Supporting Urban Agriculture for Food Justice:
An allyship lens on decolonizing research, urban farmer-to-farmer learning, and the neoliberalism critique in the East Bay, California

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the impacts of neoliberalism and racism on urban agriculture, food justice, research about these topics, and local government involvement in them. The introduction includes an overview of how neoliberalism and racism intersect to shape urban food justice activism. Next, I present three independent but related case studies. In the second chapter, I write with an elder food justice activist with whom I collaborated extensively during my early fieldwork at an urban farm. We write about the structural barriers, presented largely by the impacts of racism on the academy, to conducting respectful research in the spirit of allyship. As part of this process, we characterize two forms of food justice, moralist and original, and their relationship to colonizing and decolonizing research practices. In the third chapter, I describe the efforts of an urban farmer field school that supports food justice activists, in the original sense, and link both the inspiration and the pedagogical practices of the field school to racism and anti-racism. In the fourth chapter, I present a case study about collaboration among founders of an urban farm and county government leaders. The extensive support for the farm from the county reveals the shortcomings of a prominent critique about urban agriculture, the neoliberalism critique. I use the example to suggest that a kinder analytical framework for understanding food justice and urban agriculture can be rigorous. In the conclusion, I address recurring and emergent themes, such as the value of dynamic research relationships, the importance of allyship, and the effects of research on activism.

Keywords: Food justice, urban agriculture, Dig Deep Farms, East Bay Urban Farmer Field School, Alameda County, neoliberalism, anti-racism, allyship

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Table of Contents

List of tables and charts

Chapter 1: Introduction

As a graduate student, my first experience with fieldwork occurred at Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm with a social justice mission in what the USDA recognized as a food desert. Dig Deep Farms started only a few months before I arrived. There were ten farmers, all of whom lived in the area and had no prior farming experience. I had completed a year of Masters' coursework in Community Development at the University of California, Davis and I was interested in how people coped with food insecurity, namely, how they expressed and adapted their culinary traditions as a result of struggles to access healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. I had read as much literature about food insecurity as I could find. Much of it acknowledged urban agriculture as a viable strategy for increasing food security (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996; Allen 1999; McClintock 2011). Yet, none of it included perspectives of people with first-hand knowledge of food insecurity. This seemed wrong, so I was excited to work in and learn about urban agriculture alongside the farmers. I was especially eager to learn what food justice — a concept I saw as an exciting response to the disparities between where fresh, healthy food was available and where corner stores dotted the streets — meant to them.

Initially, I felt out of place there. As a white woman who grew up in an upper-middle class, mostly white suburb, was pursuing an advanced degree, and had never been food insecure, I was not sure how I would connect with farmers, who were all African American, of different ages, and from areas near the farm. But, I wasn't completely uncomfortable with this. Thanks to opportunities to travel internationally beginning in my teens, I was familiar with being the foreigner, the one with specific economic and educational privileges. And, I enjoyed the learning that happened in unfamiliar positions. Sometimes I was a little ashamed of my

privilege, but I was hungry to know how to use it to promote social justice. Mostly, as the farmers grew to be experts in urban agriculture and to see themselves as food justice activists, I was grateful to be their student.

When I planned this field work, I only anticipated doing research with Dig Deep Farms for about six months. But, five years later, I'm still doing research there. Over the years, my relationships with farmers developed in ways that significantly shaped my research interests and methods. Initially, I spent a lot of time weeding alone but eventually some of the farmers and I grew closer. We enjoyed working together and I sometimes played the role of confidante. One farmer nominated me to be the farmers' representative to the urban agriculture advisory committee of Dig Deep Farm's parent organization, the Alameda County Deputy Sheriff's Activities League. I declined this nomination, but I still felt obligated to live up to this trust. Yet, despite mutual trust, there were still ways in which the farmers and I were not close. Although we enjoyed working together, we weren't friends away from the farm.

In 2012, three of the farmers and I traveled to Detroit, where I began to understand this dynamic better. This trip was part of the Food Dignity project, a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded research project about how five communities build sustainable, just, and local food systems. Over the years of my PhD program, Food Dignity provided important learning and reflection opportunities. On this trip in May 2012, the three farmers and I traveled to Detroit with two of their supervisors and about 25 other activists and academics from Wyoming and New York. We met with members of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Coalition, toured their urban farm, D-Town Farm, and visited with civil rights activists at the Boggs Center. This was moving for everyone in our group, but it was different for the farmers. The same farmer who nominated me to represent them had a chance to learn about the Black

Panther Party. He learned that De Fremery Park in West Oakland, where he delivered produce every week, had a long history as a site of self-sufficiency and resistance. The Panthers used the park as a site for organizing and providing social services (Nelson 2011). In school, he was only taught that the Panthers were violent. He cried because he had been denied knowledge that he was carrying on a legacy of service and that he was part of something greater than himself.

When we returned to Oakland, I could tell that the trip had activated something in the farmers. But we still didn't talk about racism very deeply. After all, I had no personal experience on which to base my empathy and could offer no insight on processing and overcoming historical trauma, micro-aggressions, or overt racism. Although we had begun trading stories of love and resilience — caring for children, support from grandparents, lunches made with love and bagged up for the workday, a family phone plan shared among friends and colleagues — I did not know what kind of support I could or should offer. So, I turned to literature, mostly academic, to begin learning about what all of this meant for me personally and as a scholar.

In the next section, I review some of the fruits of this reading— the cultural and political history in the United States that I now see as foundational to all of my anti-racist research about urban agriculture. There were additional circumstances and more personal implications from this reading that shaped my research. I discuss these as well following this review.

Literature review

In my work with urban farmers, I began to draw connections between political economic structures in the neighborhoods where I did research and post-colonial states where I

previously travelled. In the literature I read about urban agriculture, scholars frequently acknowledged the structural nature of inequality, but rarely delved very deeply into how United States' racist political economic history shapes cultural politics today.

In summarizing what has become the defining theory of global political economics, David Harvey defines neoliberalism. It is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2005, 2). It is Harvey's contention that neoliberalism facilitates a process he terms "accumulation by dispossession," which occurs through privatization and commodification of once-public assets, financialization, management and manipulation of crises, and state-facilitated redistributions of wealth from the poor to the rich. Under neoliberalism, states, especially the United States, plays the vital role of facilitating and expanding these processes, which ultimately protects private property and creates markets where they do not exist, in, for example, such fields as education, social security, incarceration, and environmental pollution.

Harvey is concerned with how these processes cement class inequality. He argues that "the commonality that cuts across race and gender lines... is quite obviously that of class and it is not hard to see the immediate implication that a simple, traditional form of class politics could [protect] the interest of women and minorities as well as those of white males" (Harvey 1996, 338). However, in line with ideas I heard urban farmers in the Bay Area express, scholars of race politics in the United States contend that the neoliberal project is intrinsically racist. A couple of examples highlight these roots. The Federalist papers, although often framed as establishing principles about checks and balances and democratic representation, were very

much about the protection of private property, especially slaves, and their exchange value (Alexander 2011; Omi and Winant 2015). These values shaped the U.S. Constitution. As the Europeans and European Americans expanded their territorial control across North America, the accumulation of wealth was based on stolen lands. The forced and stolen labor of Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans was rewarded with forceful dispossession that has never been rectified (Sherraden 2005). My point here is not to provide a detailed history of racist forms of wealth accumulation and dispossession in the United States, but to dispel the myth of equality and meritocracy as foundational American values and establish this history as a starting point for my dissertation.

Despite the failures of reconstruction, local laws that limited economic opportunities for former slaves and their ancestors, and Jim Crow laws, many black, urban communities had achieved vibrant local economies within a hundred years of abolition. But, urban renewal projects, which "condemned and leveled many minority and poor communities" (Taylor 2014, 229) to make way for redevelopment projects, undermined significant aspects of this economic progress (Solari 2001; Self 2003a). And, restrictive property covenants and redlining drove many city-dwelling blacks to depend on government for housing and social services by the mid-twentieth century (Taylor 2009, 2014). These policies existed alongside violence and white vigilantism that suppressed African American enfranchisement, which was a keystone issue of the Civil Rights Movement.

Around the time of the Civil Rights movement the seeds of neoliberalism were planted. Harvey and Omi and Winant trace neoliberalism's origins to the Powell report of 1971, which Harvey describes as catalyzing "an assault upon the major institutions—universities, schools, the media, publishing, the courts—in order to change how individuals think 'about the corporation,

the law, culture, and the individual.' US business," he observed, "did not lack resources for such an effort, particularly when pooled" (2005, 43). According to Omi and Winant, the report catalyzed "a corporate-led network of think tanks, campus and media activities, and lobbying" to undertake "a widespread and lavishly funded effort to support corporate interests against demands for redistribution of wealth and expansion of the welfare state" (2015, 213).

This corporate activism led to an extensive set of policies of international and domestic scope that would protect and advance white economic and political supremacy. In the United States, when racially diverse class-based resistance contested policies that would limit workers rights or advance the welfare of the poor, corporate leaders and their political backers deployed media coverage to pit working class whites against their black peers (Kivel 2002; Alexander 2011). One way the media achieved this was through the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes of poor whites and backs as deserving and undeserving, respectively, of welfare benefits. The undeserving poor were deemed such, at least in part, because of their "disruptiveness" during the Civil Rights movement. Struggles for survival were met with tough-on-crime and law-and-order rhetoric. While new tough-on-crime attitudes were rhetorically race neutral, they resulted in redistributed funds and gave law enforcement and prisons unprecedented financial resources to arrest, incarcerate, and ultimately disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Americans, the vast majority of whom are people of color (Alexander 2011).

The redistribution of resources to law enforcement, and the creation of tax codes more favorable to corporations, restricted the abilities of federal, state, and local jurisdictions to provide services. Weakened environmental regulations and social welfare added to the plight of the poor (Faber and McCarthy 2003). Today, the emphasis on balanced budgets, although

ostensibly race neutral, cloaks a similarly racialized roll-back of state services. The ensuing hardships have, more recently, been exacerbated by predatory lending, the subprime mortgage crisis (Rugh and Massey 2010; Omi and Winant 2015), and gentrification (Cadji and Alkon 2015). The cumulative impacts of these practices and processes are part of what many urban farmers and food justice activists view as so fundamentally unjust and worthy of their activism.

These injustices are connected to the implementation of neoliberal political economic ideology at the global scale. Internationally, structural adjustment projects were widely administered by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. This resulted in mandated privatization of public or common resources and squashed public spending. Peasants and the urban poor were hardest hit. As Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) and many subsequent political ecologists show, political economic conditions can interfere with sound ecological practices and create mutually exacerbating cycles of environmental degradation and impoverishment. Upon losing their land, many peasants moved to cities (Davis 2006). Some also came to the United States and faced conditions similar to what many poor Americans already experienced, in terms of limited economic opportunity and social services (Holmes 2013a). In the most severe cases, immigrant experiences were more comparable to chattel slavery (Wolfes 2008).

Understanding this history was, in some ways, a beginning. On one hand, it provides broad context for the political economic context of the work described in each of the following chapters. On another hand, this history marks a beginning for more personal reasons. These political economic structures have shaped my life and positionality as a researcher. How I made sense of this history personally and professionally is foundational for my dissertation. I discuss this in the next section.

Research as Allyship

Through my involvement at Dig Deep Farms, I started to learn about anti-racism. I quickly recognized it as a framework that could help direct my old desire to use my privilege to promote social justice. Reading and learning this history helped me to make sense of the world and the lenses through which I was perceiving it. While I saw this a personal endeavor, I also wanted to know what it meant for me as a researcher. This, I realized, required clearly identifying the benefits and privileges that I experience as a result of this history and political economic structures. Through a praxis of reflecting, alone and with farmers, and engaging in research activities, I began identifying the benefits and privileges that were specific to research and my status as a student.

There are countless ways structural and historical racism benefited me. My ancestors came to the United States as early as the seventeen hundreds and as late as after World War II, so their experiences and opportunities varied. But, they all came on their own terms. They all had access to jobs, prestigious ones in some cases. They were able to own land and vote. I grew up in an area where more money was spent on schools attended by white students than on those attended by students of color. And, the curriculum I was taught affirmed my race as normal and prepared me to think critically and write like an academic. This was valuable, since my teachers, parents, extended family, coaches, friends, and friends' parents — everyone in my life — assumed I would attend college. Today, I live in a neighborhood with reliable municipal services, without fear of the police, and with easy access to amenities, including recreation. All of this prepared or allows me to focus on my scholarship and teaching. In identifying these privileges and benefits, and many others, I found Kivel's (2002) checklist of

privilege helpful. His work also helped me to recognize how structural and historical racism hurt me, as a white person.

Kivel explains that pressures on immigrants to Americanize can leave immigrants ancestors with little knowledge of the cultural heritage and a sense that American culture and whiteness are boring. This can lead to romanticization of cultures of people of color and/or other nationalities. And, indeed, I have experienced this. I suspect this was often a factor in my enjoyment of what was new and unfamiliar to me. Furthermore, growing up among almost exclusively white peers, I had never been in close significant relationships with people of color. Media portrayals taught me to fear dark-skinned mean, and since I went to school with so few students of color, I didn't learn other ways of perceiving dark-skinned men. Now, I attempt to unlearn this by reminding myself that I am safe and that my fears were inculcated, as I walk down sidewalks. I fight these tendencies as I build research relationship. But, sometimes, these hurdles, along with the history, discourage me.

In addition to helping me understand how racism impacts my opportunities and relationships, anti-racism frameworks helped me understand principles of allyship and apply them to my scholarship. I'm learning to be more sensitive to racism so that I can intervene when I see it. Because of my loyalty to the farmers, much of this learning has occurred in urban agriculture settings. General principles of allyship still apply. As Kivel (2002)explains, allyship entails "listening to people of color so that we can support the actions they take, the risks they bear in defending their lives and challenging white hegemony. It includes watching the struggle of white people to maintain dominance and the struggle of people of color to gain equal opportunity, justice, safety, and respect" (94). Additionally, allies take responsibility for

challenging a system of rules that are set up to benefit white people and making sure people of color “have the information and resources they need to move ahead” (Kivel 2002, 115).

So, what does this mean for me as a researcher? This is a question I tried to answer many times throughout my PhD work and through processes of trial, error, and reflection. Much of my participant observation at Dig Deep entailed listening to people of color holding different positions of power within the organization. It enabled the collaboration that led to chapter 2 of this dissertation. It also prepared me to step into a coordinator/action researcher role for an urban farmer field school that Dig Deep Farms started and that I write about in Chapter 3. But, being able to fill this role, at no cost to group (since some of my time as a researcher for Food Dignity could be allocated to this work) and get a PhD out of it, is a tremendous privilege. While racism shapes how I am able to engage in action research and be an ally, I’ve learned that allyship isn’t just about dismantling racism. This field school emerged, in part, because DDFs needs were not being met by the available, university-based resources. While existing resources were more than sufficient in terms of technical assistance, they did not validate the experiential learning happening on the farm or account for the social and economic dynamics of the farm. Thus, allyship is also about combating the institutionalization of knowledge, the privilege and power of university-based knowledge, and the impacts of these power structures on urban agriculture that is part of food justice activism.

Despite the rewards, there are ways in which I struggle to be an ally. Freire’s notion of solidarity applies to allyship. He writes that "solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture...true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these 'beings for another'" (Freire 1970, 50). This is echoed by activists of color who want to see allies bodies

“on the line” (Kivel 2002). I struggle to give fully of myself. I frequently make the choice to surf, for example, on the weekends rather than march or participate in community workshops. Part of this decision is about knowing my limits and needs for self-care. Sometimes I justify this by telling myself that my energy is better spent on research than on the front line. But I always wonder if these judgments are merely convenient ways to let myself off the hook. Either way, this choice marks a significant privilege I have through my involvement in activism as a researcher.

Another way I struggle to be a good ally stems from my limited experiences with people from backgrounds dissimilar to mine. As Max (2005) explains, the tendency to appropriate information is pervasive in academics. She provides an example of how this can be problematic. She writes “A friend of mine, who is Cree, gently chastised me for writing down the elders' stories. She reminded me to listen fully and completely with my heart, and not focus on remembering the story. I have struggled to do this and I ask myself why I was so intent on taking the stories home with me, by writing them down or remembering them. I know that the stories seemed so powerful to me, with many hidden layers of meaning. My mind was racing and I wanted to enjoy the moment; somehow, I wanted to keep it..." (85).

I also have to check my inclination to write down all the details and personal stories people share with me. I sometimes have an impulse to consider them as data. But stories are a part of people’s lives and the gift of story is the basis for our relationships. On one occasion, I was speaking with an activist whose efforts to show solidarity with a victim of excessive force by law enforcement had just been undermined by a colleague and he was angry. I jotted down something he said that seemed important. He stopped short and said, “is that for research?” In the moment, I couldn’t say yes or no since the topic of our conversation wasn’t obviously part

of my research, but it was my research that brought us into conversation, and after all, here it is, in my dissertation. This activist had the presence of mind and confidence to regain control of the situation, but not everyone I work with would. His reaction reminded me that the relationships I build should take precedence over the research questions. The tendency to appropriate and difficulty resisting this tendency are exacerbated by the ways I learned to romanticize cultures unfamiliar to me. To give into such tendencies would be to appropriate and decontextualize important parts of people's lives.

Each chapter of my dissertation reflects a different aspect of my allyship and action research praxis. Each chapter also engages with specific political economic trajectories related to the above history. In the next section, I provide an overview of the dissertation, a brief introduction to the themes, including the relevant political economic threads each chapter analyzes, and an explanation of how the topics were shaped by my relationships at Dig Deep Farms.

Overview

Thanks, in large part, to the Food Dignity project my research with Dig Deep Farms continued well past the time when I started recognizing that merely continuing with participant observation would not launch me into great, new unknowns. As I explain below, some of the research components of the Food Dignity project were difficult to implement at Dig Deep Farms, leaving me to flail as I wrote several dissertation research proposals that were equally difficult to implement. In a way, Food Dignity kept me tethered to Dig Deep Farms and forced me, and helped me, to find a way to do research that was intellectually enriching, emotionally stimulating, and morally satisfying. Developing a praxis of reflection and action with farmers and activists at Dig Deep Farms and the urban farmer field school was a major source of this

satisfaction. I grew as a person through this work, which affirmed the fundamental connections between the historical, structural, and personal domains of action research.

Each of the following three analytical chapters has roots in my relationships with people at Dig Deep Farms and a different form of allyship bears out in each. The second chapter explores the interpersonal aspects of allyship in research. The third explores the ways I used my researcher role to actively contribute to a social movement. And the fourth chapter represents a more passive role, but one in which I still support efforts to advance social justice. Each chapter does more than this as well. Thus, in this section, I describe how my fieldwork informed the focus of each article, pull in the political economic threads from the above literature review that are relevant, and review briefly the empirical and theoretical content.

During my field work, I developed a research partnership with Hank Herrera, Dig Deep Farms' co-founder and long-time food justice activist. Less than a year after beginning my field work, Dig Deep Farms became part of the Food Dignity Project. I was hired to work as a research assistant and would continue to work closely with Hank for three more years. We scrutinized our perceptions of Dig Deep Farms, where they aligned, where they diverged, and why. We jointly reflected about the nature of the food justice movement and scholarship about it, pushing each other to see urban agriculture and the food justice movement in new ways.

The second chapter, "Decolonizing Food Justice" is the product of this collaboration. This co-authored chapter is foundational for the rest of the dissertation because we begin grappling with several themes that run through the other chapters. First, we examine positionality in this chapter and specifically the implications of structural privileges, particularly my own white privilege and academic privilege, for my role in the food justice movement. Second, we

describe and characterize a diversity of practices that comprise the food justice movement. In doing so, we establish a set of values that guide the research in subsequent chapters. We describe colonizing tendencies in research about the food justice movement. We discuss how neoliberalism shapes a particular form of food justice activism, which we call “moralist” food justice. We demonstrate the interdependence of colonizing research and moralist food justice. We compare moralist food justice to “original” food justice. And, drawing on our individual and collaborative experiences at Dig Deep Farms, in the Food Dignity Project, and the food justice movement broadly, we share strategies we used to decolonize our own research practices. These strategies prepared me to undertake an activist research project that emerged because of the growth of Dig Deep Farms. This project is the focus of the next chapter, which I introduce next.

When the Food Dignity Project was designed, Dig Deep Farms had neither hired anyone nor harvested any food. As it turned out, many of the research components, which were intended to benefit the communities building local food systems, were a burden for Dig Deep Farms to implement while getting started. One thing they really needed was help learning to farm. So, Hank Herrera formed a network of food justice-oriented urban farmers for Dig Deep farmers to learn from. He asked me to help formalize this network as part of my Food Dignity responsibilities. My trust with the farmers gave me insights into their specific training needs. Thus, I became the coordinator of the network, which became known as the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School.

The third chapter, “We’re the Experts,” shifts focus from Dig Deep Farms to urban agriculture in the East Bay and its connections to the original notion of food justice. Whereas “Decolonizing Food Justice” addresses the connections between structural racism and my personal

connections to the movement, this third chapter looks at two related connections — between structural racism and its neighborhood-specific manifestations and between structural and historical racism and the personal implications for urban farmers of color, especially African Americans. I also review how neoliberal and racist values manifest in agricultural research and training and academic privilege. These relationships and conditions, I argue, highlight the need for anti-racist urban agroecology training. Using the case of the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School, I provide examples and analysis of how anti-racist research and activism can support urban agriculture.

