and serve it, as well as the bodies to whom those hands belong.

Behind the Kitchen Door is a groundbreaking exploration of the political, economic, and moral implications of eating out. What's at stake when we choose a restaurant is not only our own health or "foodie" experience, but also the health and well-being of the second-largest private sector workforce—the lives of 10 million people, many immigrants and many people of color, who bring passion, tenacity, and important insight into the American dining experience.

AUTHOR

Saru Jayaraman is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC-United), Co-Founder and Co-Director of ROC, and the Director of the Food Labor Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. After 9/11, together with displaced World Trade Center workers, she co-founded ROC in New York, which has organized restaurant workers to win workplace justice campaigns, conducted research and policy work, partnered with responsible restaurants, and launched cooperatively-owned restaurants. ROC now has 9000 members in 19 cities nationwide.

The story of Saru and her co-founders' work with ROC has been chronicled in the book *The Accidental American*. Ms. Jayaraman co-edited *The New Urban Immigrant Workforce* (ME Sharpe, 2005). Saru is a graduate of Yale Law School and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She was profiled in the *New York Times* "Public Lives" section in 2005, and was named one of *Crain's* "40 Under 40" in 2008, *1010 Wins'* "Newsmaker of the Year," and one of *New York Magazine's* "Influentials" of New York City.

BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR WEBSITE

<http://thewelcometable.net/behind-the-kitchen-door/>

RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTERS UNITED (ROC-UNITED)

The mission of ROC-United is to improve wages and working conditions for the nation's low-wage restaurant workforce. ROC-United is the only national organization in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to the needs of restaurant workers. Despite employing more than 10 million workers and producing more than \$1.7 trillion in revenue each year, the U.S. restaurant industry is less than 1% unionized. Until ROC-United's growth and development, the lack of organization left millions of restaurant workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation around the country. Through participatory research and policy work, employer engagement, workplace justice campaigns, membership and leadership development, and more, ROC-United has become a powerful national vehicle for restaurant workers to lift their collective voice on issues affecting all low-wage workers, including the minimum wage, paid sick days, compliance with basic employment standards, and access to health care.

www.rocunited.org

THE WELCOME TABLE

The Welcome Table is a national association of people who care about the food they eat and the people who have touched it, and want to be part of making a better food system for all.

www.thewelcometable.net/join-the-welcome-table/

MAJOR THEMES

- Food Justice and Sustainability, Ethical Eating
- Gender Discrimination, Women's Rights, Gender Studies
- Health Equity, Public Health
- Immigration Policy, Immigrant Rights
- Organizing, Advocacy, Social Change
- Public Policy, Political Science
- Racial Discrimination, Racial Justice, Race and Ethnic Studies
- Restaurant Industry, Business Management
- Workers Rights, Labor Issues

TOPICS BY CHAPTER

CHAPTER 1: The Hands on Your Plate introduces how the author, the co-founder of the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) and a restaurant diner herself, developed the consciousness and commitment to improve the wages and working conditions throughout the restaurant industry.

CHAPTER 2: Real Sustainability Please describes how employment practices in the restaurant industry are out of sync with the values of the sustainable food, or “Slow Food,” movement.

CHAPTER 3: Serving While Sick illustrates how restaurants that force employees to work while sick are also usually careless when it comes to food safety and customers’ health.

CHAPTER 4: The Tipping Point looks at how millions of workers are struggling to survive on the \$2.13 minimum wage for tipped workers.

CHAPTER 5: Race in the Kitchen show how racial discrimination continues to prevent workers of color from obtaining living-wage jobs that would allow them to support their families.

CHAPTER 6: Women Waiting on Equality looks at the wage gap between men and women, and sexual harassment in the restaurant industry.

CHAPTER 7: Recipes for Change describes how consumers and diners can support the struggles of restaurant workers—in both big and small ways—to create a more equitable, sustainable restaurant industry.

KEY CHARACTERS

(CHAPTER NUMBERS INDICATE WHEN CHARACTER WAS INTRODUCED.)

Saru Jayaraman: the author of *Behind the Kitchen Door*, as well as Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC-United); daughter of immigrants from India; community organizer. (Chapter 1)

Fekkak Mamdouh: a Moroccan immigrant, former head waiter at *Windows of the World*, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC-United). (Chapter 1)

Daniel: an Ecuadorian immigrant and former dishwasher at the celebrity chef Mario Batali’s restaurant *Del Posto*, and a waiter at a four-star New York restaurant. (Chapter 2)

Diep: the owner of *Good Girl Dinette* in Highland Park, Los Angeles; an industry leader in sustainable restaurant practices. (Chapter 2)

Thomas: a restaurant worker in the South who became a leader in ROC-New Orleans. (Chapter 3)

Nikki: a worker forced to continue serving food in a Washington, D.C. restaurant after coming down with conjunctivitis, who later became a ROC organizer and restaurant worker lobbyist in Washington, DC. (Chapter 3)

Woong Chang: a Korean American who served food in and upscale French bistro after contracting H1N1, commonly known as the “swine flu.” (Chapter 3)

Claudia: an immigrant worker from Mexico who earns the \$2.13 minimum wage for tipped workers, and who became an organizer with ROC-New Orleans. (Chapter 4)

Mike Morgan: a white worker from Detroit who also earns the \$2.13 minimum wage for tipped workers. (Chapter 4)

Jason and Ben: the owners of Russell Street Deli in Detroit who demonstrate how restaurants can pay workers livable wages and still be profitable. (Chapter 4)

Oscar Diaz: a charismatic busser from Nicaragua who couldn't get a promotion in a fine dining restaurant in Miami because he didn't have the “right look,” and went on to become a ROC-Miami organizer. (Chapter 5)

Frantz: a young Haitian immigrant who worked as a dishwasher at the Capital Grille in Miami. (Chapter 5)

Maya: a hostess in a fine dining restaurant in Washington DC, who was raised in a Trinidadian neighborhood and repeatedly had to train white men to hold management positions while unable to advance herself. (Chapter 5)

