DISSERTATION

GROWING DIVERSE CO-OPERATIVE NETWORKS?: AN EXAMINATION OF BOUNDARIES AND OPENINGS TO RESILIENT FOOD FUTURES

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ABSTRACT

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Efforts to improve connections between people, food, agriculture, and the environment abound – Community Supported Agriculture, land-sharing, school and community gardens – just to name a few. Yet, the ability of groups to work together on such projects, and pull the resources that help them thrive, varies. This is the focal point of this dissertation. Drawing on extensive field work, this research examines how food and agriculture co-operative networks diversify their resources. Through a series of papers, I demonstrate: 1) that the importance of such inquiry lies in a relational approach to resilience thinking which views resilience as the imminent potential of networks to enact diverse resources. Assuming that diversity and equity play a vital role in fueling adaptation and transformation, I pay particular attention to the socio-cultural values and interactions which create openings and boundaries to more diverse network performance. 2) Honing in on the role of frames and framing processes in community development activities, I demonstrate the vital role of cultural and symbolic values in shaping co-operative network resource access. As symbolic power becomes more concentrated, diverse resources becomes more difficult to enact. For example, the more a utilitarian frame shapes co-op member engagement, the more this can limit boundaries and openings to cultural diversity and bridging social capital. My research suggests that while sustained dialog around co-op values can help networks adapt and access more resources, it also requires additional resources which may take away from other activities. 3) While co-operation the verb is often assumed in the co-

operative organizational form, my research suggests that co-operative efforts can be unco-operative in practice. By adopting an egalitarian view of co-operation, I show that decision-making can often be exclusionary, that leadership can reproduce socio-cultural inequities, and that the emotional work necessary to co-operative relationships can sometimes limit membership recruitment and engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

Though we may not always be aware of it, the way we relate to the environment, past and future, and each other is intimately tied to food and agriculture. In a culture that prizes cheap and fast food (i.e. see Carolan 2011), people in the United States often do not take or have the time to eat with each other. For many, agricultural processes, related economic policies, and farm labor practices are secondary concerns, if of any interest at all. This disengagement reproduces food and agriculture practice status quo. The cultural and political power to shape the production, distribution, and consumption of food lies in increasingly fewer hands whom often financially benefit from more passive food citizenry. It works within a competitive market, supported by policies which encourage the extraction of resources from communities by packaging it up and selling it across the world. Some have referred to this as the “food from nowhere regime” (McMichael 2009).

Yet, as this research examines, there are efforts to activate connections between people that encourage co-operation over competition, resource generation over extraction, long-term planning over short-term gains. Food and agriculture co-operatives are an alternative to the food from nowhere regime in that they often push people to engage with various processes that dominant features of the foodscape tend to mask or ignore. Rather than voting with your dollar, co-ops also emphasize democratic decision-making, community, and sharing resources with other co-ops. Volunteerism, community events, and social connections are often observable in the culture of a given co-op. However, how co-operative can co-operatives be in a broader landscape which often encourages competition over co-operation?

I began wrestling with such questions in the fall of 2014 when I was considering studying food and agriculture co-ops for my dissertation research. I had been active in alternative food networks in the Rocky Mountain region for close to a decade and began to come across a new excitement in the potential of co-operatives among rural farmers, policymakers, community development professionals, foundations, and food activists. Through the 2000s, it seemed that people had been focusing more on experimentation comprised of individually owned businesses or non-profit organizations with public service missions. But, from my experience, the narratives accompanying these efforts seemed to be missing a critical component of practice I witnessed throughout much of my involvement; namely the important role of collaboration. Following these initial steps, in 2012 I began studying how people worked together on such projects. Although they may sometimes emphasize market competition, I was fascinated with how the success of such projects often relied upon collaboration rather than competition. This interest is what led me to studying co-operatives – perhaps following others who also began to see the use in highlighting the co-operative aspects of relationships and how more may be developed.

As I continued down this path, I became especially interested in how people can co-operate across difference, particularly in ways that help encourage more equitable resource access. There are a lot of people with different interests, identities, and insights which need to be woven together if there is to be a co-operative shift in the dominant foodscape. As this dissertation argues, the resilience of such efforts may be better understood by their ability to retain diverse and equitable relationships over time. The capacity for this to happen often relates to how people interact with each other – some interactions can encourage people to become more or less involved. Further, the way that people make sense of, and communicate the work of a co-op impacts whether others will become, and stay, involved.

My dissertation includes three papers written for academic publication. To help fill in salient gaps left out of these papers, I have included the following information in the coming pages: study research questions and logic, a theoretical reflection, overview of methods, a brief summary of findings, limitations, and future research directions. By doing so, I aim to add clarity to the broader arc of this research project.

Research Questions and Three Paper Logic

This research has been guided by the following questions:

1. How do co-operative networks diversify their resource access?
    a. What are the characteristics of each co-operative network's community capitals access[1]?
    b. What are the salient boundaries and openings for co-operative networks to access community capitals, as observed through interactions, frames, and organizational and contextual characteristics?
    c. How are boundaries and openings reproduced or transformed through forms of interaction, frames, and organizational and contextual characteristics?
    d. Who benefits and who loses in the various approaches to accessing resources?

These questions are visualized in Diagram 1, also described in further detail in Paper 1.

[1] All three papers use the Community Capitals Framework to help characterize the network of each co-op. Inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, it is used to study community development, particularly in rural communities (for examples, see Emery and Flora 2006; Flora and Flora 2013). In short, proponents of the framework posit that by characterizing and encouraging the advancement of a diversity of community resources – including natural, social, political, human, cultural, built, and financial capitals – we can improve community development efforts. The framework is discussed in further detail throughout the papers.

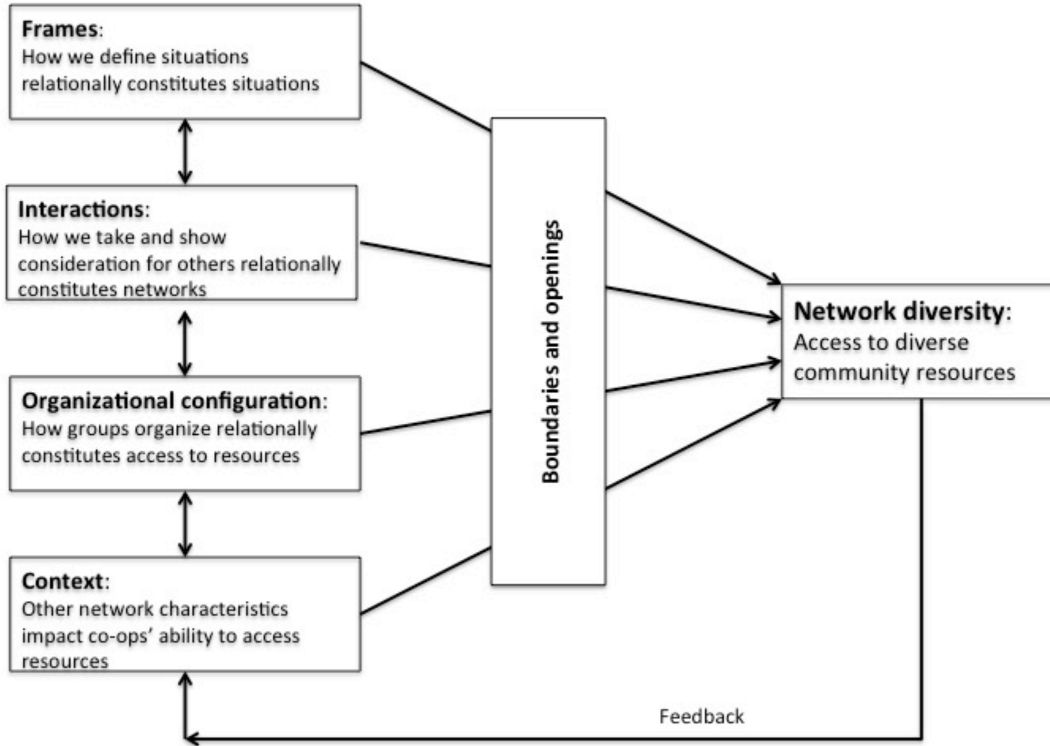

Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework

During the analysis and writing process, it became clear that though the above questions have continuously shaped this research, analysis and writing is an iterative process which aims to engage specific audiences. As such, I outline how these questions relate to each paper below. Although aspects of the above questions are underlying the concerns of all the papers, each paper hones in on a different aspect of the questions. Summary findings are found later in this paper.

Paper 1: "Toward Relational Resilience: Connecting Network Capabilities with Performance"

This research has a fundamental concern with examining how co-operative networks diversify resource access (Q1). The relevance of this focus is presented in the paper titled "Toward Relational Resilience: Connecting Network Capabilities with Performance". In it, I work to develop and defend a networked, relational approach to resiliency thinking by analyzing

how frames, interactions, and organizational patterns relate to the boundaries and openings food and agriculture co-operatives face in accessing resources. This sets up questions 1a, b, and c. There is a primary interest with diversity and equity which requires an analysis of who benefits and who loses in various co-operative arrangements (Q1d). This paper is meant to be a theoretical contribution to resilience literature. As such, the empirical grounding is more brief and directly considers two co-operative cases rather than three like the other papers do.

Paper 2: Framing Co-operative Development: The Bridging Role of Cultural and Symbolic Value Between Human and Material Resources

Working to address shortcomings of the Community Capitals approach (Flora and Flora 2013) by studying how cultural and symbolic values shape resource access (Carolan and Hale 2016), this research focuses on how frames (Goffman 1997; Snow et al. 2012) contribute to boundaries and openings to community capitals access (Q1a, b). The way that frames are transformed, or could be, is also examined (Q1c). Value and identity frames are used to consider the bridging role of cultural and symbolic value in three food and agriculture co-operatives. In doing so, I make a number of suggestions about the frames that co-operatives may work to solidify and /or shift to that result in increased resource access, and some of the tensions therein which relate to who benefits (Q1d). This paper is aimed at the community development and social movement audiences.

Paper 3: Co-operative or Unco-operative Co-operatives?: Digging into the Process of Co-operation in Food and Agriculture Co-operatives

This paper hones in on what co-operation, as a process rooted in egalitarian values (Rothschild 2016), looks like in food and agriculture co-operatives. The distinction between “co-operative” the verb and “co-operative” the noun was made by a research participant early on in

this project. I have used it as a way to conceptually and empirically ground the interactional characteristics of this study's research questions, especially those in 1b and c. This includes close consideration of the decision-making process, leadership performance, and emotional work as they relate to resource access (Q1a). It shows how co-operative network's resource access relates to how participants co-operate, and who may benefit and lose from current co-operative performance (Q1d). This paper speaks to the agrifood and co-operative literatures.

Theoretical Reflection

Relational theorizing has guided this research from the beginning (i.e. see Emirbayer 1997; Latour 1996). Though other theorizing is drawn upon – i.e. resilience, community capitals, co-operation – I continuously come back to relational thinking as a way to examine interrelations between individual co-op members and broader groupings and patterns. In short, I use relational theorizing to analytically highlight the flow of resources through entities rather than the separation of agents and structures (Latour 1996). Though I do characterize networks and related resources that extend beyond my cases, and create analytical separations within my cases, I hold a fundamental assumption that entities are more in flux rather than fixed and that the direction an entity goes can be better understood by analyzing relationships.

Relational theory helps me conceptualize patterned connections between individual and collective action observed during participant observation and reflected upon during interviews. I learned that individuals become involved in co-operative networks for a variety of reasons including social and cultural connections, how resonant co-operative frames may be, and other exposure that leads to repeated interactions with co-ops. Sometimes this may be as simple as acquiring food. However, often people feel connected to the values of the co-op and/or the people and culture.

Co-operative networks are shaped by internal and external forces. What I mean by "internal" forces is that individuals sometimes become increasingly involved by shopping more, participating in meetings, becoming leaders, and even becoming employees. In this way, co-operative networks become reflective of those who have been involved over time. Yet, this is relational – the co-operative networks begin to become more patterned with particular frames and networks being more readily enacted – thereby shaping how people within the co-operative think about the co-operative. For example, someone may get involved to access healthy food but eventually adopts a community development value frame as they are exposed to such values in meetings, informal conversations, reading co-operative marketing materials, etcetera.

Food and agriculture co-operatives are also influenced by structured interactions, frames, and other structures which extend beyond the co-operative network. This is what I mean by "external" forces. I pay particular attention to socio-economic and cultural structures such as identity and values. For example, the more utilitarian frame of the producer co-op is reflective of broader cultural values such as neoliberalism which seek to privatize public goods and emphasize the market mechanism in community improvement efforts. This frame shapes how the governing body of Prairie Farms Co-op views connections between members. Here, producers are producers and consumers are consumers connected through economic exchanges. Other social and cultural structures, such as urban/rural, white/non-white, and food justice values, for example, are deemphasized in favor of the more utilitarian framing. Another example explored throughout the papers is the role of political and financial networks in shaping leadership in co-operatives, thereby potentially limiting participation from groups who do not identify with these performances.

Methods

This work is part of an ongoing five-year project that began in 2013, focused on learning about food networks in the Rocky Mountain region. IRB approval was established in 2013. As each paper summarizes, I used a qualitative, extended case approach to examine boundaries and openings to diverse cooperative networks (Burawoy 1998; Ragin and Becker 1992). Extended case methods emphasize spending time participating in and observing social life and often through such a priori theoretical lens (Burawoy 1998). Initial theoretical inspirations for this research included the Community Capitals Framework (Emery and Flora 2006) and interactionist and relational views of social life (i.e. Emirbayer 1997; Goffman 1983; Latour 1996). Additionally, prior to this project, I spent over twelve years researching and participating in alternative food networks. This included time spent as an agro-forestry agent in Malawi, a masters thesis on Somali Bantu refugees' cultural relationship to land and food, research on health related qualities of community gardens, founding two urban agriculture organizations, and a fellowship looking at urban agriculture collaborations. These experiences have shaped my interest in cooperatives and the usefulness of the Community Capitals Framework and the interactionist perspective in advancing our understanding of how groups work to improve agriculture and food.

I have assumed that cases can take different forms and change over the course of research studies because ideas and evidence are mutually dependent (Flyvbjerg 2006; Ragin and Becker 1992). Ragin (1992) refers to this iterative processes as "casing". At the closing of my research, cases included the cooperative (networks) in my sample (more on this below) and theoretical cases of boundaries and openings to diverse cooperative networks using the Community Capitals Framework and relational theorizing. A goal of this research is to continually reconstruct both

the empirical and theoretical cases, thereby developing understandings of both cooperatives and theories of relational resilience, the role of cultural and symbolic values in community development, and co-operative performance. This was done using an iterative, reflexive process through data collection and analysis, as well as feedback from participants and colleagues (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Burawoy 1998).

I view mental processes as just as real, with causal implications, as physical ones, and indeed see them both shaping each other (Maxwell 2012). However, I recognize that there can be more or less adequate perspectives on mental and physical processes, and do not presuppose any particular relationship between them. I assume that real causal mechanisms not only exist, but that they can be explained through interviews and observation which can be more useful in understanding cases' local context and the consequences meaning has, for example (Maxwell 2012). Aligning with extended case method (and realism), I have taken the position that causality can be determined through long-term involvement, rich data, and comparing cases (Maxwell 2012). Member checking has also been used to help increase the validity of my findings. Table 1 summarizes these efforts taken during over the course of this project.

Situational Map

To help provide detail about the information I continuously sought to capture during my field work, I developed the "situational map" found in the appendix (Clarke 2005). I treated my methods as a means to answering my research questions, not a logical transformation of my research questions (Maxwell 2012). Further, the iterative process of this research necessitated flexibility in determining questions I entered the field with on a day-to-day basis. Maxwell (2012) recommends that the methods we select depend on our research questions *and* the actual research situation, as well as what we know will work most effectively in that situation. While

certain methods were able to get at some of my research questions better by design (i.e. interviews and focus groups get more at frames, observation gets more at interactions), I remained open to the possibility of learning, and confirming, findings through a variety of avenues such as informal conversations.

Sampling

The cooperatives were selected purposively (Creswell 2013) based upon their variation from other cooperatives as well as critical information they provide (Flyvbjerg 2006). Table 1 describes each case in more detail, as well as data collected. Some information is withheld to help retain anonymity of each case (i.e. pseudonyms are used). Points of variation initially included urban and rural, SES of members (or target demographic), and length of time in operation. Cooperative networks were also selected based upon the services they provide. I sought out both grocery store and distribution cooperatives, and also added others involved in education and land acquisition. I also spoke with regional and national experts on co-operative development. However, over time, this research honed in on three of the co-operative cases found in the top half of Table 1.

Within each cooperative network, interviews and focus group participants were also selected purposively and in a way that aimed to provide variation and critical information. This included beginning with key informants such as board presidents, founders, and leaders of subgroups (i.e. based upon demographics or organizational placement). Information obtained from this initial sample and during participant observation helped inform the selection of focus group participants. Follow-up interview participants were selected based upon the information they had to confirm or falsify research findings.

Table 1: Food Cooperative Cases

Name	Type of Co-op	Spatial characteristics	Date founded	Interviews to date	Focus groups to date	Participation/observation hours to date
Primary Cases						
Prairie Farms Food Co-op	Distribution	Rural	2009	12	1 (n=3)	60
Fair Horizons Food Co-op	Grocery store	Urban	2014 (no store yet)	10	1 (n=8)	45
Green Planet Food Co-op	Grocery store	Mid-size town	Late 1970s	12	2 (n=10)	40 + shopping there regularly for 2+ years
Secondary Cases						
Secondary 1	Grocery store	Urban	2015 (no store yet)	5	1 (n=5)	30
Secondary 2	Distribution	Rural	2011	4	0	4
Secondary 3	Cooperative development	Regional	1907	5	1 (n=4)	5
Secondary 4	Farm land management	Mid-size town	2015 (no land yet)	4	0	3
Secondary 5	Non-specific – field experts	National	N/A	7	0	8

Data Collection

Interviews

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide found in the appendix. The interview guide was tested on friends and colleagues before being implemented in the field. While these questions were used to generally guide the conversation, some were skipped over or rephrased to ask about specific events, actions, and characteristics of the cooperatives that I learned about through other interviews and forms of data collection. I prepared these additional or alternative questions before interviews but also remained open to such questions coming up during interviews. This helped triangulate observations (Maxwell 2012; Stake 1995). Potential participants were contacted through email or in person to schedule an interview.

Participants were interviewed at a location of their convenience and comfort and only after informed consent and anonymity was established. I sought to establish initial rapport with

the interviewee before asking interview questions. I aimed to develop a conversational partnership (Rubin and Rubin 2005) that values reflexivity and developing trust between the interviewer and interviewee. This required that I be aware of how my person, and the interactions I had during participant observation, may affect the interview. Much of the time, I already had repeated interactions with an interviewee so rapport was more easily established. Interviews were recorded using typical recording equipment, duplicated, and will be kept in a safe location for up to five years after the end of the study. As a token of gratitude, respondents were offered a five-dollar gift card for their participation. Demographics of interview and focus group participants can be found in Table 2. Demographic information was not always provided due to interviews being cut short. Therefore, this table should only be used to provide a general overview of interview and focus group participants characteristics.

Table 2: Interviewee and focus group demographics (n=58)

Age	
Range	23-69
Mean	39
Sex	
Male	28
Female	30
Race	
White or Caucasian	53
African American	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	1
Hispanic or Latino?	
Yes	7
Income (for those reporting)	
Less than $10,000	3
$10,000 to $14,999	1
$15,000 to $19,999	3
$20,000 to $24,999	1
$25,000 to $34,999	4
$35,000 to $49,999	11
$50,000 to $74,999	7
$75,000 or more	7

Focus groups

Focus groups occurred once initial interviews were done with key informants, and after receiving informed consent. The focus groups were led using the focus group guide found in the appendix. A note taker was present to help provide another point of view to the research team and to debrief about initial impressions. They took notes on salient themes, as well as the interactional characteristics of the focus group. The focus groups helped understand how groups interact and connections between individual experiences, orientations and group dynamics (Morgan 2007). Peek and Fothergill (2009) also suggest that focus groups can potentially help empower groups toward change. This research aimed to create an environment where everyone is comfortable to participate. As Morgan discusses, some individuals can overpower focus groups. To avoid this, I stepped in and encouraged participation from everyone. Further, when appropriate (i.e. tensions between groups, or significantly different concerns), I talked to participants about whether a separate focus group would help facilitate participation. Focus groups with Prairie Farms Co-op were difficult to conduct because of participants being spread out, rarely together with the time to participate in a focus group. To make up for the lack of focus groups with Prairie Farms (the one conducted was with three people who work on the same farm), I spent more time volunteering at distribution events and attending board meetings.

Participant Observation

Participant observation consisted of time spent observing board meetings, community events, volunteering for day-to-day events, and site visits. I included the time spent with each cooperative in Table 1. Notes were taken during or following participation. I often began with grand-tour questions about the general place, dress, topics, gestures, and interactions followed by mini-tour questions that focus on specifics of individuals and interactions and my feelings and

perceptions (Spradley 1980). I also took notes about possible connections or topics to follow-up on during interviews, focus groups, and secondary data sources. As I collected these forms of data, I also entered the field with more specific questions. This is another example of how data sources were triangulated, providing more opportunity to confirm or disconfirm impressions that arose over the course of the research. I began with a peripheral form of group membership (Adler and Adler 1987) but this sometimes became more active over the course of the research (i.e. cooperative membership, voting, and other forms of participation). Specifically, during the final months of field work, I became more vocal offering what I learned about other co-operatives. This mostly included technical information, not research findings (i.e. X co-op gets food from Y distributor). Toward the end, I began to sometimes use specific theoretical cases (i.e. frames, co-operation as process) to spur conversation in board meetings and informal conversations. This helped confirm and disconfirm findings, as well as worked to develop concepts and their applications relevant to the co-operatives.

Secondary Data

I drew on secondary data to help me understand organizational characteristics, organizational history, and contextual characteristics of the community.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was a continuous process throughout the study. This included more informal processing that occurred on-the-fly in field work. Notes were taken as these came up. Formally, data was analyzed using both categorizing (i.e. codes) and connecting strategies (i.e. contextualizing in narrative) (Maxwell 2012). Put another way, my approach to analysis has been oriented toward retaining contextual characteristics of each specific case (i.e. language of participants), while also aiming to develop categories to compare across cases (i.e. memos). This

approach is similar to the constructivist method of Charmez (2006). It allowed me to begin with some sensitizing concepts (i.e. community capitals, environmental frame) and work toward producing knowledge that is situated in the language of the participants (in-vivo codes) and with an eye toward issues of power and oppression. Memos were made as a way to connect what I learned about individual experiences and perspectives on interactions, organizational characteristics, frames, and contextual characteristics. I took notes about each network, determined contextual boundaries and openings, and compared differences between cases.

Key Findings

A number of themes have solidified through this project. First, a relational approach to resilience can help us study the role of socio-cultural performance in making human-environmental relationships more resilient (Pauwelussen 2016). Here, resilience is better understood as the imminent potential of networks to enact diverse resources. Relational thinking addresses a number of the concerns that social scientists level against the systems thinking typically drawn on by resilience scholars (i.e. Davidson 2010; Olsson et al. 2015). Following others (i.e. Cote and Nightingale 2012; Davidson 2010; Mayer 2016), I argue that relational approaches also need to evaluate an efforts' approach to diversity and equity. Diversity and equity help fuel adaptation and transformation by providing more options about what to adapt to and how to do it (Davidson 2010). I develop one way to study relational resilience by analyzing frames, interactions, and organizational processes. This approach emphasizes the socio-cultural performance that is related to the ability of networks to enact diverse resources.

Second, as studied through the frames and framing process (Goffman 1997; Snow et al. 2012), uneven distribution of symbolic power results in particular cultural and symbolic values taking hold, enabling some resource access and limiting others. As symbolic power becomes

concentrated, diverse cultural values, and the potential network resources they represent, can become difficult to enact. Sustained dialog around co-op values can help the network adapt and access more resources. However, to sustain dialog during a frame alignment process, additional resources are often needed, potentially taking away from other activities. Concerning the role of cultural and symbolic values in bridging material and human resources, I find that frames are related to resource access, that they can be in tension with each other, don't always reflect practice, and may help reorganize capitals access.

Specific to food and agriculture co-operatives, I found that a utilitarian frame limits network resources, particularly cultural diversity and bridging social capital. This also has implications for accessing other material resources typically provided by groups interested in work that targets diverse, underserved communities. A community development frame often struggles with "who" the co-op is for, thereby being more accessible to some groups who more readily identify with socio-cultural performances associated with the co-op network. While a justice frame can help groups take intentional positions toward cultural and economic barriers to participation, it may not resonate with current networks, suggesting that "community" may be a better next step away from a utilitarian focus.

