

THESIS

TRANSFORMING FOOD POLITICS: COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY'S INTERSECTIONAL
ECOFEMINISM AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMING FOOD POLITICS: COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY'S INTERSECTIONAL ECOFEMINISM AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

This thesis illustrates the advantages of utilizing an intersectional approach to analyzing problems in the food system and the activism of the food movement. The thesis undertakes the case of Community to Community, a grassroots organization that employs an intersectional analysis in their activism to center the voices and perspectives of women, support and fight alongside farmworkers, especially immigrants without documentation, and take care of the environment. Their work is grounded in ecofeminism, and ultimately strives for food sovereignty. Semi-structured interviews with members of Community to Community were conducted to explore perceptions of their guiding frameworks. Additionally, content analysis and supplemental participant observation was completed to triangulate an understanding of how the organization approaches social justice and social change. Findings reveal that while ecofeminism provides a comprehensive analysis of food system problems, when combined with the transformative politics at the heart of food sovereignty, these frameworks offer a radical intersectional praxis that focuses on transforming social relations in the food system and beyond.

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Chapter One: Introduction

It is no secret that the current food system fails to equitably meet the needs of people across the globe and is built upon exploitative practices, causing vast environmental destruction. In response to these concerns, there are initiatives and alternatives that have been building momentum with a focus on challenging the corporate-led industrial food system. In the United States, there is an uprising in social movements seeking to change the current food system. The most recent movements encompass efforts focused on fair trade, slow food, local food, urban agriculture, food justice, food sovereignty, and other initiatives. These are collectively referred to as the “alternative food movement” because of their common endeavor to replace the dominant food system with one that is fair, health-promoting, and ecologically sound (Holt-Jimenez and Wang 2011; Clendenning, Dressler and Richards 2016).

Initiatives within the food movement take on various approaches to achieve their goals, and scholars have critiqued them accordingly. Allen (2004) argues that initiatives will continue to have a marginal impact until they begin to address the long-term structural challenges within the food system. Various initiatives in the food movement claim to be developing an alternative to the industrial food system, yet questions have been raised about their approaches and practices (Guthman 2006; Slocum 2006). Others criticize the movement for its exclusivity based on class and race, claiming many efforts fail to consider the effects of race on food access or the historical racism that is deeply engrained in our food system (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). Many initiatives engage with more complacent practices or alternatives, rather than approaches that strive to change the system as a whole (Levkoe 2011).

In this thesis, I demonstrate how food movements in the United States could be strengthened through a transformative food politics that employs intersectionality to center the *interconnected structural oppressions* built in to the food system. Moving beyond isolated acts of resistance and reform (Levkoe 2011), I draw on ecofeminism as a more holistic and radical framework to help answer a pressing practical and theoretical question: *How is intersectionality useful in expanding our understanding of the food movement?* In doing so, I illustrate the possibilities and benefits of taking an intersectional approach to address problems associated with the food system. Through a single case study, I exemplify the holistic food politics of an organization and how it engages with an array of socioecological systems and problems by the way of ecofeminism. While together, intersectionality and ecofeminism provide a comprehensive analysis of food system problems, when combined with the transformative politics at the heart of food sovereignty, these frameworks offer a radical praxis to transform social relations in the food system and beyond.

I utilize the grassroots organization, Community to Community Development (C2C), as a case study to demonstrate the significance of intersectionality, especially as the organization engages in its praxis through the lens of ecofeminism and food sovereignty. Ecofeminism analyzes the ways that gendered and environmental oppressions stem from similar conceptual and material roots, and reinforce one another (Mallory 2012). Food sovereignty seeks to dismantle existing power structures and create equitable, democratically controlled, and regionally based food systems (Block et al. 2012). Ecofeminism informs the work being done at C2C, while striving for food sovereignty is the ultimate goal.

At C2C, in combining ecofeminist beliefs with their work towards food sovereignty, they are able to better consider the interconnected oppressions that exist within the food system. Stemming from their farmworker organizing, C2C addresses problems related to structural racism, immigration, capitalism, and patriarchy. In applying the intersectional lens of ecofeminism, C2C is able to respond to race, class, gender, and environmental inequities. Furthermore, C2C understands food sovereignty as the means to achieve these broader transformational goals.