Alicia: a culinary school graduate regularly relegated to salad and pastry chef positions in restaurant environments where gender discrimination is the norm, and who became the co-coordinator of ROC-Philadelphia. (Chapter 6)

Yelena: a young college graduate from Russia who faced sexual harassment on the job. (Chapter 6)

Shardha: a mother of four who struggled for years to pay childcare while working in restaurants, who ultimately joined a group of 9/11 survivors, helped open a cooperative restaurant, and rose through the ranks to become the restaurant's manager. (Chapter 6)

Siby: a low-wage worker and immigrant from the Ivory Coast, who became a chef, and eventually, the executive director of ROC-New York. (Chapter 7)

FACILITATION TIPS

TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR DISCUSSIONS PARTICIPATORY AND ENGAGING

- Choose the right seating arrangement. If possible, arrange seats in a circle where everyone can see each other's faces.
- Establish group norms or ground rules that encourage full, active and balanced participation. Create a safe and conducive learning environment. See the sample list below.
- Begin with an icebreaker. Ask participants to share their names and respond to a simple and/or fun question to help everyone feel welcome and comfortable. Give everyone a time limit (e.g. one minute or less) to keep it short.
- Use a variety of learning activities. You can build in active (hands-on) and interactive (participatory) activities. For discussions, you can address some questions in a full group, small groups, or pairs ("pair and share")—or ask participants to do some silent reflection or journaling before sharing aloud. Feel free to encourage some lively and constructive debate.
- Take turns responding to questions. Before calling on someone a second time, invite those who haven't spoken yet to talk. Next time, invite people who haven't spoken to respond first.
- Facilitate actively by using prompts to guide the discussion ("We're hearing a lot from just a few people, Let's hear from some others.") Ask talkative people to give others a chance to speak. Call on quiet people and invite them to talk, but don't surprise or pressure them.
- Ask open-ended questions to elicit more active thinking and participation. Use silence after asking a question, so people have a chance to think and decide what to say.
- Find the "teachable moments." Embrace conflict. Deal with differences, not just commonalities. Taking advantage of unplanned opportunities. Challenge people to think and act in new ways, beyond their comfort zones.
- Make the learning relevant. Keep things connected to, and grounded in, real people's lives. Respect and recognize what people know. Continually draw upon the participants' knowledge and experience.
- Keep the energy level high and make things fun. Build interest and curiosity. If the energy level drops, do something different. Schedule a break. Get people up and moving around. Lead a stretching, breathing, or centering activity. Some of the best learning is playful and enjoyable.
- Encourage follow-up action. Give people time to consider follow-up reflection and action. Give people an opportunity to share their ideas and/or commitments.

- Plan a strong finish. Thank people for their participation, acknowledge the wisdom generated and shared, and inspire people to continue thinking and acting on their insight and values.

TIPS FOR ADDRESSING RACE, GENDER AND IMMIGRATION ISSUES

- Use “I-statements.” Since everyone has their own racial identities, experiences and perspectives, encourage people to speak from their own experience and share personal stories and examples related to topics being discussed.
- Remember the group norms/ground rules. Remind people as needed about any group norms agreed to at the outset, such as listening with an open mind, and acknowledging and respecting differences.
- Use inclusive and respectful language. Keep in mind that people are from many different racial, ethnic and religious groups; have different sexual orientations, gender identities and physical abilities; may be immigrants or refugees of many different statuses; and vary in age and economic status. Everyone deserves equal rights and respect, and no one is “illegal” or second-class.
- Acknowledge the multiple isms and avoid false equations. There are multiple forms of privilege and oppression based on race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, religion, immigrant/citizen status, etc. There’s a danger in falsely equating different dynamics (e.g. racism and

sexism). Each is distinct. At the same time, there are some common dynamics to how power, privilege and oppression operate, which are worth validating and examining since they can often be points of connection across different communities.

PARTICIPATION NORMS

- 1. Voice:** Share your perspectives and needs. Participate fully, but evenly. Use inclusive language. Respect confidentiality.
- 2. Ears:** Listen well and be open to learning something new.
- 3. Eyes:** Acknowledge and respect differences, and disagree constructively.
- 4. Mind:** Be open to new learning and be fully present in mind, body, and spirit.
- 5. Heart:** Speak from your heart (use “I” statements.) Embody and express your core values.

Facilitation Tips by Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center

- Avoid the “Oppression Olympics.” There’s a danger to pitting different dynamics against each other (sometimes referred to as the “Oppression Olympics”). Sometimes racial oppression may be worse than gender oppression, or vice versa, while the combination of the two is likely to be worse than either one alone.

- Focus on actions and impacts rather than attitudes and intentions. Avoid making assumptions about people’s motives. Focus on actions and impacts, whether intentional or not.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION FORMATS

45-60 MINUTE WORKSHOP OR CLASS:

TIME	TOPIC	METHODS
5'	Welcome & Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome everyone• Overview the agenda
10'	Icebreaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone introduces himself or herself and answers a simple assigned question (e.g. favorite restaurant? Worst job? Have you or someone you know worked in a restaurant?) Responses up to 30-60 seconds max.
15'	Study Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select one of two Study Questions from the General Overview Guide or one of the Thematic Guides addressing specific content from the book.
20'	Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select one of two Study Questions from the General Overview Guide or one of the Thematic Guides addressing specific content from the book.• Select two or three Discussion Questions from the General Overview Guide or one of the Thematic Guides to give participants an opportunity for deeper analysis, connections to personal experience, or possible follow-up action.
5'	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate everyone's participation and ideas• Encourage/inspire further reflection, study and/or action.

SERIES OF WORKSHOPS OR CLASSES:

You can also meet over multiple sessions, for example for three one-hour sessions. Use one of the time formats below, but for each session, use questions from a different Thematic Guide (such as race, gender, ethical eating). At the beginning and end of each session, review what has come before and what will come next.