While Dig Deep farmers were gaining skills as farmers and becoming more integrated in the fabric of the food justice movement in the East Bay, leaders of the Deputy Sheriff's Activities League were working tirelessly and persistently to convince county leaders to support the farm. Through conversations with Marty Neideffer, Dig Deep Farms co-founder and Deputy Sheriff's Activities League founder, it became apparent that this support was as critical to the survival and growth of Dig Deep Farms as the agricultural training for farmers.

In recognition of the importance of this work, chapter 4 turns away from the practice of urban agriculture and more traditional grassroots activism to examine the motivations and objectives of county agencies that committed resources — land, capital, access to markets, and political backing — to Dig Deep Farms. In this chapter, I draw on interviews with key supporters in various county agencies to analyze how urban agriculture became a strategy of local government to address the underlying causes of crime and poor health. Not only do these employees support an urban farm, but they strive to use county resources to change the structural causes of poverty. Their work with Dig Deep Farms defies the "neoliberalism critique," the view of some scholars that suggests that alternative food systems are inherently

complicit in processes of neoliberalization. Drawing on interviews, I reassess the value of the neoliberalism critique as an analytical framework for understanding urban agriculture and food justice work.

Although each chapter can stand alone, there are common themes running through them. First, each sheds light on how neoliberalization shapes urban agriculture and how urban agriculture is used to change political economic structures. Second, each article also contributes something unique to how researchers and practitioners work within and against structures of power, privilege, and oppression. And third, my journey through realms of reflection, activism, and critiquing leading scholars informs my sense of academic privilege. I return to these topics in the conclusion.

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Chapter 2: Decolonizing Food Justice: Naming, Resisting, and Researching Colonizing Forces in the Movement

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Abstract:

Over the past 15 years social movements for community food security, food sovereignty, and food justice have organized to address the failures of the multinational, industrial food system to fairly and equitably distribute healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate real food. At the same time, these social movements, and research about them, re-inscribe white, patriarchal systems of power and privilege. We argue that in order to correct this pattern we must relocate our social movement goals and practices within a decolonizing and feminist leadership framework. This framework challenges movement leadership and scholarship by white people who uncritically assume a natural order of leadership based on academic achievement. We analyze critical points in our collaboration over the last four years using these frameworks. Doing so highlights the challenges and possibilities for a more inclusive food justice movement and more just scholarship.

Keywords: food justice, decolonization, feminism, anti-racism, reflexivity

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Introduction and problem statement

In 1996, a group of academics and activists formed the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) as a response to race and class disparities in access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and affordable food in the United States. By many accounts, the CFSC played a critical role in uniting activists in alternative food systems fields (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, Morales 2011, Patel 2011). In creating a national network of activists working in low-income communities, the coalition cultivated what we know today as the food justice movement. We open this paper with stories from Hank's experiences as a leader in the early years of the CFSC. These stories demonstrate the promises of the movement and its failure to meaningfully represent people and communities of color. Thus they also represent what we see as the colonization of the food justice movement and research about it.

The founders of the CFSC were all committed, passionate, brilliant, successful leaders—and all white. Two of these individuals, a graduate student at the time and his professor, participated in a landmark study of food insecurity in South Central Los Angeles (Ashman et al. 1993). Subsequently, they provided a preliminary explanation of community food security: "For one, food security represents *a community need*, rather than an individual's condition, as associated with hunger [Emphasis in text]. A definition of food security in this context refers to the ability of *'all persons obtaining, at all times, a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local, non-emergency sources"*" (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996, 24, emphasis added). They and several of their colleagues and mentors went on to successfully advocate for inclusion of the Community Food Security Act in the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996

and subsequent farm bills—landmark legislation that provided funding for 294 local community food projects in its first 10 years (Tuckermanty et al. 2007).

The founders of CFSC emphasized a focus on low-income communities. The Articles of Incorporation of CFSC stated as the first purpose of the organization:

> "…to increase the visibility and understanding of community food security, a concept *designed to ensure that individuals in low-income communities have access to food and nutritional information and that such communities are able to provide for a greater share of their residents' food needs* through various efforts, including promotion of the urban retail sector and encouragement and support of local agriculture and family farming in order to insure the availability to such communities of fresh, nutritionally adequate food…." (Coalition 1997, emphasis added).

For Hank, as a person of color working in a low-income community of color to increase access to fresh, healthy, affordable local food that he and his fellow activists produced in their communities, these accomplishments and concepts ignited promise and hope that their work could gain widespread support. However, over time this promise and hope faded. While their work did gain broader support, their roles in local grassroots leadership, national movement leadership, and research about the movement also shrank.

For example, Hank vividly recalls the first annual meeting of CFSC in Los Angeles in 1997. One of the field trips went to a very large community garden in the heart of Watts, a largely African American community. The garden manager was a very pleasant young white man who had completed his apprenticeship at the UC Santa Cruz farm at the Center for Agroecology

and Sustainable Food Systems. As he described the gardeners, he talked about the Latino gardeners growing plants he did not recognize, that they then sold in street markets about which, he said, he knew nothing. His lack of knowledge of indigenous plants and markets while in a position of power at this garden represented a problem with the practice of food justice in this community and in the CFSC's leadership's understanding of food justice.

Other challenges emerged in the Coalition. Even spaces designed to foster leadership by people of color within the Coalition were not safe from troubling dynamics. Early in the history of CFSC, the Outreach and Diversity Committee (ODC) was charged with addressing race and class issues in CFSC and in the food system. A young white scholar who previously conducted research about the ODC and with their support announced her plan for another research project with Coalition members. Members of the committee asked to see her proposal, but she refused, insisting that it would compromise the independence of the research but maintaining that the research would benefit the committee. They barred her from any further participation in ODC activities, although she planned to use data she collected during her earlier work with the committee. The committee then wrote to her and her department to request that she not pursue further research about them. Nevertheless, she ultimately did publish about anti-racism work within the CFSC using data she had collected in ways that benefited her personally but not the ODC, CFSC, or food justice movement.

At the Oakland CFSC meeting in 2011, the last meeting before the coalition's dissolution, Katie listened to a white CFSC board member adamantly insist that there was no need for a people-of-color breakout session. What Katie perceived as an entitlement to lead was just a more recent example of how the CFSC's original promise faded for Hank and other leaders of color.

These stories represent colonizing, dominating, hegemonic propensities of white, patriarchal systems of power and privilege within the food justice movement and research about it.

In this paper, we explain the personal and theoretical ways we understand the colonization of food justice. First, we offer our own brief biographical histories, since our backgrounds shaped how we came to view and engage with the food justice movement. Second, we present our argument that the process of colonization unfolded in the food justice movement through the emergence of moralist food justice from the original notion of food justice. We link moralist food justice to the history of colonization of native foodways, which underscores the damage moralist food justice can do. Third, we review scholarship on decolonizing methodologies and feminist leadership. Fourth, we draw inspiration from this body of scholarship and apply it to our own collaboration. Ultimately, we show that applying these concepts to collaborative research resists some colonizing forces and fosters a more just form of scholarship.

The problem of problem definition

As [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences — (Thomas 1928)

In this section, we identify aspects of our identities that shape our engagement with the food justice movement. The determinants of the ontological questions we undertake are complex, and the particular variations in how we define similar situations are consequences of these identities (Thomas 1928). Despite shared interests, we come from different cultures, parts of the country, professions, and generations. Our different backgrounds and our common values are the foundation of our activism and scholarship.

Our experiences as people, one Native American-Chicano-Mestizo man (Hank) and one European American woman (Katie), shaped how we engage with the topic of the colonization of food justice and with each other. Hank has been involved in local food systems, community food security and food justice work for over 20 years. He has long recognized racist and oppressive forces at work in constraining opportunity for people and communities of color. His family made space for his education through constant struggle against poverty and racist stereotypes. He earned a medical degree, trained in psychiatry and served on the faculties of two medical schools. He participated in the civil rights struggles and eventually committed himself to neighborhood and community development in oppressed communities, with a specific focus on what we now call food justice. The structural violence imposed on youth motivates him above all else. Katie has been assessing the influence of her race, education, and economic privilege on her capacity to contribute to social justice movements. At the same time she has critical awareness of how her gender can erase some of her power and privilege. More recently she has dedicated herself to the struggle against racism and oppression in the academy and the food movement.

We met in early 2010 when Katie invited Hank to speak to her Alternatives in Agriculture seminar, part of her graduate program in Community Development at the University of California, Davis. In our first meeting, we recognized many common interests and shared values. When Katie began studying food justice, she noticed many parallel ideologies and circumstances to the field of international development, which she studied as an anthropology major in college. In conversations with Hank, Katie shared her observation that the voices of the food insecure were largely absent from the academic literature on food security. Hank concurred. Indeed, frustration with this dynamic—the absence of the voices of people

impacted by problems from the academic research on those problems— contributed to Hank leaving his academic career in order to pursue community-based work. It is through these histories that we understand the field of food justice and the problems that plague it.

We have worked together since 2010 in several scholarly and community-based food justice projects. Based on the common concerns, Hank invited Katie to intern and conduct her master's thesis research at Dig Deep Farms & Produce later that year. Dig Deep Farms & Produce[1] is an urban farm that aims to create jobs, improve the quality and accessibility of fresh produce in urban, unincorporated areas of Ashland and Cherryland, CA and that Hank co-founded (Bradley and Galt 2014). At Dig Deep Farms & Produce, Hank worked as General Manager, supervising a team of employees who were new to farming, learning on the job, and responsible for promoting the farm and its Community Supported Agriculture program in the surrounding neighborhoods. Katie began her internship and research by working with the farm team, although she spent a considerable amount of time at arm's length before gaining their trust. As a supervisor and founder of the farm, Hank's relationship with the farmers differed greatly from Katie's. Whereas he was in a position of authority in their eyes, farmers came to see Katie as an ally and confidante. This gave us very different perspectives with which to examine leadership within the food justice movement.

V. "Original" and "moralist" conceptions of food justice

The food justice movement is fundamentally a social justice movement. It takes issue with inequalities in access to food, exploitive labor practices in the food system, and environmental

[1] Eventually, the organization dropped "& Produce" from their name. I use Dig Deep Farms & Produce and Dig Deep Farms in different sections through out this dissertation, but consistently with the name of the organization during the times to which the writing refers.

degradation associated with conventional agriculture and environmental racism (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). In both discourse and practice, early CFSC efforts de-emphasized individual responsibility in favor of systemic accountability. Many explain these priorities as originating in the civil rights movement and the Black Panther Party (Alkon 2007; Patel 2011; Slocum 2011; Sbicca 2012; Green, Green, and Kleiner 2011; McCutcheon 2011). These descriptions contribute to what we refer to as the original notion of food justice, in which struggles against racism, exploitation, and oppression taking place within the food system (Hislop 2014) are integrated with practical efforts to establish fair, equitable access to fresh, healthy, affordable, culturally-appropriate food in vulnerable neighborhoods, especially low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, with ownership and governance of the means of production and exchange accessible to the people who eat this healthy food.

Alternative food movements, in contrast to food justice and despite similarities, evince many primary concerns, from the environmental degradation associated with conventional agriculture to the health consequences of consuming industrial food. These concerns have a moral dimension, in common with traditional environmentalism in which engendering environmental protection relies upon environmentalists accepting a moral obligation (Taylor 2002). As with environmentalism, a moral component comes into play in alternative food movements in such a way that proponents see local, sustainable, environmentally friendly foods as universally good things to which everyone should have access. Implicit in this belief is the assumption that with access, people make the right, or moral, food choices. Thus, a moral imperative to establish “access” to local food without regard for the ownership and governance of the means of production and exchange represents a moralist notion of food justice. Although this work is carried out under the banner of food justice, it is distinct from the original notion of food justice.

The moralist notion of food justice is the most recent manifestation of a legacy of social reform and conservation practices. Social reformers and environmentalists have long used food and humans' relationship with nature to reinforce white privilege. Before the advent of environmentalism and the alternative food movement, dietary practices and health more generally have functioned as markers of belonging, ability to work, and expressions of identity, religiosity, self-restraint, and morality (Berlant 2010; Coveny 2000; Crawford 2006; Farrell 2011). Indeed, today, within the alternative food movement, and including in the moralist food justice movement, eating more kale, for example, can mark one's morality or sense of cultural distinction, and more specifically one's sense of responsibility towards the environment, support for small, local farmers, and defiance of the power of corporate, fast food (The Economist 2012; Johnston, Szabo, and Rodney 2011). Members of social or religious movements usually make a deliberate choice to use food in these ways, yet, as Coveny (2006) explains, people still unintentionally internalize conflated conceptions of morality, science, citizenship, and health. And, more importantly, we assert that these internalizations are both reinforced by and reinforce the institutionalization of racism masquerading as scientific knowledge.

Conflating dietary advice and morality are quite harmful. Crawford (1994) explains, "health and its pursuit have become increasingly valued and thus have become a crucial terrain upon which contemporary, personal identity is fashioned…the 'healthy' self is sustained in part through the creation of 'unhealthy' others, who are imagined as embodying all the properties falling outside this health-signified self." These "unhealthy others' are often women, the poor, the colonized, and conquered. Moreover, their non-compliance with nutritional advice offered objective evidence of their immorality and, thus justification for denial of their rights (Farrell

2011). For example, Native American scholars contest the claim that western medicine improved the health of Native people, arguing that western medicine too often leads Native people to "neglect the social, the people, and their cultural models and their mental states when we clinically study foods" (Salmon 2012, 80; Wilson 2005). This exacerbated the impacts of such colonizing acts as provisioning of tribes with U.S. commodities, the industrialization of food, and the contamination of traditional food sources (Cozzo 2009; Mihesuah 2003; Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn 2011). Thus, institutionalizing nutritional knowledge further institutionalized the marginalization of women, the poor, the colonized, and conquered.

The last quarter century has provided yet another layer to the morality-diet conflation. Under neoliberal capitalism, non-conformers to specific dietary and nutritional advice, even those who have been systematically excluded from complying, (DuPuis 2007), are immoral because of their failure to participate in a market-based democracy (Guthman 2011b). As Guthman explains, under neoliberal capitalism, people are encouraged "to act through the market, or like the market, by exercising consumer choice, being entrepreneurial and self-interested, and striving for self-actualization and fulfillment" (ibid.). Unfortunately, neoliberalism has permeated some food justice activities. This contributes to conditions that prevent the poor, colonized, and conquered from participating in these markets, and from redefining democracy and economy.

Access to leadership positions within the food justice movement have been similarly affected, with well-educated, white people professionalizing leadership within food justice initiatives and programs intended to serve people of color. Indeed, a 2013 survey of food justice organizations confirms that only 16% of respondents work for organizations that "have policies that ensure representation of community members in paid and/or leadership positions" yet 79% of respondents indicated that issues of racial, ethnic, socio-economic, gender, sexuality,

political, and generational inequalities affect their organizations (Hislop 2014, 139). And, Porter and Redmond observe a “feminist erasure of women of color” in the context of a national food movement whose public leadership is male-dominated (2014, 267). Despite these disparities leaders of color do emerge but “individual examples do not necessarily reflect a structural whole” (Reynolds 2014, 13).

While there is no lack of integrity or good will on the parts of white people running the movement, the collective impacts of their whiteness in positions of power undermine the principle of food justice. Furthermore, despite exceptions to the norm, these disparities have significant ramifications. Kristin Ryenolds found that white led urban agriculture groups in New York City were able to attract more funding than their people of color led counterparts (2014). One prominent leader, Malik Yakini, has described this phenomenon on his blog in this way:

> “These [African American, Latino/Latina, Native American and Asian American] organizations are often under resourced and thus have significant capacity issues. This lack of capacity contributes to a self-perpetuating cycle that sees the lion’s share of food movement funding go to larger, well-established, usually white-led non-profits. Of course, this is not the only factor in funding inequities. Non-profit funding is based, in part, on relationships. Funders, who are overwhelmingly white, often feel more comfortable with people who look and speak like them, know people that they know and live lives similar to their own” (Yakini 2013).

Yaikini’s and others’ success in defying the odds of white leadership does not mark the end of white supremacy or the challenges that stem from it.

Scholarly colonialism

These two conceptions of food justice are mirrored in academic work on the topic. In the vein of original food justice, scholars of alternative food movements call attention to racial processes. They have described whiteness as including (though not limited to) the romanticization of agriculture (Alkon and McCullen 2010); racial exclusion in alternative food spaces (Guthman 2011a); assuming the right to speak for others or with authority (Pulido 2002); exotification of food cultures of people of color (Harper 2011); and widespread belief in meritocracy resulting from "a set of structural advantages including higher wages, reduced chances of being impoverished, longer life, better access to health care, better treatment by the legal system and so on… a set of cultural practices, often not named as 'white' by white folks, but looked upon instead as 'American' or 'normal'" (Frankenberg 1993, cited in Kobayashi and Peake 2000, 394). The cumulative effect of these manifestations of whiteness is structural racism and an unstated article of faith and nearly absolute certainty that the white way is the right way. Although these assessments are accurate, when they are used to generalize and essentialize food justice work, they marginalizing the practice of original food justice work.

Some scholars respond to this outcome by describing the complexity of racism in the food system and focusing on racialized experiences of eaters, cooks, food service workers, and farm workers (Abarca 2006; Harper 2011; Holmes 2013; Williams-Forson 2006) or highlighting food justice work carried out by people of color (Bradley and Galt 2014; Herrera, Khanna, and Davis 2009; McCutcheon 2011; White 2010, 2011a, 2011b). These scholars and activists

highlight colonizing forces within food justice and the strategies women and activists of color use to control their food and agriculture systems.

When the strengths of academic critiques of moralist food justice lie in the author's arguments more than in her research methods, she is shielded from having to examine how her own work reproduces white supremacy and knowledge hierarchies and scholarship mirrors colonizing aspects of moralist food justice. One element of colonization is especially evident in the case above involving the ODC. The researcher's assumption about the value of independent research is more in line with "individualistic careerism" than collaboration. Gilmore describes individualistic careerism as "the competition to know the most about some aspect of the politically and oppositionally 'new'" (1993, 71). Critique and comment on the "oppositionally new" undermined the self-determination of ODC members. Although, in this example, activists contested her scholarship, this is not always possible.

For example, a different scholar discussed her work with Katie, explaining that the former's article critiquing moralist elements of the work of a food justice organization led to changes in that organization's priorities. However, allies and colleagues more intimately connected to the organization told Katie that the changes were in the works prior to the scholarship in question and independent of it. While academic work can and does contribute directly to social justice activism (Pulido 2008), many activists never hear of specious claims or contest them because they are made in "cloistered" academic settings (Gilmore 1993, 72). Thus, scholarship critiquing moralist food justice does not necessarily constitute the original notion of food justice.

These examples highlight two shortcomings of conventional research practices — the lack of adequate means for research subjects to shape or respond to how they are represented and very limited transparency about research methods and the nature of researcher-subject relationships. This facilitates colonizing tendencies. And, it undermines the value of the research and academic publications for research subjects. These scholarly practices bear much in common with other colonial forces that emerge from the dominant culture with roots in western European Enlightenment rationality, science, and patriarchy. They persist because it poses no threat to the power of highly educated, mostly white people who direct and do research on food justice work nor to powerful economic interests that create conditions of food injustice. In the next section, we align and integrate a decolonizing framework with the original conception of food justice.

Decolonizing food justice research

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. (Smith 2012)

With these words, Linda Tuhiwai Smith begins a powerful, incisive and comprehensive analysis of the social, cultural, spiritual, and physical violence perpetrated by Northern European colonialists and imperialists over the past five centuries. The purpose of her analysis is to identify and name as much of the damage as possible. Doing so is to decolonize, that is, to begin the painful, agonizing process of at least mitigating if not healing the historical trauma caused by this violence (Brave Heart 2004).

Decolonizing food justice and food justice research must emphasize praxis because of the ways theory and practical action can be used iteratively in social change. Frameworks of explanation and on-the-ground strategies inform each other. Indeed, as Smith observes, research has been "inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (2012, 1). Over five centuries colonizing forces have included many forms of destruction, e.g., through disease; economic exploitation; subjugation and enslavement of indigenous people; enlightenment notions of rationality, science, dominion, and civilization; the positional superiority of European knowledge; the dismissal of indigenous spirituality; and imposition of what is "human" and what is "Other."

Colonizing forces go deeply into the research enterprise and have been normalized within definitions of the constitution of legitimate research, theory, and written documentation, e.g. "… systematic note taking, checking and rechecking of sources, interviews with informants and, eventually, publication of results" (Smith 2012, 87). An all too common consequence of colonial nature of much research is the dismissal of all other forms of knowing as primitive, inferior, and illegitimate. Of course, these forces and power dynamics are racialized in the most fundamental way: The white way is the right way.

In contrast to colonized forms of research, decolonization research is about understanding the world "…from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (Smith 2012, 41). Decolonizing food justice, we argue, also must take shape and develop from our own perspectives and for our own purposes, and based on our own stories and the theories used to explain them. We use the phrase, "our own", to refer to indigenous peoples, people of color, allies, and all marginalized and oppressed peoples.

Indigenous people must struggle "…to make sense of our own world….Part of the exercise is about recovering our own stories….inextricably bound to a recovery of our language and epistemological foundations" (Smith 2012, 40-41). Over the past six or seven decades, decolonization has involved the development of radical social movements, e.g., the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets, the American Indian Movement in the US and others globally. Indigenous peoples have struggled to regain land, language, culture, human rights, and civil rights. Decolonization has involved the formation of an indigenous research agenda, based on mobilization, healing, transformation, and decolonization—all with political, social, spiritual and psychological dimensions—and moving in waves from survival to recovery, development and ultimately self-determination (Smith 2012). Ethical research is an essential element of the decolonizing research agenda and involves respect; face-to-face engagement; looking and listening before speaking; generosity; cautiousness; respect for the people's knowledge; and humility (Smith 2012, 9). The indigenous research agenda brings to the center and privileges indigenous values, attitudes and practices rather than "…disguising them within Westernized labels such as 'collaborative research'" (Smith 2012, 128). It is grounded in indigenous constructions of community and group identity, interests, and needs.