This case study is important because it demonstrates how intersectional frameworks are useful for addressing problems in the food system. The intersectional frameworks C2C utilizes are not commonly employed concurrently; therefore this research contributes to both ecofeminist and food sovereignty literature as it brings forth a discussion about how, together and in praxis, these concepts are useful for social transformation. Multiple scholars (i.e. Levkoe 2011; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Allen 2010) assert the need for holistic and structural solutions within the food movement. C2C exemplifies how an intersectional approach is able to address structural problems that perpetuate oppression in the food system and beyond.

Finally, the case study of C2C is meant to generate a broader discussion surrounding ecofeminism and food sovereignty, and their combined potential to create lasting, structural change in the food system. This research also speaks to the importance of social movement solidarity. C2C utilizes their Facebook page as a space to stand in virtual solidarity with other movements and organizations, which highlights the importance of unity between social movements. Ultimately, this research attempts to expand discussions surrounding the food movement and illustrate how these frameworks provide a

comprehensive approach for both activists and scholars to think more holistically about socioecological systems and systems of oppression.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Utilizing the conceptual frameworks of intersectionality, ecofeminism, and food sovereignty provides a holistic approach to confronting problems in the food system. To explain this further, I first introduce the role of community advocacy and grassroots activism to contextualize the work of Community to Community. I then review food movement scholarship, which builds the foundation for my overarching argument and situates my research contributions, especially with reference to the radical notion and practice of food sovereignty. Building on LeVoke's (2011) concept of *transformative food politics*, I then synthesize the theoretical foundations of ecofeminism and intersectionality, illustrating how, when combined with food sovereignty, structural transformation is possible. I ultimately argue that Community to Community is participating in a form of transformative food politics in their approach to social justice work, but pushes the conceptual framework even further as they take a holistic approach which addresses socioecological systems through an ecofeminist lens. Intersectionality, in short, guides C2C's transformative food politics by centering interrelated systems of oppression in order to change the food system.

Community Advocacy and Grassroots Efforts

While grassroots organizers and community advocates may not always define themselves as members of a particular social movement, their actions often serve as markers of resistance to the status quo in their individual communities. Several researchers have examined these efforts as examples of "doing politics" (Hoing 1996; Naples 1992; Platt 1997). For these communities, grassroots activities and experiences empower and provide "an alternative means of political participation that – compared to

electoral politics- is more accessible to marginalized groups” (Platt 1997:54). Similar to the role of unionization for laborers, grassroots organizations develop community strength and empowerment through collectivity. Naples explains that community-based activities often take place separately from the “formal political establishment,” which can result in an “underestimate” of these individuals’ political involvement (1992:479). Instead of political or financial interests, oftentimes the commitment of these advocates to a particular community or cause is based on the personal experiences of these individuals. Similarly, C2C is a grassroots, “community centered organization that seeks to empower underrepresented peoples to have an equal voice in decision making processes while striving to reclaim humanity by redefining power in order to end settler colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy in all forms” (Community to Community 2016). One of the key ways to understand C2C’s grassroots politics is as a form of food movement activism.

The Food Movement

For many decades, food movements have battled the mounting inequities attributed to the corporate-dominated, industrial food system. The roots of the food movement stem from the 1960’s counterculture activism, which erupted in response to the Vietnam War, racial discrimination, and a budding environmental consciousness (Belasco 2007). During this time, young, outraged Americans began to use food as a medium, through boycotts, food co-ops, and other forms of rebellion, reflecting the role of food in 1960’s activism. In the 1980s, a new wave of activism emerged as neoliberal policies solidified corporate power in the food and agriculture sector, causing an unprecedented loss of small and mid-sized farms around the world that could not compete in global export markets (Friedmann and McMichael 1989). The 2008 world food crisis furthered the understanding that the

dominant food system fails most people (McMichael 2009). Some of the more structurally oriented responses to this state of affairs fall into two major camps, which Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck (2011) identify as *progressive* and *radical*. Activists within the progressive trend advance alternatives to industrial agri-foods, such as sustainable and organic food networks, working largely within the economic and political frameworks of existing capitalist food systems. The radical trend also seeks to change the food system, but focuses much more on entitlements and structural reforms to markets, calling for redistribution of land, water, and resources (Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck 2011).