2-HOUR WORKSHOP OR CLASS:

TIME	TOPIC	METHODS
5'	Welcome & Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome everyone• Overview the agenda
10'	Icebreaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone introduces himself or herself and answers a simple assigned question (e.g. favorite restaurant? Worst job? Have you or someone you know worked in a restaurant?) Responses up to 30-60 seconds max.
20'	Study Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select two or three Study Questions from the General Overview Guide or one of the Thematic Guides addressing specific content from the book.
40'	Discussion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select three or four Discussion Questions from the General Overview Guide or one of the Thematic Guides to give participants an opportunity for deeper analysis, connections to personal experience, or possible follow-up action.• To add variety and increase the participation and energy level, divide people into small groups to discuss one of the questions. After they meet for 10-15 minutes, instead of having each group report back, simply invite a few people to share some of the ideas they discussed.
20'	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate everyone's participation and ideas.• Encourage / inspire further reflection, study and/or action.

GENERAL OVERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE

You can use these questions when running a general book group discussion. If you would like to have a more in-depth discussion or study a particular issue mentioned in the book, please refer to the Thematic Discussion and Study Question Guide.

1. In the book Jayaraman goes “behind the kitchen door” to the working conditions for many restaurant workers across the country. What stood out to you? Was there anything you learned that surprised you?
2. How do the conditions outlined in the book affect you as a restaurant patron—your health and safety, values as a consumer, concern for members of your community, the economy? Why might they be of concern?
3. Seven of the eleven lowest-paying jobs in the U.S. are in the restaurant industry. What do you think are the underlying structural issues (e.g., wages, class, race, gender, education, etc.) that have led to such low wages in the industry?
4. As a group, brainstorm all the ways and reasons that workers profiled in this book were mistreated and unfairly compensated.
5. What did you learn about occupational segregation in restaurants between different segments of the industry? What about segregation regarding the front of the house as compared to the back of the house? Is what was described in the book reflective of what you have seen in restaurants? Do you see it differently after having read the book?
6. Why do you think that “low road” practices (e.g., low wages, lack of healthcare benefits and earned sick days, discrimination, lack of options for career advancement, etc.) are so prevalent and allowed to persist?
7. If you were a restaurant owner committed to “high-road” practices and standards, what kinds of policies and practices would you institute? What would be the pros and cons of instituting each of them?
8. Why might it be difficult for restaurant workers to come together to advocate for improved conditions and to organize for their rights?
9. What kinds of public policies and incentives could be created to foster more industry-wide “high road” standards? What other opportunities exist to elevate industry standards and practices?

10. How do your values, faith, and/or community shape you as a consumer? How has reading *Behind the Kitchen Door* affected your perspective on your role as a consumer?
11. What are some actions or forms of advocacy that we as restaurant patrons can take to help change and improve working conditions?
12. How could we help support the movement that ROC and its affiliates are building with restaurant workers?

THEMATIC DISCUSSION AND STUDY GUIDE

There is a set of specific questions for each of the nine key themes addressed in the book. The study questions focus on the characters and stories presented in the book—exploring in more depth the content presented in the book. These are followed by discussion questions that address personal reflection, conceptual synthesis, and broader social implications. Rather than discuss all of the questions, select those that you think will evoke the most reflection, analysis and action.

A. FOOD JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY, ETHICAL EATING

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did Saru and Mamdouh's visit to several organic and sustainable farms in eastern Italy (Chapter 2) make such an impression on them? What did they learn about "Slow Food" values there that seemed different from those popular in the U.S.?
2. The author asserts that, "In a truly sustainable food system, everyone would benefit." Give examples of how people in different positions in the food system/chain would benefit?
3. What does it mean to become what the author refers to as a "responsible eater?"
4. What does the author mean at the end of the book when she urges people to "adopt a definition of 'sustainable food' that includes sustainable labor practices?" Write your own definition of 'sustainable foods.'
5. What restaurant practices can contribute to degraded worker health and the spread of foodborne illnesses?

6. What could be ways to convince people who believe in the health and environmental benefits of organic, locally produced, and “slow” food, to also embrace concerns for food and restaurant workers? Why are these concerns often ignored or resisted?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think growing interest in organic, locally sourced, and sustainable food has not widely included a concern for fair and sustainable labor practices?
2. If you were to propose a set of Fair Food standards and sustainable labor practices for restaurants to adopt, what would some of them be? Which would benefit workers most?
3. The Slow Food movement began as a social justice movement against globalization—the unregulated spread of multinational corporations—and for fair treatment of the world’s people. What would it take to align the current movement with its roots?

B. GENDER DISCRIMINATION, WOMEN’S RIGHTS, GENDER STUDIES

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the different types of gender bias that Alicia (Chapter 6) experienced or observed in her restaurant positions?
2. What is different about the worker-owned cooperative restaurant, COLORS in New York, which made it more possible for Sardha (Chapter 6) to advance to the position of restaurant manager?
3. Why are the majority of U.S. restaurant workers women, while the majority of restaurant managers, chefs and owners are men? What are the various decision-making points at which gender bias may occur?
4. Why are training programs specifically tailored for women needed—such as the COL-ORS Hospitality Opportunities for Women (CHOW) Institute’s “Career Ladder” classes? What other kinds of supports could help more women advance in the restaurant industry?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think are the underlying social issues that lead women to be barred from some of the highest paying jobs in the industry?

2. Jayaraman states that one-third of the sexual harassment complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission were from women restaurant workers, even though only 7% of women in the U.S. work in restaurants. Why do you think that restaurants have such a high rate of sexual harassment?
3. What are the negative impacts of the restaurant industry disproportionately paying women poverty wages? What are the protections that can be put in place to change this?