Third, there is a lack of reflection around what "co-operation" looks like in practice in food and agriculture co-operatives. Co-operation is assumed in the legal form but interactions, as observed in decision-making, leadership, and emotional work, suggest that co-operatives often struggle to be co-operative. Drawing on an egalitarian view of co-operation (Rothschild 2016), I found that decision-making can exclude current and potential members, leadership can reproduce boundaries through particular identity performance, and emotional work can lead to emotional debts which delegitimize surface level performance and decrease participation. These both

enable and impede upon resource access, shaping network capabilities. Working across difference takes more time and resources.

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TOWARD RELATIONAL RESILIENCE: CONNECTING NETWORK CAPABILITIES WITH PERFORMANCE

If one visits a community meeting, website, or a government report with some aim at improving societal-environmental situations they will likely see or hear the term "resilience" sooner rather than later. It is often included in grant applications as a desirable outcome of community programs or research projects. However, as it has become so ubiquitous, it can be easy to skim over the concept without digging deeper into assumptions and approaches associated with the term. Upon more rigorous interrogation we might ask: resilience of *what*? and *for whom*? Further, as the present paper theorizes, we may find use in viewing resilience as a relational process understood as the imminent potential of networks to enact diverse resources. By comparing the frames, interactions, and organizational practice of food and agriculture co-operatives – alternative food projects often aiming to improve the resilience of food and agriculture networks – we can begin to envision what studying and performing resilience may look like. This paper offers a relational view of resilience in response to a number of recent challenges presented in the literature, as well as experience using the concept in the field.

Social scientists often have a difficult time with resilience thinking as it relates to people because it tends to emphasize the status quo, has a limited view of agency, and draws on outdated social theorizing such as structural functionalist systems-thinking (Davidson 2010; Hatt 2013; Olsson et al. 2015). Concerning the social side of the socio-environmental coin, the concept mostly draws on institutional approaches to social organizing that equate it with community cohesion (Adger 2000). Further, with a foot in systems thinking, there is a tendency for resilience literature to emphasize a bounded view of its subjects rather than, as this paper

develops, a networked, enacted approach which may be able to better deal with issues of connectivity (Pauwelussen 2016). Such an approach helps us study the ways in which resilience, adaptation, and transformation are achieved through collective action (Davidson 2010). This requires close attention to the cultural, infrastructural, and communicative resources and relationships that constrain and enable collectivity, especially across diversity.

There are pragmatic reasons for social scientists to wrestle with the concept of resilience (Caniglia et al. 2014; Caniglia, Vallee, and Frank 2016). Namely, the motivation for this project arose out of research examining co-operatives as part of a USDA funded research project focused on food and agriculture resilience. As a sociologist entering the field, it became clear that a more grounded and iterative approach to resilience was needed. Like the literature above summarizes, concentrating on the resilience of individuals or the "system" was clearly problematic given the role of socio-cultural performance in the initial observations I made of co-operatives. For example, as the second part of this paper describes, some co-operatives are more racially and economically diverse, something that is talked about and reflected upon more often among co-op participants. Other co-operatives more readily access particular types of human capital such as farming and distribution knowledge, bonding over these activities and maintain boundaries with others who may draw attention elsewhere.

Initial observations suggested that values, identity, and forms of leadership play an important role patterning such relations. For such reasons, I have found it helpful to understand differences between co-operatives as continuously accomplished, networked relationships between financial, social, cultural, political, human, built, and natural resources (Flora and Flora 2013). The ways that boundaries and openings are performed in networks both facilitate and also impede the potential of networks to access diverse resources. For instance, if performances value

some resources over others, this has implications for who benefits and ultimately how diverse a network can be.

In an effort to demonstrate the use of relational theorizing on resilience thinking, this paper first summarizes resilience literature and associated critiques. Doing so sets a backdrop for the next section which develops the concept of relational resilience and suggests one way to study it by examining the role of social frames, interactions, and organizational patterns in determining diverse and equitable resource access. The focus on frames, interaction, and organizational patterns helps us better understand resilience as a socio-cultural, processual accomplishment of networks. The concern here is the potential of networks to engender diverse resources over time and space with some frames, interactions, and organizational patterns contributing to variability in resource access. The second part of the paper grounds this theorizing in a brief comparison of two food and agriculture co-operatives and describes the boundaries and openings to developing more relationally resilient co-op networks.

Theories of Resilience

Resiliency thinking has developed through three distinct but sometimes overlapping veins: psycho-social, social-ecological, and community resilience (Mayer 2016). The psycho-social literature typically focuses upon identifying personal development processes that support individual's adaptation to change (Smith, Carlson, and Carlson 2016). Concerned with an equilibrium-based paradigm, social- ecological resilience approaches research the capacity of systems to retain functions before change occurs (Gunderson and Holling 2001). Community resilience hones in on the ability of a geographic, political, or affinity-bound community to identify vulnerabilities and develop capabilities to overcome the impacts of a real or potential traumatic event through agency and self-organization (Berkes and Ross 2013). In this section, I

briefly summarize this literature before describing some of the criticisms leveled against resiliency thinking. In particular, I characterize what they are concerned with making resilient and how they are oriented toward change.

Psycho-social resilience research typically focuses upon the individual level and with children's ability to recover from trauma and cope with adversity (Mayer 2016). This work is motivated by a goal of understanding why some children are able to cope and recover better than others (Masten 2001). In short, psycho-social research aims to identify individual traits that contribute toward individual resilience. Established traits include personality factors (i.e. hardiness, self-efficacy), attitudinal factors (i.e. positive worldview, altruism), attachment factors (i.e. communal solidarity, social support), cognitive factors (i.e. intellectual and reasoning), and specific adaptation and coping skills (i.e. stress-reducing competencies) (Abramson et al. 2014). Traditionally, this flavor of resilience views the self as more isolated, residing in the individual and less occupied with social and/or ecological systemic dynamics (Jordan 2013). However, some have developed relational concepts of resilience in this strand of the literature, which includes a focus on individuals' capacity for connection where mutual empathy, empowerment, and courage are viewed as the building blocks of childhood resilience (Jordan 2013).

Within work concerned with socio-ecological systems (SES), resilience has been defined as "the amount of disturbance that can be sustained before a change in system control and structure occurs" (Gunderson and Holling 2001, p.28). Ecologists posit that there are three basic parts of ecosystem resilience: domains of attraction, the adaptive cycle, and cross-scale effects (Davidson 2010). The adaptive cycle metaphor is made up of four functional phases that influence a system's trajectory: growth and exploitation, conservation, release, and reorganization. Though systemic transformation is possible, an emphasis tends to be placed on

identifying necessary qualities needed to avoid transformation (Holling and Gunderson 2002). These include the system accumulating resources rather than depleting them, that it contains stabilizing (maintaining productivity and biogeochemical cycles) and destabilizing forces (maintaining diversity and opportunity); and there are processes that create novelty, ensuring a dynamic yet persistent system. A necessary balance is implied in which sufficient connectivity across scales is needed to ensure feedback, but there also must be sufficient autonomy to prevent "revolt" and ways to cultivate diversity in function and response (Davidson 2010; Walker et al. 2006). While cross-scale connectivity is one example of relational theorizing, social-ecological resilience often uses more traditional systems thinking that reduces the role of the social to a system of institutions and governing bodies that can be designed as being relatively resilient. It tends to assume that social and ecological systems can be modeled in the same ways (Olsson et al. 2015).

Community resilience is often seen as aiming to combine both psycho-social and ecological resilience. Primarily focused on community development and preparedness, work in this area attempts to integrate individual agency with structural conditions (Mayer 2016). A somewhat bounded understanding of "community" is often necessary (Pauwelussen 2016), and studies typically aspire to identify capabilities that help communities adapt to change (Norris et al. 2008). Community resilience approaches often use participatory methods to understand processes and outcomes (Magis 2010; Mitchell et al. 2014; Ross and Berkes 2014). Ross & Berkes (2014) summarize a number of studies using participatory methods to plan, research, and reflect on ways to build community resilience. Some of the indicators of resilience include: persistence, problem solving, leadership, social networks, and engaged governance (Ross and Berkes 2014). Mitchell et al (2014) emphasize the collective learning process that begins with

sharing ideals. Through this, an appreciation of diversity can form through a set of shared principles, even when these are conflicting. It is argued that through such participatory methods, the questions of resilience “for whom?” and “of what” can begin to be contextualized. But, the authors acknowledge that this does assume diverse community representation and agency, something that can often be difficult.

Deficits of Resiliency Theories

Resilience thinking has been criticized by social scientists for a variety of positions. For some, psycho-social approaches tend to rely too heavily on a “separate self” model of individual resilience (Jordan 2013). By focusing on individual temperaments, hardiness, or self-esteem psycho-social concepts of resilience deemphasize and lose the importance of relationships in shaping how people cope, as well as being vital to coping itself. The capacity for connection may be a better way to understand resilience (Jordan 2013). Further, understanding the self, and relations therein, without looking at broader socio-cultural conditions, for example, depoliticizes the role of institutions in reproducing inequities which may make some more vulnerable than others (Mayer 2016).

Typical SES conceptions of resiliency tend to ground assumptions within a mechanical view of social equilibrium rather than the adaptive approach they use to understand ecosystems (Cote and Nightingale 2012; Hatt 2013). An adoption of a systems ontology, often implicitly drawing on Parsonion structural functionalism is charged with ignoring the role of agency and power in perpetuating inequality (Cote and Nightingale 2011; Davidson 2010). By resilience scholars understanding the social as a system, individual agency, the role of power, and structural arrangements have become conflated. Indeed, “resilience” insofar as it assumes current institutions and structural relations as necessary for maintaining a “balance”, can ignore how

these relations often lead to resilience for some at the expense of others. In other words, the "stickiness" of institutions can often become filled with inefficient or ineffective norms, rules, and values (Olsson et al. 2015). For instance, resilience thinking often draws on neoliberal economics using rational choice theory (Olsson et al. 2015; Walker and Cooper 2011). Such approaches are criticized by social scientists for perpetuating historical and structural inequities such as dispossession and exploitation (Hatt 2013; Olsson et al. 2015).

Resilience thinking is also faced with challenges in characterizing systems boundaries (Olsson et al. 2015). Within sociology, boundaries are often viewed as socially constructed. Researchers may construct them for pragmatic reasons (i.e. analytically, activism) but it is still vital to be reflexive about this process. For instance, SES scholars use institutions to construct a particular system of interest and there is a tendency to stress the material aspects of institutions using rational choice theory rather than including the ideational aspects of society and nature (Olsson et al. 2015). Instead of viewing community as something "out there", and organized by rational choice, it may be better seen as something within or enacted in practice (Pauwelussen 2016). This requires qualitative methods to gain insight into the meaning and relationships that organize networks, something that is subject to change through agency. Feedback is also problematic when applied to the social sciences because the two types – positive or negative – found in the natural sciences does not work well to explain social phenomena (Olsson et al. 2015). In social systems, feedback is more determined by agency, or structural agency, and the norms and values within are dynamic and subject to continuous change. Under the assumption that diversity helps improve resilience, it then becomes a question of what ensures feedback processes that encourage variation rather than homogeneity (Davidson 2010).

For the reasons outlined above, it is argued that resilience thinking tends to depoliticize social change (Davidson 2010; Olsson et al. 2015) and focuses too heavily on static things (i.e. individuals, community, systems) rather than relations and connections. As such, the conversation can benefit from acknowledging that resilience is inherently contentious and that it is necessary to study current and historical political factors and socioeconomic conditions; or a "just resilience" approach (Mayer 2016). Yet, even community-based participatory studies of resilience face difficulties with ensuring diverse participation when power is used to undermine collective aspirations (Mitchell et al. 2014). Indeed, as others have acknowledged, inequality can disrupt feedback processes (Davidson 2010). Relational theorizing helps us dig further into this by emphasizing connection over separation. Concerning inequality, it is vital to study the bonds, and performance therein, that allow certain groups to retain control over symbolic, positional, or emotional resources that make inequality durable (Emirbayer 1997). This pushes resilience theorizing to account for how political factors and socioeconomic conditions are enacted in socio-cultural meanings and interactions.

Wrestling with the shortcomings and potential of resilience thinking, Davidson (2010) calls for inquiries into individual and collective agency that include "attention to the sites at which opportunities for 'mutant' rules or customs are generated" (p. 1145). As the next section develops further, one way to do this from a relational perspective is by studying the frames and interactions enacted in relationships, particularly those which are experimenting with alternative ways of doing (i.e. co-operatives operating in a corporate regime). Here, resilience could be better understood as the imminent potential of networks to engender a diverse spectrum of values over time and space, with some frames and interactions contributing to variability in resource access.

Relational Resilience

Adapting Pauwelussen's (2016) definition of relational resilience, I understand it as how actors (human and non-human) associate into enduring, *diverse, and equitable* networks (my additions are italicized). I have added diverse and equitable networks into the definition under the assumption that inequality decreases diversity, a necessary part of adaptation and transformation (Davidson 2010), and it is reproduced and/or challenged through network performance. From this position, practices that help develop diversity and equity are a primary concern. Diversity is understood in terms of network relations conceptualized as the ability of networks to develop and maintain access to a variety of resources (more on this below). Relationally resilient qualities of networks can be assessed by investigating how they enact structural inequities and/or challenge them. This requires studying practices that include and exclude potential network resources, thereby accomplishing a network's capabilities. In this section, I develop one relational, performative view of networks using the theoretical concepts of frames, interactions, and organizational practice. Drawing on frames, interactions, and organizational practice highlights the socio-cultural patterns which shape resilience, something often undertheorized by resilience scholars (Cote and Nightingale 2011). Key concepts compiled below include: relational theorizing, diversity, equity, resources, frames, interactions, organizational performance, and boundaries and openings.

Ontologically, relational approaches often assume a networked position, rather than a substantialist systems position (Emirbayer 1997). Here, separation (i.e. between individuals, communities, socio-ecological systems) is secondary and its performative, socio-cultural construction is highlighted (Pauwelussen 2016). Rather than assuming the primacy of any one institution, relational theorizing focuses on how these are enacted, or not, in relationships. Both

the structural and cultural aspects of networks contribute to reproduction and change (Emirbayer 2012). As such, relational theorizing applied to resilience provides space for studying how networks can adapt and transform relationships as they collectively work to improve their situations through innovative performance and practice. Resilience then becomes more of a conditional and temporary accomplishment (Pauwelussen 2016).

The diversity of network relations is conceptualized as the ability of networks to develop and maintain access to a variety of resources (community capitals). Or put another way, a key part of resilience is network capabilities (Norris et al. 2008). Diversity ensures other options about what to adapt to and resources for fueling transformation (Davidson 2010). The community capitals include natural, built, human, cultural, social, financial, and political resources (Emery and Flora 2006). These are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Community Capitals Framework

Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	Political	Financial	Built
-Location -Weather -Geographic isolation -Natural resources -Amenities -Natural beauty Shapes the cultural capital connected to place	-Knowledge -Traditions -Who and what we feel comfortable with. -Language Influences what voices are heard or not	-Skills and abilities that help develop and access resources and knowledge. -Leadership across differences, participatory, proactive.	-Connections among people and organizations, that makes things happen. -Could be close, more personal connections or more distant that create bridges among organizations and groups.	-Access to power, organizations, and resources, to change standards, rules, and regulations. -Ability of actors to engage in action that affects their community.	-Available financial resources to invest in community capacity building, underwrite business development, support entrepreneurship, and save for future community development.	Infrastructure supporting community activities

Applying this to co-operatives, I focus on socio-cultural diversity and how efforts maintain it within their immediate network (i.e. board, membership, partners), or not. Further, I pay attention to how this plays a key role in cultivating broader, relational network diversity (i.e. accessing community capitals). I also assume that networks that acknowledge and seek to

address issues of inequality may help ensure diverse participation in feedback processes and collective action (Davidson 2010).

Inequality is transactional, reproduced and challenged in practice (Emirbayer 1997). This means that rather than understanding inequality as variation in the possession of resources, it is the bonds, and performance therein, that allow certain groups to retain control over symbolic, positional, or emotional resources that make inequality durable. It is how privileged and non-privileged actors improvise in response to networked problems (Emirbayer 1997). Assuming that equality helps ensure diversity in networks (and build adaptive and transformation capacity), relational resilient approaches aim to study how relationships, and the power therein, retain or exclude some actors from different forms of participation (i.e. decision-making, labor, events, leadership) and resources (community capitals).

One way to study both the cultural and structural characteristics of networks (Emirbayer 2012; Lamont and Molnar 2002) is by examining the frames, interactions, and organizational characteristics. These reproduce and/or reconfigure resource relations over time, constraining and/or enabling diverse and enduring resource access (summarized in Figure 1). Drawing on the work of Erving Goffman, frames refer to how "definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman 1997, p. 155). Frames are informed by the roles, values, beliefs, meanings, and norms that make up the multiple, shifting realities held by individuals as they move through the world (Norris-Raynbird 2008). The way that frames allow some individuals and groups to access resources, while excluding others, contributes to potential issues of inequality and decreases network diversity. Organization performance, such as the way they divide members

into groups and relegate certain expectations to each of them, can also contribute to the types of values they are able to sustain in the network (Vincent and Wapshott 2014).

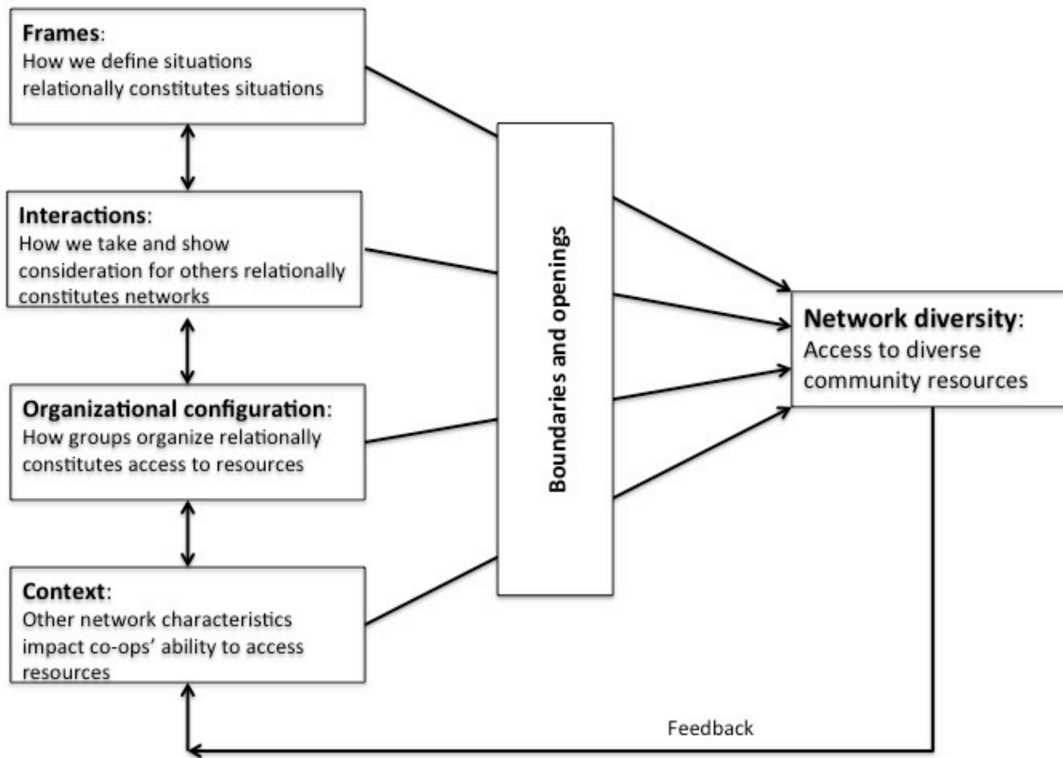

Figure 1: Proposed Framework for Studying Socio-cultural Boundaries and Openings to Network Diversity

Studying interactions between people, groups, and non-human resources can help provide understanding about how normative routines contribute to network performance. For instance, how actors' gestures, dress, and other behaviors structure relationships (Goffman 1956, 1978, 1983) and therefore openings and boundaries to resource access. Conventions concerning the division between front-stage and back-stage in various leadership styles (i.e. charismatic, bureaucratic, horizontal, hierarchal) is related to how legitimate they might be viewed (Cicourel 1958). The emotional work in maintaining relationships across diversity can also limit the capacity of networks (Hochschild 1979). For example, enacting empathy and compassion across

different identities takes energy, and debts may become embodied – potentially restraining further connection.

In relational theorizing, social and symbolic construction of boundaries and openings are emphasized over functional imperatives that systems-based understandings often use to explain boundaries (Emirbayer 1997). Identity based, symbolic boundaries are clusters of identities and associated practices that become sedimented and continue to reappear across contexts (White 1992). As we will see, in the case of co-operatives, this means how identities such as "farmer", "rural", "Hispanic", "activist", "leader", "environmentalist", "co-operative", etcetera become durable over time through interactions. For example, identity can be observed in practices that separate people at events and board meetings (i.e. who talks or sits with who) and in the meaning participants use to describe their work (i.e. I do this as a community development practitioner). These symbolic boundaries are also related to social boundaries which shape who knows and trusts who. If we only talk to those with whom we identify, then it closes off other networks. Organizational divisions (i.e. staff, board, members), and contextual characteristics (i.e. socio-demographics, geographic location, distributive practices) also help us understand how networks may be segmented.

Openings can be observed similarly to that of structural holes that connect resources. However, these holes are not only individuals with particular frames and interactions, clusters of people and non-humans can also play a role of connecting networks. Collective action frames organize the beliefs and meanings that lead to action across groups (Snow et al. 2012). Under the assumption that these openings are critical to developing and maintaining diversity, it is vital to identify frames and interactions that contribute to them. For example, what resources are available, and potentially limited by adopting a utilitarian, producer-focused frame? How about a

"healthy" or "just" food frame? Leadership styles and the emotional capacity of networks can also provide openings to diversity.

As explored in the remainder of the paper, relationally resilient theorizing, applied to co-operatives, pushes us to ask to following:

- What are the salient frames about what the co-operative networks are doing? Who or what is included, or not? What frames and interactions contribute to diversity?
- How are issues of inequality or difference addressed (or not)?
- How is the leadership structured? Is it more vertical or horizontal?
- How is power distributed (i.e. symbolic capital) and enacted in interactions and frames?
- How does organizational structure contribute to diversity and equity?

Research Project Background

The need for a relational approach to resilience arose out of a research project that examined the resilience of innovative food and agriculture projects. Through this work, food and agriculture co-operatives came into focus as gaining significant attention and resources in the region. For example, in the last four years, three co-operative grocery stores have begun working to open in the regional magnet city. Over ten producer-focused co-operatives have started in the region. Most of these efforts began within the past five to ten years. This research project followed five of these. For the sake of space, one producer and one consumer co-operative are examined here. Pseudonyms are used to help ensure anonymity.

While studying the resilience of food and agriculture co-operatives, I struggled with many of the common critiques of resilience thinking described earlier in the paper. For example, co-operatives seemed less bounded when looking at where resources come from such as financial or human capital. Further, as we will see, some co-ops work closely with other groups

which have significant influence upon them. The emergent qualities of the co-operatives I followed also led to questions of agency when trying to understand how projects came to be, and the boundaries and openings therein. Relational theorizing – viewing our cases as networks and honing in on the accomplishment of resource access, for example, is an attempt to iteratively connect what I learned through field work with theory. In response to community partnerships, and taking a performative position with research itself (Law and Urry 2004), I aspire for these results to be used to make recommendations to co-operative networks about how to better access resources.

I have worked in the region on food and agriculture projects for over ten years. Since this research continues to build off of previous research, it has an approach similar to extended case method (Burawoy 1998). The section below draws on over two years of field work which included 59 interviews, 6 focus groups, and over 200 hours of participant observation. Interviews were conducted with co-operative board members, staff, and consumers and sought to understand motivations, important relationships using the community capitals, and tensions therein. Follow-up interviews were done after observation and focus groups to confirm/disconfirm impressions concerning frames, interactions and organization configurations. Focus groups occurred with co-operative board members and staff and aimed to discuss resource access realities and possibilities, as well as observe group interactions. Participant observation occurred at board meetings, distribution sites, in stores, and community events. Rigorous notes were taken about the topics of conversation and group interactions. These experiences and materials have been used to iteratively ground resilience, and then, relational resilience, in a particular socio-ecological situation generally aimed at improving the relationships between people and the environment (i.e. organic, naturally grown, local, energy efficient, etc).

Resilient Co-operative Networks?

Food and agriculture co-operatives have received a great deal of attention within the past fifteen years including their ability to bring the social economy to the wider marketplace (Levi and Davis 2008) and enact new democratic principles (Rothschild 2016). They have also emerged as a potential alternative approach to changing food and agriculture from within (Goodman, DuPuis, and Goodman 2012); a necessary component of expanding the horizon of possible food futures (Carolan 2013). Concerning this research study, three co-operative grocery stores are currently working to open doors in the region's magnet city and state capitol. At least six producer-centered co-operatives have begun within the last few years. Here, I briefly describe the relationally resilient qualities and challenges of two of these – Prairie Farms Food Co-op and Fair Horizons Food Co-op (Fair Horizons) (pseudonyms used). I begin by providing information about each co-op and then I summarize some primary themes that arise when using relationally resilient theorizing including the salient frames, interactions, and organizational characteristics. I also suggest some potential openings to more diverse resource access for each co-op, and the tensions therein.