On the production end of the food supply chain, many activists point to an array of problems. Some have documented the environmental and health impacts of industrial agriculture, while calling attention to the ecological and nutritional benefits of alternative farming systems such as agroecology (Altieri 2009). Others concentrate on the political economy of food production including the economic impacts of Green Revolution technology and the ‘pesticide treadmill’ (Perfecto, Vandermeer and Wright 2009), labor conditions for farm workers (Brown and Getz 2008), and the ways in which the dynamics of global ‘food regimes’ negatively affect smallholder production, while benefitting large agribusiness corporations (McMichael 2009).

At the other end of the supply chain, many activists focus on issues relating to food consumption and engage in alternative food networks (AFNs). Those concentrating on consumption address issues of fair trade, urban agriculture, and access to healthy and adequate food, particularly in communities of color (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). Activism that targets both the production and consumption of food include community food security

(Winne 2008), food justice (Sbicca 2012), food sovereignty (Wittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010), and food democracy (Lang 2005).

Levkoe (2011) offers another way to classify initiatives that aim to transform the food system in to four broad categories: 1) social justice initiatives which address power and material equity along with the circumstances and conditions for those who produce food, 2) ecological sustainability initiatives which address the connection between human and ecological systems, 3) community health initiatives address regional capacity to produce and distribute adequate nutritious, safe, and culturally acceptable foods, and 4) democracy-enhancing initiatives which address policy equity through increasing opportunities for public participation in decision-making and system-wide control (689). Collectively, these efforts entail an “alternative food movement” because of their common endeavor to replace the industrial food system with one that is fair, health-promoting, and ecologically sound (Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011; Clendenning, Dressler and Richards 2016). This is the essence of transformation.

Critiques of the Food Movement

The different efforts of the food movement are also referred to as alternative food initiatives (AFIs). Although they often begin with good intentions AFIs do not always achieve their goals, which requires unpacking what accounts for their successes as well as their shortcomings. In general, “critiques of AFIs point to actors engaging in an uncritical praxis, wherein social relations are assumed to be natural and inevitable and consequently enable the reproduction of the given conditions of humanity’s existence” (Levkoe 2011:689). The food movement narrative is largely created by, and appeals to, white and middle class individuals, evidenced by the popularity of farmers markets, CSAs, farm-to-

table restaurants, and their ilk. For example, many efforts fail to consider the effects of race on food access or the historical racism that is deeply engrained in our food system (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). Allen (2010) argues that AFIs will continue to have a marginal impact until they begin to address the long-term structural challenges within the food system.

Various AFIs claim to be developing an alternative to the industrial food system, yet there are questions about their approaches and practices (Guthman 2006; Slocum 2006). Many initiatives strive to promote and provide alternative food options like organic, local, or fair trade. However, while such options may provide better choices for some people, they have been accused of reproducing social inequality by encouraging individual responsibility and consumer choice for the socially and economically privileged (Guthman 2008; Johnston 2008). This idea of “voting with your fork” (Pollan 2006) is critiqued for its individualized and consumerist approach (Guthman 2007). It is seen as complicit with the processes of neoliberalization and working within the system, rather than attempting to transform it.

Levkoe (2014:28) critiques the fact that AFIs have focused on isolated issues while ignoring the interconnected nature of problems within the industrial food system, such as identifying the structural issues of poverty and inequality to adequately engage in community development (Guthman 2008; Allen 2010). Furthermore, fetishized ideas of “local” are problematic (Born and Purcell 2006; DeLind 2011). The notion of “local food” carries with it inaccurate assumptions about its ecological sustainability, transparency, and economic benefits. In reality, a local food system may suffer from many of the same problems that exist within the global food system. Overall, many AFIs may unintentionally overlook structural and political struggles, and reinforce existing hierarchies and

inequalities. Failing to address the existing limitations hinders the possibilities for transformation of the food system.

