

(En)gendering Food Justice:

Identity and Possibility Within The American Alternative Food Movement

by

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ABSTRACT

Research demonstrates that the contemporary global food system is unsustainable, and moreover, because some groups carry the burden of that unsustainability more than others, it is unjust. While some threads of food activism in the United States have attempted to respond to these structural based inequalities—primarily those of race, ethnicity, and social class—overall, very little domestic activism has focused on issues of gender. As feminist scholarship makes clear, however, a food movement “gender gap” does not mean that gender is irrelevant to food experiences, social activism, or agricultural sustainability. Building on a framework of feminist food studies, food justice activism, and feminist social movement theory, this dissertation makes the case for “(en)gendering” the domestic alternative food activist movement, first by demonstrating how gender shapes experiences within food movement spaces, and second, by exploring the impact that an absence of gender awareness has on the individual, community, and organizational levels of the movement.

Employing a feminist-informed hybrid of grounded theory and social movement research methods, field research for this dissertation was conducted in community gardens located in Seattle, Washington and Phoenix, Arizona during the summers of 2011 and 2012. With the assistance of NVivo qualitative data analysis software, field notes and twenty-one key-informant interviews were analyzed, as were the discourses found in the publically available marketing materials and policies of domestic food justice organizations.

This study's findings at the individual and community level are hopeful, suggesting that when men are involved in food movement work, they become more aware of food-based gender inequalities and more supportive of women's leadership opportunities. Additionally, at the organizational level, this study also finds that where food sovereignty is influencing domestic activism, gender is beginning to enter the discussion. The project concludes with policy recommendations for both community gardening and food justice organizations and the detailing of a new concept of "feminist food justice", with the end goal of preventing the food movement from undermining its own potential to secure a "real alternative" to corporate industrial agriculture.

To the strong women in my family—
the Friar family matriarchs, Grandma, Aunt Teresa, and most especially, Mom.

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PREFACE

I grew-up in rural Northwestern Michigan, a region of the country known for its cherry orchards, pristine freshwater lakes, and quiet beaches. While in elementary school, I remember riding the school bus for an hour each morning and each afternoon, passing sleeping orchards and berry patches which would be thriving places of activity come summer vacation. The roads we drove down were named after farming families who had been working the land for generations, and when I got to school, my classmates were the children and grandchildren of those farmers, and in the spring and autumn, the children of seasonal migrant workers too. However, born in 1981, my adolescence coincided with a dramatic restructuring of the region's food and agricultural system, a process which resulted in significant changes to both of those familiar geographical and social landscapes. Stressed by declining profits, ageing farmers with dispersed children sold out to developers, and with every passing year, fewer cherry orchards, apple orchards, and berry fields were on the other side of my car window. Valued for its natural beauty and lake views, the hilly local farmland commanded high sale prices, and places where I had gone on adventures with my brothers and picked strawberries with my mom were converted into subdivisions for wealthy new transplants. My classmates whose parents were migrant workers were also gone, because the demand for labor had decreased. Later, as a college student waiting tables over summer breaks, I served lunch to the struggling farmers who were still holding on and listened to conversations that conveyed an inevitable sense of loss. Unlike hearing news stories on the television or radio, these stories were immediate and personal and I shared with the farmers a sense of

vulnerability to larger structural forces and anger over the “violence” committed against my home by those with more privilege.

Ironically, it would be the increasing wealth of the local population which eventually began to slow the region’s transformation. When it was discovered that the same climate and soil which were well suited to growing cherries were also well-suited to growing wine grapes, the demand for agricultural land quit declining. Drawing on their extensive resources, many of the families who had purchased land to build houses decided to plant vineyards alongside them, a process of agricultural conversion which revitalized the region’s economy. In stark contrast to what was occurring in the state’s southern de-industrialized areas, a local “foodie” culture began to emerge in northwestern Michigan, and the wealth which had at first threatened the region’s “cherry capital of the world” identity ended up giving me my first real glimpse into food-centered community organizing. Beginning with the development of the wine industry and the tourism that came with it, and continuing with the combined efforts of both public and private entities, the region eventually matured into a vibrant nexus of small-scale local food producers, all backed by a strong “alternative” foods discourse. Today, my hometown is the region’s hub and maintains a large seasonal outdoor farmer’s market, an indoor winter farmer’s market, boasts numerous independent upscale restaurants, and even publishes its own edition of *Edible* magazine. In short, it is a foodie haven, both connected to, and distanced from, its family farming past.

Having observed, on the one hand, the ways in which people and the environment can be structurally disadvantaged by the economics and politics of the food and

agricultural system, and having observed, on the other hand, the privilege which characterizes much of the alternative “foodie” movement, I began to ponder a string of questions which many years later led me to this study. For example, by virtue of my social location, I understood what an extensive body of research had already formally demonstrated: the contemporary industrial food system is not only unsustainable, but its negative outcomes are unequally distributed along geographic and demographic lines. In rural northwestern Michigan, small family-run farming businesses, migrant laborers of color, and land itself were constantly at risk within a system which valued economic profit over human and environmental welfare. Additionally, I also understood why some food activists and scholars were critical of those who were attempting to respond to this negative situation. From what I had seen, alternative food culture was primarily focused on providing gourmet, “local”, and health conscious products to residents and seasonal tourists; land security and agricultural job security were more of a positive outcome than a motivator, and social justice was never part of the discourse. While I too enjoyed this new food culture, and was pleased that the local economy was benefiting, it was hard not to notice that some were benefiting more than others. The alternative food actors—everyone from the consumers to the growing number of specialty food producers—were all very wealthy and very white, myself included. In fact, even beyond northern Michigan, research suggests that white people of high socioeconomic status are overrepresented within the population of domestic “alternative food activists”. Given these trends, race- and class-focused criticisms of the mainstream alternative food movement are understandable and necessary. Yet, as a student of gender studies, what I

could not understand about these discussions—which were often led by activists of color working in urban centers—was the lack of attention paid to gender. Again informed by personal experience, it was clear to me that both the food and agricultural system, and the alternative food movement, were shaped by gender. “Farmers”, were men, and it was my brothers—not I—who were hired to help with the cherry harvest during the summer; “farm wives” brought them home-baked cookies at break time and supplemented the household finances by also offering after-school day care, which my siblings and I had also gone to from time to time; and finally, “vintners” were men, good-looking leaders of the local food and agricultural revival with their pictures in the local magazines. Thus, I could not help but ask: “shouldn’t attention to gender—and gender inequalities—also be a part of the alternative food movement, and shouldn’t gender’s current absence be part of the criticisms against it?”

A Feminist Food Justice Study

This dissertation is a response to my observations of a food movement “gender gap”. Although research exists which demonstrates that food labor is gendered, food consumption is gendered, and social movements are gendered, as of yet, no scholarly studies have set out to understand how the alternative food justice movement is gendered and has gendered outcomes. By critiquing the domestic food movement—both at the “ground” level of individual activism and at higher levels of organizational program and policy creation—this project aims to craft a new (en)gendered vision of what food justice activism in America could look like.

Three primary goals guided this project. First, recognizing that social movements—like all social institutions—are shaped by gender, race, and class, this project sought to understand why the U.S. alternative food movement developed without a gender consciousness, especially given the gendered nature of food and agriculture; second, the project aimed to understand what impact the absence of gender consciousness has for the many women involved in the alternative food movement, as well as for those the movement intends to benefit; and third, the study sought to produce policy recommendation for how the alternative food movement can become more “gender aware” as it continues to develop.

To address these three goals, this study was guided by two primary research questions, each which had several overlapping sub-questions. The first question asked “what are the specific gendered, raced, classed, etc. processes (and their intersections) which are operating in domestic alternative food movement spaces?”, and the second question asked “what difference does it makes if gender is, or is not, part of the alternative food movement?” Research questions which supported these inquiries included: How does an individual’s experiences with food and food work, if at all, shape their motivations and goals for participation in the alternative food movement? How does an individual’s gender, race, class, ethnicity, etc., if at all, shape their experience as a member of the movement, including their leadership opportunities, barriers to accomplishing goals, and their ability to simply maintain involvement? What evidence, if any, suggests that the way gender is absent from the alternative food movement reduces the potential effectiveness of its policies and programs? And if the accumulated evidence

does demonstrates that gender “matters”, what possibilities or models for change can be found or crafted?

As a doctoral student I come to this research in my early 30s, an English-speaking single white woman without dependents who is the product of an upper-middleclass heterosexual and Christian household. In the chapters that follow, my social location has both influenced how I am approaching this research and how I interpret it. The discussion proceeds from the macro level of food justice organizations to the micro level of the community garden, and finishes back at the macro level of policy analysis. In Chapter One I review the major bodies of literature and theory which informed this project and introduce the Food Justice movement. I also introduce community gardening as a site of alternative food labor which is useful for exploring the relationship between gender and food justice. In Chapter Two I outline the research methodologies and methods which were used to collect and analyze the study’s data. Chapter Three contains an examination of the connections between the domestic Food Justice movement and the international Food Sovereignty movement, a discussion which demonstrates the full extent of “gender blindness” within the domestic movement and how unusual it is when compared cross-culturally. The bulk of new scholarship found in this chapter is based on a discourse analysis of food movement organization’s policies and programs. Chapter Four brings the reader to the micro level of community gardening, tracing a history of gendered gardening and providing contemporary evidence of gender’s operation in this specific food movement site. Chapter Five builds on this gender, race, and class examination by considering how identity variables impact individual opportunities for leadership and

affect the passing of food knowledge. Together, Chapters Four and Five represent the findings of qualitative data collected over a year and a half period in eight community gardens located in Seattle, Washington and Phoenix, Arizona. Finally, Chapter Six returns to the macro level of the alternative food movement to consider how policies and programs could be “gender mainstreamed” and how this might benefit the movement’s outcomes, including its social justness and sustainability.

Joining The Discussion

In light of a recent economic recession, “obesity epidemic”, and serious environmental changes, this dissertation aims to be timely and productive, drawing attention to the ways in which America’s expanding food activism can be improved for the greater benefit of more people. Therefore, although this study critiques the domestic food movement, I also strongly believe that alternative food projects are, collectively, our society’s best opportunity to create a more sustainable and equitable food and agricultural system. In sum, it is my desire to join race- and class-focused activists and scholars in an ongoing and critical discussion about what “real alternatives” to the food system need to look like. Finally, while this study’s most unique intellectual contribution is its problematization of the “gender gap” within the domestic alternative food movement, given the global nature of food and agricultural system, on a much larger scale this research is concerned with advancing social justice and sustainability across the global industrial food system broadly.

Chapter 1

SOMETHING IS AMISS IN THE AMERICAN ALTERNATIVE FOOD MOVEMENT

This chapter begins by defining the “alternative food movement” and the “corporate industrial food and agricultural system”, before moving on to describe the sustainability and social justice concerns inherent to the latter. Building on that foundation, I then argue that the domestic alternative food movement’s responses to those problems are inadequate, because they lack a concern for social inequalities, and that even intersectional race- and class-focused activism neglects gender. To begin building the case for why gender should be part of the domestic food movement, I then introduce the work of feminist food studies scholars, which, in combination with food justice thinking and feminist social movement theorizing, acts as the “feminist food justice” framework informing this study’s analyses of community gardening. The chapter ends with a review of the limited contemporary community gardening research conducted in the U.S. which is specifically focused on understanding intersectional identity processes.

Defining The American Alternative Food Movement

American food movements are rising! Thus pronounced Michael Pollan—journalist, professor, and foodie-guru-to-the-masses—in June of 2010 while reflecting upon a decade’s worth of increased questioning of, and resistance to, the corporate industrial food system. Recounting the impact of Eric Schlosser’s 2001 publication *Fast Food Nation*, Pollan argues that in its wake, food “issues” have entered the public discourse to a degree unmatched since the early 1970s, a time when works by Wendell Berry, Francis Moore Lappé, and others drew critical attention to the increasingly negative outcomes of “modern” agriculture. This contemporary burgeoning of food

activism has not been characterized by uniformity, however, either in motives or practices. For example, Pollan points to everything from school food reform, GMO (genetically modified organism) bans, obesity prevention measures, local food initiatives, worker's rights legislation, community gardens, and farm bill reform as examples of food movement activism in the United States. By Pollan's reckoning, "whereas many social movements tend to splinter as time goes on, breaking into various factions representing divergent concerns or tactics, the food movement starts out splintered" (2010, June).

Given the complexity of the agricultural and food system, perhaps it is not surprising that the activism surrounding it is multifaceted. In brief, the "food system" is the "entire set of activities and relationships that make-up the various food pathways from seed to table" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010)¹. In light of the system's scope, the broadness of the social movement responding to it could be understood as a strength, indicating that activists are focused on a wide range of critical issues. Kneafsey and colleagues (2008), for example, discuss seven different "analytic fields" which food movement projects are using to differentiate themselves from industrial agriculture while simultaneously responding to its multiple weaknesses. These approaches include shifting the sites of food production (e.g., community and school gardens), shifting production methods (e.g., organic farming), operating in new areas of economic exchange (e.g., farmer's markets and food trucks), and restructuring producer-consumer interaction (e.g., community supported agriculture (CSA)). Most food movement projects focus on only one or two of the five categories discussed, and when doing so, their motivations can

¹ From a natural science perspective, a food system (called an "agroecosystem") is "a bounded system designed to produce food and fiber, yet it is also part of a wider landscape at which scale a number of ecosystem functions are important" (Pretty, 2008, p. 454).

differ, representing yet another analytic field through which projects can be sorted. Motivations for participating in the alternative food movement can be as diverse as supporting local/small businesses, making food accessible to all, environmental concerns, sensory pleasure, and avoiding the anxiety which results from feeling disconnected to one's food.

Agreeing that the U.S. alternative food movement is “splintered” to some extent does not entirely preclude commonalities between its various components, however. Despite differences between food movement projects in terms of method and motivations, there are still discernible unifying threads between them. At their core, the various food movement subgroups are each attempting to eliminate or reduce the negative outcomes of corporate industrial agriculture; that is, they aim to offer an “alternative” vision or model of food growth, production, and/or distribution (Jarosz, 2008). Although there are limitations to framing food activism within a “conventional versus alternative” binary framework², within the context of popular discourse, the label “alternative” nonetheless remains a relevant way to discuss both movement ideology and participant's identities. The “American alternative food movement”, therefore, might be best understood as a collection of diverse *projects* which conceptually exist together within a broader *movement* collectively focused on finding ways to shift the food and agricultural system's status quo.

² Kneafsey et al. (2008) actually developed their seven analytic fields for assessing the alternative food movement(s) based on the limitations of the “alternative versus conventional” binary, which is a false dichotomy; in reality, most food activism is much more complex and doesn't fit neatly into one box or the other.

As Pollan notes, within the overarching domestic food movement, new projects are developing and existing projects are expanding. Because the domestic food movement exists in many spaces, it is difficult to quantify this expansion as a whole, but it is possible to point out trends in various types of activities. For example, The National Gardening Association reported that in 2010, “sales for vegetable gardening, fruit trees, berries and herb gardening totaled \$2.990 billion...the highest level of spending on food gardening seen in more than a decade and a 20% increase over the \$2.409 billion consumers spent in 2008, before the economic downturn” (National Gardening Association, 2011). When Michelle Obama announced the establishment of the White House vegetable garden in 2009, she declared that there were then one million community gardens in the United States (Burros, 2009), and local reports indicate that community gardens are the rise in the cities included in this study (Seattle and Phoenix) (Kuhney, 2012; Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, 2012). Farmer’s markets are also on the rise (Muhlke, 2010), with an estimated 9.6% increase between 1994 and 2012 (United States Department of Agriculture, 2012). Demand for organic foods has increased, with retail in the United States moving up from approximately \$11 billion in 2004 to an estimated \$27 billion in 2012 (United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2012). Finally, established organizations and publications also illustrate an expansion of the alternative food movement. Edible Communities, Inc., publisher of 70 regionally based *Edible* magazines, was founded in 2002 and has been adding new publication titles at a rate of 10% per year since then (Edible Communities, Inc, 2013). Slow Food International, an organization founded in Italy in 1986 which aims

to “link the pleasure of good food with a commitment to the community and the environment”, launched a U.S. chapter in 2000 and by the end of the decade, 12,000 members had joined. In 2013, the organization reports 171 active local chapters and 26 active Slow Food on Campus chapters (J. Best, personal communication, 2013). Perhaps the most zeitgeist example of all, however, was the establishment of a National Food Day, organized by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in October of 2011. In sum, these diverse alternative food projects are collectively increasing the visibility of a movement which is both “local” and “global”, splintered and interconnected.

The Case Against The Corporate Industrial Food And Agricultural System

The significant rise in food activism demonstrated by these statistics begs the question, “What are people protesting?” Although there are many ways to organize a response to this question, here I present research which demonstrates that the corporate industrial agricultural system is both unjust and unsustainable (which contributes to injustice), with its negative outcomes expanding beyond the U.S. border.

The most widely recognized definition of sustainable development can be traced to the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development’s 1987 publication of *Our Common Future*, more commonly referred to as the “Brundtland Report”. In it sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Munier, 2005). With an early focus on environmental issues, “sustainability” originally was conceived as a modifier to the already existing concept of economic “development”, and in the late twentieth century, the widespread shift in discourse from

“development” to “sustainable development” reflected a growing unease over the negative environmental and social outcomes produced by international development projects (Cruz-Torres & McElwee, 2012). Informed by the global environmental movement (which had reached the level of international organizations by 1972’s UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm), as well as the concurrent women’s conferences and related “gender mainstreaming” efforts (1975’s UN conference on “women in development” was held in Mexico City), “sustainable development” represented a concerted move away from the dominating neoliberal economic policies of organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Cruz-Torres & McElwee, 2012). By bringing attention to the inherent problems of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which promoted a vision of modernization built on capitalist industrial advancements and trade opportunities, the newly imagined “three-pillar” foundation of sustainable development aimed to place environmental and social considerations on equal footing with economics. In discussing sustainability issues within the food system, problems within each of the three pillars are apparent.

Characterizing the industrial food system. Contemporary conventional food systems are theoretically concerned with national food security and profitability. In the United States, the food system is regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) at the federal level, and by states’ Departments of Agriculture at the regional level; a small number of metropolitan areas have municipal food policy councils or departments (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Characterized by investments in “output-increasing research, education, and technology” in the agricultural sector, and by

corporate concentration and vertical network integration in the commodity food sector, the American food system (and its relationship to global food markets) is a model of neo-liberal capitalist economic development (Allen & Wilson, 2008; Hillman, 1989; Murphy, 2008). Industrial American agriculture produces “relatively standardized, uniform, and homogenous commodities” that can be freely traded in the global marketplace, in addition to feeding state citizens (Lyson, 2004, p. 72). However, although the food system does operate globally, scholars like Robert Paarlberg (2010) note that for many nations, most food is still produced and consumed intra-country. Paarlberg also characterizes the WTO, IMF, FAO³, and World Bank as weak governing bodies, meaning that the majority of food system policy decisions are made at the level of the nation-state. However, to conceptualize the food system at the level of the nation state only is a mistake. Many of the food system’s most serious sustainability and social justice threats occur as a result of the interaction between states. For example, as Barndt’s (2008) research demonstrates, trade agreements between nations (e.g. NAFTA) not only have real impacts on citizens, but that such agreements often do not result in equal outcomes for both countries. Yet, in the absence of trade agreements, the outcomes of agricultural globalization are often even worse for poor countries. Because structural adjustment programs oriented developing agricultural sectors toward export, poorer nations have often had to compete against each other on the international market, forcing their commodity prices down (Pretty, 2008).

³ WTO (World Trade Organization), IMF (International Monetary Fund), FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations).

It is important to understand that the unsustainability of the food system is not a gender-neutral process. Again considering the issue at the global scale, Shiva (1989) argues that “contrary to the view that modernization would liberate women from old discriminations and domination”, contemporary global industrial agriculture has instead worsened many women’s quality of life. For example, the introduction of market agriculture in economically developing countries has frequently increased women’s work, rendering them responsible for both traditional subsistence agriculture *and* paid labor in the agricultural sector. Simultaneously, their gendered subsistence has been devalued because only waged labor is “valued” under “patriarchal maldevelopment” (Shiva, p. 118). Considering paid labor experiences, Bain (2010) demonstrates that agricultural companies based in the global south, when trying to compete for export contracts with the global north, will cut production costs through labor (one of the few production costs they can control) by intentionally hiring women on a “part time” or contract basis only. Because these jobs are discursively constructed as “part time”, their hourly wage is low, meaning that women must actually work 12-14 hours a day in order to earn a livable income. Mendez (2005) demonstrates that particular discourses of femininity support such corporate practices, effectively creating a global “troupe of women” who are “cheap” and “docile” laborers, “naturally nimble fingered”, “predisposed to be patient with tedious work”, and who are “submissive to male authority” (p. 67). Importantly, these discourses work to create not only a feminized workforce, but also a racialized one, a process which benefits wealthy consumers in the

global north and connects social justice and sustainability concerns across national borders.

The food and agricultural commodity system is also vulnerable on environmental accounts. To begin with, “modern agriculture has created an ecologically simplified system that is highly dependent on inputs” and therefore lacks resiliency (Heller & Keoleian, 2002). Indicators of environmental unsustainability include the system’s reduction in biodiversity (only 10-20 crops provide 80-90% of the world’s calories), the loss of land available for farming, and the inefficient use of nitrogen inputs (30-80% of the nitrogen applied to farmland escapes, and most of that nitrogen is chemically manufactured rather than natural)(Heller & Keoleian, 2002). Indicators of low food system resiliency also include the rising age of farmers in the U.S., the high cost of entry into industrial agriculture, the low wages paid to laborers, the concentration of food retailers (in 2000, the top five grocery store chains controlled 42% of the market), and the high rates of food waste (up to 27% of the edible food supply is lost) (Heller & Keoleian, 2002).

Beyond agricultural production issues, the U.S. system is also marked by its unhealthy food environment. Most Americans not only have too much food to eat, but too much of the “wrong stuff”. A reflection of the nation’s wealth, most citizens consume a diet high in meat, fat, and refined cereals (e.g., processed food “products”) which are high in both sugar and salt (Pretty, 2008). There are also about twice as many calories available in the food system as what the U.S. population needs to meet daily recommendations (Nestle, 2007), with individual “energy surpluses” (excess calories

consumed) totaling about 500 calories a day for adults and about 350 for children (Krebs-Smith, Reedy, & Bosire, 2010). Significantly, researchers argue that there is a direct correlation between these surpluses of unhealthy processed foods and the rise in overweight and obese⁴ people. Rising rates of obesity matter because obesity negatively impacts human health at the individual level, and has large economic consequences (e.g., rising health care costs) at the societal level. In most sex and age groups, over 30% of U.S. adults are now considered obese (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden, & Curtin, 2010), and among children, one in six is considered obese (Frieden, William, & Collins, 2010). Studies on the negative health outcomes of obesity among children highlight the risk for developing Type 2 diabetes (youth account for half of all new cases), low iron deficiencies, and the delayed onset of menarche in girls and thelarche in boys (Han, Lawlor, & Kimm, 2010). The chance that obese children will carry their weight into adulthood is also very high; children who are obese after age six have a greater than 50% chance of being obese as adults (Frieden et al., 2010), a condition which can have serious impacts on their adult health as well. As adults, obese individuals have a higher risk for developing coronary heart disease (related to excess saturated and trans fat intake), hypertension (related to excess consumption of salt), stroke, and diabetes (related to excess intake of sugar) (Adler & Stewart, 2009; Flegal et al., 2010).

Although the “blame” for being overweight or obese is often placed on the individual, studies clearly demonstrate that there are environmental factors at work,

⁴ The dividing line between overweight and obese is commonly measured at the 29.9 BMI line. Overweight is defined as a BMI between 25 and 29.9; obese grade 1 between 30 and 34.9; grade 2 between 35 and 39.9; and grade 3 obesity is determined by a BMI of 40 or higher (Flegal et al., 2010).

leaving some segments of the population particularly vulnerable to obeseogenic⁵ conditions. Thus, the negative consequences of the industrial food system are not just a social sustainability concern, they are also a social justice concern. Differences in rates of developing obesity can be described in terms of gender, race, and class group memberships. For example, the rate of increase in overweight and obese individuals has been higher amongst women of color than white women (Yancey, Leslie, & Abel, 2006), with non-Hispanic black women and Mexican-American women being the most likely to be obese. In general, the racial and ethnic differences in rates of obesity are much greater in the female than in the male populations (Flegal et al., 2010). Studies also suggest that obesity is inversely related to income and education, and that this pattern is more pronounced amongst females than males (Adler & Stewart, 2009; Allen & Sachs, 2007). Sexual orientation may additionally shape rates of overweight and obesity in the US adult population, with lesbian and bisexual women being at higher risk (Yancey et al., 2006).

Social structures (e.g., gender, race, and class) interact with social and economic policies (such as those that determine what children will eat in school and where fast food restaurants can be located) to produce a “food environment” which shifts depending on one’s social location. When taking a closer look at the specific variables which produce patterns of vulnerability to negative food system outcomes (e.g. obesity), the concepts of “household food insecurity” and “food deserts” become useful. The USDA defines “food insecurity” as “a lack of access to enough food to meet basic needs at all times, due to a lack of financial resources” (Bickel, Price & Hamilton, 2000, p. 12). Under this definition, poverty and food insecurity are highly correlated; 41% of U.S. households

⁵ Obesogenic: “to cause obesity”. (Wallinga, 2010).

with incomes at or below the national poverty line are defined as food insecure, accounting for 14.9% of all U.S. households nationally (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, Andrews, & Carlson, 2012). However, poverty and food insecurity do not impact all gender and race groups the same. The USDA reports that 37% of female-headed households with children are food insecure, compared to 25% of male-headed household with children (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2012). Additionally, while 25% of Black households and 26% of Hispanic households are food insecure, only 11% of white households are (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2012). Finally, research demonstrates that rural and urban households are more likely to be food insecure than households located in suburban areas (United States Department of Agriculture, 2007a). Compounded with a gendered division of household labor which often leaves women responsible for household food preparation—even if they work for pay (DeVault, 1991; Inness, 2001)—it is possible to see that women in food insecure households (and their dependents) are often structurally prevented from making “better choices” within the food system (e.g., buying comparatively expensive fresh foods (on a calories per dollar basis), or preparing healthier meals from scratch rather than depending on pre-made options like fast food). This is especially true if their local food environment is also working against them.

In the wake of WWII, “white flight” to the suburbs triggered a supermarket migration that has left many urban areas without full-service retail food options (Moore & Diez Roux, 2006), and the fast food restaurants and convenience stores that remain frequently only have a limited selection of foods—usually all low in quality and high in price (Bagdonis, Hinrichs, & Schafft, 2009). Like food insecurity, such “food deserts”

disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minorities⁶ because it is these populations who have historically been segregated into inner cities and the rural south (Carter, Schill, & Wachter, 1998; Larson, Story & Nelson, 2009; Moore & Diez Roux, 2006). Because of the higher price of food in such underserved areas, “food deserts” reduce the purchasing power of food insecure households even further, and because the foods that can be accessed tend to be higher in calories, fat, and sugar, residents of “food deserts” are also at higher risk for suffering from health problems like obesity—what Marion Nestle (2007) cumulatively describes as the “food gap”.

The American Food Movement Responds: Community Gardens

As discussed earlier, there are many types of food movement projects attempting to respond to the negative impacts of the corporate industrial food system. Some activists and projects focus effecting “up-stream” system-level processes, which is no easy task. For example, the changes which would have to be made at the level of public policy and private industry in order to reduce the injustices and unsustainably discussed above are unlikely to be popular with powerful agri-food corporations. Although many sectors of the agri-food industry have already made *some* concessions and offered to self regulate, Paarlberg (2010) suggests that corporations will only ever self-regulate up to a point—beyond that, federal regulators must intervene. On the opposite end of the food activism spectrum, “grounded” grassroots activists are engaged in building alternatives to the

⁶ When discussing food deserts, the terms of the debate must be explicit. For example, Raja, Ma & Yadav (2008) demonstrate how, even when controlling for income, predominantly black neighborhoods have only about half the number of supermarkets of white neighborhoods. However, the authors argue that black neighborhoods do have extensive networks of grocery stores serving them; they caution against development policies which might bring in supermarkets and threaten the important role groceries play in urban economies. On the other hand, the authors also note that while almost all of the supermarkets in their study carried fresh fruit, only about 70% of the grocery stores did.

corporate industrial food system which bypass these political and economic negotiations. This dissertation collected data at both ends of this spectrum—the organizational level and the “grounded” level—focusing on the work of community gardeners for the latter context.

At present, community gardens seem to be sprouting up everywhere. Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) argue that urban gardens and urban farms are “perhaps the most visible of the new alternative, food justice-linked sites for growing and producing food” (p. 149). Community gardens which privilege food-growing commonly operate in accordance with sustainable gardening principles for the purpose of increasing local food security (American Community Gardening Association, n.d.), moving them beyond the realm of “leisure gardening” and connecting them to the alternative food movement’s agenda. Referencing the press attention awarded Michelle Obama’s White House Kitchen Garden, and the “metastasizing” of local-level community garden participation across the country, Gottlieb and Joshi argue that urban community gardening has entered into a new phase of existence as a social movement project.

What is a “community garden”? Defining a “typical” community garden is difficult thing to do. Clearly, the most marked characteristic of a community gardens is its “community” aspect. Community gardens exist in publically accessible (though sometimes controlled) spaces and they are gardened by multiple individuals. However, in terms of what they grow, how space is organized, how labor is divided, and even their *raison d'etre*, community gardens can be very diverse. Community gardens can exist in rural, suburban, or urban settings. They can be located on a vacant neighborhood lot, at a

school, in a park, or on the front lawn of a public building. The land can be publicly or privately owned. In terms of organization, garden participants may all grow in the same plot, or they may have individual beds located within in a larger shared space. Gardeners may grow flowers, vegetables and fruit, or any combination of the above. The motivations for gardening in a community setting may also be diverse; as Lawson (2005) puts it, community gardens are rarely just about “food and flowers”. Community gardeners may be interested in supporting neighborhood relations and reducing crime rates, improving the local environment and preserving open space, increasing household food security and improving health, empowering citizens and promoting community development, or maintaining an educational setting for learning leadership skills, entrepreneurship and good nutrition (American Community Gardening Association, n.d.; Holland, 2004; Kurtz, 2001). To reflect this composite character of community gardens, the American Community Gardening Association offers the following broad definition: “what is a community garden? Very simply, it is any piece of land gardened by a group of people” (American Community Gardening Association, n.d.).

Community gardens and urban farms are often lumped into the same category of alternative food movement projects, but community gardens should actually be distinguished from other forms of “farming” agriculture. While urban agriculture and community gardens are both models of local food production, urban farms differ from community gardens in that they are almost always commercial enterprises. The United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2012b) defines a farm as “any operation that sells at least one thousand dollars of agricultural commodities, or that

would have sold that amount of produce under normal circumstances”, and the North American Urban Agricultural Committee defines urban agriculture as “the growing, processing, and distribution of food and other products through intensive plant cultivation and animal husbandry in and around cities” (Bailkey & Nasr, 2000). In contrast to these definitions, community gardens are characterized by their smaller scale and more labor-intensive technologies (e.g., the absence of large equipment). Income generation is rarely the primary motivation (if it is a motivation at all). Also, while urban farms may be jointly owned and operated, such operations are often large enough that it is necessary to have a single primary “operator”, while a common feature of community gardens is democratic leadership and decision making.

Why study community gardens? If the “alternative food movement” exists in many spaces, why did this study particularly focus on community gardens for the “grounded” level of analysis? While it is possible that an understanding of the gender-gap in alternative food activism could have been garnered from a different context (e.g., farmer’s market participants might have been recruited and asked about their motivations, experiences, and barriers), community gardens have unique characteristics that made them the *best* context in which to conduct this study’s qualitative field research and the most interesting context in which to explore the food justice related issues of democratic participation, community engagement, and sustainability. Because gardening actually involves growing things in the earth, has an aspect of “community” built into it, and has the potential to foster democratic engagement with local authorities, community gardens

and gardeners were judged to be the richest site for data collection of the several possible options.

Gardeners are food movement participants who remain in a single location for a sustained period of time, providing an opportunity for relationships to develop between the study participants and myself. Being a part of each garden community included in this study for anywhere from two work parties (which last two or three hours apiece) to two months allowed me to develop a degree of trust with this population of food movement workers, a relationship which would have been hard to develop in the farmer's market setting, a movement space where customers are passing through quickly. Having a degree of familiarity with the key informants interviewed for this dissertation positively impacted the quality of the data I was able to collect; for example, I was told many off-hand "informal" stories about experiences in the garden which may not have come out of the formal interviews. Additionally, because I was working alongside gardeners (food movement participants) in a way which would be hard to mimic in another movement space, I was also able to observe the same individuals over several meetings and develop an understanding of how identity variables shaped gardener-to-gardener relationships, including leadership relations. This first-hand "insider" information allowed me to compare my perceptions of the social space to what gardeners told of their perceptions during interviews.

At the time this dissertation was being written, I was aware of only one peer-reviewed U.S. based study on contemporary community gardens which focused primarily on women and/or gender (Parry, Glover & Sinew, 2005). Most contemporary research on

women and/gender and community gardening or urban agriculture has been conducted outside of the U.S. For this reason alone, domestic community gardens presented themselves as a context to which gender research could still be contributed. Alison Hope Alkon's 2012 book *Black, White, and Green: Farmer's Markets, Race, and the Green Economy* has contributed a contemporary gender analysis within farmer's markets. Finally, community gardens have also captured the imagination of alternative food activists—as evidenced by the press attention given to Michelle Obama's white house garden⁷ and Gottlieb's and Joshi's (2010) claim that community gardens are “the most visible of the new alternative, food justice-linked sites” (p. 149). Because this dissertation desired to be socially relevant, situating the “grounded” portion of the study within an active and growing area of public interest suggested itself as one way to achieve that goal.

Yet, why study community gardens in Seattle and Phoenix, specifically? While I was already located in Phoenix (an area of the country with a very young, but quickly growing community garden culture), it's the differences between Phoenix and Seattle that made them productive sites for comparison. For example, Seattle and Phoenix are characterized by significant differences in population demographics (largely in terms of their ethnic communities), political climates (which influences support for sustainability projects, like gardens), growing seasons (when things grow), climate zones (what can

⁷ In a 2010 address to the attendants of the American Community Gardening Association's 31st Annual Conference, Michelle Obama stated that “no matter where I go, the first thing world leaders...have asked me is ‘how is the White House Kitchen Garden?’” (American Community Garden Association, n.d.). Eddie Gehman Kohan, author of the “Obama Foodorama” blog, reports that the White House food garden has had a “global” impact, with international media outlets reporting on it as well as inspiring “replica Kitchen Gardens in foreign lands” (Kohan, 2010, March 20).

grow), management styles (within the garden), and organizational structures (institutional supports for networks of gardens). Each of these differences made it possible for me to consider a number of different identity and policy issues related to achieving food justice within community gardens.

The Critical Flaw Of The Alternative Food Movement

Despite being characterized by diversity in terms of project types, motivations, and outcomes (such as in the case of community gardening), several studies suggest that the alternative food movement is not diverse in terms of demographics (Guthman, 2008; Munoz-Plaza, Filomena, & Morland, 2007). Because opportunities to participate in food movement activities like community gardens are often restricted by income, geography, gender, and race (in fact, the desire to participate at all may be influenced by one's social position and education), membership within much of the alternative food movement is overwhelmingly upper-class and white (Guthman, 2008; Jarosz, 2008). Characterizing the alternative food movement's lack of diversity, Alkon and Agyeman (2011) suggest that the social movement is "itself something of a monoculture" (p. 2). Barriers, both real and perceived, can deter low-income women and minorities from engaging with the food movement, such as by attending farmer's markets; language barriers, the low selection of "staple" food items, and the perception that produce is a "pricey" commodity can all discourage poorer shoppers from entering what they perceive to be a middle class consumer market (Bur, 1999; Fisher, 1999). Similarly, because organic foods are often positioned as a niche product (Guthman, 2008), consumers of retail organic foods are also most often white and middle-class (Dettmann, 2008). Julie Guthman (2008) argues

that the food movement is “coded white” not only because movement participants are disproportionately white bodied, but because the discourses and agendas of the movement do not resonate with minority groups.

If only upper-class and white communities were negatively impacted by the corporate industrial food system it is possible that the food movement’s lack of diversity would be less of a concern. However, as the literature reviewed earlier demonstrates, minority populations are *more* disadvantaged by the food system than their white, male, and upper-class counterparts. Given that such social inequalities exist within the *food system*, one might assume that the various projects comprising the *food movement* would be attentive to the ways in which minority groups are structurally disadvantaged. However, this has generally not been the case. When mainstream movement activists do turn their attention to race and class inequalities, the trend has been toward missionary-type projects (Guthman, 2008) which attempt to “educate” minority populations about the benefits of the alternative food movement (e.g., eating organic foods), rather than toward projects which attempt to change the underlying structural inequalities which prevent certain communities from being able to participate in the first place. Guthman writes, “the intention to do good on behalf of those deemed ‘other’ has the markings of colonial projects, in that it seeks to improve the ‘other’ while eliding the historical developments that produced these material and cultural distinctions in the first place” (2008, p. 436).