Prairie Farms Food Co-op

Starting with the aim of rural economic development and selling quality foods, Prairie Farms Food Co-op has been working across state lines for almost ten years. The network includes over fifty producer members spread across three states and over five-hundred consumer members who are primarily located in the regional urban centers. The co-op was originally formed by a number of producers, many whom describe their situation as "land rich, cash poor" and a strong understanding of agricultural production. The economic decline of rural communities and the health concerns of conventional farming practices led this dispersed group

of famers and community members to work together to access urban markets willing to pay premiums for local, natural foods. Associated motivations for the producers include not "poisoning themselves and the land" and also developing a farmer-focused economy to keep young people in rural communities. The vast majority of the governing body and participating farmers are white and tend to be over the age of 55. There is little to no inclusion of Hispanic and Latino populations in discussions of the co-operative despite Hispanic and Latinos making up 7% of one of the key producer counties. Though spread out across many counties, the leadership is based in a county that has a median household income of $44,500 per year. Men have typically been in formal leadership positions in the co-op, though participants described participating women as having a strong role in the informal leadership (i.e. day to day operations and communication). Relatively, there is more homogeneity and bonding social capital in this co-op than the other co-ops studied.

While most of the food distributed by Prairie Farms goes to urban areas, some returns back to rural communities. Labor is mostly volunteered, including distribution, governance, communication, marketing, and collaboration. There is no office, meetings rotate around to involved farms and nearby community centers. The primary distribution site is currently at an urban center which houses a number of urban non-profit organizations. This site was chosen because it is free, it is centrally located, and delivery vehicles can easily enter and exit the large, warehouse garage. It is in the historically African-American area of the city. Few, if any, African-Americans are involved in the co-op as producers or consumer members. Prairie Farms has received some small grants, which have helped with supporting accounting and purchasing trailers and mobile processing units. The foods are naturally grown, meaning that they are typically not certified organic (though there are some USDA certified). The "naturally grown"

standards are more informal and peer reviewed by others in the co-op and community. Prairie Farms Food Co-op distributes fruit and vegetables, honey, eggs, meats and dairy, as well as a number of value-added products including coffee and baked goods.

Fair Horizons Food Co-op

Fair Horizons is a consumer focused, yet to open grocery store located in a traditionally low-income, Hispanic and Latino neighborhood. The median household income for the neighborhood is $38,000 per year. The store is not yet open and the board has been meeting for over two years. Other businesses in the area include Mexican and South and Central American restaurants and markets, auto-repair stores, and community development non-profits. The co-op currently has 300+ members and aims for 1,000 before the doors open. The membership includes Hispanic and Latino people, low-income community residents and more privileged, working professionals who are perceived as gentrifying the area. Both groups occupy board positions in the co-op. However, a number of the Hispanic and Latino board members also work for a key partner non-profit whose efforts spearheaded Fair Horizons. The leadership of this non-profit also leads the co-op (i.e. president position, meeting facilitation, information and resource gathering). These leaders are educated, white men who have located to the neighborhood within the last ten years. There is a focus on connecting cultures; providing culturally appropriate, healthy, and affordable foods; and community ownership and wealth-building. While issues of inequality and justice come up in board meetings sometimes, explicit stances toward these are not currently included in any guiding documents (i.e. mission and vision). Along with the rest of the rapidly growing city it is located within, there is a concern of gentrification in the area.

Through the leadership of the non-profit partner, Fair Horizons has received additional support. For example, the non-profit has received grants and funding to support non-profit

salaries and the acquisition of land and infrastructure that will be leased to the co-op once it builds the capacity to do so. This partnership has also raised the profile of the project within the city and the region as the non-profit highlights it as one of its primary projects. Such attention occurs online, through newsletters, in presentations, and in meetings among funders, city officials, activists, and non-profit professionals. These resources, as well as the community-lead focus of the non-profit, support more heterogeneity and bridging social capital in the co-op network and governance. However, the non-profit has a great deal of influence over the co-op as its networks shift and change. For example, when funding streams change, this affects what may be currently planned for the co-op. This includes changing site infrastructure (i.e. building), store opening dates, staffing, and interim steps (i.e. business plan, technical advice). It can also lead to the non-profit handing off activities to the co-op such as a mercadito (small market grocery) which can be used to build knowledge and trust within the co-op and broader community network.

Co-operative Frames: Development, "Good" Food, or Justice?

The frames used to understand the need for the co-operatives generally revolve around the sometimes conflicting goals of community economic development and accessing "good" food. Prairie Farms producers position the co-op as fueling rural economic transition and development whereas the Fair Horizons works to create jobs and keep more money within the community. Members of Prairie Farms often emphasize the quality of foods provided and received, whether it be about health (i.e. non-GMO or chemicals) or sustainable production. Also, "knowing" your farmer is something present within network relationships. For Fair Horizons, there are more exchanges about culturally appropriate and affordable foods, rather than prioritizing getting foods from natural food distributors (i.e. UNFI) and local growers,

community control is asserted. This means that some foods will be bought through conventional food distributors, such as Sysco, to make the inventory more affordable.

For such reasons, what is affordable for consumers can be unaffordable for producers in co-operative networks. After initial conversations about the potential of partnership, the food from Prairie Farms was determined to be too expensive for the Fair Horizons community. Indeed, co-operative network participants described the challenge in being able to sustain frames that include both community development, whether it be rural and/or urban, and also the various forms of "good" food, whether it be fresh, environmentally sustainable, naturally grown, affordable, or culturally appropriate. Generally, this leads to either group opening up relations toward networks, which help make foods, and labor, more affordable from their point of economic interest. For Prairie Farms, this means consumers willing to pay premiums; for Fair Horizons, it results in buying food from distributors with lower costs.

Issues of inequality are commonly brought into conversations along such lines, but often not expressed beyond more immediate network interactions. Within the governing body of Fair Horizons, food access and issues of gentrification are commonly discussed, legitimizing the concerns of current and potential Hispanic and Latino members. For some in the Fair Horizons network, becoming a member is perceived as risky because they don't know if they will continue to be in the neighborhood. Further, developments like the co-op grocery are seen as potentially driving gentrification. For Prairie Farms, farmer and rural wealth is often viewed as being drained by urban centers. Prioritizing food access for low-income city dwellers can seem unfair in light of rural struggles. Here, the resources that city dwellers receive, and their general lack of understanding of the "producer" side, characterizes an intentional distance held by Prairie Farms governance (i.e. board of directors). For instance, there is a formal policy that the majority of the

board must be producers. There are currently no urban dwelling consumers or partners involved in board of Prairie Farms (more on this later).

While discussed indirectly, a "justice" frame is not used by either co-op on a regular basis. Further, as described above, one's "justice" is often seen as taking away from another's. While either network could turn their frames toward challenging inequality in broader market relations (i.e. influence of market prices) through adding in hidden costs (i.e. labor, environmental practice), they often don't. When asked about this, co-op participants view the "justice" as being too divisive or not being a useful way to connect. They emphasize the importance of local work. For Prairie Farms, "justice" is viewed as an urban concern. For Fair Horizons participants, the justice frame is commonly understood differently depending on the cultural context and degree of education about the topic. Because of misunderstandings, it is not included as much in the network's frames – though there are some board members who express an explicit need for it to be. One potential opening to further bring issues of inequality into the discussion is qualifying a term like "justice". For example, "farmer justice" or "cultural justice" may be used to facilitate conversation working toward openings to more network "food justice" and how this is interrelated with other networks and co-operatives. Under the assumption that more food justice would lead to diverse resource access for both networks, and therefore more resilience, it may be worthwhile to consider its potential inclusion into food and agriculture co-operative frames. However, "good" food and "development" are also potentially evolving frames that may be more appropriate for these networks at this time. It is a question of what may be lost and gained by the inclusion of "justice".

In sum, the "good" food and development frames provide space for networks to negotiate the addition of resources to their network. Yet, the "good" and focus of development

are different for each co-op, much of this being a reflection of the resources available to each community. For the producer co-op with more agricultural knowledge and natural resources, the frames typically rest on healthy food and rural economy. For the consumer co-op, which has more cultural, political, and built resources, often through the non-profit sponsor, community ownership, cultural diversity, and affordability are emphasized and help the project receive further financial support. While the justice frame has been found useful to building equitable food and agriculture networks elsewhere (for example see Alkon and Agyeman 2011; DuPuis, Harrison, and Goodman 2011), the present networks find the term less useful at this time. However, if education and leadership works to qualify such a term, it may lead networks to build connections across urban/rural and racial lines.

Performing Co-operatives: Leadership, Identities, and Emotions

The interactions, and performances therein, shape and are shaped by identities and leadership. For Prairie Farms, the governing body present a more rural, producer self. This identity helps maintain current network ties and includes, for example, talking about farm practices, the weather, the challenges of other farmers, and distribution demands. Board meetings sometimes end with tours of the host farm operations. Dress tends to have a practical use on farms such as jeans and boots or clothes that are comfortable and affordable such as tennis shoes. There is more immediate deference to those who are older. Much of the conversations about the co-operative involves producer and consumer economic relations. Concerns often include invoicing, efficient ordering and distribution, website practices, and maintaining and gaining customers. The utility of actions and relations are emphasized.

The Prairie Farms leadership is relatively more horizontal, meaning that expertise and voice tends to be more distributed. The board president often works to “herd” others by

summarizing main points in a discussion and presenting them back to the group for decisions to be made. However, some described the need for "behind the scenes", or backstage, conversations to be more public to avoid decisions being premade. For example, one common tension is between those who are more financially liberal, and those that are more conservative. Approaches to dealing with particular financial strains are sometimes already decided by those who work together on a more regular basis. Some described opportunity in the co-op for further developing capacities to "hear" others more in meetings.

The current Fair Horizons network identities are more diverse than Prairie Farms. These generally include racial formations such as Hispanic/Latino and White, varying levels of formal education, and whether members are community residents and/or non-profit professionals. Interactions commonly work to maintain relations across these differences by recognizing and valuing diversity in front stage performances. For example, there are translators present, though the conversations are mostly spoken in English. Issues of inequality and community control come up in conversations. There is more regular deference to the Hispanic/Latino members and displays of compassion across difference. However, some forms of knowledge tend to be privileged over others.

Hispanic/Latino participants sometimes viewed themselves as not being "smart" or knowledgeable about how to run a co-op or access financial resources like the non-profit professionals can. Some view this dynamic as being immediately disempowering but also a reflection of larger structural challenges with non-profit community development efforts where certain bodies and presentations "work" better than others. White people with formal education, are often viewed as more effective leaders within this environment. For example, they can dress and talk the language of political leaders and non-profit professionals. Fair Horizons' leaders

have a more hierarchical leadership style, in large part because the rest of the community does not have the presently valued knowledge or time to work through decisions.

Some expressed challenges with transparency between the non-profit and the co-op since the leadership was shared. Because this leadership is made up of educated white men, there are also issues of legitimacy because of not being perceived as from the "community". While these leaders are sensitive to issues of inequality, explicitly deferring to underrepresented forms of knowledge in meetings, the day-to-day of building network capacity often hides opportunities taken, missed, and who ultimately benefits or not. For example, who and what is funded? Who wins and loses within these? An undercurrent exists where these individuals hold the "expert" knowledge and translate community concerns and vis-versa. Some participants suggest that more work is needed to phase out these leaders and build capabilities in others that low-income, communities of color identify with and in whom they trust that their interests are better represented.

The boundaries and openings related to identities and leadership revolve around "who" the co-operative networks are for. For Prairie Farms, the producer focus strengthens ties but maintains a boundary with potential resources from non-white laborers, consumers, and, more generally, urban populations. For Fair Horizons, the white, male, non-profit professional leadership performance often outweighs others like the Hispanic/Latino identities, however unintentional this may be. Is the co-op for the benefit of the community or for the non-profit?

There is potential opportunity in decision-making processes and explicit conversations concerning what interactions contribute to co-operative network diversity. Some may include structural feedback indicators such as having day-to-day leadership representative of the target community, or the inclusion of all member groups in decision-making (i.e. producer *and*

consumers). Others may include forms of interaction that help bridge trust and make decisions across difference. For example, explicitly encouraging empathy and compassion as necessary to co-operation may be more important than emphasizing collective ownership or allowing feelings and expressions of entitlement to fuel passions (i.e. founder syndrome). As one participant distinguished, there is a difference between a "co-operative" and "co-operation". In my time in the field, there was little to no discussion about what the latter looks like beyond the assumption that "one member one vote", open membership, etcetera makes a co-op co-operative. There may be more openings to diverse resources if groups more intentionally work to develop a network culture aware of how co-operation occurs in interactions and relations between members.

Concerning resilience, it becomes a question of what types of interactions and relations lead to more diverse resource access. This has occurred in some forms. For instance, through feedback processes between co-op members, Fair Horizons has worked on including Hispanic and Latino members in trips to regional co-operatives. However, by having more empathy and compassion in their relations, thereby being potentially more aware of how various forms of oppression are enacted therein, meetings might be improved by being primarily in Spanish, providing food, and white leadership continuing to step back so that new leadership can step up. However, such feedback processes take emotional work and energy – something that trust, or lack thereof, is related to. While trust can develop over time through effective leadership, the cases above demonstrate how identity and structural inequities shapes one's confidence in others. Though they might sometimes be competitors, Prairie Farm's trust among producer members is built upon being farmers with similar concerns, even though more work is needed to bring some conversations to the full group. For Fair Horizons, more emotional labor is spent on working across identity, whether it be based on race, class, or gender.

Governing Members: Staff, Board, and Members

The organizational divisions within co-operative networks have implications for relationships. For Fair Horizons, the board is currently made up of diverse consumer members, though guiding documents also include producer and worker classes. There are no workers currently, so no worker members. Most of the leadership and staffing is supplied by the partner non-profit. Much of the labor, such as organizing events and membership recruitment, is led by the non-profit. There are some members who grow food in small, home based plots, as well as a potential of value added products from the area. Fair Horizons aims for such efforts to help fill the producer membership. The group has also expressed a desired interest to work with rural producers, if the foods are affordable.

As mentioned above, Prairie Farms is made up of both producer and consumer members, though the latter, particularly those from urban networks, are not part of the board. Some contract workers are present at board meetings; a couple being voting members. Urban consumer members, the primary distribution volunteers for the co-op, are not on the board. When asked about this, members explain that other similar co-operatives fail when consumer members take control because they do not understand the producer perspective.

The real and possible boundaries to diverse network relations described in the above sections – those found in frames and interactions – may be overcome if co-operatives work to identify diverse current and potential members to integrate into their governing networks. For example, the Prairie Farm's governance can diversify by retaining producer majority but adding urban consumer members who may help connect the network with needed volunteers, markets, or funding sources. For Fair Horizons, rural producer members may help bring in more perspective of how to collaborate to make food more "affordable" for both sides. Though it can

get messy in interactions and frames to achieve such difference across time, some conversations and observations suggest that those that are able to endure such integration can build trust and respect, thereby strengthening network ties to and through diversity.

Resilience, Relationality, and the Future

In some ways, relationality is already present in notions of resiliency. Concepts such as "feedback" and "connectivity" do emphasize relationships which drive adaptive and transformative moments. However, as this paper has attempted to demonstrate, it can be helpful to expand imaginations beyond system-individual-community-environment connections and move toward an approach that examines how diverse relationships are achieved through network performance. At least in part, it is within these relations that the capabilities needed for adaptation and transformation are accessed, or not. Though this can occur through more top-down efforts such as policy changes, what is possible is also related to how everyday life is accomplished through forms of meaning and interactions. It is assumed that inequality plays a key role in limiting possibilities. As such, this paper has sought to understand the forms of meaning and interactions that help networks access resources, particularly in ways that contribute to creating more diversity and equity.

By examining co-operatives through a relational resilience lens, we learn that salient network frames often facilitate relations to resources. However, within this, social and cultural resources are sometimes lost, much of the time because they are in tension with other relationships. For example, for Prairie Farms, it can be difficult to make food "affordable" for low-income consumers when producers and their communities are also cash poor. For Fair Horizons, local and environmental frames become secondary to community development and affordable food access. While larger market forces clearly constrain possibilities, the question

remains if there are other possible frames, such as justice, which may help both Prairie Farms and Fair Horizons to more directly wrestle with what is “fair”. Yet, it is also important to recognize that such concepts may not resonate with some groups for socio-cultural reasons. In these cases, it might be helpful to explore what other frames may exists for opening up networks in more equitable and diverse ways. For instance, maybe “justice” needs to be qualified or maybe there is more use in continuing to interrogate current frames such as “quality” foods and what they may eventually mean. Whatever the case, the ways in which new meaning can be developed plays an important role in what is possible (Davidson 2010).

Forms of interaction and leadership play a vital part in helping people stay engaged in co-operative networks. Identity, whether it be farmer or professional or Hispanic/Latino, is continuously enacted and shapes resource access. For Fair Horizons, tensions in legitimacy of white, male leadership in a community of Hispanic and Latino households, or the co-ops potential role in gentrification, can create difficulties for trust and membership to develop. Yet, this leadership helps the community access resources such as jobs and food that it might not have otherwise. The strong social bonding around the white rural farmer identity, and the potential knowledge and infrastructure exchanges therein, fuels board member commitment to Prairie Farms. However, this also creates challenges for other co-op members from the cities – potential reserves of volunteer and political and financial support – to integrating into the board. For instance, they may feel out of place or have a difficulty finding the time to drive to rural communities. These tensions show how some resources accessed through interactions both expand and sometimes limit possibilities.

However, through participation, I have observed that the expression of compassion and curiosity across difference can help mobilize additional networks. Yet, the capacity for this

emotional labor is also constrained by the symbolic boundaries that it may seek to bridge (i.e. identity and structural inequities). Emotional labor does not occur in a vacuum (Hochschild 1979). Debts can develop, particularly when the work is perceived as unfair, driving a sense of entitlement which can limit feedback processes and other forms of resource accesses. Though consumers or working professionals may not know it, the emotional work that producers and Hispanic and Latino people have to do to sustain relationships, can lead to resentment and disengagement in the network. It can also lead to a sense of entitlement for consumers and working professionals to be respected, further fueling resentment.

The divisions between members – producer, consumer, staff, and board – have implications for how the co-operative networks work. By prioritizing producer representation, ensuring easy access to social bonding capital, Prairie Farms is more readily able to govern. However, this preference limits its ability to network in other resources from consumer members such as volunteerism and political connections. The non-profit partner's leadership on the board of Fair Horizons helps the governing body access human, political, and financial capitals but it also sometimes disempowers less advantaged current and potential co-operative members. Put another way, the political capital necessary to connect across networks (i.e. foundations, city officials) is only one part of the socio-cultural makeup of the network. This leads to power dynamics that may privilege some cultures over others. It becomes a question of how such co-operative networks can access broader networks, while simultaneously enacting more equitable relationships in their more proximate connections. Or maybe adequate trust in the latter is a necessary first step before the former can occur in an equitable way?

While "resilience" is a buzzword, its sometimes ambiguous use leaves open opportunities for wedging in innovative theorizing. The questions and approach here arose out of fieldwork

that pushed the inquiry toward a more relational view of resilience. I show that it matters how people frame their involvement with co-operative networks; that leadership, identity, and emotional labor play key roles in the interactions which enact network resources; and that organizational divisions shape feedback processes which limit and facilitate connections. It is recommended that future research and theorizing continues to push our imagination and analyses to include a less bounded, and more open, relational, view of resilience. Applied to food and agriculture co-operatives, identifying the frames, interactions, and organizing patterns which encourage diversity and equity is one way that such conceptual development may create more co-operative, resilient food futures.

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FRAMING CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE BRIDGING ROLE OF CULTURAL AND SYMBOLIC VALUE BETWEEN HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

When a group of people get together to work to improve their communities, they often find that resources vary among those within the group and that this can be helpful – everyone can bring something different to the table. These resources can include a backyard, a meeting space, skills, connections to powerful groups, volunteered labors, and financial commitments. What is offered up depends on whether people have it to offer in the first place and how much they believe in the work of the group. Yet, another piece of this is whether the resource or potential in sharing it is recognized in the first place. In other words, cultural and symbolic values have an active role in community development practice (Carolan and Hale 2016; Gibson-Graham 2003). This paper examines the role of these values in food and agriculture co-operative development by using social frame analysis to determine how cultural and symbolic values create boundaries and openings to community capitals.

The community capitals framework—an approach that analytically distinguishes between seven (social, cultural, political, built, human, environmental, and financial) capitals—can be used by researchers and practitioners to evaluate the impact of community development efforts and as a diagnostic tool for characterizing community resources (Flora and Flora 2015). Generally, the community capitals framework is applied when considering how to make a community or program more sustainable and resilient using the seven forms of capital: built, financial, social, political, natural, cultural, and human (Flora and Flora 2013; Hale n.d.). It has been posited that if one capital is prioritized, the other capitals risk depletion, thereby

compromising community development goals—we see this often in initiatives that privilege financial capital above (and often to the exclusion of) all others capitals (Flora and Flora 2013). The paper that follows digs further into this claim by conceptualizing such prioritization as the influence of cultural and symbolic values on the community development process.

It is important to recognize how some capitals become valorized over others and how such values change over time and space (Carolan and Hale 2016). The way that communities value capitals is related to particular cultural performances that become sedimented in networks through routine (Gibson-Graham 2008). In other words, cultural and symbolic values work together to make community capitals more or less valued. Further, those who have access to more capitals are more likely able to shape what gets valued.

However, simply telling communities what they ought to feel or do can sometimes lead to further entrenchment in current practices. As such, rather than aiming to make people value capitals in a particular way, scholars and practitioners should support community-specific strategies that encourage community members to revisit their assumptions about what is important, especially in those instances where financial capital seems privileged to the exclusion of all other capitals (Carolan and Hale 2016). To be able to do this, we need to first understand how the cultural and symbolic values of a particular effort relate to resource access. We can then take a first step in identifying what cultural and symbolic values need to be capitalized on by the group and how that might happen. By "capitalized", I mean the outcome of a process of reworking values so that additional capitals become recognized, sought after, and accessed.

I use the concept of frames to examine the cultural and symbolic boundaries and openings to capitals access that three food and agriculture co-operatives face. As I elaborate on in the coming pages, frames are the result of both individual and group processes of

characterizing the world and our relation to it (Goffman 1997; Snow et al. 2012). They are informed by the roles, values, beliefs, meanings, and norms found in the varying and dynamic realities people enact as they move through the world (Norris-Raynbird 2008). The frames used to guide community development activities are representative of worlds commonly experienced by cultures and become routinely actualized through adhering to conventions (Gonos 1977). With the inclusion of frames in community capitals analysis, we are able to more clearly study the role of power, particularly power that is more dispersed and relational (i.e. see Foucault 1982).

This paper examines how food and agriculture co-operative frames relate to resource access and what alternative frames might allow groups to diversify their capitals. In doing this, a number of themes arise including: frames both enable and constrain capital access, tension often exists between frames, frames do not always reflect practice, and changing frames can help reorganize capital access. I begin by describing the community capitals approach to community development. I then summarize frame analysis and how it connects to community development. The second half of the paper focuses upon the community development activities of three food and agriculture co-operatives. I then describe the salient patterns which connect frames with capitals access.

The Community Capitals Approach

The community capitals framework has formed through the work of Cornelia and Jan Flora on rural community development (i.e. see Flora and Flora 2013). The approach was established over many years of striving for holistic analysis and action. It has been applied in a variety of analyses and models of community development including political economy and power perspectives as well as asset-based and technical assistance approaches. Drawing on the

ideas of Pierre Bourdieu, it uses seven forms of capital – natural, human, cultural, social, political, financial, and built – to evaluate community efforts (see Table 4). The community capitals approach argues that effective development must value all of these capitals, and a primary focus of this perspective is identifying regional resources and the ways these can be leveraged toward change. For example, the Floras' describe one project as implementing a comprehensive cultural plan that reflects the community's diversity – showcasing cultural, natural, and built histories – and uses this to draw in resources (Flora and Flora 2013). While this may be done through tourism, it can also lead to the development of other resources such as social capital through collective action and more inclusive governance networks.

Table 4: Community Capitals Framework

Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	Political	Financial	Built
-Location -Weather -Geographic isolation -Natural resources -Amenities -Natural beauty Shapes the cultural capital connected to place	-Knowledge -Traditions -Who and what we feel comfortable with. -Language Influences what voices are heard or not	-Skills and abilities that help develop and access resources and knowledge. -Leadership across differences, participatory, proactive.	-Connections among people and organizations, that makes things happen. -Could be close, more personal connections or more distant that create bridges among organizations and groups.	-Access to power, organizations, and resources, to change standards, rules, and regulations. -Ability of actors to engage in action that affects their community.	-Available financial resources to invest in community capacity building, underwrite business development, support entrepreneurship, and save for future community development.	Infrastructure supporting community activities

The vital importance of social capital is a primary theme of the community capitals literature. It is argued that focusing only on financial and built, for example, creates challenges if social capital, and its close ties to political, cultural, and human capitals, are not also active in community development efforts. Social capital facilitates the stock (assets of each capital) and flows (type of capital invested) of other capitals (Emery and Flora 2006). It has two forms – bridging (heterogeneous connections) and bonding (homogenous connections). Studies have found that both bridging and bonding help increase community action when developed together (Agnitsch, Flora, and Ryan 2006). Further, social capital can prevent decline of all the capitals

by “spiraling-up” through increasing the flow to other community assets (Emery and Flora 2006). Leadership, financial investment, and an entrepreneurial spirit are found to modify cultural capital. However, one of the challenges with increasing bridging social capital are cultural boundaries such as those determined by identity, performance, and knowledge (Stryker 2008) which play into certain capitals being more valued then others.