C. HEALTH EQUITY, PUBLIC HEALTH

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What policies and practices could the Washington, D.C. restaurant where Nikki worked have instituted (Chapter 3) in order to prevent her from having to work for several days with conjunctivitis (pink eye) so as not to risk losing her job?
2. Why does Woong Chang (Chapter 3) who worked for several days with H1N1 (swine flu) in an upscale restaurant consider paid sick days to be “one of the most basic human rights?” In addition to the workers, who else is hurt by the widespread lack of paid sick days in the restaurant industry?
3. Why was the “Carrot Mob” action that Nikki and Woong organized so successful? What were the impacts?
4. How did ROC develop evidence to show that “the restaurants that mistreated their workers were more likely to engage in unsafe food handling practices that sicken customers?”
5. In 2007, a San Francisco ordinance compelled all restaurants to provide paid sick days to all employees, resulting in a four-fold decrease in foodborne illness outbreaks. What would be the pros and cons of trying to replicate this in other cities? Why was its universal application (to all restaurants and all of their employees) critical to its success?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the public health ramifications of not having paid sick leave for restaurant workers? What is the effect on the health of the community?
2. How do conditions “behind the kitchen door” affect restaurant patrons, and why should patrons be concerned?

3. The U.S. Department of Labor's 2011 report ranks the restaurant industry as the third highest in total number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses. How could these injuries and illnesses be prevented?

D. IMMIGRATION POLICY, IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did Claudia (Chapter 4) want to fit in and be an “all-American girl?” How did her race, immigrant status and gender compound her challenges to fit in and succeed in the U.S.?
2. What were some of the barriers and challenges faced by undocumented restaurant workers featured in the book? How were they more vulnerable to worker exploitation than workers with documentation?
3. In what ways is Daniel's immigration story (Chapter 2) common to many immigrants, and in what ways is it unusual?
4. Why do so many people of color and immigrants work in the lower-paying “back of the house” jobs? (Approximately 40 percent of New York City restaurant workers are undocumented immigrants.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the restaurant industry such a popular point of entry for new undocumented immigrant workers? What other industries have a lot of gateway jobs that attract undocumented immigrants?
2. In what ways does the restaurant industry enable new immigrants' access to better employment opportunities? In which ways does it not?

E. ORGANIZING, ADVOCACY, SOCIAL CHANGE

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did the former workers at Windows of the World learn by protesting the opening of the owner's new restaurant where they were denied jobs? How did this action inform future organizing efforts of the Restaurant Opportunities Center?

2. Why was it critical for ROC to engage in multi-racial organizing, for example, when Siby helped unite Latino and Bangladeshi workers in New York (Chapter 7)?
3. Why has it been critical to ROC's success to not only fight wage theft and discrimination with legal action but to also have strong worker-led organizing campaigns involving multiple visible actions?
4. In what ways did ROC-NY effectively use research as a way to highlight worker abuses and advocate for alternatives?
5. What do you think are the pros and cons of the ROC affiliates in New York and Detroit creating their own cooperative restaurant, COLORS, as a strategy for advancing worker rights, dignity and advancement? What are some of the complications that arise when workers become owners and competitors with other restaurants?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it difficult for many restaurant workers to fight for their rights?
2. The union density of the restaurant industry is less than 2%. What do you think are the barriers to organizing this workforce?
3. The Food Chain Workers' Alliance is currently organizing across the food chain with participation from workers from various sectors, including meat and poultry processing, food retail and distribution, restaurants and supermarkets, farmworkers, and others. What do you think are some of the actual and potential benefits of this organizing?
4. What are some actions or forms of advocacy that restaurant patrons can take to help change and improve working conditions? Which kinds of actions do you think would have the most positive and significant impacts?

F. PUBLIC POLICY, POLITICAL SCIENCE

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are some reasons the National Restaurant Association wields so much power in Congress, compared to the voices of restaurant workers?
2. How does the presence of ROC lobbyists like Nikki (Chapter 3) change the political terrain long dominated by the National Restaurant Association? How can a grassroots lobbying force affect bills such as the Healthy Families Act and the WAGES Act?

3. Why is Diep, the owner of the Good Girl Dinette in Los Angeles (Chapter 2), a strong proponent of uniform policy changes—like a raise in the minimum wage and a paid sick leave policy? How could you appeal to large restaurant owners and small family restaurant owners to support uniform policies that improve worker compensation and workplace conditions?
4. What kinds of public policies and incentives could be created to foster more “high-road” standards across the restaurant industry? What opportunities exist to elevate industry-wide standards and practices?
5. Review the provisions in the proposed Healthy Families Act (H.R. 1876 and S. 984 in the U.S. Congress). What do you think will be the racial impact (positive or negative) on workers from different racial groups, and for immigrants of different statuses?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the federal minimum wage for tipped workers has remained so low for so long? Who do you think has the most stake in keeping the minimum wage low? Besides low-wage workers, who else is hurt when workers are not paid a livable wage?
2. ROC-United has said that the restaurant industry is like “the wild West” due to the lack of regulations. What regulations can be put in place to protect workers in the restaurant industry? What are the enforcement mechanisms?
3. How do current U.S. immigration policies contribute to an easily exploitable workforce in the restaurant industry and in other parts of the food chain?
4. As someone who is concerned with issues affecting restaurant workers, how would you approach policymakers to ask for changes?

5. G. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, RACIAL JUSTICE, RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is the unfair treatment of people of color—such as with Daniel (Chapter 2) and Oscar (Chapter 5) so prevalent, especially if, under U.S. employment law, racial discrimination in the workplace is illegal?
2. Why does Maya (Chapter 5) say, “I wish I’d had a tall white man’s suit to get ahead in the industry?” What would her trajectory likely be—in terms of her restaurant positions and promotions—as a white man rather than a woman of color?

3. When Detroit restaurant owners Jason and Ben say, “Our new rule is that every time we put out an ad, it’s for a dishwasher,” why is this practice critical to racial diversity and equity in their workplace? What other restaurant practices could foster racial fairness?
4. Why does the author, in Chapter 5, refer to the racial pay gap in the restaurant industry as “a race tax?”
5. How does the quote by a Detroit restaurant manager—“Well, diversity in Detroit usually means everyone in the back of the house is black, everyone in the front of the house is white”—suggest that there is a difference between racial diversity (variety) and racial equity (fairness)? How can racially diverse restaurants still be racially inequitable?
6. What are some of the ways that ROC has proven that racial discrimination exists in particular restaurants as well as across the industry? Why is research and evidence gathering such an important part of ROC’s campaigns for fairness?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Reflect on your experiences in restaurants: Have you witnessed the racial segregation or discrimination that Jayaraman describes? How?
2. Why do you think that people of color and immigrants so often end up working and staying in the lower-paying “back of the house” jobs?
3. Why does the author make the statement: “Today, I believe that racial segregation is the restaurant industry’s most pressing, deep-seated problem, and is part and parcel to every other pattern of injustice in the industry”?
4. How is racial segregation in the restaurant industry not only due to discriminatory practices in restaurants, but also a result of broader societal factors involving other institutions and inequitable patterns? How is institutional racism in an individual restaurant compounded by the structural and systemic racism of the broader society?