Decolonizing methodology and radical social movements teach that theory and methodology are intimately connected. Retelling a story, or in this case, multiple stories about the CFSC and academic work is part of a healing process that reframes the history of the CFSC as a process in which activists of color were deeply invested and disappointed. This perspective serves as a reminder that a critique of moralist and colonizing practices must also honor the efforts of the oppressed to resist colonization. This demands a new theoretical explanation.

We contend that the original and moralist conceptions of food justice offer this. Furthermore, the perversion of the original notion of food justice and the emergence of a hegemonic moral

imperative in the guise of food justice are not merely structural phenomena. Individuals operating in universities, governments, and non-profits internalize values and recreate stories like those told in the introduction. After all, Tuhiwai Smith argues that we are "all inheritors of imperialism" (Smith 2012, 9). Given how historically entrenched this set of problems is, we are also interested in the power of decolonizing methodologies to transform research about food justice. We contend that by honoring experiences of the oppressed, research can embody decolonizing values and support the original notion of food justice rather than merely capitalizing on the moralist notion of it.

This section touches on a limited number of essential elements of the decolonizing process, which is complex, nuanced, multi-faceted and specific to oppressed people in their communities. Nevertheless, the implications for food justice and food justice research are many. The definitions, the practice, and the study of food justice must center and privilege indigenous knowledge, values, beliefs, interests, needs, hopes, and dreams. The food justice movement and food justice research require leadership from indigenous communities. When a formal research endeavor ignores the original notion of food justice, it is complicit in a colonizing process. Therefore, we look to other processes of social change for new definitions of research.

Feminist critiques of western science have contributed important frameworks for promoting social change through research. According to Tuhiwai Smith, feminism has opened up significant spaces "within the academy and some disciplines to talk more creatively about research with particular groups – women, the economically oppressed, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples" (2012, 9-10). A major way space "opened up" was through the coincidence, in the sixties, of activists and academics asking questions about power and

research. Feminism took on the considerable task of “undoing or deconstructing dominant paradigms by which most scientific research was bounded” (2012, 168).

Feminist leadership, according to Batliwala (2010) provides a complementary frame with the potential to correct the flaws and distortions of power and privilege resulting from colonial forces acting within food justice research and activism. Based on an extensive review of leadership literature, Batliwala offers several elements of feminist leadership that, we contend, are highly relevant to the formation of a decolonized research agenda for food justice. They include making “the practice of power visible, democratic, legitimate and accountable, at all levels, in both public and private realms” (18); “an active participatory attitude, and inclusion, at all levels of the organization” particularly of people from marginalized groups (26); an intervention “in structures of power that keep the world unjust” and a challenge to multiple, intersecting oppressions (26); creating a “more gender and socially equitable architecture” (27); and, ultimately, it must connect practices of power, politics and values (28).

Batliwala usefully identifies leadership practices and experiences that feminist leaders use to uphold a socially just research agenda. Whereas some are useful in terms of strategizing, others serve as comforting reminders about the normative and problematic nature of undertaking a feminist or decolonized research agenda. For example, operating within these frameworks requires agility and resilience, since the mainstream often penalizes efforts to up heave the status quo. Batliwala reminds us that introspection and critical appraisals of our own leadership efforts must be ongoing and integrated into every undertaking. Often activists undertaking these charges do not see themselves as leaders, but rather as part of a group, and they are uncomfortable with power. Relatedly, they see the creation of new and equitable

research paradigms and social institutions as fundamentally about relationship building (Batliwala, 2010, 34-5).

While the academy can offer resources and training for the practice of food justice and food justice research, it rarely encourages many of these characteristics. Tuhiwai Smith argues that struggling to integrate indigenous and feminist values and epistemologies into a research agenda is an alienating "occupational hazard" that can have a negative impact on the "perceived expertise and intellectual authority of the researchers" (206). The academy must learn to subordinate its interests, control and ownership to the indigenous communities striving for their own self-determination and emancipation. While we aspire to change these institutions, we have begun by applying these principles in our own collaboration on food justice activism and research. We offer the following stories in an effort to personalize decolonizing methodologies and to make visible this struggle for power.

Personalizing decolonizing methodologies

Theorizing the decolonization of food justice research and decolonizing ourselves as we collaborate in food justice activism and research are very different types of challenges to us as individuals and as two colleagues working in solidarity. While theory is often applied to case studies, it is far less common to read in peer-reviewed work how scholars make meaning of theory in personal ways. Although we fundamentally want to see structural changes in food systems and food systems governance, we believe individuals play crucial roles in pushing this agenda. Furthermore, the tendency of academics to call out racism and oppression in the food system without also reflecting on the ways scholarship and scholars re-inscribe

oppression merely buttresses the academy's power. Therefore, we also turn a critical gaze upon our collaboration in an effort to be the change we want to see in the world and to foster a community of praxis with others activists and academics struggling to decolonize food justice.

Collaboration requires that we accept each other's faults, are willing to acknowledge when we are wrong, and trust each other's commitment to justice. This is sometimes frustrating and challenging because, despite shared commitments, we are also entrenched in, and have internalized aspects of the cultures of movements and institutions that have colonized food justice. Within this context, we question the limits of what we each contribute and value the unique perspectives each of our backgrounds affords. Thus, we are well positioned to study how racism permeates food justice activism and scholarship and to propose strategies for combating racism in these fields. In doing so, we hope to deepen this body of scholarship that gives voice to groups who are too often silenced by or erased from food justice scholarship.

Several examples, ranging from quotidian interactions to epistemological questions, provided opportunities for us to reflect on, dispute, and create resolutions about how we personalize theories of decolonization and feminist leadership. The first story is of how we came to work together. Following up on Katie's invitation to Hank to be a guest lecturer at UC Davis, we met for coffee. At the time, Katie was a first year graduate student with no experience as an activist and almost no credentials as an academic; however wanting to be more involved in food justice activism, she used her status as a graduate student to initiate a conversation with Hank. She was nervous to meet Hank because of his reputation as a committed activist but told him about parts of her history that led to caring about food justice – learning to cook with her parents and aunts, visiting rich kitchens in poor households around the world, and ultimately overcoming depression by becoming a professional pastry cook. In reflecting on this meeting,

Hank observed, “Your heart was right there and I connected with that because to me, that insight into that learning that happens, that emotional experience in the kitchen, is so deep. It puts aside all intellectual considerations.”

In this situation, we both lowered our guards and refrained from using power we each held over the other. Katie did not draw on her connections to academic institutions. Hank did not draw on power derived from his status as an elder, a man, or veteran of the food justice movement. Therefore, with this type of interaction, we forged a connection that can and does bear stress.

And indeed, it has. In our first effort to co-author a story, we struggled to come to a shared understanding. The story was about Dig Deep Farms & Produce (DDF), the above-mentioned urban farm. We planned to tell the story at the Society for Applied Anthropology annual meeting in 2011. We decided to present because, as Katie wrote in her notes at the time, we wanted to critically examine academic story telling, the appropriation of knowledge, and to share lessons from DDF on these matters.

To prepare, we reviewed Power Point slides Hank and DDF co-founder, Lieutenant Neideffer previously prepared as part of the official story. We agreed to use some of them in our presentation. Reviewing the slides sparked a rich conversation about the social construction of knowledge and the limits of knowledge. Despite some common ideas and values, we also had different loyalties. Having spent months earning the trust of the farmers at DDF, Katie felt compelled to tell a story that they would approve. And, such a version of the story had to, Katie felt, acknowledge the farm crews’ frustration that they were not given adequate training and support to succeed in their new jobs. Meanwhile, Hank was wary of the possibility that any sign

of trouble at DDF could attract criticism from academics who would only know what we told them, and that such criticism could make its way to financial and political backers of DDF. He therefore wanted to tell a story that Lieutenant Neideffer, would approve and that would protect DDF in it's first year of operation.

Katie developed a first draft outline that incorporated the Power Point slides. As she worked, Katie thought that a more provocative presentation would explore tensions between farmers' experiences and DDF's overall objectives. In part, she was inspired by a recent keynote talk at the Dimensions of Political Ecology conference in which Paul Robbins emphasized the importance of tensions and contradictions in political ecological analyses.

Upon reviewing the first draft, Hank was disturbed by Katie's portrayal of conflict within DDF and by the way she deviated from the official storyline. Katie was disturbed by Hank's insistence that only one version of DDF's story could be told publicly. But, as we explained to each other why we wanted to tell the stories we did, Katie began to acknowledge that her search for tension instantiated a neocolonial and objectifying tendency of academic inquiry. Emphasizing conflict between values, objectives, and social relationships might have made for rich analysis of race and class dynamics in urban agriculture; but it would have wrenched control from members of DDF and subjected the organization to outside critique and possibly even loss of funding before farmers and founders could address the issues internally, which they subsequently began doing. This conflict demonstrates that academic endeavors can lead to appropriating stories, removing them from context in such a way that they do not serve the communities in which they originate. Over time, it became our practice to resolve any conflicts privately before subjecting them to public scrutiny through presentations or publications. This has the effect of promoting inclusiveness in shaping a living story. Batliwala encourages

making “the practice of power visible” however, we also believe making difficult or messy situations visible prematurely can undercut the efforts of activists (Batliwala, 2010, 18). Dealing with such issues using a decolonizing framework requires honesty, humility, and patience. We have yet to deal with irreconcilable versions of a story, but we have agreed that if this happens, we will share neither or both versions.

This paper is another product of our collaboration that demonstrates the importance of using decolonizing and feminist principles in food justice scholarship. We began writing this paper by discussing what arguments and stories we wanted to share and then taking turns writing and building on the other’s work. Katie used this strategy successfully in an article co-written with her advisor. It requires trust that errors will be forgiven and, even more than that, trust that one author will protect the other author’s ideas. After several revisions, it was Katie’s turn to write. She read some of Hank’s work, did not understand an argument, and deleted parts of it. She thought, if it did not make sense to her, it would not make sense to readers. She made other additions and edits as well and sent the revisions to Hank. Hank did not respond except to say that he was busy and he’d get to it.

A month later, we met to discuss the next steps. Here, Katie learned that Hank had not worked on the paper. Initially, Katie felt disrespected by Hank not working on the paper in the month since she sent him the draft. Gradually, Hank shared that he was so troubled by what Katie wrote, or more specifically, the absence of his words from our argument, that amidst his many obligations, he could not find the energy to address this silencing. Hank felt betrayed by Katie. And, it was a very frustrating and saddening experience for both of us.

Over ninety minutes of what seemed (to Katie) a very unproductive meeting and (to both of us) a very frustrating meeting, the seed was planted for a very important lesson. To maintain the trust that inspired us to collaborate, and for collaboration to be a meaningful tool of decolonization, Katie had to take all of Hank's ideas seriously, especially the ideas that did not obviously make sense. After leaving the coffee shop where this frustrating and saddening meeting took place, Katie went back to work. She restored the paper to the draft that preceded the problematic one. Focusing on what did not initially make sense to her, Katie spent time considering why Hank would chose the arguments and examples he chose. She considered these confusing ideas in the context of Hank's history, to the extent she was familiar with it, and in doing so, realized the shortcomings of her frameworks for thinking and writing about food justice and academic scholarship. It was embarrassing, as being wrong often is. Yet, it was this act of contemplation that helped Katie achieve greater understanding. And, it was the confluence of our ideas, on top of the trust we share, that enabled us to share these ideas with you, our reader.

If the process of writing a paper about decolonizing food justice has taught us anything, it is that the process of decolonization requires us to embrace what we don't already know or understand. The academy encourages particular ways of presenting ideas. From discouraging the use of the first person, assigning jargon laden readings in courses, and feedback on student work, to pressure to publish as a sole author, these expectations help define knowledge and success in academia. To decolonize food justice scholarship, we must welcome, humbly, and perhaps even embarrassingly, age-old yet alternative methods of sharing knowledge. From a scholar's perspective, trust can ease the discomfort of humility and embarrassment. From an activist's perspective, to decolonize food justice scholarship, fortitude

and patience can be invaluable tools. But that is not all. Next, we discuss several strategies Hank uses to ensure that his lessons fall upon open, humble minds and loving hearts.

In the course of our collaboration, Hank began learning about his Ohlone heritage. This was part of his family's history that was rarely discussed but of great significance and interest to him. One afternoon, we met to discuss DDF and the Food Dignity Project, a collaborative research project. We began reflecting about Native American history in the Bay Area and quickly realized we knew very little. Hank suggested we do some internet research together on the spot. As we sat over our laptops, sending each other URLs, looking out the window to a busy Oakland street, what we learned horrified us. Bounties were placed on the heads of Native Californians in what amounted to both physical and cultural genocides. As we read detailed accounts of this history, Hank imagined his forefathers hiding these stories inside themselves. He began to understand the weight of the burden his father carried his entire life and began to cry. He cried in empathy with their suffering. And, he cried because he knew then that it prevented him from knowing his ancestry and his father's struggles better.

In the months that followed, we realized that being open about pain and trauma is very important to our collaboration. Hank's willingness to share his feelings modeled the type of honesty he expects of his academic collaborators. This situation demonstrated the importance of acknowledging the overwhelming, present-day impacts of historical trauma and of chronic stress. It takes confidence, patience, and generosity to be as open as Hank was in this situation, and these are both privileges and burdens he possesses.

We are not calling on people who have suffered from racism, historical trauma, and other forms of oppression to bear the burden of educating people with more privilege. And, Hank takes

important precautions before sharing his wisdom and welcoming scholars into his activism. Hank is a well-known activist and as such students and scholars often request that he participate in research about food justice. In his time as general manager of Dig Deep Farms & Produce, Hank required any potential researcher to share a research protocol, work on the farm, and earn the approval of the farmers before beginning research. These requirements "make the practice of power visible," (Batliwala, 2010, 18) challenging the power of academics and helping activists to claim power in a relationship in which they often lack it. Such structure goes a long way in creating a space in which Hank is safe to teach and share in personal, vulnerable, and emotional ways, as described above.

Hank is not always the teacher in our collaboration. Although our working relationship began in a very unbalanced way, the power dynamic slowly shifted. Initially, the power and privilege of male teacher accrued to Hank, and Katie was in the vulnerable position of student and female. The power dynamic became more balanced through our intention to learn from each other. Initially Hank was driven to learn from Katie about her life experiences, cooking with her family, her international travels, and her academic work. He learned about her heart in the kitchen—an insight that went historically, intellectually, and emotionally deeper than his previous association with kitchen and cooking as merely a congenial and convivial experience and which helped him to identify parts of his heritage and upbringing that influence his activism. Through this process, we began articulating the importance of a reflective and personal agenda for food justice research, which this article represents.

Gradually, Hank learned about Katie's struggle to gain acceptance from the farm team at Dig Deep Farms & Produce. He witnessed the attachment between the farmers and Katie becoming powerful as trust grew. As hard as it sometimes was for him to hear, he learned

about thoughts and feelings of the farmers—thoughts and feelings that they would never express directly to him as "the boss." In this way, Katie's lack of power allowed her to become an authority on matters that Hank's power precluded him from fully understanding without her input.

We have worked hard, with a fair degree of success, to pull away the accouterments of patriarchy and privilege that ensnare us all if we allow them to do so. Most importantly, we did not learn from each other in contemplative isolation. We talk to each other frequently, honestly, and fearlessly. Our collaboration has thrived on each of us acknowledging our ignorance, appreciating the other's ability to constructively question each other's assumptions and attitudes, and aspiring to collective and emergent insights.

Conclusion

We offer this window into our collaboration to highlight ways we have tried to decolonize research about food justice and to invite other scholars and activists to do the same. Hank's generosity and vulnerability strengthened already existing trust. Furthermore, making time to research and discuss the history of Native Californians, as well as the history of CFSC's ODC, provided a broader perspective about the history of oppression that Hank brings to his activism and with which he makes sense of food injustice. These are processes Smith highlights as critical to decolonization. Yet, Hank's honesty and vulnerability, which fomented the situation, are not attributes that are promoted in academics broadly, or food justice scholarship specifically.

Integrating the qualities of feminist leadership, the imperative of decolonization, and original and moralist conceptions of food justice provides us with critically important markers for countering the injustice imposed by colonialism and white patriarchy, while building food justice within sustainable community food systems, and doing so with the support of academic research. These frameworks point to the pervasiveness of patriarchy, white supremacy, and colonialism in institutions of governance, including the academy, and thus the need to remake these institutions.

These frameworks also point to the critical role individuals play in remaking these institutions, and thus to the need to make these frameworks personal. We hesitate to suggest a prescriptive course for collaboration, except to say that multiple social, cultural, and political positions and unique personalities that academics and activists alike possess and the unique settings and contexts in which we work matter greatly. Our collaboration has worked well because we give weight to specific aspects of our own and each other's backgrounds and the circumstances that define our work. We grapple with how these factors impact and colonize our own thinking, within and outside of the bounds of traditional academic discourse. We attempt to step outside of—and indeed explicitly reject—those boundaries we find unrealistic and detrimental to just scholarship.

Understanding and decolonizing research about food justice will require considerable reflection, primarily on the part of academics, but also with support from activists. Collaborative reflection has enabled us understand and begin to decolonize our own research. Therefore, we call on other academics to engage in similar reflection, and eventually to make these reflections public. We also encourage honesty about what shapes the research, especially personal connections and networks, emotional and interpersonal challenges, and skill sets.

This, we contend, constitutes meaningful resistance to the academic and educational privilege, racism, and moralism. In our efforts to decolonize our research, we have often had to leave our comfort zones. We hope the above stories of frustration, collaboration, humility, and compassion will serve as reminders that this can be a fruitful endeavor.

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Chapter 3: “We’re the Experts”: practical lessons about urban agroecology farmer-to-farmer training from the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School

Abstract

In this paper, I show that urban farmers bear important similarities with peasants around the world because of how their communities are oppressed by the connections between structural racism and neoliberal capitalism. The neighborhood-specific manifestations of these structural conditions present unique challenges to urban farmers in the East Bay. I also review the racist histories of agricultural innovation, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance in the United States to highlight the need for agroecological training tailored to food justice-oriented urban farmers. I describe the formation and values of the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School (EBUFFS), which attempts to fill this need. I also analyze pedagogical practices used in EBUFFS that teach agroecological skills and acknowledge the intersections of structural and micro racism within urban agriculture. Ultimately, I argue that anti-racism and ally-ship need a prominent place in urban farming training and agroecology and that urban agroecological training must account for the multiple, diverse, and neighborhood-specific realities of farming in cities. This paper is relevant to scholars and students of urban farming as well as to agroecology practitioners and teachers.

Keywords: urban agriculture, anti-racism, farmer field school, East Bay, California

Introduction

I had been doing research with Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm in unincorporated, Alameda County, for almost two years when they broke soil on an 8-acre hillside. The team of new farmers was about to transform a grassy site behind Alameda County's Juvenile Justice Center into a farm, but they had concerns about erosion and soil moisture. The general manager at the time, Hank Herrera, invited Eric Holt Giménez to visit. Holt Giménez[2] spent many years working with and learning from indigenous campesinos farming on the sides of mountains in Guatemala (Holt-Giménez 2006). These farmers responded to green revolution technology, natural disasters, and political and military threats of land loss by systematically researching, implementing, and sharing agroecological techniques for maximizing their yields and stabilizing their hillside farms. They called the movement Campesino a Campesino. Ultimately, they hoped to protect their livelihoods and traditions. In the spirit of Campesino a Campesino, Holt Giménez taught the Dig Deep farmers what indigenous farmers taught him — how to dig trenches, build bunds, and use rain and gravity to develop resilient hillside terraces.

Over the course of the next year, Dig Deep farmers sought additional technical assistance from different sources. Initially, they attended beginning farmer and rancher training sessions or worked with agriculture and farming experts. A bit too often, these trainings were based on assumptions about farm conditions and farmer backgrounds that did not match closely enough their social justice-oriented urban farming model. As a result, the lessons were not immediately relevant. The farmers responded by inviting other urban farmers and food justice activists to

[2] Holt Giménez is also the Executive Director of Food First.

their farm to learn and teach. The Dig Deep farmers were now responsible for sharing the lessons of Campesino a Campesino. Gradually a group of urban farmers formed and began meeting monthly to teach and learn about different topics. What emerged was hands-on farmer training that also provided opportunities for farmers to make and deepen connections. Thus began the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School, or EBUFFS.

EBUFFS is a group of food justice organizations whose employees and volunteers meet periodically to teach each other about agroecological farming practices. It provides learning opportunities that are guided but flexible, allowing for technical skill acquisition, community building, leadership development. Modeled on Movimiento Campesino a Campesino, EBUFFS promotes self-determination and self-sufficiency within the food justice movement. It also responds to the racist impacts of niche food markets, and historical and contemporary forms of racist capital accumulation by committing to anti-racist values.