The feminist theoretical concept of intersectionality can help make sense of the disconnect between “mainstream” food movement activists and marginalized populations. “Intersectionality” recognizes there are many different kinds of social

structures which shape our lived experiences, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, social class, age, ableness, religious affiliation, nationality, etc. Depending on the composite of one's various group memberships, one's experiences in the social world change, as does the way one "sees" the social world. When Alkon and Agyeman argue that "the food movement narrative is largely created by, and resonates most deeply with, white and middle-class individuals", it is exactly because this population of activists have structured the movement to reflect their own perceptions of the food system's problems (2011, p. 3). In many ways, this is an understandable process; however, the failure of mainstream wealthy white activists to reflect on their privilege has resulted in a general perception that food activism is only for, and about, the nation's most privileged, producing a cycle which discourages minorities from joining and which keeps larger structural social inequalities out of the movement's discussion. Here it must be recognized that the lack of attention paid to privilege is not always unwitting; for example, Rachel Slocum (2006) found, during her time as a community food activist, that the white leaders and staff of the organizations she worked with were often uncomfortable with discussing race and racism, preferring instead to collapse race into class and frame the conversation as a "lack of diversity" problem rather than a "white privilege" problem—a maneuver which works to keep alternative food activism whitened. Critically, however, the reluctance to deal with white privilege (as well as other forms of privilege) undermines the overall effectiveness of the alternative food movement.

Addressing The Flaw: The Food Justice Movement

Encouragingly, what could be called the “social justice gap” in alternative food activism is not universal. Precisely because the alternative food movement is a collection of projects rather than a monolith, some of the movement’s “splinters” *do* focus on social structural inequalities within the food system while also critiquing the lack of diversity within the food movement itself. Of all the alternative food movement’s threads, the “food justice movement” is arguably the most focused on addressing access inequalities along race and class lines. Conceptually, “food justice” is about “ensuring the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten are shared fairly” (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6). Theoretically close to the environmental justice movement’s analysis of the unequal distribution of environmental degradation, the food justice movement focuses on the ways in which low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately burdened with the food system’s problems. Alkon and Agyeman (2012) argue that one of the defining traits of the food justice movement is its treatment of the food system as a racial project, a framework for analysis which also considers social class. Unfortunately, within the entirety of alternative food activism, food justice projects are rather unique. The effect is the relegation of race and class social justice work to “the edges” of the alternative food movement, distinct in identity and focus from “mainstream” work (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6).

But what about gender? Compounding the “social justice gap” in alternative food activism is its lack of gender awareness. “Gender” refers to the socially constructed

ways of being a “man” or “woman” within a given culture, which may also include identities beyond those binary options. While projects and activists on “the edges” of the alternative movement have critiqued mainstream projects and activists for their unexamined whiteness and social-economic privilege, both activists have been surprisingly silent on the issue of gender. Within food justice activism, gender is almost entirely absent from the public literature produced and the programs created by organizations. Likewise, scholarly analyses of the food justice movement have also failed to introduce gender into the discussion. For example, two of the most recent and comprehensive academic publications related to food justice—*Food Justice* (2010) by Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, and *Cultivating Food Justice* (2011) edited by Alison Hope and Julian Agyeman—only briefly reference gender in what are otherwise sophisticated intersectional race and class analyses.

The absence of “gender awareness” within the alternative food movement cannot be explained away on the grounds that gender is irrelevant to either the food system or to social activism. To begin with, Feminist Food Studies literature sheds light on the gendered way women are socialized to relate to food as procurers and preparers and how these roles can make them vulnerable within society, especially when their gender is compounded with minority race or class status. Feminist scholars have also demonstrated that gender impacts various elements of social movement formation and development, including opportunity structures, mobilization tactics, and participant identity formation (Ferree and Mueller, 2004).

Within the United States, feminists have already begun to point out women's unique contributions to the alternative food movement, including some of the ways in which their efforts are overlooked. For example, the quarterly feminist publication *Ms. Magazine*, published an article during the summer of 2010 which noted that while “many may know of Alice Waters...few have heard of the thousands of women who have taken up farming, planted urban and community gardens, advocated for food safety and better school lunches, or run restaurants with organic, seasonal menus” (Cognard-Black, 2010, p. 37). Likewise, former Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFÉ) director Temra Costa was motivated to write her 2010 book *Farmer Jane* in order to address the lack of attention given to women involved in the “sustainable food and farming movement”. As Costa points out, “it is not that men aren't changing how we eat. Men are definitely involved—it's just that they're really good at getting all of the press” (2010, p. 6). In sum, the fact that the domestic alternative food movement lacks gender awareness needs to be addressed.

Feminist Food Justice: An Analytic Framework

To think about the development and outcomes of the gender gap in alternative food activism I draw on three bodies of literature: feminist food studies, food justice activism and related scholarship, and feminist social movement theories. All three bodies of literature and theory are sensitive to the insights of intersectional race and class analyses, but only feminist food studies and feminist social movement theory are attentive to gender. The result of the synthesis is a gender-aware “feminist food justice” framework which informed the analysis of the study's findings. In the sections below I

present a detailed review of feminist food studies literature, but only briefly introduce food justice and feminist social movement scholarship; the former will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three and the latter in more detail in Chapter Five.

Feminist food studies. The scholarly investigation of food consumption and production has not always been embraced by Western academics, let alone feminist-identified academics. American Studies food scholar Warren Belasco (2008) argues that the notable resistance to academic studies of food has been partly rooted in the intellectual tradition of mind-body dualism which associated food with the “mundane, corporeal, even ‘animalist’” act of eating; in short, food—at least the cultural aspects of procurement, preparation and consumption—was deemed unworthy of intellectual pursuit.

The changes to household and economic production which occurred at start of the Industrial Revolution reinforced the devaluation of food work, and by extension, the study of it. Regarded as a feminized activity and relegated to the private sphere, food work continued to be overlooked as a topic of investigation by both the social sciences and humanities throughout the early- and mid-twentieth century. Although the agricultural sciences were already regarded as a proper “science”—intellectual and masculinized, predating even the establishment of the land-grant institutions⁸—it was not until the 1970s that food, in all of its post-agricultural phases, began to be regarded with a similar degree of seriousness. Belasco (2008) traces the seeds of contemporary food

⁸ The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 (the latter modifying the program in what had formerly been the Confederate states) allowed for the creation of land-grant universities in each eligible state. The Hatch Act of 1887 established the agricultural experiment stations, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the cooperative extensions.

studies to the increasing interest in food-related topics such as cooking shows, gourmet restaurants, and health. Whatever the catalyst, by 2010 Marion Nestle argued in the journal *Food, Culture and Society* that since the late 1980s, a discernible discipline of Food Studies had steadily matured, characterized by its own body of canonical works and supporting a number of related social movements. While the dual feminization of food (that is, the philosophical women-body connection and the gender of those who were predominantly tasked with food work) might have suggested that women's studies faculty would have dominated cultural food-studies early on, this was not the case. It is possible that the pressure put on early women's studies scholars to demonstrate their seriousness as academics worked to discourage any overlap between two fields (women's studies and food studies) which were both regarded with suspicion by established disciplines.

By 2005, things had changed. In their edited volume *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, Arlene Avakian and Barbara Haber (2005) made the case for "feminist food studies" as a thread of research separate but within the larger field of food studies, and by 2007 Allen and Sachs contributed the first field-defining theoretical framework for thinking about gendered food politics.

Briefly tracing the history of feminist food studies scholarship, the earliest examples focused on illuminating the connection between gendered bodied norms and eating disorders. While this is critical work, this body of research also tended to take a very narrow view of the relationship between gender and food. Since the 1990s, however,

feminist researchers have expanded the scope of their work to encompass the entire food system. What the scholarship produced by contemporary feminist food studies demonstrates is that not only is food—along the entire supply chain, “seed to fork”—influenced by cultural constructions of gender, race, social class, etc., but additionally, that these relationships can produce and reproduce social, environmental, and economic inequalities. Understanding this, some food studies scholars have moved beyond strictly academic investigations of food and culture to also engage in research which informs, and is informed by, social justice movements. As Belasco notes, “the academic left has found food studies to be a fertile base for activist analysis of hunger, inequality, neo-colonialism, corporate accountability, biotechnology, globalization, and ecological sustainability” (2008, p. 6).

For the purposes of this dissertation, the primary strength of the Feminist Food Studies framework is its ability to connect the macro with the micro, the structural with the interpersonal; it is a framework which can connect food system operations in the “public sphere” with those of the household “private sphere”, and even physical bodies. It is only when these macro and micro connections are made that the relationships between the alternative food movement, social inequalities, sustainability, democracy, food security, food justice, environmental justice, etc., make sense. An example of such thinking can be found in Allen’s and Sachs’s 2007 article “Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food” in which they organize their gendered approach to food studies into three “food domains”: the material, the socio-cultural, and the corporeal. Such an approach to the study of food helps clarify how gender operates at every stage of

the food and agricultural supply chain (production, procurement, preparation, and consumption). A second example of feminist food studies connecting the macro with the micro is Deborah Barndt's 2008 *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail*. In her book Barndt uses an intersectional analytic framework to pull out the aspects of food production, food procurement, and food consumption which connect third world women laborers with western women consumers along the tomato supply chain. Divided by geography and culture, but connected by the globalized food economy, she shows how these two populations of women are essentially living at opposite ends of the same economic phenomena. While the data I collected for this dissertation is limited to the U.S. context, by adopting a feminist food studies framework this study is able to illuminate the connections between local experiences of food injustice and resistance to the regional, national, and international agri-food environments they are situated within.

In conclusion, giving Feminist Food Studies scholarship a title has legitimized work which has, at times, been deemed trivial—by women, by feminists, and by the academy in general. In contrast to earlier women's studies scholars, Avakian and Haber (2005) argue that academic examinations of women's food-related roles do not result in a straightforward re-inscription of women's oppressions under patriarchy. Rather they argue that by examining women's material food realities, including the ways in which "women reproduce, resist and rebel against gender constructions", feminist food scholars can uncover the important "meanings embedded in women's relationships to food" (Avakian and Haber, 2005, p. 2). The field's critical interdisciplinary lens also

illuminates the positive aspects of women's relationships to food, including "nourishing" carework and leadership in the alternative food movement (Allen & Sachs, 2007). It is exactly because feminist food studies does not assume all labor related to food is necessarily oppressive that it can capture both the positive and negative repercussions of food gendering, making the theoretical position useful for analyzing women food activists—women who *choose* to spend their resources (time, energy, money, etc.) on food-related work. Finally, because feminist food studies centers the category of gender rather than the category of women within its framework, it is useful for analyzing men's relationships to food and agriculture as well as women's—which is relevant to this study.

Food Justice. The food justice movement has existed in the U.S. since at least 1994, when the organization *Just Food*—often cited as the oldest food justice organization in the country—was established in New York City. However, many other food justice non-profits have developed all across the country, largely in urban centers where race and class inequality are particularly concentrated. As noted, of all the sub-threads which make-up the domestic alternative food movement broadly, food justice projects have produced the most sophisticated race and class critiques of the corporate industrial food system. For that reason, the work of these activists was instrumental to the development of a feminist food justice framework; the thinking which originates from this strand of the alternative food movement presented a partial (race and class based) intersectional analysis to which gender was added, and the more complete intersectional framework was then expanded using feminist social movement scholarship.

Like feminist food studies, the developing food justice frameworks provide a way to think about food in a variety of contexts and to “locate instances of food injustice in the wider political, economic, and cultural systems that produce both environmental degradation and racial and economic inequality” (Alkon and Agyeman, 2011, p. 9). The two frameworks each support the other’s ability to contextualize seemingly individual experiences of food injustice within the larger institutions which produce them. The major differences between them are the absence of a gender critique within food justice, and food justice’s direct connection to the alternative food movement. These differences actually represent a weakness in each of the frameworks which is overcome when they are joined. Because feminist food studies analyzes the alternative food movement from the outside, its perspectives and language reflect its academic origins; food justice strengthens and lends a degree of legitimacy to feminist food studies by connecting it directly with grassroots activism. Conversely, feminist food studies strengthens food justice by expanding its capacity to complete sophisticated intersectional critiques of both the industrial food system and the mainstream alternative food movement.

When analyzing the food justice movement, academics have reproduced the sub-movement’s gender gap by also concentrating on structural race and class issues and failing to problematize the movement’s lack of attention to other identity categories. In part, this academic oversight may be an outcome of scholars focusing on the previously mentioned theoretical ties to between food justice and environmental justice. The environmental justice movement originally coalesced around the discovery that communities of color were more likely to be located in areas of environmental

degradation than white communities and “environmental racism” became common discourse within the movement (Tarter, 2002); gender was frequently only a secondary concern. For example, in the edited volume *The Environmental Justice Reader* (2002), only three of the eighteen essays focus on women and/or gender, and of those, only one considers the ways in which gender operates to make women more vulnerable to inequalities. Although environmental justice has only ever marginally focused on the issue of food (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011), the movement’s intellectual heritage (including the absence of gender) is clearly evident within the food justice movement itself. For example, offering a scholarly definition food justice, Gottlieb and Joshi again make a clear ideological connection to the environmental justice movement: if environmental justice can be defined as “the right of all people to share equally in the benefits bestowed by a healthy environment” (Adamson, Evans, & Stein, 2002, p. 4), Gottlieb and Joshi state that “most simply, [food justice] ensures that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, and transported and distributed and accessed and eaten are shared fairly” (2010, p. 6).

Feminist social movement theory. A social movement is a “conscious, concerted, and sustained effort by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society through extra-institutional means” (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003, p. 3). Feminist approaches to understanding social movements and social activism completed the “feminist food justice” analytic framework by providing a way to connect the technologies of gender operating in the food system with the technologies of gender operating in the responses to that system. I specifically draw on Ferree’s & Mueller’s (2004) work to draw connections

between macro-level (institutional) social movement processes and micro-level (individual) movement processes (primarily in community gardens), drawing gender all the way through the movement, “from top to bottom.

Reaching Feminist Food Justice In Community Gardens

Community gardeners, as participants in alternative food activism, can often be described in the same narrow demographic terms which characterize the alternative food movement at large. However, depending on where they are located, community gardens can also be much more diverse. In Chapter Four I offer a historical overview of shifts in the gendering of community gardening, but here I want to review the research on contemporary domestic community gardens which speaks to race, class, and gender issues. However, before doing so, I need to clarify that my intention is not to attack individual community gardeners who just happen to be white and/or upper class and/or male; rather, I am arguing—as the studies below demonstrate—that identity differences do impact the way a garden functions, suggesting that diversity “matters” and therefore should not be operating “invisibly” within community garden spaces.

Diversity in community gardens. U.S. based studies which have investigated race and class dynamics in community gardens have focused on the differences in gardening motivations, the potential for inter-gardener tensions, and the potential for tensions between gardeners and non-gardeners.

Conducting research in New York City, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny (2004) found that motivations for community gardening differed by racial and ethnic group. Among Latino/a communities, gardens primarily served as community open spaces,

encouraging both gardeners and non-gardeners to socialize and participate in cultural activities. Conversely, African American communities regarded community gardens primarily as food growing and neighborhood clean-up projects, while white communities regarded gardens as gentrification efforts, and immigrant communities regarded gardens as a way to preserve their traditional foods (Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, p. 2004). What is grown in gardens is often an extension of these underlying motivations, an agenda which is communicated to both other gardeners and outside community members. Glover (2004), for example, found that flowers were associated with “white gardens” and their predominance in a space could deter local black residents from wanting to get involved. However, even when gardeners are growing the same things (e.g., food), motivations can still differ. In her study of allotment gardening in England, Buckingham (2005) found that wealthier women often connected their food growing with environmental issues and food quality concerns, while lower-income women viewed food gardening as a way to reduce household food insecurity. Additionally, both Guthman (2008) and Holland (2004) found that certain communities may be reluctant to garden altogether, regardless of what is grown, because of a cultural connection between subsistence agriculture and “the slave diet” or “peasant’s work”. Thus, while outsiders might assume all community gardeners garden for the same reasons, research demonstrates that differences in race, ethnic and class backgrounds produce a complexity of community gardening motivations which must be examined.

In diverse community spaces, race and class differences can create both intra-garden and intra-neighborhood tensions. In his study of fourteen community gardens,

Glover (2004) found that frictions arose between white and black neighborhood residents when local garden organizers failed to involve non-garden participants in the garden's planning and when a lock was used to keep people out of the garden at night (Glover, 2004). Glover suggests that although community gardening projects typically intend to benefit the entire neighborhood, garden organizers must be aware that citizens will always come to projects on different "footings because of their status in society" and that these social locations shape community member's "readings" of the garden space (2004, p.158).

Research on gender in gardening spaces has demonstrated that it also shapes what is grown, how it is grown, a project's division of labor, and gardener's leadership experiences. Researching the "feminization" of British allotment gardens (which were historically a masculinized space), Buckingham (2005) found that women were likely to use fewer chemicals than men and were also less likely to follow recommended "scientific" gardening practices. An extension of the gendering of carework in the home, Buckingham also found that women were more likely to involve their children in the garden space than men were. Glover, Sinew, and Parry (2005) found that community gardening was often a source of empowerment for women. Because women were often the catalyst which initiated the development of a local garden in the first place, they would remain in leadership positions as the garden developed. Gender shaped these leadership experiences, with women often being more comfortable sharing power (they would describe themselves as "co-leaders") and appreciating the flexibility that this leadership structure granted them (Glover, Sinew, & Parry, 2005). Finally, while

community gardeners often report dividing non-leadership labor along ability and age lines, by closely examining comments made during interviews, it became clear to Glover et al. (2005) that men thought they were better at jobs which required strength, and women would often automatically recruit the men to complete such tasks. However, the result of this gendered division of labor was not a transfer of power to men; rather, the responsibility for planning and implementing garden projects remained the role of the women leaders.

In her book *A Patch of Eden: America's Inner-City Gardeners* (1996), Patricia Hynes uses her final chapter to briefly consider “why so many women” are present in New York City, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Chicago community gardens. Hynes’s work advances feminist scholarship on community gardening research because it considers women’s gardening from a historical perspective while paying attention to the intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, class, and geography. For example, Hynes argues that women of color have a special connection with gardening by virtue of their ethnic heritage:

The majority of community gardeners in inner cities are women, women of color whose historical relationships to plants extend back to the agrarian South, as well as farther back to Africa, islands in the Caribbean, and to Latin American and Asian countries, where traditions of subsistence gardens link them to the very origins of international agriculture. (1996, p. 152)

Finally, Hynes also notes that the central role women play in community gardening has been undervalued specifically because it is work being completed by women:

At the neighborhood and household level, where women dwell and work on the surrounding land, they identify, collect, cultivate, and conserve large numbers of plant and animal species. Yet the value of this work, like that of community gardening, is generally not counted in the economy because such work is un-paid and not market-based; nor is it recorded in environmental history because it is considered the minor, insignificant work of many ‘ordinary’ women and not the major, heroic drama of the rare Great Man; nor has this work been documented, until recently, by the mainstream media because the billions of examples of the ‘homely act of earthkeeping’, as poet Robin Morgan calls her gardening, are neither *grand* nor *romantic*. (Hynes, 1996, p. 155)

Conclusion

Although this dissertation focuses heavily on community gardens as a site of food movement analysis, is it never assumed that community gardening alone will result in wide scale food justice. While a gardener may, depending on how they define “food justice”, feel that community gardens allow them to experience food justice at the individual or household level, from an institutional perspective, the food *injustices* inherent in our globalized corporate food system and daily food environments are too immense to solve through community gardening alone. Additionally, any research project which set-out to extol the “power” of community gardening would be in danger of mimicking the very alternative food movement discourses the food justice movement critiques; such a stance fails to consider the many structural barriers that prevent large

portions of the American population from engaging in community gardening and other alternative food practices.

Chapter 2

FEMINIST METHODOLOGY AND STUDY METHODS

As reflected in Chapter One's literature review, this dissertation is not the first study to investigate either American community gardens or alternative food movements. What sets this study apart from those that have preceded it then are its gender focused research questions and its feminist epistemological and methodological foundation. This chapter begins by briefly explaining what is "feminist" about this dissertation project, before proceeding to a detailed explanation of the study's design and primary research methods—qualitative field research and discourse analysis.

What Is "Feminist Research"?

Feminist research can be distinguished from non-feminist research by its specific methodological approaches. Although there is no "single" feminist methodology⁹, what fundamentally sets feminist approaches to knowledge building apart from Western-science's classic approaches are the ontological and epistemological assumptions which guide the selection and application of specific research methods. The result is that when interdisciplinary feminist scholars "borrow" methods from other disciplines, they apply them in ways which are unique. For example, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) argue that, as a reflection of its relationship with feminist activism, "feminist research is committed to challenging power and oppression and producing research that is useful and contributes to social justice" (p.150). In her edited *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (2007), Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber also suggests that, in general,

⁹ Fonow and Cook (2005) broadly define feminist methodology as "the description, explanation, and justification of the techniques used in feminist research" (p. 2213).

studies which can be described as “feminist” share the following characteristics: first, “feminist” research relies on an intersectional approach to social inquiry which assumes that there are many kinds of social oppressions and that the manner in which these oppressions overlap changes the experience of them; second, feminist research assumes that lived experience is a valid source of knowledge, and that by combining the perspectives of multiple different standpoints, a researcher can better arrive at an accurate understanding of the social phenomena in question; third, feminist researchers reject the possibility of “discovering” an “objective truth” and instead demand that scholars are reflexive about their own biases and the impact these may have upon the project’s findings; and finally, feminist researchers acknowledge that power hierarchies exist between the researcher and the researched, and that while the influence of these hierarchies can be minimized through thoughtful research design, they cannot be erased entirely.

“Grounded Social Movement” Research Framework

While collecting and analyzing data for this study I was guided by a “modified” grounded theory which incorporated elements of social movement research theory. Because this dissertation is concerned with an entire social movement, not just community gardens, it was beneficial to combine a clear plan for developing theory (which was provided by grounded theory) with insights on how to approach studying something as large and complex as a social movement. As will be detailed, the two research designs fit well together, and moreover, both are supportive of feminist

methodologies and methods, making this “modified” approach to grounded theory an appropriate compromise for the project.

Unlike classic positivist research designs which produce knowledge in a deductive manner via the testing of hypotheses, Grounded Theory is an inductive (“bottom up”) approach to knowledge creation, moving from specific observations to more general theories. The absence of testable hypotheses in the study design does not connote a lack of structure or rigor more generally, however; followed faithfully, grounded theory demands that researchers are constantly aware of the new directions their data is taking as it is collected. Developed by sociologists Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser, and first detailed in 1967’s *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, grounded theory has since been used by researchers working in a wide variety of academic disciplines and is well recognized as a qualitative study design amongst feminist researchers. Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) point out that grounded theory has been a particularly useful alternative to positivist research designs which fail to recognize the influence of power hierarchies on study outcomes and which do not “place people’s experiences at the center of inquiry” (p. 144).

Sociologist Adele Clarke (2007) has made the case that grounded theory is an “implicitly” feminist method which can also be employed in more “explicitly” feminist ways. Referring to the method’s original conception, Clarke (2007) argues that implicit characteristics of grounded theory, include: its roots in symbolic interactionist sociology, which approaches the task of theorizing about the social world by observing interactions at the level of individual experience, including the researcher’s; its concepts of

situatedness and partiality, borrowed from sociologist George Herbert Mead; and its practice of open-coding, a method which implies a temporary and partial reading of the data. In addition to this list, Clarke argues that researchers can make grounded theory more explicitly feminist through the use of intersectional theories of gender, race, class, etc.—concepts which were not part of the Glaser’s and Strauss’s original design and to which they were later resistant.

Beyond theoretical considerations, there were several practical reasons why grounded theory was an appropriate research framework for this study. First, because inductive research is more exploratory in nature than deductive, given the lack of literature available on gender processes within contemporary domestic community gardens or the food justice movement, an exploratory approach to the research was more appropriate than an experiment-based explanatory approach (Schutt, 2006). Yet, grounded theory, as is made clear in its very name, does aim to “go beyond simple description and exploration”; if followed fully, the design produces a theory with explanatory power (Birks and Mills, 2011, p. 17).

A second strength of grounded theory, for the intentions of this study, is that it can accommodate multiple forms of data; this was critical given the diversity of study sites—all at different levels of the alternative food movement—which data for this study was drawn from. Useful to both qualitative and quantitative researchers, Birks and Mills (2011) in *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide* argue that interview transcripts, field notes, researcher memos, surveys, policy documents, photographs, artwork, and more, can all serve as data sources in a grounded theory informed study. Because this

dissertation analyzed spaces at both macro and micro of the domestic food movement, each of these data types became part of the project.

A third strength of grounded theory design for this project is its reliance on theoretical sampling (a form of purposive sampling) as the nature of community gardens and other social movement spaces presented barriers to other sampling forms. Within the garden context, for example, complete lists of garden participants were often not kept, and because participants often shift in and out over the course of even a single season, random sampling (in which each member of a population has an equal chance of being selected) was not an option. Conversely, in theoretical sampling—or “theory directed sampling”—the researcher purposefully selects additional persons to interview in order to pursue a deeper understanding of the emerging themes. In this research project, the process of concurrent data generation and theoretical sampling is most obvious at two points: first, it was decided that “drop out” gardeners would need to be theoretically sampled in order to better understand what variables led participants to abandon their work, and second, in order to better understand how the motivations to garden differed among men of varying age, young men were also theoretically sampled.

Concurrent data collection is the most prominent feature of grounded theory. Briefly, the basic components of a grounded theory approach to research are as follows: first, observations and measurements are collected, data which is then analyzed to ascertain any patterns which might suggest early hypotheses; next, these hypotheses are “tested” through the collection of even more data collected via theoretical sampling; last, the desired end result is the development of a new theory which has the ability to explain

what had been observed “on the ground” in step one (Birks & Mills, 2011). In sum, grounded theory is a very “organic” approach to knowledge building that can easily accommodate feminist efforts to maximize the benefits of situated knowledges (via theoretical sampling) and reduce the impact of biases (via constant analysis of the data and the researcher’s interpretation of it). However, grounded theory is also best suited to studies which are collecting data at the level of the individual only—that is, “on the ground”. While this study does collect data at the individual level of analysis within the community garden context, data was also collected at the organizational level of analysis (within city departments and food justice organizations) as well as the movement-level of analysis (via publically available movement discourse). Social movement research methods provided a way to combine these various levels of analysis while still following grounded theory’s method of theory building. As outlined by Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002), social movement researchers draw connections between the “bottom” and the “top” of a movement by “focusing on the concrete actions of actors and their interactions with authorities”. For this reason, “grounded” data collection which draws on the experiential knowledge of activists remains an important part of social movement research. Additionally, social movement theory also has clear ties to feminist standpoint theory; Klandermans, Staggenborg, and Tarrow (2002) suggest that “the best theories are built by synthesizing arguments from different perspectives” (p. 317). In sum, the methodological overlaps between grounded theory and social movement research theory, and their similar accommodation of feminist epistemologies, resulted in a research framework that was capable of analyzing the alternative food movement

without compromising the core elements of grounded theory which guided the study's data collection and analysis.

The Two Aspects Of The Study: Field Work And Discourse Analysis

As introduced in the Preface, two major research questions guided this dissertation, each with several overlapping sub-questions. The first question asked “what are the specific gendered, raced, classed, etc. processes (and their intersections) which are operating in domestic alternative food movement spaces?”, and the second question asked “what difference does it make if gender is, or is not, part of the alternative food movement?” Research questions which supported these inquiries included: How do an individual's experiences with food and food work, if at all, shape their motivations and goals for participation in the alternative food movement? How do an individual's gender, race, class, ethnicity, etc., if at all, shape their experience as a member of the movement, including their leadership opportunities, barriers to accomplishing goals, and their ability to simply maintain involvement? What evidence, if any, suggests that the way gender is absent from the alternative food movement reduces the potential effectiveness of its policies and programs? And if the accumulated evidence does demonstrate that gender “matters”, what possibilities or models for change can be found or crafted?

Researching community gardens and garden programs. A total of eight community gardens are represented in this study's data, five from the Seattle area and three from the Phoenix area. Because these gardens varied significantly in terms of their physical characteristics and member demographics, some of the gardens are represented

in this study through both formal interviews and field notes, while other gardens are represented in field notes only. For a comparison of each of the eight garden's characteristics, including its size and the demographics of its participants, please reference Appendixes A and B.

Importantly, all of the community gardens included in this study privileged food growing. Although most community gardeners grow a mix of flowers and edible plants, the balance between the two can vary quite a bit; however, because this study was concerned with the alternative *food* movement, the most productive gardens to research were those which *primarily* grew food. Because gardens also vary in terms of how they divide land amongst their members—some are structured around individually gardened plots while others are structured around shared plots—the “measure” of food growing was determined at the level of the garden, not the level of the plot.

Selecting gardens in Seattle.

Of the five Seattle gardens, all but one was part of the city's “P-Patch” community garden program operated by the Department of Neighborhoods. For an annual fee of \$38-\$74 (depending on the plot size), the P-Patch program allows city residents in either an individual or shared plot garden to access water and benefit from other management services provided by a city coordinator. In Chapter Six I will review the history and policies of Seattle's P-Patch Program in more detail. The garden in this study which was not part of the p-patch program was connected to a local garden club located in a neighborhood to the northwest of downtown Seattle.

At present there are over eighty community gardens affiliated with the P-Patch program. To select the gardens which became part of this dissertation project, an original list of ten gardens was compiled from the program webpage, which includes an interactive map showing the location of each p-patch in the city. Every garden has a short profile, and the information included typically covers how the garden came to be a part of the program (which often involved some degree of community activism), its organizational style (e.g., some gardens are part of city housing projects, some are “market gardens”), and its ethnic make-up¹⁰. Based on this publically available information, a list of potential study gardens that represented a broad range of gardener demographics was developed. Next, each garden was visited and/or garden leadership was contacted (about half the p-patches have an email address for inquires); gardens were eliminated from the list if its leader(s) indicated they did not wish to participate in a research study. In the end, a total of four gardens from the original list were included in the study; two gardens I successfully introduced myself to, and two were introduced to me by City of Seattle P-Patch staff. The remaining non-p-patch garden was introduced to me by one of the study’s interview participants. Collectively, these five gardens allowed me to conduct research within two distinct “types” of gardens: those predominantly populated by upper-middle class white members, and working class gardens predominantly populated by first generation immigrants from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Of course, each garden also had members who fell outside their garden’s “typical” demographic profile.

¹⁰ Although the website didn’t offer an official explanation for why a garden’s ethnic make-up is publicized, I assumed that this information was intended to help members of various immigrant communities locate gardens in which they could meet other members of their Diaspora.

The type and depth of data collected from each of the Seattle gardens depended on a number of variables, including the size of the garden's population, whether or not English was spoken in the garden, and the specific situations of the gardener's themselves. For example, even though the City of Seattle had approved this research project and each garden's leadership board had confirmed they were willing to have a researcher in their midst, individual gardener's ability/inability or willingness/unwillingness to participate varied (which was also true for the Phoenix gardeners). The amount of time gardeners had to tend their plots was often constrained, forcing many to focus on getting their work done and forgo socializing (with their fellow gardeners, let alone with me); also, some gardeners simply desired to preserve the "peace" their gardening permitted them, one of the few times of the day or week they could be alone; finally, some gardeners were rarely in the garden at all. To correct for the general absence of this "stressed" population of gardeners within the study, four of the twenty-one key informants interviewed were recent (within the past year) garden "drop outs", individuals who could speak to some of the barriers that the "stressed" population of gardeners were facing.

In gardens with large populations of first generation immigrants, meeting gardeners was virtually impossible without an introduction from P-Patch staff—not only because of language differences, but also because I felt I was invading these gardener's cultural spaces when I attempted to visit on my own. This sense of invasion was heightened by differences in the physical layout of the gardens. Although all p-patches are "open to the public", the upper-middle class and largely white gardens in this study

could be compared to park spaces, while the working class immigrant gardens resembled urban farms. From my social location, the former setting “read” as open to non-garden visitors, while the latter “read” as places of business which should be respected as such. However, even with formal introductions, it was not possible for me to conduct key informant interviews within these gardens as finding and affording translators for the various Southeast-Asian languages and dialects became a serious barrier (the City of Seattle itself struggles with this lack of translators). In general, however, many of these gardeners were very open to talking (albeit, in simple terms) about their gardening and their activism, and many were clearly excited to demonstrate the results of their hard labor. This openness and interest in the study’s research meant that even in gardens where interviews were not possible, field note data was rich.

Based on its large population of English-speaking gardeners, formal interviews and a focus group were conducted in only one p-patch garden, data that was combined with interviews from the non-p-patch garden for a total of fourteen formal in-depth semi-structured interviews from the Seattle area. In the gardens where no interviews were conducted, the voices of the gardeners were captured in field notes and later transcribed.

The “interviewed” p-patch was a large community garden located in a middle to upper-middle class neighborhood, home to a largely white population with visible ethnic minority groups of second and third generation Russian, Polish, and Norwegian immigrants. Of the three remaining p-patches, one was a small garden of upper-class, largely white professionals who were willing to meet with the researcher in the field but who did not have time to sit for formal interviews (four voices are represented from this

garden in field notes); a “market garden” which, in partnership with Seattle’s Housing Authority, maintained a CSA and a weekly “farm stand” and whose members were primarily Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants (three gardeners are represented in field notes); and a large garden whose members were really practicing small-scale agriculture and who were all first generation Laos or Thai immigrants (five gardeners voices are captured in field notes). In terms of gender, all four gardens had more women members than men, but men were not at all absent; men’s general membership representation was about 40%, and their representation in leadership was at least 50%—and in some cases, more.

Selecting gardens in Phoenix. For the Phoenix case study, three gardens of very different characters provided eight formal interviews, and similar to the Seattle case study, many additional voices were also captured through field notes. Unlike Seattle, however, Phoenix has no city department in charge of community gardens, and neither do the incorporated cities and towns which collectively comprise the “Valley of the Sun” have a common non-governmental organization with the resources to oversee or communicate between all local gardens. For this reason, the process of finding gardens to include in the Phoenix case study proceeded differently than it did in Seattle. As both a graduate student and instructor at Arizona State University, two of the gardens came to be included through on-campus networking; one was recommended by students in the researcher’s “Gender, Food, and Society” course, and one was physically on campus and managed by an undergraduate student organization. The third garden in the Phoenix case

study was introduced to the researcher by a leader within a local non-profit organization, the Valley Permaculture Alliance.

Arizona's contemporary community gardening and food movement culture is "younger" and therefore less developed than Washington's. As a result, all of the gardens in the Phoenix case study were smaller than the gardens in the Seattle case study—both in terms of population size and acreage. The majority of the interviews originated from a garden managed by a group of white and Latino/a students and community center members. The leadership team in this garden was comprised of four women and two men. The university's campus garden, which at the time of this study was managed by group of undergraduate women, was gardened by a diverse group, including white, Latino/a, and international students of both genders. Finally, the smallest of the three gardens, in terms of acreage, was organized around shared plots and was entirely managed and worked by white women.

Data collection. The field research conducted for this study took place during semester breaks between May, 2011 and August, 2012. The primary method for collecting data from the study's eight community gardens was participant observation and field notes. This approach to research in the gardens was aided by a particular aspect of community garden membership—the work party. Because a common feature of community gardens is some degree of shared space, members are usually expected to participate in regularly scheduled work parties in order to maintain or improve those spaces. In the case of the Seattle p-patches, work party schedules varied significantly (some had weekly meetings whereas others had meetings only once a season), which is a

reflection of the leadership structure within any given garden, specific projects the gardener's had committed to, and the gardener's collective resources (time and money) to spend on maintenance and improvement. In the large Seattle p-patch where interviews were conducted, monthly "full garden" work parties were held, as were weekly work parties to maintain and harvest produce from the garden's "food bank" plots. The weekly aspect of work parties in this garden made it possible for me to "gain access" to the community. While planting, watering, weeding, and picking vegetables alongside gardeners during their Tuesday night gatherings, I was able to engage in numerous informal conversations (which appear in field notes) and develop relationships which resulted in formal interviews. By spending field time in the garden actually working, rather than simply observing from a distance, I was also able to gain deeper insight into the garden's culture: how gardener's interacted with one another, how leadership operated, what was grown, how it was grown, who was in the garden's public spaces, etc. This information allowed me to put gardener's formal and informal interviews into context and also allowed me to see if my perceptions of a situation differed from those of the gardeners. In the case of the Phoenix gardens, work parties were less regular—usually just once a month—but operated in the same way.

In sum, I spent eight weeks in the large Seattle garden during the summer of 2011, attending weekly Tuesday night work parties lasting between two and three hours apiece. I would additionally visit the garden on weekend afternoons to hold an interview or collect notes about the garden's public spaces, taking the opportunity to also meet gardeners I had not been introduced to on weeknights. Because the Seattle garden which

was not affiliated with the p-patch program did not hold a formal work party during my stay, only interviews were collected from that garden. During the summer of 2012, I returned to the large Seattle garden for a month, conducting additional interviews with “drop out” gardeners and meeting with new garden leaders. At that time I also attended work parties in three predominantly immigrant community gardens, data which is represented in field notes (because English language interviews could not be conducted). This field work included two full-day (eight hour) Saturday outings in the company of a City of Seattle Department of Neighborhood garden coordinator. For the Phoenix area’s three gardens, I attended three work parties apiece (each lasting an average of three to four hours) for the smallest and largest gardens. For the garden on university property, I spent a season working a plot of my own, attending work parties which occurred during my tenure.