Other research has examined how the community capitals are related to each other and accessed to achieve change (Pigg et al. 2013). By studying 20 sites, each with a variety of community projects, Pigg et al. (2013) find that the relationships between capitals are not always as straightforward as the “spiraling-up” metaphor implies. A particular organization or community leader’s interest, for example, often determine which capitals have the most potential for change. Such knowledge and priorities is reflective of contextual relationships (Pigg et al. 2013). The deployment of capitals, and their intended effects, are found to cluster in two: the “material” – financial, built, and natural – and the “human” – social political, and human. Cultural capital has primary ties with the human cluster, particularly social capital, but through regression and cluster analysis, the authors find that it is also related to the material cluster. This pushes us to examine the bridging role cultural capital might play between the material and human clusters. Further, as others have recognized, the way that communities symbolically value capitals relates to community practice, which in turn relates to capital access (Carolan and Hale 2016). This suggests that while social capital is vital for the flow of resources, how resources are symbolically valued by the network can also encourage or impede development.

Bourdieu (1987) describes the important role that symbolic capital has in the way that other capitals are recognized and valued, or not, within a field. Within the present project, I use the term “symbolic value” in place of “symbolic capital” to emphasize a more active and

relational process of capital valuation rather than a possessive quantity that "capital" implies. Put another way, "symbolic value" refers to the frames that shape, and are shaped by, collective action (more on this below). Some within networks have more access to capitals, obtained during previous struggles, and this grants them power to make group boundaries. In doing so, the power relations between groups is not only the result of varying access to social and cultural capitals, for instance, but also how groups are imbued with varying levels of symbolic power that constitute how those capitals are accessed in the first place. When applied to the community capitals framework, symbolic power also relates to how additional conditions are recognized and valued. For example, how built infrastructure and cultural diversity are symbolically valued, or not, has implications on boundaries and openings to incorporating them into community development work.

Community Development and Frames

As a way to study the impact of cultural and symbolic values on accessing community capitals, this research uses frame analysis. This approach is concerned with how "definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events and our subjective involvement in them" (Goffman 1997, p. 155). Frames are informed by the roles, values, beliefs, meanings, and norms that make up the multiple, shifting realities held by individuals as they move through the world (Norris-Raynbird 2008). Individuals fit their actions into understandings of what is going on in a particular "strip of activity". For example, the way that community members or development practitioners recognize losing volunteers as a problem is based upon a frame that volunteerism is a necessary part of community development.

This example also highlights the role of group interactions on the frame formation, or alignment, process (Snow et al. 2012). Some frames are determined more or less real for

perceiving the circumstances depending on the encounter and the particular roles it requires (Goffman 1997). Further, frames are filtered through previous experience to determine which meanings are more salient. Frames are the result of an ongoing process of past and present experience, and the meaning imparted on individuals communicated in groups, thereby collectively constructing how we define what is occurring in a particular situation. They organize experience and guide action at the individual and collective level (Snow et al. 2012).

In my analysis, two primary frames are used to examine resource access: those concerning the values related to problems and solutions a co-operative is working to address, and those concerning identity. The frames that co-operative participants use to understand the purpose of the co-operative can both enable and disable resource access. Much of this depends on the conditions the co-operatives are organizing under. For instance, as we will see, if work is framed in terms of economic development, this can sometimes limit the generation of other values such as social and environmental. Or if a justice frame is valued, this may help gain access to the human capitals cluster but also may also require more of these resources to be sustained than those without a justice frame.

Identity refers to the self-images related to roles and positions in social organization (Stryker 2008). It includes the structures which precede interaction such as race, gender, occupation, religion, political affiliation, etcetera. They are carried into situations and affect social conduct. People have multiple identities that are hierarchically organized with some being more likely invoked depending on the encounter (Stryker 2008). Identities can create boundaries and openings to capitals, particularly direct connections to those in the human capital cluster (i.e. social, human, cultural, political). For instance, whether co-operative members identify with a new potential co-operative board member relates to how supportive we may be of adding them

or not. Identity also influences how communities value capitals. For example, a farmer may not perceive it as their responsibility to value diverse cultures as part of their efforts as a farmer.

The role of cultural capital in the community capitals framework is in need of improvement, particularly concerning how communities assess their resources and development efforts (Carolan and Hale 2016; Pigg et al. 2013). The addition of symbolic power, or the ability to make other capitals recognized and valued, or not, provides us with a way to help bridge this gap. By examining the frames that organize the experience of food and agriculture co-operatives, we can learn about the relationships enacted (i.e. between the capitals) through particular cultural and symbolic meanings. Cultural value is more of the long-term, institutionalization of particular conventions. Symbolic value includes such conventions, with symbolic power referring to the ability to transfer symbolic value into cultural. As we will see, by identifying the symbolic and cultural boundaries and openings within community development networks, in this case food and agriculture co-operatives, we can help determine how efforts can better mobilize resources toward change.

Methods

This research is part of a five-year study examining food system resilience in a region of the western United States. Through initial field work aiming to identify and explore innovative practices, I learned about the swell in interest in food and agriculture co-operative in the past ten years. Four co-operative grocery stores are forming in the region's magnet city. At least seven producer co-operatives have begun in the past ten years. I was interested in learning about what was spurning the formation of these co-operatives in addition to the opportunities and barriers they faced. As someone who has been active in the region as a researcher and practitioner in food and agriculture development projects over the past decade, this research takes an extended case

approach (Burawoy 1998; Ragin and Becker 1992). This position emphasizes time spent participating in and observing social life with an a priori theoretical lens. For my research, I used the community capitals and relational theorizing (i.e. frames) as guides as I entered and tried to make sense of my time spent in the field.

I selected each of these cases purposively (Creswell 2013) to create variation within my sample. Initial salient points of variation included urban and rural, SES of members (or target demographic), length of time in operation, and whether they were producer or consumer led co-operatives. Within each cooperative network, interviews and focus group participants were also selected purposively and in a way that aims to provide variation and critical information (Maxwell 2012). This included beginning with key informants such as board presidents, founders, and leaders of subgroups (i.e. based upon demographics or organizational placement). Information obtained from this initial sample helped inform the selection of focus group participants. Follow-up interview participants were selected based upon the information they have to confirm or falsify the coalescing research findings. Variation within each co-operative helped solidify salient frames, and potential points of tension which help me understand how boundaries are maintained, and potentially opened.

As mentioned above, I conducted interviews (n=59), focus groups (n=6), and spent over 200 hours as a participant observer over an 18-month period. The interviews and focus groups aimed to understand salient motivations and values for participating in the co-operative as well as characterizing barriers and opportunities to resource access for the co-op. To help facilitate this latter conversation, participants were shown a table which summarized the community capitals (see Table 4).

After gaining consent, interviews were either conducted at a place comfortable for the participants or over skype. If these two approaches did not work, we would talk over the phone. I sought to develop a conversational partnership (Rubin and Rubin 2005) that values reflexivity and developing trust between the interviewer and interviewee. This required that I be aware of how my person may affect the interview. Focus groups occurred with each co-op. To encourage participation, I was sure to redirect conversation if some voices were becoming overpowering (Morgan 2007). A note taker was present to help provide another point of view about the focus group. They took notes about salient themes brought up during the focus groups. Interviews and focus groups were recorded with the participants' consent.

Participant observation primarily occurred at co-op board meetings, events, and through volunteered labor (i.e. at distribution). A primary focus was on group dynamics, especially how identities shaped interactions. I took notes often beginning with grand-tour questions about the general place, dress, topics, gestures, and interactions followed by mini-tour questions that focus on specifics of individuals and interactions and my feelings and perceptions (Spradley 1980). I also took notes about possible connections or topics to follow-up on during interviews, focus groups, and secondary data sources. I began with a peripheral form of group membership (Adler and Adler 1987) but this became more active over the course of the research (i.e. cooperative membership, voting, and other forms of participation).

Interviews, focus groups, and notes were analyzed through categorizing (i.e. codes) and connecting strategies (i.e. contextualizing in narrative) (Maxwell 2012). This helped me retain contextual characteristics of each specific case (i.e. language of participants), while also aiming to develop categories to compare across cases (i.e. memos). This approach is similar to the constructivist method of Charmez (2006). It allowed me to begin with some sensitizing concepts

(i.e. community capitals, environmental frame) and work toward producing knowledge that is situated in the language of the participants (in-vivo codes) and with an eye toward issues of power and oppression.

Frames of Co-operative Development

In this section, I characterize each co-operative's community capitals access and how some are valued over others. Characteristics and associated frames are presented separately for each co-operative. I do this to keep each case analytically distinct to help create points of comparison for the next section that is concerned more generally with the role of cultural and symbolic value in community development as understood through frames. For each co-op, I begin by describing the human capitals and then I summarize the material capitals. Following this, I characterize each co-operative's primary value and identity frames. The summary of each co-op and their associated frames can be found in Table 5. Though I often refer to each co-op as an organization or group, I assume a more networked position of how resources flow (i.e. see Emirbayer 2012; Lamont and Molnar 2002).

Table 5: Three Cooperative Cases

Name	Type of Co-op	Location and service area	Date founded	Frames
Fair Horizons Food Co-op	Grocery store	Low-income, community of color, in fast growing regional city	2014 (no store yet)	Values • Affordable foods • Community economic development and ownership • Growing attention to inequality and justice Identity • Community developers • Community members • Hispanic/Latino women • White, educated men and women
Green Planet Food Co-op	Grocery store	Mid to high income, mostly white, educated college town	Late 1970s	Values • Environmentally sustainable and local foods • Local economy • Community building Identity • Environmentalist • Progressive • Community member • Staff member

Prairie Farms Producer Co-op	Distribution	Low to mid – income rural towns, customers in fast growing regional city	2009	Values • Rural economic development • Healthy food access • Growing future farmers Identity • Utilitarian producer • Rural • Healthy food consumer

Prairie Farms Producer Co-op

In 2008, a group of small-scale producers came together with the goal of improving rural communities through a regional small-scale agriculture co-operative that connects producers with consumers. These mostly aging farmers typically have access to large pieces of family land, generations of farming and related business knowledge. Though primarily made up of producers, the governing body is made up of some local leaders and professionals who also farm. There are retired and working professionals but many participants rely directly on the farms as a source of income. They have witnessed the decline in rural towns where younger populations are leaving for towns and cities where there are more jobs available. As Sam, a producer member of the co-op put it,

> "There is a move-away-from the home mentality that caused all this youth out migration away from these rural communities." – Sam

All of the producers and consumers observed appeared to be white, with a fairly even gender split, although more men are in leadership positions, something that some women respondents described as a "strategic" decision to gain support within rural communities. Producer members are more immediately trusting of other producers. For instance, some producers described feeling less comfortable with and skeptical of consumer knowledge, implying that they connect with producers more readily. Some participants also described the

producers as having an adversarial relationship with consumers. Field notes also suggest that producers more readily talk to one another, than consumers when both are present.

The homogeneity and enduring relationships of the governing body (mostly producers) contributes to heightened levels of bonding social capital. The board of directors do socialize together sometimes and all communicate regularly, even though improving communication regularly comes up in board meetings. The group can sometimes be willing to share resources with other groups such as non-profits or other co-operatives. However, there are instances of being suspicious of other groups. For instance, when considering partnering to distribute food, a local distributor was viewed as untrustworthy and self-interested. The group is also cautious of who they share their business plan with.

The co-operative specializes in meats and eggs but also distributes fruits and vegetables and value-added products. The income and expenses for the co-op in 2015 was around $269k. The average monthly purchase amount is around $100. At this point, the co-op typically plays a small role in the income of the producer members. These producers often describe themselves as "land rich, cash poor". Though spread out across many counties, much of the leadership of Prairie Farms is located in a county with a median household income of $44,500 per year, 22% with a bachelor's degree or higher, and 90% non-Hispanic or Latino White (U.S. Census). Many of these households have additional sources of income whether through off-farm jobs or retirement funds. Through grants and partnerships, Prairie Farms has been able to improve facets of its infrastructure including a mobile poultry processing unit, trailers, a warehouse space for distribution sorts, and event spaces for yearly meetings. These help Prairie Farms process and distribute food and build connections more effectively. Many of the producers have adopted

organic and agro-ecological practices either by direct negative health and environmental experiences with conventional agriculture.

Prairie Farms often struggles with bridging and sustaining relationships with non-producers and those that are not white. The board of directors has no consumer members and there is little to no involvement of Hispanic and Latino rural populations, which make up 7% of one of the participating counties. The target market for the co-op is a city with a median household income of $54,000 per year, 45% with a bachelor's degree or higher, and 53% non-Hispanic or Latino White (U.S. Census). Though events and distribution are held in urban low-income and communities of color, there is also little membership involvement from these populations in the co-op. Some do receive co-op food through partner non-profits. However, there is tension with prioritizing urban food affordability when many rural populations cannot afford the co-op's food either. At least partially due to the lack of consumer and urban members, the co-op has less direct and sustained political connections to regional leaders, foundations, and those with media and marketing skills.

The shortage of bridging social capital is also apparent in the struggle to maintain consumer member volunteers needed for distribution. This contributes to an overall lack of time to work on building capacity to move beyond the day-to-day of growing and distributing food and management of the organization. While some infrastructure and financial resources have been acquired, in formal and informal conversations many express that much more are needed to make Prairie Farms sustainable. For instance, there are two part-time employees that mostly do accounting and marketing. Other management efforts, which amount to a half and sometimes full time job for some, are all volunteered. The mobile meat processing unit can only operate in one

state, limiting producers who can participate, because there is no inspector in the adjacent state. Furthermore, political connections are lacking to help to address such barriers.

Honing in on the more cultural and symbolic aspects of Prairie Farms through identity and value frames, we can learn more about how resource access patterns are maintained symbolically. The primary frames of Prairie Farms include rural economic development, growing future farmers, and providing healthy food access. As Peter describes,

> "The goal is really to bring back the rural producers, and to keep their whole way of life alive… it is about keeping the small producers alive" – Peter

To achieve these goals, economic relations and the pragmatics of running a profitable business are emphasized. This shapes how co-operative members relate to each other. As Sara put it:

> "Farmers have a more utilitarian mind set when relating to consumers" – Sara

The utilitarian mindset aligns with other producers which helps build and maintain connections among this group. Knowledge about farming and rural life help facilitate relationships between producers and the other material resources they contribute (i.e. land, infrastructure). The decline in small farmers and young people, and the necessary role young farmers are viewed as playing in the future, contributes to the growing future farmers frame. Rural development helps gain that attention of foundations and other political connections but these groups often value either more financial sustainability (i.e. not as reliant of volunteers) and/or food access for low-income communities. The utilitarian producer-consumer economic focus and practice of Prairie Farms creates challenges to the latter, but they also struggle to "scale-up" enough to take on full-time employees.

While the rural economic development and young farmers values frame connections with some urban consumer members, these are not as salient for many city dwellers. Consumer

members tend to be more interested in health concerns. This aligns with many of the farmers who described getting involved with non-conventional agriculture for individual health reasons. Much of this was motivated by negative experiences with chemicals used in conventional agriculture.

Prairie Farms' capital access is driven by a strong farmer identity which is often opposed to the consumer. While discussing the consumer-producer relationship, Jeff said:

> "Customers have a hard time grasping production. An extremely hard time grasping production. So when you let them- it's great to take in their input and have the open lines of communication, because producers need to know what the consumers are looking for, but their input needs to be taken with a grain- an extremely large grain of salt, because if you focus solely on the consumer side of it, and lose focus of your producer side of it, you'll get things so skewed that- you have no choice but to fail." – Jeff

This producer identity contributes positively to the social bonding and cultural capital of the co-op. By not including urban consumers in the framing process – only taking their input with a "large grain of salt" – boundaries to other resources that lie in urban consumer members are solidified (i.e. financial, political, human capital resources). The consumer-producer identity dichotomy, in addition to the utilitarian frame, also limits the inclusion of other identity frames and related resources. For example, racial and political identities do not fit neatly into the producer-consumer focus of Prairie Farms. It does not consider the other cultural and symbolic values – such as the type or affordability of food, or the dress and conversation at distribution and co-op events – that might be keeping people, and resources, away. Most of the people involved are white and more socially and politically conservative, as described by a number of participants and supported in participant observation. This limits the access of resources from other groups (i.e. volunteers, skills, financial commitments) as well as foundations which use the inclusion of underserved populations as an indicator of successful work.

Fair Horizons Food Co-op

Fair Horizons is an aspiring consumer co-op grocery store (not yet open) located in the fast growing regional magnet city. This is also the target city for Prairie Farms. The demographics for the Fair Horizons neighborhood include a median household income of $42,000 per year, 16% with a bachelor's degree or higher, and 80% Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census). This neighborhood is commonly described as a "food desert" indicating challenges to healthy and affordable food access.

The co-op began as a project of a local community development non-profit called "Renovation". The focus of this non-profit is on community wealth building, especially concerning the local food economy. Prior to the co-op, primary programs included setting up home and school gardens and food access through market events. There is a degree of codependency between the co-op and Renovation since both share and receive resources from each other. For instance, the co-op relies on Renovation for human resources (i.e. leadership, expertise, labor) and built capital such as a store space. Renovation receives funding from foundations to support the development of projects such as Fair Horizons. Such relationships are also apparent in exchanges of other resources including material and other human resources.

The co-op has an annual membership cost of $41 and currently has over 300 members and a board made up of staff of Renovation and local community members and residents. This includes working professionals; newer and longtime residents; both individuals with low and high education levels; white, Hispanic and Latino, refugees, and low-income households. While there is diverse representation from these groups on the governing board, the membership is made up of more white, educated, newer residents. White educated men are in the leadership positions such as the board president. This assorted make-up of the membership contributes to a

strong knowledge and skill set base for Fair Horizons. However, time and knowledge of running a co-operative grocery store are cited as constraints. Current leadership shared reflections with me that they are skeptical that the co-op would be able to get started and operate without the support of Renovation.

The diversity of the Fair Horizons network also suggests a higher level of bridging social capital. There are more connections within the community, of which Renovation and the co-op contributes to, and this supports social and political connections throughout the city and region. For instance, the mayor and other government officials have regularly attended events related to Renovation's work. Such relationships also broaden the access to financial support through government and foundation grants. These are often used to support the work of Renovation which includes staff time and buildings infrastructure such as acquiring land, building, parking, etcetera.

Raising financial resources through the membership has been difficult for a variety of reasons. One primary challenge is the potential role of the co-operative in the gentrification process of the neighborhood. As Kate told me:

> "Is the work doing more harm than good? Because at this point, the co-op is accelerating gentrification in the neighborhood. For example, there was a real-estate sign down the road that says '1 mile from the Fair Horizons Food Co-op'". – Kate

One challenge gentrification creates for the co-op is uncertainty about whether membership will guarantee benefits. For example, people who buy membership now may be forced out of the neighborhood before the store is open. Related to this is concern over what foods the co-op will carry. Some members and potential members value different foods whether it be specific ethnic varieties or foods that reflect moral commitments such as organic, local, sustainable, and fair.

These varying value frames – affordability versus environmental or healthy – is a tension point in the co-op. As Alison described:

> "I wouldn't shop at the co-op if they didn't carry organic foods because I don't want to support that but I have the financial capital to go to Vitamin Cottage. Many of the people in the neighborhood do not." – Alison

The uncertainty about who the co-op is for contributes to a lower degree of trust among the members. Put another way, although the network is more diverse, there are challenges to creating bonding social capital. The process of determining what goods and services the co-op will provide affects its role in broader networks. For example, Alison went on to say that by prioritizing affordable foods, the co-op would contribute to unsustainable conventional agriculture methods. This is a problem for her and many other members. However, Renovation and many of the low-income members of the board want the priority to be affordable foods rather than healthy and sustainable.

Another primary value frame involves community economic development. When discussed with Renovation representatives, they explained that this language and focus, along with improving health, often resonates with funding organizations. This frame has shaped the views of co-op members by being a primary focus of the co-op. Members speak of the co-op creating jobs for the community, buying foods grown and prepared from the neighborhood, providing an ownership opportunity, and decreasing time spent traveling to distant grocery stores. Healthy food access is commonly cited as a primary motivation for participating in the co-op.

While the economic development and healthy food frames have helped gain political and financial support, inequality and justice have become increasing salient in board meetings as

issues of gentrification and trust continue to affect membership recruitment. One of the leaders of the co-op and Renovation said:

> "I am seeing more and more how important race is to everything we are doing. I am seeing more and more how justice and equity need to be front and center of not only the public face and messaging but the values that drive decisions on the board and within membership. I think we drifted off course by saying 'yeah, this is about race, but really it's about economic power' but not being cognizant that we were falling into the same trap of making decisions that were going to reinforce privilege based on race. I always thought we could course correct but realize now that the DNA would be wrong if these aren't front and center in discussions." – John

Some co-op participants view the lack of focus on inequity and race, and the accompanying lack of trust (social bonding), as a result of the project being led by mostly white educated men and women. As one focus group participant put it:

> "I feel that there's an issue with the leadership not being reflective of community here in this area. I feel like there's a lot of leaders in our community – a lot of potential leaders in our community that could be reflective of who we actually represent. Sadly, I don't think we have that and so that creates a sense of disempowerment in our community." – Angel

Those with Hispanic and Latino identity frames often do not see how they fit in to decision making and day-to-day processes. In contrast, the primary leaders of Renovation are driven by the community developer identity frame and take less of a direct stance on issues of race and class. There is a tension between this occupational identity, those related to race and class inequities, and who the co-op ultimately serves. At least in part, the acquisition of resources through foundations and political connections shapes this tension by emphasizing economic development over issues of inequality and justice. In other words, the economic development frame creates a boundary for Fair Horizons to address inequality and justice.

Green Planet Food Co-op

Started as a buying club in the early 1970s, Green Planet Food Co-op is a small consumer grocery store located in a busy downtown area of a mid-size city (150,000). Much of the city

economy and culture revolves around a state university and the brewery industry. According to the U.S. Census, the city has a median household income of $55,647, 89% identify as White, 10% Hispanic or Latino, and 52% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The co-op has 2,400 members but very few spend more than $20 per week at the store. The annual sales are over 1 million dollars, not enough to receive support from National Community Grocers Association for subsidizing United Natural Foods Incorporated purchases (must be over $2 million).

The co-op membership is made up of people from a variety of professional backgrounds including local business owners, researchers, professors, and government workers. While the city and much of the co-op membership is highly educated, the co-op struggles to develop and maintain store managers who have both the knowledge on how to manage a grocery store and also to work within a co-operative setting. There are also challenges related to having both the time and expertise for outreach for the co-op.

The co-operative has been struggling financially for close to a decade. It recently had an acute disruption where overspending occurred, management was fired, and staff took pay cuts to keep the store going. There was a general lack of trust between staff, management, and board. As Gretchen reflected upon firing management:

> "There wasn't enough communication and trust. We were concerned about finances. I was just elected to the board and we had to do something so that the co-op wouldn't go under". – Gretchen

Much of the staff regularly socialize together. Some described it as a "family". This social bonding capital supports the co-op in difficult times, such as financial and management struggles, but some are concerned with how it creates challenges with developing and maintaining relationships with the board, members, and other potential partners. One former employee described the impact cliquishness like this:

> “The co-op is enhanced and enabled by the cliquiness. It definitely impacts people coming- as to whether people are like, ‘oh, it’s a clique. I don’t want to shop here because there’s cliquishness’” – Lars

Lars went on to tell me about how this also sometimes affects the ability of the co-op to maintain relationships with other partners throughout the town such as other businesses. From my own experience at social and community events organized by the co-op, and talking with members and staff, the co-op generally struggles with community outreach (i.e. sustained engagement by diverse community members). The co-op is also sometimes left out of discussions about the development of downtown which may affect them. Some perceived this being due to the co-op’s continued financial struggles as well as being mismanaged. For such reasons, this co-op can be understood as having strong bonding social capital among much of the staff but struggles with bridging social and political capital across difference found on the board and throughout the community.

In terms of material resources besides financial capital, the co-op does own the building it is in. This built capital commonly comes up as an asset in meetings. However, the store’s size is also viewed as limiting its ability to carry foods that appeal to an audience besides those able to afford healthy and organic foods. Because of the size and location, the co-op has begun focusing on prepared foods for downtown professionals. Parking is a commonly cited issue, even though the store has space in a parking garage across the street that serves the downtown area. The access and limited inventory leads to the co-op being perceived as less convenient. This has become especially concerning for the co-op members and staff as new corporate health food stores plan to open in the downtown area. Co-op board meetings are commonly discussing how to differentiate the Green Planet from these new stores.