H. RESTAURANT INDUSTRY, BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Diep, owner of the Good Girl Dinette in Los Angeles (Chapter 2), says, “What’s a sustainable restaurant? It’s one in which the restaurant grows, and the people grow with it.” What kind of growth does a sustainable restaurant make possible, as demonstrated by Diep’s restaurant?
2. How did Diep answer her own question: “How can I make it an affordable restaurant and still have living wages and organic food?” What were some of the challenges and trade-offs involved in her business practices?
3. What institutional practices did Jason and Ben, owners of the Russell Street Deli in Detroit (Chapter 5), change in order to create “a work environment conducive to happiness” for workers, vendors, patrons and themselves?
4. Why did Restaurant Opportunities Center start the Restaurant Industry Roundtable (Chapter 2)?
5. What is the strategy behind starting the *ROC National Diner’s Guide*? What impact could widespread use of the guide have on different sectors of the food chain, including the restaurant industry, individual restaurants, restaurant workers, diners, food growers and farmworkers?
6. What are the benefits to starting a worker-owned cooperative restaurant—COLORS, in New York and Detroit? What are some of the biggest challenges to starting and sustaining a cooperative restaurant?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do restaurants engage in “low-road” practices and standards (e.g. low wage, lack of benefits, lack of upward mobility, etc.)? Which “low-road” practices are most prevalent, and why are they allowed to persist?
2. If you were a restaurant owner committed to “high-road” practices and standards, what kinds of policies and practices would you institute? What would be the pros and cons of instituting each of them?
3. If the restaurant industry—“one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors of the U.S. economy, with over 10 million employees nationwide”—were to support uniform “high-road” standards and policy reforms, what effect might this have on the overall U.S. economy?

I. WORKERS RIGHTS, LABOR ISSUES

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the flaws of a labor system that result in food service workers like Claudia (Chapter 4) not being able to eat, or needing to rely on Food Stamps to survive? Why do you think restaurant industry leaders have failed to heed the wisdom of auto-maker Henry Ford, who understood that he needed to pay workers enough to afford his automobiles?
2. Many of the workers profiled in the book share their experiences of being unfairly compensated in their job. What are some of the reasons for this undercompensation?
3. Rather than strive to become primarily a service organization focused on helping individual workers address various problems, why did ROC-NY choose to focus on organizing and worker empowerment to affect industry-wide change? Which of their strategies and campaigns focused on institutional and industry change?
4. Why do you think the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY) chose to organize a different kind of worker formation, rather than a labor union?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the key conditions “behind the kitchen door” that have significant effects on the lives of restaurant workers across the country?
2. Why are so many low-wage and immigrant workers situated in the restaurant industry? Why does the restaurant industry have 7 of the 11 lowest-paying jobs in the U.S.?
3. Much of established U.S. labor law was fought and won by immigrant workers during the 1900’s (e.g. minimum wages, 8-hour workday and overtime compensation, health and safety provisions). What kinds of labor reforms are needed to protect today’s workers, including immigrants?

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

1. FIELD OBSERVATION OF A RESTAURANT

Select a restaurant to dine at or visit—it could be one you already frequent regularly. Tune in to the working conditions there. Look behind the kitchen door. Even ask employees about their work experience there (without interrupting their work flow). If possible, visit the restaurant more than once to see if any problems or patterns persist over multiple visits. Document and reflect upon what you observe.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER INCLUDE:

- What is the racial composition of workers in the back of the house compared to that in the front of the house?
- What are the conditions in the kitchen? Front of the house? Restrooms?
- Are there any safety or sanitary concerns? Do any employees appear to be sick?
- Are there any signs of harassment or verbal abuse?
- Are there detectable differences in the way people of color are treated vs. white workers? Women vs. men? Back-of-the-house workers vs. those in front?

2. DIALOGUE WITH A RESTAURANT MANAGER

Write or talk to a restaurant manager about worker issues and conditions. If you've made any first-hand observations of potential problems—or exemplary practices—at the restaurant, bring those to the manager's attention. You can check the *ROC National Diner's Guide* to see if the restaurant is listed. If you don't get a response, be persistent in following up and feel free to involve other diners.

QUESTIONS TO ASK COULD INCLUDE:

- What is the minimum wage for tipped employees?
- Is there a paid sick leave policy for employees?

- How diverse is your wait staff?
- Are there promotion policies and training opportunities so that back-of-the-house workers have opportunities to move up into front-of-the-house positions?
- Besides a standard non-discriminatory hiring policy, what other policies or practices, if any, does the restaurant utilize to ensure that there is racial diversity and equity in each of the different positions in the restaurant?
- What policies or practices, if any, does the restaurant have in place to ensure gender pay equity for different positions?

3. ATTEND A COMMUNITY MEETING OR EVENT:

Tune in to the media, including alternative and social media, to see if there are any community events, meetings, protests, or actions related to restaurant worker issues, food justice, or related concerns.

ATTEND, OBSERVE AND REFLECT UPON AN EVENT WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What are the issues? What changes are being demanded?
- What solutions are being proposed?
- Who are the power-holders or policymakers that the community seeks to influence?
- What stories are being shared to highlight the issues?
- How narrow or inclusive are issues being framed, and are workers' rights being addressed sufficiently?
- How effective does the organizing effort appear to be?
- What could make it more effective?