The process of writing field notes for this study closely followed the procedure outlined by Lighterman (2002), which draws heavily on the work of Glaser and Strauss and grounded theory. Lighterman outlines a model of “theory-driven participant observation” in which the researcher enters the field of study with preexisting themes, derived from academic literature, that they predict will be important to focus on. After memoing about the themes and their expectations, the researcher begins taking broad notes on everything within the field setting—details about the people, their relationships, conversations, aspects of the built environment, etc. In line with the “constant-comparative” component of grounded theory, the researcher begins coding field notes from the very beginning of the study. The intent of this activity is to find concepts which

will be important to examine in more detail, back in the field, via theoretical sampling. Emersion in the literature continues throughout this ongoing process, aiding the researcher in developing new ideas that might then require additional coding of the data. The research process ends when the researcher feels they have collected enough evidence to support a theory which has emerged from the data. For this study, field notes were first written on paper and then typed-up after the fact, along with as many additional details and personal reflections as possible. Field notes were also supplemented with photographs I took in the field.

Twenty-one key informant interviews were also conducted with garden participants, fourteen women and seven men—a gender division which reflects the average gender division of the gardens in this study. A gardener was determined to be a “key informant” if they were a designated leader of a garden, if they were a long-time member with institutional memory, or if they had experienced marginalization in a garden—ableism and ADA issues, for example. (For tables comparing the twenty-one key informants in terms of their demographic variables, please reference Appendix B). All interviews were conducted in English within public spaces—either the gardens themselves or local coffee-shops. The taped semi-structured interviews lasted between an hour and two hours and followed an interview guide, granting me the flexibility to ask follow-up questions about critical topics. The interviews were transcribed either by me or a professional transcriber.

While still in the early stages of data collection for this dissertation, it became increasingly clear that grounded theory’s reliance on theoretical sampling was going to be

very practical for this study. Amongst the population of community gardeners who spoke English, finding garden participants who would be willing to meet for an hour long interview proved difficult—most gardeners spent what free time they had in their plots! My approach to this obstacle was to invest heavily in securing the key formant interviews with community garden members who could provide the best data about leadership, identity differences, and social activism. Key-informant interviewing is also a commonly used method in social movement research. Because it is often impossible to interview every member of a movement, researchers instead purposefully select a sample of activists who can give them insight into various aspects of the larger group. Blee and Taylor (2002) argue that “in the field of social movements, semi-structured interviewing is a common methodological tool, especially useful in studies where the goals are exploration, discovery, and interpretation of complex social events and processes, and when combined with participant observation” (p. 93). While feminist scholars assume that this type of experiential knowledge is authoritative, they are also concerned with the ways in which a power dynamic between the “researcher” and the “researched” can skew how that knowledge is shared and heard. DeVault and Gross (2007) suggest that one way to disrupt a power hierarchy is by not “viewing informants of as objects of the researcher’s gaze; [instead] feminists should develop ways of conceptualizing the interview as an encounter between [individuals] with common interests who would share knowledge” (p. 178). Another way Devault and Gross suggest feminist researchers can enhance the collaborative nature of research is by practicing “sustained immersion” and “active listening”; being in the field longer aids in developing relationships which can

destabilize power hierarchies between individuals, and active listening encourages the researcher to concentrate as much on what interviewees are saying as what they are not. Finally, although many researchers are drawn to interviewing as a method because of its potential to “give voice to the voiceless” and bring marginalized perspectives to the front of a study’s analysis, DeVault and Gross caution feminist researchers away from the faulty belief that they can perfectly represent communities or individuals (2007, p. 167).

Responding to these concerns, throughout this study’s data collection I always attempted to establish some sort of relationship with a gardener before the interview (usually during work parties), and during the interview I would, at times, selectively share information about myself if it seemed to reduce a “power hierarchy” built on nationality, age, education level, or social class. It should also be noted, however, that the dynamic of every interview did not necessarily place me (the researcher) “on top”. In fact, based on a gardener’s age, gender, the achievement of a professional degree, and/or being in a leadership position, there were interviews where I was clearly the “less powerful” one in the conversation. I will discuss this again in the “Weaknesses of the Method” section, below.

In addition to collecting data with gardeners, this study also collected data at the “administrative” level of community garden programs. While conducting fieldwork in Seattle, I accompanied one of the city’s paid P-Patch coordinators as she “made rounds”, leading garden work parties and facilitating leadership development. During these trips I was able to observe administrative styles and, through extended conversations, gain a deeper understanding of the p-patch program’s policies and development. Informal

interviews were also conducted with two other P-Patch staff in the field, individuals who were first generation immigrants themselves and who were responsible for on-the-ground coordination of several p-patches with large immigrant communities. In the absence of an institutionalized community garden administration in Phoenix, “administrative level” research was conducted with the head staff member of the Valley Permaculture Alliance (VPA). In partnership with the public-health outreach arm of a local hospital, the non-profit organization supports local sustainable agricultural efforts by organizing community garden and school garden start-ups, offering low-cost home gardening how-to classes, by managing a seed bank, donating low-water use trees to local neighborhoods, and organizing home tours of chicken coops. Although it has neither the resources nor the authority to “manage” gardens valley-wide, the VPA is the most visible resource for community gardens in the Phoenix area and is a source for information about local regulations. However, since staff members of the VPA do not manage gardens directly, administrative-level data collection took place in Phoenix via a one hour interview with the organization’s head staff member and by attending a monthly community gardening “networking” event she was hosting at a local school.

Software assisted data analysis. In accordance with grounded-theory’s research design, researcher memos, field notes, and interview transcripts were methodically collected and organized for coding and analysis, a process which was on-going over the course of the study. While all of the early opening coding and intermediate coding took place on paper or in Word.docs, the study’s final stage of coding was completed with the assistance of NVivo qualitative data analysis software (which was only available to me

on campus, not in the field). The strengths of using NVivo software to complete the study's final analyses include the program's ability to keep track of multiple levels of coding and to compute coding quires. After all written materials and photographs were imported into NVivo, I then coded the materials, developing seventeen major codes during the analysis process. The major themes were then sorted by gender and by garden so that I could consider how the context of each garden shaped the development of gendered motivations and experiences. To aid my thinking at this final stage I also printed off pages of the coded themes, organized by gender and garden, and taped them to wall posters so I could better visualize the data.

Researching food justice discourse. The macro-level food movement research for this study was conducted in two ways: first, a "case study"¹¹ was conducted with feminist food justice organization exemplar Community to Community Development of Bellingham, Washington, and second, a discourse analysis of food justice organization's public materials and internal documents was completed with the assistance of NVivo.

Community to Community Development came to my attention while conducting regular keyword web-searches of the terms "food justice", "women", "gender", and "feminism". At the time of this writing, Community to Community Development remains the only "feminist" food justice organization that the researcher is aware of within the U.S., and as such, was incorporated into the dissertation project as a "case study". According to Snow and Trom (2002), the defining characteristics of a case study are: the analysis of some instance of a social phenomenon (rather than many instances), the

¹¹ The term "case study" is placed in quotation marks because this dissertation did not use the method in its most formal sense.

creation of “thick” (richly detailed) data about the phenomenon, and the triangulated use of multiple methods to achieve that quality of rich data. In framing Community to Community Development as a “case study” for this dissertation, all of the preceding characteristics were present; however, because this organizational spotlight was a compliment to the dissertation project, rather than being the project itself, this research was not conducted longitudinally nor was it as methodically structured as a formal “case study” would be. By conducting an in-person interview with the organization’s Director of Food Sovereignty Programs in July of 2012, by conducting a content analysis of the organization’s documents with the assistance of NVivo, and by reading the published writings of the organization’s Executive Director, Rosalinda Guillen, I was able to develop a complex picture of the specific policies, programs, leadership styles, and overall culture of Community to Community Development. The end goal of including such an “exemplar” in the project is to provide one model of (en)gendered food activism which could serve to move the alternative food movement forward generally.

For this dissertation, discourse analysis helped “paint a picture” of the domestic food justice movement and how it compares to the food sovereignty movement—which is attentive to gender and women in a way that food justice is not. To collect the body of text which comprised this study’s analysis of food justice and food sovereignty discourses, I took two approaches. Because there is no national association which manages a roster of all food justice organizations, I first conducted keyword web-searches (via Google) using the keywords “food” and “justice”, and “food justice”; I kept the search terms broad in an effort to cull as many potential organizations as possible.

One weakness of this approach is that small food justice organizations which lack a public presence might have been missed. Upon reviewing the search results, organizations were either accepted or rejected for the project based on whether or not the organization self-identified with the food justice movement (e.g., as communicated by their name or mentioned in their “About Us” web pages), if they operated programs which were identified as “Food Justice” focused, or if they were clearly “doing” food justice work (e.g., working to improve the *social* justness of the domestic food system, especially along race and class lines). Because the sample was small, I did not want to discard projects which were clearly related to the movement but which had not taken-up the still emerging label. Organizations were “rejected” if they only superficially used the terms “food” and “justice” and were clearly not engaged in food justice work. Second, after exhausting the organizations that I could find online via key word searches, I then consulted lists of food justice organizations which I had found on other organization’s websites (e.g., the Community Alliance for Global Justice maintains such a list) and made sure that I had reviewed—and either accepted or rejected—each of the organizations listed. There was a great deal of overlap between my original web-derived list and the lists of “recommended” organizations compiled by movement actors, and I felt that the dual approach had captured all of the country’s leading food justice organizations, as well as several which were new to me.

In the end, the online materials of twenty food justice organizations with well developed websites were added to the NVivo database. Using the “webpage capture” tool, I imported a pdf of each relevant webpage written by the twenty organizations.

These pages usually constituted the “Home”, “About Us”, “Food Justice”, and “Program” pages; in sum, if a page contained information about food justice, I captured it. I also imported any available “manifestos”, “annual reviews”, or other relevant and publically accessible policy documents offered by the organizations. Using NVivo’s coding functions, I then coded all of the web pages for major themes. To complete the analysis of discourse I ran word frequency queries of both the entirety of the webpages, and also queries related to specific codes (e.g., a word frequency query was run on “food justice_definitions”). While such a word frequency analysis alone would only constitute a content analysis, the advantage of qualitative software when conducting discourse analysis is that each bit of coded material can be immediately traced back to its source page, allowing for a consideration of the coded material in context.

Weakness of the Method

Chapters Four and Five of this study draw heavily on the data collected from 21 community garden key informant interviews. While the perspectives of many “average” gardeners are captured in the project’s extensive field notes, the gardeners who were interviewed for this project were unique from their peers in some way—either in terms of a demographic characteristic, their leadership position, or their long-term participation. It is important to acknowledge that this interview data is therefore not “representative” of the community gardeners in Seattle and Phoenix at large, but rather was useful for understanding specific aspects of alternative food activism in more depth. Yet, key informants are also not entirely unique from their peers, and as a result, many of their perspectives echoed those of gardener’s whose voices were captured in field notes only.

Power hierarchies resulting from individual's social location represent a second weakness for a study which relied heavily on interviews and interactions in the field. Because we all embody a social location, it is impossible for any researcher to either be completely unbiased, or to completely remove the power hierarchies which arise during qualitative field research. For example, as a relatively young, native-born English-speaking white woman, I was separated from many of this study's participants—with the “social distance” between some participants being greater than others. While the distance between me and the elderly white men who gardened in a largely upper-class neighborhood was significant, it often felt smaller than the distance between me and the immigrant women who spoke only limited English and whose community garden reflected cultural differences in land use and gender relations. The “degree of perceived separation” in these two cases demonstrates that shared gender identity does not necessarily trump other categories of difference, nor does it automatically produce a sense of alliance between a researcher and research participants. On the other hand, a common gender identity *can* facilitate communication across differences. Even though I was unable to speak any of the southeast Asian languages spoken in several of Seattle's gardens, and even though my whiteness and cultural markers clearly made me an “outsider”, my gender did permit me to work in close proximity to women, a privilege which resulted in a degree of knowledge sharing which would likely have been difficult for a man to achieve.

My gender aside, in almost every other respect, my identity as a young white woman made it difficult for me to recruit study participants from non-white and/or non-

English speaking gardens. This was especially true in Phoenix, where community gardens are more often private rather than public spaces. Language and cultural barriers made it awkward (or even rude) for me to simply walk into a garden and attempt to meet people in their private space, and contacting gardeners by phone or email was virtually impossible because Phoenix gardens often do not have websites advertising their existence (as noted, all gardens in the P-Patch program have a city run web presence). Finally, other aspects of my social location and identity which would come to bare on the field research data collection process included my lack of dependents (many individuals framed their gardening work and food activism in relation to their families, something they understood I could not fully empathize with), and my status as a student (which not only granted me a great deal more flexibility than most of the gardeners and was sometimes read as a marker of social class, but also created an “education” hierarchy—although I was not always at the top of it).

Chapter 3

CROSS-MOVEMENT COMPARISON OF GENDER IN ALTERNATIVE FOOD ACTIVISM

Because the gender gap in the domestic alternative food movement is not a universal characteristic of food activism, an examination of the ways in which the progressive food justice movement differs from the radical food sovereignty movement provides fruitful insights into the specific social and political processes which fashioned a U.S. national food movement that unwittingly reproduces gender inequalities. In this chapter I briefly expand the scope of the project to the global level in an effort to understand which factors promoted the development of a gender-aware food sovereignty movement, and by extension, might be necessary to adopt at the local and national levels in order to replicate food sovereignty's successes with empowering women. The following discussion primarily relies on two sources of data: first, both academic and activist literature on food justice and food sovereignty is used to trace the history of conceptual differences between the two movements, and second, a comparative analysis of the discourses and policies arising from organizations which self-identify with "food justice" and "food sovereignty" demonstrates how the two agendas translate into different models of grassroots activism. The findings of this analysis point to under-examined influences on contemporary U.S. food activism, including the legacy of tension between civil rights and feminist activism, and the federal government's consistent refusal to formally support internationally recognized human rights legislation. However, as this research also reveals, amongst a vanguard of the food justice movement, a shift toward

food sovereignty ideology is underway, suggesting that U.S. activists are becoming sensitive to the limitations of the food justice framework and see potential in a hybrid of the two movements. If a related increase in gender awareness will accompany this incorporation of food sovereignty into food justice is yet to be seen.

Tracing The Origins And Conceptualization Of Food Sovereignty And Food Justice

Although the concepts of food sovereignty and food justice are unique, their parallel focus on food-based rights for marginalized populations has resulted in their frequent confusion and misapplication as synonyms. While this muddling is understandable amongst those who are new to food movement discourse, even activists and scholars who are deeply embedded in the movement's work frequently mix both the titles and their concepts. Regardless, food justice and food sovereignty can be clearly distinguished from one another, both in terms of their core concerns and conceptual origins, as well as the character of their movements and organizations (e.g., there are marked differences between their members, regional locations, leadership structures, and approach to activism). It is on account of these differences that the project of distinguishing between the two is important. When the platforms are casually collapsed into one another, food sovereignty's radical potential to call U.S. food justice activists to task on their lack of gender awareness and their failure to question their own role in the far-reaching impact of U.S. economic policies and consumption practices is lost.

Distinguishing the concepts. That the conceptually related food sovereignty and food justice movements came to exist simultaneously as strands of alternative food movement activism is a reflection of their vastly different origins; while the former was

developed by rural peasant farmers from the global south as a direct challenge to weaknesses of the concept of “food security” being applied in international spaces, the latter reflects efforts to improve urban food insecurity in the global north by dismantling the affects of structural racism.

Most commonly, food sovereignty is defined as “the right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures, and environments” (Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010). Backing this conceptualization, food sovereignty is supported by six internationally recognized pillars (principles) of food sovereignty: people’s right to food; the valuation of food providers and the rejection of policies which undermine them; the localization of food systems and the shortening of the gap between producers and consumers and the rejection of inequitable trade arrangements; local and public control over the means of production; the support of sustainable agricultural practices which reject technologies like genetic engineering; and the support of agriculture which promotes biodiversity and rejects environmentally damaging industrial agriculture.

In contrast to this well-developed description of food sovereignty, food justice seems somewhat indefinite, which may reflect its lack of a nationally or internationally recognized umbrella organization. Unlike the food sovereignty movement, which benefits from the unifying front of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), the task of defining and communicating the concept of “food justice” is largely left up to individual grassroots organizations. Among those attempts, New York City based Just Food’s definition is perhaps the most straightforward and well recognized:

Food Justice is communities exercising their right to grow, sell and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals. People practicing food justice leads to a strong local food system, self-reliant communities, and a healthy environment. (Just Food, n.d.).

At least a few organizations have additionally attempted to outline principles or practices which support the achievement of food justice. For example, on its webpage titled “Food Justice”, Earthworks Urban Farm of Detroit answers the question: “what can you do to be a food justice advocate?” Largely focused on the common food justice themes of structural racism and the relationships between consumers and producers, the practices the organization outlines support a definition of food justice which is somewhat different from Just Food’s. Focused more on describing what food justice *does* than what it *is*, Earthworks Urban Farm states that “food justice” expands on the concept of community food security by “requiring us to question why food insecurity currently exists. We must examine the historical social and economic inequalities that cause wide spread food insecurity, locally and globally” (Earthworks, 2008). Although it is difficult to determine what exactly would qualify as a “just” food system under this definition, readers of the website are encouraged to move toward the goal by “questioning how racism has played a role in determining who has access to healthy food and who does not”, to “host a discussion about structural racism and our food system”, and to “shop at your local farmer's market and ask your farmers questions about their food and growing practices” (Earthworks, 2008).

The considerably different approaches taken by Just Food and Earthworks to defining their common concern of “food justice” is unsurprising given that the grassroots movement is occurring in many divergent spaces; however, this increases the difficulty of characterizing the movement with any depth. While an intellectual inheritance from community food security¹² is evident in both conceptions, they otherwise seem to have little in common. To more accurately hone in on those themes which occur most frequently among the various attempts to define food justice, the materials of fourteen different organizations were subjected to a word frequency query in NVivo and the following list of keywords, in order of weight, was returned: people, systems, community, health, local, access, sustainable, right, land, racism, power, and policy. Earthwork’s focus on racism, systems, and power are reflected in the list, as are Just Food’s named concerns with people, communities, rights, health, land, local, and their implied concerns with sustainability and access. Although unmentioned in their definitions of food justice, both organizations are additionally focused on “policy” issues. The remaining two themes, “rights” and “land”, represent characterizations of food justice produced entirely by organizations other than Just Food and Earthworks, conceptions which also point to overlaps with broader food sovereignty concerns.

Comparing the core themes of food sovereignty to those of food justice, a few significant differences emerge. A word frequency analysis of food sovereignty definitions crafted by seven different organizations or working groups highlighted “production”,

¹² The North American nonprofit organization the Community Food Security Collation conceptualizes “food security” differently than international organizations like the FAO. The collation’s often-cited Hamm & Bellows definition is: “community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (Community Food Security Collation, n.d.)

“farmers”, “trade”, and “international” as concepts which are distinct to the movement. However the concerns of “people”, “communities”, “rights”, “local”, and “policy” food sovereignty shares with food justice, an overlap which perhaps explains some of the confusion between them. The results of these two queries bolster the connections between food justice and food sovereignty as social movements which fight to secure food and agricultural rights for marginalized populations. But it also confirms that their scope and strategies differ; while food justice is primarily focused on the race-based health and food access inequalities of consumers at the intra-state regional level, food sovereignty is concerned with small-scale producers’ rights to agricultural resources at the nation-state level and to trade protections at the international level. This distinction is easy to overlook, however, in light of the overlap between the movements’ named themes, which is also where content analysis fails to be useful. A simple numerical word count cannot capture the way in which each movement discursively frames a concept. For example, both food justice and food sovereignty employ the theme “local”, but there are differences in the scope and meaning. For example, food sovereignty:

prioritizes local food production and consumption...[by giving a] *country* the right to protect its local producers from cheap *imports* and to control production...and ensure that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, water, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those who produce food and not of the corporate sector. (La Via Campesina, n.d.)

Conversely, food justice “increases awareness and action around food and farm issues and advances policies for a thriving local food system...because of [Just Food’s] efforts,

NYC residents have become more informed advocates for *local, regional, and national* farm issues...” (Just Food, n.d.)

This comparison reinforces another key difference between food justice and food sovereignty: the primacy given to the consumer’s versus the producer’s perspective. Josh Viertel, president of Slow Food USA, offers a demonstration of this difference from the food justice perspective. Discussing advances in the movement, Viertel’s description of contemporary (2011) Slow Food USA suggests that the organization—which has frequently been critiqued for promoting a privileged “foodie” position—has begun to recognize that structural barriers rooted in race and class inequality must be accounted for in the food movement’s call to “eat according to your values” and “vote with your fork”. As Viertel notes, not everyone has the luxury of doing just that:

If dinner is a democratic election, and we seek to change our food system via our forks, we need to look squarely at the fact that, in many electoral districts and for too many people, there are no polling stations because there is only one candidate, the incumbent: fast food. (2011, p. 141)

Although Viertel’s essay demonstrates is that food justice principles are expanding, albeit slowly, into the mainstream domestic food movement, his writing also suggests that the sub-movement projects a consumer’s perspective. “Voting with your fork” references a switch in consumption choices, but one that nonetheless heavily relies on purchased food. Unlike food sovereignty, which represents the producer perspective of small scale

farmers, indigenous people, and migrant agricultural workers¹³, even the most progressive food activism in the U.S. is still largely comprised of a consumer-activist base. Of course, many food justice organizations support projects which help members take on portions of the producer's role (e.g., community gardens), or develop a different relationship with producers than that fostered by conventional agriculture (e.g., farmer's markets). For example, Earthworks Urban Farm, which began as a faith-based soup kitchen, developed a garden project in 1997 which led to a gleaning partnership with a local food bank, and then in 2001 to a moving farmer's market that set-up at public health facilities all around Wayne County, Michigan. However, the reality of the U.S. food system is that very few households—especially those in urban areas where the food justice movement originated—are capable of subsisting entirely off of their own production efforts, and less than 1% of the national population claims farming as an occupation (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2013). This sets domestic food justice apart from food sovereignty in a significant way as the latter works to the “put the aspirations, needs and livelihoods of those who produce” (in addition to workers and consumers) “at the heart” of the food system and the movement (La Via Campesina, n.d.)

The history of the concepts. In addition to the guidance which arises from a unifying international organization, it is also easier to define and describe food sovereignty as a concept because its etymological history is well known, whereas food justice is generally regarded as having more organic and collective origins. American

¹³ Raj Patel (2010) points out that this “production” perspective causes tensions within the diverse food sovereignty movement. “Any talk about the ‘means of production’”, between landed peasants and landless migrant workers is understandably “fractious”.

food activist Bryant Terry typifies the lack of specificity surrounding the term's first-use when he declares that food justice "was coined by activists working in low-income communities" (Wolf, 2007). In kind, academics are similarly vague about the history of the term. While Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) note that the term has to be at least as old as the organization Just Food, which was established in 1994, Alkon and Agyeman (2011) seem to suggest that it may date back to at least the 1980s, originating out of food-related discussions within the environmental justice movement. "Food sovereignty", on the other hand, is undisputedly accredited to the organization La Via Campesina, which introduced the concept at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome. Founded in Belgium in 1993, La Via Campesina describes itself as an "international movement which brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world...an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent from any political, economic, or other type of affiliation." (La Via Campesina, n.d.). The organization's membership is comprised of over 150 local and national organizations, and over 200 million farmers from 70 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Opposing transnational corporations and private ownership of agricultural means of production, La Via Campesina instead promotes small-scale agriculture as a model which is both more sustainable and just. Additionally, in their resistance to capitalist agrifood monopolies, the organization's members also criticize the institutions which support them—including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—and "public-private partnerships of government aid" such as the United States' "Feed the Future" initiative

and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011).

It is worth understanding the history and mission of La Via Campesina because food sovereignty emerged directly from them¹⁴; most specifically, food sovereignty is tied to the organization's efforts to develop a replacement paradigm for "food security", the "food regime" concept (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989) which came to dominance beginning in the 1970s. First formalized in international policy at the 1974 World Food Conference in Rome (Fairbairn, 2010), "food security" built upon the post-war discourses of "right to food" and "freedom from hunger" by increasing the emphases on states' responsibilities for maintaining adequate food supplies via market interventions, increased food production, and/or the acceptance of external aid (Fairbairn, 2010). However, by the early 1980s the concept of "food security" had shifted slightly and was being reframed as "*household* food security", with this new approach placing greater focus on the individual, resulting in an overall reduction of state intervention into economic markets. As it continues to operate today, "food security" became more focused on the "micro-economic choices facing individuals within a free market, rather than about the policy choices facing governments" (Fairbairn, 2010, p. 24). While national governments still play a vital role in the contemporary conception of food security, that role is now presumed to be one of protecting markets, rather than directly

¹⁴ In addition to La Via Campesina, the IPC (which emerged in 2002 before the June "World Food Summit: Five years later", the follow-up conference to the 1996 meeting at which food sovereignty was first introduced) and the Nyeleni Forum for Food Sovereignty in Selingue, Mali (which was organized by La Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth International, The World March of Women, and other organizations) are also consistently referenced as keystones of the food sovereignty movement's identity development (Nobre, 2011).

intervening in them on behalf of citizen welfare. Beyond the FAO, international financial organizations were also quick to support this new conception of food security because it echoed the existing “globalization project with its individualizing and commodifying tendencies” (Fairbairn, 2010, p. 25). It was in response to this broad adoption of a neoliberal food politics that La Via Campesina introduced the counter-concept of food sovereignty. Because food security, as it was operationalized, could potentially be achieved under a political dictatorship, food sovereignty activists argued that democratic politics could not be divorced from food movement work. As such, the movement argues that democracy is a precondition for food sovereignty, and food sovereignty is a precondition for food security (Patel, 2010).

While the origins of food sovereignty are rooted in the history of global food and agricultural politics, the history of food justice is rooted in national and city-level racial politics. The People’s Grocery of Oakland, California—a food justice organization as well-recognized and influential amongst activists as Just Food of New York City—is particularly vocal about the connections between contemporary activism and the history of inequality which necessitated it. For example, the organization’s website hosts materials that outline Bay Area history since the completion of the transcontinental railroad. While industry was attracted to the port city of Oakland and the entire area grew substantially all way through the second world war, beginning in the 1950s, “systemic patterns of structural racism in policy, urban development, migration, construction, and industry”—such as bank loan redlining and the construction of freeways through minority neighborhoods—began to erode the predominantly minority community

(Ahmadi, 2011, p. 154). One outcome of this history has been a high concentration of food deserts—and the negative health outcomes which characterize them—within the San Francisco suburb. The organization’s “About West Oakland” webpage states that “decades of systematic disinvestment and discriminatory policies have led to high rates of unemployment, poverty, crime, and pollution, which have taken a severe toll on residents’ health and welfare, and uprooted the local economy...*today*, amid public housing projects, an overabundance of fast food restaurants and liquor stores choke West Oakland like an invasive species. The community is the epitome of an urban ‘food desert’...As a result, skyrocketing rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases exist, especially among children. Health disparities between West Oakland and affluent communities nearby are well documented...” (The People’s Grocery, n.d.) Oakland’s response to the severe food and health injustices which mark their community has been particularly robust, giving rise to a network of alternative food organizations which today make the city a stronghold of boundary-pushing food justice activism and thinking; in addition to the People’s Grocery, Oakland is also home to the food justice organizations Planting Justice, The Oakland Food Connection, the Community Food & Justice Coalition, and Food First: The Institute for Food and Development Policy. However, many urban centers experiencing structural hardships illustrate a similar pattern of grassroots resistance, including Detroit, New York City, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Phoenix.

Gender within the movements. Finally, food justice and food sovereignty can also be distinguished from one another based on their respective handlings of gender. As

discussed, the domestic food justice movement, while being very focused on race and class inequality, is all but silent about gender inequality, including its well-documented impact on the other the food justice concerns of access equality, health, communities, and public policy. The absence of gender within the food justice agenda is immediately apparent when reviewing the publicly available media and policy documents of related organizations. For example, the mission statement of Growing Food and Justice for All Initiative (GFJI)—which developed out of a Community Food Security Coalition committee and is sponsored by Growing Power of Milwaukee, Wisconsin—claims that it is “an initiative aimed at dismantling racism and empowering low-income and communities of color through sustainable and local agriculture” (GFJI, n.d.). The organization’s website goes on to state that the “network views dismantling racism as a core principal which brings together social change agents from diverse sectors working to bring about new, healthy and sustainable food systems and supporting and building multicultural leadership in impoverished communities throughout the world” (GFJI, n.d.) Similarly, the food policy think-tank Food First: The Institute for Food and Development Policy offers the following definition of food justice in their edited volume *Food Movements Unite! Strategies to Transform Our Food Systems* (2011): it is “a movement that attempts to address hunger by addressing the underlying issues of racial and class disparity, and the inequities in the food system that correlate to inequalities in economic and political power”(Holt-Gimenez, 2011, p. 340). In part, the dual foci on race and social class exhibited by GFJI, Food First, and Earthworks Urban Farm can be explained by their philosophical connection to community food security. The Community Food

Security Coalition is guided by six principles, the first of which is addressing/securing “low income food needs”. The movement is related to the anti-hunger movement, so structural economic inequality—and its intersection with race and ethnicity—often comes to the forefront. However, studies also demonstrate that women and the children of female-headed households are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011), making any gender oversight inconsistent with food security’s goals. Even so, gender remains absent from the discussions and resources produced by the majority of food justice organizations, and most do not offer women-centered programming. Unfortunately, this gender-gap has also not been avoided or problematized within scholarly conceptions of food justice—some of which have even made use of feminist methodological perspectives. Alkon’s and Agyeman’s 2011 *Cultivating Food Justice*, for example, begins with an explanation of “positionality”, which they correctly attribute to feminist methodology, but then the editors fail to present gender as a variable, which in conjunction with race and class, also structures experiences of food injustice.

Although the overwhelming majority of food justice organizations neglect to consider gendered food injustices, there are exceptions. The Seattle-based nonprofit Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ) is one such organization. To begin with, the organization defines food justice as “the right of communities everywhere to produce, distribute, access, and eat good food regardless of race, class, *gender*, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, religion, or community. Good food is healthful, local, sustainable, culturally appropriate, humane, and produced for the sustenance of people and the planet”

(Community Alliance for Global Justice, 2013). Importantly, the organization does not simply reference gender and leave it at that; instead, CAGJ demonstrates an applied intersectional approach to its gendered food activism by providing information on migrant workers' vulnerability to sexual violence and by hosting workshops on "sexism, racism, and classism in the food system" (Community Alliance for Global Justice, 2013).

In general, however, gender is present in the food sovereignty movement in a way that it is not in food justice. One place to observe this is in the foundational documents of national and international food sovereignty organizations. Considering the six internationally recognized principles of food sovereignty (International Planning Commission for Food Sovereignty, 2013), the requirement to "value food providers" includes both binary gendered nouns: "food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants". The *Founding Document for the US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA)* also expresses gender equality by incorporating sexism, along with racism and classism, into the organization's vision of dismantling "systems of power and oppression" that contribute to a corporate-controlled food system (US Food Sovereignty Alliance, 2010). Further examples of gender awareness within the document include the Operating Principle which explicitly states that women's leadership is "recognized and prioritized"—along with that of indigenous peoples, people of color, migrant workers, and others marginalized by the global food system—and the Membership Section which makes it clear that USFSA "welcomes grassroots,

community-based, faith-based, and non-profit organizations with leadership of women, youth, people of color, workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, immigrants, queer folks, people with dis/alter-abilities, trans people, and gender-nonconforming people” (US Food Sovereignty Alliance, 2010).

Grassroots activists have made the case that gender equality is essential for the achievement of food sovereignty, an argument that supports the incorporation of gender into the movement’s founding documents. In Food First’s *Food Movement’s Unite!*, only two chapters deal specifically with women—both of which discuss or are organized under the food sovereignty heading rather than food justice. For example, two program consultants for The New Field Foundation of the Northern Niger River Basin in West Africa write about women’s gendered relationship to food security. Although the activists use older “food security” language, they end their essay by connecting their support of women’s empowerment to the attainment of local and national “food sovereignty”. In West Africa, 70% of agricultural production and food processing is completed by women, and women are also responsible for daily household food preparation (Ndiaye & Ouattara, 2011). Based on this feminine gendered food-labor structure, Ndiaye and Ouattara (2011) argue that any societal “barriers [women] face become barriers to food security” (p 57). Socially constructed barriers that undermine women include community- and household-level control of their social status and movements, which limits their ability to access education, own land, or attend local women’s organizations. At the national- and multinational-level, women face another set of policy related barriers; “development strategies are not designed to address the real needs of rural

people, particularly rural women” (Ndiaye & Ouattara, 2011, p. 59). In light of this gender context, Ndiaye and Ouattara argue that the way to achieve food security in West Africa is to “support rural women to bring it about themselves”, “empowering them to gain access to information management and technology so that their contributions can enter the international dialogue on food sovereignty” (2011, p. 67). The truly radical claim the two activists make is that “rural women’s integral role in supplying food means that true food autonomy *is not possible* [my emphasis] without their leadership and improved status with their communities, countries, and regions” (2011, p. 53).

According to scholar/activist Esther Vivas (2011), since its founding in 1993, La Via Campesina has been attune to the importance of women’s equality, leading it promote a “female peasant” agricultural identity intentionally in opposition to masculinized corporate industrial agriculture. Regardless of this outward reaching gendering, however, Vivas notes that women peasant farmer members still found it necessary to organize themselves around internal gender inequalities—which they have done with great success (Vivas, 2011). For example, in 2000 the 1st International Assembly of Women Farmers met and laid out gender-related action points that they then took to the 3rd International Conference of La Via Campesina. Their demands included that women make up at least 50% of participants at every level of the organization, and that sexist language and content within the organization’s documents, trainings, and public events be eliminated. As a result, La Via Campesina has gone on to develop alliances with feminist organizations, including The World March of Women, thereby

expanding its analysis of gender oppression beyond the food system to also include the many gendered processes that marginalize women within social activism.

Accounting for the gender variance in food activism. Understanding the factors which influenced the food sovereignty movement to develop with a gender consciousness, and for food justice to develop without one, is essential for crafting strategies to (en)gender the domestic food movement. To begin with, it is important to clarify that domestic food justice activism does not overlook gender on account of the movement lacking people who experience gender-based oppression. Women make up half, and in some cases more, of food justice activists—as well as food activists, generally, nationwide. Evidence of women’s presence in food justice abounds; for example, the race-focused non-profit Growing Food and Justice for All Initiative (GFJI) spotlights eleven “Voices Which Make A Difference” on its home web pages, seven of whom are women. In Seattle, the Community Alliance for Global Justice made the results of their 2012 member and volunteer survey publically available, and women comprised 72% of survey responders (there were forty responses in total) (Community Alliance for Global Justice, 2013). This same gender pattern holds for organizational staff members; Just Food includes the profiles of seventeen staff members on its web pages, fourteen of whom use feminine gender pronouns, and the People’s Grocery’s web pages include the profiles of eleven of their twelve staff and board members, eight of whom use feminine pronouns. Of course, in addition to being present as food activists, the work of Feminist Food Studies scholars confirms that women are also present within the food system and that they experience food injustices in specifically gendered ways, from production

through to consumption. For example, considered from food justice's "default" consumer perspective, the gendering of food roles is particularly evident given that up to 93% of food purchase decisions in the U.S. are made by women (Marketing to Women, 2013). In sum, it is clear that the absence of gender discourse within food justice cannot be attributed to an absence of women activists or an absence of gendered food processes.

By approaching this puzzle intersectionally, rather than considering gender alone, a more complex relationship between movement's identities and action platforms comes into focus. Undoubtedly, for some food justice activists—including women—race and class *are* more influential than gender in shaping their individual and/or community food injustices. However, it may also be that the food activism gender-gap reflects the historical trend of treating sexism as a secondary concern to racism and classism. For example, feminists of color have written about their experiences being caught between the feminist and civil rights movements and the pressure they felt to prioritize race activism over gender activism, because while the former solidified community relationships, the later often intensified community and household-level conflict. Patricia Hill Collins (2005), writing about a similar contention between race activism and sexual identity activism, argues that "until recently, questions of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, have been treated as crosscutting, divisive issues within antiracist African American politics. The consensus issue of ensuring racial unity subordinated the allegedly crosscutting issues..."(p. 88). For women of color, sexism is experienced as arising not from the dominant white patriarchal culture, but also from the men of their own race and ethnic communities—and even from their own intimate

relationships. Work to eliminate this sexism, however, has often been swept under the rug by men who feel that racism and classism are more important to address than gender inequality. While Collins notes that men of color have recently demonstrated an increased willingness to analyze the privileges afforded masculinity, she also argues that over the past thirty years, “the majority of African American men have been highly resistant to any discussions that they perceived as being critical of themselves, and some have loudly criticized Black feminism” (Collins, 2005, p. 8).