The primary value frames of Greet Planet include environmentally sustainable and local foods, local economy, and community building. While the co-op does buy and sell local foods, some view this as contributing to a broader label that the co-op is too expensive, thereby limiting patronage. What about communities that can't afford these foods or have different values? Or, as one respondent told me, members want local but don't want to spend extra on it. Similarly, the co-op staff research the environmental practices of companies to ensure their values align. Not having the store space and value frames to incorporate other foods may contribute to the perception of the co-op being too expensive or not a welcoming place to shop at.

The local economy and community building frames help the co-op retain those that identify with these values. However, the financial struggles of the co-op lead to it being labelled as mismanaged. This also allows social boundaries, or the cliquishness to be maintained. The current frames limit participation of other potential shoppers concerned with values such as justice and inequality, interrogating who the co-op is for, or the expense or lack of convenience to participate. The amount of time needed to hold social events and workshops is also beyond the capacity of current staff and volunteers who often describe being overextended.

The environmentalist, progressive, and community member identities among the members help maintain the frames and associated practices. But, as Mike explains, this limits broader participation for those who can't afford and do not identify with the values and identities of the co-op:

> "What I find with the co-op is that it is a group of people that are privileged enough to have these resources, whether its education opportunities, financial means, reliable transportation. They are able to access the co-op because of those components. These same things are limited for a large part of our community, the very same 'community' that we like to idealize. It is something that is easy to idealize". – Mike

The labels of being mismanaged, in addition to being perceived as exclusive, limits patronage, social and political connections, and ultimately financial support. These challenges could become compounded by the new grocery store opening in the downtown area. How will Green Planet compete if the values and identities are similar but participation is cheaper at those stores? While co-operative values were brought up as something that differentiates the co-op from these stores, there was a general concern about whether that is enough. Some think that more significant change may be needed in the co-op to adjust to these developments, while others dug in their heels and cited that they have competed with such stores for decades.

Framing Community Capitals Access

Through studying the co-operative cases described above, a number of themes arose in relation to the role of cultural and symbolic values – examined here through frames – in community development. First, we learned that frames both enable and constrain capital access. This is apparent in the variation between co-operatives, particularly how frames relate to practice. Second, tensions sometimes exist between frames in a co-op and these often reveal how the co-op does, and possibly can, access resources. Third, frames don't always directly reflect practice. Sometimes frames are used to access resources but their actual practice can be much more difficult to actualize. They can also be in tension with other relationships. Lastly, this research suggests that as researchers and practitioners of community development, it is vital to consider the way that communities frame their experiences and look for ways to expand those frames toward more diverse resource access practices.

Frames both enable and constrain capital access

What co-operative participants identify with and value often reflects how they access resources. For instance, Prairie Farms relies upon market relationships, as well as bonds with

other producers, to sustain much of their efforts. Economic development and farmer identity shape, and are shaped by, these connections. However, these value and identity frames limit bridging capital and access to political connections which constrains Prairie Farms' from other built, financial, and human resources such as volunteers, processing units, and grants to help build capacity through full-time staff. Similar patterns exist for other co-ops, albeit varying configurations. Fair Horizons' focus on community development, affordability, access, and tensions between occupational, racial, and gendered identities, is able to support more connections across difference and acquisition of material resources. However, their diversity of identities, and institutionalized inequities therein, creates challenges to ongoing commitment and building trust.

This supports a view of cultural capital playing a bridging role between human and material resources (Pigg et al. 2013). While social capital does facilitate the connections between capitals, values and identities mediate the likelihood of such relationships forming. Though Prairie Farms may look and act like, and even implicitly value, community, by not being explicit about aiming to build community, real and potential social relationships are masked by economic relationships. For example, by prioritizing community, the co-op may be able to build more solid connections with urban populations outside of producer-consumer economic transactions. Assuming that more diverse capital access improves community development efforts (Hale n.d.), it is critical to examine and encourage cultural values which limit or facilitate a variety of connections.

If one group is able to impose values unevenly on another, or if any group has a strongly disproportionate amount of symbolic power, then this limits an effort's access to diverse cultural capital (Flora and Flora 2013). Such limits constrain political and social connections, diverse

forms of knowledge, and associated resources such as time, built, and natural capitals. Understanding community development in mostly economic terms facilitates and limits relationships for Prairie Farms, just as sometimes neglecting equity and justice has limited and at times enabled Fair Horizons efforts.

Tension often exists between frames

Frames can sometimes be in opposition to one another. The way that these tensions play out can contribute to the rigidity or transformative potential frames may have on capitals access. Further, as organizations age, they tend to become more rigid, whereas newer co-operatives can transform more quickly. For example, Green Planet's concern with community building, while also aiming to provide sustainable and local foods, creates tension around who the "community" is for. The identities often associated with the co-op constrain who the co-op community includes. Indeed, identity frames do affect social conduct (Stryker 2008). The method of community building has tended to focus on economic transactions and this limits the community to those who can afford to shop there and identify with the co-op's values and people. Community tends to also be conflated with the social bonding, or cliquishness, of the staff. Creating community through shopping or through similar identities creates tension around what is community, how it is created, and who it includes. This ongoing dynamic at Green Planet has created rigidity around how to adapt to more competition in the downtown area. Creating the space to interrogate what the co-op means by "community" may open up spaces to be more inclusive, thereby accessing additional resources and remaining differentiated.

In its shorter existence, Fair Horizons has cultivated more space for varying values and identities to be called out. The continued transformation to a more explicit focus on issues of inequity and justice has occurred because of the concerns often raised by less privileged

members of the co-op (i.e. not white). Renovation has been intentional to work directly with the Hispanic, Latino, and refugee communities in the area. By involving these groups in the work of the co-op, and creating spaces for the exchange of values across varying identities, frame transformation is more likely for Fair Horizons. This supports a view that it is important to anticipate how different identities may be called out (Stryker 2008) during community development efforts and adopt values and practices that allow groups to sustain relations across difference. One challenge in this is that desired practice, such as what foods are supplied by co-ops, may not be the same for all groups. Is Fair Horizons going to carry more expensive, healthy foods? Hispanic and Latino foods? And/or food for various refugee groups? Maintaining commitments across identities and values can be challenging if people don't see how they will benefit. However, creating space for discussing possible overlap of interests allows the co-op to further build connections across capitals and work processually toward Fairer Horizons.

Frames don't necessarily reflect practice, and that can be okay

Although Prairie Farms values growing future farmers, the co-op currently struggles to bring in this human capital. Green Planet sources local food because this value resonates with the customers, but then customers often don't buy local. Fair Horizons aims for economic development, however, is struggling to open its doors and impact the local economy in the first place. These values, though they may not always connect to practice, help form the co-operatives' aspirations and they still organize practice in other ways. They are attempts at using symbolic power to create values. For example, Fair Horizons uses the economic development and ownership frame to make such frames recognizable and hopefully gain members and access other forms of material support from donors. Furthermore, organizations like Prairie Farms, and

citizens concerned with the outmigration of young people from rural towns, aim to create a farming economy by framing it in values so that it can draw young people back.

Goffman uses the concept of "keying" to denote how swapping frames can reorganize a particular situation by redefining the related activities, events, and biographies (Goffman 1997; Snow et al. 2012). In community development work like the co-operative cases are involved in, keying frames so that it becomes more about what the group aspires to may help create change (more on this below). Yet, this can also lead to the efforts being delegitimized. Frames exist as copies of how situations are experientially organized. If efforts use frames to access certain resources such as financial and built resources or volunteers without actualizing practices associated with the frame, people can become distrusting. For example, Prairie Farms' focus on healthy food access through market relations can appear to not wrestle with structural inequities that mediate access. This can lead to some current or potential participants and networks (i.e. funders, politician, activists) being skeptical. In short, while frames can help form group aspirations, they can also lead to mistrust, thereby limiting capitals. The interactions between people and between people and resources may tell a different story. It is important to be open about frames that are forward looking and those that depict current activities.

Changing frames can help reorganize capital access

Much of what I have discussed so far has focused on the generalizations about the salient frames the co-operative cases, and their members, use to make sense of their activities. However, because these frames both enable and constrain access, a question remains: what sort of frames may better help the co-ops with relationships both within and external to each? Participation in collective action, especially across difference, relies upon the process of frame alignment between individuals and organizations (Snow et al. 2012). This requires work to bridge and

amplify frames, render them coherent to potential participants, and potentially transforming frames. Further, it is important for frames to be continually reexamined (Snow et al. 2012).

For co-operative development, this means looking for opportunities to create bridging frames across current and potential groups. For example, a community frame may be better suited for bridging productive connections between producer and consumer members than an economic or farmer identity frame. Or, a justice frame may help create connections between Green Planet and other community work as well as differentiate from competition. Groups can amplify their frames by responding directly to new developments such as, in Fair Horizons case, gentrification. Taking an official stance in relation to an equity frame can potentially help amplify the message of Fair Horizons.

It is also vital that groups interrogate how well their frames are understood and resonate with members and potential participants. For instance, varying identity frames can create challenges to participation if people do not have a frame for making sense of their relevance for a co-operative. Do urban consumers understand why Prairie Farms tends to focus on producers? How can trust be built with urban consumers if Prairie Farms is not including them in decision-making beyond economic transactions? Again, this may necessitate transforming frames toward inclusion of varying identities and values.

Conclusion

At times the community capitals framework can seem frameless. Specifically, the cultural and symbolic relationships that make capitals recognizable and valued by communities is undertheorized. This work has aimed to wrestle with limitations of the community capitals approach to community development. Through conversations with colleagues and the field work

presented here, I have identified and used the concept of frames to study the role of cultural and symbolic values in capitals access.

Perhaps most importantly, this research confirms the claim that if one group is able to impose values unevenly on another, or if any group has a strongly disproportionate amount of symbolic power, then this limits an effort's access to diverse cultural capital and potentially other resources (Flora and Flora 2013). However, for efforts to work to address such inequities, resources are themselves needed to sustain dialog and collective action, thereby connecting projects to broader structural inequities. The ways that groups navigate structural inequities through the frames and frame alignment processes relates to capacity to sustain diverse resource access. Using a market focused, utilitarian frame as an organizing tool essentializes participation with monetary transactions.

A community building frame may help groups value social relationships outside of the market. However, if the group remains unreflexive about how ideas of community may marginalize certain populations, then this can further reproduce inequities. Attention to inequality and justice in framing processes can help groups take more intentional positions about how co-op development efforts relate to broader structural inequities. Yet, the justice frame may not resonate with all current and potential networks, thereby making other frames such as "community" a more negotiable starting point. Such steps may lead to more effective bridges between cultural and symbolic values and potential community resources.

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CO-OPERATIVE OR UNCO-OPERATIVE CO-OPERATIVES?: DIGGING INTO THE PROCESS OF CO-OPERATION IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE CO-OPERATIVES

Co-operation is arguably a basic human ability and a fundamental process in food and agriculture. People have been working together to grow, distribute, and consume food throughout history. The institutionalization of co-operation in legal form is a more recent development. What before was patterned and often informal has become formalized in legal co-operative organizations which are user-owned, user-controlled, and distribute benefits on the basis of use (Mooney 2004). While the co-operative form has seen its ups and downs in terms of popularity, there has been a recent resurgence of interest (Katz and Boland 2002; Rothschild 2016). For example, the region that spawned this research has seen four consumer co-ops working to open in the large regional city. Over six small-scale producer co-ops have started within the past ten years. The importance of developing such alternative food networks as been argued for by both practitioners and researchers (Goodman, DuPuis, and Goodman 2012). In this paper, I pay particularly attention to the role of socio-cultural boundaries and openings to improved food futures.

When first beginning to study this resurgence in co-operatives, a research participant made a valuable distinction that has driven this work. He explained that there is a difference between “co-operative” the *verb* and “co-operative” the *noun*. Carrying this forward I learned that assumptions about the latter often inform what the former looks like. Further, as we will see, the process of co-operation is rarely considered and reflected upon in food and agriculture co-operatives. When it is, co-operators commonly refer to the seven co-operative principles which include (Williams 2012):

1. Offer voluntary and open membership,
2. Govern by democratic member participation,
3. Operate by equal and "fair" investment by the members,
4. Remain free of intervention from governments or any other outside power,
5. Educate members and community about the nature, principles, values, and benefits of the co-operative,
6. Encourage co-operation among co-operatives, and
7. Protect the environment and contribute to sustainable development of the community.

While these principles provide a roadmap, they do less to take into account the socio-cultural processes that shape participation. For example, while membership may be officially open, does everyone feel comfortable participating? While democratic principles are valued, are various current and potential members active and included enough to be able to thoughtfully contribute? Does leadership of the co-operative represent particular interests, potentially discouraging participation? What does freedom from outside power translate to in practice? How are groups able to work across socio-cultural diversity?

Through extensive fieldwork, this research examines interactions that impede upon, and/or support, co-operation in food and agriculture co-operatives. As the above questions introduce, this paper considers decision-making processes, leadership performance, and emotional work as observed through three co-operative cases. Further, it explains how these interactions connect co-operative networks to community resources including social, cultural, political, financial, built, human, and natural capitals (Emery and Flora 2006). In doing so, I improve our understanding of the boundaries and openings to co-operation understood as joint ownership, egalitarian values, and sustained dialog (Rothschild 2016).

I begin by briefly situating this research in alternative food network and co-operative literatures. This helps ground the empirical cases in some of the common challenges faced within agri-food scholarship and responses therein. I then interrogate the concept of co-operation and show the use in adopting Rothschild's (2015) definition of the term. In short, it helps us anticipate some of the challenges associated with the process of co-operation. After describing the qualitative methods used to arrive at my conclusions, I provide an in-depth description of three food and agriculture co-operative cases. I end with a discussion of major themes and suggestions for improving co-operation in co-operatives, particularly concerning decision-making processes, leadership performance, and emotional work.

Alternative Food Networks

This research arose out of an interest in alternative food networks and how they may succeed at improving the relationships between food, people, and the environment. Taking a networked, relational view of food and agriculture activities emphasizes the recursive qualities of material and symbolic interactions (Goodman et al. 2012). Relational, reflexive thinking often seeks out innovative alternative food networks that can reconfigure values, time-space relations, and forms of governance in food provisioning. Goodman et al (2012) argue that reflexivity, particularly "reflexive localism", and alterity are cornerstones to brighter food futures. Reflexive localism includes a food politics that is processual, open-ended, and messier. Alterity seeks to develop new ways of doing food and agriculture from within – not necessarily seeking to overthrow hegemonic, neoliberal capitalism, for example. Studying co-operatives provides one such example of changing food networks from within.

A vast literature has explored such alternative food networks (for an overview see Carolan 2012). For example, using the Community Capitals Framework, Flora and Bregendahl

(2012) studied how collaboration, particularly collaboration that seeks to value a variety of capitals, increases the sustainability of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) ventures. Others have focused on the ability of food hubs to help "scale-up" local food efforts (Cleveland et al. 2014). Cleveland et al. found that local food efforts need to scale-up from direct market activities (i.e. CSA), and that this is easier to do than scaling down mainstream distribution because of the trust that small producers develop through direct markets. Further, this case study finds that valuing capitals beyond market-based relationships, such as environmental and social capitals, helps food hubs succeed.

While such efforts help highlight some of the transformative potential of alternative approaches to food and agriculture, they have also been criticized for reproducing and even further entrenching neoliberal institutions. For instance, studies have found that local food efforts reproduce social and environmental problems through the social construction of "local" (Hinrichs 2003), practices that include and exclude social identities (Guthman 2008; Slocum 2007), and structural limits to social organizing for change (Sbicca 2012). In short, sustainable and local can be expensive, culturally inappropriate, difficult to access, and conceptually contested.

Such critiques have themselves been criticized for adopting a limited view of social change that equates consequential politics with collective action and national mass movements focused on the state (Goodman et al. 2012). Totalizing critiques of alternative food networks can themselves be disempowering, and reproduce neoliberalism by assuming it to be an inescapable, hegemonic project. It can push us to wonder how such collective action and mass movements would organize? What would untainted knowledge, let alone practice, look like wholly outside of neoliberalism? Where would such knowledge come from in the first place?

Alternatively, research has also sought out ways to see change as necessarily incremental and messy (Carolan 2011, 2013; Carolan and Hale 2016; Hassanein 2003; McClintock 2013; McIvor and Hale 2015). Carolan (2013) encourages agri-food scholars to take a more "wild" approach, one in which relationality, process, and multiplicity are enacted, and in a way that looks for novelty in food movement efforts rather than confirming (and possibly reproducing) theories of domination. Relatedly, DuPuis, Harrison, and Goodman (2011) suggest that local food movements need to develop a more reflexive notion of justice as it relates to food; one that is contextual and requires us to consider the wide range of understandings of what good food is through inclusive discussions. Goodman et al (2012) suggest that academic projects guided by a more reflexive food politics might ask: "How do more egalitarian alternative economies get made?" (p. 157). This paper contributes to our understanding of how food and agriculture co-operatives may play a role in creating such alternative economies, particularly concerning the socio-cultural boundaries and openings co-operatives may face.

The Co-operative Alternative

Until recently, there has been an overall decrease the number of agriculture co-operatives. However, they still hold around one-third of agricultural market goods and over one-fourth of input supplies (Mooney 2004). Many studies have examined the co-operative advantage from economic perspectives (Boone and Özcan 2014; Novkovic 2008). For instance, Novkovic (2008) argues that they are places of social and economic innovation and can thrive in areas of low labor mobility, market failures, oligopoly markets, and labor intensive industries. Others recognize opportunity in studying co-ops because they do not fall into traditional market or non-profit sectors (Levi and Davis 2008). It is argued that co-operatives' dual nature of including social and economic goals can help them bring the social economy to the wider marketplace. However,

these studies do less work to further our understanding of the social and cultural conditions and processes that contribute to or inhibit co-operative network formation and ongoing participation.

Mooney (2004) considers the tension co-operatives can create in capitalist economies by developing a multi-dimensional sociology of co-operation. These strains include a number of contradictions in the realms of social and spatial relations, production and consumption, and collective action. For instance, Mooney discusses the push by some co-operatives to change their voting structure from “one member, one vote” to privilege those with capital, thereby challenging a key principle of co-operatives. Additionally, he suggests that many co-operatives suffer from an increased influence of managers over members. Mooney argues that such practices can erode the primarily democratic structure of co-ops in favor of the economy. These challenges are in part due to the sometimes-heterogeneous make-up of the co-op membership – something that can slow down decision-making and a coop’s ability to keep up with economic and bureaucratic pressures.

Stock et al. (2014) study farmer co-operation as it can sometimes be in tension with farmer autonomy. It is argued that neoliberalism can breed a particular type of autonomy – one focused on market relationships – rather than an autonomy that challenges capitalism itself through a sense of collectivism. Co-operative legal structures can be paradoxical in that while one can promote neoliberal, market autonomy, another can hold emancipatory potential through co-operative practice. Stock et al. use a case study example of the monopolization of New Zealand milk production by Fonterra, a dairy co-operative. The regulatory, extractive role that this co-operative takes on works against farmer autonomy from an emancipatory perspective. Another state-led producer co-operative in England views social relations between farmers as a barrier. In Brazil, Stock and colleagues further note that the Landless Rural Workers Movement

(MST) works intentionally against capitalism through a number of co-operative efforts including organizing language and marketing practice. This results in a more collective form of autonomy, where people work together to realize collective interests while also working to be independent from the neoliberal accumulative structures and ideology.

While there have been some steps toward improving our understanding of how food and agriculture co-operatives work, less attention has been paid to examining *co-operation* itself. Here the interest is on what is more or less co-operative in social action as it relates to food and agriculture co-operatives. For example, some might think of co-operation in terms of market relations such as the work of Fonterra co-operative. Yet as the next section describes, co-operation may be better understood as necessarily working against such relations, otherwise it is not co-operative. Rather than using types of farmer autonomy and organizational forms to make this distinction (Stock et al. 2014), this research uses Rothschild's (2015) definition of co-operation; one that makes many ostensibly co-operative efforts (i.e. co-operative legal status), unco-operative in practice.

Co-operation in Co-operatives

The top of the list in a Google search of "co-operation" defines it as "the process of working together to the same end". This does help provide a general idea of what we may mean when we say "co-operation", but it steers clear of what working together and shared ends look like, while saying even less about the process of getting there. While some treat co-operation as involving strong reciprocity and juxtapose this trait with self-interested competition (i.e. Fehr and Gintis 2007), more recent research assumes that egalitarian decision-making and resource sharing are necessary to co-operation (Rothschild 2016). In short, this research does not lose focus of the importance of process—as a verb—and working toward particular ends – something

that can be lost if we place social action in a vacuum away from day-to-day interactions. The ability of people to work toward particular ends (co-operate) depends on relationships and interactional processes both internal and external to particular social interactions (Hall 1997). This understanding of co-operation necessitates understanding the role of decision-making processes, leadership, emotional work, and other interactions between potential co-operators. In this section, I briefly summarize some varying views of co-operation as well as place the current research within work that examines co-operation in co-operative organizations.

When compared to competition, co-operation can be viewed as the result of norms, with strong reciprocity being conditional on others' co-operation (Fehr and Gintis 2007). Rather than agents seeking to maximize their own payoffs (competition), co-operation necessitates a concern for the group and the existence of sanctions against those who violate co-operative norms. However, concern for the group and sanctions can be viewed as relational. For example, when individual contributions to the group are recognized and respected by the group, they can lead to further contributions (Willer 2009). In other words, the desire for respect and social standing can lead individuals toward collective actions. If an individual's motivations include concern for the group, that person gains status. The greater status obtained, the more influence an individual receives in the direction of co-operation. This can lead to groups bifurcating over time into free-riders and high contributor subgroups with contributors becoming more central to decision-making (Willer 2009).

A norms based understanding of co-operation leaves out the role of at least partially exogenous structural relationships which shape status and relationships within a group (Stryker 2008). Relatedly, this approach also does not deal well with the influence of power, or better yet, meta-power, on shaping social relationships, structures, and situations "by altering the matrix of

possibilities and orientations within which social action occurs" (Hall 1997, p. 405). Here, meta-power shapes how social organization can look through strategic agency, structuring contexts, rules, constituting intentions and language, and empowering delegates.

Studying interactional rules and trust provide better indicators of the likelihood of co-operation (Misztal 2001). Such an approach emphasizes the relational qualities necessary to co-operation, rather than solitary individual actors. This includes the gestures, dress, rituals, identities, and other interactional processes and impressions which make up social life (Goffman 1956, 1978, 1983). Co-operation from this view is much more dependent on the performance of relationships between people in a group. For instance, there can be specific leadership performances – whether bureaucratic or charismatic – both with roles in maintaining current organizational forms (Cicourel 1958). Bureaucratic leadership can be understood as more "frontstage" behavior, while charismatic leadership is situated more in the "backstage". Frontstage bureaucratic behavior can be reinforced through sharing backstage, charismatic performances strategically (Cicourel 1958). In other words, charisma is sometimes needed to reproduce bureaucratic structures. While the emotional work necessary to these performances can be reproduced strategically, there is sometimes work going on below the surface, or what has been called "deep acting" (Hochschild 1979). Here, the surface level performances can be impacting internal emotions – meaning that while face work can be draining, it can also change internal emotions over time. Still, the sometimes continued dissonance between surface performances and embodied emotions requires "emotional management", shared in more private settings.

As a way to anticipate the potentially impeding role of meta-power on situational interactions and emotional labor, the present work follows Rothschild (2015) by understanding

co-operation as social bonds between members that is co-operative in nature where "any property at hand must be socially or collectively owned or such organizations will be unable to sustain egalitarian decisional processes" (Rothschild 2015, p. 57). Egalitarian decision-making necessitates that the group is willing to work toward common ground through sustained dialog.

Understanding co-operation as joint ownership, egalitarian values, and sustained dialog does not treat process, working together, and ends as forming in a procedural vacuum (Rothschild 2016). Such an understanding also does not assume that the distribution of resources through the market mechanism is the common end we are co-operating toward. Rather, it assumes a position that the legitimacy of co-operative efforts is contingent upon ongoing participation; hierarchies of authority must be resisted; diverse knowledge must be valued and shared; and that relationships must be personal, egalitarian, and free of capitalist culture of instrumental relationships (Rothschild 2016). Drawing on Weber's concepts of formal and substantive rationality, Rothschild argues for more emphasis on the latter.

Yet, co-operatives often face challenges in achieving these aims. Research has found that the rhetoric of "efficiency" can impede co-operative values (Taylor 1994). Others have studied the challenges associated with not anticipating diversity and inequality (Meyers and Vallas 2016) and the emotional work necessary for co-operation (Hoffmann 2016). Examining the Mondragon Co-op case in Spain, Taylor (1994) found that the social construction of "efficiency", particularly among managers, led to a deterioration of the original objectives of equality, job security, and favorable work conditions. "Businesslike" perspectives eroded the "social firm" through rhetorical maneuvers that favor institutional interests such as profitability and stability. Policy-making process limited the participation and member control over shaping objectives and means. For example, during a time of economic turmoil during the 1970s, the co-operatives'

decision-making process became the focus of strikes to which management responded with the expulsion of a number of strike leaders. This limited the process of identifying responses, particularly from the perspective of the workers.