4. MEET WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

You and your organization can call the office of your elected officials—such as a state or U.S. representative or senator, or a local city or county official—to ask for a meeting. Before meeting, learn about bills and proposals related to restaurant workers. Visit the “Take Action” tab at the ROC-United website to learn about current issues and how to contact your legislator. <http://rocunited.org/action-center/>

WHEN MEETING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL, HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DISCUSS:

- Share some of your own experiences or observations related to restaurant work.
- Share some of your concerns about problems you are aware of, or that you learned about from reading *Behind the Kitchen Door*.
- Share some of your ideas and values related to justice, fairness, and sustainability.
- Discuss concrete issues, such as the minimum wage for tipped workers, sick leave for restaurant workers, etc.
- Ask your legislator where she or he stands on specific issues. Try to get clear answers regarding whether she or he would support or oppose specific proposals—or even sponsor or co-sponsor bills.

ACTION AND ADVOCACY OPTIONS

Author's Suggested Actions: (described in Chapter 7)

1. Adopt a definition of “sustainable food” that includes sustainable labor practices.
2. Talk to the workers when you eat in a restaurant.
3. Engage restaurant managers in a conversation about labor practices.
4. Help raise the federal minimum wage for tipped workers (now \$2.13 per hour).
5. Vote for paid sick days for restaurant workers. Tell restaurant managers you consider workers' health when choosing where to eat.
6. Picket with your wallet—don't eat in restaurants segregated by race and gender.
7. Join our campaign to support workers along the food chain.

See the ROC-United website at: www.rocunited.org or contact: info@rocunited.org

MORE OPTIONS:

- Support responsible restaurants: Use the *ROC National Diners Guide to Ethical Eating*—now available as a free mobile app—to patronize businesses that match your values. You can find the guide at <http://rocunited.org/dinersguide/>

- Join the Welcome Table: Become a part of a national association of people who care about the food they eat and the people who have touched it, and want to be part of making a better food system for all. www.thewelcometable.net
- Write your legislators: The “Take Action” tab at the ROC-United website makes it easy to contact your legislator. <http://rocunited.org/action-center/>
- Dine at COLORS Restaurants and recommend the worker-owned cooperative to your friends: COLORS in New York (417 Lafayette St, NYC, 212-777-8443) and COLORS in Detroit (Centre Street, Detroit MI 48226, 313-496-1212)
- Start a ROC STAR in your community: Any restaurant worker can apply to start a ROC STAR (Supporting Restaurant Transformation in America’s Communities) to help build a local ROC presence and affiliate.
- Join ROC: You can either become a 1) Full Member if you’re a restaurant worker living near a ROC local; 2) Online Member for restaurant workers living in places without a ROC local yet; or 3) Consumer Member if want to help ROC improve the restaurant industry. Sign up at: <http://rocunited.org/join-rocunited-now/>
- Join ROC-United’s online community: Keep up with the latest happenings. <https://www.facebook.com/ROCUnite?ref=ts&fref=ts>
- Donate to ROC-United: Support worker organizing efforts with a donation at: <http://www.rocunited.org/donate>.

FURTHER READING

- *The Accidental American: Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*, by Rinku Sen and Fekkak Mamdouh, 2008. Activist, journalist, and immigration expert Rinku Sen and organizer Fekkak Mamdouh call for a bold new approach to immigration: a free international flow of labor to match globalization's free flow of capital. After all, corporations are encouraged to move anywhere in the world so they can maximize their earnings. People shouldn't have to risk exploitation, abuse, and even imprisonment when they try to do the same. The authors examine the consequences of this injustice through Mamdouh's own story. Born in Morocco, he was a waiter and union leader at Windows on the World, a restaurant in the World Trade Center. In the aftermath of September 11th, facing a rising tide of anti-immigrant bias, Mamdouh and others formed the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY) to help their colleagues fight for decent jobs and fair treatment. ROC-NY was able to unite native-born and immigrant workers, helping each group realize they were involved in a common struggle for better working conditions.
<http://www.accidentalamerican.us/>
- *Behind the Kitchen Door: A Multi-site Study of the Restaurant Industry*, by ROC-United, 2011. In conjunction with three local ROC affiliates, ROC-United released *Behind the Kitchen Door: A Multi-site Study of the Restaurant Industry*—an overview of conditions in the restaurant industry nationwide through studies in eight regions throughout the country. The findings illustrated the great need for reform that can achieve a sustainable industry in which workers, employers, and diners can prosper together.
<http://rocunited.org/2011-behind-the-kitchen-door-multi-site-study/>
- *The Color of Food*, by Yvonne Yen Liu and Dominique Apollon, Applied Research Center, 2011. ARC embarked on a broad survey of the food system, to map out the race, gender and class of workers along the supply chain.
<http://arc.org/foodjustice>
- *Fast Food Nation*, by Eric Schlosser, 2001. This best-seller exposes exploitation of workers by the food industry and, according to Amazon.com, "...how the fast food industry has widened the gap between rich and poor, fueled an epidemic of obesity, and transformed food production throughout the world." A film based on the book was made in 2006.
- *Good Food and Good Jobs for All: Challenges and Opportunities to Advance Racial and Economic Equity in the Food System*, by Yvonne Yen Liu, Applied Research Center, 2012. This report finds stronger collaboration is needed between movements for "good food" and "good jobs" in order to advance racial and economic equity in the food system.
<http://arc.org/foodjustice>
- *The Hands That Feed Us: Challenges and Opportunities for Workers Along the Food Chain*, by The Food Chain Workers Alliance, with ROC-United, Data Center, Saru Jayaraman, and the Food Labor Research Center, 2012. This study examines wages and working conditions across the food system, advancement opportunities for workers, and potential opportunities

for consumers and employers to improve prospects for food workers.

<http://foodchainworkers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Hands-That-Fed-Us-Report.pdf>

- *Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalized Immigrants*, by David Bacon, 2008, Beacon Press. In this incisive investigation of the global, political, and economic forces that create migration, journalist and former labor organizer Bacon offers a detailed examination of the trends transforming, for example, Mexican farmers into California farm workers.