It is conceivable that one outcome of this subordination of gender-based oppression to the continuing fight against structural racism is that gender-based food justice work has likewise been subordinated to race-based food justice work. A closer examination of the women food justice activists discussed above supports this claim. As described, Seattle’s Community Alliance for Global Justice stands apart as one of the only food justice organizations to incorporate gender into its work, but it also stands apart in terms of its racial make-up. The organization’s 2012 member survey reports that 72% of the respondents identified as “European American/Caucasian”, whereas the staff members of Just Food and the People’s Grocery are much more diverse, with people of color representing half or more of the population. For white women food activists, gender shapes food injustices but race does not, an experienced-based reality that may lead organizations dominated by white women to center gender in their work in a way that more racially and ethnically diverse organizations may not. In this sense, white women’s focus on gender is a “luxury” not afforded to women of color who, if their work is also going to reflect their lived experiences, must additionally focus on race and ethnicity.

While the Community Alliance for Global Justice *does* focus on gender, race, and class simultaneously, another organization where white women comprise the majority of members might experience very little resistance if it focuses on gendered food inequalities almost exclusively.

In her 2012 publication *Black, White, and Green: Farmers Markets, Race, and the Green Economy*, Alison Hope Alkon offers an example of race-gender tension in alternative food activism which arises around a West Oakland farmer's markets. Describing her research with the multiple actors (customers, vendors, managers) represented at the discursively constructed "black community farmer's market", Alkon positively notes that the primacy given to racial identity within the market reflects both of Patillo-McCoy's (2002) conceptions of racial consciousness—reactionary (responding to racism) and non-reactionary (celebratory). In the reactionary sense, Alkon argues that the market's deliberate emphasis of its black identity "can be read as a reaction to the pervasive whiteness in local food system activism, and to racial oppression in general" (2012, p. 99). From an activist perspective, the community's resistance to erasure with the food movement is constructive. However, in the process of crafting its black food justice identity, Alkon argues that the market fails to consider how class and gender additionally shape the lived experiences of its actors, a general disregard that becomes particularly evident when individuals negotiate their identities as "community members" in relation to the "black market". Although it was originally intended to serve low-income residents who would have been predominantly black women and children, the market's actual consumer base is middle to upper-middle class and racially diverse.

However, because of the absence of class awareness, upper-middle class blacks are “deemed” to be insiders, but white food activists have to negotiate the boundary of the community in order to be included—and some have done so. While Alkon is in favor of an intersectional approach which considers race, class, and gender equally, she is critical of white women food activists redrawing community boundaries to privilege gender over race, because “this approach denies the realities of racism and serves to re-entrench the dominance of white cultural practices” (2012, p. 109).

History demonstrates that food activism which gives primacy to race over gender is not new. Raj Patel, writing for the edited *Food Movements Unite!* volume, describes the history of the Black Panthers’ free breakfast program for urban African American children during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Begun in Oakland, California—the same community that today is home to a large number of food justice organizations—the Breakfast for Children Program was “part of a suite of survival programs [which had] explicit goals of transforming relations around private property” (Patel, 2011, p. 125). This historical concern with capitalist conceptions of private property is reflected in today’s food justice call to disentangle food from the corporate industrial system that poses food security as a privilege for those who can pay, rather than as a right for all. Alkon (2012) argues that the Black Panther’s program of yesterday, and the food justice activism of today, are connected in that both link “food provisioning to community empowerment and self-determination” (p. 36). The free food program was not above criticism, however; echoing the voices of many women who have spoken out about sexism within the Black Panther movement, Patel cites evidence that women were

primarily responsible for the program's food work, but wonders if "the sexist bubble might have been punctured by moving men into kitchens and onto serving lines for children" (2011, p. 128). While the Black Panthers' breakfast program is not the direct antecedent of contemporary food justice organizations, the parallels are clear—especially in food justice work influenced by community food security. Hunger and health inequalities, in both urban and rural areas, have been resulting from racism for over a century; what the Black Panthers were attempting to address in the 1960s, food justice is attempting to address today—and both are doing so with a focus on racism and a blind-eye to sexism.

I want to make it very clear that I am not suggesting that work to end structural race and class oppression—both generally, and within the food system (they are connected, obviously)—should be muted. Without a doubt, the academic and activist articulations of race and class injustice which have characterized the food justice movement have been critical to advancing the alternative food movement as a whole, and together are part of what constitutes a feminist social justice framework. However, the insight of intersectionality is that race and social class do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, experiences of race and of class are uniquely shaped by gender, sexuality, ablebodiedness, age, and other categories of social location. Thus, when it is argued that "the food system itself is a racial project" (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011), I believe we must also recognize that men and women experience that project differently. By extension, while white women's racial privilege might grant them the "luxury" of focusing on gendered food oppressions in a way that women of color cannot, it must be recognized

that an absence of intersectional work will only undermine any polarized approach to food justice, regardless if it race or gender or class or whatever that predominates the work.

It is also important to note here that white men have historically been no more willing to address sexism than men of color, and that not even every woman believes that gender inequality shapes her food and/or social movement experiences. As will be discussed in the next chapter, it is entirely possible that women themselves may believe that gender is irrelevant and that gender inequality is something that happens “elsewhere”—although this tends to be the privileged perspective of upper-class white women. Additionally, while many men involved in contemporary social activism identify as feminists (or as feminist allies) and therefore do not intentionally reinforce gender inequality, because it is woven into the very fabric of our society, no one is immune from a socialization which prioritizes men and masculinity above women and femininity. Finally, because gender and race formations change slowly, even if the tensions between race and gender activism have subsided, it is very possible that the pattern of giving more attention to the former has been unwittingly carried into the present; intersectionality is a concept which remains primarily in the domain of academics.

If the particular race, class, and gender systems of U.S. society have influenced the ways in which the food justice movement thinks about structural inequalities, a factor which has clearly influenced a greater gender presence within the food sovereignty movement is its connection to the UN network, and to the FAO in particular. Influenced

by the “gender mainstreaming”¹⁵ efforts which began in the 1970s and continue into the present, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations—similar to its fellow UN organizations—is amenable to discussing structural gender inequalities and developing projects which aim to empower women. As evidence of this, the FAO maintains a Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division to work on creating “a world where all rural women and men have equal opportunities to make choices that free them from hunger and poverty”, and along with the “Right to Food”, “Gender” is one of six major themes addressed by the organization’s Economic and Social Development department (Food and Agricultural Association of the United Nations, 2013). The inclusion of the “right to food” theme points out that the FAO—again, like much of the rest of the international community—is also influenced by human rights legislation, within which the right to food was formalized as far back as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As such, the FAO also operates a Right to Food division, which aims to “develop methods and instruments to assist stakeholders in the implementation of the right to food and information and training materials to raise awareness and understanding by rights holders, duty bearers, civil society and the general public” (Food and Agricultural Association of the United Nations, 2013). Importantly,

¹⁵ “Gender mainstreaming”, when used as a general identifier, refers to efforts to introduce gender awareness into large-scale development projects. It has been defined as “an organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution’s policy and activities through building gender capacity and accountability” (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000). Originating at the international scale of “development” sponsored by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, various NGOs and similar, gender mainstreaming was actually preceded by, and then effectively subsumed, several relatively distinct phases of gender + development conceptualization and theorizing which reflect an evolving sensitivity to the complex ways in which top-down economic policies—which also necessarily impact a multitude of other social institutions, as well as the environment—play out “on the ground”. Since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (in Beijing) however, “gender mainstreaming” has remained the “preferred strategy” and label for women or gender-aware policy development (Sachs & Alston, 2010).

Raj Patel (2010) argues that despite being formulated in international spaces where rights discourses circulate and have weight, food sovereignty's adoption of human rights was no accident. Instead, Patel argues that the food movement consciously decided to "deploy language to which states had already committed themselves. Thus the language of food sovereignty inserts itself into international discourse by making claims on rights and democracy, the cornerstones of liberal governance" (2010, p. 188).

Beyond being a supportive environment for gender and human rights discourse, part of what made the FAO an attractive space for the food sovereignty movement to inhabit in the first place is the structure of the organization. Among UN organizations, the FAO is particularly democratic in its governance, having a one country-one vote model while also formally partnering with civil society and agricultural cooperative, in addition to the private sector and other UN agencies. Nora McKeon (2011) argues that it was for these very reasons that food sovereignty organizations like La Via Campesnia and the IPC invested considerable time in attending the FAO's World Food Summits and other activities, resulting in a substantial advancement for the international food movement. McKeon writes that, "for the first time in history, the international community has established a global policy forum for food issues where people's movements can defend their proposals. This may seem fairly remote from local action, but it is important because many factors that impact food systems escape the control not only of community but even of national governments" (p. 265).

A final factor to consider when comparing the different ways food justice and food sovereignty have come to handle gender is the demographic makeup of U.S. farmers

verses farmers worldwide. Even though food justice activists largely represent a “consumer” perspective, the domestic food movement is certainly not unconcerned with agriculture or farmers; for example, an NVivo word frequency analysis of the entire web presence of twenty different food justice organizations returned the themes of “farmers” and “agriculture” within the top ten keyword results. While food labor is highly feminized within U.S. society, when agricultural labor is considered alone, we find that a masculinized corporate industrial model dominates the U.S. food system. Results of the 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture show that while the percentage of women farm operators is growing, men still represent 60% of all farm operators and account for 86% of principle operators (United States Department of Agriculture, 2007b). These statistics are almost the inverse of agriculture in South America, Africa, and Asia, where “women, primarily on small farms, provide up to 80% of agricultural labour and produce 45%-90% of domestically consumed food, depending on the region” (UN Women, n.d.). The reference to small-scale agriculture is important—women farmers outside the U.S. are generally not the principle operators of corporate industrial farms, but rather subsistence farmers and farm laborers in a global industry which feminizes agricultural work in order to exploit women’s paid labor (Nobre, 2011). In sum, where domestic food justice *is* concerned with agriculture, the model it engages with is a masculinized one, rather than the feminized one which sits at the center of peasant farmer organizations like La Via Campensia and their related food sovereignty work.

Tracing A Shift Toward Food Sovereignty Within The Food Justice Movement

The ways in which food sovereignty differs from food justice makes it compelling for feminists and food activists to track as it moves into new movement spaces. The general failure of activists and academics to concisely use the terms “food justice” and “food sovereignty” has not precluded the fact that levels of “informal” food sovereignty discourse (discourse which is not labeled as “food sovereignty”, very likely due to the fact that the authors themselves are unsure of it) are rising within domestic grassroots activism, especially within the food justice movement. The introduction of language such as “global”, “gender”, “human rights”, and “ownership” into food justice spaces demonstrates that food sovereignty discourses are reaching and impacting U.S. activists, which is perhaps best illustrated by the 2010 founding of the US Food Sovereignty Alliance, an outcome of that year’s Community Food Security Collation’s New Orleans conference (McKeon, 2011).

Superficial examples of the two concepts mixing are more common, however. For instance, among the sample of food justice organizations analyzed in this study, the websites of some organizations include pages titled “food justice” with the content of those pages dedicated to defining the principles of “food sovereignty”, while other organizations which describe their work as “food justice” on their “Home” and “About Us” pages have given their program director the title of “Director of Food Sovereignty Programs”. In academic writing, the ambiguity continues; although it is clear that scholars understand the two labels signify different concepts, clear explanations of how they relate to one another are rare and difficult to infer. Sometimes, as is evident in a

chapter included in Food First's *Food Movements Unite!*, food justice seems to be understood as a subcomponent of food sovereignty (Ahmadi, 2011), rather than as the independent movement that it is. Significantly, in Food First's nearly simultaneously published volume on *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* (2010), not a single mention of "food justice" is made by either of the sixteen contributors or three editors. This contrasts with not only the organization's *Food Movements Unite!* volume, but also the two MIT Press publications *Food Justice* (2010) and *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability* (2011); all three books contain references to both movements and at various points demonstrate a collapsing of food sovereignty into food justice, or visa versa. What I argue these books reflect is a difference in the direction of movement discourse; while the above evidence suggests that domestic food justice writers are increasingly influenced by food sovereignty work, food sovereignty activists—especially outside the U.S.—appear to be largely unconcerned with the food justice movement.

Aside from grassroots organizations, examples of food justice-food sovereignty hybridity which go beyond the superficial can be found in the materials produced by national organizations. At their September of 2012 conference "Food+Justice=Democracy", the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)—a Minneapolis based organization with a mission to "work locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems" (IATP, n.d.)—produced a collective document outlining the "Principles of Food Justice". As conceptualized by IATP, "food justice" is actually a mix of what I have

described as food justice and food sovereignty, with food sovereignty being a sub-theme, or component, of food justice at points, and both being components of the theme “Local Foods, Community Development, and Public Investment”. The IATP’s vision of equality represents both movements, and importantly, incorporates of gender; while food justice’s concerns with historical trauma, health disparities, structural racism and classism, community food security, and environmental justice are represented, so are food sovereignty’s concerns with farmer’s land rights, indigenous land rights, gender equity, local democratic control of food systems, and fair labor and immigration rights (IATP, 2012). The IATP’s “Principles of Food Justice” manifesto clearly demonstrates that domestic food activists—especially at the level of large national organizations where the memberships are more diverse—have access to both discourses and are crafting new food movement identities which can be characterized as true hybrids of food justice and food sovereignty. However, while IATP provides an encouraging example, as the more superficial examples cited above demonstrate, gender is not necessarily one of the food sovereignty themes represented in the more general migration of movement discourse; the extent of the shift, and the extent to which gender will be part of that shift, is yet to be seen.

Eric Holt-Gimenez, executive director of Food First, and Annie Shattuck are co-authors of one of the few published works where food justice and food sovereignty are not only treated as discrete concepts, but also put into conversation with one another. In their analysis of the similarities and differences between the two movements, the authors point out strengths of both approaches, but seem to suggest that food sovereignty is

superior. Part of their reasoning comes down to their understanding of food justice's focus on localized solutions (such as the introduction of new food outlets within food desert spaces) rather than systemic changes. They write:

An honest and committed effort to the original food justice principles of antiracism and equity within the food movement is just as important as working for justice in the broader food system. Addressing the rights of women, labor, and immigrants is essential for strengthening movements for food justice. (2011, p. 323).

While I believe Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck underestimate the policy efforts of food justice organizations (especially at the municipal level, where many food justice organizations work to establish or influence existing food policy councils), I do believe that they accurately point to critical weaknesses in domestic food justice activism—namely the oversight of gender, the failure to seriously consider immigration and labor issues as part of structural racism, and at times, an approach to change which (unintentionally) fails to significantly challenge the underlying processes which result in food system inequalities. Describing the approach of each, Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck characterize food justice as a politically progressive social movement and food sovereignty as a politically radical one, the former operating as an “empowerment” model and the latter as an “entitlement/redistribution” model (2011, p. 321). According to this conception of the two movements, food justice can be understood as a movement which attempts to improve access to food and increase health for marginalized populations by working within the existing economic and political system, whereas food

sovereignty is a movement which questions the very desirability of that system and goes so far as to advance an alternative on a global scale.

Holt-Gimenez's and Shattuck's work offers insight into the reasons why food activists might be increasingly drawn to the principles of food sovereignty. One way to account for the migration of food sovereignty discourse into the food justice movement (and the absence of the inverse) is that domestic activists are not entirely insensitive to the progressive-radical distinction the two authors conceptualize. While Viertel's (2011) conception of food justice à la Slow Food reflects Holt-Gimenez's and Shattuck's characterization of food justice as a progressive social movement—because it largely encourages the expansion of consumer infrastructure so that underserved populations can equally access both conventional and “alternative” food sources—, many food justice activists are clearly working more in line with food sovereignty's radical approach, questioning and/or resisting existing political and economic processes. Brahm Ahmadi, co-founder and Executive Director of Oakland's People's Grocery, seems to understand the more radical potential of food sovereignty and his case against corporate grocery stores as a solution to food deserts makes a very interesting contrast to Viertel's work. Critical of the Obama administration's offer of federal assistance to corporations for the opening stores in underserved areas, Ahmadi writes:

Imagine if the national answer to the food crisis took the form of a huge, publically financed flood of corporations like Wal-Mart and Tesco opening up stores in inner-city neighborhoods, using the exact same economic model their using now. We could expect low wages, the destruction of small businesses and

local economies, and all of the labor and supply-chain practices we're familiar with...it would be ironic if corporate America, which helped create food deserts, took the lead in rescuing food deserts and food-deprived communities. (2011, p. 156)

Although Ahmadi is in favor of food justice activists getting involved with public policy, he resists the model currently in place—that is, attempting to achieve lasting change within the artificial timeframes of elected offices. Instead, Ahmadi more accurately reflects the principles of food sovereignty when he writes that the food justice movement is in “a battle to prove that there is another way: that we don't have to sell our local wealth, our land, our environment, and our health to corporate America just to bring in some superficial change in an expedient manner” (2011, p. 157). Even though Ahmadi cites food justice, and his essay is organized under the food justice section of *Food Movements Unite!*, the only referent header he uses in his chapter references food sovereignty. In sum, the combination of discourse and politics Ahmadi uses reflects a heavy food sovereignty influence upon Oakland's People's Grocery.

Finally, while Ahmadi clearly understands food justice activism in a more radical way than some others, his connection to food justice remains intact. However, not all domestic activists who are concerned with the core food justice elements of structural racism and classism and inequality have chosen to identify with the label. Natasha Bowens, author of the blog project *Brown Girl Farming: The Color of Food*, is one such activist. From her own perspective, the distinction between the two movements—and the appeal of food sovereignty—comes down to the matter of ownership.

Food sovereignty is about having ownership. Ownership over our food source, over our land, over our seeds, our water, the food systems in our communities and over our rights as people impacted by the food system. And that's all of us, everyone who eats should understand and care about food sovereignty. Food justice is a term that gets thrown around a lot but generally applies to ensuring food is accessed fairly and that folks involved in or impacted by the food system are treated fairly. Note that the subject in this definition, "all of us", is passive, having the outcome of the food system be something that happens to us. That's not ownership. (Bowens, personal communication, 2013)

Barriers to the adoption of food sovereignty in the U.S. Despite evidence that food sovereignty discourse is being incorporated into domestic food justice work—or that food justice is being bypassed altogether in favor of it—there remain significant barriers to a wide-scale adoption of the movement's platform within the U.S. For activists working to increase gender awareness within the domestic alternative food movement, these hurdles potentially cut-off one of the most promising ways of achieving that goal.

To begin with, food sovereignty's reliance on legal human rights language to articulate its goals and demands results in a disconnect when it is transferred from the international to the U.S. national context¹⁶. Although many domestic food justice organizations have mimicked food sovereignty by incorporating "rights" discourse into their own work, in reality this is an impotent move within the U.S. context because the

¹⁶ Raj Patel (2010) argues that food sovereignty's use of rights language may not actually be well suited to the radical social movement. Because the responsibility for guaranteeing rights is ultimately assumed to be the burden of the state, but radical food activism questions the authority of the state and criticizes its role in supporting power hierarchies (and the food sovereignty movement is itself committed to non-hierarchical organizing), a deep tension arises between food sovereignty and legal human rights frameworks.

federal government has declined to sign or ratify many of the key documents which articulate the human right to food, women's equality, and migrant worker protections. For example, as of 2013, the U.S. "is one of only seven countries—together with Iran, Nauru, Palau, Somalia, Sudan and Tonga—that has failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" (Human Rights Watch, 2009). The U.S. has also declined to take the first step of signing the Migrant Worker Convention 1990, and staff members for the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) argue that "food sovereignty itself means very little in the U.S. context. Why would it? The U.S. government does not recognize the Right to Food, which is part of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)" (Spielfoch, 2008). While the domestic food movement's efforts to have various human rights documents officially recognized—such as the US Food Sovereignty Alliance's "calling on the US to join the community of nations and support the human right to food"—represent an important voice of resistance and serve to inspire grassroots activists, at present food sovereignty in the U.S. lacks the same "bite" that it has in other countries where activists are already legally empowered through these conventions.

Although the U.S. does not hold itself legally accountable for certain key social justice elements of food sovereignty, in an interesting twist of interpretation, some activists argue that the U.S. government has actually already secured economic and political food sovereignty for itself—technically, if not entirely in spirit. "The United States and Europe have understood the importance of national food sovereignty very well and have successfully implemented it by systematic economic policies" (Amin, 2011, p.

xv). Contrasting this form of food sovereignty with the food security framework forced upon other nation-states, Amin argues that the large capitalist economies of the global north knowingly benefit from exploitative relationships with Third World countries which leave the latter dependent on “industrial agriculture, mass food, and international trade” to feed their citizens (2011, p. xv). By arranging import tariffs and subsidies for domestic commodity crops, the U.S. effectively achieves the food sovereignty requirement of “controlling their own food systems, including their own markets and production modes”, however, all other elements of the food sovereignty platform are left behind. For example, food sovereignty should be a joint achievement between people and their state, but the insight of the food justice movement is that U.S. food policies are as harmful for some members of this country¹⁷ as they are for other state’s citizens whose governments engage with the U.S. in trade, loans, or food aid¹⁸.

A second variable that I argue acts as a barrier to the adoption of food sovereignty within the U.S. is the relatively dormant state of the domestic feminist movement and the continuing societal resistance to the gender activism which does exist. Because gender is a core component of food sovereignty, the unadulterated adoption of the platform requires activists to be supportive of efforts to eliminate structural gender inequality—or, at a minimum, to believe that gender is a relevant to the food movement project. Although, as demonstrated in the examples above, elements of food sovereignty can be

¹⁷ Of course, this state-induced loss of citizen’s food sovereignty began with the destruction of Native American’s (although they weren’t always recognized as citizens) food sources (e.g., buffalo), their removal from agriculturally productive lands on to reservations, and the forced introduction of government commodities in place of traditional food culture (Winne, 2010).

¹⁸ Winne (2010) argues that these economic policies are not likely to change anytime soon. Because U.S. agricultural production is growing faster than the domestic market can consume, agricultural market stability increasingly relies on exports to get rid of the surpluses.

embraced by food justice activists while leaving the gender component behind, if the work of activists like Ndiaye and Ouattara (2011) is to be believed, then we can expect that these partial attempts at adopting food sovereignty will fail, as gender equality is essential for its achievement. In arguing that the domestic feminist movement is currently in a “third wave” period of low visibility, and that serious resistance to feminist activism still exists—and that these each have impacts on food activism—I reference ahead to the next section and the next chapter in which I discuss two of the only seriously gender-focused food justice organizations in the country, and to the experiences of a lone feminist-identified community gardener in Seattle, WA.

Describing The Impact Of Food Sovereignty On Gender Equality

While the incorporation of gender into a food movement’s definition and founding documents is a critical first step to engendering food activism, this act alone does not guarantee that alternative food movements will operationalize that gender commitment, let alone succeed in improving gendered food injustices. Although food sovereignty activists like Vivas (2011) have argued that gender equality is essential for the achievement of food sovereignty’s goals broadly, what evidence is there that activists who take on the gender-aware food sovereignty platform are advancing gender equality? In the answer to this also rests the defense of why it matters if food sovereignty does, or does not, influence food justice. Within the U.S., a few food sovereignty-influenced grassroots organizations do already meaningfully recognize that gender intersects with race and class, and it is to these examples that I want to now turn and consider how

“gender awareness” demonstrably shapes the way an organization structures its programs.

Our Kitchen Table (OKT) of Grand Rapids, MI conducts its gender-aware food justice activism within low-income urban communities (neighborhoods which have been labeled “food deserts”). Although Our Kitchen Table does not explicitly identify as feminist, the non-profit does identify as an organization which mobilizes low-income women, “creating a space where women build individual capacity through participation in a self-empowerment model that emphasizes (1) knowledge, (2) purposeful action on individual and collective levels and (3) leadership” (Our Kitchen Table, n.d.) These gendered programming goals structure Our Kitchen Table’s work, resulting in time spent communicating information about WIC and other nutrition programs to neighborhood residents, and training women in community organization and community gardening. A commitment to gender equality within the organization’s food work is also apparent in its management structure, with the “Community Leadership Circle” being described as comprised of six women drawn from the local community, women who “have faced challenges themselves, and are aware of the problems that are present in the target areas” (Our Kitchen Table, 2011). By having community women lead its local grassroots projects, Our Kitchen Table hopes to build trust in the neighborhoods it operates in and through that, increase its food justice and social justice impacts. The dual steps of deliberately creating space for women’s leadership within the organization’s structure, and developing programming which trains and empowers women to be leaders in their surrounding communities, sets Our Kitchen Table and Community to Community

Development apart from other “gender aware” food justice organizations; there is a depth to their gender equality efforts which reflects the work of food sovereignty.

A case study: community to community development. In Bellingham, Washington the nonprofit organization Community to Community Development exists as the most radical exemplar I can offer of the impact that gender can have when meaningfully incorporated into domestic food activism. Identifying itself as a rural “place-based, women-led grassroots organization”, Community to Community Development is perhaps the only U.S. food activist organization which explicitly, primarily, grounds its food justice work in gender justice and women’s empowerment (Community to Community Development, 2013). Rather than making a connection to environmental justice, the organization cites eco-feminism as its theoretical foundation and asserts that in an “intersecting circular process” with food justice, the two influence both its “participatory democracy” and “movement building” work. In an interview with Erin Thompson, Community to Community’s Director of Food Sovereignty Programs (2012, July), the organization’s focus on women and gender was evident not only in the inclusion of gender equality within its definition of food justice, but also in its programs specifically designed to foster women’s leadership. Rosalinda Guillen, the Executive Director of Community to Community has written that “women’s leadership is our first goal; farm worker justice is the next...” (2011, p. 309). As a rural organization which is also influenced by Guillen’s prior work with Cesar Chavez, Community to Community Development is primarily dedicated to supporting the individuals who exist at the intersection of those two concerns— that is, women farm workers. To achieve their goal

of developing women leaders, Community to Community Development hosts standard events like community kitchen gatherings, but additionally offers long-term training for women farm workers, helping them to overcome sexism originating from both their own ethnic culture and American culture—including agricultural culture—at large.

While centering gender, Community to Community Development’s approach to activism is actually strongly intersectional. For example, the organization’s work with immigrant women farmer workers begins by addressing the multiple structural barriers that undermine them; in addition to addressing sexism, classism, and ethnic discrimination, the organization also believes that immigration issues are inseparable from gendered food system issues, as are issues of domestic violence, children’s welfare, family nutrition, etc. Community to Community’s intersectional approach allows its leaders to see that successfully addressing food injustice requires attending to all of these concerns because they are all interconnected. Thompson related that the question “why are you doing so many things?” has periodically been posed to the organization, but she argues that these multiple projects cannot be separated. Community to Community Development’s intersectional awareness has also allowed them to maximize the effectiveness of their programming by paying attention to some very practical matters. For example, on community kitchen meeting nights, not only do Community to Community Development staff provide transportation for women who don’t have any, they also provide dinner and childcare so that mothers feel comfortable bringing their kids and do not have to back out on account.

Tellingly, Community to Community Development has been in the process of switching from a food justice model to food sovereignty one. Although their website—like many—still reflects a historical food justice identity, the influence of food sovereignty on the organization is evident in many ways. Already in the process of transitioning before the 2010 World Social Forum in Detroit—which only served to reinforce the decision—part of the organization’s motivation for the change was their desire to move beyond localized activism. As Thompson stated, “systems change has to happen at the local level, but if you don’t pay attention to the global, then the change isn’t systemic” (interview, 2012). As part of this effort to expand the impact of their activism to the national and international level of food activism, Community to Community Development has been developing “meshwork” relationships with other alternative food movement organizations. Thompson differentiated meshworks from networks, attributing to the former “a more flexible way of being in solidarity” (interview, 2012). Also suggesting that meshworks encourage a greater degree of listening, Guillen further cites Manuel Landa’s (2006) conceptualization of meshworks as nonhierarchical, decentralized, and self-organizing—all characteristics which reflect a more feminist approach to social activism. In combination with the social forum model of “creating space and dialogue and intersecting movements”, Guillen states that Community to Community Development’s goal is to “develop a women-led organization that replicates that model [of the social forum] in a smaller way in local communities” (2011, p. 309).

The desire to connect local activism with global processes does not mean that Community to Community is not involved with local level politics, however. Rather,

Community to Community Development is both involved, and critical, of efforts like municipal- and regional-level food policy councils which are failing to include farm workers—especially women laborers—within their activist and policy efforts, even though farmers are represented (Allen, 2004). Attentive to the ways in which gender shapes group leadership, the directors of Community to Community Development expressed concern over the fact that the local Bellingham food working group is comprised of all women, while the county council is comprised of all men. Beyond the male basis at the local policy level, Thompson also discussed the masculinization of agriculture and policy at the national level. For example, Thompson described a “scale of masculinization” where domestic policy is at the extreme masculine end, domestic food movement activism somewhere in the middle, and the international food movement at the extreme un-masculine (feminine?) end (interview, 2012). Offering an example of this scale, the Community to Community’s program director related that she often feels she has to “act masculine” in order to successfully navigate agricultural and food policy spaces, such as regional councils organized by the land grant institutions. By extension, Thompson suggested that part of the organization’s frustration with food justice is its concentration on policy reform within a system which is structured to protect the (masculinized) powers already in place. Guillen also argues that domestic grassroots organizations are becoming increasingly hierarchal (the opposite of meshworks), having been “swallowed-up” by other economic and political structures (2011, p. 313). As Thompson expressed to me, the combination of financial and media control “limits our

ability to be radical and outspoken”—a direct conflict to their food sovereignty identity (interview, 2012).

In addition to the desire to expand their activism beyond the local level, Community to Community Development’s shift toward food sovereignty also reflects their desire for a more radical politics. Guillen argues that both food security, but also food justice, are “just not good enough” for the country (2011, p. 307). Like Holt-Gimenez (2011), Guillen discerns a radical, rather than a progressive, foundation to food sovereignty, which sets it apart from food justice; in her mind, the food movement needs to be about more than just legislative change, but also about *transformation of relationships between humans...*” [my emphasis] (2011, p. 310).

While food justice is a great term and a great struggle, it speaks more to a struggle based on legislation, policy regulation. It’s become a way of struggle that needs to be fought within the existing structures that we recognize. Who ensures justice, if not the same government and corporate food system that is depriving us of our human right to healthy food...? (Guillen, 2011, p. 311)

On the other hand, Guillen feels that “food sovereignty demands that we move out of that box and think...in a deeper, transformative way. What is it that I need to do to ensure my community’s liberation, not just from the effects of oppression—like the bad treatment of workers and food insecurity—but from the structures of oppression”? (2011, p. 312).

Food sovereignty also has clearly influenced Community to Community Development’s organizational structure. Modeling themselves off of La Via Campesnia, the organization decided to require that 50% of its farm worker-members be women.

Additionally, for the past eight years the organization's board was entirely comprised of women. However, in another example of their intersectional awareness, Community to Community's core staff have recently begun to feel that such a gender limitation problematically excludes queer people. So while the commitment to women's representation remains, the organization has begun to resist binary representations of that gender role.

Based on this case study, what can be suggested about the impact of gender awareness and feminist awareness on food activism? Although it was beyond the scope of this project to conduct a longitudinal comparative study to quantitatively measure the impact of Community to Community Development's projects, I believe that it is nonetheless possible to describe the ways in which gender "matters" to the outcomes of organization's work. First, I would argue that it is Community to Community Development's feminist influenced intersectional approach to food activism that leads it to understand that gender oppression, the exploitation of migrant laborers, and structural racism and classism are all interrelated. Instead of being an organization which supports only women, by virtue of their intersectional framework, Community to Community Development recognizes that placing women migrant farm laborers at the center of food activism brings all of these related concerns into focus at the same time. Although men are not the primary targets of Community to Community's work, they nonetheless benefit from immigration reform policy work and efforts to establish farm cooperatives. Community to Community Development's understanding of gender—including the ways in which women are gendered responsible for reproduction—additionally shapes the

organization's efforts to the benefit of the children of migrant farm workers. As Miriam Nobre of the World March of Women (2011) argues, "food sovereignty constructs a political agenda around reproduction that involves everyone, not only women" (p. 297); inserting gender activism into food activism does not detract from the latter—rather, it enhances the number of issues which can be simultaneously addressed through it. By opening a space for women farm workers to address their multiple life concerns—all of which intersect with food security, health, and labor—as well as by placing women into leadership positions, Community to Community Development is positively impacting individual women, their households and communities, and regional policy; justice is being enhanced at multiple levels.

Given that evidence suggests that incorporating gender into food justice activism has positive outcomes, I ended by trying to get a sense—from the organizational perspective—of why more domestic alternative food activists are not incorporating gender into their work at any level, let alone in the deeply integrated way Community to Community has done. I asked Thompson, "why there are not more gender-aware or women-centered food justice organizations?" Based on her experience as program director, working with women in their communities to develop leadership experience and representation, Thompson suggested that it is because the gendered skill sets women develop are not recognized as "legitimate" or "real skills". As a result, women remain marginalized within their communities, as well as within the broader context of social activism and public policy—especially in the U.S. If this is the case, then the leadership focus of Our Kitchen Table and Community to Community Development—that is, not

only fostering leadership skills, but specifically equally representing women in movement governing spaces—is perhaps the most significant action that gender aware food justice organizations can take in order to turn the very nature of the social movement. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter Five’s look at leadership in community gardens.

Conclusion: Food Sovereignty Versus Feminist Food Justice

The research presented in this chapter suggests that incorporating gender into the decision making frameworks of food movement organizations is a worthwhile endeavor, specifically because it impacts the type of programming developed, potentially improving the food justice outcomes for individuals, their households, communities—and not inconceivably, the food system at large. For example, when women are placed at the center of food activism, programming becomes sensitive to the gendering of reproductive work, making it possible for women to manage commitments which would otherwise act as barriers to their involvement. However, rather than simply reinforcing a gendered division of labor, the feminist-informed work of Community to Community Development and Our Kitchen Table helps women resist the multiple forms of oppression which disempower them. Because these organizations do not conduct their activism on *behalf* of women, but rather *with* women in leadership positions, Community to Community Development and Our Kitchen Table additionally challenge the gender gap in the food movement itself. In her research on women in agricultural organizations, Patricia Allen (2004) describes the distinction in this way: women do “not simply want to be included in an existing framework; they want to be full participants in creating the framework” for

activism (p. 163). Importantly, when women are equal participants in social movements, activism tends to move in new directions. Finally, by completing their gender aware work specifically from a food justice perspective, Community to Community and Our Kitchen Table are actually working intersectionally, successfully addressing race, ethnicity, class, and gender simultaneously.

At this point, I would argue that influential food justice organizations like Growing Food & Justice for All Initiative (GFJI), the People's Grocery, and Just Food will need to follow the lead of their feminist-oriented counterparts if they are going to help produce a food system which is truly an "alternative" to patriarchal-corporate-industrial-monoculture. Encouragingly, because these organizations are so well recognized, any move they make toward a model of *feminist food justice* will likely have a quick and significant impact on the rest of the domestic food justice movement.

My use of label "feminist food justice" is intentional. Even though this chapter has discussed the relative strengths of food sovereignty over food justice, including its integration of gender analysis, as an academic conducting research in the United States, there are benefits and obligations to retaining an ideological connection to the food justice movement. First, which was also demonstrated in this chapter, food justice has a greater presence in the country than food sovereignty, thereby granting it greater influence over the mainstream food movement. As Nobre points out, "food sovereignty is a popular concept in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, but less prevalent in North America and Europe, and globally, the concept still mobilizes more rural women than urban women" (2011, p. 296). As discussed earlier, the difference in the presence of the

two movements is a reflection of their origins and conceptual platforms; specifically, food justice's superior influence reflects its long history of urban food security activism, a heritage which is worth building upon. A second reason I retain an ideological connection to food justice is because it is in need of a gender critique, whereas food sovereignty is not—"feminist food sovereignty" would be redundant and easy. Revising food justice, however, is necessary feminist work. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as both a scholar and an activist I am not yet willing to give up on policy work and am therefore drawn to food justice's progressive approach to food system reform. Given that the U.S. economy remains the largest in the world, and given that the federal government has considerable influence on international food and agricultural issues (trade policies, aid policies, development policies, etc.), there is power in U.S. policy spaces which I believe U.S. feminists should be committed to influencing. Although there are inherent frustrations which accompany working within entrenched institutions, the widespread impact—for good or bad—of public policies means that policy work has the potential to be one of most effective tools available to feminists in their efforts to achieve social justice. This can begin with feminist food activists working to reduce the negative impact of U.S. actions on the rest of the world's food systems, and on pushing the ratification of key human rights documents.

Following Holt-Gimenez's typology of food activism, based on this dissertation's concern with public policy, it would be classified as "progressive" project. Even so, I am dedicated to pushing food justice out of its comfort zone—beginning with the inclusion of gender— and I find that the comparison between food justice and food sovereignty

suggests many “radical” ways forward. For example, there is radical potential in an alliance between the food movement and the feminist movement, and part of why I am drawn to the label “feminist food justice” is because it brings that relationship to the forefront. As briefly mentioned earlier, the food sovereignty movement’s gender work has been influenced by global feminist organizations like the World March of Women, and visa versa, feminists have been drawn to food sovereignty because it recognizes gender oppressions. Writing as a representative of the World March of Women, Miriam Nobre (2011) argues that in their alliance, the feminist movement contributes a vision of “women’s autonomy, and a vision of sovereignty for all people” to the food movement (p. 302). For feminist food activists working in policy spaces, maintaining connections to both food activism and feminist activism—and the radical intersection of the two—would be critical for not falling into the pattern of “boxed” thinking that frustrates activists like Guillen.