Comparing a bakery and a grocery co-operative, Meyers and Vallas (2016) show how the implementation of a "utilitarian" versus a "communitarian" regime resulted in stratifying types of participation along race, class, and gender lines. When race, class, and gender are understood as not relating to co-operative performance (utilitarian), the division of labor results in reproducing structural inequities. Further, the unequal influence on the decision-making process by a charismatic leader resulted in making the co-op less equal. On the other hand, the co-op that adopted a communitarian perspective included race, class, and gender directly into the co-op's day-to-day strategies. For example, childcare was provided for workers and the 40-hour workweek was rejected, both policies served to address unfair advantages some groups in the co-op might have related to time and family.

Hoffmann (2016) demonstrates that co-op workers experience heightened freedom to express their emotions in co-ops, learn new emotional responses, but sometimes must also fake emotions to fit in with a co-op's culture. Overtime this faking, or "surface acting", can segue into "deep acting" (Hoffmann 2016) – the latter being when performance actually corresponds to internal memories and feelings (Hochschild 1979). Newer members may internalize the co-op's feelings of rules, such as being helpful or friendly. However, this takes work and can be a slow process, and although co-op members can feel more connected, this can come at the cost of personal stress (Hoffmann 2016; Rothschild-Whitt and Whitt 1986).

This research project aims to contribute to the growing body of research on co-operation by comparing a number of cases' ability to co-operate, particularly as it relates to resource

access. These resources include natural, social, cultural, human, financial, built, and political (Table 6) (Emery and Flora 2006). By understanding differences in co-operative networks' resource access, we can continue to learn about the type of relationships and processes which may impede or encourage co-operation. Specifically, this research focuses on how decision-making, leadership, and emotional work shape, and are shaped by, the ways in which co-operatives access resources. Furthermore, it examines the role of meta-power in this process.

Table 6: The Community Capitals Framework

Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	Political	Financial	Built
-Location -Weather -Geographic isolation -Natural resources -Amenities -Natural beauty Shapes the cultural capital connected to place	-Knowledge -Traditions -Who and what we feel comfortable with. -Language Influences what voices are heard or not	-Skills and abilities that help develop and access resources and knowledge. -Leadership across differences, participatory, proactive.	-Connections among people and organizations, that makes things happen. -Could be close, more personal connections or more distant that create bridges among organizations and groups.	-Access to power, organizations, and resources, to change standards, rules, and regulations. -Ability of actors to engage in action that affects their community.	-Available financial resources to invest in community capacity building, underwrite business development, support entrepreneurship, and save for future community development.	Infrastructure supporting community activities

Methods

This research draws on interviews, focus groups, and participant observation conducted beginning in 2015. Due to my extensive background in food and agriculture research and practitioner work in the region beginning in 2005, this project takes on a more extended case position which values ongoing participation and often through an priori lens (Burawoy 1998). As the result of a five-year research project that began in 2015, I began to study co-operative networks with a general interest in how the networks diversify their resource access. The Community Capitals Framework (Flora and Flora 2013) guided this initial inquiry (see Table 1). As described above, early in this research some conversations suggested that co-operation as an

interactional process was less reflected upon within the food and agriculture co-op networks, as well as the literature. In response to this, I began focusing participation on board meetings, events, informal meetings, and distribution activities. This participant observation was particularly concerned with processes which included and excluded the participation of current and potential co-operative members.

I conducted 59 interviews, 6 focus groups, and participated in over 200 hours of meetings, events, and other volunteer opportunities on farms and at distributions. Interviews were conducted with co-operative board members, staff, producers, and consumers. Individuals were chosen based off observations that suggested they were key informants or that they could provide an alternative perspective. I initially sought to understand motivations, important relationships using the community capitals, and tensions therein. During follow-up interviews, I asked questions specific to observations at each co-op concerning decision-making, leadership, and emotional work.

All interviews were conducted in a setting in which participants felt comfortable. I sought to develop a conversation partnership (Rubin and Rubin 2005) and encourage participants to share their views with me. Interviews, focus groups, and notes were analyzed using both categorizing (i.e. codes) and connecting strategies (i.e. contextualizing in narrative) (Maxwell 2012). This helps me retain contextual characteristics of each specific case while also developing categories to compare across cases (i.e. memos). This approach is similar to the constructivist method of Charmez (2006), especially the focus on issues of power and oppression.

Co-operation and Food and Agriculture Co-operatives

As introduced at the outset of this paper, a research participant early in the development of this project distinguished between co-operation the verb and co-operative the noun. I had not thought

about it that way until that point and one thing began to take shape as a result – most people working in co-operatives do not spend time thinking about co-operation and how to do it. When asked what co-operation is, participants commonly either cited principles of co-operatives – i.e. one member, one vote; member-owned; co-operation among co-operatives – or they expressed surprise and acknowledged not having considered co-operation before. However, as conversations and observations developed I did learn salient general themes about how participants in each co-operative view and practice co-operation. These included issues related to decision-making process, leadership, and emotional work. I develop these through examples from the field after short descriptions of each co-operative case's resource access. Through comparing the co-operatives, we are able to learn about the relationship between resource access and interactions, particularly the connections that exists between co-operation and network capacities.

The Three Co-operative Cases

The three co-operative cases vary in the following ways: the type of location they're in, the services provided, and maturation. As Table 7 summarizes, each co-op also has different community capitals characteristics. Although these have also been described in more detail in a related paper (Hale n.d.), I briefly summarize each co-op's capitals access as a backdrop for understanding the role of co-operation in predicting resource access. For the sake of space, I only detail the most salient capitals (those more directly concerning people) to the current analysis.

Table 7: Three Cooperative Cases

Name	Type of Co-op	Location and service area	Date founded	Community Capitals
Fair Horizons Food Co-op	Grocery store	Low-income, community of color, in fast-growing regional city	2014 (no store yet)	**Social** – high bridging capital across various structural and institutions. Lower social bonding capital, beyond the support of the non-profit. **Political** – connections to urban policy makers and foundations. Decision-making process primarily driven by non-profit who often sets the agenda. **Cultural** – diverse cultural knowledge (i.e. SES). **Built** – have access to building for store. Plan to be rented from non-profit. **Human** – struggling to recruit members and volunteers. Also, leadership mostly by structurally advantaged white men. **Financial** – while gaining support through the non-profit, struggle to raise funds for store. No paid staff yet. **Natural** – in urban area with urban vegetable gardens. Plan to sell affordable and local foods. Organic and sustainable can be too expensive.
Green Planet Food Co-op	Grocery store	Mid- to high-income, mostly white, educated college town	Late 1970s	**Social** – strong social bonding between some staff, struggle with bridging social capital with board and broader community. **Political** – mostly uninvolved in policy making networks whether it be local or national. Decision-making often led by long-term staff. **Cultural** – lacking cultural diversity. Relies on people who can afford food and/or more strongly identify with local economy/DIY/"hippie" culture. **Built** – own grocery property in busy downtown area. Parking and store infrastructure commonly discussed as needing improvements. **Human** – strong grocery store skills and dedication of core staff (i.e. taking pay cuts). Challenge of skills and time for marketing and community building. Also challenge with retaining general managers. Staff co-manage currently. **Financial** – have over million-dollar annual budget but still struggle to adequately pay staff and make necessary store improvements. Almost folded in 2016 because of financial struggles. **Natural** – located in urban area with access to related amenities. Prioritizes buying sustainably produced and locally grown and processed foods.
Prairie Farms Producer Co-op	Distribution	Low- to mid-income rural towns, customers in fast growing regional city	2009	**Social** – high social bonding capital, low bridging social capital. **Political** – somewhat disconnected from policy making networks, especially urban based networks. Decision-making led by insiders who are producers. **Cultural** – lacking cultural diversity though there is a strong rural producer knowledge base. **Built** – able to access built capital through partnerships but own little. **Human** – strong producer skills, lacking marketing and community building expertise and time. Also lack urban volunteers. Burnout happening among producer members. **Financial** – have ¼ million-dollar annual budget. With three part-time, seasonal staff. Most money goes to paying out producers. **Natural** – through producer base, have access to vast amounts of rural land and resources.

Fair Horizons Food Co-op is a yet to open grocery store located in a gentrifying, predominately Hispanic/Latino urban neighborhood. This co-op particularly values affordability, community and economic development and ownership, and attends to issues of inequity and justice (Hale n.d.). Founded and primarily driven by a partner non-profit, Fair Horizons accesses a number of resources through its network. It has high bridging social capital as observed in the diversity of people at meetings (i.e. race, gender, class) and the high-profile partnerships and media attention the project has received. This bridging capital is related to connections to

regional political leaders and also to the relative diversity of cultural capital. However, the co-op has struggled to develop leadership that is not supported by the non-profit and more representative of the target community. For example, many conversations suggested that the co-op does not include and encourage enough leadership from the Hispanic/Latino community. In this sense, the co-op has less social bonding capital between members. The co-op also struggles to have an inclusive decision-making process since the meeting agendas are often set and facilitated by the non-profit representatives.

Green Planet Food Co-op opened in a mid-size college town in the late 1970s. Much of the membership values environmentally sustainable and local foods, local economy, and community building (Hale n.d.). There is strong social bonding between much of the staff. These bonds and commitments have saved the co-op during financial struggle. During such times, the staff has taken pay cuts, essentially volunteering more of their time to the co-op. While connected to some local policy-making and projects, many expressed that the co-op is less active in such processes, often being viewed as struggling too much to maintain relationships. There is a core group of people who have been shopping at the co-op for decades but beyond that, the co-op has struggled with developing connections with more diverse cultural groups. In this way, it has low bridging capital. Decision-making is often led, directly or indirectly, by the co-op staff. The strong relationships between staff have at least in part created challenges for general manager retention. The co-op is now being co-managed by a group of senior staff members.

Prairie Farms Producer Co-op is a regional co-op spread through four states. Participants value rural economic development, healthy food access, and growing future farmers (Hale n.d.). The co-op has been supplying food to the region’s magnet city since 2009. This includes retail and wholesale sales (i.e. to households and to restaurants). The governing body of Prairie Farms

is made up of rural producers with high social bonding capital. For example, the meetings serve as times for the geographically scattered producers to talk about the technical aspects of farming over home cooked meals. While run mostly on volunteerism, the co-op struggles to retain urban consumer volunteers. Some burnout while others feel disconnected from the producer focused mentality of the co-op. This is a significant struggle that Prairie Farms faces – that of low bridging social capital. It creates challenges with connecting with policy networks and other cultural groups such as those with different political views, younger and/or not white. Decision-making is led mostly by insiders in the co-op. There is little to no involvement of the consumer members which are the largest member class of the co-op.

Decision-making Process: Inclusivitites and Exclusivities

The ways that ends and means are determined – what people are co-operating toward and how they get there – is an ongoing process for each co-operative. Much of this occurs in governance meetings such as board meetings and annual member meetings. However, participants often had differing views on how much decision-making is shaped by circumstances more external to meetings. These divergent views take shape when considering different ways co-operation is understood, including inclusive and exclusive practices and when to recognize and when to ignore external forces (i.e. meta-power).

Many participants often viewed co-operation through decision-making processes that involve listening, being thoughtful, and being respectful of differing points of view. I also observed this in meetings as participants would defer to others' previous statements and acknowledge another's views, even when disagreeing or showing the other side. When asked about what co-operation looks like, a Prairie Farms producer stated,

> "Well, you have to be flexible. Not everybody is going to think the way you do. You have to get along and if you are going to make a point, be sure to have the facts to back it

> up. Some people once they make up their mind, they don't listen to anything anyone else has to say. This makes everyone else's jobs much more difficult. Not everyone is willing to discuss disagreements." – Anne

Disagreements in Prairie Farms often included different ways to approach distribution of food, whether to take on debt, and how to grow the business (i.e. what markets to prioritize, who to hire). If people have already "made up their mind", this can work against a process in which people work together to determine ends and means. Relatedly, when minds are made up exclusively, such as in informal side conversations, this can create challenges to more open discussion among the larger group.

Prairie Farm's decision-making processes often do not include urban, consumer members – only involving them in decisions set aside for the annual meetings, if at all. Further, there are no urban, consumer members on the board even though this is the largest member class. When asked about this, one producer said,

> "A lot of people don't care about being part of process, they are just happy getting their food each month. Others do wish they had more input. For example, I know many people wish we did not change the website. The issue is that it was no longer functioning for what we needed to do. It was causing the co-op a lot of financial issues so we had to make a change." – Jeff

Not involving consumer members in the decision process results in the co-op's struggling to develop and maintain a distribution website which may be eased by information and human resources coming from urban members (i.e. consumer perspective, IT volunteerism). While the previous website was causing the co-op financial issues and needed to change, efforts to make changes did not work with the consumer end users to develop the end goal and a means to get there.

Though some consumers may not desire to be a part of the process, others are more critical of the producer focus of Prairie Farms and the exclusion of consumers from decision-making. As Keith, an urban resident, put it,

> "A lot of the (producer) board members are out of touch with where the consumers are at. Or if they are aware, they are voluntarily ignorant of it. It goes back to the Oklahoma co-op where the consumers took over the co-op and they are very concerned about that happening with this one. They don't want the consumers to dictate what the producers do. They have an adversarial relationship with the consumers they sell with. They don't see eye to eye politically or morally. There is this conflict with the consumer that they don't necessarily want a relationship with. I guess this might be a little harsh. I'm just calling it how I see it." – Keith

The "adversarial" relationship sometimes has to do with interests at odds with each other such as the price of food, or the way it should be distributed. Participation for consumers has been relegated to buying food from producers. Although producers on the board expressed a strong desire, often in a prideful way, in educating urban consumers about farming and food, the decision-making process remains exclusive as they do not emphasize equal participation from members and other social groups outside of rural producers. While this retains control for the producers, the co-op is struggling to find and maintain consumer member volunteers for distribution, enroll new consumer members, and access other resources such as skills, knowledge, and political connections.

Prairie Farms has the additional challenge of working across physical distance between members. Meetings rotate to different Farms, which can be a 5 to 6-hour drive away. While this helps build more understanding and trust among producers through discussing technical aspects of farming and assessing each other's skills, it creates challenges for urban consumer participation. Some have suggested conference calls but others have expressed concern in this because they "want to see people's facial expressions". This emphasizes the performative work often necessary to meetings (more on this later).

Divisions also exist in the decision-making process of the other co-ops as well. For Green Planet, tensions revolve around decision-making between staff and board members. The staff often end up driving the process of board decisions because of having more knowledge of the day-to-day. This can diminish efforts by board members who have less grocery knowledge and are short-on-time. Although staff can be critical of the board not doing enough, when the board does not do what they want, the tensions created are sometimes made visible with eyebrow pinching and quick defensive responses from the staff. Participants described that it took time for board leadership transitions (i.e. president) to develop relationships and skills to work with staff.

When I asked about groups that may not be well represented in Green Planet, some people mentioned the homeless and Hispanic or Latino populations in the area. Relative to the producer communities of Prairie Farms, the Green Planet community is more urban and socio-economically diverse. Involving diverse populations is often not viewed as the role or goal of the co-operative. Conversations at Green Planet rarely cover issues of race and class as it might relate to participation. When it does come up, diverse participation and membership is not viewed as economically feasible or is argued to be organizationally challenging. Partnerships with non-profits are typically viewed as opportunities for the co-op to engage with diverse populations. As Gretchen put it,

> "Homogeneity is going to happen in any small business. People have to be able to work together and get on board with whatever the mission is. I feel that there is much more need for educating in the community about the food and reasons to shop at the co-operative. It is tricky though because people only have so much time. That is why we need to work with a non-profit to develop more relationships with volunteers." – Gretchen

Gretchen went on to describe an "old guard" who have particular expectations about the co-op and the foods it provides. Appealing to other cultural groups whether Hispanic/Latino or those who desire more affordable foods is not the aim and therefore they are not viewed as being

necessary to the co-operative's decision-making process. This contributes to a decision-making process that remains culturally exclusive, beyond the institutional differences between the staff and board.

Central to Prairie Farms and Green Planet's challenges in finding the time for inclusive decision-making lies an assumption about what should be prioritized. Here, co-operation amounts to listening and being respectful of other opinions, and relegating participation to consumer purchases, rather than also anticipating the role of social hierarchies, related inequities, and in the ability to stay engaged. Fair Horizons is more intentionally working to anticipate difference as it relates to inequality, although the challenge of time is still present. Angel, a Hispanic/Latino board member said,

> "I think there's- you know, there's a lot of assumptions that people sometimes make, and like I know everybody gets busy, and I know everybody has busy lives, but I think there's a whole different set of barriers that happens with some of our Latino families as opposed to like some of our other board members that have like a 9-5 job. And then there are folks like me, you know, that I'm at work all day, I have to come home and like feed my kids and make dinner for my husband, and take them to my mom's so somebody can watch them during the board meeting, like there's a whole 'nother set of like barriers that kind of prevent people from being fully engaged, does that make sense? I think it's important to really look at, what are their barriers, what are the reasons that they can't feel completely at the meeting or feel like, 'oh man I was late,' or- it's really hard. I have a pressure of being Latina, making sure that my kids, and I have child care for them. It's really hard." – Angel

For Fair Horizons, the main tension is between those who are generally more educated, white, and recent neighborhood residents, and those who are generally less educated, Hispanic or Latino, and long-time residents. Furthermore, white men from the partner non-profit generally lead the co-operative effort and decision-making by setting the agenda (more on this in the next section). While a great deal of this occurs in side conversations in the non-profit, proposals are still presented to the board that is made up of diverse community members. When asked about

this, the lack of time and knowledge of other board members is viewed as an impeding factor for both inclusive conversation and still moving the co-operative effort forward.

Discussions observed at Fair Horizons acknowledge the impeding effect of racism and classism on decision-making, and work to address challenges as they come up. For example, in response to some of the concerns that Angel brought up, the meetings now have full-time translators and now have childcare services. After feedback occurring through these networks, meetings are beginning to be held more in Spanish and translated into English. Even white, male leadership are reflecting on their role differently. For example, Steve, who acknowledges his race and status, said,

> "The way that I try to do that (co-operate) is slowing down. So allowing myself, others, and progress to be slower. I am aware that me as a person cares about efficiency and making decisions to move forward…just get it done and take action. Recognizing that being a privileged white male in a position of leadership in an organization comprised of mostly Latino women, I need to be more okay with being slower. Trying to not talk, trying to ask for input from this specific person, asking a question in Spanish rather than English, or… when someone is having troubles in the office with a computer, rather than just doing it for them, it is about having the patience and time to do it with them." – Steve

The opportunity for such feedback and adaptation is not as possible in Prairie Farms and Green Planet. Participants view it as taking too much time, that it could problematically disrupt current networks, and that it is not the goals or responsibility of the co-op to address such inequities.

Structuring Leadership and Identity

Leadership and identity are closely intertwined in how each co-operative performs its work. Leadership can be more hierarchical, shared, detached, charismatic, and/or more representative. Each of these relate to how co-ops are able to access resources. Similar to the themes in the previous section, leadership is related to the amount of time and other resources co-operative networks have. For Fair Horizons, the non-profit partner's continued pressure to acquire funding, and the "professional" culture this funding sits within, supports some bodies

and presentations of self over others. One research participant, Kate, described how people who are formally educated, white, and male, for example, are “made to be in front of people”. Individuals from the non-profit who are white, educated and often male have ended up in paid positions to lead community development efforts such as the co-op.

The lack of time and resources prevalent in co-ops results in a more hierarchical leadership structure where the conversations and agendas are more driven by the non-profit representatives. They are the ones who come up with the meeting agendas and generally lead and facilitate conversation. There is a degree of detachment these leaders present when facilitating meetings. When there are changes in funding or new technical information about running a grocery is established, it is communicated to the group via these leaders. While the charisma of these individuals may transfer to funding and political circles – thereby acquiring support for the co-op that might not be there otherwise – their legitimacy is sometimes questioned by Hispanic and Latino community members who are the target population (Hale n.d.). Further, by allowing the people and symbolic currency of professional culture to drive meetings, leadership can work to disempower members and potential members of the co-op. As Angel describes about a meeting with new board members,

> “At the first meeting we had with the new board, everyone introduced themselves and said ‘I have such and such degree, I work for the City’ or ‘oh, I just finished my MBA,’ you know whatever, and then you moved to the gals that are Spanish speakers, and then they would say things like, ‘well, I don’t have a degree, but I’m here to help,’ and it was something that just bothered me. All the sudden we created like this environment, without even wanting to, we created this space that people felt like, ‘oh my gosh, we don’t have a degree compared to the new members,’ or, ‘we don’t have these top-level positions with the city’. In the last couple weeks, we’ve had some of those folks that were previously on the board missing the board meetings and I’m wondering if there’s something to do with this. I don’t think it’s intentional by any means, Steve did address it, and people did say, ‘oh, I’m sorry I don’t speak English,’ and Steve said, ‘you don’t ever have to apologize for that language barrier, that’s why we have interpretation’. I feel like somebody at that point someone should have validated and said, ‘even though you don’t have an education or this expertise, you still have so many valuable things to

> contribute to this board,' so I think in some ways kind of equalizing that space again would have been really, really important for the long-term dynamics." – Angel

Inclusive decision-making takes time and leadership that works to be sure everyone can participate. However, sometimes the very differences between people's status can unintentionally disempower people in a room. Angel provides some examples of what leaders can do to address this such as valuing diverse knowledge and culture.

Though it is easy to focus upon the non-profit leadership, Angel is also an example of a charismatic leader within the co-op who challenges some of the less co-operative power dynamics such as those described above. In meetings, Angel expresses themselves more from a place of feeling and connection to the community, rather than organizational efficiency. Such leaders are viewed by some as being vital to the success of the co-op. However, time and knowledge are challenges for such leaders to sustain participation, especially as the non-profit has mostly driven the process. As Alison describes,

> "I feel like that until there is a champion besides Renovation (the non-profit), it is difficult for everyone to know what's going on in the co-op. Even if I wanted to do it, so much happens behind the scenes. How would I have the time? I have a job and a life. And can't be that engaged with what they're doing. I know the goal is for it not to be Renovation's pet project but I don't think there is enough momentum for that to happen." – Allison

As made up of a mostly white, educated staff, Renovation has received criticism for not hiring individuals from the community into leadership positions. However, during my time studying the group, the need for the co-op's leadership to be from the community, along with a process to ensure this outcome, became increasingly part of Renovation's approach. For example, the group has hired a Hispanic/Latino office manager from the community, held anti-oppression trainings, and has continued to develop intention around who should be represented on the board and group dynamics therein.

For Green Planet, the leadership is more bifurcated into the board and the staff made up of a general management team (GMT). The GMT was put in place as the result of three general managers lasting less than a year or two. When asked about why the general managers didn't last, one participant said it was,

> "because of the undesirable conversations and interactions between staff and the GM (general manager), that breeded resentment dispersed amongst staff. It created an unhealthy toxic environment. If we're supposed to follow the GM's lead and there is talk behind this person's back, then there are unresolved conflicts. Of course it is going to turn our negatively." – Mike

General managers were hired from outside the community and typically came from a more "corporate" background. This included more professional presentation of self, with a focus on efficiency, profit, and hierarchical decision-making. While some viewed hiring from the outside and GMs not fitting in, others saw the current staff culture, and charismatic leaders within it as being the problem. Sara described it like this,

> "One person is a little bossy and wants the attention and the control. All of the GMs talk about this person being a problem and not co-operative. But then it is spun the other way that the GM's a just corporate and unco-operative. I was more inclined to believe the staff when they were critical of GMs but when you hear it from more than one person, it is pretty clear that something is going on. There was a lot of gossip, divisiveness, to get people on her side. It was a power grab, getting people to not like each other." – Sara

However, there are others who describe a quieter leadership that offsets some of these dynamics. As Mike said,

> "There are so many different personalities in the microcosm of the co-op. Some people dominate conversations, just like anywhere. It is natural. It is also important to have balance. When there are squeaky wheels, there needs to be attention to the quieter ones that are doing things that aren't the most noticeable. They're the ones behind the scenes and with something incredibly profound to offer." – Mike

Leadership dynamics also plays out between board and staff. Though the board may have particular goals – a second store, for example – if these don't align with staff interests, they rarely happen. This is especially the case since the board is voluntary, with limited knowledge of

the day-to-day operations. In this way, while the board is to work to mediate staff and member concerns, the staff tends to drive the process. The current board leadership is often viewed as being too stuck on bureaucratic rules, following the policy governance protocol – or – occupied with their own agendas which align more with more corporate, bureaucratic performances. I witnessed a number of times where there was tension between staff and board about following the protocol or particular agendas, rather than staff experience. In a way, the tension might be better understood as the staff wanting more legitimacy in managing board activities, while the board aims to play a visioning role but is forced into managing as previous GMs left. Now the leadership dynamic is unclear, often becoming the subject of board meetings.