The group's early gatherings were well attended and participants were enthusiastic. Farmers from all around the East Bay talked about their farms, what motivated them, what they were growing, and how they were growing it. These farmers came from different neighborhoods and cities in the East Bay (although they often shared political economic conditions, as described below) and different generations. Farmers were Latino, African American, white, and Asian American. Some were born and raised in the Bay while others arrived as adults. And of the newcomers, some were drawn to the area by the social justice activism and professional opportunities in the area and others arrived as refugees. Some farmers were educated on the street and others had advanced degrees. Some farmers came with well-developed techniques for growing food in the city. In the fractious context of non-profit food justice work, participants were heartened by seemingly organic inter-organization collaboration. Some people expressed

deep understanding of how racism and exploitation pervaded the food system. This group honored local knowledge, integrated food justice politics, and accounted for often less-than-ideal circumstances of urban farms.

In this paper, I analyze the activities of EBUFFS, exploring why anti-racist values are important to urban agroecology training. Beginning with the fundamentally interrelated structural processes of neoliberalism and racism that inspire urban agriculture, I show that there are neighborhood-specific manifestations of neoliberal racism to which urban farmers respond. Along with the neighborhood level impacts, micro expressions of racism, which include everyday signals that are racially denigrating, shape and constrain urban agriculture. I argue that agroecological training for urban farmers must be sensitive to these conditions. To demonstrate how this can be done, I present the the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School's pedagogical practices that teach agroecological skills and acknowledge the intersections of structural and micro racism with urban agriculture. Ultimately, I argue that anti-racism and ally-ship need a prominent place in urban farming training and agroecology

Methodology and methods: ethical and relational praxis

The group was looking for a volunteer to coordinate its activities. Herrera and Holt Giménez asked me if I was interested in coordinating the group as part of my research. Their work aligned well with my research interest in participatory knowledge networks related to urban agriculture and food justice. It also aligned with my research ethics. I felt strongly that my research methods, not just my findings, should be useful to food justice activists. And, the

collaboration this would entail would allow me to reflect and learn in relation with fellow activists. I took on the role eagerly.

For years, I have been inspired by Laura Pulido's ideas and examples of scholarly activism (Pulido 2008). While I see myself at the beginning of such a path, many aspects of my fieldwork resembled what Jeffrey Juris terms "militant ethnography." This "means helping to organize actions and workshops, facilitating meetings, weighing in during strategic and tactical debates, staking out political positions, and putting ones' body on the line during mass direct actions…One has to build long-term relationships of mutual commitment and trust, become entangled with complex relations of power, and live the emotions associated with direct action organizing and activist networking" (Juris 2007, 165).

In this vein, I spoke with EBUFFS participants about the goals and assets they brought to the group and I learned about their organizations and farms. Beginning in late spring of 2013, and continuing through the time of writing (mid-2015), I did this by talking with them at workshops, reading about their work and their organizations, and occasionally attending community events, such as plant sales, open houses, and farmers' markets hosted by their organizations. These interactions helped me to understand the organizations for which EBUFFS participants work and volunteer. In addition to this, I organized and facilitated two planning meetings. The first was well attended; there were 16 people representing 10 organizations. At this meeting, we discussed a budget, our core values, rules for participating, and identified workshop topics. The other planning meeting was poorly attended with only two people besides myself from two organizations. Although we did not set a workshop agenda for the coming months, as planned, the small size allowed for intimate conversation, referenced below, that likely would not have occurred in a larger group. I conducted six evaluation site visits, with the goal of

visiting urban farms, learning about their strengths and needs, and identifying compatibilities and incompatibilities with EBUFFS. I coordinated and facilitated one evaluation meeting, attended by 11 people representing 5 organizations. During this meeting, we discussed valuable lessons learned in EBUFFS and barriers to participation. And, most importantly, I coordinated, with participants' assistance, 15 workshops. Following each event, I took detailed notes about who participated, what we did and talked about, and where we were.

This work occasionally required me to make strategic decisions, such as when to hire someone from outside of our group, based on the preferences and needs I heard participants express. This challenged me because, despite solidarity and some similarities, not all participants had the same needs and goals. Sometimes participation lagged and I worried that I had let down participants and facilitators by not identifying the most appropriate topic or adequately promoting a workshop. However, my emotional investment, reflections, and conversations about these events and decisions were critical components of my research, analysis, and learning.

The data and the questions I ask of it were developed iteratively and in response to ideas participants expressed at the first gathering I attended. At that time, EBUFFS participants were still getting to know each other and discussing their values. Having recently attended a research agenda setting symposium for the University of California's Berkeley Food Institute (Gliessman 2013), one person reflected that "our people" were not well enough represented. As he explained and I wrote in my field notes, this left him with little faith in the UC's ability to help underserved communities where the urban farms work. Responding to this, another participant asked, "at what point do we start assuming that we're the experts?" Others nodded, seemingly in agreement that the answer to this question was "now." This skepticism and

answer manifested in a group ethic that valued knowledge local and experiential knowledge. EBUFFS participants and I used it as a moral cue to shape the format of future workshops.

EBUFFS participants identified additional values that are critical to my research methodology. In the first planning meeting in January 2014, the group collectively articulated and agreed to the following:

1. We are committed to anti-racism and anti-oppression in terms of organizational missions and how we relate to each other. A couple ways we do this are by supporting teachers with diverse backgrounds and identities and reducing barriers to participation (through, e.g., stipends, participatory teaching techniques).
2. We acknowledge that we all bring something valuable to the lesson and the group. We are committed to fostering openness and respect, reserving judgment, looking for the positive, and maintaining spaces that are safe to ask questions. In creating this environment, we expect that everyone comes to EBUFFS as an active contributor and participant.
3. We are committed to sustainable, ecological practices.
4. We are committed to building a unified food sovereignty movement and creating systemic transformations.
5. At every gathering, we will discover, work, and learn together.

I used these values as additional cues to define my roles as coordinator and researcher. As coordinator, I needed to figure out how to uphold these values. As a researcher, I needed to document this work and return to these values in guiding my research and analysis.

There are limitations to this method. First and foremost, I assume that as a white person, fairly new to anti-racist ally-ship, people of color may view my research and activism with caution

and skepticism. As a potential participant in an ethnography of sidewalk culture in 1990s New York City explained, “My suspicion is couched in the collective memory of a people who have been academically slandered for generations…African Americans are at a point where we have to be suspicious of people who want to tell stories about us” (Hakim Hasan cited in Dunier 2004, 207). In a climate where white people dominate the professional landscape of urban agriculture and scholarly work about it (Hislop 2014; Reynolds 2015), a similar response seems not only reasonable but likely in the context of my research.

Second, throughout my research, and especially during evaluations, I wanted to ensure that I maintained reciprocity with EBUFFS participants. During evaluations, one of my goals was to understand why people and organizations that had expressed early interest in EBUFFS did not participate. Six agreed to meet with me for the sole purpose of evaluating EBUFFS (although others spoke with me about it more casually or via e-mail). I had to frame my evaluation questions in terms of what service, if any, people would like EBUFFS to provide. Much of the more personal feedback participants shared with me came from African Americans, although EBUFFS participants come from diverse backgrounds and races. As a result of this, much of my analysis focuses on the experience of African Americans in EBUFFS. In the future, EBUFFS will be doing more explicitly anti-racist work that will hopefully meet the needs of this diverse group and be attuned to diverse experiences of racism and urban agriculture. Additionally, as a white ally, I try not to place the burden of educating me about dismantling racism on participants of color. As a result, I asked questions about racism and racial identity only when EBUFFS participants opened the door for me to do so. On both matters, I asked questions and collected data based on what seemed appropriate and respectful given the dynamics of specific relationships.

As a result of these practices, I sincerely trust what people shared with me. And, as Laura Pulido explains, “the whole point of being a scholar activist is that you are *embedded* in a web of relationships, some of which demand a high level of accountability that will hopefully ensure the relevancy of your work in the effort to create social change” (Pulido 2008, 351). In the next section, I offer a literature review of the issues that motivate EBUFFS participants’ activism.

Literature review

The more I learned about EBUFFS’ participants, their organizations, and their politics, the more apparent it became that the connections between neoliberalism and racism were at the core of the change EBUFFS farmers want to see. These connections shape the local conditions — poverty, gentrification, mass incarceration, food insecurity, and health disparities — that motivate urban agriculture. They shape global conditions — peasants’ displacement, industrialization and commoditization of the food system, and responding social movements — that provide the food sovereignty framework for urban agriculture. And, they shape agricultural resources — the land grant university system and cooperative extension — that marginalize food justice-oriented urban agriculture. In this section, I outline a framework for a grounded, historicized, and place-based understanding of race in relation to urban agriculture.

The connections between neoliberalism and racism have been thoroughly articulated (Goldberg 2009; Omi and Winant 2015). Some scholars trace the protection of private property, a pillar of neoliberalism and an expression of American individualism, to political efforts to protect the rights of slave owners (Alexander 2011; Omi and Winant 2015). Others describe the way capital accumulation projects undermine the economic viability of African American

neighborhoods, through, for example, urban renewal, redlining, highway construction, and 20th century suburbanization (Solari 2001; Self 2003b).

Internationally, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund led the implementation of neoliberalism through structural adjustment projects. These forced the privatization of public or common resources and squashed public spending. Peasants and the urban poor — who are often indigenous people and people of color — were hardest hit. Some peasants with more land or better access to markets became contract farmers involved in export-oriented agriculture (Carney and Watts 1990). As a result of industrialization of production, concentration of land and supply chains, substitutionism and commoditization, and the globalization of produce markets, the number of farmers declined and new environmental vulnerabilities emerged (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Whatmore 1996). The loss of farmland for peasants is also tied to the financialization of farmland and land grabs around the world (Borras Jr., Wang, and Franco 2013; Brent and Kerssen 2014; Fairbairn 2014). This redistribution of land wealth created opportunities for green revolution technologies to expand into new markets; and, in many cases, adoption of green revolution technologies led to debt that led to further loss of land by small holders (Holt-Gimenez and Altieri 2013). Upon losing their land, many moved to cities (Davis 2006). Many also came to the United States and faced conditions similar to what many poor Americans already experienced, in terms of limited economic opportunity and social services (Holmes 2013b). In the most severe cases, immigrant experiences were more comparable to chattel slavery (Wolfes 2008). These political economic structures shaped many realms of society, including universities.

More specifically within universities, the relationship between neoliberalism and racism shaped the development of agricultural technologies and knowledge transfer. In the United States, the

Morrill Act and the Smith Lever Act respectively established the Land Grant system of universities, many with agricultural experiment stations, and a related system of cooperative extension to disseminate university-developed technology and knowledge (Ramussen 2002). As Holt Giménez explains, much of this knowledge is centralized, hierarchical, too often underestimates the importance of trust among farmers, employs unidirectional knowledge transfer, and is based on drastically different socioeconomic and environmental conditions than what campesinos experience. And, as Trauger et al. found in Pennsylvania, extension curricula are developed with "authentic" farmers, i.e. male and productivist-oriented, in mind. When this curricula "do not meet the needs of women, neither the content of the programming nor their ideas about women are seen in need of revision. Rather, the woman farmer herself is framed as an inadequate fit to the program and she should adjust herself to the content and the context" (Trauger et al. 2010, 98). This, they argue fits Freire's definition of oppressive pedagogy.

These practices tended to marginalize small farmers pursing agroecological practices and resisting commoditization and concentration (Chambers 1983; Bell 2004; Warner 2008). At the same time, by promoting expert knowledge, they contributed to the concentration of land and agricultural resources described above. Furthermore, it often adopted racist ideology. For example, Harris describes the conscious and deliberate anti-black discrimination in the southern extension services (Harris 2008). Specifically, extension agents invoked "a connection between race and the ability to comprehend and apply scientific agriculture" (Harris 2008, 194). And, following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, some extension offices chose to close rather than integrate (Butler 2014).

Efforts to maintain white, male supremacy through agricultural knowledge and practices were not limited to the U.S. south or to extension. Linda Nash describes how science intersected with white supremacy in California; as agriculture became more industrialized, and environments thought to be pure of pests and ordered by gridded fields and canals, disease persisted among farmworkers. Farmworkers "read their bodies as a kind of instrument whose limits and illnesses measured the health of the land" (Nash 2006, 138), yet public health, housing, and agricultural agencies and their staff continued to dismiss farmworker knowledge (Ramirez and Villarejo 2012)[3]. Furthermore, land grant resources do not adequately meet the needs of Latino, Asian, and women farmers (Ostrom, Cha, and Flores 2010).

In more recent times and in the jurisdiction that is to home to EBUFFS, two studies addressed the incompatibilities between extension services and urban agriculture. University of California Cooperative Extension Small Farm Specialists provide technical assistance to agricultural operations that are commercially oriented, which tend to be located in predominantly white areas (Reynolds 2010). Reynolds argues that many urban farmers are left without assistance on topics such as “expanding food production from personal gardening to (community) market gardening, or community development” (Reynolds 2010, 190-1), although UC Davis researchers found that the staff of University of California’s division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, which houses extension, would like more resources to support urban farms (Surls et al. 2015).

[3] In the U.S. south, the economy was built not just on slave labor but on slaves’ agricultural knowledge and ingenuity (Carney 2001). And, around the country, farmworkers identified many inputs as dangerous before they were banned following the development of university-based evidence (Nash 2006). These contributions to agricultural advancement are rarely acknowledged within this system.

In addition to extension, a variety of farmer training programs have emerged.[4] Across the board, they require significant time and financial commitments that are often much greater than what EBUFFS participants can afford. Although they are valuable local resources and may make accommodations for, or in rare cases work directly with, marginalized groups, they all follow conventional teacher-directed pedagogical models and reinforce the links that Chambers argues exist between modern scientific knowledge and "wealth, power and privilege"(Chambers 1983, 75). Given the history of racism in extension, extension's marginalization of urban agriculture, the privileging of institutionalized agroecological knowledge, and the racialized impacts of neoliberal ideology in cities, urban farmers of color share important similarities to third world peasants.

This similar, subaltern status makes farmers' and peasants' resistance strategies highly relevant to urban farmers and food justice activist in U.S. cities. Around the world, farmers and peasants have resisted these trends of commoditization, concentration, displacement, appropriationism, in part with agroecological farming practices (Francis et al. 2003; Braun and Duveskog 2008; Altieri 2009). Generally considered to be those practices which mimic local ecological conditions and build resilience to potential threats to sustainability, agroecology includes interconnected horticultural and sociopolitical components. Agroecology adopters and proponents generally opt for farming methods rooted in local ecological knowledge, even if they are labor intensive.

University and extension-based knowledge transfer methods alienate agroecological farmers in various. They tend to be productivist- oriented. And, they tend to privilege corporate,

[4] Regionally, there are three intensive, multi-month apprenticeship programs (University of Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, the Center for Land-Based Learning, and Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association).

industrial agriculture's interests in university developed knowledge, which is incompatible with ecologically sustainable and small-holder farming. Therefore, not only do farmer-to-farmer movements focus on specific content, but they develop their own pedagogy as well. Campesino pedagogy is a praxis-based, people-centered form of cultural resistance. They are often based on Freierian principles of learning (Bell 2004) and "adult non-formal education" (Braun and Duveskog 2008, 3). They include experimentation and failure as important components of knowledge production (Holt-Giménez 2006). Within farmer-to-farmer models, small holders share technical support and conduct research that is appropriate to local contexts. These strategies also often strengthen the sociopolitical base of agrecological farmers (Holt-Giménez 2006).

With this combination of content and pedagogy, these models have been shown to increase peasants' agroecological resilience by promoting, for example, integrated pest management practices (Van den Berg and Jiggins 2007), pesticide use reduction (Braun and Duveskog 2008), and soil conservation (Holt Gimenez 2001). Such practices increase peasants' self-sufficiency by reducing their reliance on expensive inputs and outside expertise. As Van den Berg and Jiggins acknowledge, farmer field schools and farmer-to-farmer models, "have been designed to achieve more than increasing farmers' technical capabilities, and have sought to enhance their educational, social, and political capabilities" (Van den Berg and Jiggins 2007, 666).

In the United States, particular aspects of this model have been replicated in different ways. In some rural, agricultural, and mostly white communities, farmer-to-farmer groups have been created, promoting peer-to-peer learning, small scale experimentation, "bottom-up knowledge," and mutual social support among farmers (Hassanein 1999; Bell 2004, 24).

Farmer to farmer models have also led to the partnership model of extension (Warner 2007, 2008). These groups have not, however, addressed racial inequalities. This has been the work of groups like the Beulah Land Farms, Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative, and the Detroit Black Community Food Security Coalition (McCutcheon 2011; White 2011; Ammons 2014). These organizations insist on privileging experiential and cultural knowledge of black farmers and providing spaces where "blacks can discover self-reliance and empowerment through working in a community of black farmers" (Ackerman-Leist 2013, 130). Scholarship about these initiatives makes important contributions by recognizing the self-determination and legitimacy of black sustainable farmers. While scholarly critiques of urban agriculture and the shortcomings and needs of urban agriculture are fairly easy to come by, no scholarship about urban agriculture training programs recognizes the self-determination and legitimacy of the myriad objectives of justice-oriented urban farmers. In the next section, I turn to the political ecological context of urban farming in the East Bay and pay particular attention to the urgency and legitimacy of farmers' multiple priorities.

Politics and ecology of urban farms

The work and mission of each organization participating in EBUFFS is telling of the ways they engage with neoliberal ideology and racism. All of the organizations work to change the political economic systems that simultaneously perpetuate and are upheld by racism and neoliberalism, or they are working to support groups oppressed by these systems. Of course, they do these activities in addition to farming or supporting urban farmers. Growing food is a way to increase food security and food access for neighbors and constituents. It is also a way to engage neighbors, constituents, and employees in building social and political capital. And, food production can increase an organization's credibility to outsiders and/or its fundability.

While farms generally have favorable growing conditions, there are several political ecological factors that can limit productivity. In each neighborhood, farmers contend with specific manifestations neoliberal racism.

EBUFFS participants are motivated by several problems that are rooted in the systems described above and fall under the umbrella of food justice. The urban poor, who are often people of color, are excluded from niche markets for high quality, chemical-free, fresh, healthy food by high prices and labor costs. For EBUFFS participants and many other urban farmers across the country, this issue tends to be a gateway for challenging structural racism that causes so much poverty. Many participants also recognize that food insecurity and lack of access to high quality fresh food is experienced by many people in tandem with other environmental injustices. Such stresses as unemployment or underemployment, neighborhood crime, police brutality, inadequate access to health care, and/or environmental pollution compound the effects of food insecurity. Most EBUFFS participants recognize that many constituents of their organizations navigate these stresses on a daily basis. Participants look critically on the industrial food system and most consider themselves and their work to be in solidarity with environmental justice, farmworker rights struggles, and the international food sovereignty movement.

From this common ground, participating organizations work in multiple areas (see Chart 1). Two do job-training, one with six-month cohorts and one through providing longer-term employment. Several do social work case management, with low-income families, with refugees, and with formerly incarcerated individuals. Of the organizations working with individuals affected by the criminal justice system, there are different approaches; one group focuses on job training and post-release internships on a farm, another is advancing a

restorative justice pilot project with the local police force, one EBUFFS group engages young people in long term mentor-mentee relationships, and yet another attempts to disrupt the school-to-jail pipeline by home schooling youths who were expelled from or struggled in public school system for behavioral reasons. Several groups do economic development work, through operating a community kitchen, providing assistance to beginning farmers, and providing small business coaching. Other organizational priorities include hosting public educational events, operating Community Supported Agriculture programs, and doing youth programming with elementary and teenage groups. For all of these groups, urban agriculture is a means for achieving social justice objectives that often take priority over producing food. These objectives also influence production and marketing.

EBUFFS participants farm and market their produce in different ways. While a few participants make a living by farming for a non-profit community-based organization, they are in the minority. The rest of EBUFFS' participants are students, program managers, volunteers, and non-profit professionals in fields related to urban agriculture and food justice. Unlike the farmers in the Campesino-a-Campesino movement on which EBUFFS is based, nearly all the urban agriculture groups that participate in EBUFFS depend on grant funding, which is typical of urban farming in the non-profit realm around the United States (Cohen and Reynolds 2014; Hislop 2014; Rogus and Dimitri 2015).

Farming conditions vary among EBUFFS participants, but there are some similarities. Seven of eleven participating organizations farm on less than an acre. All use organic production methods but none are certified. One is pursuing certification. They use various distribution channels (see Chart 2), including community supported agriculture/produce boxes, farm stands, and non-market channels. Although only one participating organization owns the land

they farm on, all participating organizations have stable and reliable tenure with landlords such as local counties, city parks, and community college districts. As a result, they are not facing private development of the land on which they farm[5]. Urban farms have been deliberate about this. For example, when California AB 551, the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone bill, passed, one EBUFFS participant told me that his organization would not push for local implementation or pursue farming on potentially eligible parcels because it does not offer stable, long-term tenure.

Stable land tenure comes with costs and municipal government landlords present constraints. For example, some landlords place restrictions on permanently altering the landscape, including by planting trees. As a result, urban farmers sometimes plant trees in containers, where trees are less productive and harder to maintain. Those who disobey such constraints do so not simply out of necessity, but also to assert their right to control their food supply. In another case, an EBUFFS participant gained access to land that was not worth developing because of its steep slope. Consequently, farmers confronted additional challenges of learning to farm in multiple nutrient and moisture conditions that result from hillside farming while also combating soil erosion. Despite these challenges, most urban farms in the region "have high soil fertility, and many farmers follow soil building practices and use techniques that emphasize high biodiversity" but researchers still concluded that "farmers face a number of issues related to insect and weed pressure, as well as problems linked to soil contamination and water use efficiency. Outreach should be targeted towards methods for increasing functional biodiversity, productivity with lower inputs, and resilience of farms" (Altieri et al. 2014). Additional factors,

[5] I continue to coordinate EBUFFS although the window for my dissertation research has closed. More recently, a group new to EBUFFS farms on land slated for development and they are actively protecting it, primarily through direct actions.

such as the diverse priorities described above, and local social functions of farms described next also shape the adoption of such methods.