In summary then, I believe that the most effective model of food justice, one that would have the greatest chance of producing a “real alternative” to corporate industrial agriculture, would be one that draws from both food justice activism operating in the urban Global North and food sovereignty activism operating in the rural Global South. The resulting model of “feminist food justice” would include an intersectional race, class and gender praxis; would work concurrently on social, environmental and economic issues; would aim to influence public policy; and would work to draw connections between feminist social justice organizations and food movement organizations. Our

Kitchen Table and Community to Community Development have the potential to be just such exemplars for the rest of the alternative food movement.

Chapter 4

GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS IN COMMUNITY GARDENS

In Chapter Three I demonstrated the varying degrees to which gender is, or is not, present in food movement discourse and explored some of the impacts this has on the organizational level of food activism. The case study of Community to Community Development—a feminist and food sovereignty informed grassroots organization—provided an illustration of how, by paying attention to gendered processes and gender inequalities, an organization can empower women in multiple arenas of food experience. However, the argument was also made that such organizations are rare within the domestic food movement, and that in general, gendered experiences with food and food-activism remain invisible. Turning to the “grounded” level of food activism, this chapter begins to take a closer look at those “invisible” gender processes, considering both how they operate and the impact they have. Drawing on field research conducted in community gardens, this chapter provides concrete contemporary examples of the ways in which gender—in combination with race, ethnicity, class, education, age, and ability—shapes motivations, experiences, and outcomes at the individual and community level of food activism. By demonstrating that gender *is* operating within alternative food spaces, this chapter continues to build the case for closing the “gender gap” in domestic food activism.

Before moving on, it is necessary to note that not all community gardeners connect their work to the alternative food movement, let alone to the food justice movement. Community gardens are complex social spaces which simultaneously support

a variety of goals, and for many gardeners, community building or leisure take precedence over the food movement related goals of food security (either for oneself or others), access to organic or non-GMO foods, or improved nutrition and health. For the purposes of this study, this diversity of motivations enhanced rather than detracted from the goals of the project as it allowed me to compare when and where individuals and communities do, and do not, connect their “alternative” food work to food activism; in other words, it allowed me to ask, “where is the work being politicized?” Because this project’s primary goal is to engender food justice and then move “feminist food justice” mainstream, knowledge of who food activism is, and is not, resonating with provides insight into how the “feminist food justice movement” might move forward.

Historical Trends In The Gendering of Gardening

In order to contextualize the major themes which originated from this study’s community garden research, I begin with a historical overview of the gendering of gardening, paying specific attention to community gardening trends in America between 1894 and the early 21st century.

In *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern English Literature* (2008), Jennifer Munroe argues that more than being physical spaces for growing things, gardens are “ideologically-charged spaces that convey social meaning” (p. 1). Because the cultivation of plants—food *and* flowers—requires resources and produces resources, agriculture (including “gardening”) is inevitably shaped by larger institutions and social constructions. However, gardens are also spaces in which social constructions can be reinforced or challenged. Gender, for example, both shapes and is shaped by gardening,

operating uniquely in distinct times and places. At some points in time this process has established gardening as an appropriate activity for only one gender. For example, subsistence food gardening has, at times, been a masculinized activity (e.g., historical allotment gardens), while in other spaces it has been a predominantly feminized activity (e.g., contemporary subsistence gardens, especially in developing countries). More commonly, gardening has been a suitable activity for both men and women, but just as common, gardening during these periods has been characterized by gender differences in garden size, function (e.g., subsistence verses leisure, etc.), what could be grown (e.g., flowers verses food), the degree of “specialized” knowledge required, and what tools could be used. In each of these cases, a man’s or a woman’s social class, race and/or ethnicity worked in combination with their gender to shape the gardener’s experiences. Yet, describing intersectional processes in the garden is just a first step; where social inequalities exist, it is also necessary to explain *why* gender, race, and class are operating as they are, a project which requires considering a garden’s larger social context. In the following brief analysis of four centuries of Western European and American gardening, a clear connection is established between intersectional shifts *within* the garden and larger political and economic shifts occurring *outside* the garden, a relationship which continues to influence the community gardens of today.

Seventeenth century garden manuals demonstrate that English men and women were once guided into very different types of gardening, both in terms of scale and function. While it was appropriate for men of the middle and upper classes to garden large plots for profit and pleasure in 1618, cultural beliefs regarding women’s “less

developed skill set” meant that they were encouraged to grow smaller “amateur” plots of flowers and herbs (Munroe, 2007, p. 6). Although women of the elite classes had greater freedom to defy these behavioral expectations, with a few actually becoming renowned for their elaborate estate gardens by the mid-17th century, these privileged women continued to engage in ornamental gardening only. Working class women, on the other hand, had less freedom to defy gender norms than their upper class peers, but their necessity-based subsistence gardening may have actually been more egalitarian; both men and women labored in the household kitchen gardens of the period, and Monroe argues that their labor was similarly valued (2007).

The impact of other identity factors—in this case, social class—on the way gender operates within gardens is quite apparent in this seventeenth century illustration. As wealth increased, households transitioned from utilitarian to ornamental gardens, with women losing status within garden culture along the way. Because ornamental gardening is a form of leisure, it does not matter if everyone participates or not—people will not go hungry on account of the lack of hands involved. As a result, it is possible to use leisure gardening as an activity with which to mark social status, and by preventing women from participating as fully—or participating at all—the gender hierarchy was reinforced. As aesthetic gardening became progressively professionalized and specialized through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Munroe suggests that gardening was “increasingly understood in [masculine] gendered terms”, and women were often restricted from pursuing advanced horticultural education (2007, p. 16). However, as incomes rose across all social classes moving into the 18th century, additional households

were capable of supporting a display garden and it became ever more difficult to keep them out. By the late 1700s, middle-class women had successfully entered the realm of aesthetic gardening en masse, at which point masculinity was disassociated from flower growing and it went on to become a decidedly feminine form of leisure rather than a chiefly masculine profession.

In America, the connection between femininity and flower gardening is perhaps best exemplified by middle class women, post-WWII. Frequently combining flower gardening with charity work and socializing, women's garden clubs during the 1950s and 1960s were bastions of idealized womanhood focused on care work and beauty. For example, in Phoenix, Arizona women's garden clubs spent time sending cut-flowers to the local U.S.O. and collecting donations for a Tucson children's home during the holidays (Valley Garden Center News Bulletin, 1949). Directed by a board of married women, the local Phoenix clubs were part of a national hierarchy of clubs which collectively espoused similar visions of femininity—a vision which was clearly communicated in the club's quarterly newsletter. For instance, 1949's winter *News Bulletin* provided members with a letter from the local president thanking them for “working so untiringly to make our valley a more beautiful and attractive place”, followed by a poem praising the virtues of the “Dependable Woman” (Valley Garden Center News Bulletin, 1949). Of course, in a binary gender society, such a clear conceptualization of femininity simultaneously constitutes masculinity, examples of which are also in the *News Bulletin*. The publication's descriptions of upcoming club meetings, during which local male horticulturalists were to come and instruct the women

members on topics like “House Plants” and “Pruning Roses”, connects men and masculinity with knowledge and authority (Valley Garden Center News Bulletin, 1949).

Similar to flower gardening, gender has also consistently structured food gardening across time and place. For example, English allotment gardens of the 18th century—the direct precursors of American community gardens—were a predominantly masculine space. Scholars trace the origins of allotment gardens back to a series of British Parliamentary acts which, between 1700 and 1860, extensively decreased the rights of non-landowning (male) English citizens to use common open-spaces for farming or grazing livestock, drastically altering both the geography and the social structure of the country (Moran, 1990). Coinciding with the shift between a subsistence economy and an industrial economy, and the related shift from rural to urban living, one consequence of the Enclosure Acts was a very serious threat to the food security of the urban working classes. Denis Moran (1990) notes that an “important effect of the Enclosure Movement on agrarian society was to establish, on the one hand, a small but very prosperous landed gentry, and on the other, a very large but essentially disenfranchised peasantry” (1990, p. 25). Responding to the potential starvation within landless households, the General Enclosure Act of 1845 and its amendments “attempted to provide better protection for the interests of small proprietors and the public...in no small part due to fear of civil unrest and revolt, and provided for land to be set aside for allotment use” (Harrison, 2011). In this sense, the resulting allotments—parcels of land owned by a local governing body and rented out to individuals—became a replacement for common land farming and were therefore imbued with similar symbolism.

Food growing in early allotment gardens was framed as an extension of male head-of-house provision responsibilities, and discourses of masculinity and femininity were adjusted to support this idea. Crouch and Ward (1997) argue that in the 19th century, British gender constructions dictated that “men were much more interested in serious utilitarian food growing...[and that] women would find this too hard...dirty...and lacking prettiness” (p. 31). The authors are quick to point out the irony of a “delicate femininity” in the garden, as within the home women were already responsible for “the labour of cleaning clothes before washing machines...and cleaning the lavatory” (Crouch & Ward, 1997, p. 31). Moving into the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Crouch and Ward note that working class men (miners, railwaymen and gasworkers) continued to spend an hour or two working in their allotment after returning from a day of paid labor. Even after WWII, as household incomes increased and subsistence gardening was less of a necessity, the masculinization of the British allotment garden was so complete that the association between allotments and men remained intact. Moran (1990) explains that while the Enclosure Movement had originally deprived the peasant class of subsistence resources, as time went on, it became clear that the Acts had also deprived the growing urban working class of recreation opportunities (e.g., hunting and fishing). As such, allotments transitioned into male-dominated leisure spaces, separate from the feminine sphere of the home, a type of “annex to the working man’s club or the betting shop” (Crouch and Ward, 1997, p. 89). With time, however, the connection between the allotments and men did relax and by the latter half of the 20th century women leisure gardeners became an increasingly common sight. In the 21st century, Buckingham (2005)

has described a contemporary “feminization of the allotment”, an outcome of the growing number of women who want to garden in order to access “chemical free food [grown in] an environmentally sustainable way” (p. 176).

During periods of time in which it has been acceptable for both men and women of the middle and lower classes to food garden, gender was often used to divide the types of food suitable for men and women to grow and the types of technologies appropriate for them to use. For example, beginning around 1890, American school gardening was regarded as a form of natural science education and psychical exercise appropriate for students of all social classes. In working class areas, however, gardens were also used to teach agricultural job skills, and in these gardens, a gender division by crop and technology is especially clear. According to *Among School Gardens*, a teacher’s guide to establishing school gardens written by M. Louise Greene in 1910, it was only appropriate for boys to learn how to use farm machinery and plant field crops; girls and younger children were instructed to grow vegetables, and in some rarer cases, just flowers (Lawson, 2005). Such gender restrictions are particularly interesting because it was largely female teachers and parents (e.g., mothers from women’s clubs) who ran the school garden programs. A reflection of the distinction which arises between profit-oriented farming and subsistence gardening, this early 20th century approach to school gardening demonstrates that a feminization of gardening—including food gardening—often occurs when men have access to mechanized cash-crop agriculture.

(En)gendering America’s history of community gardening. While a general history of gardening is useful for understanding the various ways in which gardens can be

shaped by gender, race, and class, a history of community gardening in the particular helps clarify how those processes operate in shared spaces which are distinctly politicized around food growing. As discussed in Chapter One, the existing research on gender and American community gardening limited, so the following discussion is primarily based on a focused reading of select secondary sources.

Welcome to America, let's garden!: 1894-1898. In 1894, the nation's first city-level community gardening program was organized in Detroit, Michigan (Huff, 1993; Kurtz, 2001). A response to the 1893 depression, the Detroit program was promoted by the city's mayor as an "alternative to charity", an idea which fit well with late 19th century and early 20th century views on Environmental Determinism and the need to instruct immigrants and the impoverished (often the same population) on the American ideologies of self-reliance and hard work (Lawson, 2005; Mink, 1995). A central focus of these early community garden programs was moral instruction, an agenda which also meshed with the many school garden projects of the time. For example, Native American youth living in state boarding schools were frequently required to garden as part of their cultural assimilation, and in urban settings, a concern that children were suffering from the ill effects of city life led many schools to incorporate agrarian values into their curriculums, what Lawson characterizes as the "bedrock of American citizenship" at the time (2005, p. 59).

Gender, race, and class permeated these early community garden projects. For example, the Detroit gardening program was originally designed with only male "heads of house" in mind, a reflection of period's heavy investment in the male-as-breadwinner

model of heterosexual nuclear family. However, although women were initially excluded from participating in the poverty-relief program because their economic contributions were invisible, during the first two years of operation, the program's leaders realized that women (and their families) also benefited from participation. Yet the women who "deserved" welfare assistance via the garden plot were, in the eyes of the city, a narrowly defined category; widows were privileged, but single women and unmarried female heads of households were overlooked. It was also assumed that women who did participate could not successfully manage a plot on their own. In 1895, Cornelius Gardner, Detroit's then superintendent, described the program's participants as "deserving persons and heads of families, either out of work or very poor; among them thirty widows, who, having half-grown boys, were able to properly attend to cultivation of the land" (Lawson, 2005, p. 25). In terms of race and ethnicity, in her book *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America* (2005), Laura Lawson notes that Detroit reported the majority of its participants were Polish, followed by Germans, "other Americans", and African Americans, and to accommodate this first generation ethnic diversity, the program's instructional pamphlets were printed in three languages.

WWI liberty gardens: 1917-1920. In the period between the decline of 1890's relief gardens and the rise of WWI Liberty Gardens, agricultural science made great advances. Although chemical fertilizers were available for sale as early as the mid-1800s, their use grew exponentially over the next century, and in 1892 the first gasoline tractor was built by John Froelich (Froelich Foundation, n.d.) In combination with the expansion of the land-grant university system, by the start of WWI food production in America was

much more efficient and mechanized than it had been 25 years earlier. As a result, when community gardening participation increased again in 1917, Lawson argues that the new movement could be differentiated from its predecessor in several ways: first, a clear distinction between “agriculture” and “gardening” now existed in the minds of most citizens, and “agrarian” citizenship was not part of the program’s desired outcomes; second, although the movement still heavily relied on local support, agencies at the federal level had an increased presence; and last, because the primary goal of the WWI community gardening movement was management of the food supply via reducing domestic demand on agricultural exports, all Americans were encouraged to participate—not just the economically depressed. Support for Liberty Gardens came from as high as the White House, however, although President Woodrow Wilson voiced his support of the Liberty Garden campaign by stating that “everyone who creates or cultivates a garden helps...to solve the problem of the feeding of the nations”, no garden was planted on the White House lawn at that time (Lawson, 2005, p. 119). President Wilson, as well as future president Herbert Hoover (then head of Food Administration), also wrote letters of support for the United States School Garden Army which was coordinated by the Department of Agriculture, the Council of National Defense, and the National War Garden Commission. Organized into “military” units, the students in the School Garden Army were said to be increasing food production while also learning about patriotism, service, responsibility, and industry. (Lawson, 2005).

As women directed almost 90% of food consumption in the U.S. during WWI, many of the promotional materials asking Americans to conserve food were aimed at

women or at women's clubs. Interestingly, these materials usually did not mention gardening; instead, they contained advice on how to follow the Food Administration's recommended food substitutions and encouraged women to buy produce from local farmers. However, national women's clubs did take up the gardening cause, including the Garden Club of America and the Women's National Farm and Garden Association. Yet, it was still assumed that the majority of home gardening would be completed by males. For example, Lawson's research (2005) uncovered articles written for the *Boston Globe* which "emphasized the use of [a man's] Saturdays as gardening days and the *contributions* of a man's wife and children in the management of larger plots" (my emphasis) (p. 135).

After Armistice Day, Americans were encouraged to continue gardening in "Victory Gardens" as it was estimated that it would take Europe five to ten years to rebuild its agricultural and food distribution infrastructure. Nonetheless, gardening promotion in magazines and other literature dropped quickly after 1918, and where hobby gardening promotion did continue, it tended to focus on flower growing and specialty crops rather than staples. (Lawson, 2005).

WWII victory gardens: 1941-1945. As directed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, in 1943 the White House grounds boasted—for the very first time¹⁹—a garden dedicated specifically to growing food, inspiring a trend which would eventually result in 20

¹⁹ While many White House residents have left their mark on the lawn, in over 200 years of occupancy, only Eleanor Roosevelt and Michelle Obama have used the soil for planting food. In 1825, John Q. Adams—who, with his wife Abigail Adams, was the building's first occupant—developed the first flower garden, and in 1835, Andrew Jackson built an orangery for citrus growing. John F. Kennedy, in 1961, had the Rose Garden redesigned to suit state functions. It was also Kennedy who assigned management of the White House lawn to the National Park Service, the agency which manages it yet today. In 1969, Lady Bird Johnson directed planting of the first Children's Garden.

million households producing 40% of America's vegetable supply by the end of WWII (Kurtz, 2001; Patel, 1996; Pollan, 2008). Given the eventual extent of public involvement in the Victory Garden campaign, it is interesting to note that small-scale community gardening did not garner much federal support when America first entered the war, largely based on a growing prejudice against "non-scientific" agriculture. During the two decades between the end of U.S. involvement in WWI and entry into WWII, agriculture had again undergone dramatic scientific developments; thus, unlike the WWI approach to food supply management—which centered on decreasing domestic demand—the WWII approach centered on maximizing yields. Although large rural and suburban vegetable farms were supported by the USDA and the Federal Security Agency from the start, it was feared that smaller-scale urban gardeners would inefficiently use scarce resources, including fertilizers, seeds, and tools made of metal and rubber. However, representatives of urban garden clubs argued that urban community gardens had value beyond food production, including improved nutrition, recreation, and morale. Largely administered by the Office of Civilian Defense, urban Victory gardens helped off-set food shortages experienced under food rationing and were additionally cited as a solution to American's increasingly poor diets and physical fitness. (Lawson, 2005).

As had been the case with WWI Liberty Gardens, the WWII Victory Garden campaign extended across race and class boundaries and called on all Americans to view participation as part of their civic duty. Lawson (2005) argues that "garden advocates often lauded victory gardens as a democratizing experience which brought together people from all walks of life" (p. 189). In reality, however, access to Victory Garden

participation was mediated by gender, race and class. For example, similar to the Liberty Gardens of WWI, the Victory Gardens of WWII were a masculinized space in which women would “assist” men. Although mid-20th century American men were typically associated with cash crop cultivation or the increasingly familiar suburban lawn, thus leaving the family kitchen garden to the domain of women, during periods of crisis gender norms shifted in garden. In her book *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (1998), Amy Bentley argues that although women were clearly active Victory Garden participants, men were the symbolic “chief cultivators of gardens—in part, as a substitute for actual combat” (1998, p. 7).

Women, on the other hand, were the symbolic “Wartime Homemakers”, in charge of managing rations and canning garden produce. By virtue of this framing, the status of women’s gendered subsistence work increased overall, even despite their “secondary status” as gardeners (Bentley, 1998). Although Victory Gardens reinforced gendered work divisions and hierarchies, Bentley argues that the WWII image of the “Wartime Homemaker” elevated the status of middle-class white women’s unpaid labor similar to the way the image of Rosie the Riveter elevated the status of working class women’s paid labor. But this rise in status was mediated by both race and class. Bentley’s research (1998) also finds that not only were women of color frequently prevented from attending “canning schools”, but that the expense of canning (jars, pressure cookers, etc.) prevented low-income women from participating in this “patriotic” endeavor.



Figure 1. WWII Food Rationing and Victory Garden Posters

Whether gardening, canning or cooking, Bentley (1998) argues that all WWII food activities incorporated a “communal” rhetoric. WWII “Wartime Homemaker” discourse redefined the “private space” of the home kitchen as a “public space” in which every meal was a political act. Women were called upon to think of their traditional food-related roles from a communal perspective and worked together to organize canning parties, pack lunches, and reduce the black-market demand for rationed foods. Although she admits that the *ideal* of “community” did not always translate into practice, Bentley nonetheless argues that Victory Gardens and canning did inspire community “cohesion, cooperation and unity” (1998, p. 121).

²⁰ Bentley’s research finds that government pamphlets aimed at promoting Victory Gardening “overwhelmingly featured men” (1998, p. 126). Conversely, materials—like the poster above—which promoted managing rations and food preservation “inextricably linked women with home canning” (Bentley, 1998, p. 132).

Gardens and environmentalism: 1970s- up to the present. In the years following WWII, with an absence of any immediate national crisis, gardening was reframed as part of America's energetic pursuit of post-war "leisure". Community gardens declined in popularity as individual landscape gardening became the primary focus of gardening activity. Not until the 1970s—under the shadow of rising food costs, the oil embargo, and environmental concerns—did community gardening again capture the imagination of the nation. Other contributing factors included Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which illuminated the detrimental impacts industrial agricultural practices were having on both environmental and human health, and urban planning reports of the postwar "White Flight" to the suburbs which highlighted the deterioration of America's urban centers and rising rates of minority poverty. Lawson (2005) argues that under these conditions, beginning in the 1970s urban community gardening took on an "urban activist" identity. To support this work, in 1976 the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture launched the Urban Gardening Program (UGP) in six urban centers: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit and Houston. Extended to ten more major cities in 1978, and then extended again in 1985, the UGP made an effort to address a range of complex problems, many of which were connected to the, by then, robust environmental movement (Patel, 1996).

Moving into the 21st century, the range of concerns community gardens were used to address expanded again. The most extensive recent study on contemporary community gardens, *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Learning from Seattle's Urban Community Gardens* (2009), argues that community gardens have become a "recurring

feature of urban landscapes in America” and characterizes gardening efforts in terms of “sustainability and community building, economic security, and health” (Hou, Johnson & Lawson, p. 187). Hou, Johnson, & Lawson (2009) also suggest that today’s community gardens are increasingly understood as community spaces which support diversity and promote democratic ideals. By “reconstructing the commons”, today’s community gardens:

provide opportunities for the negotiation of interests, values and identities. As cities become increasingly multicultural, community gardens provide opportunities for different cultural groups to interact...and present a new model of the ‘neighborhood common’ that should be considered a part of the neighborhood infrastructure. (Hou, Johnson & Lawson, 2009, p. 189)

If swells in community gardening participation have historically coincided with large-scale social, environmental or economic crises, in one sense, the most recent manifestation of the social movement is no different; although community gardeners report a diverse set of motivations, most all of them can be tied back to concerns over food-system sustainability (Lawson, 2005). For example, writing from the British context of allotment gardening, Buckingham (2005) traces this most recent rise in community gardening, in part, to the 1992 adoption of Agenda 21 and the call to “think globally, act locally” by participating in municipal-level sustainable development projects (Buckingham, 2005; Ferris, Norman, & Sempik 2001; Munier, 2005). In another sense, however, Lawson’s research suggests that contemporary community gardeners are unlike community gardeners of the past. Whereas community gardens were previously assumed

to exist as short-term crisis interventions only, Lawson finds that contemporary community gardeners assume their gardens should operate as long-term additions to their local communities.

Contemporary Community Gardening In Seattle And Phoenix

As the history of community gardening demonstrates, what society perceives about gender, race, and class *in* the garden space shifts over time in connection to social changes occurring *outside* the garden. While contemporary community gardeners are informed by the historical meanings given to gardening, they also negotiate their understanding of gardening according to current trends in economics, politics, and social activism. Depending on an individual's social location, sometimes the frame through which a gardener views their work ties them to food activism, or even to food justice work; for other individuals, however, the historical or contemporary construction of community gardening dissuades them from wanting to participate, or if they do, from seeing their labor as connected to activism. As a result, these intersectional understandings also determine who comes to comprise America's population of grassroots "alternative" food participants, and by extension, who has the potential to contribute to, and benefit from, food justice. Finally, it is important to note that gardeners are not always conscious of how they are interpreting community gardening work—which is why I argue that gender, for one, is "invisible".

Histories and discourses which motivate community gardeners. One of the most significant ways historical trends in gardening and agriculture influence contemporary community gardeners occurs via their motivations for participation. Of the

twenty-one key informants interviewed for this study, 19 were first motivated to begin gardening based on the example set by a same gender ancestor (usually a parent or grandparent), with many gardeners going on to describe their motivations in gendered terms. For this population of gardeners, the influence of historical gender patterns occurred directly, though familial socialization, with a few gardeners also contextualizing their family history within the larger history of gendered food work. Varying by gender, age, and ethnicity, differences in gardener's motivations reflected changes in the number of American family farms, as well as shifts in the gendering of food labor within the home.

All of the white American born gardeners who told me an "origin story" which highlighted farming were men over 50, and in these stories farming was understood as a masculine activity, a "scientific profession" which could be differentiated from the food work of gardening "amateurs" (Bob, personal interview, 2011). Bob (all gardener's names have been changed), a white male in his mid-50s who grew-up on a farm in North Dakota, related the common story of a family-run operation organized along traditional labor patterns: men were responsible for the commercial crops and women the subsistence gardening. Robert, a man in his mid-60s who was a core leader of one of Seattle's upper-class and largely white community gardens, had farmed professionally as an adult prior to retiring, relocating, and joining the community garden. For both these men, farming as a youth or adult informed their first attempts at finding a way to "farm" in the city.

Although all of the white American gardeners who told me farming origin stories were male, not all male gardeners told me farming stories, and in general, the connection between gardening and farming was less strong, or even non-existent, for the youngest men in the gardens. Instead, the gardening work or even cooking work of fathers or grandfathers became the motivating “origin story”. Cooking is not universally gendered feminine, especially when it is completed in a professional capacity. Larry was a white American in his mid-60s whose father and grandfather had both been professional chefs, and he was drawn to gardening based on a masculinization of food preparation rather than food production. Similarly, Victor, an immigrant from Brazil in his mid-30s, was influenced by his father’s restaurant ownership, where he had worked as a youth, even though he had also learned to garden from his grandmother.

Two white women in their 20s and 30s also had origin stories which featured a male ancestor, but both focused on memories of their fathers’ gardening, not farming. Significantly, one of the two women was raised in a heterosexual nuclear household in which her mother “cooked fresh” with the resulting garden harvest, and both women had a strong interest in cooking and/or nutrition. Therefore, although these women did not tell a same-gender role model “origin story”, within their more complex origin stories, they nonetheless equally focused on feminized food labor. On the whole, in fact, many participants’ origins stories centered on the gardening (rather than farming) and household food labor of their parents, and even more frequently, of their grandparents—and of their grandmothers in particular. Thus, even while men were drawing masculine connections to their contemporary work, they often still acknowledged that they had

participated in gardening labor as a child, under the direction of their mothers or grandmothers. For example, Mark, a white man who grew-up on a farm in Iowa, made a special point of telling me—understanding that I was a student of Gender Studies—that his mother’s early instruction in the backyard garden still informed his adult community gardening work. However, the American-born women gardeners in this study expressed a stronger connection to the labor of their mothers and grandmothers than their male peers. Wendy, a white woman in her early 50s, Aeron, a white and Native American woman in her early 50s, and Maria, a white and Mexican-American woman in her early 60s, all drew strong connections between their own gardening work and the work of their grandmothers. For example, Wendy felt that her grandmother would be “tickled pink” by the work she was doing in her Seattle community garden. Going a step further, Joanne, a white woman in her mid-60s who grew-up in Nebraska, contextualized her inherited food knowledge (growing, preserving, preparing, etc.) not only by the labor of her own foremothers, but also to women generally over the past “40,000 years of recent history”, during which they “have done the brunt of the gardening, and always will” (email communication, July 11, 2011). Joanne’s explicitly gendered approach to gardening was influenced by her feminist identity; she politicized her community gardening work as feminist work and she frequently referred to me as her “soil sister”. Joanne’s approach to gender equality was not to reject women’s gendered food work, but rather to embrace it and elevate its status in a manner similar to that of the WWII “Homemaker in Chief” discourses. Finally, again considering the impact of age, younger women were less likely than older women to have a gendered “origin” story which connected them to gardening,

largely because many of them did not have a gardening origin story of any kind—that is, their parents had not gardened.

If American born women are more likely to have a gendered connection to gardening than farming (if they connect to either), the women immigrants from Southeast Asia working in Seattle’s community gardens were entirely informed by farming, as most had been farmers in their countries of origin. Significantly, the “farming origin” stories that these women of 40 years and older told me did not have the same quality of nostalgia that others’ farming-origin stories had (e.g., white American men’s), perhaps because this population of women—on account of where they lived in the city—had access to large plots in which they could intensively “urban farm” using the same techniques and tools they always had, and for the same reason: supplementing the food needs of their households. In many ways this population of immigrant women was still farming, despite their “community gardener” label, while the American-born men in this study were decidedly gardening and only drawing upon their farming past to contextual their current food labor. Significantly, these women’s focus on feeding family members—rather than production for commercial sale—also set their farming-informed labor apart from the men’s as it connected them to a feminine gendered food task rather than a masculine economic activity.



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Figure 2. Photographs Comparing Two “Types” of Community Gardens

²¹ The two photographs above demonstrate how different “community gardens” can look, depending on the predominating background (gardening or farming) of the participants. The picture on the left depicts the features which were common to an upper-middle class “garden” in this study: the paths are mulched and orderly, flowers are being grown along with food (although food represents the majority of what is planted), colorful Tibetan prayer flags are hanging in the background, and the trendy garden prop “walls of water” are insulating tomatoes in the upper left. Conversely, the garden on the right is really more of an urban farm, even though the gardeners there were not allowed to sell their produce. The picture shows a garden entirely focused on efficiency—no mind is paid to aesthetics, and instead, large amounts of corn and beans are grown, enough to feed extended families.

In light of the decrease in the number of American family farms over the course of the twentieth century, and the related decrease in nation's rural population, the above findings are perhaps not surprising (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2013). Younger men were less likely to make a connection between their gardening and farming because they were less likely to have been raised or worked on a farm than their older male counterparts. This same trend also helps explain why younger women are less likely to have a gendered connection to gardening than their older peers, and why younger people in general were less likely to have either a family farm or garden origin story. However, there is more behind these trends than changes in agriculture. Shifts in the gendering of food labor within the home are also reflected in the differences between older and younger gardener's motivations. Although women presently comprise the majority of community garden members, gardeners who had been participating in their respective gardens for over five years suggested that the percentage of men had increased over that time. In Seattle, Bob argued that one reason men were becoming more engaged in food gardening is because food labor in the "private"²² sphere has become increasingly egalitarian. Paying attention to age and relationship status, a closer reading of men's gardening motivations across several gardens supports such a claim. While men in general were more likely to draw a connection between their gardening work and a farming past, younger men were more likely to also (or only) express a connection between their gardening work and food labor within the household. These respective

²² Feminist scholars have demonstrated that the discursive construction of the home as a "private" space, in contrast to the "public" spaces beyond it, is highly inaccurate as home life is very much structured by the state and other social institutions. I am using the term here only because I have been using the term "domestic" to distinguish national food activism from global food activism at other points in this document.

frameworks influenced how male participants of various ages organized their garden time, with older men concentrated on producing high yields for the local food bank via “efficiency” gardening, while men in their 30s-40s spent more time growing fresh, organic, and hard-to-find ingredients (e.g., for “ethnic” cuisines) to use when cooking with their wives. By extension, many of these younger heterosexual men also participated in the community garden with their partners, usually sharing a plot. While older men (e.g., men who were retired) certainly had more free time to spend volunteering for the food bank than their younger counterparts, by the same logic they would also have had more time to spend in the kitchen. Yet, it was younger men who were making the connection between garden labor and domestic food labor. While Bob claimed that this was a outcome of the increasing pressure put on men to share food work within heterosexual households, it likely also reflects the reduced stigma attached to men who engage in non-professional cooking work (as evidenced by the rise in television cooking shows directed at men).

More to the point, such changes over time in men’s gendered relationships to food labor offers a very clear example of how gender shifts *within* the garden are an extension of larger political and economic shifts occurring *outside* the garden and are therefore also directly related to shifts in *women’s* relationships to food work. Based largely on the efforts of twentieth century feminist activism, women have experienced reduced inequalities and increased opportunities in the paid labor force, providing options for women who either want or need to work for pay. In 1950, only 34% of women worked for pay in jobs which were counted by the Bureau of Labor Statists, but by 2000 that

number had increased to 60% (Toossi, 2002). Therefore, in addition to having female partners who worked outside the home, men under 40 were also more likely to have mothers who had worked outside the home than had the generation of men before them, clearly impacting how these younger men felt about the division of household food labor. Importantly, regardless of some men's "food preparation" motivations for gardening, all of the men in this study successfully "masculinized" their food work; gardening and cooking did not threaten the identities of younger heterosexual men. Of course it must also be considered that all of the men in this study were voluntarily engaged in this work, granting them greater freedom to positively define their involvement, and that some of these men were also—as discussed—positively influenced by male chef role models.

If shifts in the domestic organization of food labor are, in part, bringing younger men into community gardens, the results of my research suggest that involvement in community gardening also impacts the consideration that men give food labor, including labor within the home. In this way, even if men have not sought out an opportunity to community garden on account of their prior experiences with household food labor, their participation may nonetheless result in increased gender equality within their homes; men who *were* motivated to community garden on account of their household labor likewise had their motivations positively reinforced. Victor, for instance, claimed that his involvement in a Phoenix community garden had led him to "think more about the labor that goes into food", a statement which covered the entire spectrum of food work—from production, to procurement, to preparation. I often got the sense that many of the older women community gardeners understood the potential for this "food labor in the

garden=food labor in the home” connection and attempted to maximize it by intentionally including their sons and younger male family members in food work like gardening and cooking. Maria, for example, talked about teaching both her son and daughter to cook, Joanne was invested in passing on her food knowledge to her nephew, and Marlene noted that her grandson was being included in cooking lessons along with his sister. It is important to confirm here that young women in their twenties and thirties were already uniformly, though not exclusively, approaching their gardening work with a domestic food work/care work perspective (it might be a secondary motivator behind a historical “origin story”). For example, Katie spent time crafting recipes with garden produce for a local magazine, Adela cooked at home so that the food she grew would never go to waste, and Beth connected her gardening to the nutrition of her daughter—but each of these women, like their male counterparts, had their household food interests reinforced by their gardening.

A return to Chapter Three’s discussion of Community to Community Development and the Black Panther’s breakfast program is useful for thinking through the implications of a causal relationship between food work in the garden and food work in the home. In reference to the sexism which characterized the Black Panthers, Raj Patel (2011) mused that the “sexist bubble might have been punctured by moving men into kitchens and onto serving lines for children” (p. 128). Patel’s suggestion is that increased gender equality in one area of labor and social life might have repercussions in other areas—in this case, equality in food labor might increase equality in activist labor. This assumption also guides the work of Community to Community Development, as

evidenced by the organization's multiple foci on leadership, immigration reform, labor rights, etc. The feminist informed food justice/food sovereignty organization operates with the idea that women experience gender inequality in each of these areas and that measurable change in any one of the three is dependent upon change in the others.

Applying these insights to the community garden context, it is possible to suggest that an increase in gender equality within the division of food labor might have larger impacts on women's equality within other related areas of the food system and the food movement—including the food justice movement. If this is so, the encouragement of men's participation in alternative food projects like community gardening could be part of a feminist food justice approach to achieving justice within the food system.

Identity based experiences within community gardens. Once gardeners have become established members of community gardens, their experiences—both positive and negative—will influence the degree to which they engage with the garden community and the outcomes of that participation. In terms of negative experiences, what gardens' experience as problems is almost always rooted in human relations—these are, after all, *community* gardens. However, as most (though certainly not all) of the interviewees in this study were in a position to end their participation without seriously threatening their food security, the fact that they did not quit suggests that their experiences in the gardens were, on the whole, positive. Nevertheless, almost every gardener I interacted with also had a list of things they wished they could change. In some cases, these desires related to the nature of community gardening itself (e.g., some people did not like that they had to interact with others, or commit to mandatory

volunteer hours, when all they really wanted to do was grow things in solitude), but more often, gardener's spoke of specific issues related to their own garden's community. For example, the gardeners in this study reported experiences with sexism, classism, disability, and cultural bias against recent immigrants, which I will now explore in further detail.

Despite shifts in gendering of food work, the majority of community gardeners in this study were still women. Although gardening labor is no longer feminized in the same way it was during the latter half of the twentieth century, many contemporary community gardens exist as women dominated spaces (in bodies, if not always in power). For example, the Permaculture Guild of Phoenix, AZ reports that 75% of its members are women (personal interview, Doreen Pollack, 2012), and the leaders of the community gardens included in this study reported similar women majorities of between 60% and 100%. These statistics match previously published scholarly findings on community gardens, such as a 60% female majority in an Ohio based study (Blaine, Grewal, Dawes, & Snider, 2010), and a 70% female majority in a Missouri study (Glover et al., 2005). While at least one gardener (a man) suggested that this gender arrangement resulted in more women being involved in garden leadership than might have otherwise occurred, the gender imbalance was not necessarily viewed positively by all women gardeners. For instance, Beth, a white single mother in her early thirties, wondered if the lack of men in community gardens might lead opponents to attack the projects in gendered terms. When the all-woman garden that she participated in was challenged by the local neighborhood association for its draw on financial resources, Beth sarcastically imagined that board

members viewed the gardeners as “bitches screaming at us...because we want pretty flowers” (personal interview, 2012). It was clear to me that Beth felt vulnerable as a community gardener on account of the gender difference between the garden’s demographics and the larger community, a feeling which she expressed using a stereotyped (though historically accurate) reference to what women gardeners are believed to grow.