While bureaucratic rules have provided grounding for some, others, including the staff, have desired more focus upon relationship building. One leader in the co-op described this dynamic,

> "He wants to be nurtured. He wants to get a lot of personal attention and nurturing. He only talks in terms of feeling. He doesn't understand that there are benefits to the process. It is very analytical and very abstract and he wants to talk about feelings all the time. He wants to feel a heart connection with every encounter. All this abstract stuff leaves him feeling high and dry." – Marsha

The process of the board leaves some "feeling high and dry", particularly if they are concerned with relationship building – something many perceive the co-op struggling with. Focusing on institutional, bureaucratic processes limits the time and possibilities for getting others involved, particularly those who might not identify with the current co-operative network's cultural make-up. This might have to do the types of food found at the grocery, but also could be the politics and subcultures of the staff and board. Much of these community resources are not valued in following protocols but can be developed through having get-togethers, events, and leadership

that prioritize such activities. Such leadership would necessitate the ability to develop relationships across difference (i.e. cultural).

Prairie Farms also struggles to have leadership that works across cultural groups. However, the homogeneity of Prairie Farms often leads to more horizontal leadership on the board between producers. Most people are active in the conversation and play a particular role such as distribution coordination, accounting, and community partnerships. The president of the board's aim is to ensure that if any 2-3 people were to step down from the board, the organization would not fold. He wants to "empower all the way down in the co-op". However, as described above, the horizontal leadership is based on the producer identity so the leadership of the consumer members is often minimized to that of buying foods.

Leadership in Prairie Farms is often detached, following an agenda determined by core leadership in advance of the meetings. There is an emphasis on recognition on the board such as people referring to and praising others' work and efforts. Charisma can sometimes be based on age or presentation of self. For example, the aim of Prairie Farms making farming viable for young farmers again helps one young farmer and employee of the co-op gain status. Board members listen closely to this person, encouraging his contributions which lead to more contributions. An urban consumer member and marketing employee works to connect with people new and old at distribution. She was described by some as a "people person". This person is a charismatic leader but has also expressed frustration with some of the decisions of the board who she perceives as not focused enough on the consumer experience. In this way, charisma will only go so far if the space is not opened for that force to change co-operative operations. As mentioned in the previous section, many of the producer members and leaders of the co-op view producer leadership as crucial to the success of the co-op. A similar co-op in Oklahoma, and one

that informed the work of Prairie Farms, was viewed as struggling once consumers took over the co-op. As Fred and Jeff described in a focus group, the director who was hired brought in too much of the consumer perspective,

> Fred: "She brought in her friends to help run it."
>
> Jeff: "Yeah, and she was paying them, but then the guy that's in there now, he was bringing all his hippie friends in and paying them to do just sorting and everything, and running that place, and they have lost so many producers. They were doing, what $70-150,000 a month I think it was, and there're down to like $30,000 now, $35"

The perception of consumers changing the co-op culture, and how this may result in less producer engagement and financial struggle, has resulted in Prairie Farms limiting the opportunities of consumer leadership in the organization. This in itself has limited the resources – such as volunteerism, political, infrastructure, and financial capitals – the co-op can acquire.

Emotional Work, Trust, and Debt

Co-operation takes a degree of trust, and trust often takes work, particularly when working across differing cultures and ways of doing. This work can be emotional and when it is perceived as uneven, participation can wane or stop completely. The difference between the emotional surface, and what is going on below it, can lead to emotional debts, even if these debts are not known to others. As described below, these debts can contribute to social bonding but also result in interactional barriers with others in a co-operative network.

The salient surface level emotional work of Green Planet is twofold; occurring between staff and customers, and between staff and the board. The general presentation of self for the staff of the co-operative includes being caring, helpful, and community-minded, as well as efficient and thoughtful grocers. Mike describes the emphasis on caring and community here,

> "[it is important] to take the time to connect in such a way that shows that you really care about this person, that I really care about the co-operative movement as a global

> movement for justice. I do care about what this job means to me. I care enough to make a difference and connect in this way." – Mike

As I allude to in the previous sections, the emotional work between the staff and board often goes more below the surface, with the staff readier to express frustration and emotion. The board typically has a more emotionally detached presentation of self. When frustration and emotion are expressed, this often pushes the decision-making process in the staff's direction and takes more decision-making autonomy away from the board.

While this dynamic works in the staff's favor with the board, its implications with customers can result in less patronage. A number of participants I talked to from the board and staff described how staff culture sometimes made customers uncomfortable coming to shop at the store, one participant described it as "a snootiness, better-than attitude". After probing for more examples, Sara responded by saying,

> "It was clear to me that there was a lot of behind the back gossip, there was a nicety to your face… People would be shopping and would hear the staff in the back bad mouthing the GM. Personally, I don't shop there anymore because of this stuff." – Sara

Some participants also described a "cliquishness" of the staff. Others were quick to describe that this was not the case for all staff. For some it is a "clubhouse" while for others it is a demonstration of commitment to the community. As Lars put it,

> "Yeah, it was interesting, it's like it's cool to be at the co-op, you know, we're not working at fuckin' Whole Foods, but at the same time, that's kind of where I feel like it ended. I would say some people put their heart and soul into the place, and really like the idea of having a community market where we are selling as many local things and helping producers, and is pretty involved. For others, I don't know, it's just cool to work there, but I don't think they really give a shit. It kind of just became more of a hangout place for them to just bitch and a lot of that affected business I think." – Lars

The staff talking within earshot about other employees, customers, or other activities is an example of what happens as emotional debts build up and there is a culture that encourages that it be shared in public. Staff have felt underappreciated for taking pay cuts, and then are expected

to perform surface level emotions, such as smiling and being friendly, when customers come in. This results in debts that staff might feel customers, management, and the board owe them. While some staff are able to bond over this, other non-staff sometimes witness it by overhearing conversations or perceiving unwelcoming, or insincere gestures.

Related to this, staff and members I spoke with at events and in the community often referred to the Green Planet as being expensive. However, the co-op regularly conducts price comparisons with other natural food stores, finding that their prices were competitive with other stores such as Whole Foods or Natural Grocers. I began to ask people if the perceived expense was perhaps representative of something else. Some described challenges with convenience such as parking or getting all the foods they needed. However, others suggested that it may be representative of the emotional work sometimes necessary to shop at the co-op. As one participant said,

> "There is a certain level of anonymity in other grocery stores. People are afraid of too much closeness and they want the anonymity. That is why the co-op draws a very small portion of its potential market. They are afraid of being known. I go to the co-op because I love having people there I can say hi to. But I'm gaining a sense that I'm more of an anomaly." – Marsha

The co-op's expense is also related to the emotional work of interacting with a small staff and in a small store. If identities are more discordant, it takes more work, especially for staff, and this can lead to debts and insincere performances.

As the conversation further unfolded with Marsha, she continued to describe concern with being able to compete with the anonymity of larger grocers. I asked how the co-op might be able to appeal to more diverse identities, and not be reliant on "anomalies", such as with people like herself. Marsha said,

> "I think potential co-op shoppers would want to see themselves as wanting diversity, but the reality is that people often want to see people that look like themselves. The

> emotional reality is there is a very big difference between what people say they want and what makes them comfortable. I think people end up going with comfort a lot more than we are willing to admit." – Marsha

In this way, the customers have a certain amount of willingness to engage with below-the-surface emotions, particularly if it involves working across difference. Such work is more emotionally taxing though. Marsha's statement is also representative of staff and board members who view working across socio-economic diversity as potentially taking too much emotional energy.

For Prairie Farms, the performance of self is more detached, as a pragmatic utilitarian producer working to bring consumers a good product. There is less effort in developing relationships with the consumer members beyond market relationships and sometimes at volunteer-run distribution. Besides distribution, where a couple producers are present, and board meetings, there are few opportunities consumers and producers have to interact. At distribution, people interact, moving food around a room before it goes to the next location. People are subtle in acknowledging each other, sometimes not greeting each other at all. The distribution manager makes some announcements about the work and tiredly expresses appreciation for their time. Many conversations are about farms, family, and logistical challenges with the co-op. However, most people kept distance from me during the times I volunteered. Though this may have to do with being a researcher, whenever a new consumer member volunteer came, I took notes about a tendency of the interaction to be surface level and often evolving into minimal social interaction. Further, at an annual meeting at a community health center in an urban African American community, there was an often a visible line dividing white and non-white people in the room of around 50 individuals. Put another way, there was little interaction between producers, current consumers, *and* potential and curious African American community members.

When asked about what kinds of interactions keep consumers from participating in board meetings, one producer board member said,

> "Sometimes you just meet someone and you don't like what they say and how they act. If you get someone like that on the board and the other eight board members don't like them because their personality doesn't mesh, there would be a problem. I think that is what happens with a lot of boards." – Anne

When personalities do not "mesh" it takes more emotional work to co-operate and can create social distance for consumer members who might be on the board. Anne went on to describe that some of the past challenges with retaining consumer representation,

> "We do need more representation on the consumer side. We had consumer members on the board in the past and they ended up not making the board meetings, and not answering their emails. They didn't care I guess. You have to have passion if you're going to be on this board. I don't think they have the passion." – Anne

Producers often viewed consumers as not being interested or having as much passion for the work. But some consumer members had a different point of view. For example, Keith said,

> "There is a lot of protectionism of producers by design. People are always really wary of me. I feel that I get where they are coming from a lot even though I am consistently trying to build trust with them. I can be really honest with a few but otherwise I have to be really political." – Keith

While both parties described the emotional work of working across the consumer-producer divide, consumer member volunteers such as Keith often talked about feeling like an outsider at meetings and even slighted at times; not being recognized as quickly as producer members for their contributions. Keith went on to say that,

> "They love having their little social club, rather than an actual self-sustaining business… I wish they would not resist consumer desires as much as they do. We could be much more convenient." – Keith

Later Keith said,

> "I've suggested having a hip summer dinner. The consumers want to have a party with drinks, kids running around, other soccer moms, talking about the food they buy at the coop, what meals they made. But those things never happen and it's a shame. I've

> suggested the idea but it always gets shut down. It we had more events like this, we would have no problem finding someone to be secretary. A stay at home mom or dad could be into it but these people are not going to be found at the annual meeting with the boring booths of food. I mean, come on. Throw in a little music or sit down food. People love that stuff." – Keith

So while the co-op may save on the emotional work of developing trust with consumers in board meeting, distributions, and other day-to-day activities, Keith is suggesting that this has a financial cost for the co-op. Without consumers involved, the co-op loses out with how to be more convenient, resources to have events, and building networks that brings the co-operative other resources.

The social distance between different socio-economic groups is the focus of the emotional work for Fair Horizons. Board members aim to be inviting and inclusive. However, meetings still typically end up being spatially organized along racial lines. As community development professionals, the leaders of the co-op and non-profit typically work to greet people across groups. As John, a professional white man said,

> "The majority of people at meetings driving the conversation are people of privilege. We check the box saying we got language interpretation but the reality is that there are still significant race, class, and power barriers where some people have more agency right when they step in the door. I see some people from the community feeling alienated from the conversation. It can be seen with one person bring food from whole foods and another feeling judged for bringing five-dollar pizza because that is what they can afford. The side conversations tend to occur along race and class. It is super hard to feel like there is trust amongst that. Some are viewed as the gentrifiers moving in and changing the community. When they're like 'this is the only neighborhood I can afford to move into. It's not my fault that I'm white." – John

Kate confirms this last part of it being difficult to build trust with the current role the co-op is perceived as playing in gentrification. She said,

> "I have a good relationship with folks who grew up in this neighborhood who work as interpreters for a lot of meetings. And they say that people don't want to buy into their own displacement. Now we can't get critical mass membership to open this thing. I was thinking about this too because I was working through how, okay, these people don't

> trust white people's businesses coming in. To try to gain that trust is really hard in a city that is rapidly gentrifying." – Kate

When I later asked John about how the types of resources needed for Fair Horizons to co-operate work across difference, he said that the capacity was bolstered by the non-profit who provides the resources to do this.

> "Renovation is critical for the co-op to be able to work across these different groups, whether it be providing resources for anti-oppression trainings, field trips, and making space. When you look at the rest of the co-ops working to start right now, they have increasingly begun to focus their target population on affluent white people. When you try to do the type of intersectionality we are here, it is really fuckin difficult. If there is not an organization doing it daily with that as their focus, then a co-op is going to go toward the path of least resistance." – John

In this way, non-profit organizations, or potentially other types of established coalitions, may help take on more of the burden of an uneven emotional field. However, as stated previously the ability of organizations to do this – to connect and retain commitments from diverse groups – is a place of power dynamics with white, male professionalism often winning out with funders and politicians. One expense of this is that emotional work to connect with these leaders can fall on the target populations, creating barriers to trust and leadership legitimacy. It also can reproduce sentiments that other identities cannot themselves be in leadership positions, thereby contributing to broader structural inequities.

Discussion

Co-operatives serve as a valuable case in studying alternative forms of organizing food and agriculture networks. They also provide an opportunity for imagining and enacting alternative food futures. However, as this research has shown, co-operatives can sometimes struggle to be co-operative. Decision-making can exclude certain current or potential members, leadership can reproduce divisions, and the emotional work necessary to co-operative culture can

lead to emotional debts which can delegitimize surface level performance. All of these enable co-operative networks to access certain resources, and disable others.

All the co-operative networks studied had different ways of including and excluding others from decision-making processes. These are often identity-based – such as producers, professionals, or staff driving decision-making process – and values based – such as utilitarian or environmental sustainability (Hale n.d.). Prioritizing these groups and certain values can help bring certain resources such as social bonding capital and volunteerism as in the case of Prairie Farms and Green Planet, or financial and political capital in the case of Fair Horizons. However, it also limits resources that other potential networks might provide. Consumer members are sometimes excluded intentionally – their participation is valued through market relations only. Even when they are not, the amount of time, information, and physical and spatial distance these other networks have to go limits capitals access. For example, websites, distribution centers, and markets may be more easily accessible if urban consumer members were more intentionally included in the decision-making process.

These tensions within the decision-making process suggest that while economic interests can directly erode the potential of one-member-one-vote (Mooney 2004), so too can cultural differences within current and potential networks. Voting is not independent of the social and cultural locations members occupy within and outside of the co-operative network. The "adversarial" relationship between consumers and producers, as one participant put it, is fueled by both economic interests as well as cultural judgements and priorities. Alternatively, for power to be shared, diverse knowledge to be valued, and personal relationships to be developed and maintained (Rothschild 2016), bonding relationships, which often drive volunteerism, may be

eroded. Diverse efforts may also require more time and other resources during the start-up phase, such as that observed in the case of Fair Horizons.

Co-operatives such as Fair Horizons are more intentionally anticipating and encouraging the expression difference in the decision-making process. Race, class, educational, and other structural inequities more regularly come into the conversation, guiding means-end process to navigate structures both external and internal to Fair Horizon's efforts. By doing so, this co-operative network has opened more readily accessible feedback circuits. It also demonstrates effort to counteract meta-power (Hall 1997). For example, the non-profit partner provides childcare and translation services to help ensure participation. The board has also been more intentional with including a majority of Hispanic and Latino community members on the board. Leadership regularly reflects upon slowing down the process and not focusing as much on efficiency. In this way, the inclusion of these voices in the decision-making process has produced forces to counter the influence of meta-power in fully appointing delegates. However, the power dynamics in shaping the leadership in Fair Horizons still presents significant challenges.

The co-operative cases display tensions between professional, bureaucratic and charismatic leadership performance. Though Fair Horizons is able to include more diverse voices, the professionalism and bureaucratic demands of being led by a non-profit create challenges for the leadership being representative of the target community. This leadership helps the project access additional resources such as grants, technical expertise, and efficiencies but it can sometime be seen as disempowering to the community. White, male leadership often makes decisions backstage, such as meeting agendas, what opportunities to explore, and where there are potential problems. Though many are quick to say that they do not have the time or expertise to do this, some still view it as a problem that the leadership is not representative of the target

community of low-income, Hispanic and Latino residents. In this way, meta-power works to empower certain delegates as leaders, who set agendas (Hall 1997), thereby reproducing structural inequities in interactions (Stryker 2008). While it may lead to financial and human capital that help the co-op acquire a store space and fill out a proforma, for example, it can decrease social and cultural capital by shaping what is considered "efficient". In doing so, the co-op may actually be less efficient because of losing out on other forms of human capital (i.e. volunteerism) and potential membership.

However, once again, Fair Horizon's relatively diverse feedback networks allow such lessons to be reflected upon and wrestled with. The separation between co-operative membership classes (i.e. workers and managers) are not as institutionalized as others such as those in Mondragon (Taylor 1994), possibly making "efficiency" relatively more negotiable. The relationships between those in the co-op and the non-profit leadership are still sometimes personal, more readily displaying the backstage of social life (Cicourel 1958). When compared with Green Planet, Fair Horizons likely has a more negotiable order (Hall 1997) at least in part because it is at an earlier stage of its development. Various forms of charismatic leadership are still observable in Fair Horizons. However, in the later stages of this research, some leadership had begun to wane, particularly those who saw the co-op as potentially contributing to gentrification rather than helping it.

When compared to Fair Horizons, the other co-operatives have a more horizontal form of leadership. These networks often have more time but, possibly more importantly, are more homogeneous. Decision-making and trust is easier for networks such as Prairie Farms. Hierarchical leadership is less necessary for acquiring the needed resources. In fact, because trust is more automatic, around a producer identity, it could be easier to share leadership and create

investment across the group. Yet, like Meyers and Vallas (2016) found, this group takes a more utilitarian approach to understanding its work. Leadership works to fill in roles necessary to bring product to market, rather than a communitarian approach (i.e. Fair Horizons) which would be more concerned with how inequities structure, and are structured by, the co-op's leadership.

This research supports others who have shown that, in comparison to corporate forms of business, co-operatives may allow a wider range of emotions to be displayed such as anger and excitement (Hoffmann 2016). Further, the time spent with the co-operatives suggests that surface emotional performances that conflict with those below the surface can lead to emotional debt such as resentment. This is observed between grocery store staff, the board, and customers as well as producer and consumer members. The emotional tensions between these groups sometimes result from performances that further divide decision-making and leadership, thereby limiting resources and ongoing commitments. Green Planet now finds itself labeled as "expensive" or "cliquish". Some people don't feel comfortable going into the store because of being judged or feeling insincere performance.

In the case of Prairie Farms, customers are often viewed by producers as not caring enough about the co-operative. This territorializing of care supports the continued insularity of the co-op from urban, producer members. Board meetings and day-to-day efforts are spaces where producers feel comfortable, not having to work as much across other socio-economic, political, and cultural lines. This comfort, a place where surface performance and deeper felt emotions more easily align, support the ongoing commitment of producers. However, at the same time, it limits investment and empowerment of other current and potential members such as urban consumers. In this way, while it can be slow to segue into deep acting for potential co-operators (Hoffmann 2016), if the ability for current and potential members to participate is

unequal, groups are not able to develop ways to emote across difference and in a way that still encourages ongoing co-operation. If groups are not doing the emotional work – whether it be surface or deep acting – to ensure participation across difference, then their efforts might be characterized as unco-operative (Rothschild 2016). Yet, for groups to work across difference, such as the case with Fair Horizons, other forms of bureaucratization maybe necessary to acquire resources – grants, in-kind donations, volunteerism – to support trainings, events, and other forms of interaction which can help build trust. But this bureaucratization can also chip away at the energy of charismatic leaders who play a critical role bridging networks.

Conclusion

The co-operativeness of co-operatives is often assumed in practice. After all, most people involved in such forms of social organizing would likely consider themselves co-operative. However, as demonstrated in this paper, a co-operative legal status does not always result in co-operative relationships. Decision-making processes can be exclusive, leadership can disempower, and emotional work can limit the ability to work across socio-cultural difference. In this way, when we speak of co-operation, it is important to ask: co-operative for whom?

This work has assumed a position that to be co-operative, food and agriculture co-operatives must also practice egalitarian decision-making, hierarchies must be resisted, diverse knowledge valued and shared, and that relationships must be personal and free from capitalist, instrumental relationships (Rothschild 2016). Such practice helps co-operatives diversify their resource access. By anticipating socio-cultural difference, for example, some co-operatives are able to access broader networks. However, such communitarian approaches (Meyers and Vallas 2016) may create challenges for some groups who are fueled by bonding social capital. Working across difference takes work and potentially takes away from incentives fueling participation (i.e.

camaraderie with other producers). Depending on the type of leadership, and supporting emotional investments, values, and performances, some identities feel disempowered and struggle with ongoing participation.

There is often a tension between the aims of alternative food networks and efforts to improve conventional value chains by scaling-up (Goodman et al. 2012). By attempting to enact alternative values, while to some degree working within more traditional value chains, co-operatives can serve as a kind of third way. Traditional value chains' focus on producer, distributor, consumer economic relationships can often miss other important interactions that happens in day-to-day relationships. Alternative food projects can sometimes seem destined to be dispersed and episodic, with less coordination across space and time. Co-operatives provide an alternative legal form but also need to continuously interrogate what co-operation is in action – something that can also depend on the time and place in which a co-operative network works. If an intentional process of co-operation is not sought after, it can be easy to revert back to the competitive values that drive traditional economic processes, even under the banner of a co-operative legal form. Projects working deliberately on organizational *and* interactional aspects of co-operation may fair better in creating better food futures – an aspiration that fueled steps toward co-operation in the first place.

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WORKING TOWARD CO-OPERATIVE FOOD FUTURES

Resilience, frames, and co-operation – this dissertation has thus far wrestled with these as a mostly academic exercise. In what remains, I aim to emphasize how the findings can inform practice. I will conclude by providing some general limitations and future research opportunities.

Making Co-operatives Resilient

As a way to pragmatically move the resiliency thinking toward more egalitarian horizons, I have inserted relationality into the conversation. This means that when we think of one resilience, we must also consider how it relates to another. I have assumed that diversity – understood through varying capital access – and equity are the fundamental guiding principles to resilience. Combining these positions has pushed me to exam how networks are more or less diverse in the resource access, who benefits and loses, and where groups can improve resource access. I have mostly examined these through value and identity frames, as well as co-operation understood through decision-making processes, leadership performance, and emotional work. However, what does this mean for community practice?

To make co-operatives more resilient, efforts can be bolstered by being wary of homogeneity, anticipating and planning to counteract inequities, working across co-operative networks, and remaining open to discomfort. While homogeneity can smooth out interactions and decision-making processes, it limits the resilience of co-operatives in the long run. For instance, a significant strength and driver of Prairie Farms has been bonding over producer identity and knowledge. This supported more investment into the group – members have developed meaningful relationships with each other. However, over time, this boundary has resulted in the co-op struggling to access other resources found in those who might not identify

as much with producers. Now, volunteerism is running thin as the group struggles to “scale-up” to being able to pay full-time staff. In short, co-operatives should be wary of remaining homogenous and look for ways to encourage engagement across socio-culturally diverse groups. This includes prioritizing and identifying barriers for other identities and sets of knowledge to tap into the network. For example, engagement could occur by encouraging leadership development of less represented groups, providing goods and services which may draw various networks, and spurning persistent conversation about how to bring more socio-cultural diversity into the fold.

Anticipating and counteracting inequities can encourage more socio-cultural diversity. One way to do this is through “power-mapping” (McIvor and Hale 2015). Applied to co-op networks, this entails an intentional focus on who or what has more power within and beyond the co-operatives. These powers impact the ability of co-ops to be diverse. As this work has emphasized, socio-economic positions vary in their ability to draw on the community capitals, as well as make them valued. Certain value frames (i.e. utilitarian, community, justice) relate to resource access. Co-operatives might ask themselves what kinds of frames and practices help map out power and work to identify appropriate strategies to counter the consolidation of power.

Fair Horizons has made steps in this direction – identifying socially constructed cultural hierarchies – and establishing practices to counteract them – translators and childcare. Green Planet has concentrated on the ecological unsustainability of the current food system and prioritized acquiring and selling more environmentally minded food. Yet, for both of these groups, more work may be done to identify broader policy and cultural processes which impede the ability of co-operatives to sustain diverse resource access. For example, efforts could benefit from intentionally focusing upon institutionalized forms of racism and sexism which shape

funder networks and who are deemed legitimate leaders. Or, racially motivated violence or exclusionary policies (i.e. immigrant deportation), may be critical rallying points for co-ops and broader community. Raising awareness and creating situations where diverse potential co-operators can learn about the value of people and land, rather than dollars, can also help map out power. For instance, through such efforts, the economic consolidation in the food system (Carolan 2012) may become a paramount focus for the group, thereby identifying practices and events to call attention to such patterns. By doing so, collective action to challenge food and agriculture status quo may become more possible.