<http://dbacon.igc.org/IndexPS/news.htm>

- *The New Urban Immigrant Workforce: Innovative Models for Labor Organizing*, editors Saru Jayaraman and Immanuel Ness, 2005. This groundbreaking look at contemporary immigrant labor organizing and mobilization draws on participant observation, ethnographic interviews, historical documents, and new case studies. <http://www.mesharpe.com>

- *ROC National Diners' Guide to Ethical Eating*, by ROC-United, 2013 Edition. The Diners' Guide provides information on the wage, benefits, and promotion practices of the 150 most popular restaurants in America in 9 major cities across the country, from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. to New York City.

<http://rocunited.org/dinersguide/>

- *Suburban Sweatshops: The Fight for Immigrant Rights*, by Jennifer Gordon, 2005, Harvard University Press. In 1992, Jennifer Gordon founded the Workplace Project to help immigrant workers in the underground suburban economy of Long Island, New York. In a story of gritty determination and surprising hope, she weaves together Latino immigrant life and legal activism to tell the unexpected tale of how the most vulnerable workers in society came together to demand fair wages, safe working conditions, and respect from employers. Immigrant workers—many undocumented—won a series of remarkable victories, including a raise of thirty percent for day laborers, and a domestic workers' bill of rights. In the process, they transformed themselves into effective political participants.

<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674024045>

- *Taking the High Road: A How-To Guide for Successful Restaurant Employees*, by ROC-UNITED and Dr. Rosemary Batt, 2012. This guide helps restaurant businesses learn specific strategies for improving working conditions while increasing profitability. Highlighting a number of ROC Restaurant Industry Roundtable members such as Zingerman's, CRAFT restaurant group, and Good Girl Dinette, the employers featured in this report tell you how the high road benefits the bottom line.

<http://rocunited.org/taking-the-high-road-a-how-to-guide-for-successful-restaurant-employers/>

RESOURCES

- **APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER** advances racial justice through research, advocacy and journalism. ARC publishes Colorlines.com and convenes the ARC convenes the biannual national Facing Race conference. ARC published Good Food and Good Jobs for All and The Color of Food. ARC offers racial justice workshops, webinars, and tailored training and consultations. www.arc.org
- **BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR:**
<http://thewelcometable.net/behind-the-kitchen-door/>
- Brandworkers International is a New York City-based not-for-profit organization protecting and advancing the rights of retail and food employees by training workers in social change tools and facilitating member-led workplace justice campaigns. <http://www.brandworkers.org>
- **THE BUSINESS ETHICS NETWORK**'s mission is to help transform the role of corporations in society by building the capacity of our members in their corporate campaign work, by providing education, facilitating collaboration, and increasing recognition of their campaign successes with the funding community and the public. <http://businessethicsnetwork.org/>
- **CENTER FOR NEW COMMUNITY** is committed to countering the reality of racism and bigotry in America. It was founded on the principle that a concerted, long-term effort by individuals, families, congregations, communities, and civic organizations to address issues of social, economic, and racial justice, is both necessary and achievable. <http://newcomm.org>
- **COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS** is a community-based organization of mainly Latino, Mayan Indian, and Haitian immigrants working in low-wage jobs throughout the state of Florida. <http://www.ciw-online.org>
- **COLORLINES** is the national online daily newsmagazine on race, culture and politics. www.colorlines.com
- **COMITÉ DE APOYO A LOS TRABAJADORES AGRÍCOLAS (CATA)** is a migrant farmworker organization that is governed by and comprised of farmworkers who are actively engaged in the struggle for better working and living conditions. <http://www.cata-farmworkers.org/>
- **THE DATACENTER** is a non-profit organization that supports grassroots organizing for justice and sustainability through strategic research, training, and collaborations. The Data-Center provides research support and training to the Food Chain Workers Alliance. <http://www.datacenter.org/>
- **DOMESTIC FAIR TRADE ASSOCIATION** is an association of farmworkers, farmers, retailers, processors, businesses, and NGOs building a movement to transform our food system into one that is more healthy, sustainable, and just. <http://thedfta.org/>

- **FARMWORKER ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA** challenges systems that keep farmworkers and the rural poor in situations of poverty, exploitation, and powerlessness. <http://floridafarmworkers.org/>

- **FAST FOOD FORWARD** is a movement of New York City fast food workers to raise wages and gain rights at work. It is part of the national movement of low-wage workers fighting for a better future. <http://www.fastfoodforward.org/en>

- **FOOD CHAIN WORKERS Alliance** is a coalition of worker-based organizations whose members plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve, and sell food—organizing to improve wages and working conditions for all workers along the food chain. The Alliance works together to build a more sustainable food system that respects workers’ rights, based on the principles of social, environmental and racial justice, in which everyone has access to healthy and affordable food. <http://foodchainworkers.org/>

- **FOOD LABOR RESEARCH CENTER**, based at the University of California at Berkeley, seeks to conduct research and education on the wages and working conditions of workers along the food chain, and on the impact these conditions have not only on workers, but also on employers and consumers. <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/foodlaborresearch/>

- **GRASSROOTS GLOBAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE** is a national alliance of grassroots organizations building a popular movement for peace, democracy, and a sustainable world. GGJA supports local struggles and collaborates with international allies who share a vision and commitment to building a transformative social justice movement beyond borders. <http://ggjalliance.org/>

- **THE INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**, also known as Food First!, is a research and policy think-tank. Its purpose is to eliminate the injustices that cause hunger. In the summer of 2009, Food First! began its Food Workers-Food Justice program. <http://www.foodfirst.org/>

- **INTERFAITH WORKER JUSTICE** educates, organizes, and mobilizes the religious community in the U.S. on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers. <http://www.iwj.org/aboutus/aboutus.html>

- **INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM** is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. <http://www.laborrights.org>

- **JOBS WITH JUSTICE** is a national network of local coalitions that bring together labor unions, faith groups, community organizations, and student activists to fight for working people. <http://www.jwj.org>

- **JUST HARVEST USA** aims to build a more just and sustainable food system with a focus on establishing fair wages, humane working conditions, and fundamental rights for farmworkers. Just Harvest USA achieves this through broad public education and mobilizing support for farmworker-led and other grassroots campaigns.
<http://justharvestusa.org>

- * **THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT LAW PROJECT** promotes policies and programs that create good jobs, strengthen upward mobility, enforce hard-won worker rights, and help unemployed workers regain their economic footing through improved benefits and services.
<http://www.nelp.org/>

- **NATIONAL NETWORK FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS** is a national organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights, and labor organizations and activists working to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States, and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status.
www.nnirr.org.