Regardless of the fact that women comprise the majority of community gardeners, based on both interview data and field notes, it is evident that women can still experience sexism within the garden. Sue, a white woman in her early sixties, described to me the ways in which she often felt belittled by a male project leader in her Seattle garden. Working on the components of an upcoming celebration, Sue wanted to help build a performance stage and had her own tools; however, she discovered that the man in charge of the project assumed only men would know how to handle such equipment. Although this same individual also often used “sexist language”, Sue felt that she could not confront him about his behaviors because he was otherwise a very effective and charismatic leader and she feared undermining the positive outcomes he had on the garden community at large. In the same garden, but with different leaders, Joanne also had experiences with men which she felt were illustrative of sexism. For example, during my summer research period, Joanne had a large hand in securing the donation of a gently used shed—which the garden needed very much—and voiced her opinions about where in the garden she felt the shed should be placed. A large structure which required multiple people to move and considerable work to clear a space for, the shed sat on the perimeter

of the garden for several days while the issue was debated. Several core male participants disagreed with Joanne's suggestions for the shed's eventual location, and over the course of a weekend put in the extensive labor required to place it where they thought it should go. Upon finding the shed already firmly settled, Joanne felt that her perspectives had been ignored and was frustrated that the location issue hadn't been put to a garden-wide vote, but had instead been decided by a few men who, though heavily invested in the garden's welfare, were nonetheless not officially elected garden leaders.

Concerns over sexism did not arise from every mixed-gender garden represented in this study, however. Although gender certainly shaped how all of the study's gardens operated, it was not always in such a way that women felt discriminated against by their male peers. For example, in her role as garden leader, Adela, a young woman in her early 20s, felt that all of the male participants in the garden—even if they were older than her—were respectful of her authority. In their shared roles as leaders with Victor and Angel, Jessica and Mary also did not feel undermined or treated differently by the two men. In my interactions with these two groups of leaders, I likewise observed cooperative relationships which were challenged more by differences in age and knowledge level than by differences related to gender. As I will explore more in Chapter Five, the experiences of Adela, Jessica, and Mary reflect the ways in which expressions of masculinity differ according to social location, and that many men's masculine identities are not primarily predicated on a power hierarchy with women.

During my own period of participation in the community gardens described above, my encounters with sexism were never as poignant as Joanne's and Sue's personal

accounts, which is very likely because sexism was never directed towards me. While apparently not pervasive in these women-dominated spaces, I did feel that particular events occurred during my research that evidenced some men's sexist attitudes towards women. For example, in predominately Southeast Asian immigrant gardens, the character of patriarchal relations which described the ethnic group's culture at large resulted in women gardeners relegating themselves to "invisible leadership". I will revisit this concept in Chapter Five, but it is worth noting here that although garden administrators recognized that the women in these gardens had substantial power to influence the community, it was men who clearly expected to be in visible leadership positions. This was most apparent in the person of Fau, a man who was hired to attend work parties primarily as a translator, but who subsequently took on the mantle of a leader and attempted to direct the group's activities. From my observations during a half-day long work party, Fau was fairly successful in this role; while most of the gardeners worked at tasks like weeding the paths, Fau would engage in conversation with other men or walk around with a sense of authority. The gender dynamic between the garden administrator (Erin, a white woman) and Fau was such that he also took liberties in how he translated her words, expanding or shifting what she said. Although Erin knew enough of the community's dialect to realize this was occurring, she felt that it would be unproductive to reproach Fau directly, so she instead negotiated around him, meeting with specific women gardeners (those she deemed to be "invisible" leaders) separately as other activities were underway. In Joanne's and Sue's garden, Robert played a role similar to Fau's, although with less pretension. As a white man who had professionally farmed

before becoming a garden member, I often observed Robert “take charge” during Tuesday night work parties although no formal leadership structure was in place. Significantly, Robert was almost always just one of two men attending the work parties, both of whom had been primarily responsible for disregarding Joanne’s ideas about the shed.

It is important to note that there are other ways to interpret each of these scenarios. For example, perhaps Fau, regardless of his gender privilege, would have been just as overbearing in his role as “translator” simply on account of his personality. Likewise, Fau’s identity as a member of the larger Southeast Asian community might have countered Erin’s more privileged identity categories of race and city employee. In Robert’s case, perhaps his habit of taking charge during work parties can be more accurately attributed to his age and experience level rather than his gender, and perhaps his interactions with Joanne were the outcome of her freely expressed opinions, which some gardeners interpreted as “bossy”. Given the complexities of identity categories and how they structure power at the level of individual interaction, it is impossible to claim that sexism is the only explanation for the experiences of gardeners like Joanne and Sue; this is especially true since I never overheard blatantly sexist remarks from any of this study’s gardeners. Nevertheless, I think it is important to consider the ways in which gender norms influence how the actions of these various individuals were differentially interpreted and responded to. For example, while Erin decided to quietly work around Fau and leave his “leadership” identity intact, Robert chose to blatantly ignore Joanne and undermine the leadership she had demonstrated by securing the shed in the first

place. Additionally, although Joanne was interpreted as “bossy” by some gardeners, it was hard for me to make a distinction between how she expressed her opinion and how Robert and Mike expressed theirs. All three gardeners were equally vocal about their ideas, but it was only the men who had the physical (though not “official”) power to make their decision stand. In sum, informed by my personal observations of gardener interactions, it seems clear to me that although gender was never the only factor shaping difficult relationships, there were certainly times when it played a central role, and when it did so, women often felt undermined by their male peers.

Experiences with classism were more commonly reported in large gardens which were capable of accommodating people from a number of different neighborhoods, which often varied in terms of socioeconomic status. In Chapter Five I will also explore how class inequality can undermine individual leadership opportunities, but here I want to focus on class experiences which come to fruition because of particular administrative policies. Since community gardens are often located on land which is publically owned, or because they use resources which taxpayers fund, administration boards typically ban gardeners from selling their harvests. The rationale is that individuals should not be able to profit off of programs which are funded by others. However, for low-income gardeners, such policies can be contentious. For example, in a discussion with Adela about the community garden she led which was located on university land, I learned that the school had cut financial support to the garden because members had been attempting to sell their organic produce at the bi-weekly campus farmer’s market. Unfortunately, this sanction was negatively impacting all of the garden’s members and had eliminated a potential

source of income for low-income students. The City of Seattle also has a similar policy in place for their “p-patch” community gardens—with a few exceptions. In partnership with the Housing Authority and P-Patch Trust, a few of the city’s community gardens operate as market gardens which support CSA programs and seasonal farmer’s markets.

Although the gardeners who participate in these programs do not get to keep 100% of the sales profits, it was “common knowledge” that they did receive a percentage. As a gardener in a p-patch which was not part of this market-garden program, Sue, who had been experiencing economic hardship, felt resentful. Supportive of the other gardeners’ opportunity to make money, Sue only wished that the same opportunity was afforded to her. Significantly, when Sue voiced her thoughts about the unfairness of the rule to her own garden’s leader, she felt “shut down” when the leader said “we don’t do that here”; the connotation was that selling produce was “beneath” the community gardeners of that neighborhood. While community gardens located in low-income areas may more obviously be populated by low-income individuals, what each of the cases above demonstrates is that in diverse gardens located in middle to upper-income spaces, the needs and experiences of low-income gardeners can often be overlooked by garden administrators and leaders of a higher social class.

Sue also had insights into experiences with mental health issues within the community garden setting. Gardening with her male partner who struggled as a participant in group activities, Sue understood the barriers that mental health posed to being “a part of the community”. Although this was frustrating enough, Sue explained that she often felt discriminated against because she and her partner were not meeting

some member's expectations of the time commitment "good" community gardeners invested. In general Sue felt that her garden was a very accepting and accommodating space, but because her partner's disability was not visible, and she did not feel like disclosing it to others (largely because the disability was not her own), Sue perceived that people judge her more harshly than they otherwise would have.

Sue's garden did demonstrate sensitivity to more visible forms of physical disability, however. For example, during the spring of 2012, the garden had collectively decided to complete a large ADA improvement project that greatly expanded the number of raised beds (which accommodate wheelchairs and people who need to garden standing up) and generally made accessing the east side of the garden much easier. Diamond dust had been put down to replace uneven mulch surfaces that were hard to cross with a wheelchair or cane, and tools were placed closer to the raised beds inside of a newly purchased bench. Through casual conversations I came to realize the degree to which gardeners with physical limitations welcomed the changes, as evidenced not only by the fact that there was a waitlist for the new beds, but because it had been Sarah's husband—a woman who relied on a wheelchair to move around the garden—who had donated his time and construction equipment to make specific aspects of the update possible. Even gardeners who did not apply to have a raised bed clearly enjoyed the east side's new ease of access. For example, although Wendy did not use either a wheelchair or a cane she did have difficulty walking, and when I met up with her during my second summer in Seattle, I found that she had moved to a new plot which was closer to the improved walking paths

in order to benefit from the increased ease of moving wheelbarrows and other tools around.

Not all of the ableness-related policies were as welcomed as the improvements to the physical space however. For example, in a discussion with the garden's Department of Neighborhoods coordinator I learned that in a prior year the garden's leadership had also decided to eliminate the volunteer hours requirement for members with disabilities, fearing that it was a burden. While well intended, the coordinator felt that this policy actually undermined disabled gardeners as it essentially discouraged them from participating in some of the primary community building activities. Instead, the coordinator would have preferred that the garden's leadership had found other ways for disabled gardeners to volunteer, such as by mentoring new gardeners. Although the coordinator's logic made sense to me, when I was in the garden space, it was also clear that the improvements would greatly facilitate some gardener's participation in even low-mobility activities like new garden mentoring, and that without it, the leader's concerns were quite justified.

In general, because the gardens in this study tended to be racially and ethnically homogeneous (for the same reason they tended to be class homogenous), racism and xenophobia were not part of gardener's experiences. However, in a Phoenix garden populated by a mix of university students and first and second generation Central American immigrants, two issues based on differences in ethnicity, education level, and citizen status arose. The first issue had to do with the garden space feeling "unsafe" because leaders were overly concerned with documenting various aspects of gardener's

lives. Victor, a leader in the garden, explained to me how he and his fellow garden leaders had eventually decided to drop their project of surveying participants and local community members about their food security. Influenced by their university pursuits, four of the six leaders had originally approached the garden's development with a "research perspective", aiming to understand what potential member's needs were and then address them. However, they came to understand that paperwork is a constant—and at times threatening—aspect of many immigrants' lives and that by asking people to complete a lengthy survey they were establishing a negative connotation for the garden. Based on the advice of their fellow leader-member who worked within the immigrant community, the leadership group instead decided to focus on making the garden a "comfortable" and inviting place to be, a place where trust could be established and relationships built. Importantly, because the garden was organized around shared rather than individual plots, people could participate in the garden on a more informal and as-they-were-able-to basis and not feel they were violating any rules.

It was Angel who discussed the second issue which arose in this garden, which we introduced when he argued for a "paradigm shift" in some of his fellow leaders' thinking. While supportive of his peers, Angel was critical of their approach to the garden as presumed "educators". Again related to their combined academic and personal interests, some of the younger garden leaders had envisioned the garden as a place where people could "learn about healthy eating"; to this end, they held workshops on topics like "green smoothies", making use of what they had grown in the garden. The students also desired to support local household's food security by growing food that surrounding

community members could come over and take as they needed. Unfortunately, the student leaders had very little food growing knowledge of their own and were almost entirely reliant upon Angel—who had grown-up gardening and then worked as a Peace Corps member helping families start gardens in Central America—to accomplish the garden’s most fundamental activity. The reality of this became most apparent on a day when just Victor, Jessica, and I were attempting to harvest and replant a number of beds, only to discover that not one of us felt entirely confident in our ability to do so! Angel characterized the situation in this way: “they have this mentality of ‘we want to teach you how to garden’, but they don’t even know how to use a shovel” (personal interview, 2012). Unfortunately, the well-meaning but misguided intentions which originated out of the students’ unexamined race, class, and education was not lost on the garden’s immigrant members—almost all of whom had extensive agricultural knowledge—and the result was an undermining of the project. Angel encouraged his fellow leaders to be wary of a “top down” approach to alternative food activism, and to instead focus on listening, learning, and collaboration. However, he also noted that when “people see these privileged white students who don’t know how to do anything, it’s like a shut off...if you’re going to build a collaboration, there has to be a common respect” (personal interview, 2012). From the immigrant member’s perspectives, the students’ approach to the garden could be likened to that of Detroit’s nineteenth century relief gardens, projects which were supposed to instruct participants in how to be “appropriate citizens”, or in this case “appropriate eaters”. While Angel’s insights would at least lead Jessica to realize that the charity approach to gardening was actually a “savior complex” (which is

how she phased it in her own interview with me), at the time of Angel's interview, the process of moving beyond these initial mistakes and poor first impressions was still ongoing. For example, throughout the duration of my own involvement with the garden, most of the volunteers who participated were not immigrant laborers connected to the Worker's Rights Center, but rather other community members who were responding to the garden's work party announcements on Facebook. While the ideals Victor described to me sounded very positive (that is, making the garden an inviting place to be and establishing trust with the center's members), this was clearly still a work in progress. However, the students were very committed to the garden project, and their responsiveness to Angel's feedback (as evidenced by the fact that I heard many of his thoughts second hand, repeated to me though another leader in casual conversation) suggested that they were eager to do adjust their preconceived notions if it would make their project relevant and useful.

Barriers to garden participation. Like all garden experiences, barriers to participation reflected gardener's gender, race, and class locations, with some gardeners being more likely to experience "drop out" inducing barriers than others. To determine which barriers were most likely to lead an individual gardener to completely stop participating in community gardening, I talked to women and men—both formally and informally—who had "dropped out" of their gardens. Knowledge of barriers which did not result in a complete cessation of garden involvement was provided by continuing community gardeners, as almost everyone could describe circumstances that they had negotiated in order to remain involved. The barriers discussed by these established

community gardeners differed from the reasons that led less established (e.g., first year) gardeners to drop out, the latter group often having discovered that they did not actually like gardening, or that the weather was not always pleasant outdoors, or that gardening is “hard work” (personal interview with coordinator Erin, 2012). Of course, even dropout gardeners represent a population of people who were able to attempt gardening in the first place; what prevents people who are interested in gardening from ever being able to take those initial steps was beyond the scope of this study, but I suggest some possible causes at the end of the section.

Care work for children and other family members came to dominate the list of causes for extended gardener “drop out”. Although care work responsibilities can vary in duration, for many gardeners, the time commitment required during the care work period often excluded simultaneously maintaining an individual garden plot (shared garden plots may have more flexibility), let alone a leadership role. For example, just prior to my 2011 research period in Seattle, the female leader of one of the upper-class, largely white community gardens had stepped down on account of caring for ailing parents. In another Seattle garden of similar demographic make-up, a male co-leader eventually found he was unable to participate in my study because he had recently become a new parent and was taking a leave of absence from his post. Even when children did not result in a complete hiatus from community gardening, child care did present a barrier to involvement. Beth, for example, noted that while she was in the garden with her daughter, she was “either helping in the garden, or watching [her] daughter—[she] couldn’t do both” (personal interview, 2012). For parents, when child care becomes a

barrier to participation, internal conflict occurs; Beth was, in part, motivated to participate so that she could teach her daughter about gardening and food. In this study women accounted for more care work “drop outs” than men, but the sample size was too small to determine if women were over represented as drop outs compared to men (who are the minority population to begin with). Perhaps more tellingly, there was a general lack of parents with young children in this study’s community gardens. Of the twenty-one key informant interviewees, only Beth had a child under eighteen years old. Related, during my many months of volunteering in community gardens while collecting data for this study, I never once observed a member working with a young child. In several gardens, leadership was aware of this gap and some attempted to assist parents with balancing children and garden membership. For example, one of Seattle’s large community gardens had begun to hold work parties on Sundays in addition to Saturdays in order to “reflect the changing nature of families” and the fact that many parents were busy on Saturdays with children’s extracurricular activities (personal interview, Mike, 2011).

Other common barriers to participation included personal health issues and work conflicts. For many gardeners, the management of these barriers was an ongoing battle that eventually resulted in dropout for some individuals, but not all. Rachel was a white woman in her late thirties who had dropped out of her community garden because she had moved and was having a hard time making it to the garden during daylight hours while also working fulltime. Although Rachel had struggled to negotiate her garden participation and work schedule for many years, the length of her new commute had

proven to be more than she could manage. For some gardeners like Mary, a Latina university student in her early twenties, transportation was an issue regardless of the time of day because she did not own a car and had to rely on family and friends to drive her. Students also frequently cited difficulties with managing work, school, commutes, and garden participation. Leaders of a garden located in central Phoenix noted that many of their members could not travel to the garden on weeknights because they lived many miles away, in the less-expensive areas at the edges of the valley. Health issues were more likely to result in a reduction or short-term leave from gardening rather than a permanent drop. For example, Mark's wife had taken a leave of absence while she was undergoing treatment for cancer, but she had resumed gardening during her recovery period because it was "therapeutic". Similarly, in between the summer of 2011 and 2012, Joanne had been involved in a serious bicycle accident that reduced her mobility. Although Joanne's community gardening participation had dropped as a result, she was still motivated to continue and was considering requesting a transfer to an ADA bed. Joanne's attempt to negotiate the barriers to her participation reflects the commitment that many established gardeners demonstrated; Rachel had also attempted to informally negotiate a way to remain involved in the garden by setting up a "taking turns" watering schedule with her nearby plot mate. Mark suggested that a formalized way to help gardeners manage such daily tasks would reduce the number of garden dropouts overall, and he wished that such assistance had been available during his wife's illness.

The community gardeners I interviewed had thoughts about what prevented other outside community members from getting involved. Overwhelmingly, gardeners felt that

their garden spaces were “welcoming”, so they tended to focus more on structural and cultural barriers rather than garden-specific sexism, classism, or abilism concerns, as described above. For example, many gardeners acknowledged that community gardening demanded time and financial resources, and that the produce they harvested did not always reflect what they had invested (in terms of what it would have cost to buy it outright); this was especially true for newer gardeners who were still learning how to maximize yields. While these gardeners were motivated to continuing gardening for other reasons (community, being able to “get my hands dirty”, exercise, etc.), they suggested that people living in poverty would not have the luxury of making such a decision. As Adela succinctly put, “people can’t garden when they are working two or three jobs” (personal interview, 2011). Several gardeners also noted that for many immigrants and people of color, the activity of gardening had a negative connotation. Kathy, who is Mexican-American, spoke about her mother’s refusal to garden because she connected it with “being poor”, a sentiment similar to that of the “peasant diet” and “slave diet” (Holland, 2004; Guthman, 2008), which also reflects the history of nineteenth century poverty relief community gardens. For some first generation immigrants, this opinion of gardening was based less on historical perception and more on direct experience. Angel, who is Mexican-American man in his late 20s, reflected on the responses of Mexican women to the community gardening project organized by the neighborhood center where he was a staff member: “a lot of people came from that kind of subsistence food work and they don’t want to do it anymore. It’s not a romantic way of living, it’s a hard way of living” (personal interview, 2012). Angel also noted, however, that some first generation

immigrants are motivated to participate exactly because they no longer have a way to grow food on their own (e.g., they live in an apartment) and want to be able to pass such knowledge on to their children. This sense of identity via gardening was also reflected in my field notes. For example, in Seattle I recorded my interactions with a number of different Southeast Asian immigrant women who, when I asked about a plant they were growing, subsequently toured me around their entire plot and then sent me off with a handful of samples, herbs and greens that were largely new to me. The women were proud of their gardens, and taking time to show me around and answer my questions, seemed happy to share their knowledge. In an interesting reversal of the social class and identity readings of gardening, Angel himself had been challenged by his 30-something Mexican-American friends for being involved with gardening “because it’s a white thing”. Although Angel was not dissuaded by his friend’s jabs, the remarks show that young men of color in some communities might be turned off from gardening as much for their readings of race as for their readings of gender.

Finally, reflecting on barriers which had stalled their own first attempts at getting involved with community gardening, many interviewees told me about periods of their lives when they were constantly “in transition”. Marked by frequent moves and job changes tied to economic insecurity and/or school, the gardeners in my study told me that while they had often wanted to get involved with community gardening during “less stable points” in their lives, they were reluctant to invest the time if they could only be there for a year or so.

What makes gender “invisible” in community gardens? Having described various intersectional processes which occur in the community gardens represented in this study, I want to now consider some of the reasons why gender in the specific—since it demonstrably *does* influence this form of alternative food work—remains “invisible” in garden spaces.

One fairly fundamental reason that gender is “invisible” in community gardens is because no one is really talking about it. The fact that women gardeners are *women* is often treated as irrelevant (by both women and men), eliminating the opportunity to discuss gender differences in motivations and experiences. Save for Joanne—who was informed by her feminist identity—and Sue, none of the women in this study voluntarily reflected on how their experiences in the gardens differed from men’s experiences. Two men in the study also voluntarily offered some gendered analysis during our interviews, and while sensitive to women’s needs as gendered caretakers, these thoughts were also clearly shared with a mind to my own research interests (all interviewees were aware of what my doctoral area of study was). In the small Phoenix garden which was entirely maintained by women, gender talk may have been absent on account of the lack of men to compare themselves to (or to worry about sexist behavior from). At the administrative level of community gardening, gender discussion may have been missing because women are not numerically underrepresented in community gardens (just the opposite). Instead, cities like Seattle have invested in initiatives to increase racial and ethnic minority participation, so that garden diversity at least reflects the surrounding population. However, as the examples above illustrate, women’s status as a numerical majority does

not necessarily eliminate sexism in the garden, nor does it otherwise eliminate the effects of gender; many women still approach gardening from a different social location than men and often face different barriers as a result.

While it is possible to introduce gender into the community garden discussion, if women themselves do not feel that gender and/or gender inequality exists in the garden space, changes are unlikely to follow. For example, during my interview with Maria, an allusion was made to a fellow member who “feels that there is a conspiracy against women in garden” (personal interview, 2011). Because I had been working in the garden for over a month at the time of our discussion, I knew that Maria was referring to Joanne and her recent frustrations over the garden’s new shed. Although Maria did contextualize her own perceptions by saying “I’ve never experienced [sexism]”, it was clear to me that she felt that Joanne’s perceptions of gender discrimination were unwarranted. Related, Maria also felt that individuals who were experiencing nutrition-based health problems were largely to blame for their conditions, on account of their lifestyle choices. Setting up her remarks by reminding me of her ethnicity (Mexican-American), Maria asked “is it racist of me to say that people need to take an interest [in food] and stop taking the easy way out by saying ‘I’m going to spend \$1.99 and go McDonalds?’” (personal interview, 2011). I mention these comments together because I feel that they both speak to the ways in which Maria was protected from sexism and racism which she may have experienced if not for her class privilege. Retired, but with a husband whose income exceeded \$80,000, Maria was able to cook all of their meals at home (thus avoiding less healthy, processed foods) while also finding the time to participate in her community garden as a

leader without any other care work barriers (thereby interacting with the male leaders as an equal). Unfortunately, as the only woman on the garden's leadership team, Maria's opinion that gender was irrelevant to the workings of the garden meant that her location-based experiences took precedent over the experiences and opinions of other women like Joanne, effectively undermining any attempt Joanne made to point out some of the garden's problems with sexism.

Conclusion: Food Justice And Community Gardens

The gardeners in this study, especially the younger participants of both genders, frequently claimed that community gardens have the power to change an individual's understanding of food work—the resources it requires, who is responsible for it, and what it means to society at large. I discussed earlier the potential this outcome has for gender equality within two gender households, but the case can be made that the impact could extend even further. While some gardeners noted that their plots—or even entire gardens—might be too small to ensure household food security or significantly off-set monthly grocery expenses, they still stressed a connection between community gardening participation and food justice, and even social justice more broadly. Adela told me that community gardening had increased her knowledge of, and made her more sensitive to, those “without” and made her want to “help make changes in her community” (personal interview, 2011). What this demonstrates is that it is possible for this particular form of alternative food *work* to support alternative food *activism*, even if an individual's participation did not start out politicized. Community gardens were described as “catalysts for changing” the justness of the food system—even if they could not achieve

the change alone—and they were likewise described as places where people could become “inspired to get involved in other justice work” (personal interviews, Victor and Jessica, 2012).

One of the ways in which gardeners connected their gardening labor to food justice was by using resources responsibly or sharing surpluses. For example, Sue felt that she had a “duty to grow food over flowers...[because] the land belongs to the community, others have enriched the soil for years...” (Sue, personal interview, 2011); Sue believed that using a community garden plot to just grow flowers undermined food justice within her community. Over the course of my research I also met “drop out” gardeners who had given up their community garden plots because they had changed addresses and now had access to land at their new homes. Although these individuals still came to work parties from time to time, in order to stay in touch with friends and continue contributing to a project they felt heavily invested in, these drop out gardeners felt that they could not justify keeping a community garden plot of their own when others needed it for growing food. Overall, there was an underlying sense that resources (and land, particularly) needed to be shared equitably.

Perhaps the best example of the connection between gardening labor and the development of what I will call a “food justice consciousness” are the “Giving Gardens” that several of the community gardens in this study maintained. Giving gardens are plots in a community garden space set aside specifically to grow food for donating to local food banks or other charities. For some gardeners, like Robert, the food bank garden was actually the main reason they continued to belong to the garden; although Robert had not

joined with that motivation, once there, he ended up dedicating more energy to the donation plot than his own bed. He, and another core gardener, Mike, even went a step further and volunteered at their neighborhood food bank itself, bringing knowledge back to the garden about what vegetables were popular and what the garden should therefore plant next. In Seattle, where the wait for an individual garden plot could be upwards of 3 years, gardeners like Katie had actually become a member of the garden community long before she had a plot of her own because she regularly attended the weekly work parties dedicated to maintaining the Giving Garden. Katie was originally motivated to begin gardening because she was new to the area and wanted to meet people, but she became a committed volunteer because of the connection between the community garden work and helping others. In sum, the food bank gardens were a very interesting space where “masculine” approaches to gardening (e.g., efficiently producing things using scientific strategies) and “feminine” approaches to gardening (e.g., care work) met, and the community as a whole was making a connection between their gardening labor and food justice within their communities.

I want to argue that there are some key differences between the food bank plots I have described here and other “missionary complex”-type of approaches to food movement work. First, the gardeners were growing in their own community—they were not going into surrounding low-income or minority communities and attempting to “lead” residents into alternative food movement participation. Gardeners who had the resources to volunteer in the donation gardens were aware of their privilege and wanted to share their resources with those who did not have access to land (to garden for their own food

security) or who did not have the time to garden. For example, a few gardeners noted that community gardens (which are distinct from Giving Gardens) could only ever contribute to food justice within depressed communities up to a point; without money, time, and access to land to start with, food justice via the community garden is hard to imagine (Eileen and Mark, personal interviews, 2012 and 2011). Therefore, in place of developing gardens in those communities, the giving gardens draw on the resources of those who have them and help distribute them. Although gardeners who spent time volunteering certainly were not doing so entirely altruistically (many of the gardeners developed a sense of identity based off of their volunteer work and received pleasure from it), they were still finding a concrete way to connect their community garden food movement work to broader food justice. Finally, gardeners were not uncritical of their efforts. Both Mark and Bob expressed the opinion that their common garden could be “doing more” to increase local food security, and Mike was frustrated at the “waste” (unpicked produce in personal plots that could otherwise be directed into local food stream) which was occurring in his garden.

At the most basic level, the intersectional processes described in this chapter matter because “people who grow food, realize the value of food”, and our society’s achievement of food justice will certainly depend on a widespread increase in the regard for food and agriculture (personal interview, Bob, 2011). Motivations and positive experiences which inspire people to garden and continuing gardening, as well as the negative experiences and barriers which interfere with their participation, are important processes to understand if we want to ensure that as many people as possible have the

opportunity to engage in this form of food work and/or food activism and benefit from its outcomes. Critically, because these processes of support and determent are experienced differently according to one's gender, race, class and other identity variables, the achievement of food justice depends on finding a way to equally share the risks and benefits involved with both food activism and the food system at large. For this reason, as much as I believe projects like the Giving Gardens can contribute to food justice and are both good and necessary, it is also necessary to help interested community members who are facing barriers to garden participation overcome them. For example, in Arizona, the water required to maintain a garden was often cost prohibitive, and key informants like Eileen suggested that paying for water at the city level (which is the model of support Seattle uses) might help expand community gardens into low-income neighborhoods.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the findings from this study on community gardens could also shed light on the motivations and barriers to other forms of food activism as well. Paid labor inequalities, inequalities in the gendered division of care work, environmental injustice—each of these justice concerns are characterized by their own social movements, while also being intimately connected to food justice, and community gardens are spaces which help individuals understand the connections. In sum, intersectional experiences which encourage or hinder participation in alternative food work has implications for who in our society—both as individuals and entire communities—is likely to be a contributor to food justice and thus whose voices will influence the movement.

Chapter 5

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN THE GARDEN

The findings presented in Chapter Four demonstrated that although women currently represent a majority of community gardeners, depending on their social location and garden context, women can still experience gender-based inequality within garden spaces. Moreover, gender processes, including those which result in inequality, largely operate invisibly. Here in Chapter Five I will now examine how these processes impact leadership and consider what this might mean for the alternative food movement at large, especially in terms of its ability, or inability, to move toward a model of feminist food justice. As previously discussed, women's leadership does not guarantee that gender awareness will be incorporated into a food movement project; however, without women's equal representation as leaders, the likelihood that the alternative food movement will become cognizant of gendered inequalities within both the food system and food activism is greatly reduced.

This chapter is divided into two major discussions. I begin with an examination of this study's leadership experiences, demonstrating that gender—in combination with other identity categories—does impact the way leadership operates. In turn, this impacts gardeners as a community. Second, I engage with social movement scholarship to discuss the connection between leadership opportunities for women within the community garden and political engagement beyond it.

Gender And Leadership In Community Gardens

Within community gardens, leaders can be either formal or informal, recognized or unrecognized. Gender shapes both formal and informal leadership, although stereotypically “masculine” and “feminine” ways of being a leader are not always preformed by men and women respectively. By extension, not all of the women in this study managed their gardens in the same way, nor did all of the men. By providing a nuanced review of the study’s garden’s leaders and leadership, in this section of the chapter I intend to shed light on the ways in which multiple identity categories come together to shape various leadership opportunities, and the style of leadership which an individual can successfully deploy. These two factors influence who will be the face of the expanding alternative food movement.

To date, research on gender and leadership has frequently focused on women in the corporate or political setting. For example, in a 2001 special issue on “gender, hierarchy, and leadership” in the *Journal of Social Issues*, editors Carli and Eagly opened the issue’s introduction by considering the dissonance created when an increase in women’s visibility as public leaders (i.e. Hillary Clinton) is compared to numerical data which demonstrates that women still account for only a small minority of elected leaders, CEOs, and top military officers in the United States (2001, p. 630). Although early scholarship on leadership proposed that this perplexing condition was the result of the “pipeline problem”, a metaphor suggesting that there was a lack of women qualified to move into leadership positions, Carli and Eagly (2001) argue that since the introduction of the “glass ceiling” concept, a new way to talk about the influence of gender discrimination on women’s opportunities in leadership has been provided. While the

specific ways in which gender discrimination produces barriers for women is multifaceted, the processes include ideas about men's greater competency as leaders (i.e. men are "natural" leaders) and the tendency to devalue women's leadership activities specifically because women are doing it (Carli and Eagly, 2001).

Gender also results in different behavioral expectations for men and women once they do become leaders. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) describe these stereotyped styles of leadership as sets of "agentic" and "communal" attributes, with the former primarily being ascribed to men (including the traits of assertiveness, confidence, and control), and the latter being associated with women (and including traits like kindness, sympathy, and helpfulness). As the authors state, because those traits associated with "leadership" are typically gendered masculine in our society, "people tend to have similar beliefs about leaders and men, but dissimilar beliefs about leaders and women" (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001, p. 785). One result of this gendering is that women leaders frequently feel they are expected to be simultaneously direct *and* warm, masculine *and* feminine, in their work (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Thus, although men and women in leadership roles usually have similar understanding of the behavior expected for any given job, differences in their socialization produces differences in how they perform the same function (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Significantly, Eagly's and Johannesen-Schmidt's (2001) research found that although women are often perceived as less capable leaders than men, there are ways to measure their performance which suggests the opposite is actually true, with women performing better in multiple areas of leadership, including some areas which are stereotypically associated with men

(p. 791). In sum, a substantial body of scholarship demonstrates that ideas about leadership are gendered, that women and men are influenced by these ideas such that their approaches to leadership frequently differ, and that women's ways of "being" a leader are not necessarily less effective than men's.

Regarding the body of scholarship on leadership which addresses social movements specifically, studies have largely focused on formal roles within recognized organizations. However, in a review of social movement literature, Herda-Rapp (1998) notes that scholars like Barnett (1993) argue against this approach as it serves to craft a very limited conception of leadership. Additionally, this approach to researching social movement leadership has relied heavily on resource mobilization theory to make a connection between "leadership" and the mobilization of assets, which reinforces the professionalization of movements (Herda-Rapp, 1998). Exceptions to this trend can be found in the work of feminist scholars who challenge the idea that the only leadership worth studying is the visible variations which occur within structured movements. Herda-Rapp (1998) introduces Blumberg's (1990) research on the mid-twentieth century civil rights movement, for example, to illustrate that less-structured forms of social organizing can actually afford women greater opportunities to become visible leaders than more mature movement spaces.

Formal leadership experiences. The varying patterns of leadership which existed in the gardens included in this study point to the diverse ways in which "leadership" in food movement spaces can operate. There were men and women garden managers who preformed a style of leadership which could generally be described as

agentic, and men and women who displayed a communal style of leadership (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Identity categories like class, ethnicity, and age additionally combined to structure these variations in gendered leadership performance, although I argue that, in general, communal styles of leadership were better received by garden members, regardless of the gender of the leadership team.

Eileen was the sole leader of a small garden in Phoenix with all women members. As both a manager of a local non-profit and a front yard gardener, the shared-plot community garden that Eileen led was a testament to the pleasure she derived from growing things. In an interview with Eileen in 2012, she told me that she loved to share gardening knowledge and that she believed in the power of community gardens to improve neighborhood spaces. In her role as the garden's leader, Eileen generally demonstrated an assertive style of management. For example, she told me that she was "the kind of person who liked to take charge" and that the community garden gave her "another arena to oversee and make something happen" (personal interview, 2012). While Eileen enjoyed gardening, she *also* enjoyed being in charge of a garden. This enjoyment of leadership set Eileen apart from several of the other women leaders in this study, as well as from some of the men. Following her dual passions for gardening and leadership, Eileen had also become a certified Master Gardener²³, and while observing her interactions during garden work parties, I felt that she received an additional sense of authority from the credential. This does not, however, suggest that Eileen's style of

²³ Master Gardeners are individuals who have been certified through a land grant university cooperative extension program as gardening specialists in their local climate zones. Master Gardeners are expected to donate their knowledge and time to the community, such as by giving public presentations or answering questions via a cooperative extension's help-line.

leadership was unsuccessful or bad for the garden. On one occasion in particular, Eileen's assertive leadership style may have actually been a boon to the garden's welfare. During the course of this study, Eileen found herself in the position of having to defend the garden's existence to new (male) board members of the local neighborhood association. Although the garden abutted a church which paid for its water bill, the garden also received funds from the neighborhood association and was in need of the insurance protection which the relationship provided. Eileen's approach to negotiating the situation and protecting the garden was to meet with the new president directly and talk at length about the garden's positive impact, a tactic which ended up being successful for the white woman in her late fifties.

Regarding her approach to leadership, Eileen felt that leadership in general was simply a matter of innate "personality traits" and she argued that all good leaders were "committed" people by nature. To illustrate this, Eileen told me that she would often forgo taking care of her own garden in order to help maintain the community garden, a level of commitment that she primarily framed as a matter of character rather than as a reflection of social location (although, to some degree, Eileen did speak about the practical matters of time and money). By setting up an implicit comparison between her own actions as a leader and those who prioritized their home gardens and home lives, Eileen seemed to be intentionally setting herself apart from, and perhaps criticizing, others who didn't do the same. While interacting with Eileen, I never doubted that she donated an enormous amount of her time and energy to the community garden (i.e. organizing work parties, stopping by during the week to make sure everything was

watered, meeting with the neighborhood association, etc.); however, it was also clear to me that Eileen's social class, family structure (being a single adult), geographic location (near the garden), and formal gardening knowledge made it easier for her to be a leader than it would have been for others from a different social context. Finally, in addition to being informed by her social location, I also believe that Eileen's approach to garden management was informed by the leadership models which are characteristic of formally structured non-profits like the one she managed.