Co-operation among co-operatives is a key principle of co-operatives. However, surprisingly little co-operation across co-operatives was observed or spoken of during my time in the field. For instance, there was little communication between Green Planet – one of the only regional co-op grocers – and Fair Horizons. Admittedly, their approaches vary substantially. Yet, there is an opportunity for cross-pollination – being exposed to information and resources the co-ops may have not been otherwise. This can increase the diversity of co-op resource access and may lead to innovative ways of organizing across networks. Though this may take more time (more on this later), resource access can decrease the time crunch often felt by co-ops. Having to start from scratch, or assume that interests are opposed (i.e. Fair Horizons low-income consumers and Prairie Farms producers), impedes the ability of efforts to build on each other and create common interests. Regular meetings among co-operatives, resource sharing, and collaboratively organized events may help groups connect and collaborate.

Being relationally resilient is work – it is not something groups simply fall into. Working across difference entails discomfort. This is perhaps one of the key implications of this research as it relates to resilience. Rather than focusing upon the acquisition of material capital, or the

maintenance of a particular co-op or network as an indicator of resilience, efforts would be better served to bolster the capacity of participants to be uncomfortable while also remaining involved over time. At a fundamental interactional level, openness to discomfort is a precondition for diversity to be incorporated into co-operatives. If structural inequities are underlying that discomfort, it is not something that is mapped and amended overnight. It takes sustained effort and willingness to be uncomfortable over time. Aims for resilience in co-operatives and beyond should avoid settling for comfort as it can lead to significant challenges in the future which may threaten the co-operative itself.

Framing Co-operative Work

The way co-operatives frame their work matters. It both limits and enables co-ops' ability to access resources – something that predicts their ability to sustain across time. A key part of this includes the process by which groups work to align frames (Snow et al. 2012). The way co-ops communicate their work is going to inspire some and discourage others. Depending on the goals of co-ops, frames that span current and potentially interested parties need to be amplified. However, as part of this, it is important to also consider power inequities and determine what frames need amplification to further counteract the consolidation of particular values that limit co-operative progress.

Framing co-operative work in terms of increasing financial capital – something commonly observed in the utilitarian and community economic development frames – limits the potential of co-ops to value other capitals, however implicitly valued they may already be. Further, if co-ops do not significantly increase financial capital for the network, something all the co-op cases studied struggled with, then co-ops can lose legitimacy in the eyes of current and potential co-operators. Further still, in a market that generally favors practices that devalue other

capitals – natural, social, cultural, human, etcetera – the playing field is uneven and competition is often unfair. Put another way, when efforts are trying to revalue natural, social, human, and cultural capitals, it is difficult for them to compete with the prices of the current food and agriculture landscape. Instead of playing this game, co-ops may benefit by differentiating themselves based on other value frames, rather than adhering to the utilitarian and economic development frames found in dominant markets. For example, it may be more important to underline non-economic relationships between people within the co-op, democratic ownership, and/or collective political actions the co-op may take to change the current landscape. Some of these are already sometimes emphasized but they tend to be secondary to valuing financial capital.

All of the co-ops either explicitly or implicitly value community. However, there is a tendency for community values to be subsumed under utilitarian and economic values. As a step in getting off the next to impossible playing field of food system status quo, co-operatives would benefit by placing their community foot forward. Community is about relationships that extend beyond financial exchanges (i.e. see Carolan and Hale 2016). It can be about sharing food, stories, commitments, differences, cultures, etcetera. This is where much of the power of co-operatives lies – in the ability to connect people to each other outside of the market. It is also how co-ops can differentiate themselves from corporate grocery stores and distributors. Yet, it is important for groups to problematize community that becomes implicitly based upon homogeneity whether it be related to race, class, heritage, or political positions. Rather, connecting with others and focusing upon the substantive values of the co-op may help avoid insularity. For example, continual wrestling with values such as socio-cultural inclusivity, equity,

discomfort, relationships, and fairness may help spur interactions across difference, expanding the "community" in ways that open up networks and possibilities.

"Justice" is a substantive value sometimes included in food and agriculture projects and academia (i.e. see Alkon and Agyeman 2011). While none of the cases were explicit in adopting a justice value frame, it was often implicit. Whether it be rural or farmer justice with the case of Prairie Farms, environmental justice with the case of Green Planet, or socio-cultural justice with Fair Horizons, all the co-op networks were working to fairly revalue various identities and related practice. Within this, however, groups often place each other in opposition with one another thereby limiting the potential to reach a more expansive view of justice and practices that fight for it. What I mean by this is that while producer and consumer ideas of justice may seem in opposition, for example, it appears this way at least in part because of particular powers being ignored or masked. These powers often set the conditions for what is or seems possible in relationships. For example, the policies which dictate the price of food, or political strategies which shape the worldviews of rural and urban populations, divides people where they may have more in common than they often realize. This may include challenges to achieving livable wages, housing, healthy food access, and transportation. While some co-op networks may not currently sustain economic relationships between each other, there is opportunity in organizing around these seemingly more peripheral issues. After all, they often inspired co-operative action in the first place. This can occur at a more managerial level through event and action planning, but can also arise out of conversation starters between producer and consumers, white and non-white, staff and board members, and in a way that can widen the values of the co-op.

Utilitarian, community, and justice values – all routes for framing co-operative work. However, if these do not align with practice overtime, co-operative efforts can become

delegitimized. Consider the case of Fair Horizons and Green Planet. For Fair Horizons, community and equity are key values but the leadership is often viewed as reproducing structural inequities because positions are occupied by relatively privileged white men. Green Planet values community building but this has become based upon a progressive, "hippie" identity. This results in insularity and the co-op being perceived as a clique or club and less representative of the diversity found in the broader community. Though community and equity can be useful collective aspirations, if less labor is put into developing and implementing strategies to achieve this, then the frames can seem disingenuous to current and potential co-operators.

For the sake of analysis, I have distilled each co-op's value frames in ways that do not show the full breadth of values in each co-op. The themes I have described tended to be the most salient observed in meetings, interviews, and public documents. In a way, these salient themes are the result of those with the power to determine that they should be valued in the first place. Some people have louder voices, some never get a chance to speak, and other alternatives may not even be present to be communicated. Through such processes, symbolic power becomes increasingly concentrated. Co-operative efforts could be improved by intentionally working to ensure that value frames do not become monolithic, unmovable statues because of some people or networks having more power. Everyone in the co-op has something to offer and if the scales get tipped too far in one direction, it can limit participation and resource valuation. Groups should remain vigilantly against hierarchies and aim for sustained relationships that are personal and egalitarian (Rothschild 2016). This might be done by having limits in pay gaps between staff and management, rotating leadership as commonplace, regular events and meetings designed to build trust across diversity, and anti-oppression trainings (Reynolds 2014).

Becoming Co-operative Co-operatives

It can be easy to settle into co-operation as a given after acquiring the legal co-operative status. However, as this research has highlighted, it is important to remain committed to the process of co-operation. While the co-operative principles help provide a guide, key pieces do little for understanding processes that make efforts more co-operative than competitive. In particular, remaining free from the influence of outside power is a difficult order to fill, especially socio-cultural powers which shape interactions. Values and identities do not occur in a vacuum – they are shaped by networks and experiences outside of the co-op. Yet, groups can work to intentionally wrestle with these exogenous forces by naming them and coming up with strategies to resist them taking a full grip on a co-op. Some key ways to do this is emphasizing process, striving for inclusive decision-making and representative leadership, sharing the emotional work, and determining appropriate times to be co-operative and when to be competitive.

Simply adopting co-operative principles is not enough – the process of putting them into practice within various situations takes persistent effort. If they become assumed in a vote or a legal status, the process of their day-to-day implementation can become obscured. For instance, does everyone feel comfortable participating? Are agendas, and therefore votes, set in advance, thereby benefiting some over others? Is reading the principles enough to educate members about co-operation? Or are experiential learning opportunities needed? What would those look like? What kinds of efforts can make emotional labor shared and fair? These are examples of questions that co-ops could continuously revisit as part of a *process* of co-operation. This is not to say that some similar efforts do not exist. For example, Green Planet uses policy governance protocols to revisit end-means goals on a consistent basis. Yet, many felt that they were stifling

conversation, possibly suggesting that more work could be done to determine how such guidelines apply to their particular situation, rather than assume a one-size-fits-all list of checkboxes. This is where process comes in. If people are deeply involved in decision-making, embodying co-operative ethics, and unburdened by unfair emotional work, for example, then policy governance would never have the chance to become stifling – it would be put to the side or adapted closer to its introduction to a co-operative project. Put another way, such principles can only be put to good use if the collective aspirations concerning the process of co-operation have already begun to be characterized and enacted by co-operators.

Inclusive decision-making and representative leadership seem like obvious goals for co-ops to strive for. However, it can be challenging to include others with differing opinions or ways of communicating them. Some leadership may be more effective at acquiring material resources than others. Recognizing these tensions, it is vitally important to make steps toward more inclusivity and appropriate leadership, otherwise efforts begin to appear more competitive than co-operative (more on this later). If any group or individual becomes entitled to the control of the co-op, this can create toxicity within and beyond the co-op network. It is important to intentionally seek to include various membership classes and identities into the governing body and leadership of the co-op because it expands networks and resource access. In doing so, power-mapping can help determine how some voices may become unfairly valued over others as well as identify effective strategies for counteracting inequities. For example, one concern of Prairie Farms includes consumer members taking over the co-op and creating challenges for producers. Perhaps rather than assuming that consumer members are going to be given an unfair amount of influence, it is more important to concentrate on how to create equity between members and identities. This may mean valuing rural, producer values as well as urban ways of

life. Though the latter has sometimes ended up carrying more cultural weight in the media and political decision-making process, for instance, it is going to stifle co-operative efforts if one becomes exceedingly valued over the other. This is observable in the challenges Prairie Farms experiences with retaining customers and urban volunteers needed for distribution, lack of political influence, and relative lack of fundraising success when compared to other similar efforts. In short, decision-making and leadership can be improved in food and agriculture co-operatives by mapping out power, being inclusive and slow, and less focused on immediate horizons and more on relationships across time.

The emotional work of co-operatives is rarely talked about in co-ops. Interpersonal relationships often spanning members and management, in addition to personal investment and sense of ownership, creates strong emotions that can be felt in meetings and the front and back of the store. This is part of the strength of co-operatives – it can work on deeper levels of human interaction (Hoffmann 2016). If emotions remain surface level, such as that between the consumer and producer members of Prairie Farms, meaningful relationships beyond market exchanges stagger and co-operation begins to resemble competition. As part of this, this research suggests that it is important to understand who may be unfairly burdened by the emotional work of a co-op. Consumers have become more accustomed to anonymity and surface level acting – this is where corporate business excels. While co-ops create space for the expression of emotions among all of its members, groups should work to understand how some may be left with more of the emotional labor and develop strategies that facilitate its expression. For instance, creating space where store staff can express their own frustration with consumers or board members in a constructive way, may lead to more mutual understanding. Further, regularly expressing a range

of emotions can create bonds between members that begin to see people as more-than staff, board member, customer, etcetera.

This research may at times appear to not recognize the importance of competition for co-operatives. After all, networks would be hard-pressed to not have some group that they might be competing with, such as a corporate grocer. What I encourage groups to do is to be more intentional about who and what they are competing or co-operating with. Competition within a co-operative, such as between producers and consumers, or between different socio-cultural groups, are representative of broader struggles, much of which are sometimes competitive. Co-operatives provide an opportunity to experiment with working across these differences by pooling resources – providing a step in changing the dominant culture of competition. If groups use dominant narratives to connect these groups – such as the utilitarian frame – or do not work to make interactions last across space and time through egalitarian principles, then co-operatives competitively chip away at themselves. It is critical for co-operatives to figure out who they are competing and co-operating with and how. For instance, co-ops are sometimes competing with corporations or undemocratic efforts by having open member ownership and democratic decision-making. Groups must avoid undermining such principles by speeding up decision-making, or becoming insular in the process of competing with broader market forces.

Agrifood Resilience, Frames, and Co-operation

Alternative food and agriculture efforts often emphasize the effectiveness of particular practices – community gardening, agroecology, community supported agriculture, for example. The energy around co-operatives are no exception. Yet, co-operatives can help us intentionally experiment with alternatives forms of organizing and interacting that potentially challenge and shift the broader culture of competition. All alternative food and agriculture projects can benefit

from wrestling with what co-operation looks like in action. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, this means paying significantly more attention to how people relate to each other and designing ways for groups to sustain participation over time across diverse forms of social life.

When focusing on relationships, agrifood resilience takes on a different form. Highlighting soil qualities, financial reserves, and membership numbers each become only a piece of the resilience puzzle. Further, resources may more readily follow diverse socio-cultural connections. It can be uncomfortable to start with seeking socio-cultural diversity but the payoffs can spiral into other resources being accessed and enacted (Flora and Flora 2013). Alternative food and agriculture projects may be better served by starting with strategies which connect diverse networks, rather than emphasizing any particular silver bullet.

Attention to frames is commonplace in agrifood practice and scholarship. Neoliberal, food security, food justice, and food sovereignty are common distinctions within scholarship (Holt-Gimenez 2011). Economic development, health, and community are common within practice (Carolan and Hale 2016). This research suggests that frames both result from and predict resource access, and that this depends on the context. While the current project may be criticized for not beginning from an explicit emancipatory position, my orientation toward social change values a diversity of tactics. Beginning from dominant perspectives of food justice when working with rural producer culture has potential in and of itself to create more boundaries than openings. For such reasons, I have begun from a place of aiming for network diversity and equity and seeing how current frames play out. I then worked to identify and encourage frames already present, however underutilized they may be, that may push the conversation toward new, potentially unexpected openings. In this way, I have offered one approach to working toward

improving the broader food and agriculture landscape in a way that is sensitive to where people and places are at. Such scholarship and activism is necessarily messy but more directly grapples with avoiding totalizing concepts and critiques that can sometimes reproduce food system status quo (Carolan 2013).

When considering much of food and agriculture practice, and broader cultural patterns, competition has become a defining characteristic of how people relate to each other. We eat too fast, often on the go. Corporate practice and policy has become almost ubiquitous with how we connect to food and agriculture. We desire food and agriculture to be cheap and easy – a result and source of businesses competing with each other. Co-operatives are one way that people can experiment with creating alternatives to the current paradigm. They push people to question the way we do food and agriculture and create collective aspirations for what food futures lie on the horizon. Co-ops also provide opportunities for people to relearn how to make decisions across difference, share leadership, and deepen emotional connections with each other. All of these experiences and skills are fundamental pieces to more resilient, egalitarian, and co-operative food futures.

Limitations

This research could have been improved by also having a survey component which measured network characteristics among co-op participants. While the rich field work component allowed comparison between co-operatives, a survey focused upon how the community capitals flow through the networks would help confirm points of contention which may not have arisen during interviews and observations. Further, it would result in sociograms (diagrams depicting network data) which could be used as a point of conversation between current and potential co-operators. Future research is planned to fill in this gap.

The positionality of the researcher plays a critical role in qualitative field work and analysis (Mccorkel and Myers 2003). My project is no exception – the networks I studied were made up of many identities which interact with how I am perceived. Further, as a White, mostly monolingual, formally educated man, I was more easily able to connect with and understand some populations than others. Though a key focus of this research was on egalitarian values and encouraging network diversity, the way I came to understand networks is at least in part shaped by my own position within them. This was sometimes as an urban consumer who, despite a background in food and agriculture practice, has rarely relied on cultivating the land for my livelihood. This, in addition to spending much of my life in cities, limits my ability to understand the lived experiences of rural co-operative participants.

Other times it was shaped by a tension often reflected in the current food movement. From my experience working across a variety of alternative food projects over the last decade, I have come to believe that market based solutions that do not focus upon socio-economic and cultural barriers to participation are holding the food movement back from fully actualizing its potential. Though I do believe in messy, pragmatic modes of food citizenry (Carolan 2013; McIvor and Hale 2015), I am also interested in the potential of groups to more intentionally wrestle with issues of inequality. This position within my own development as a scholar and co-operative participant inevitably shaped, and in many ways was shaped by, the project.

As a White, educated man studying Hispanic and Latina women working to open a co-op grocery, there were certainly challenges. In general, I aimed to be cognizant of this during interviews, focus groups, and interactions, aiming to affirm what participants had to share and being thankful for the time I was able to spend with people who in some ways are different from me. However, I was surprised how readily many Hispanic and Latina women were willing to

share their impressions of the co-op with me, even when it was difficult. For example, a number of these research participants were eventually able to discuss issues of power and privilege in the co-op's work with me. This is part of the strength in field work that extends over time – trust and relationships can form in which research participants are willing to share some experiences concerning the power and privilege of white men with a white man. I remain thankful to those who shared their stories and am committed to accurately expressing them in my work.

Yet, while I may be able to abstractly conceptualize some of the cultural barriers to participation and leadership, for example, my ability to understand the lived complexity of these relationships is a limitation of this research. This became clear to me during a number of experiences which were sometimes uncomfortable for me. During one of my focus groups, a Hispanic/Latina woman repeatedly said that she was "stupid" to me. Besides showing concern and providing encouragement that she had much to share, the language barrier, along with me as a privileged white man, created challenges to me fully describing and embodying knowledge to empower her as a participant. While the language barrier is more obvious, my lack of specific examples about how she felt "stupid" and how to cite the knowledge she has to offer, could have made my attempt to comfort her a little flat.

Another example in addition to being a white male included not having children. I was always ready to meet with participants and was able to talk for longer periods of time. At times, I become acutely aware of how much more the participants were sacrificing to be there then I was. I remember one particular instance when an engaging interview with a Hispanic/Latina woman felt like it could have gone on indefinitely. I was probing further as we were parting in the parking lot and thought afterwards: "wow, I was so focused upon learning more about leadership and identity and now she is rushing off to pick up her kids from family. I should have been more

sensitive of her time." I tried to learn from such experiences as I moved forward but they still occurred over the course of the research.

My positionality and the experiences I have had with this research have resulted in findings which may not sit well with some of my research participants. Taking a more performative position within the research itself (Carolan 2013; Law and Urry 2004), I have used egalitarian values as a guide in reporting my findings and suggestions. This has resulted in me emphasizing and responding to points of contention where I see the most potential for change instead of others which may negatively impact networks to the point of possibly reproducing neoliberalism or socio-economic boundaries, for example (i.e. Gibson-Graham 2008). Put another way, in places where vulnerable populations could be negatively impacted by this research, I have pressed less hard. This is part of an ongoing struggle in the role of community based, qualitative research – having outcomes which produce a net positive for community efforts, particularly vulnerable populations, while still being held to the standards of academia. Through ongoing conversations with colleagues, mentors, community members and practitioners, I am committed to continuing to be reflective and engaged in the process of connecting research and practice in ways that improve both.

Future research

Following these cases across time can help us characterize how networks shift and change through feedback and adaptive processes. As stated above, a network survey aimed at examining the exchange of community capitals could help provide a more nuanced view of each co-operative network. Future research could also benefit by more surveying of consumer members. While this occurred directly and indirectly through conversations at events and with board members, these participants are qualitatively different than the less active consumers who

may only be shopping at the co-op. Future research could examine what impedes patronage and further investment into a given co-operative network.

Future research could go into more depth about the role of non-humans in accomplishing co-operative networks (Latour 1996). For example, how might biological relationships limit and enable co-operation? Regional and/or international cultural differences in the success of co-operatives may also be fruitful. For example, a number of participants described the challenge of working co-operatively in a region with a history of individualism and business rather than community and co-operative forms (i.e. upper Mid-western USA).

This research has focused more on the day-to-day interactions of people working within co-operative networks and how this relates to co-operative network performance. Future research can work to situate these findings within a political economy with particular policies and economic practices that shape how well co-operatives are able to achieve their ends. For example, the way that some food and agricultural practices are subsidized (or not), thereby tipping the scales in the direction of corporate food and agriculture, is something that greatly impacts the ability of co-ops to be successful. Further, since co-operative efforts are typically attempting to revalue various relationships – environmental, social, cultural, etcetera – it would be worthwhile to examine the political economic forces which shape how well co-ops are able to sustainably re-embed such values in the market.

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APPENDIX

Co-ops and Front Range Food Network Resiliency
Interview guide

1. How and when did you get involved with the coop?

2. What are your motivations for being involved?

3. How did the coop get started?

4. How do co-ops improve the food system?

5. What are the important relationships and why?

6. Who is missing from co-ops and why?

7. What voices are marginalized and why?

8. How can the cooperative work more cooperatively?

9. Using the CCF tool, what are barriers and opportunities for cooperatives?

10. This sheet lists the various types of 'capital' that might be seen as sustaining a regional food system. (allow time for examination and questions)

    According to where you see the regional food system going, what are the major barriers and opportunities for collaborations according to the different forms of capital?

Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	Political	Financial	Built
-Location -Weather -Geographic isolation -Natural resources -Amenities -Natural beauty Shapes the cultural capital connected to place	-Knowledge -Traditions -Who and what we feel comfortable with. -Language Influences what voices are heard or not	-Skills and abilities that help develop and access resources and knowledge. -Leadership across differences, participatory, proactive.	-Connections among people and organizations, that makes things happen. -Could be close, more personal connections or more distant that create bridges among organizations and groups.	-Access to power, organizations, and resources, to change standards, rules, and regulations. -Ability of actors to engage in action that affects their community.	-Available financial resources to invest in community capacity building, underwrite business development, support entrepreneurship, and save for future community development.	Infrastructure supporting community activities

11. What would you like to see research on concerning co-ops and the food system?

Demographics

12. Age:
13. Sex: M/F

14. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Y/N
15. Please select the race that best describes you.
    a. White
    b. Black or African American
    c. American Indian or Alaskan Native
    d. Asian or Pacific Islander
    e. Other______________________
16. Approximate household income:
    f. Less than $10,000
    g. $10,000 to $14,999
    h. $15,000 to $19,999
    i. $20,000 to $24,999
    j. $25,000 to $34,999
    k. $35,000 to $49,999
    l. $50,000 to $74,999
    m. $75,000 or more
    n. Don't know/not sure
17. What percent of this income is from agricultural activities (if any)?
18. Can we contact you in the future for a follow-ups or additional research?
    o. If yes,
        i. Name:
        ii. Email:
        iii. Phone:

Co-ops and Front Range Food System Resiliency
Focus Group Guide

1. Short icebreaker

2. What are the characteristics of an ideal food system?

3. Using the community capitals tool (see table below), what are the barriers and opportunities the cooperative faces in getting to that ideal food system?

4. How can cooperatives work more cooperatively? (If it doesn't come up in the proceeding conversation)

5. What sticks out concerning the barriers and opportunities?

6. How is the CCF useful? How can it be improved?

Natural	Cultural	Human	Social	Political	Financial	Built
-Location -Weather -Geographic isolation -Natural resources -Amenities -Natural beauty Shapes the cultural capital connected to place	-Knowledge -Traditions -Who and what we feel comfortable with. -Language Influences what voices are heard or not	-Skills and abilities that help develop and access resources and knowledge. -Leadership across differences, participatory, proactive.	-Connections among people and organizations, that makes things happen. -Could be close, more personal connections or more distant that create bridges among organizations and groups.	-Access to power, organizations, and resources, to change standards, rules, and regulations. -Ability of actors to engage in action that affects their community.	-Available financial resources to invest in community capacity building, underwrite business development, support entrepreneurship, and save for future community development.	Infrastructure supporting community activities

Cooperative Network Situational Map

Actors and organizing	**Organizational configurations**
Non-human • Farming technologies • Farm infrastructure (i.e. buildings) • Cooperative infrastructure (i.e. buildings, parking, refrigerators) • Land/water/biophysical *Human similarity organizing (symbolic)* • SES • Membership group (i.e. producer/consumer, staff/board) • Urban-rural *Human contiguous organizing (interaction)* • Leadership styles (i.e. horizontal/hierarchical) • Decision-making processes • Gestures, dress, speech • *In more detail below* **Frames** • Frames used to understand ideal food futures in meetings, interviews, and focus groups • Frames used depict cooperative activities and activities to get to ideal food futures **Interactions** *Between people* • Practices such as dress, gestures, and overall order of social interaction • How people organize in a setting • How decisions are being made (i.e. inclusive? rushed? engaged dialog?) *Between groups and networks* • How groups interact in a cooperative network (when, where, topic of conversation) • How people recognize and build partnerships • Partnerships/resource sharing • How decisions are being made that effect partnerships (i.e. inclusive? rushed? engaged dialog?) *Between humans and non-human* • Farming practices such as conventional, organic, and/or agroecology • How people move through cooperative infrastructure (i.e. stores, distance to market) • How decisions are being made (i.e. inclusive? rushed? engaged dialog?)	• Leadership/governing structures (i.e. horizontal versus hierarchical) • Division of labor and membership structure • Infrastructure divisions (i.e. store/food hub layout) **Other contextual characteristics** *Temporal* • History of cooperative network • History of community • History of land • Changes observed during research *Spatial* • Urban/rural characteristics • Where actors integrate into cooperative networks (i.e. store locations, pick-up/drop off locations, farm locations, meeting location) *Governmental* • Policies and state resources that shape cooperative organizing and food and agriculture *Political* • Political characteristics of communities • Related political and social organizing networks *Economic* • Socio-economic characteristics of communities *Socio-cultural* • Economic and political values • Values and knowledge about other actors **Community Capital Access** • See Community Capitals Table • This is determined for each cooperative through triangulating data sources and comparing with other co-op cases.