In addition to navigating local politics and relationships with landlords and producing and marketing food, EBUFFS participants are also frequently attuned to and involved in local neighborhood events. At one workshop, our host and facilitator began by telling us about where we were.

> He talked about the history of the area. Dover Park was the track for Merritt College, where Bobby Seale and Huey Newton met. He also talked about current issues in the neighborhood – there have been four murders lately. The victims' families have painted silhouettes of the victims on the fence. Later, he said that one thing they've done that's gained credibility in the neighborhood is working to stop gang injunctions (Field notes).

Prior to another gathering of the field school, I met a resident who volunteers at the hosting farm. I wrote in my notes

> He is on a citizens stewardship committee for the park. He and a few other people on the committee are responsible for trash pick up on the street, because there's a lot of dumping. Today, he looked to see if a mattress he called about had been picked up by the city. It had. He and one of his neighbors also keep the graffiti off the fence across from the garden. He holds a weekly meditation that's not religious in the garden and was about to start it before we began talking. He started the meditation by striking a small metal bowl three times. I sat with him and practiced being present. The clouds were moving across the sky and the wind was blowing the tree branches around and my hair. There were kids playing baseball next to the garden on the diamond. There were mechanical sounds off in the distance and oldies playing from somewhere nearby (Field notes).

And, in another neighborhood, one of our facilitators told us about the California Hotel:

> It was originally the only place blacks could stay in Oakland and so it's where many famous musicians like Ella Fitzgerald stayed when they came for the jazz scene. The building was eventually converted to apartments. A few years ago a development company tried to kick out the residents, but they organized, hired a lawyer and were allowed to stay. The building is being renovated and filled with low-income housing and on-site social services. During the construction, developers built a wall around the site and the garden to prevent theft. The 12-15 foot plywood wall still stands and at first the farmers were mad because it closed off the garden. They eventually put up some murals and built some planters on the outside. There aren't tags all over the wall because of this and the developer appreciates the gardeners' contributions (Field notes).

In these ways, the farmers are liaisons among developers, residents, the city, and neighbors and they play roles as keepers of local history and neighborhood stewards. As such, the farms' neighborhood contributions are greater than their produce yields alone. The farms' commitments to working with neighborhood folks in areas affected by racist political economic practices means that some farmers are new to farming and food systems, new to social justice organizing, or both. And, these practices mean that EBUFFS' commitment to anti-racism is especially important for aligning agroecological training and neighborhood conditions. The next section addresses the importance of anti-racism to agroecological training and challenges to upholding anti-racism values in EBUFFS.

Upholding anti-racist values

The structural nature of racism in the United States and the neighborhood-specific manifestations of racism shape and constrain urban agriculture. As a result, EBUFFS needs to address the legacy of slavery, the micro impacts of racism, and the barriers they pose to urban agriculture. While EBUFFS must address these factors for all of the diverse participants, it is still working to identify all of these. The discussion in the section gives more attention to the experiences of African Americans in urban agriculture than to other racial groups because African American participants shared more personal feedback with me than participants of other backgrounds. Thus, the lessons I draw from this feedback are only a few examples of racially specific ways urban agriculture training must adjust. In addition to racially specific considerations, EBUFFS training incorporates and supports anti-racism efforts more generally through the practices of meeting people where they are and selecting facilitators.

First, EBUFFS participants recognized that the trauma imposed by the history of slavery can be a significant barrier for African Americans becoming leaders in urban agriculture. Two black EBUFFS participants discussed this memory: One, who is interested in urban sustainability, going back to school to learn about green building, and eager to use his administrative skills to support urban farmers, told me that he has no interest in putting his own hands in the dirt since his ancestors already did that. Another participant spoke with me about the impacts of comments a colleague made comparing him to a field slave. Following the comment, the farmer was so hurt that he questioned whether he wanted to pursue his work. Ultimately, he decided to pursue farming, but only along with support for overcoming the association with slavery, educating his colleagues, who are white and black, as to the courage and strength it

takes to confront the history and legacy of slavery, what it means to be a black man farming with white managers, and how his white colleagues and supervisors can be more supportive allies.

In addition to more traumatic histories, EBUFFS farmers contend with white supremacy in alternative food movements. For example, after a workshop several participants lingered and discussed why it was so difficult to get folks in their respective neighborhoods excited about growing vegetables. One person said, “people think green means white.” Another participant sympathized, saying that she steers clear of the term organic because “organic is like Pilates.” For these farmers, the connection between healthism, an ideology in which notions of wellness, “camouflaged as natural, become powerful vehicles for authorizing and validating social practices” (Crawford 2006, 404), and racism poses challenges to urban agriculture.

Second, meeting people where they are sometimes requires understanding and creating space to acknowledge personal hardships, especially when such hardships are connected to structural racism. Several farmers in EBUFFS have lost family members and close friends to street violence, partners to jail, or paid work hours to recovering from violent injuries. Others have spent considerable time worrying about family members being on the street or have faced homelessness themselves. All of these situations affect the wellbeing of some farmers and, thus, their ability to concentrate on farming. Therefore, making space for participants to acknowledge and support each other through personal experiences of racism is crucial groundwork for agroecological knowledge to be shared and learned and for new leaders to emerge.

Third, EBUFFS tries to validate these realities and create anti-racist dynamics by hiring people of color as facilitators when there isn't a facilitator available within the group. EBUFFS intends for this to accomplish several outcomes, such as supporting leaders of color and fostering connections between EBUFFS farmers and local leaders. Additionally, one EBUFFS participant acknowledged that many of the East Asian, immigrant urban farmers she supports do not connect around food justice verbiage in the same way that program managers, long-time activists, and students do. So, another intention is to expose EBUFFS participants to farmers of color who have developed their own resonant verbiage, as well as political frameworks for their work with food and farming. Unfortunately, merely bringing together people with appropriate leadership skills and interests was not always adequate for accomplishing these objectives, since agroecological content sometimes took precedent over these issues. Nevertheless, the intentions matter, given one participant's reflection that there are more than enough urban farming training resources in the Bay Area that are widely accessible to well-educated white people and that she is very sensitive to when she is in predominantly white spaces.

In addition to attempting to dismantle racism through these strategies, EBUFFS also adopted pedagogical practices that helped uphold the group's commitment to anti-racism. Since EBUFFS farmers are predominantly people of color and were new to farming, the more our pedagogical practices met new farmers where they were, engaged them in learning *and* teaching, and valued experiential knowledge, the more EBUFFS workshops would help new urban farmers of color develop skills and knowledge to become leaders. I describe these practices in the next section.

EBUFFS pedagogy and values

Over the course of 15 workshops, a set of pedagogical techniques emerged. These include offering hands-on instruction, timely and actionable lessons, unstructured time within workshops, and facilitated group discussion. Below, I describe these practices and explain how they helped to uphold core values, and where and why they fell short.

First, workshops began and sometimes ended with unstructured time, allowing farmers to get to know each other on their own terms and explore interests different from or more specific than the workshop topic. In the cover crop workshop, we connected this technique with other objectives, like leadership development and providing practical, actionable lessons. During unstructured time at the beginning and end of the workshop, participants were able to explore their own interests. For example, they asked questions about planting strawberries and the advantages and drawbacks of a particular type of sprinkler. Host farmers who were not officially facilitating the workshop were able to answer these questions because they had experiential and place-based knowledge. More experienced farmers interested in the technical and biological details of rhizobium were able to discuss their questions without alienating farmers seeking practical experiences. Additionally, this became a space where participants could connect around shared experiences of racism, as mentioned above.

Second, leaders facilitated group teaching and sharing, increasing opportunities for all farmers to share what they know regardless of skill and experience level. In a workshop about greenhouse irrigation, the facilitator structured the presentation of information with relevant questions. For example, he began by asking the group to define irrigation, then asking the

group to identify different types of irrigation, and then if all of those types of irrigation were appropriate for starts. When heads shook “no,” we discussed as a group why not and what young plants need. People called out that they need consistent moisture, multiple waterings per day, and low pressure watering; thus, the facilitator kept track of the content he needed to review, but drew it out of participants rather than presenting it. When someone asked about flooding flats of seedlings, he asked the group why that worked and what risks were associated with the practice. Only when no one else in the group could answer did the facilitator present information. In this situation and others like it, facilitators with advanced degrees in agricultural fields downplayed their expertise so that others who learned on the job could teach their peers.

Third, workshops employed hands-on instruction and encouraged learning through doing whether the focus was crop planning or pruning. At a crop planning workshop, with the help of a facilitator, the group developed crop plans based on hypothetical square footage, yields, and varieties. At a pruning workshop, participants practiced on branches already removed from trees before taking clippers to fruit trees. At a seed saving workshop, participants scraped seeds out of ripe fruit, smelled, felt, and rinsed fermenting tomato seeds, tasted seeds from hot peppers, stomped on dry crops to release seeds, and winnowed seed from the chaff with box fans. This practice allowed participants to share fears about making a damaging cut while pruning precious trees, unease about the smell and slime of fermenting seeds, or frustrations with math while making a crop plan.

Fourth, EBUFFS facilitators offered education that was actionable based on existing skills, experience, and seasons. For example, fruit tree pruning was addressed during a winter workshop, and cover cropping was taught in the late fall, when the skills could be taught in a

hands on way and when farmers could immediately implement that skills on their own farms. In addition to timing, the content matters. In the cover crop workshop, most participants were not interested in the biology of nutrient fixation. Only one participant wanted to talk about the rhizobium in the inoculants. So, it was appropriate that the facilitator didn't spend a lot of time discussing rhizobium and nitrogen fixation. Most participants wanted to know what practical considerations they'll need to make when, for example, they plant cover crops on their own farms or when they explain the practice to a volunteer. In addition to gaining practical experience through this teaching method, it allows EBUFFS participants to support other farmers by making a work investment in each others' farms, thereby building solidarity. Along with hands-on instruction, this practice helps the group to uphold core values of working together and building a unified food sovereignty movement.

These pedagogical practices have a number of effects. Planning for unstructured time helped to create spaces in which people built relationships and where it was safe to ask questions. Together with the practice of facilitating group teaching and learning, this created an environment in which everyone was able to contribute something valuable to the group, whether before, during, or after a workshop. Practices that focus on experiential expertise help to level the playing field and encourage novices to engage. This is important because many new farmers often do not realize they have something to teach and as a result, take months or even years to develop the confidence to share. Providing settings for casual inquiry and explanation helps novices to engage in the learning process as teachers and learners. This helps to cultivate leadership skills, highlights the knowledge of multiple participants, and helps to uphold the value that everyone brings something valuable to the group. Ultimately, through these practices, EBUFFS is able to teach agroecological skills while also acknowledging and confronting structural and micro forms of racism.

Conclusions

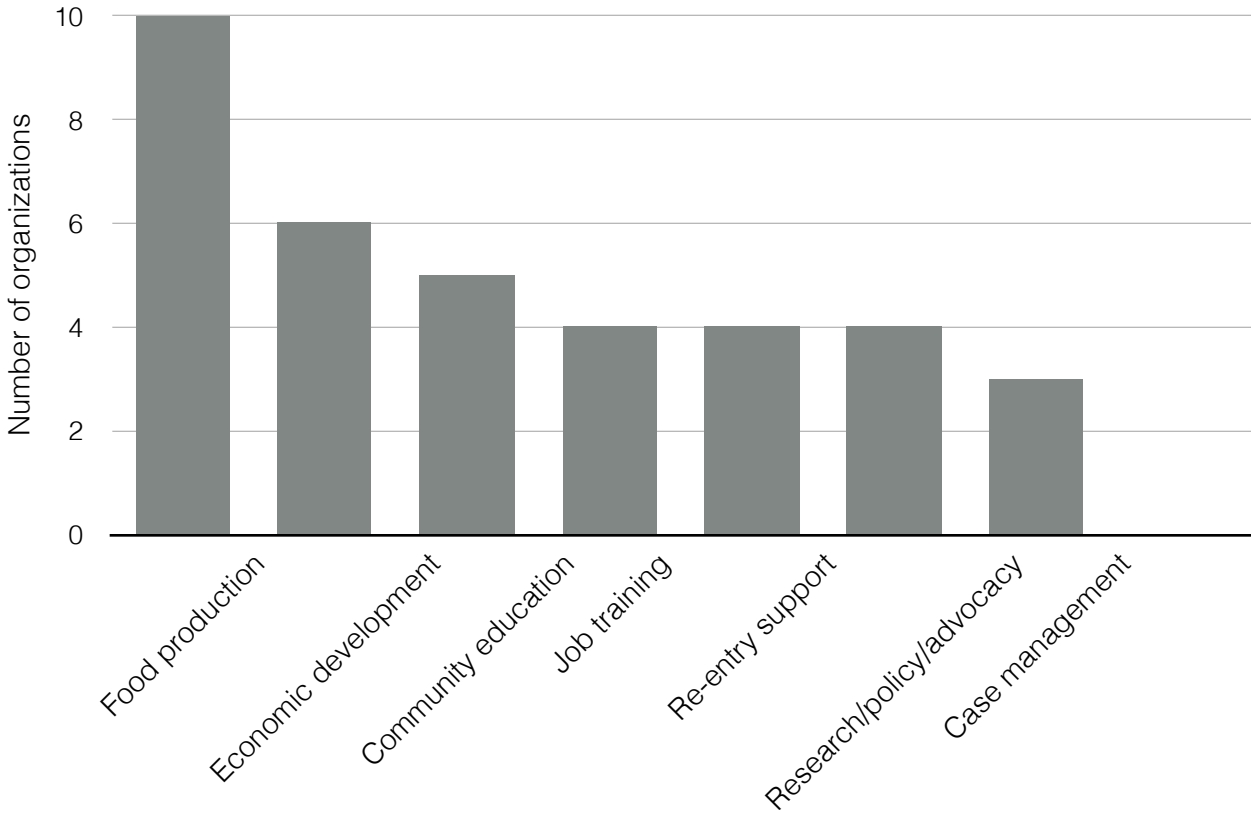
I have argued that racism manifests in a number of ways that limit urban agriculture and agroecological practices. This racism is ideological and structural and has specific local manifestations, such as with urban renewal, redlining, gentrification, and predatory lending. It also has individual implications, as with exclusive niche food markets, food insecurity, and micro oppressions that have complex and diverse impacts on real farmers and activists. All of these converge to create specific conditions and training needs for many urban farmers. These factors, which in turn shape local ecological contexts and farmers' needs, must inform urban agroecology training if this training is to support urban farmers and their many goals. Urban farmers who have been marginalized through urban processes of capital accumulation, histories of slavery and segregation, and the devaluing of experiential knowledge cannot be expected to conform to traditional modes of technical assistance when the purpose of training is to support self-sufficiency. Therefore, in the contexts I have described, and many parallel contexts, there is both a moral and practical imperative that urban agroecology training also be anti-racist. This anti-racism must address both structural and micro forms of oppression. And, it must honor the relationships that comprise anti-racism and food justice movements.

In this vein, EBUFFS works towards a vision of vibrant place-based, anti-racist, urban agroecologies that help expand leadership by urban farmers of color, increase agricultural biodiversity and productivity, nurture and nourish local activism pursuing resilience and self-determination, and begin to heal the legacies of racist violence, both structural and physical. There is not a formula for this. Indeed, EBUFFS is still experimenting with its format and striving

to center anti-racist practices within agroecological training. EBUFFS will explore new strategies in 2015-16 that will better fulfill the training needs of diverse participants and shed light on additional anti-racist urban agroecology training practices. Urban agroecologists, extension advisors and specialists, master gardeners, well-intentioned academics, and urban farmers generally must take cues from anti-racist and liberation activists. While many already do, many more have yet to take up this call.

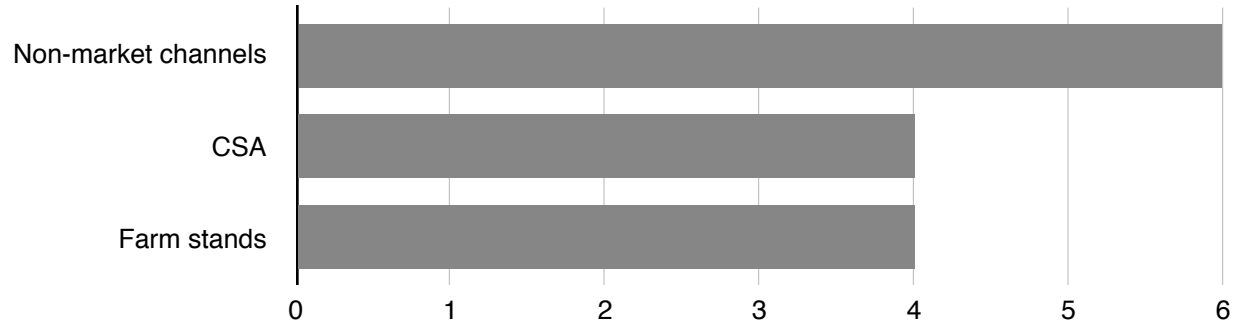
Charts

Chart 1: EBUFFS-participating organizations' priorities



Organizations participating in EBUFFS address multiple and inter-related issues. Food production is the most common priority for participating organizations.

Chart 2: EBUFFS-participating organizations' produce distribution methods (n=11 organizations engaged in food production)



EBUFFS-participating organizations use various channels to distribute fruit and vegetables they produce, and some use more than one.

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Chapter 4: Complicit and Resistant: what local government support for an urban farm means for the "neoliberalism critique"

Abstract:

The “neoliberalism critique” of food justice contends that in being largely comprised of nonprofit organizations many urban agriculture projects absolve the state of its responsibilities and preclude structural changes. In the case of Dig Deep Farms (DDF), a number of local county agencies support an urban farm that provides employment for formerly incarcerated individuals and fresh produce in neighborhoods with food insecurity. The collaboration between DDF and Alameda County (AC) presents a unique counterexample to this critique and thus an opportunity for local governments to learn from DDFs and AC’s experiences. Drawing on participant observation and interviews within DDF, interviews with heads of county agencies, and an online survey of county employees who collaborate with DDF, this paper identifies the motivations, nature, and impacts of county level support. I examine the ways in which DDF-AC collaboration is complicit with and resists neoliberalization within alternative food networks and society more broadly. Even with county level support, DDF-AC collaboration includes promotion of market-based strategies and some responsibilizing attitudes about health and crime, which mark complicity with neoliberalism. I argue that this complicity is not as problematic as the neoliberalism critique would suggest. And, I argue that DDF-AC collaboration constitutes significant forms of resistance to deeply entrenched processes of neoliberalization.

Acronyms

Alameda County Board of Supervisors	BOS
Alameda County Community Development Association	CDA
Alameda County General Services Agency	GSA
Alameda County Public Health Department	PH
Alameda County Sheriff's Office	ACSO
Alameda County Social Services Agency	SSA
Alternative Food Networks	AFN
Deputy Sheriff's Activities League	DSAL
Dig Deep Farms	DDF
Operation My Home Town	OMHT
University of California	UC

Introduction

In Alameda County, California, county agencies have joined forces in support of the creation of a local food system. In the national context of the United States, this is rare. For the most part, creating just and sustainable food systems is left to individual farmers, small groups of farmers, to activists and community-based organizations. These groups comprise what is widely recognized as the food movement. Scholars have often pointed out that such a bricolage of non-state actors attempting to fill roles left by a state hollowed out by neoliberalism renders these actors complicit in neoliberalism, whether they like it or not (Allen and Guthman 2006;

Guthman 2008a, 2008b, 2011b; DeLind 2015). Such arguments are referred to as the "neoliberalism critique" (Alkon 2014).

This paper focuses on people and agencies within Alameda County who, by creating and investing in an urban farm, Dig Deep Farms (DDF), are attempting to realize health equity and a vibrant local economy. The Deputy Sheriff's Activities League (DSAL), a non-profit organization associated with the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) started DDF in order to create jobs, improve food access and health, and reduce recidivism in two urban, unincorporated areas. These areas, Ashland and Cherryland, have a culturally diverse population, higher than average rates of poverty, low vehicle access, no major grocery stores, a disproportionately large population of formerly incarcerated individuals, and a life expectancy that is shorter than the county average (Witt et al. 2010; Alameda County Public Health Department 2013; Alameda County Sheriff's Office 2013; Economic Research Service (ERS) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2013). In the five years since the farm started, DSAL leaders forged strategic partnerships across county agencies. DSAL receives little acknowledgement for their networking efforts from external funders — what "counts" are the harvests, customers, and employees — but the relationships that emerge are foundational to the farm's success. With ongoing investment of time and energy from DSAL leaders, these partnerships have matured, new ones have been nurtured, and the farm has expanded. As a result of these collaborations and the farms' objectives, the California State Association of Counties bestowed its annual California Counties Innovation Award to Alameda County for DDF, helping to solidify DDF as a fixture of local government.

Although the farm is largely independent of ACSO, many supporters see it as part of the county government. At the same time, it is one of the few non-profits in the Ashland and

Cherryland area providing youth programming. This unique, hybrid status has made partnerships with county agencies possible. These partnerships result in a variety of types of support for DDF. Individually, each agency's investment in DDF supported the farm's needs at crucial growth points. These investments also represent county agencies' efforts to shift from treating symptoms of poor health, crime, or poverty, to addressing root causes of health and social inequity. Extensive participant observation at DDF and interviews with these county employees raise two questions that I take up in this paper. First, what does it look like for local government to take responsibility for creating a local food system? And, second, what are the implications of such an endeavor for the "neoliberalism critique"?