Similar to Eileen, Adela had also been the lone leader in her garden for a time, but unlike Eileen, the university garden that Adela managed was mixed gender. Significantly, Adela had not set out to be the leader of her garden, but instead had found herself taking on more and more responsibility when the garden's former president graduated and communication with the other members of the leadership team fell apart. In her new role, Adela was guided by care work motivations and her style of leadership can be described as communal (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). A pre-med major, Adela primarily wanted the garden to be a place where people could grow their own food and improve their nutrition, thereby improving their health "from the start" (personal interview, 2012). While this motivation closely follows the "teach people to do better" discourses that feminist scholars have problematized for both their unacknowledged privilege and ineffectiveness (Guthman, 2008), Adela's approach bypassed "blame" and went right to concerns of "healing". Building on that focus, Adela hoped that the garden space would not only be a place to grow healthy food, but also a place where "people could find a home and heal up a part of them that is missing" (personal interview, 2011). In part,

Adela's words reflected the fact that the university garden had many out-of-state and international student members who, in an attempt to have something that reminded them of home, would plant familiar herbs and vegetables—a habit that resonated with Adela's ideas of what the community garden should be about. Overall, Adela was much less assertive in her approach to leadership than Eileen was, and she also preferred to share responsibility, recruiting other gardeners to take on supportive administrative roles such as “treasurer” and “media promoter”.

Eileen and Adela, both of whom are white women, present an interesting contrast in women's approaches to garden leadership and communication. Their example demonstrates that gender alone does not determine leadership style. To begin with, age likely played a large factor in how Adela and Eileen differed. Whereas Adela was the same age or younger than many of the members in her mixed-gender garden, Eileen was the same age or senior to most of the women in her same-gender garden. As noted in Chapter Four, Adela never felt that any of her garden's members attempted to undermine her, via sexism or otherwise. However, during my time as a participant observer I noticed that Adela also never conducted herself in a way that would have invited power challenges. When I attended work parties under Adela, her quieter mannerisms and skill at making instructions seem more like suggestions were a noticeable contrast to Eileen's “ok, all together now, let's do this!” attitude. While Adela was willing to lead her garden as necessary, she did not specifically desire to be a leader and was not interested in passing herself off as an “authority”. In part, this was because she was sensitive to the limits of her own gardening knowledge and was considering organizing a Master

Gardener visit to help answer questions. This suggests that skill level was another factor shaping the differences between how Adela and Eileen approached leadership.

Nonetheless, Adela's style of leadership seemed to be an effective one for her garden as its membership continued to grow and new projects—like a website with recipes—were introduced.

It is also worth comparing Eileen's behaviors as a leader to Joanne's, which were discussed in Chapter Four (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Although the two women operated at different levels of leadership (i.e. Eileen was a formal leader and Joanne an informal one), I felt that the nature of their interaction with others was very similar, but the two women received very different reactions from their fellow gardeners. One possible explanation for this is that a formal leadership title gives women more flexibility to break gender norms (that is, as a formal leader, Eileen had more freedom to act in "masculine" ways). Another possible explanation is that women were more willing to be directed by a "bossy" woman than men were. While Joanne was situated in a large mixed-gender garden and had tense relationships with some of the garden's male leaders, Eileen was the leader of a small same-gender garden, and even on the hottest days I spent digging weeds and planting seeds, I observed the other women (all of whom seemed to know each well) being very patient with Eileen's direction.

In gardens with mixed-gender group leaderships, approaches to management also varied. In Seattle, the two men and one woman team of a large garden exhibited the most gender normative leadership style amongst the predominantly white-member gardens in this study. The team had developed organically during a break in formal leadership and

one of its self-perceived strengths was its ability to distribute leadership power beyond a solitary person. In fact Mike, Robert, and Maria reportedly saw themselves as only a “short term” stopgap on the way to an even larger “leadership board” (Mike, personal interview, 2012). A second self-perceived strength of the three-person team was their desire to be formally recognized by the garden community before they “spoke on behalf of others”. In part, this desire to be “official” leaders reflected the established nature of the garden and its relationship with the city’s management team; a precedent for elected leadership had already been set. Once officially “voted in”, the new team—comprised of two retirees and a student—had more flexibility to meet than many other garden members, and their weekly time investment in off-season planning meetings had resulted in some much appreciated physical space improvements come spring.

It is relevant to note that while the team identified itself as a trio, the two men were much more visible in the garden than their female peer. During my second summer of research I actually never saw Maria in the garden, whereas I saw Robert and Mike almost every time I visited. One reason for their visibility was that Mike and Robert dedicated time to “orienting” new gardeners and to hosting local students and vacation bible school groups for garden visits. Both men were also highly involved in the Giving Garden project, which I regularly attended work parties for. Robert and Mike were both energetic, extroverted individuals who “performed” leadership in a way which reflected their masculine identities. They had strong opinions about how things should be done in the garden, and both men were willing (and able) to invest time into to achieving their visions. However, while recognized as legitimate leaders who were very productive, from

the perspective of the garden's Department of Neighborhood's coordinator, the team also inadvertently produced a leadership "hierarchy" which left less opportunity for others to get involved. In short, the coordinator was suggesting that the amount of time Mike and Robert, in particular, invested in the garden meant that other participants had no opportunity to match or exceed their involvement. Based on my knowledge of the hundreds of volunteer hours that the two men accumulated each year, I could appreciate her comments. In our 2012 personal interview, it was clear that Mike was not insensitive to this concern, but he was frustrated that it often took longer to recruit someone else for a project than it took for him to just do a task himself. Mike had a strong identity as a "valid" leader for the garden, stating that "before I was a leader, I was a doer", and sometimes he seemed to measure other gardener's efforts based off this identity—adding support to the coordinator's observations of an unexamined hierarchy. For example, although he understood that the p-patch program's regulations only required eight hours of volunteering annually, he was clearly disappointed in gardeners who "just put in the minimum [time commitment]" (personal interview, 2011). Thus, while Mike was very committed to fostering community within the garden and just wanted people to get more involved, in his earnestness he seemed to be unaware that he was operating in a way that could be (and at times was) perceived as dominant, especially when coming from a white male.

Comparing Maria's leadership to Mike's and Robert's within the trio was difficult to do specifically because she was not in the garden space as often as the two men. This does not mean she was entirely absent, however; in addition to helping lead large

monthly work parties, Maria's volunteer activities also included maintaining the "welcome garden's" flower beds at the community garden's main entrance, something that she had been doing even before becoming an official leader. Discussing the leadership team's dynamics with Mike, I was informed that originally only he and Robert had been meeting to discuss ideas for the garden. Yet, even though Maria had joined them later, Mike felt the three worked well together because they all liked each other and because there "wasn't a lot of ego" between them (personal interview, Mike, 2012). As covered in Chapter Four, Maria reported never experiencing sexism within her garden, so it is perhaps unlikely that tensions would have arisen between the three leaders—at least not on account of gender. However, I was troubled by Maria's relative absence in the garden and often wondered just how included she—as a third generation Mexican-American woman—really felt. Unfortunately, I was never in a position to ask her. While Maria's comparatively smaller role as a team member very possibly reflected the fact that it would have been *incredibly* hard to be in the garden as often as Mike and Robert, the end result was that the team dynamic was more masculine—both in terms of visible bodies and the overall gendering of communication—than might otherwise have been expected in a garden with more women members than men.

In Phoenix, a community garden attached to a neighborhood community center was led by six individuals, four of whom (two women, and two men) were interviewed for this study. Through the processes of formal interviews, at different times all four leaders told me they thought the gender dynamic of the team was egalitarian. Such a uniform opinion was particularly significant considering the other identity factors at

work; both of the men were older (in their late twenties or early thirties) than the women in the group (who were in their early twenties), and both men had more gardening knowledge than the two women. In light of these differences, I felt that the team's gender dynamic was largely a result of the two men's leadership style, which was communal in character. One example of Angel's communal leadership style came to light during our interview when he explained to me that his way of negotiating difficult garden relationships was to "listen more" (personal interview, 2012). Angel was also the team member with the most technical gardening knowledge, but he seemed to prefer to "teach" by letting his peers experiment. In fact, Angel was generally very reluctant to be a leader who demanded/commanded authority. I observed this firsthand during an early work party in the garden when I, and a few other volunteers, asked Angel how we could help out; in response he made a few suggestions and then left us to decide for ourselves. It was interesting to note that Angel had also recently completed Master Gardener training, but unlike Eileen, he was not inclined to advertise it; rather, he compared the "badges" or t-shirts that master gardeners wore to identify themselves to "scout badges" and told me that he would never wear one in his capacity as a garden leader. The implication of his statement was that doing so would be pretentious.

Victor's approach to leadership also shifted power away from himself and to the group. For example, in explaining to me how decisions were made within the leadership team he said, "we really try to be democratic—but it's not majority vote, it's comprise" (personal interview, 2012). While working in the garden with various members of the leadership team I felt that this portrayal was accurate; very little was done in the garden

without a group discussion. Victor's and Angel's approach to garden management meshed well with Jessica and Mary, neither of whom reported any tensions with the men. In fact, Jessica's only leadership frustration was directed at one of her female peers who had been largely uninvolved over the last few months.

The difference in leadership style between the two mixed-gender leadership groups provides a number of different things to think about. First, in trying to understand the factors which produced Angel's and Victor's more "feminine" approach to leadership verses Mike's and Robert's more "masculine" style, I have focused on the influences of age, professional socialization, and organizational culture. To begin with, both Victor and Angel were significantly younger than Mike and Robert (by over 20 years), a factor which likely influenced their understanding of gender roles, with the older men performing more traditional forms of masculinity. Additionally, because Angel was employed in the non-profit sector he worked entirely with women on a daily basis, whereas Robert had retired from farming, an industry characterized by agrarian ideology and strong conceptions of the separate spheres (Sachs, 1996). Additionally, unlike the garden that Robert and Mike led with Maria, the garden which Victor and Angel led with Mary and Jessica was brand new and still relatively unstructured, which Blumberg (1999) suggests has the potential to result in less structured leadership dynamics, by extension.

Having compared the formal leadership styles present in four different gardens, I want to consider what this says about gender, leadership, and effective garden management. It is important to recognize that none of the formal leaders in these gardens demonstrated any sort of "gender awareness"; that is, at no point did I perceive them to

be crafting their leadership style in order to consciously meet or resist a gender norm. Rather, the leadership styles individuals performed primarily appeared to be the outcome of individual identity operating in a particular social context (of the garden). What was interesting to observe is how gendered styles of leadership (communal versus agenic) were perceived differently based on the gender of the performer. While Eileen didn't experience resistance to her assertive style of leadership in the small women's garden, I argue that Joanne's experiences with resistance may shed light on how Eileen would have been perceived and responded to in a mixed-gender garden. Conversely, that Maria was willing to work with Mike and Robert through the winter-off season as they developed new garden projects suggests that she was not bothered by the men's agenic style of leadership. One way to interpret these observations is that women performing "masculine" leadership were more likely to be criticized than men performing the same. This argument is certainly supported by existing research on gender and leadership. Yoder (2001), for example, succinctly offers the following review:

Women leaders contend with an inconsistency not faced by men leaders. Assertiveness by gender-deviant women makes them not only threatening to (Carli, 1995) and disliked by (Butler & Geis, 1990; Carli, 2001) others but also proves ineffective. Carli (1990, 1999, 2001) consistently found that assertive women were less influential, especially with men, than gender-congruent, tentative women. (Yoder, 2001, p.818)

Significantly, however, *both* the men and women who performed an agenic leadership style in this study were critiqued more than the men and women performing a communal

style. As a participant in Adela's garden I never overheard critical comments about her, and neither did I hear Mary or Jessica critiqued—or Victor and Angel, whose leadership styles were against gender type. On the other hand, I was aware of criticism directed at Mike, Robert, and Joanne (albeit, an informal leader). In general, therefore, this study's data makes the case for communal leadership styles over agenic styles in community garden settings as they appear to be more effective at reducing power hierarchies and tensions between garden leaders and general members.

Before moving on, I want to reiterate that during my months of observation in their community garden, I never witnessed Mike or Robert acting in blatantly sexist ways (i.e. using sexist language); additionally, I *did* observe both men reflecting on various aspects of their privilege—especially their class privilege, which was also evidenced by the time they spent working at the local food bank. However, the ways in which Mike and Robert expressed their masculinity nonetheless impacted the tone of the entire mixed-gendered garden, with at least some women in their garden perceiving their leadership as sexist; on the other hand, the women members in Angel's and Victor's garden did not. While many women worked very well with Mike and Robert, these were also women who preformed gender normative leadership (i.e. Maria, and later, Katie as an informal leader in the Giving Garden). Unfortunately, because the female peers Mike and Robert *did* get along with did not perceive validity in how other women were experiencing their co-leaders' management style, the two men were not challenged by the people perhaps in the best position to do so.

Informal leadership experiences. For the purposes of this study, “informal” leaders were those who did not hold elected positions in their gardens, but who were nonetheless long standing, highly involved individuals who may or may not have been the primary overseer of some smaller aspect of the community. One of the common frustrations with informal leadership is that an individual’s contributions can more easily go unrecognized, although research suggests that this more likely to occur for women than for men. For example, in her work on black women’s leadership in the civil rights movement, Herda-Rapp (1998) makes the case that older women played a critical role in maintaining the social movement’s momentum by sharing stories and history, but that their contributions as informal leaders went unrecognized because storytelling is “just what women do”. Additionally, Mary Pardo (1990) argues that women’s social activism is often an extension of the activities that they are gendered responsible for at the personal level (such as care for others and household), complicating the task of bringing to light similar activities which women perform in an informal leadership capacity.

Sue’s experiences offered insight into these gendered processes in the community gardens as she was particularly sensitive to the differences between her own style of leading and the style employed by the formal leaders in her garden (which had two strong male leaders). To explain her frustration, Sue related a story from a different sphere of her life. As a member of a local board game society, Sue had experienced resistance from one of the established male members when she first joined, treatment which she interpreted as sexist. Having preserved through it, Sue then took pains to help create an environment of “camaraderie”, especially when another new member arrived and

experienced racism. For example, when a game was a close call, Sue would openly declare it a “tie” in an effort to move away from a “culture of dominance”—a trait that she felt was indicative of American work culture and which was often carried into community spaces like the garden. Through such actions, Sue felt that she had played an important role in changing the culture of her game club; “it used to be really unpleasant for a new person to walk in there. So I guess I can see that I did a leadership thing by doing that...it’s like if I do leadership, it’s under the surface” (personal interview, 2012). In the community garden context, Sue felt that the garden’s official leaders failed to recognize her style of “leadership under the surface” as a real contribution to the community. After observing Sue in the garden context I agreed that her communal approach to leadership, which was often enacted with those in neighboring plots rather than in the work party setting, went unnoticed. Because Sue was interested in formal leadership, but felt that her financial constraints made it impossible to step into the model which operated in her garden, what I primarily took away from this discussion was that Sue felt the concept of “leader” need to be expanded—and that she really just wanted to be recognized and appreciated for the types of contributions that she *was* making.

In Seattle, an example of women’s informal leadership demonstrated that the recognition of their contributions depends on the viewer. Here, city-level garden administration was quite aware of the leadership dynamics operating within each of the program’s community gardens, knowledge which included whose voices were most influential. Because leadership is critical to a garden’s success with basic upkeep—let alone for higher level outcomes, such as the fostering of community—, garden

coordinators from the Department of Neighborhoods often spent a great deal of time “in the field” helping gardens negotiate leadership issues. While some gardens were fairly self-sustaining, other gardens lacked “official leaders” and required more city-level oversight. For instance, within one of the city’s large, predominantly Southeast Asian immigrant gardens, Erin—the garden’s coordinator—felt that “official leadership” had not developed because the garden’s “real” leaders would not take on the titles. Although this garden had a paid (male) translator who acted as a leader during the garden’s occasional work parties (as discussed in Chapter Four), Erin recognized that this was more of a figurehead position. Thus, at a point in time when Erin was attempting to get a large improvement project off the ground, I observed her discretely seeking out the established women members (even though they were not “official leaders”) and asking them to “begin talking to people”. Understanding that the system of leadership which worked well for the city did not necessarily translate effectively into all community gardens, Erin had become adept at tapping the “unofficial” women leaders within the garden to get things done. In this situation, the garden’s gender dynamics seemed to be actively dissuading the women members from taking on visible, authoritative roles; although the women had significant influence in their community, they were not regarded as “leaders”. As a result, women like May would always say “no” when asked to be a garden mentor, but she would happily answer any question that someone asked her (Erin, personal communication, 2012). As the garden’s coordinator, Erin was constantly concerned that this gender dynamic was working to marginalize the Southeast Asian immigrant women. In her efforts to compensate, Erin worked very hard to have a direct

relationship with the women so that their voices were not “just” mediated by the translator. In my time as an observer of these events, I was left to wonder: “what would happen if Erin was not sensitive to the gender dynamics operating in the garden?” The answer is very likely that the women’s voices would never have been heard, and if so, the garden’s successes would have diminished overall for the “real”, albeit informal, leaders of the garden would have been overlooked.

Barriers to leadership. In Chapter Four I discussed some of the barriers which can keep interested community members from participating in community gardens, or which can reduce or end a current gardener’s involvement. While any barrier to garden participation as a whole—including issues related to ability, class, and gender—is obviously also going to prevent an individual from rising into a leadership position, based on the data collected for this study, the process of becoming a leader seems to pose specific barriers of its own which are also experienced differently by individuals of disparate social location. Because leadership requires a substantial time investment, gendered carework led two different key informants to step down from their formal positions. Social class will also be discussed below, and based on the experiences of formal leaders discussed above, I argue that a woman’s agentic leadership style can prevent her from successfully becoming a leader—especially if part of a multiple gender team, or in a multiple gender garden.

As an extension of the classism that she experienced in her garden, Sue described for me how insensitivity to economic differences also had the effect of preventing lower-income garden members from getting involved in garden leadership. Since a common

way of holding garden meetings was to meet at a local coffee shop, Sue felt that she was at a disadvantage because she couldn't afford to buy a latte, but was embarrassed to go and buy nothing. Sue was unemployed at the time of our interview and potentially could have gotten involved in leadership work, but she was unlikely to do so on account of constantly perceiving her "outsider" status.

Based on the time I spent in Sue's garden and with garden leadership, I believe that there are two ways to interpret the experiences she describes. First, because I had interviewed the garden's leaders after interviewing Sue, I knew that general garden meetings were actually held at a nearby apartment building where one of the garden members lived. What Sue's comments suggest then is that there were informal meetings which she felt were important to attend if she wanted to get involved with leadership. Second, Sue's experiences point out that overall, the garden community was insensitive to ways in which even general meetings at the apartment complex—which included a potluck dinner—were marginalizing lower-income gardeners, as arriving without a dish to share could also be socially embarrassing. Given my knowledge of the garden community and garden leaders, I strongly believe that Sue's experiences of class marginalization were unintentional, but I also believe her perceptions offer valid insight into how leaders—unless they are intentionally paying mind and responding to structural inequalities—can unwittingly reproduce them.

The process of becoming a leader within an established garden often developed organically over a long period of time. For example, Mike, Robert, and Maria had all been operating as informal leaders for several years prior to transitioning into formal

leadership roles. Although many of the gardeners I met were very happy to *not* take on leadership responsibilities, for those gardeners who did want to, various forms of privilege clearly made it easier to do so and various barriers and responsibilities made it harder. While it is none too surprising that free time and financial stability paved the way for some gardeners to more easily step into leadership, the experiences of Sue suggest that there are ways in which gardens might work to reduce the number of barriers members have to overcome—such as by being mindful of the ways in which community events can unintentionally leave some gardeners out.

The impacts of leadership dynamics on garden dynamics. Having described the experiences of both informal and formal leaders in this study, I will now briefly explore two ways in which whom leads a garden, and how they lead, has outcomes for other garden members. First, I will discuss the ways in which leadership “diversity” (or lack thereof) influenced how garden members perceived their relationships with management bodies; second, I will consider the relationship between leaders and the transfer of gendered food knowledge. In taking the time to reflect upon these two issues in particular, I am following the themes of my data. However, the ability to explore either of them with more depth will require additional research.

“Diversity matters”. Guided by feminist intersectional approaches to social investigation, this dissertation never presumed that differences between gardeners *didn’t* matter. That is why, in the above sections on leadership, I have employed intersectional thinking to consider the multiple aspects of identity and social location which informed the leadership structure and leader’s experiences in individual gardens, with a particular

mind to gender dynamics. However, this project has also not attempted to qualify or quantify “diversity”. Questions of “what does, or does not, count as ‘diverse leadership’ in community gardens?” and “which gardens are, or are not, ‘diverse enough?’” were not attended to. That being said, “diversity” can be discussed in at least two ways in relation to this project. First, the community gardeners in this study were committed to the idea of “diversity”, even if that idea was abstract and their own food movement spaces were not particularly diverse; and second, leaders in the community garden settings were found to have the ability to impact, and be impacted by, the diverseness of gardener’s demographics. This latter point has also been presented in prior academic studies. For example, DiTomaso’s and Hooijberg’s (1996) research on diversity and leadership makes the case that individuals in leadership positions have the potential to significantly influence efforts to diversify organizations and their leadership; actions may include helping minority garden members rise into other leadership positions and directly addressing the anger and frustrations which can arise between people from different social locations, and which may be exacerbated by power hierarchies between leaders and non-leaders.

Even if they struggled to specifically define why, several of the key informants interviewed for this study argued that “diversity matters” in garden leadership. Jessica, for example, speaking from her position as white woman with three non-white peer leaders, told me that diverse leadership brought “more perspectives” to the project and was therefore valuable on that account. In Jessica’s experience, diverse leadership had improved the approach and goals of her co-led community garden by pointing out the

biases each leader invariably had. For instance, as described in Chapter Four, Angel’s perspectives as a non-student helped him to see where his peers were unwittingly approaching the community garden with an academic “missionary complex”. Because Angel expressed his concerns in a way which his peers—including his female peers—could “hear” and respond to positively, the entire leadership team was able to mature, improving the garden space as a whole. However, this same example also demonstrates that diverse leadership does not guarantee leaders will never alienate other garden members. The fact that Angel felt compelled to intervene in the first place shows that although diverse within themselves, the other three garden leaders—a white woman, a Hispanic woman, and a Brazilian man—had still misjudged how to best make connections with the surrounding community, which was predominantly composed of first generation Mexican immigrants. Similarly, as noted previously, Maria’s presence did not guarantee that her leadership team was exempt from conflicts with women garden members. However, while working in Maria’s Seattle garden, people also told me that the three-person leadership model was an improvement over the single leader model because it had increased the perspectives and personalities which members could interact with. Thus, although diverse leadership teams were not immune to conflicts rooted in identity, there is some evidence that teams comprised of individuals from different social locations increased sensitivity to inequality, and at the very least, teams of diverse personalities increased positive perceptions of leadership.

On the other side of equation, perceiving a lack of diversity within leadership also influenced how garden leaders and garden members experienced the community space.

When garden leaders were clearly divided from garden members along gender, race, class, and other identity lines, some gardeners expressed concerns about being misunderstood or disrespected by garden leaders or administrators. Sue's experiences, for example, demonstrate how differences in economic privilege shaped the way member meetings were perceived, with the lower income garden member feeling like higher income leaders were unaware of their privilege. In Seattle, a scenario arose which demonstrated that a lack of racial or ethnic diversity can also inform how gardener's view garden events. John was a gardener who had been communicating with his city's garden coordinator about transferring to a larger plot; having met with resistance, John felt that his request was being denied because he was the only black person in the community space and the garden coordinator was a white woman. From the city coordinator's perspective, John was a novice gardener who would not make good use of a larger garden plot and therefore was reluctant to accommodate him, even though most of the other gardeners did have plots larger than John's. Although I was not in a position to judge the technical aspects of this disagreement, it was nonetheless clear to me—from the way each party characterized their exchanges—that the community was suffering for its lack of diversity. While the garden coordinator felt that John “saw race in every conversation” and felt personally attacked by his accusations, John told me that he felt “unsafe” in the garden as a man of color. The unfortunate outcome of the situation was that even if the garden coordinator was not denying John a larger plot on account of racism, John had no way of knowing that race wasn't a factor because there were no leaders of color to weigh in on the decision.

By frequently focusing on the “community” aspect of community gardens, and even lamenting that their gardens were not as diverse as those in cities (such as New York City) (Bob, personal interview, 2011), it was clear to me that most of the gardeners in this study were more than just superficially interested in “being diverse” and would support leader’s efforts to become so. Thus, the research which suggests that those in leadership roles have the opportunity to actualize that goal is promising. On the ground, however, I did not observe many practical steps aimed at achieving this intention, suggesting that gardeners were not really sure how to go about becoming “diverse”. Perhaps the most concrete step which was planned for the largest garden in the study was to expand the leadership team from three to five individuals, but how that would (if at all) change the dynamic of the team remained to be seen and would certainly depend on who the new leaders turned out to be.

Food knowledge transfers. One of the most commonly reoccurring themes that arose from this study’s field work was a concern over the decline in what I called “intergenerational food growing knowledge transfers”. Understandably, age was a key determinant in which side of the teacher-learner divide a community gardener saw themselves on, but almost every single gardener interviewed for this study expressed a desire to be part of the process of sharing and learning knowledge about how to grow food. Bob, who occasionally taught gardening classes at a non-profit organization, felt that a desire to reclaim “our elder’s knowledge” which had been “rejected post WWII”, was behind the rising number of individuals in their 30s who were attending his courses (personal interview, 2011). Within the community gardens themselves, younger members

such as Katie were often motivated to garden in a community setting specifically because it had a “built in” way to receive mentorship. On the reverse side, older gardeners often understood that they possessed valuable knowledge and saw the community garden as a place to share it. Larry discussed with me how reaching a stage of life where he could mentor others felt like a “rite of passage into the elderhood”, and that as a grandfather, he was increasingly thinking about the relationship between knowledge transfers and sustainability (personal interview, 2011). Gardeners also felt that a deep body of gardening knowledge was one of the things that made an individual an appropriate community garden leader. For example, Rachel defined a good leader as someone who could not only foster community development, but who could also mentor inexperienced gardeners. By extension, as a young leader who had not grown-up with extensive garden training, Adela was self-conscious of the fact that she could not provide more technical gardening mentorship.

In this study, food knowledge transferring was not a neutral process, however. Based heavily on my field observations, I argue that knowledge which was coded as “scientific” was given more attention than knowledge which was coded as “gendered” or “ethnic”. Aspects of the process I focus on to make this claim include how both the knowledge and the knower were perceived by garden leaders, and what a knower’s power to share their knowledge was relative to others.

As a feminist identified white woman in her 60s, Joanne argued that “older” women needed to be deeply incorporated into the alternative food movement specifically on account of the breadth of their subsistence-oriented food skills. Having grown up on a

farm in Nebraska, and having proudly descended from Polish “dirt people”, Joanne knew that she had a wealth of “hand me down” food growing and food preparation knowledge which was different from what her male peers on the farm had been socialized with; the men had been taught to grow and harvest food from the fields, while she had been taught to cook and kitchen garden. Over the course of several formal and informal conversations, Joanne often spoke about the vulnerability of the contemporary food, water, and power systems, and argued that if a serious crisis ever befell the U.S., older women like herself would “instantly become society’s most valuable commodity” (personal interview, 2011). As part of my research, Joanne insisted on teaching me how to can jam with raspberries that she grew herself, as well as showing me her home greenhouse—a few blocks from the Seattle community garden where she had a plot—in which she began preparing heirloom tomato seedlings during the winter months so that she could maximize the summer growing season. Noting that a “woman’s most valuable resource is her time”, the many “tips” that Joanne shared with me reflected not only how much she enjoyed having someone to share her skills with, but also how serious she was about the necessity of passing on her knowledge. Additionally, as part of Joanne’s sharing process I was also told many stories about the history of certain gardening techniques, about how various activities were gendered, and about life in general; for Joanne, the skills and the stories clearly could not be separated and were instead passed together. Within the context of her community garden, although Joanne had many friends, I noticed that during events like the Giving Garden work parties—a time of the week when many novices showed up to help and learn—, people seemed to be less

interested in what Joanne had to share than in what leaders like Robert shared. As a retired professional farmer, Robert and his knowledge seemed to be viewed as superior to Joanne's knowledge, and the way he communicated it—to the point, and with no stories—reinforced the feeling of a neutral, “scientific” approach to growing.

While Joanne framed her food knowledge and the ability to pass it as empowering herself, in Phoenix, one of the community gardens leaders organized an event which constructed immigrant Mexican women's food knowledge as empowering for them. During our formal interview, Mary, who is a young Mexican-American woman, was proud to tell me about her garden's end-of-the-season Harvest Party which featured tortilla making with the heirloom variety of corn that they had grown in the community's shared plots. To help in this endeavor, first generation indigenous Mexican women immigrants had accepted Angel's invitation to teach the process of making tortillas from scratch. However, after the event had passed, Angel related to me his frustration over the way things had gone. From his perspective, guests at the Harvest Party assumed the indigenous women were there to serve them, rather than to teach them valuable food knowledge. While Angel did admit that perhaps he—being the one who had arranged for the women to provide the workshop—should have better communicated the purpose of the tortilla making, he was still upset over what he felt was a lack of respect given to both the women and the cultural food heritage they possessed. Prefacing his remarks by indicating he wasn't a “religious person”, Angel nonetheless felt that learning cultural knowledge was like “going to church” and was therefore offended by the lack of seriousness with which guests (including some of the other leaders) approached the

opportunity. However, when Mary and I met for an interview about a month later, I came to know that she—following Angel’s lead—had sat and made tortillas with the immigrant woman and left excited, feeling that a connection had been made “through the food” (personal interview, 2012).

Although quite different, what I believe these two scenarios demonstrate is that some forms food knowledge were less likely to be transferred in this study’s community gardens on account of how they were gendered, raced, and classed. Although the gardeners in this study spoke of the need to learn from elders, there were clearly some elders who were listened to more than others. To begin with, the knowledge to make tortillas from scratch or grow handed-down varieties of tomatoes resides with individual women who were gendered responsible for learning it. Arguably, this knowledge was also raced and classed, as it belonged to immigrant women and self-described feminist “dirt people”. In general, the individuals who carried this knowledge also had less power to share it in formal settings, vis-à-vis their social location to some of the formal leaders in both gardens and the fact that none of the women in these two scenarios were in official leadership positions. While there were certainly other factors which could explain this particular knowledge transfer gap (i.e. Joanne’s agentic style of leadership, and language barriers to communicating with the indigenous women), another possibility is that this knowledge was not as valued by gardeners because of how it was coded. Angel related a similar idea when he told me that white Americans didn’t like how immigrant gardens looked, because they lacked the straight furrows and wide mulched paths between beds which were characteristic of gardens located in predominantly upper-

middle class and white areas (a sentiment that I also observed in Seattle regarding gardens run by Southeast Asian immigrants). Although the physical layout of immigrant gardens actually meant that more space was used for growing things, Angel's comments implied that white gardeners would not adopt the practice because aesthetically it was perceived as unruly, unscientific, and very "ethnic". Speaking as a Mexican-American man and a Master Gardener, Angel noted that food knowledge coded as "scientific" (such as that learned in Master Gardener courses or through university sustainability courses) was generally considered more valuable than that he had inherited from his parents. Similarly, while I had many discussions with people about cooking, people may not have been interested in the type of food production knowledge which Joanne and the immigrant Mexican women could share specifically because it was being presented as cultural knowledge, as women's knowledge, as handed-down knowledge.

Angel's reaction to these processes provide insight into why he had characterized the immigrant women's knowledge as "empowering", and perhaps why Joanne had similarly crafted her identity. Although Angel appreciated what his co-leaders had learned in academic settings and was open to various ideas—particularly about how to conserve water in the desert—, he was resistant to entirely replacing his cultural heritage with new knowledge (personal interview, 2012). Joanne's and Angel's depiction of possessing and transferring "traditional" knowledge as "empowering" was clearly an act of resistance against loss of culture and personal devaluation resulting from sexism and racism. In the popular press book *The Earth Knows My Name: Food, Culture, and Sustainability in the Gardens of Ethnic Americans*, Patricia Klindienst argues that

immigrants often use gardening and food work to express resistance to identity loss, as a way to “refuse fully assimilating into mainstream American values” (2006, XXIII). For Angel, planting indigenous varieties of corn in the community garden and highlighting the immigrant women and their skills at the festival, was a direct resistance to the devaluation of traditional Mexican food work practices. For Joanne, connecting her food growing and processing knowledge to discourses of sustainability was a way to resist the devaluation of gendered, handed down skills which were not as valued by gardeners and garden leaders as masculine gendered, “scientific” gardening practices. In the end, as community gardeners focus on resisting the industrial agricultural system by transferring food knowledge, a gap in the passing of gendered cultural food knowledge matters not because it is necessarily “better” knowledge, or because it is “women’s knowledge”, but because it carries with it important identity markers and history which is different from what male and white gardeners can share. When leaders like Angel value this knowledge, their influence can create space for it to be shared alongside knowledge being shared by those with more social privilege. Conversely, when women who are capable of sharing specifically gendered food knowledge are not supported by garden leaders, opportunities to share are slim and others are also not encouraged to question their cultural assumptions about the superior value of “scientific” food knowledge.

Leadership in community gardens: take-aways. The experiences of the community garden leaders—both formal and informal—in this study demonstrate several things. First, although personality traits are certainly not irrelevant to the way an individual operates as a leader, how leadership is performed and perceived is also the

result of an individual's social location and a garden's unique social context. For example, although both women and men in this study preformed a "masculine" style of formal leadership, in line with the findings of previous research on leadership, the gender dynamics operating in this study made it more acceptable for men to perform masculine styles of leadership than for women (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). This did not mean, however, that men who managed gardens in traditionally masculine ways were universally embraced; some women garden members and at least one garden coordinator found reason to criticize this style of leadership, and as a participant observer I felt that the tensions which arose often worked to undermine the community aspect of the garden. Conversely, the performance of a "feminine" leadership style was accepted and effective for both the women and men in this study who relied on it. Victor and Angel, for example, were greatly appreciated by their female co-leaders, and the leadership team overall was described as "egalitarian", a word which may reflect the connection between "feminine" and democratic ways of being a leader (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). However, it is important to recall that outside of formal leadership, communal styles of leadership also resulted in invisibility, which research suggests may be especially true for women (Herda-Rapp, 1998). This may also explain why some women, like Eileen, chose to perform a more agentic style of leadership. Returning to Chapter Three and the motivations which drive food justice organizations like Community to Community Development in their work with women farm workers, the failure of society to see feminine gendered skill sets and ways of leading—especially when women perform them—as "legitimate" clearly has implications for women's placement within

the alternative food movement as a whole. This accounts for Community to Community Development's focus on helping women learn "formal" leadership skills. Whether or not such an initiative bodes well for the women is a question for another project and more research.

Based on the experiences of gardeners who faced barriers to leadership participation and/or recognition, it is clear that in many gardens, formal leaders have space to develop sensitivity to gender, race, and class dynamics which can either prevent gardeners from attempting to get involved with formal leadership, or from having their informal leadership contributions be recognized. Rachel Solcum's research on food movement organizations draws attention to the fact that most organized groups continue to speak about differences in ways which obscure "the racist, classist and gendered features of the food system, past and present" (2006, p. 330). In her investigations of anti-racism trainings, Solcum found that many people were uncomfortable being held accountable for white privilege and instead wanted to attend "diversity" trainings which would teach about identity differences without holding them accountable for racist actions (Solcum, 2006). In this study's gardens, similar processes were clearly operating. For example, although Mike was a student of the social sciences and could talk in depth about structural inequalities and the benefits of diversity, he did not demonstrate introspection into his own gender privilege. However, it is also clear that garden leaders had a lot of influence over how garden communities did, or did not, address diversity and inequalities, as is evidenced by Angel's attempts to include the immigrant Mexican women. If Mike and Robert had been more willing to consider how their actions could be

perceived as sexist—rather than reasoning that the tensions only reflected personality conflicts—then I think it is very likely that there would have been more room for women like Sue and Joanne to feel respected and recognized. Overall, the experiences of gardeners considered in this section has illustrated that “diversity matters” for gardeners’ sense “safety” in the community space, and that garden leaders have the power to influence what food knowledge gets transferred; this suggests that paying attention to processes which inhibit diversity along gender, race, and class lines is a critical step toward protecting historical food knowledge and promoting “community”—both primary concerns of the gardeners in this study.

To be clear, taken as a whole, the community gardens in this study were positive places for women to be, with many women holding both formal and informal leadership roles. Also, I constantly observed women socializing with others as they gardened, and the way women (and men) talked about the community of people within their gardens made it clear that even when tensions existed with garden leaders, relationships between gardeners were largely positive and one of the primary reasons gardeners maintained a plot year after year. Although men were overrepresented in leadership roles, each garden in this study had at least one woman leader, and in large gardens like Seattle’s, women also acted as demonstration garden coordinators and informal leaders of smaller projects; for example, during my second summer of research, I found that Katie had become the informal leader of one of the giving gardens (2012). However, because leaders have a great deal of power in gardens, it is necessary to understand how the overrepresentation of men in leadership roles, and the performance of “masculine” styles of leadership

regardless of gender, influenced how gardeners—with a specific mind to women gardeners—experienced their garden space.