- **NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WORKERS' JUSTICE CENTER** is a non-profit organization that assists low-wage workers. Through advocacy organizing and workers education, NAWJC seeks to help workers to help themselves obtain safe workplaces and a fair wages. <http://www.nwawjc.org>

- **PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKING FAMILIES** is a national network of leading regional advocacy organizations that support innovative solutions to our nation's economic and environmental problems. The Partnership's Good Food, Good Jobs campaign unites a broad array of stakeholders to improve job quality in the grocery industry, while advancing access to healthy and affordable food in disinvested communities.
<http://www.forworkingfamilies.org>

- **RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER UNITED (ROC-UNITED)** is a national restaurant workers' organization, comprised of restaurant worker organizations across the country.
www.rocunited.org

- **UE EDUCATION FUND: THE UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA** is a democratic national union representing some 35,000 workers in a wide variety of manufacturing, public sector, and private non-profit sector jobs. <http://www.ueref.org>

- **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE (UUSC)** is an international human-rights and social-justice organization whose program on economic justice features a "Choose Compassionate Consumption" initiative in support of the rights of workers in the food system. www.uusc.org/

- **UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS (UFCW)** is America's neighborhood union—1.3 million members standing together to improve the lives and livelihoods of workers, families, and communities.
<http://www.ufcw.org/>

- **UNITE HERE FOOD SERVICE DIVISION:** From university cafeterias to airport concessions, UNITE HERE's Food Service division is leading the way in new organizing, bringing thousands of new voices into the American labor movement.
<http://unitehere.org/fs/>

- **UNITED WORKERS CONGRESS** is a strategic alliance of workers that are either by law or by practice excluded from the right to organize in the United States. We are national networks that represent a base of workers, and also regional networks and individual organizations in industries where there is no national network.
<http://excludedworkerscongress.org>

- **U.S. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ALLIANCE** is a US-based alliance of food justice, anti-hunger, labor, environmental, faith-based, and food producer groups that upholds the right to food as a basic human right, and works to connect our local and national struggles to the international movement for food sovereignty.
<http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/>

- **THE WELCOME TABLE** is a national association of people who care about the food they eat and the people who have touched it, and want to be part of making a better food system for all. It is also the web portal for a multi-media campaign that illustrates an interconnected story that reveals the people behind the kitchen doors in restaurants and throughout the food chain across America, and how their lives impact our eating experience.
<http://thewelcometable.net/>

- **WAREHOUSE WORKERS UNITED** is an organization committed to improving the quality of life and jobs for warehouse workers in Southern California's Inland Empire.
<http://www.warehouseworkersunited.org>

- **WORKING AMERICA** is the nation's fastest growing organization for working families, with over 3 million members fighting for good jobs and a just economy.
<http://www.workingamerica.org/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT RESTAURANT WORKERS

Below is a handy list of questions prepared by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The answers to each question can be found on their website at: http://www.uusc.org/cc/frequently_asked_questions_about_restaurant_workers

MINIMUM WAGE AND TIPS

1. What is the “tipped minimum wage” or the “tipped credit”? What does the law say about the minimum pay for restaurant workers?
2. If workers make less than the minimum wage in tips, the law dictates that their employer must make up the difference. Why is UUSC claiming that tipped workers make as little as \$2.13 per hour?
3. Which part of the country actually has a tipped minimum wage of \$2.13? Doesn't the minimum wage differ in each state?
4. Do all restaurant workers earn wages as low as \$2.13 per hour? Don't bartenders and servers make a lot of money in tips?
5. What does it mean to “tip out” the hosts or bussers?
6. If workers don't get paid their tip credit because employers don't follow the law, then how is changing the law going to help?
7. Don't workers benefit from the informal nature of the business, in that they often get to keep their “under the table” pay that is not reported to the IRS?
8. What are the common ways that employers steal wages and tips from restaurant workers?
9. Do you have any facts on how raising the minimum wage would affect small businesses and the hiring of new workers?
10. What is a living wage?
11. If restaurant employers provide higher wages and benefits, won't they just pass the cost along to consumers, making it more expensive to dine out?

THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

12. Aren't these just jobs for teenagers anyway? Don't they just need a little pocket cash and a place to work over the summer?
13. Do independent restaurants treat their workers more fairly than chain restaurants?
14. Don't chain restaurants have corporate personnel policies that prevent problems like discrimination and wage theft?
15. How do I know what conditions exist in a specific restaurant that I frequent?

DISCRIMINATION

16. What is "occupational segregation"?
17. Are racial and gender discrimination really still issues in the workplace? With so many laws against discrimination, how could it still be happening so much?
18. What percentage of restaurant workers is comprised of undocumented immigrants?
19. There are many economic and labor-violation issues around the world—why focus on this one?
20. Why not just organize restaurant workers to join a union?
21. What can I do to support restaurant workers?

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<http://www.uusc.org>

SURVEY: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

1. What would you like to see eaters/diners organizations do?

2. What ideas do you have to grow the food and worker justice movement?

3. Were you able to use this Discussion and Study Guide? If so, what was useful, and what suggestions do you have?

4. Optional: Your name, organization and email:

THANKS FOR YOUR IDEAS AND FEEDBACK! PLEASE EMAIL YOUR RESPONSES
WITH THE SUBJECT **BKD DISCUSSION FEEDBACK TO**
ROCUNITED@ROCUNITED.ORG