In this paper, I describe the county's investment in DDF. The literature review summarizes arguments about urban agriculture, focusing on the state's typically limited role and critiques resulting from this condition. In the "Growing a Farm" section, I describe the evolution of the network of county support and its impacts on the farm. In the "Uprooting Inequality" section, I describe the motivations, values, and impact of county support. This provides real examples of Alameda County's and DDF's complicity in and resistance to neoliberalism, which I analyze in the "Findings" section. Finally, I argue that Alameda County and DDF are both complicit and resistant to neoliberalization, that this nuanced status vis-à-vis neoliberalism reveals problems with the "neoliberalism critique," and that the work of DDF and Alameda County provides hopeful openings for meaningfully impacting poor and working class residents in a historically disinvested area.

Literature review

In this section, I highlight scholarship documenting the roles of the state and civil society in urban agriculture, leading to a common critique made of alternative food networks (AFN), which include urban agriculture.

While the links among, civil society, urban agriculture, and city dwellers' self-sufficiency are old, the state has taken a renewed interest in promoting urban agriculture in the past decade. Citing previous scholarship, researchers at UC Davis and UC Cooperative Extension identified the following forms of this interest:

> Land inventories, such as the ones conducted in Portland and Detroit, are being employed by municipal governments to support UA projects. Just in the past 2 years, large cities, including Chicago, Atlanta, Boston, Minneapolis and Portland, revised policies and zoning ordinances to accommodate changing land-use patterns… municipal governments in cities across the country have also begun creating food policy councils, which often include elements directed toward strengthening UA. A report from the American Planning Association indicated that UA continues to grow as a planning priority, with several cities and counties including UA in their comprehensive plans (Surls et al. 2015, 33-4).

Additionally, cities support urban agriculture through departments that maintain and facilitate community gardening, such as New York City's GreenThumb (Bennaton 2009; Reynolds 2015), but cities' roles are usually limited to support urban farmers and only in rare examples do local governments implement urban agriculture projects.[6] As Alkon explains, "the lack of a role for

[6] The city of Arcata, California operates a farm and CSA program (City of Arcata 2015), which to my knowledge, is the only such farm.

government policy [in AFNs], and its replacement with nongovernment organizations and markets, helps to relieve the state of its responsibility to provide environmental protection and a social safety net" (Alkon 2014, 30).

While the state's role in urban agriculture is fairly limited, civil society has a more prominent role in implementing urban agriculture. In this realm, urban agriculture takes many forms and aims to achieve many goals. There are community gardens, school gardens, back (and front) yard gardens, as well as some production scale gardens, greenhouses, and nurseries. While there are many individual urban farmers and gardeners, most urban farms and gardens are part of a non-profit or community based organization. These groups often use urban agriculture as a strategy to successfully achieve a plethora of goals. Kristin Reynolds describes the many benefits of urban agriculture, "including increased access to fresh, affordable, and culturally appropriate food in low-income communities; maintenance of green spaces in areas dominated by the built environment; cultivation of women's empowerment; job training for youth and adults; and community economic development" (Reynolds 2015). Increasingly, urban farms face pressure to become financially self-sustaining as well (Daftary-Steel, Herrera, and Porter 2015).

These pressures include expectations that urban farms will produce food, develop some kind of social or cultural capital, and increasingly, become financially self-sufficient. Activists have referred to this set of expectations as "the unattainable trifecta" (Daftary-Steel, Herrera, and Porter 2015). While these expectations shape the practice of urban agriculture around the county, the "neoliberalism critique" often ignores the source of these pressures and instead problematizes the ways urban agriculture responds with market-based solutions. As Daftary-Steel et al. (2015) explain, many urban agriculture operations are driven to market-based

strategies as a form of self-financing because “outside funding, especially foundation grants… tend to be small and are rarely multi-year” (18).

In many ways, the multitude of goals is a response to growing social inequality and the diminishing role of the state. This process includes rolling back the welfare state, privatization of state-owned enterprises and state-provided services, state promotion of “free” markets, and protection of private property rights (Jessop 2002; Harvey 2005). The paths of these processes within the food system characterize what McMichael calls the corporate food regime (2009). Neoliberalism also plays out in alternative food movements, specifically through the promotion of market-based strategies for changing the food system, public attention on consumer choice, growth of localism, and self-improvement mandates (Guthman 2008a). Included in this is responsibilization — the problematic idea that consumers can change the food system through individual shopping behaviors and that educational programs are needed to ensure that individuals shop, cook, and eat responsibly (Guthman 2011b, 2011a).

The notion of change through individual consumption, in part, inspires the “neoliberalism critique,” which problematizes a set of strategies that “moves away from long-standing social movement strategies pursuing state-mandated protections for labor, the environment, and the poor, and posits individual entrepreneurialism and consumer choice as the primary pathways to social change” (Alkon 2014, 30). Specifically, the critique has two important components.

First, a common element of the “neoliberalism critique” is that alternative food movements are “complicit in the neoliberal agenda” (Guthman 2011b, 142). Some scholars contend that by enacting programs that help to provide for the wellbeing of residents, AFN, including urban agriculture, inadequately fill in for the state but still manage to absolve it of welfare

responsibilities. As Alkon explains, “the lack of a role for government policy [in AFNs], and its replacement with nongovernment organizations and markets, helps to relieve the state of its responsibility to provide environmental protection and a social safety net” (Alkon 2014, 30). For the most part, actors and activists intend this “help” for poor and working class people coping with the shrinking state.

Second, another common element of the “neoliberalism critique” is that AFN have devolved to “scales not commensurable with the problems being addressed” (Guthman 2008a, 1180). She argues that “agro-food activism is often quite removed from a politics that names and addresses actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (1180). In broader discussions about neoliberalism and globalization, critics observe the concentration of power in the corporate realm and diminishing power at all levels of government (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Jessop 2002; McMichael 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that activists of modest means do not participate in the corporate realm and that their food systems work takes place at local scales.

Some of the problems the critique has been used to identify are real, such as the racist and classist impacts of individual-oriented food system work. At the same time, the critique is applied too broadly. Commonly, this happens when scholars make claims about the food justice movement as if it was a monolithic thing, rather than distinguishing between moralist and original food justice (Bradley and Herrera 2015). For example, Guthman wrote, “efforts to address inequality, through, for example, ‘food justice’ might make good food more accessible, but it still does not fundamentally challenge the dynamics that cause the vast majority of Americans to eat vacuous food and to be exposed to appreciable amounts of toxins by dint of the way most food is produced” (Guthman 2011b, 141). Such a broad claim precludes the

identification and analysis of food systems work that offers hope for changing the food system and the political economic structures that shape consumption.

In the next section, I discuss the research methods that gave me insights about state engagement in local food systems work.

Methods

The data in this paper comes from several sources. First, my understanding of DDF, its growth and its value to Ashland and Cherryland and to Alameda County, comes from participant observation at the farm between 2010 and 2015. I began fieldwork in 2010 with six months of intensive participant observation, working in nearly all aspects of the operation, including farming, CSA packing, administration, and attending some networking meetings. During this time, I developed close relationships with the farmers and established a good rapport with the founders and DSAL leaders Hank Herrera, Lt. Marty Neideffer, and Hilary Bass. From 2011 to 2012, I continued doing participant observation, but on a less regular basis. During this time, I also met regularly with DDF co-founder and General Manager Hank Herrera. Together we shared reflections and he updated me about the farm. I also met several times for in-depth conversations with DSAL founder and DDF's other co-founder, Lt. Marty Neideffer. He and I discussed his objectives for changing law enforcement from within ACSO and developing a network of allies in additional county agencies. The combination of conversations with Lt. Neideffer and the impacts I could see on the farm because of wider county support led to this research project.

Lt. Neideffer encouraged and facilitated research about county support. He and Herrera helped me to identify the most important allies across county government and Neideffer helped me to make contact with county leaders and schedule interviews. I draw on interviews with ten key county employees conducted between 2012 and 2014. These interviews were conducted with employees of SSA, PH, GSA, ACSO, Supervisor's Office (BOS), and Community Development Agency (CDA). Several people, whose agencies have been involved longer, were interviewed twice. A total of 12 interviews were conducted, 9 by me, and 3 by Christine Porter, principal investigator of the Food Dignity Project, a broader research project encompassing this one.[7] These interviews focused on motivations for collaboration, nature of collaboration, and goals. In addition to these interviews, I had several in-depth conversations with DSAL's executive director, Hilary Bass, to access and review memoranda of understanding, evaluations, contracts, and grant applications for the collaborations with each agency. This helped to establish the chronology and specific details of DDF's various collaborations.

Third, I conducted an online survey of secondary collaborators and collaborators unavailable for interviews about their views on the characteristics and scope of county level support for DDF. The survey focused on motivations, expectations, and context of county support for DDF. From a list of 141 supporters of DDF that I identified with assistance from Lt. Neideffer and Hilary Bass, I identified a population of 91 county employees who DSAL leaders have worked with to grow DDF. I e-mailed a link to an online survey to these individuals. One e-mail bounced, making the populations size 90 people. There was a 21% response rate (n=19). Descriptive quantitative data from this survey supplement interview findings.

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[7] The Food Dignity project is a five-site, four-university research project across three states investigating community-driven efforts to build sustainable and just local food systems.

Growing a Farm

In the middle of the urban corridor on the western edge of Alameda County are the urban, unincorporated areas known as Ashland and Cherryland. As unincorporated territories, the county provides services and the District Supervisor and the county Sheriff, Greg Ahern, are the only elected officials. Whereas many urban areas have city governments and school districts that provide recreational activities to youth, Ashland and Cherryland offered few extracurricular opportunities for young people from the 1980s on. After serving as a school resource officer and noticing this, Alameda County Sheriff's Deputy, then-Sergeant (now Lieutenant) Marty Neideffer, along with the support of a community organizer working in the area, Hilary Bass, started the Deputy Sheriff's Activities League (DSAL). After gaining the support of commanding officers in the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO), DSAL began offering free arts and sports programs to local youth. They developed a youth mentoring program, in which teens organized community walks and rallies, and, most notably, participated in a planning process with the Board of Supervisors' (BOS) office to design a youth center in the heart of Ashland. With the dedication of additional community organizers, DSAL started a free soccer league. Six years later, the families of over 1000 youth converge on soccer fields in the center of the Cherryland every Saturday during the five-month season.

As the youth center planning and the soccer league were just beginning, Neideffer and Bass recognized that, to keep kids in school and to prevent crime, they needed to do more than provide free, healthy, and legal activities. For Neideffer and Bass, the perpetrators of crimes are also the victims of broken educational, social service, and economic systems. Adults

needed jobs and more resources were needed to improve the lives of Ashland and Cherryland residents. They met new residents who wanted to start gardens, read Van Jones' *Green Collar Economy* (2008), and wondered if they could create jobs and improve access to fresh produce in Ashland and Cherryland by starting a farm.

As this was happening, employees in Alameda County Public Health Department (PH) approached DSAL to collaborate on a proposed project to improve the quality of food inside Alameda County's Santa Rita Jail, which ACSO runs. Their proposal was not funded, but through these meetings they met colleagues working on improving food access and health equity in other parts of the county. One of these people was Hank Herrera, a long-time food justice activist who would help start the farm and become the farm's General Manager. They developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alameda County Fire Department and a local business owner to farm on vacant parcels within a block of the future youth center site. They worked with the Youth and Family Services Bureau, part of ACSO, to access American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to hire a farm manager and ten residents of Ashland and Cherryland to become farmers. They supplemented this funding with additional funds from the San Francisco Foundation, through a Koshland Fellowship awarded to a group of activists in Ashland and Cherryland that included Bass. Thus, Neideffer, Bass, and Herrera started DDF. (For more details of the founding and first year of the farm, see Bradley 2011; Bradley and Galt 2014)

DDF consists of three farm sites. The original site, about 3/4 of an acre, is owned by the Alameda County Fire Department and is adjacent to a firehouse, and thus called Firehouse. It is used for row crop production, post-harvest cleaning, box-share packaging, cold storage, and tool and equipment storage. One block away, DDF has a greenhouse where they produce

their own starts and maintain raised beds for vegetable production. This lot, referred to as the Greenhouse or Pacific Apparel (because of the adjacent business), is leased, for free, to DSAL by the owners of a local business. DDF's largest piece of land is an 8-acre hillside site adjacent to (and only accessible by vehicle through) Camp Sweeney, a low security juvenile correction facility run by the Alameda County Probation Department. While the Probation Department does not own this land — Alameda County does and the General Services Agency leases DSAL the land for free — their cooperation is necessary for accessing the farm site. This parcel, known as Cityview because it sits above and looks over the residential flatlands (and the San Francisco Bay), has a fruit-tree orchard and is used for row crop production.

DDF hires people who have historically earned low incomes and have dependent children or were formerly incarcerated, conditions that often coexist among employees. These farmers[8] often arrive with no farming experience and learn on the job from farm managers and more experienced farmers. Some are placed at DDF through job training apprenticeship programs that, in some cases, convert to long-term employment at DDF. Since it began in 2010, DDF has employed over fifty people to work as farmers, outreach coordinators, and farm stand operators. In addition, DDF has always had an operations manager, general manager, or business manager. Often managers come to DDF with more formal education, higher past earnings, and experience working in alternative food systems, but frequently with minimal or no experience working with formerly incarcerated people.

[8] These farmers do not have any ownership stake in DDF. One or two farmers are always being groomed for leadership positions. Because of frequent turnover of farm managers, the farmers provide organizational and cropping history, along with the bulk of manual labor on which the farm depends.

The creation of DDF entailed collaboration among departments within ACSO, the Fire Department, and the Board of Supervisors (BOS). When ARRA funding was cut short, DDF briefly looked to foodie market channels to support the farm (Bradley and Galt 2014). They also began building partnerships with additional county agencies. The connection to ACSO and buy-in from the BOS and Fire Department were distinguishing features that DDF leaders used to appeal to like-minded individuals within county agencies.

Even before DDF broke ground, PH included DSAL in a project (funded by the Kresge Foundation) to increase healthy food access for low-income pregnant mothers and their families in what the county identified as Best Babies Zones, or areas with higher than average infant mortality and shorter than average life expectancy. The project, called Food to Families, fostered a partnership between DDF and a local health clinic, funded produce prescriptions for pregnant mothers to be filled by DDF's farm share program, and provided funds to DSAL that could be used for staffing and grant reporting costs. This grant was important for several reasons. Food to Families funding helped to secure the employment of DDF's new farmers, which was crucial after the initial ARRA funding was discontinued earlier than anticipated. And, collaboration with PH represented yet another county stakeholder in DDF that DSAL leaders could leverage for further county support.

The county helped DDF broaden its customer base in another way as well. A group of employees working on sustainability initiatives within General Services Agency (GSA), which manages all county properties promoted DDF among their coworkers and arranged for farm share drop-off sites at county administrative buildings. Along with the produce prescriptions, this helped to ensure a customer base, allowing DDF to focus efforts on training farmers, rather than marketing and outreach.

Still farming on discontiguous and small (less than 1 acre) parcels, in 2011 DDF began making efforts to access larger parcels of land so that they could produce a higher percentage of the produce in the farm shares and in order to reduce inefficiencies of producing on multiple parcels[9]. DDF worked with the GSA and ACSO, as a sponsoring agency, to gain access to the Cityview farm site in 2012. In these negotiations, GSA played a critical though limited role. They identified eligible land that had no potential for development and thus could offer secure land tenure to DDF. For the same reasons that the land was not suitable for development, however, it also presented challenges for farming. The land has a steep slope[10] and water would have to come from somewhere off-site.

Simultaneously, DSAL began working with the Alameda County Community Development Agency (CDA) to develop a plan to restore a barn and plant an orchard on privately owned land. While that land ultimately was not suitable for DDF's purposes, the CDA worked closely with DDF to develop a fundable proposal to expand their farm operation and revise the proposal for Cityview and adjacent areas. The CDA employee working with DDF cited access to county-owned land as significantly contributing to the fundability of DDF (CDA employee 2012).

In 2013, DDF entered into an agreement with Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) to operate farm stands outside of SSA buildings so that their clients and employees could have easier access to fresh fruits and vegetables. SSA initially agreed to fund two new positions —

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[9] DDF supplemented what they produced by purchasing produce from Veritable Vegetable, a San-Francisco based organic produce distributer.

[10] This topography, along with regional activist politics, was the impetus for the East Bay Urban Farmer Field School.

farm stand operators — within DDF and to pay for any produce that DDF could not grow but that customers wanted (such as bananas). They provided DDF with wireless point-of-sale equipment so they could accept electronic benefit transfers (EBT), such as CalFresh (formerly known as food stamps), and advertised DDF farm stands in client waiting rooms. In the second year of the contract, Social Services agreed to pay for the farm manager's salary, in addition to what produce DDF could not produce for the stands.

Throughout all of this investment by outside agencies in DDF, ACSO also developed and implemented initiatives that supported DDF. DDF is one of the most referred-to community based organization partners in Operation My Home Town (OMHT), which is an adult offender re-entry program that offers a continuum of health care and social services to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people at risk of recidivating. People who participate in this program receive pre-release job training and counseling, post-release counseling, internships, and social services. DDF pays interns for four weeks of work. Half of the pay comes from AC Hires, the SSA's subsidized employment program for welfare recipients. The other half comes from ACSO, which is using money that the state of California made available to counties upon prison realignment and money from a Byrne Criminal Justice Grant.[11] Many formerly incarcerated people do internships at DDF through OMHT, which ACSO, probation department, and SSA fund. Some of these interns became long-term employees or went on to other jobs.

[11] Nationally, Byrne grants are federally administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. They have played important roles in the War on Drugs, including the seizure of billions of dollars worth of assets (Alexander 2011).

In Alameda County, the experiment in using an urban farming enterprise to deliver county services is based on deliberately forged relationships across agencies. DSAL and county leaders are driven to use their positions to improve the quality of life for the poorest county residents. Each section below addresses important features of DDF-county partnerships.

Collaboration

There are important conditions within the county that make collaboration around DDF possible. First, a series of survey questions asked where planning, financial, implementation, and regulatory responsibilities for crime prevention, business development, and food systems creation lies among the federal, state, and local government, community based organizations, philanthropy, and the private sector. Respondents placed the most responsibility with local government for planning, implementation, and regulation responsibilities and with federal government for financial responsibility for crime prevention and business development. See Charts 3-5. These shared values are important precursors to collaboration.

Second, in interviews, county leaders expressed that they view DDF as part of the county, despite DSAL's 501(c)3 status. One county leader explained DSAL's role in the county this way: "it's hard to kind of separate DSAL from the county government per se because I look at DSAL as providing the services and moving the agenda, if not for the county, on behalf of the county as a nonprofit provider out there" (BOS employee 2014). The same leader said, "the government's not going anywhere so if we can institutionalize this [farm] then that's what we want to see happen but still make sure that the community, the people, the citizens are still

engaged and it's working the way people feel it should work" (BOS employee 2012). Other directors of county agencies who I interviewed viewed DSAL and DDF as part of the county as well. And, many residents and urban agriculture activists see DDF as part of ACSO. While groups outside of the county have concerns about the close connections to ACSO, various county agencies have a shared vision for DDF's relationship with the county.

Third, the county leaders expressed budgetary motivations for collaboration. One county agency director said, "In Alameda [County], I think we have a history of collaboration among departments... As resources dwindle you have to find ways to maximize the minimal resources that you have" (SSA employee 2014). This director added that the overlapping client populations of agencies like Social Services and the Sheriff's Office provides further motivation for collaboration. Another county leader saw the work of DDF as a cost-savings program for the county. He observed, "It's $55,000 a year to keep someone in prison. And so the recidivism is, according to the Chronicle yesterday, is 65%. So if you've got 8 kids on the street working, two-thirds of them would have gone back to …that's 5 people, that's a quarter of a million dollars we've just saved. Now that you can take to the bank" (CDA employee 2012). Knowing that DDF is supported by multiple agencies reassures county employees that their spending will have broad impacts.

Upstream thinking

In addition to the collaborative environment among county agency leaders, many are frustrated with treating symptoms and expressed desires to do work that addresses root causes of poverty, crime, and poor health. One employee of the SSA said to me, "If our role is to mitigate, alleviate, eradicate poverty, well, how do we do that in the broadest sense?" (SSA employee 2014). Another said, "I'm interested in community development work and how public agencies

can contribute to community development specifically around anti-poverty efforts" (SSA employee 2014). Yet another employee spoke at length about the need to think "upstream," saying, "I think we're trying to get more creative about funding community economic development and small business development… For example, not just placing people on unemployment but actually helping to generate jobs, good jobs and then looking more holistically at family wellbeing and prevention. I'm interested in, can we help create safe neighborhoods and good jobs and… great opportunities for kids [so] that you would then… not see as many families in [the] child welfare system" (SSA employee 2014).

Although this upstream thinking was most prevalent within the SSA, interviewees in ACSO and PH shared this approach. A leader in the Sherrif's Office explained his department's effort to reduce violence, asking rhetorically, "Do we just keep arresting people? Do we just keep hoping that it gets better?" (ACSO employee 2012). This aligns with Lieutenant Neideffer's often-repeated philosophy that the cops can't expect to arrest their way out of every problem. While the issues are slightly different at PH, similar attitudes were shared with me. One employee explained, "research really shows that things that happen early in life have life long impacts on health and if we can really mitigate and reduce disadvantage early in life, we can have a much more healthy and productive society in general" (ACPH employee 2013).