Before moving into the final section of this chapter, I want to pause and reflect on how my relationships with the participants of this study are undeniably influencing how I interpret the interview and field note data which the above discussion draws on. Because I spent quite a lot of time getting to know each of these individuals, I have found it difficult to pull different aspects of their complex personalities, behaviors, and beliefs apart. Although the intent of this part of the research project was to understand how identities and power operate in gardens and on gardeners, I feel that my analyses—which are concerned with very specific issues, and are informed by only a few months of data—do not do justice to who these individuals were as real people, accomplishing many positive things alongside what I have critiqued. Although, as a researcher, I aimed to be as neutral as possible at each stage of data collection and analysis, I often found that I had to return to my data over and over again before settling on how to best interpret what I observed; on different days I would sometimes see the information differently. I liked all of the people I met while working in this study's eight gardens, and I feel that the vast majority of them genuinely wanted to be part of something that helped people, that expanded the sense of community in their neighborhoods, that improved the environment, and that let them "play in the dirt". I admired garden leaders like Robert and Mike for the immense amount of time they invested in improving their garden for the common good, and for volunteering at the local food bank. If I can critique them for their unexamined gender privilege, I must also note that this one of the few negative things I

can say about them, within the context that I knew them. Because of my placement as a researcher within these gardens, I also had the opportunity to hear many different perspectives about the difficult situations which arose—and none were simple black and white matters. Thus, in writing up the themes that I observed, I want to acknowledge that although I have tried to include many details and consider other possible explanations, there is always more that could be said, and a researcher coming from a different social location would likely have a different understanding of this data than my own.

Gender And Social Activism In Community Gardens

Perhaps the most important reason for understanding the gender, race, and class dynamics present in community garden leadership is that they directly shape who is most likely to get involved with political activism via the community garden. As leaders of community gardens, individuals become responsible for garden well-being and develop skills which assist them with that charge. While Eileen interacted with her local neighborhood association, Adela had also found it necessary to meet with university officials regarding funding and protocols for her garden, Mary and Jessica had applied for a grant which would have allowed them to expand the events they could host in their garden, and gardeners in Maria's, Mike's, and Robert's garden annually worked with leaders to host a garden fundraiser. Such efforts on behalf of garden communities and the exposure it entails to local political bodies has the potential to lead to new forms of social movement activism which expands beyond the household or garden itself.

Undeniably, even though most community garden leaders are engaged in a form of “political” work, not all end up becoming engaged in activism on behalf of community

gardens, or for the food movement more generally. While almost all of the gardeners in this study connected their alternative food work to the alternative food movement at the individual level, and while most also felt that community gardens could contribute to food justice, few gardeners were formally involved in alternative food movement activism beyond their own garden plots; those that were, tended to come into their community gardens already involved (e.g. Victor and Jessica had been involved in an on-campus food movement organization before being recruited to be co-leaders in their community garden). In general, the closest that most gardeners in this study got to social activism came out of the “giving gardens”. As discussed in Chapter Four, community gardeners who spent time growing food to support community food security began to make links between their own immediate food work and larger social structures. However, as some gardeners and all garden coordinators argued, community gardens clearly have the potential to support more activism than is presently occurring, and significantly, gardens are spaces that may support forms of activism that are particularly appealing to women.

Community gardens and political engagement. One of the earliest mentions of “food justice” in academic writing is Levkoe’s 2006 article based on research conducted in Toronto community gardens. In Levkoe’s opinion, the development of a community’s democratic civic participation is the primary outcome of the food justice movement, with the movement’s diversity (in terms of demographics) “enabling citizenship learning”. In this sense, Levkoe views food justice work as a tool for achieving “food democracy”; he argues:

The transition to a food democracy requires that people develop the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in society and to have an impact on different political levels. Food justice movements, utilizing local grassroots initiatives, have the ability to provide this opportunity. (2006, p. 92)

For Levkoe, political activism and social activism are connected—the achievement of the latter is supported by the former, and community gardens are one space to develop skill at engaging with political activism.

Only two of the twenty-one key informants for this study spoke of a direct connection between community garden leadership and political engagement. During a conversation about threats to community gardens in Seattle, Aeron began to tell me about her experiences as a local precinct representative and she stated:

I see a link between community gardens and local politics because we can bring the issues up...help influence who gets elected to represent our interests...the link to social justice makes me think that we need to be out in front of what's going to be taken away—our healthy food opportunities and options. (personal interview, 2011)

In Aeron's mind, the ability for community garden leaders to get involved with local politics had a specific activist application—the ability to help protect alternative food spaces. Like Levkoe (2006), Aeron also felt that diversity in community gardens enhanced community mobilization to those ends; speaking as a Native American woman she said, “there's so much opportunity when people from diverse backgrounds come together and share what we know” (personal interview, 2011).

By virtue of already being formally connected (as employees) to local governing bodies or influential non-profits, administrative level garden personal were more likely to see a connection between community garden leadership and engagement with local politics than the gardeners themselves. Charlie, who was a second generation immigrant from Thailand, told me that one of the greatest outcomes of a city run community garden program was that gardeners had direct contact with their local government; if garden leaders organized themselves to state needs and desires, they had “direct lines” to their cities via their garden coordinators. As one such garden coordinator, Charlie enjoyed being a representative for people of color, and Erin had a similar identity, saying that she was the “face of my government” (personal communication, 2012). In their roles as coordinators, Erin and Charlie did more than act as mediators, however; they also attempted to help garden leaders develop skills to engage with political bodies themselves. One way Erin and Charlie went about this was by encouraging gardeners to apply for improvement grants; however, neither coordinator would apply for grants on behalf of gardeners—leaders had to organize their members and accomplish the task as a community. As Aeron pointed out to me, the manner in which community gardens operate lends itself to such organization and/or mobilization efforts (at least at the leadership level); “we have periodic meetings already, and not just in our garden, in other gardens...it’s a tight knit group anyway” (personal interview, 2011). For Aeron, though, community garden leaders had the potential to do more than help secure funds for individual gardens; as part of her conversation about social justice and alternative food

spaces, Aeron argued that community gardeners “need to take it to another level” (personal interview, 2012).

Gender and social activism. Prior to the 1960’s, scholars approached social movements as an undesirable societal disruption, an unsettling phenomena that had the power to turn average citizens into irrational mobs (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003). However, in the wake of the women’s liberation movement, the gay liberation movement, and especially the civil rights movement, academic interpretations of social movement organization and participation began to shift. Contemporarily, Snow, Soule & Kriesi (2004) argue that “we live in a ‘movement society’” where social activism is increasingly conspicuous. Within this context, several new ways of understanding social movements have developed, all of which view activists as rational beings.

Responding to the lack of gender awareness in many classical camps of social movement theorizing, Myra Marx Ferree and Carol Mueller (2004) developed a framework for understanding how, because we live in a gendered society, all social movements are affected by gender—regardless of whether or not they are “feminist” movements or “women’s” movements. Responding to three major developments in social movement theory—political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and meaning making—Ferree and Mueller first contend that political opportunity is not gender neutral, especially in relation to formal institutional structures. The interaction of socially constructed gender with the socially constructed state means that women have historically been disadvantaged within governmental spaces—if able to access formal public spaces at all, then women have had to operate in a masculinized environment.

Ferree & Mueller argue that as “an outgrowth of the way nation-states construct their politics, women are institutionally disadvantaged in contests waged in ‘men’s’ terrain” (2004, p, 589). As a result, women activists have often chosen to operate in “domestic” settings rather than state settings. One of the related difficulties, however, is that many people—sometimes including women activists themselves—fail to conceptualize grassroots activism as “real politics”. When women *have* chosen to pursue their social movement agendas through formal institutional structures, it has often been for causes which reflect “appropriate” cultural gendering—that is, movements which reflect women’s gendered responsibilities (i.e. to care for others), and to which states are more sympathetic. In such instances, it might be argued that gender stereotypes are working in women’s favor, but other gendered stereotypes about women work to undermine them as activists. For example, the socially constructed connection between women and emotion can undermine their ability to be taken seriously when they are “angry” about social injustices; mislabeling claims statements as “fits of passion” is a tactic intended to weaken the legitimate grievances of women activists. On the other hand, Ferree & Mueller argue that the cultural “permission” granted to women to be more in touch with their emotions can also increase the longevity of their participation in movements. Finally, differences in political opportunities also mean that women may choose to rely on different forms of mobilizing structures. Yet, Ferree & Mueller (2004) argue that one of the weaknesses of resource mobilization theory is that it typically studies mobilization only in hierarchical, formalized organizations (e.g. 501(c) non-profits) as “normal” social

movement organizations. This bias often left one of the primary ways women organize—networking—beyond the scope of scholarly analysis.

Feminist scholars have addressed this gap in social movement theory by treating women's grassroots and informal activism as worthy topics for research. For example, Pardo (1990) contributed to the scholarship on Los Angeles's Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) movement by considering how women's "traditional" family and religious networks are leveraged to protect urban environments and communities. Working through their churches and outside of formal non-profits, the activities the Mexican-American women of MELA participated in were labor intensive (phone callings, door-to-door visits, etc.), but "transformed old relationships into coalitions" that were capable of challenging threats to their community (Padro, 1990, p. 6). Pardo argues that the environmental work MELA engages in reflects the tendency for women of color's social activism to be an extension of their gendered responsibilities for family and home. Significantly, Pardo argues that as interest in issues of sustainability continue to rise, "the issues 'traditionally' addressed by women—health, housing, sanitation, and the urban environment—have moved to center stage...and instances of political mobilization at the grassroots level, where women often play a central role, allow us to 'see' abstract concepts like participatory democracy..." (1990, p. 6).

Applying feminist social movement research to the context of community gardens and food activism, community gardens suggest themselves as particularly well suited to supporting women's alternative food activism. Women already comprise the majority of community gardeners, which as outlined in Chapter Four, is likely best explained by the

historical connections between women and gardening, and women and food work. Community gardening—with its focus on food, community, and environment—is a public context where multiple areas of private life which women have traditionally been responsible for meet, and as Pardo (1990) demonstrates, when women participate in social activism it is often as an extension of those same concerns. Additionally, whereas governmental bodies and hierarchical non-profits are often masculinized spaces (Ferree & Mueller, 2004), as are food and agricultural policy spaces on account of their connection to the agricultural sciences or to bureaucratic legislative bodies (Erin Thompson, personal interview), community gardens are most often neither, suggesting that there is more room for women, and communal styles of leadership, to thrive. The first part of Chapter Five covered the leadership experiences of women in four different community gardens, demonstrating that women and communal styles of leadership *can* be very successful in the community garden context—although this is by no means a universal guarantee, and attention will always need to be paid to gender dynamics. Arguably, however, there are also benefits to having gardens connected to public bodies. For example, while Community to Community Development was turning to the Social Forums as an alternative political space at the organizational level, at the “grounded level” of the food movement, community gardens programs with pre-established government connections might fill a similar role. Although they are not policy creating spaces themselves, gardeners in government operated community gardens have the potential to be supported as they make claims on the state, via garden coordinators. While there is always the risk that garden coordinators could operate as a “masculinized”

extension of governing bodies, as the Seattle case demonstrates, this is not inevitable and coordinators do have the potential to act as advocates for gardens and to help garden leaders understand their activities as “legitimate” organizing work. Finally, community gardens are an alternative food work space which supports “feminized” forms of mobilizing, such as networking. As illustrated by even the simple, but habitual, exchange of produce between gardeners, relationships exist between community gardeners that facilitate informal exchanges of knowledge and resources. Although, as the findings presented in Chapter Four show, gardeners can be excluded from these intra-garden networks based on their marginal social locations, in general, the overwhelming focus on “community” within community gardens means that untapped networking possibilities exist in these gardens which could support women’s food justice activist efforts.

In arguing that community gardens might be particularly effective spaces in which to expand women’s involvement in the alternative food activism, I am not arguing that men should be discouraged from participating. In Chapter Four I presented findings which suggest that men’s food work in the garden shifts their understanding of food work broadly, including the gendered division of food labor within the home; this is a process which should be encouraged. However, perhaps community gardens could be reframed to be not just women dominated spaces, but spaces where women can play a significant political role in alternative food activism.

Conclusion: Community Gardens And Feminist Food Justice

At the conclusion of Chapter Three I argued in favor of an (en)gendered model of food justice that I called “feminist food justice”. More than simply bringing gender into

the food justice framework, feminist food justice also draws connections between the alternative food movement and feminist activism; in a sense, it is a “politicized” model of (en)gendered food activism which draws attention to gender inequalities within the food system and alternative food activism. Unlike food sovereignty’s radical political approach to food activism, feminist food justice is a progressive approach which recognizes that within the U.S. context, there are benefits to working with existing governing bodies, or even to “moving into” institutions with the aim of “changing them from the inside out” (Ferree & Mueller, 2004, p. 591). Based on this progressive approach, community gardens—especially those with official government ties—could clearly play a role in promoting a shift toward feminist food justice within domestic food activism. If community gardens were utilized as spaces in which citizens interfaced with local governments and made demands which improved local food systems, then they could be a powerful tool for alternative food activists—particularly for those who are marginalized in other political or social movement arenas.

To be sure: suggesting that community gardens might be particularly well suited to supporting women in food activism runs the risk of essentializing a connection between women and gendered labor as well as gendered ways of being a social organizer. Similarly, one foreseeable drawback to my call for moving toward feminist food justice is the reification of food activism being a “women’s issue”. As Ferree and Mueller (2004) point out, when women have engaged with national level political bodies, it is often because their grievances were judged to be gender appropriate. The reality of the contemporary food system, however, is too serious to be reduced to a single gender

concern—or even more worrisome, to be delegitimized on that account. Thus I also argue precaution; although the ways in which community gardens operate could increase the number of women engaging in activism and move us closer to a gender aware domestic food movement—and by extension, perhaps a less sexist food system—, the focus should never be on women alone. Feminist social justice has never been just about gender, and neither should feminist food justice.

Finally, it would be grossly over-romantic to suggest that community gardens could or should ever be the primary avenue through which marginalized populations, including women, approach food justice work. From a practical standpoint, community gardens—as they currently exist—are not capable of replacing the entire conventional food system, or eliminating food injustice. From a policy standpoint, community gardens are also run at the city-level, if they are run by governmental bodies at all; however, most of the legislation which shapes the food and agricultural system is made at the state and national levels. For this reason, I argue that a critical component of achieving feminist food justice will be to engage with political bodies at every level of the food system. While such an approach already characterizes the alternative food movement broadly, as discussed, gender is missing from the agenda. However, a map has already been laid, and if feminist food justice could successfully build upon it, progress could be made.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Three months before Barack Obama was inaugurated as President of the United States, *The New York Times Magazine* published a letter by noted food journalist Michael Pollan titled “Farmer in Chief”. A call to action, Pollan was encouraging Mr. Obama to not underestimate the amount of attention his administration would need to direct to food policy; the nation’s food system, he warned, was literally a “critical issue of national security” (Pollan, 2008). Yet, even though Pollan’s focus was directed at macro-level concerns (e.g., oil prices, climate change, health care, trade policies, etc.), he concluded his appeal with a more grounded prescription:

Since enhancing the prestige of farming as an occupation is critical to developing the sun-based regional agriculture we need, the White House should appoint, in addition to a White House chef, a White House farmer. This new post would be charged with implementing what could turn out to be your most symbolically resonant step in building a new American food culture. And that is this: tear out five prime south-facing acres of the White House lawn and plant in their place an organic fruit and vegetable garden. (Pollan, 2008)

In March of the following year Pollan’s vision would come to pass, yet one of the more notable aspects of that development went largely un-discussed. While Pollan’s letter had been addressed to “Mr. Obama”, it was Michelle Obama who became the symbolic “farmer in chief”, taking up the challenge of planting a garden and championing food system reforms. Aided by enthusiastic school children, Mrs. Obama oversaw the

planting and harvesting of food on the White House lawn, and bridged the garden-kitchen divide by being involved with meal planning and even publishing a White House Kitchen Garden themed cookbook. In light of the extensive media coverage of these activities received, I suggest it is significant that Mrs. Obama's identity as First Lady—as a *woman*—has not been part of the discussion, nor, by extension, has the gendered nature of her labor been analyzed. This is relevant exactly because it is clear that Michelle Obama's Kitchen Garden work *is* gendered. For example, in a video for “Inside the White House: The Kitchen Garden” Mrs. Obama notes that:

The garden was something I had always thought about. I was probably like most busy working mothers. I would find it difficult to feed my family in a healthy way. So I decided to change our diet...and we wanted the focus to be on kids because you can affect kids...and I saw that in my own life. (The White House Blog, 2009)

Interweaving her identity as a mother, her gendered responsibility for household nutrition, and a child-centered motivation for her activism, Michelle Obama's kitchen garden project is clearly informed by her social location as a woman and a mother, yet neither of these foundational motivations have become a significant part of the White House Kitchen Garden discussion.

Revisiting The Major Findings

Based on the literature review which guided this dissertation, the lack of gender discourse surrounding the most visible social justice oriented alternative food movement project in the country is unsurprising. However, here at the end of the study, it is now

possible to make a claim for “why it matters” that gender is absent from alternative food movement projects. While it would be easy to confirm and expand on the ways that gender socialization shapes both food experiences and social activism experiences and leave it at that, there are outcomes to ignoring the gender workings of alternative food activism which must be addressed. Patricia Allen and Alice Brooke Wilson (2008) have criticized local food movements for “tending to move to solutions without first analyzing the causes” of inequality, and they argue that such activism may unintentionally support “traditional American agrarian structures” by placing too much emphasis on individual choices rather than structural-level changes (2008, p. 537). This dissertation has aimed to avoid such a mistake by examining identity based processes in context and then considering what steps can be taken to address the inequalities which were observed.

This study has demonstrated that the U.S. alternative food movement has space to expand the attention it pays to social inequalities—particularly those related to gender. At the organizational-level of the movement, the case study of Community to Community Development showed that programming changes when activism is approached from a gender-inclusive intersectional perspective; women become centered within social change efforts, a move which brings multiple overlapping concerns (paid food labor, household nutrition, care work, etc.) into focus at the same time. Conversely, the absence of gender awareness at the organizational-level of the movement results in social justice oriented activists placing only race and class at the forefront of their efforts. As the analysis of food justice staff member demographics suggested, race and class may indeed be more influential in shaping experiences of food injustice, but it also suggested that

women may feel pressured (even if unintentionally) to subordinate gender concerns to race- and class-focused work by men in their communities who don't experience gender inequality. In either case, gender is certainly not irrelevant to women's *or* men's experiences within the food system, or as activists. The efforts of the food sovereignty movement suggests ways to push past this gender gap at the macro-movement level, such as holding nation states accountable for upholding human rights and building alliances with the feminist movement.

The data which resulted from the qualitative field work conducted for this study also demonstrated that gender shapes alternative food movement work at the “grounded” level. Continuing a pattern which can be traced back at least as far as 1894, the women in this study came to contemporary community gardening with different “gendered histories” informing their motivations, and have different experiences than men while there. These experiences impact leadership opportunities, and by extension, opportunities for political engagement. As presented, not all of the findings discussed in Chapter Four involved gender; sometimes class or ethnicity was operating without evidence of a specific gendered way of experiencing them. However, the fact that women comprise the majority of alternative food movement workers in spaces like community gardens means that addressing issues of racism, classism, and ableism will reduce the number of women experiencing identity based inequalities overall, and a reluctance to do so may suggest a lack of concern for social inequalities operating in “women's spaces”. The findings presented in Chapter Four supported some of the findings presented in prior research studies, including the fact that people often come to the garden with assumptions about

what is “appropriate” work for men and women, and that tensions can arise between gardeners along identity differences. What this study has contributed to that existing body of work is a new way to think about gender in the garden, specifically the relationship between participation in community gardens and gender shifts in other areas of food work, including the division of food labor in the home. What was most significant about these observed shifts is that they were intentional; men in the garden were developing an understanding of the labor involved in food and were intentionally engaging in it in the home as a result, or they were motivated (in part) to begin gardening because they had a prior awareness of the way gender structures food labor and their garden labor reinforced their understanding.

In regards to leadership, the findings of this study demonstrate that the barriers gardeners face to leadership within alternative food work spaces impacts both the formation of community and the transfer of knowledge. When community is undermined via identity-based inequalities, the diversity of the activist body which may result from community garden participation is reduced. When leaders overlook women and minorities as legitimate contributors, food knowledge specifically gendered or steeped in cultural heritage can be lost. However, the findings in Chapter Five suggest that grounded food movement work spaces like community gardens remain sites which could greatly expand food activism, especially for women and minorities. When leaders are attentive to structural inequalities, leadership becomes more diverse, allowing a more diverse body of citizens to develop skills which can help them transition from alternative food movement work at the individual level to alternative food movement activism beyond the garden. As

evidenced by the investment gardeners make in their Giving Gardens, food justice work is already taking place in many community gardens; if gardeners were supported in seeing this work as a form of activism, and if had the leadership skills to put political pressure on governing bodies, significant changes could be achieved within communities. Moreover, these changes have the potential to be informed by women and specifically work to reduce gender differences in experiences of food injustices like food insecurity.

Supporting Community Gardens

Urban agriculture has historically been viewed as an “anachronism” by city planners in the U.S. (Halweil, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). As settlement in cities increased throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, agriculture came to be primarily regarded as a “rural issue that did not demand the same attention as housing, crime, or transportation” (Halweil, 2004, p. 93). Contemporarily, however, several scholars argue that much could be gained from intentionally planning for urban agriculture, including community gardens. For example, the public health benefits of urban agriculture represent a concrete incentive for municipal-level investments in local projects. In addition to reduced crime and pollution, improved nutrition, exercise, and mental health have all been tied to urban agriculture, suggesting that community gardens are potentially effective responses to illnesses resulting from the built and social environment (Bellows, 2006; Maxwell et al., 1998).

Given that wider scholarship on community gardens has demonstrated that there are positive environmental and social outcomes related to community gardens, and given that this dissertation has illustrated the ways in which community gardens could

contribute to feminist food justice, what then is the best way to go about supporting urban agriculture, and community gardens in particular? Scholars Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) suggest three different potential avenues through which urban food systems could be supported by governmental bodies: municipal Department's of Food (which are as yet nonexistent), city Food Policy Councils (active in a small, but growing number of U.S. cities), or in specialized units carved out of existing city Planning Agencies.

Significantly, all three of these ideas set cities up as the sites of direct involvement in the food system. As discussed, the City of Seattle took such an approach beginning in 1997 when it incorporated the p-patch community garden program into the city's Department of Neighborhoods. While Detroit set the precedent for city run garden programs in the late 1800s, in their work *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Learning From Seattle's Urban Community Gardens* (2009), Jeffery Hou, Julie M. Johnson and Laura J. Lawson argue that based on the combination of institutional supports it offers, Seattle is a community gardening role model.

The publically administrated "p-patch" gardening program originated in 1973 with the locally infamous Picardo community garden, previously a three-acre farm donated by the Picardo family (hence the "p" in "p-patch") to grade-school children in order to grow food for a Neighbors in Need program. Pressure to save the community garden from being sold two years later on account of high property taxes resulted in a partnership between Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation, the City Youth Council, and the Puget Community Cooperative (PCC)—the city's local food cooperative. From this origin, the city program has grown to an extensive network of

gardens, all supported by several food and/or gardening non-profit organizations, in addition to the city itself. For example, Lettuce Link is a non-profit organization which helps collect “giving garden” donations for distribution at local charities. The program has made it possible for the amount of produce donated to rise; the city reports that between 2004 and 2007, the percentage of gardeners donating rose from 34% to 40% as a result (City of Seattle, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter Five, there are positive outcomes to having community gardens officially associated with local political bodies. In the case of Seattle, community gardeners found relief in the protection of the non-profit P-Patch Trust, which in conjunction with city and state level bodies, works to secure land tenure on their behalf. The power of cities to handle matters related to land ownership far exceeds what non-profits can achieve on their own. As a coordinator in the p-patch gardens, Erin told me that having the gardens connected to the city made it easier to handle issues which involved multiple city departments—such as the power companies and city streets. Perhaps most importantly however, were the political opportunities which were inherent to the city run program. Gardeners in p-patch community gardens—by way of their city employee garden coordinators—have a direct interface with their local governments, and were supported in their development of leadership and organizing skills. While community gardens which are run solely by non-profits are also capable of fostering leadership development, a garden’s direct connection to a public sector entity enables gardener’s to make demands on local governments. For example, community gardeners in Seattle described instances when garden members organized to pressure the city into

adjusting the program in ways which supported their food work on the ground. In one case, their effort focused on rejecting a city plan to address the long wait lists for garden plots (which could be upwards of five years, depending on the garden) (Maria, personal interview, 2011). While the City of Seattle had considered limiting plot tenure to three years in order to create space for new participants, because gardeners understood what this would do to the development of their communities and to local biodiversity, they began organizing to make their protests heard. In both the field work and interview setting gardeners described for me how their approach to the community owned land would change for the negative if they knew they could not stay in the gardens indefinitely. Wendy, for example, told me that instead of planting her blueberry bush—which could take three years to mature and therefore would never produce during such a short tenure—, she would only plant the same quick growing vegetables year after year (personal interview, 2012). Similarly, my observations of the many improvement projects undertaken by gardeners reflected their sense of continued benefit from the investment of both time and money. While I often observed individual gardeners adding new plants or fixtures to their personal plots, shared resources like patios, arbors, bee hives, fountains, and compost systems indicated to me the community's larger sense of sustained commitment to the gardens. Unlimited tenure was recognized as not only an incentive to maintain the soil, but also for developing relationships within the space. As gardeners presented their appeal, the City of Seattle realized that the multiple functions which the patches serve would be undermined if gardeners were forced to leave after only a few years and thus abandoned their proposal.

Compared to Seattle, Phoenix's community gardens lack support. While the Valley Permaculture Alliance is able to provide information about local regulations, gardeners are ultimately responsible for overseeing their own projects. Land tenure issues, taxes, insurance—all of these concerns must be researched and dealt with by independent garden leaders. For example, if Eileen's community garden had part of a city run program, she would not have been threatened by the local neighborhood association as there would have been a larger entity to ensure community support. Although Eileen was ultimately successful with her bid to protect the garden, it is very possible that the outcome could have been different. Additionally, without administrative level coordinators to assist with leadership concerns, individual garden members have no one to apply to when their communities are marked by inequalities. Breaks in leadership also become more difficult to navigate without coordinators recruiting unofficial leaders into leadership positions and providing a continuity of oversight in the meantime.

Undoubtedly, many of the growing community garden cultures across the nation are expanding within cities which provide no official services to them. However, the comparison between Seattle and Phoenix suggests that one of the most significant policy changes that could occur to support the alternative food movement, and food justice work within that, would be to provide local governmental support for alternative food movement spaces like community gardens.

As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, sexism, classism, ableism, and xenophobia do exist in garden spaces. To address such issues of inequality within the gardens themselves, examples of what needs to occur are not difficult to conjure, and

would span across community gardens of all administrative types. For instance, unless gardens are designed with ADA requirements in mind, physically disabled community members will find it difficult—if not impossible—to participate and benefit. Cities would have more authority to demand that gardens held themselves to standards of accessibility, but local non-profits could also act as a promoter and educator of how to support gardeners who need accommodation. Steps to address barriers such as care work responsibilities—which appear to remain gendered feminine in the garden—might take more planning and commitment, but could include starting “child care share” and “taking turns watering” programs. While addressing racism and sexism requires changes beyond the garden and beyond the food movement itself, within the garden, the process could begin by making it “safe” to speak out when incidents occur, perhaps by having an anonymous reporting system and clear leadership protocols for addressing complaints.

Reaching For Feminist Food Justice While Avoiding The Femivore

Viewed from the perspective of feminist activism and theory, I believe that the various social movements we collectively refer to as “the alternative food movement” remain in danger of failing to imagine, and therefore foster, a food system model which is as fully “alternative” to conventional corporate industrial agriculture as will be necessary to produce comprehensive social, economic and environmental justice across the global food chain. Although an increasing number of alternative food projects have improved upon older strains of food activism by paying explicit attention to structural race and class inequalities, there remains a dearth of gender-aware programs and policies—especially within the United States. However, in calling on food justice organizations to

begin “gender mainstreaming” their work, I do not suggest that efforts to increase gender awareness within the domestic movement should be limited to that thread of activism alone. On the other hand, because activism identified with the “food justice” movement is already focused on social inequalities, these organizations have the opportunity to lead the way in any concerted effort to achieve feminist food justice in the United States. Additionally, as a result of the research completed for this study I have become convinced that food justice organizations which attempt to include gender in their activism can greatly benefit from the example set by the international food sovereignty movement. Food sovereignty’s radical politics, the clear connection it makes between the local and the global levels of the food system, its reworking of the idea of capitalist ownership, and the significant role women play in directing the movement’s activities culminates in a model of food activism which can challenge and inform U.S. based activist’s change efforts.

By concluding this study with a call to the domestic alternative food movement—led by the food justice movement—to begin adopting the principals and practices of food sovereignty, what I aim to communicate is a form of “feminist food justice” that is politically committed to social justice and sustainability in a meaningful way. That feminist-identified food activism can error toward the depoliticized and superficial is already clear, with perhaps the most conspicuous example being the trendy image of the “femivore”.

For those following popular food movement writing in March of 2010, it may be remembered as a curious month. In an essay titled “The Femivore’s Dilemma” published

in New York Times Magazine, author Peggy Orenstein had drawn attention to—and creatively labeled—a particular subgroup of domestic food activists; “chicks with chicks”, highly educated women who are leaving the paid labor force to become fulltime homemakers, urban homesteaders, and participants in the local foods movement. Drawing on discussions with several of her women friends, Orenstein argued that through the alternative food movement’s struggle to minimize the negative outcomes of the corporate industrial food system, an unexpected “out” had been provided for women struggling with the “feminist predicament”, a malaise Orenstein characterized as the desire to embrace homemaking while “avoiding the fate of Betty Draper” (The New York Times, 2010). As described by Orenstein, femivores are women who transfer all of the energy and ambition they had applied to the paid labor force toward the running of a household which is ecologically friendly and focused on family health, often complete with an organic backyard garden and chicken coop.



Figure 3. The “femivore” as represented in the New York Times, by Katherine Wolkoff.

Predictably, in the weeks following the run of Orenstein's article, the blogosphere was in a riot. While the literal implications of the femivore label (are they consuming human women?) and the photograph which had been selected to accompany the article, were prime points for contention and/or amusement, feminists applying an intersectional critique to the identity also had plenty of fuel for the fire of online debate. Foremost amongst the critiques was that the "femivore" lifestyle indicates a level of economic privilege which allows for the option of choosing to leave paid labor in the first place, presumably by virtue of having a male partner with a substantial income. Blogosphere attacks of the femivore ideal were not just limited to class and sexuality, however. Women who had been raised on rural farms chimed in to point out the ways in which urban homesteading is romanticized; chickens are temperamental, gardening involves a lot of dirt and sweat, and what you can grow on the amount of land available to most city dwellers is often not enough to supplement the income lost from even part time employment. (Shoot, 2010).

In light of these concerns and the cumulative mass of popular backlash, one engaged blogger went so far as to declare the "fall of the femivore" less than a month after Orenstein's article first ran (Goodwin, 2010). However, I would suggest that such a pronouncement was premature. For example, in 2011 the organization Think Local First DC began granting a "Femivore Award" to a competitively selected woman leader in the region's local foods movement, and the October/November 2013 issue of the third wave feminist magazine *BUST* contains an article on foraging, information on how to make your own mustard, and other romanticized representations of domesticity which are

strikingly similar to the photo that ran alongside Orenstein's article over three years prior. In sum, I don't think the femivore—a raced, classed, arguably heterosexual, romanticized, and potentially oppressive image of feminist food work—has gone anywhere just yet.

Undoubtedly there are many models of women-led food activism which the general public may be aware of, as the example of first lady Michelle Obama demonstrates. Overall, however, I believe that there are relatively few models of explicitly feminist-identified food activism for the people to look to, and as a result, a concept like the femivore is positioned to misrepresent what the intersection of feminism and alternative food activism can result in. While not everything the femivore represents is problematic (for example, their demand for the revaluation of carework, including food work, will be critical for the success of the alternative food movement), in a broader sense I believe a concept like the femivore functions as a distraction from larger issues. While second wave feminists fought to legitimize the “personal” as the basis of individual activism, I fear that feminist food activists patterning themselves off of the femivore model are actually at risk for depoliticizing their activities. “DIY” projects can be fun, but activism which is entirely enacted at the household level has very little potential to accomplish significant social change. Thus, while femivores are a model of positive shifts in individual consumption, I argue that feminists—and all those who are committed social justice—need to be additionally focused on effecting change on a larger scale.

Kathy Rudy has written what I judge to be the best handling of the femivore's both positive and limiting aspects (March, 2012). While defending women's and men's decision to return to the home and emphasizing that it doesn't have to be a return to traditional gender roles and women's oppression, Rudy nonetheless argues that feminist food activists must also engage in social change beyond the "private sphere". Her suggestions for politically expanding feminist food activism focus on building alliances with minority communities to improve food quality and access, and on challenging the federal food policies and subsidies which form the backbone of a dysfunctional national food environment. However, building upon Rudy's analysis, I suggest that this dissertation makes the case for yet another level of political connection to reach for. By building relationships with feminist food sovereignty activists working beyond our national borders, domestic food justice activists have the potential to engage with a community of feminist food activists which is already much more robust and far reaching than our own.

In ending with a critique the feminist urban homesteader, I do not intend to promote a hierarchy of feminist food activists. Indeed, this same accusation has already been leveled at the femivore herself, an individual who is often accused of making self serving comparisons between those who shop at Wal-Mart rather than farmer's markets, and those who feed their children fast food dinners rather than meals sourced from the backyard. Thus, the final thoughts of this study are not dedicated to fostering competition between activists, or to narrowing engagement with the alternative food movement to just

one “acceptable” feminist model. Rather, I am invested in promoting a model of activism that has the potential to expand two critical social movements simultaneously.

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APPENDIX A
TABLES OF GARDEN CHARACTERISTICS

Table of Garden Characteristics

	City	Interviews Collected?	English Speaking?	Ethnicity	Income	Model	Garden Size
1	P	Yes	Yes	White; significant international student population	Students; low income	Individual plots. University land.	50 individual plots
2	P	Yes	Yes	White	Middle-class	Shared plots	4 shared plots
3	P	Yes	No and Yes (divided population)	First generation Central American immigrants; students	Working-class; students	Shared plots	5 shared plots (all giving garden plots)
4	S	Yes	Yes	White; some ethnic minorities (Russian, Native American, Mexican)	Upper-middle class	Individual plots	94 individual plots; 6 giving garden plots
5	S	No; field notes instead	Yes	White	Upper-middle class	Individual plots	19 individual plots; 2 giving garden plots
6	S	Yes	No	White	Upper-middle class	Individual plots	Individual plots, NOT a “p-patch”
7	S	No; field notes instead	No	First generation immigrants (South East Asian)	Working class	Individual plots	110 individual plots
8	S	No; field notes instead	No	First generation immigrants (South East Asian)	Working class	Individual plots AND shared plots	40 plots for market garden, 20 for individuals

APPENDIX B

TABLES OF KEY INFORMANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table of Key Informant Demographics for Phoenix

P	Gender	US Born	Ethnicity	Total H. Income in dollars	Age	Education Level	Employment Status	Children Living at Home?
1	M	N	Brazilian	40,000-59,999	31	Some college	Part time	Nephew
2	W	Y	Mexican	Less than 20,000	22	Bachelor's	Unemployed	N
3	W	Y	White	Less than 20,000	22	Some college	Less than part time	N
4	M	Y	White & Mexican	20,000-39,999	28	Master's	Full time	N
5	W	Y	White	40,000-59,999	20	Some college	Part time	N
6	W	Y	White	20,000-39,999	26	Bachelor's	Full time	Daughter
7	W	Y	White	20,000-39,999	59	Bachelor's	Full time	N

NOTE: N/A indicates that the interview subject left the question unanswered.

Table of Key Informant Demographics for Seattle

S	Gender	US Born	Ethnicity	Total H. Income in dollars	Age	Education Level	Employment Status	Children Living at Home?
1	M	Y	White	Less than 20,000	50	Master's	Part time	N
2	M	Y	White	Over 100,000	67	Bachelor's	Retired	N
3	W	Y	White	Less than 20,000	61	Some graduate	Unemployed	N
4	W	Y	White	40,000-59,999	46	Bachelor's	Full time	N
5	W	Y	Mexican	80,000-99,999	62	Bachelor's	Retired	N
6	W	Y	White	60,000-79,999	39	Bachelor's	Unemployed	N
7	W	Y	White and Native American	20,001-39,999	50	Some college	Part time	N
8	W	Y	White	40,000-59,999	52	Bachelor's	Unemployed	N
9	W	N	British	N/A	83	Bachelor's	Retired	N
10	W	Y	White	80,000, 99,999	65	Bachelor's	Retired	N
11	W	Y	White	60,000-79,999	66	Bachelor's	Part time	N
12	M	Y	White	80,000-99,999	47	Master's	Full time	N
13	M	Y	White	60,000-79,999	67	Bachelor's	Retired/Part time	N
14	M	Y	White	60,000-79,999	56	Bachelor's	Self Employed	N

NOTE: N/A indicates that the interview subject left the question unanswered.