These attitudes are what lead to enthusiasm across county agencies for supporting job creation and DDF. The same person who asked if arresting people is the answer to violence explained the following about perpetrators of many crimes: "There's no jobs for them, doesn't excuse the crime but it explains it to a certain extent. So how do we break that? Let's create some real jobs" (ACSO employee 2012). Similarly, an employee at Social Services talked to me about "not just placing people on unemployment but actually helping to generate jobs, good

jobs" (SSA employee 2014). For her, supporting DDF was a way of not just creating jobs, but also long term employment and career ladders.

In survey responses about organizational priorities when collaborating with DDF, job creation and crime prevention were highest among respondents' priorities. Responding to the questions about the extent to which employees and their agencies value various priorities, respondents ranked their personal priorities approximately half a point lower, on average, than their organization (see Chart 6). This suggests many of the DDF's priorities are also engrained in the cultures of county agencies. Furthermore, crime prevention, job creation, and health equity were valued most within county agencies among a list of priorities related to DDF. An interviewee helped to explain this. She said, "employment is one of the huge issues in our agency right now so, at some stage, politically, thinking of DDF as a social enterprise that does employment work is just as, if not more, valuable than thinking of it as a food justice organization and I think for agencies like ours that's the kind of framing that is going to help with investment" (SSA employee 2014).

Burden of proof and other challenges

Despite efforts to address root causes, my interviews with county leaders also revealed constraints and challenges to doing so. A PH employee, whose collaboration with DDF was possible because of SNAP-Ed[12] funding, wanted for her agency to focus efforts on increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, but lamented,

> "we go back to the default, which is education, health education, nutrition education but what we really need to putting attention on is, if people can't buy food in their

[12] SNAP-Ed funding is intended to promote the use of SNAP dollars for purchasing that is consistent with USDA dietary guidelines.

neighborhood, you can give them education up the wazoo and it's not going to do you any good" (ACPH employee 2013).

She elaborated, saying,

> "all of our structures and systems are set up in specific ways where we get funds from the state or from the feds to do certain mandated delivery of certain services or health education or that kind of thing. And it's harder to carve out the resources to do things that have attention to root causes especially because those strategies haven't yet really been defined. So that burden of trying to build the evidence base as you go along and are trying to actually resource the work and build a foundation for it is a challenge because we know that the things that need to happen aren't going to show short term results" (ACPH employee 2013).

Supporters recognize structural barriers to upstream thinking and can only do so much about it. Consequently, county employees still adopt strategies that shift responsibilities from the state to the individual. In health, responsibilization frequently entails promotion of self-discipline and behavior modification (Coveney 2006). One PH employee explained the need for cooking education, saying that "some of the fruits and vegetables that DDF grows are not what, culturally, a lot of the, specifically the Latina's are used to cooking, like greens" (ACPH employee 2013). Her agency provides cooking education for consumers rather than training farmers about culturally-appropriate foods. And, in Social Services, DDF supporters want SNAP recipients to support the local economy. One interviewee described a goal of the farm stands as "really about getting people into the habit, helping them see, experiment, appreciate the benefits of healthier foods and at the same time also provide a possible employment opportunity which is one of the things that we're focused on" (SSA employee 2014).

In addition to constraints posed by funding structures and responsibilizing tendencies, ACSO faces significant internal challenges. In an interview at the Sheriff's substation, a deputy explained the barriers posed by cop culture. He said, "we can't do our jobs by running around hugging people all the time, we just can't do that. So, the people who are trained to stay alive out there and do their jobs, some of them don't see a real benefit in having deputy sheriff's working in, associating with DDF or Youth and Family Services Bureau or the Deputy Sheriff's Activities [League]" (ACSO employee 2014). Despite this attitude, ACSO and its leaders are some of DDF's staunchest supporters.

As part of their efforts to address root causes of poverty, crime, and poor health, DDF supporters promote neoliberal ideology through expectations that DDF work through and promote food-based markets, albeit in limited ways. An employee of the Community Development Agency, part of what appealed to him was DDF's "whole vertically integrated food model" and "opportunities along the way for individual businesses to spin off that" (CDA employee 2012). In the General Services Agency, supporters want to see DDF connect with existing businesses, such as youth-run cafes in several county buildings. In PH, where the collaboration with DDF centered around a food-as-medicine program, supporters and leaders within DDF hoped that the program would help DDF increase their market share in the unincorporated area. Another county employee explained concerns that the farm stands are not profitable. She said, "from an operations standpoint there's some concern. But I also think that's part of the business plan that I've been recently in conversation with of 'can you set up the farm stands to be subsidized by the connections that you potentially could make to the private market?'" (SSA employee 2014). These attitudes are fairly common, with survey respondents rating DDF's self-sufficiency as an organizational priority relatively high (3.12 on a 0-4 scale), on average.

Although supporters want to see DDF drive economic growth in a depressed area, they do not fully embrace market-based approaches. The Community Development Agency employee interviewed about his collaboration with DDF said, "I basically tore up their business plan. I said this is not a sustainable model. You shouldn't be calling it [a sustainable business model] but moreover, that's not bad. It's okay to be a nonprofit… You'll be better off by calling yourself a social enterprise of a nonprofit and more doors will open to you" (CDA employee 2012). A supporter in SSA explained the importance of multiple funding sources, saying "lots of times with social enterprises it has been my experience that you've got to have the ongoing revenue that can help support the other aspects of the organization of business because it's expensive, on-the-job training and stuff like that" (SSA employee 2014). Aware of these motives and concerns, DDF is honest with supporters that financial self-sufficiency is many years away. Given their current farm operation, social mission, and distribution model, it may not be possible.

This financial reality, even in light of market-based goals, does not deter supporters. They recognize that the goals they want to see are long term, and possibly multi-generational. Given this, I asked them in the interviews how they continue to justify their support of DDF. One supporter from Social Services said, "I'm glad that that model's there for the county to have and for others to reflect upon 'cause I think it kind of puts it out there that there's other ways that we can do business and enhance what we're currently doing, other models" (SSA employee 2014). Another supporter, from the Board of Supervisors, explained, "I think that's how I know it's being successful… it's all of this stuff holistically or comprehensively, cumulatively being considered" (BOS employee 2014). Echoing this idea that DSAL's work with youth and adults go together, a supporter in ACSO suggested that DSALs success creating a community-run

soccer league gives him faith that that DDF will be successful also. He told me: “I generally always go to the opening day of soccer and looking at the parents that are there, looking at the children that are there, seeing how the kids and the adults want to have their picture taken with the sheriff and undersheriff and feel almost slighted if they don’t get an opportunity to do that. It’s a little thing but it’s not so little. In my opinion, it’s a big thing and it wasn’t that way 10 years ago. So empirically, while there’s no hard and fast data, just how it makes you feel as a person who provides a service and I can tell you how it makes me feel, I mean, it almost brings me to tears.” (ACSO employee 2014).

Ultimately, county employees’ support for DDF and their vision for Ashland and Cherryland have very little to do with creating a local food system, despite recognizing the need to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables for residents. Overwhelmingly, county employees expressed that they support DDF because they recognize poverty and unemployment as the underlying causes of the vast majority of preventable crime and illness. In the next section, I analyze county efforts and motivations in the context of already existing, local neoliberalisms and the implications for the "neoliberalism critique.”

Discussion

The shift from managing cases, making arrests, and delivering entitlements to creating jobs that cannot be outsourced suggests that some county employees are attempting to defend what is left of the public sphere in Alameda County. Thus, in rest of this section, I relate examples from Alameda County to important components of the "neoliberalism critique” of AFNs and characterizations of neoliberalism as it operates in society more broadly.

Guthman has argued that AFN tend to adopt strategies that are incommensurable with the scale of the problem. In her argument about commensurability, Guthman (2008a) draws readers' attention to Brenner and Theodore's (2002) list of twelve specific mechanisms of neoliberalization, and calls for a similar enumeration of the trajectories of neoliberalism in agro-food systems. She identifies and offers four neoliberal rationalities advanced by AFN. They are consumer choice, self-improvement, entrepreneurialism, and localism.

DDF's integration of market-oriented strategies and job creation and training may seem to advance these neoliberal rationalities of consumer choice, entrepreneurialism, self-help, and localism. For example, DDF is attempting to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables in Ashland and Cherryland. For another example, several supporters hold responsibilizing attitudes or are pressured to use responsibilizing strategies. And, the vision of DSAL leaders is to create a farm and infrastructure for a local, food based economy. These realities demonstrate how these neoliberal rationalities operate in this case study.

In addition to AFN-specific rationalities, DDF is complicit with more widespread patterns of neoliberalization. For example, DDF farms on marginal land — a steep hill with limited accessibility — even though flat and accessible parcels exist in Ashland and Cherryland. This is because GSA does not recognize creating a food- and place-based economy as highest and best use, a value characterizing the neoliberal transformation of landscapes (Brenner and Theodore 2002). This, along with the small size of the parcels, means that DDF cannot achieve the economies of scale necessary to compete with other regional CSA farmers. Yet, support from other county agencies continues to grow despite this reality, suggesting that most county employees place only limited importance on DDF's market orientation, competitiveness, and

financial self-sufficiency. This is just one way neoliberal ideology is kept in check. And, while neoliberal rationalities and processes are in play, there is also more happening

Brenner and Theodore's mechanisms do not all directly shape the food system, however many of them shape the conditions in which real people live and thus engage with the food system. Alameda County actively resists many of these specific mechanisms of neoliberalization through its support for DDF. In Table 1 below, I use Brenner and Theodore's concept of "actually existing neoliberalisms," which they define as "the path-dependent, contextually specific interactions between inherited regulatory landscapes and emergent neoliberal, market-oriented restructuring projects" (2002, 349). Drawing on their arguments further, I highlight relevant moments of destruction of the welfare state and moments of creation of the neoliberal state. In the fourth column, I characterize aspects of Alameda County's support for DDF as resisting this creation of the neoliberal state.

Brenner and Theodore identify the recalibration of inter-governmental relations as a mechanism of neoliberal localization (see column A, row 2 in the table). By their account this happens through dismantling systems of central government (A3), support for municipal activities, the devolution of tasks and responsibilities to municipalities (A4). It is possible to read the BOS' view of DSAL as an agent of the county in this way, however that would be overly simplistic, since the desire to institutionalize DDF represents an effort to add to the county's public resources.

The nuance surrounding the moments of destruction and creation is best demonstrated through the way prison realignment has affected DDF-Alameda County partnerships. Because of realignment, ACSO, rather than the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation,

is responsible for a larger number of people convicted of non-violent and low-level offenses. By some accounts the state has failed to adopt state level reforms necessary to reduce the burdens to counties, (American Civil Liberties Union of California 2012) although it has dispersed funds to local jurisdictions (Petersilia and Greenlick Snyder 2013). Interestingly, efforts to shrink the state prison system is an example of creating the neoliberal state through devolving tasks to lower levels of government *but* the way Alameda County has seized and redirected this new responsibility toward prevention — devoting some of these new resources to supporting DDF in hope of reducing recidivism and minimizing this new burden (D2, D6) — runs counter to the trend of mobilizing zero-tolerance crime policies (C6). In accepting that the strategy's effectiveness is impossible to prove in the short term as county employees have done, their support for DDF interferes with the trajectory of interlocal policy transfer (row 5). This is especially notable in light of the militarization of police forces nationwide (Balko 2013).

Some might read the county's support of DDF as enabling the restructuring of the welfare state (A3), reworking the labor market (A4), or re-regulating urban civil society (A6), which Brenner and Theodore describe as a mechanisms of neoliberal localization. However, SSA is not privatizing social service provision. Rather, by partnering with DDF, SSA is investing in a place-based economy serving people already connected to the area (D5). By paying for some of DDF's operating costs and subsidizing some salaries, SSA supports a local business and encourages the cycling of its funds through the communities it serves, amplifying the local impact of its spending. Furthermore, by connecting social service recipients with jobs, albeit in small numbers at this time, SSA helps to ensure that its clients have a wider range of support than merely financial assistance (D3), which also reinforces crime prevention efforts (D6). Furthermore, through job training and job creation in urban agriculture (D4), DDF and Alameda County together prepare people for work in a field with growing cachet, in contrast to low-

wage, corporate-dominated industries or illegal economies (C4). Of course, all of this is happening as part of the mobilization of entrepreneurial discourses that focus on revitalization and rejuvenation (C7). However, when Alameda County does these things, it does so with pubic resources and it catalyzes a food-based and place-based economy that is accessible to historically disenfranchised or marginalized members of society (D7) rather than further ostracizing so-called “dangerous classes” (B7).

Table 1: Openings and Resistance to Actually Existing Neoliberalisms Involving Dig Deep Farms in Alameda County

Mechanisms of Neoliberal Localization (A1)	Moments of Destruction (B)	Relevant Moments of Creation (C)	Openings and resistance to the neoliberal city (D)
Recalibration of inter-governmental relations (2)	• Dismantling of earlier systems of central government support for municipal activities	• Devolution of new tasks, burdens, and responsibilities to municipalities	• Creative and collaborative responses to new burdens and commitment to the state's responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of residents
Restructuring the welfare state (3)	• Local relays of national welfare service-provision are retrenched; assault on managerial-welfarist local state apparatuses	• Expansion of community-based sectors and private approaches to social service provision	• Promotion of urban agriculture that reinforces social service provision
Reworking labor market regulation (4)	• Dismantling of traditional publicly funded education, skills training, and apprenticeship programs for youth, displaced workers, and the unemployed	• Implementation of work-readiness programs aimed at the conscription of workers into low-wage jobs • Expansion of informal economies	• Job training and creation of living wage jobs • Creating infrastructure for a food-based economy to legitimize informal food economies and promote cottage industry
Interlocal policy transfer (5)	• Erosion of contextually sensitive approaches to local policymaking • Marginalization of 'home-grown' solutions to localized market governance failures	• Diffusion of generic protoypical approaches to 'modernizing' reform among policy in search of quick fixes for local problems • Imposition of decontextualized 'best practice' models upon local policy environments	• Taking a long-term approach and recognizing that outcomes may not be realized for at least another generation • Investing in a place-based economy that serves working class people already living in Ashland and Cherryland

Re-regulation of urban civil society (6)	• Destruction of the 'liberal city' in which all inhabitants are entitled to basic civil liberties, social services, and political rights	• Mobilization of zero-tolerance crime policies and broken windows policing • Introduction of new policies to combat social exclusion by reinserting individuals into the labor market	• Preventing crime by helping individuals move from the informal and illegal economy to a legal, food-based and place-based economy •
Re-representing the city (7)	• Postwar image of the industrial, working-class city is recast through a (re-)emphasis on urban disorder, 'dangerous classes,' and economic decline	• Mobilization of entrepreneurial discourses and representations focused on the need for revitalization, reinvestment, and rejuvenation within major metropolitan areas	• Using state resources to reinvest in disinvested communities and catalyze a food-based and place-based economy that provides good jobs

Columns A-C are adapted from Brenner and Theodore (2002). Column D is based on the DDF-Alameda County case.

Not only does DDF resist some mechanisms of neoliberalism, but the ways in which DDF is complicit in the neoliberal agenda is not entirely problematic. In particular, DDF's promotion of local markets and entrepreneurialism deserve more attention. For Nathan McClintock, the use of market-based strategies in urban agriculture "attempt to subvert the commodity form itself, by viewing food as a public good, prioritising its equitable distribution over profit" (McClintock 2013, 148). For Gibson-Graham, it is necessary to resist "equating community economic development only with growing the local capitalist economy" or any other essentialized end-game (Gibson-Graham 2006, 86). The promotion of a food-based economy and efforts to create place-based jobs constitute efforts to re-socialize economic relationships in Ashland and Cherryland (Gibson-Graham 2006, 79). DDF's and Alameda County's complicity in and resistance to enacting neoliberalism raise problems for the "neoliberalism critique." Namely, this complicity and resistance highlight how using the "neoliberalism critique" as an analytical

framework fails to give a full understanding of the objectives and potential of urban agriculture. As an analytical framework, it exemplifies a “debilitating politics of perfection” (Galt, Gray, and Hurley 2014, 135).

By characterizing Alameda County’s collaboration with DDF as doing more than instantiating neoliberal localization and framing neoliberal rationalities as constraints, I hope to highlight how creative and collaborative responses to these processes offer hopeful openings. Furthermore, much of the work of DDF and Alameda County constitutes multiple forms of resistance. Ultimately, DDFs complicity and resistance constitute “openings for more progressive, radical democratic reappropriations of city space” (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 376).

Conclusions

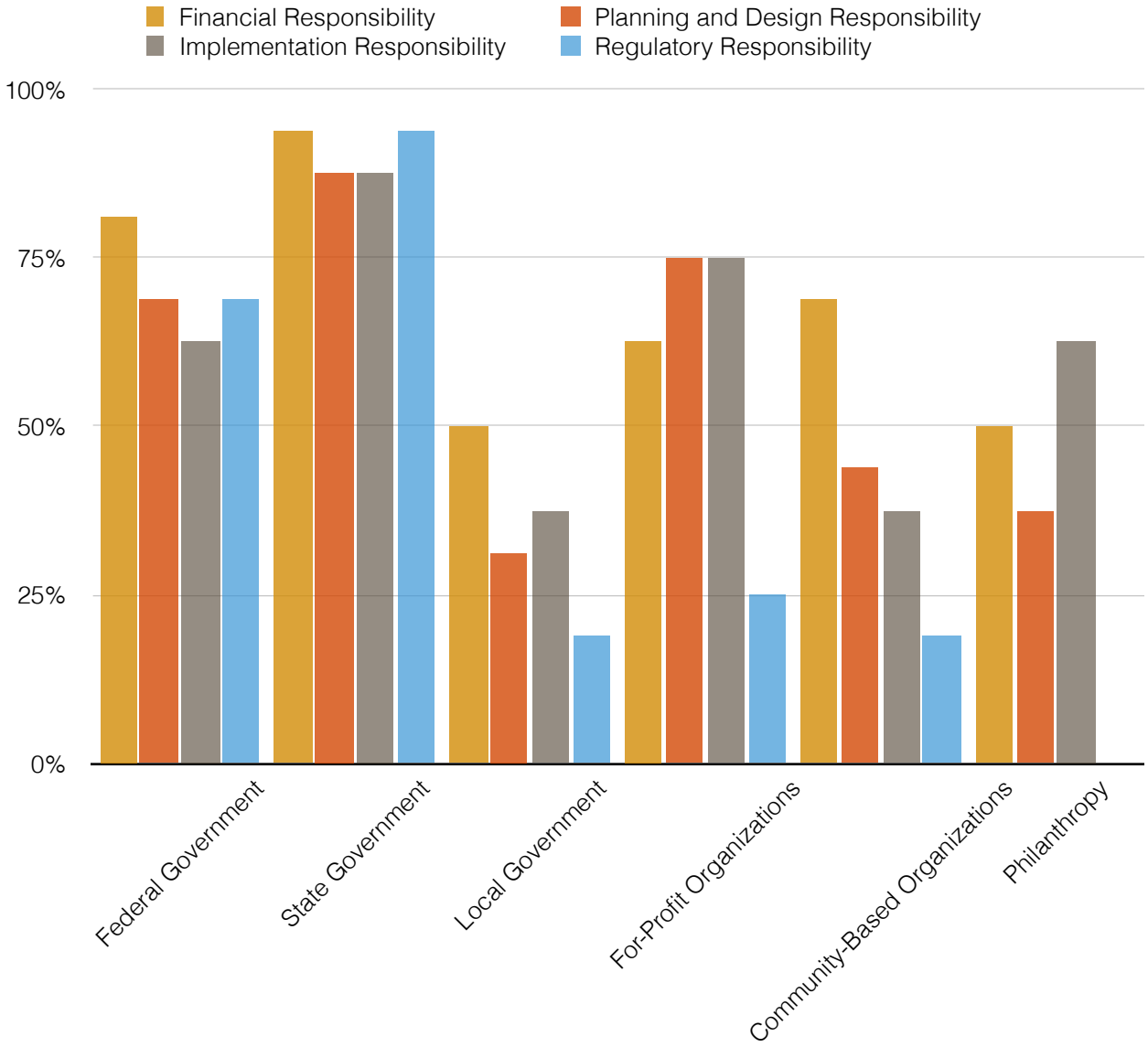
There are valid applications of the "neoliberalism critique” of urban agriculture and AFNs and there are ways in which neoliberalism is enacted by the organizations and actors in this case study. While selling food and providing jobs and job training may exemplify neoliberal rationalities, to focus only on these features obscures their resistance to neoliberal trajectories that are entrenched more deeply than any AFN-specific rationality (Galt, Gray, and Hurley 2014).

County employees’ focus on creating economic opportunities in Alameda County through DDF contradicts both a pattern of the shrinking state and, it seems, though only time will tell, state-facilitated redistributions. Social justice-oriented economic development is not traditionally a responsibility of a sheriff’s office, public health department, or social service agency. However,

in Alameda County, these departments are allocating discretionary funds to this objective, albeit through a non-profit organization. Furthermore, despite the shrinking budgets of these departments, they are devoting more resources to DDF each year. This is especially notable in light of conservative rhetoric and practices aimed at reducing state spending, especially spending on entitlements. It is notable for another reason as well. As Pudup (2008) explains, neoliberalism tends to corral at-risk populations in clinical settings in order to instill neoliberal governmentalities. By contrast, county support helps to establish a new space for at-risk populations and a non-clinical locus for support services.

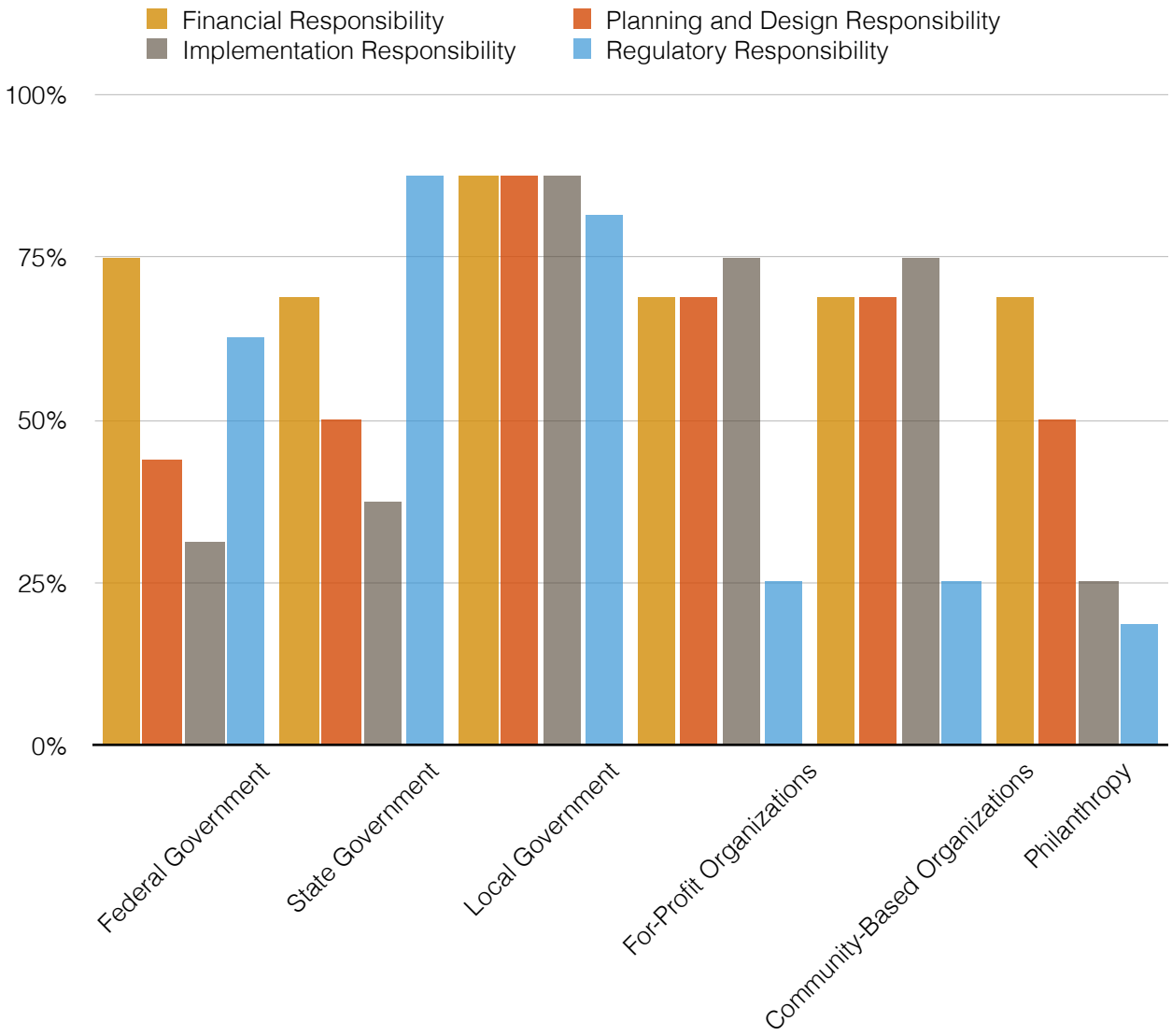
Guthman argues that “neoliberalization limits the conceivable because it limits the arguable, the fundable, the organizable, the scale of effective action, and compels activists to focus on putting out fires” (Guthman 2008a, 1180). Yet, the "neoliberalism critique" is similarly limiting. In this case, the “neoliberalism critique” undermines our understanding of the politics of the possible. Because of county employees’ motivations, attitudes, and support, DDF is poised to become a municipal farm and the anchor for a vibrant local economy. And, Alameda County is using county resources to serve individual residents as opposed to the interests of capital even while processes of neoliberalism are unfolding. Thus, amidst complicity with neoliberalism, there are also openings for new political possibilities and for scholarship of the possible. Thus, this case, and especially DDF’s and Alameda County’s complicity *and* resistance, highlights the need to look outside the neoliberal box in order to see the transformative potential of urban agriculture.

Chart 3: Allocation of responsibility for crime prevention by percentage of responses (n=16)



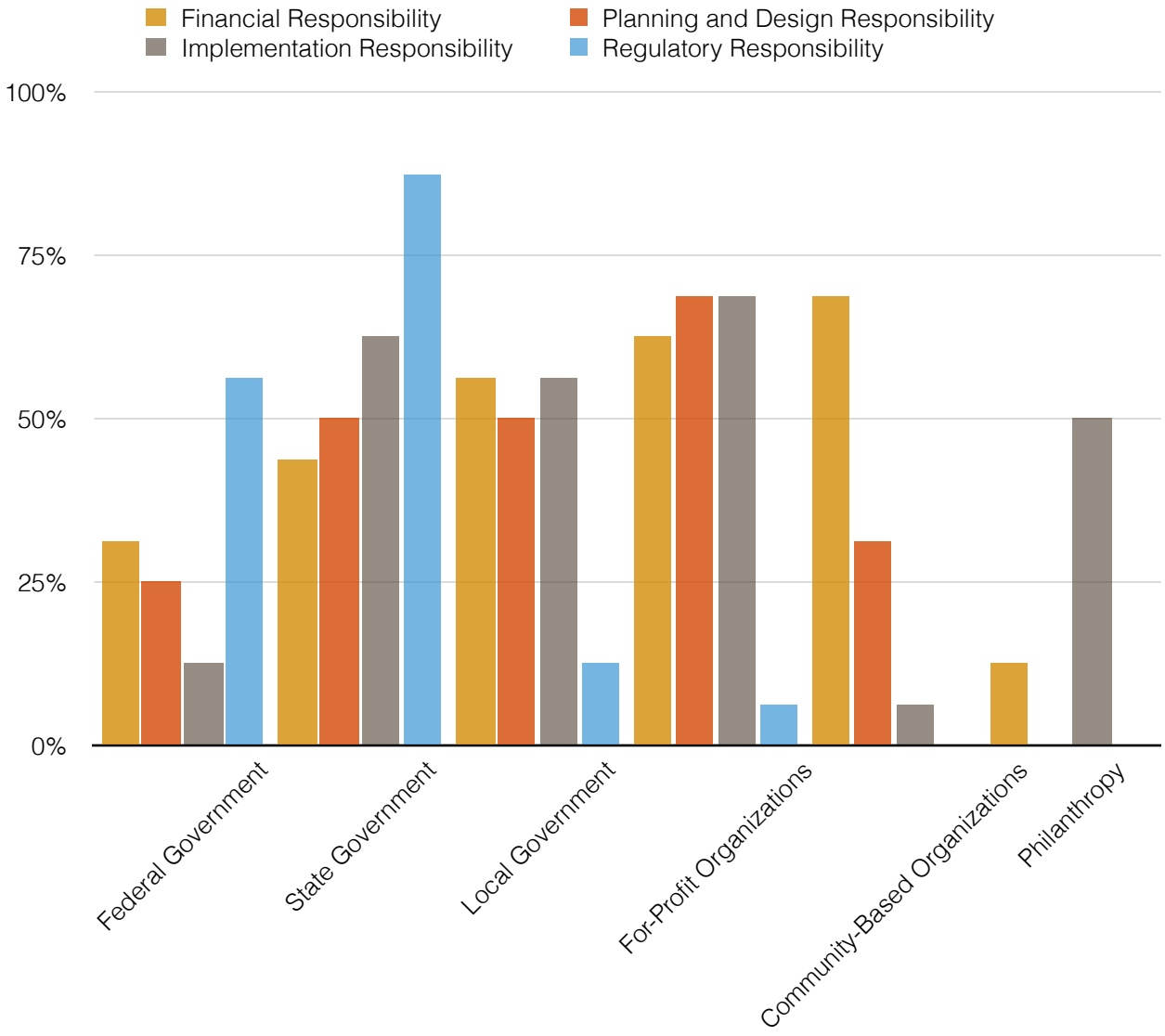
Data sourced from respondents answers to the question "In your personal opinion, where does responsibility lie for crime prevention, including recidivism reduction and youth development? Check all that apply."

Chart 4: Allocation of responsibility for business development by percentage of responses (n=16)



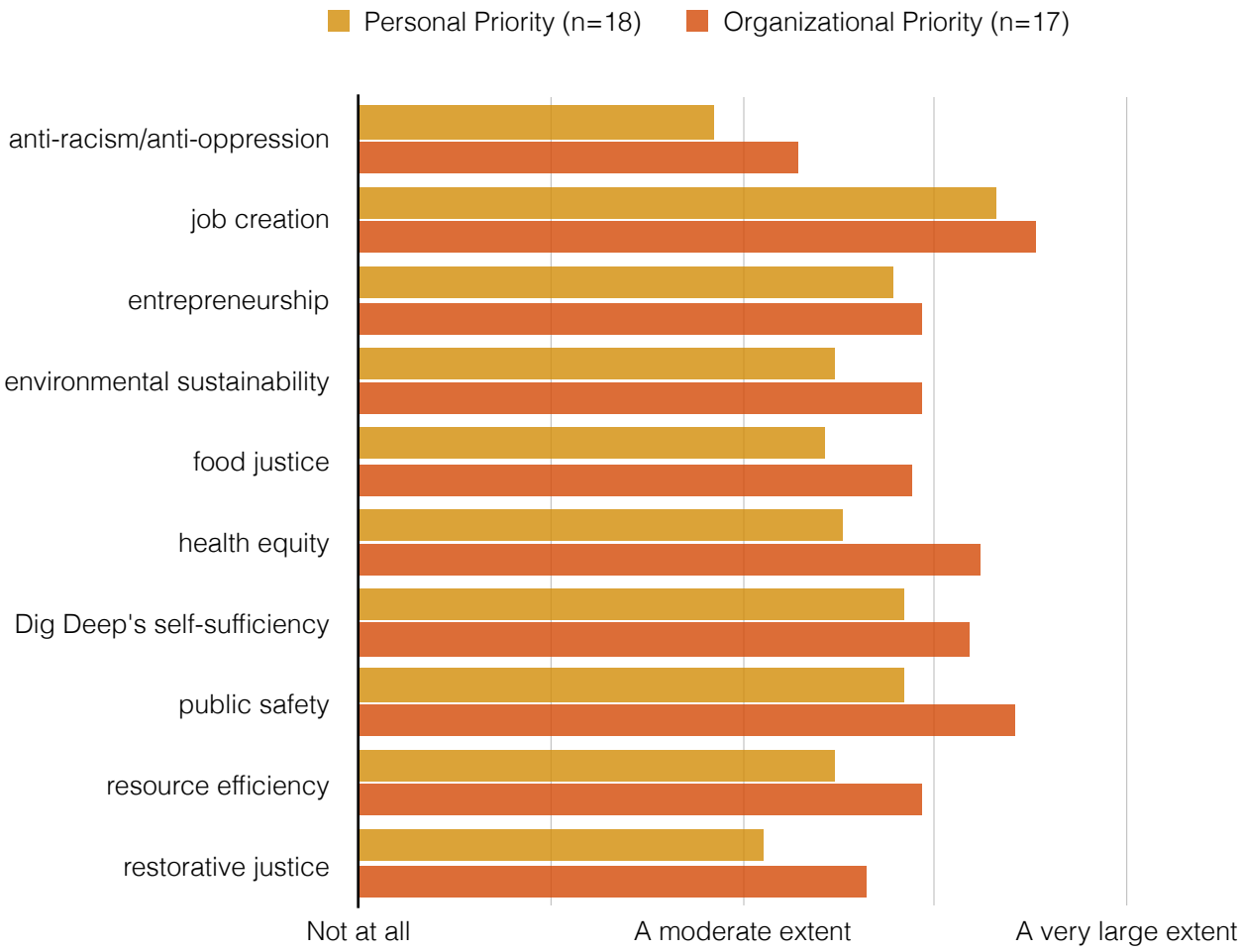
Data sourced from respondents answers to the question "In your personal opinion, where does responsibility lie for business development, including job creation? Check all that apply."

Chart 5: Allocation of responsibility for local food system creation by percentage of responses (n=16)



Data sourced from respondents answers to the question "In your personal opinion, where does responsibility lie for local food system creation and development? Check all that apply."

Chart 6: Average personal and organizational prioritization of DDF objectives



Data sourced from respondents' answer to the questions "To what extent do you personally prioritize the following in your collaboration with Dig Deep/DSAL?" and "To what extent does your organization/agency prioritize the following in when collaborating with Dig Deep/DSAL?"

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Chapter 5: Conclusions

At the beginning of my Ph.D. coursework, I was, not surprisingly, frequently required to think about my dissertation research proposal. The Food Dignity Initiative was getting underway as I was starting this work. While I considered different versions of my dissertation proposal, Dig Deep Farms (DDF) struggled to implement several pieces of Food Dignity research — conducting a photo-voice project, employing a community organizer, and forming a steering committee to distribute mini-grants. (In hindsight, this shouldn't surprise me; although the Food Dignity research agenda was determined in collaboration with four other community food organizations that partnered in the project, DDF was only coming into existence).

Simultaneously, I was finding less and less satisfaction in participant observation at DDF. I witnessed more and more of the practical and day-to-day challenges. After all, cops were running a farm to employ formerly incarcerated people. Most of the people initially involved had no experience doing anything like this. Plenty was bound to go wrong. As a result, starting DDF was a risky leap for everyone involved. I could have focused my research on these challenges, but I wanted my research questions and the ways I answered them to benefit the farmers and activists who had become my teachers. Prematurely focusing on these challenges would not accomplish this. Rather, it would have led me to an analysis supporting the sort of prominent critiques of food justice that Hank and I described in Chapter 2. I also saw that more was happening. In hindsight, I see that DDF's story was just beginning and needed time to develop before someone picked it apart and showed it to the world.

I wanted DDF to be at the center of my dissertation, but a research plan that focused on something other than only the challenges was not immediately apparent to me. I continued visiting the farmers and meeting with Hank, who was still the General Manager of DDF. I used this time to listen and pay attention to what the farmers wanted to say, learn, and do. My continued involvement gave me opportunities to listen to so-called subjects as co-analyzers and to treat myself as a research subject. Ultimately, through this work, I learned strategies that I would later recognize as making the practice of power visible. It entailed several things — listening, trust building, adaptability, and transparency about analytical frameworks — that I now see as part of a praxis of allyship.

Various forms of transparency were important to making the practice of power visible. First, I needed to stop, listen, and create space for others' ideas to grow. Doing this required a willingness on my part to stray and even abandon parts of the research proposal my qualifying exam committee approved. But this helped me to find ways to use my research to the benefit of farmers and activists.

Before conducting interviews about Alameda County's support for DDF, I listened closely to the leaders of DDF and DSAL. Only after long conversations and several years of observations did Lt. Neideffer introduce me to important county supporters I would interview. This dialogue helped to make the practice of power visible between us. It clarified my assumptions — that understanding county investment in urban agriculture will be beneficial to other urban agriculture groups or local governments and that the extensive network of county support required tremendous effort to maintain and some risk for DSAL leaders. This clarification, for both myself and DSAL leaders, ensured that my assumptions honored the tremendous knowledge base they developed through their work. In short, it fostered trust between me and

Lt. Neideffer. Other activists I worked with through EBUFFS occasionally expressed concern about the cops' involvement in urban agriculture. I had to look past this skepticism without alienating myself from these activists. Eventually, the conversations in which I earned Lt. Neideffer's trust also gave me faith in his vision of changing policing and crime prevention practices and convinced me of the importance of the farm to these objectives. These conversations gave me the confidence to conduct interviews with these assumptions in mind and without alienating myself from other activists with whom I worked.

Transparency was also important when it came to how specific frameworks and critiques benefit and harm scholars, research subjects, research partners, and broader political agendas. I actively brought this into interviews and discussions in the field. It also became apparent that this is possible in two types of relationships. Research partners and I either a) were on fairly equal footing in terms of our educational attainment and/or political and sociological imagination or b) built trust over longer (often, several years) time. And my writing was another place where I did this work, as this dissertation attests. I had conversations and attended events in which research partners and I did not also analyze our work. And these conversations and activities rarely made their way into my writing. This leads me to conclude that scholars need to understand and communicate the differences and extents of the benefits and harms of various frameworks and critiques. Ultimately, these practices enhanced my understanding of urban agriculture and the validity of my arguments.

Developing a praxis of allyship also forced me to think about my academic privilege and the importance of something as basic as the frameworks we, scholars, practitioners, funders, etc., use to analyze food justice and urban agriculture. For too long, the question of whether urban agriculture (or other activists' strategies) is complicit in neoliberalism resulted in critiques that

failed to honor efforts to change the structures of power and oppression. These critiques bothered me tremendously, but they also benefited me to the extent that I used them as a foil. And, I did to a great degree in chapter 4. There, I showed how the neoliberalism critique could limit one's understanding of urban agriculture in the case of DDF-Alameda County collaboration. While the neoliberalism critique wasn't the focus of chapter 3, my arguments about the neoliberalism critique apply. Urban farmers, such as those participating in EBUFFS, typically have multiple objectives. In some ways, this marks their resistance to productivist- and market-oriented modi operandi. Increasing production can increase the availability of fresh produce in neighborhoods where people experience food insecurity (and elsewhere). Making sure people have healthy food if they want it should not be critiqued merely because the rationalities involved are also sometimes instruments of neoliberalization.

Involving myself as both a researcher and a research subject in EBUFFS meant that I was co-creating the data I would analyze. It also meant that any critiques and shortcomings could be attributed to me as much as they could be attributed to participants. In my analysis, I was often harsh on myself. Mentors reminded me to be as kind to myself as I was to activists and farmers. Being kinder to myself required me to think with different frameworks, and consider the structural conditions that limited me and EBUFFS. In writing about EBUFFS, the ethical-intellectual tension that the question of analytical frameworks raises became one that I had to resolve with myself.

Developing a praxis of allyship in the above ways also helped me to identify the following more appropriate targets of critique. Focusing on problematizing individualism and market-orientation among EBUFFS farmers and activists, for example, could draw attention away from how they are limited by political economic structures and attempt to change them. Sometimes,

it is valid and constructive to highlight the deficiencies of individualist strategies in food justice work, since these can, indeed, lead to victim blaming. However, critiques identifying the complicity of urban farmers in the rollback of the state would be better directed at corporate advocacy and state and federal government, since even local governments are often as constrained by neoliberalization as the civil sector is. Critiques would also be better directed at the xenophobia and racism that have motivated responsibilizing programs for centuries, since activists and urban farmers are often constrained by and motivated to combat these forces as well.

This praxis allowed me to build relationships that proved to be necessary foundations for the research that informs each chapter of this dissertation. It allowed me to hear feedback from farmers at DDF about key ideas from potential dissertation proposals, to reflect on why I struggled to identify research projects that were meaningful to them, to identify why prominent pieces of scholarship about food justice frustrated me. For example, because of this praxis, especially the listening, Hank shared his stories of co-opted activism. I did not want to reproduce the co-optation he previously experienced nor to reinforce the prominence of moralist food justice. One way to do this was to write *with* him, to commit some of my scholarly time to serving the work he took up many years before I was even interested in food justice. Learning what I could and could not research through this listening and dialogue helped us to identify and write about the challenges of collaborative, allied research that previous academic literature about collaboration romanticized. These relationships also helped urban farmers trust me enough to ask me to coordinate their field school. And, as I explain next, ongoing dialogue with Lt. Neideffer helped me see the need for research into the often unacknowledged importance of networking to the success of urban agriculture.

Throughout this dissertation, I direct attention to the emergent effects of neoliberalism and racism. In chapter 2, Hank and I address how they shape research conventions and manifest in moralist food justice practices. The distinction between moralist and original food justice can help to ensure that analysis of food justice does not undermine or marginalize meaningful and radical practices of urban agriculture. I am ultimately calling for kindness towards activists and research subjects in general. Focusing scholarship on original food justice, given the caveats above about avoiding essentialization and appropriation, will facilitate kindness. When blanket critiques of food justice are made based on moralist food justice practices, it both marginalizes original food justice and reflects a lack of solidarity with activists. Thus, scholars must understand neoliberalism and racism in personal ways, as well as theoretical and structural ways.

In the introduction and chapter 3, I emphasize that neoliberalism and racism shape everything from individual experiences with urban agriculture to the diverse priorities of a regional movement. Pedagogical practices that center anti-racist values within urban agroecological training, I argue, can support leaders who navigate and disrupt these structures. And, in chapter 4, I argue that the emergent effects of neoliberalism and racism create challenges for local government. But they can motivate creative local responses to the inequality that emerges from neoliberalism and racism and I provide examples of this throughout my dissertation. Ultimately, these case studies make real the connections among decolonizing research about original food justice, the realities of urban agriculture, urban agroecology pedagogy, and local government involvement in urban agriculture. These themes are connected, not just because they all stemmed from my involvement with DDF, but because of research practices I developed early on. Any work that builds on this must, regardless of the

field, do so through ally-ship with activists and farmers, with self-awareness and reflexivity, and great attention to the ways power structures and dominant ideologies manifest.