Food Sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty emerged from the experience of, and critical analysis by, peasant farmers, who were most affected by the changes in national and international agricultural policy introduced throughout the 1980's and early 1990's (Wittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010). Peasant farmers coined the term "food sovereignty" to recognize the inequitable political and economic power relations in the food system. The concept of food sovereignty is most commonly associated with La Via Campesina, the International Peasants Movement, though it is also advocated by other organizations (Alkon and Mares 2012). Food sovereignty is broadly defined as the right of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments. Food sovereignty is a central component of the work at C2C. This is something that it strives to achieve, as food sovereignty serves as a solution to many of the issues it addresses, both social and environmental.

Food sovereignty offers a distinct social change vision. Wittman et al. (2010:4) provide a substantial account of food sovereignty as follows:

The theory and practice of food sovereignty has the potential to foster dramatic and widespread change in agricultural, political and social systems related to food by posing a radical challenge to the agro-industry model of food production. The transformation envisioned entails a changing relationship to food resulting from an integrated, democratized, localized food production model. It also entails a fundamental shift in values expressed in changed social and political relations.

The authors present this not as just a change in relations of production and consumption, but as a revolution in social relations, citizenship, and democracy (Wittman et al. 2010).

Supporters of food sovereignty express the need to dismantle the monopoly power of the corporate food regime and create democratically controlled, regionally based food systems. Unlike other food movements, food sovereignty is a “distinctly political” concept (Block et al. 2012:205). It hopes to transform power structures within the existing food system. At a local level, food sovereignty implies particular rights of individuals and communities to define their own food system through their own level of self-reliance. Food sovereignty requires that decisions are formed through consensus and not through top-down politics (Desmarais 2007). In light of this, food sovereignty is celebrated for elevating the voices of peasants and producers, and in the case of C2C, farmworkers.

One of the most important tools that food sovereignty movements use to pursue their goals is the framework of rights (Walsh-Dilley, Wolford and McCarthy 2016; Patel 2009). This is not just in regards to the right to food itself, but the right to the social, political, and natural resources that allow people to determine and define their own systems of food production and consumption. In addition to rights, food sovereignty movements emphasize equity and the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities across populations. Special attention is paid to the most marginalized, vulnerable, or disadvantaged populations, focusing on the structural forms of marginalization embodied in gender, class, and ethnic relations (Walsh-Dilley et al. 2016). Furthermore, food sovereignty addresses power between local and state institutions as well as attending to differentiation within various local contexts.

Food Sovereignty in the United States

In the U.S. context, many food activists are increasingly engaging with food sovereignty. C2C, for example, is a member of the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFA)

and is actively engaged in promoting and creating the goals of the USFA. U.S. based food sovereignty efforts stem from “a complex landscape of historically entrenched power structures and diverse forms of resistance, with particular histories and dynamics within and between them” (Brent et al. 2015:620). The U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance, formed in 2010, seeks to promote the mission of food sovereignty in the U.S. context. Their mission statement reads as follows:

The U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance works to end poverty, rebuild local food economies, and assert democratic control over the food system. We believe all people have the right to healthy, culturally appropriate food, produced in an ecologically sound manner. As a U.S.-based alliance of food justice, anti-hunger, labor, environmental, faith-based, and food producer groups, we uphold the right to food as a basic human right and work to connect our local and national struggles to the international movement for food sovereignty (U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance 2010).

While the organization is based in the U.S., international solidarity is central to their organizing and they view their struggles in the U.S. as part of a broader global food sovereignty movement.

Theoretical Framework

In response to the critiques of the food movement, Levkoe (2011:689) uses the concept of *transformative food politics* to describe approaches that move beyond making slight changes to the current food system towards a reconceptualization of both the root of current problems and of the solutions that will address them. Central to this concept is the demand for a comprehensive approach to food system problems and requires the development of interrelated solutions that simultaneously consider and address social justice, ecological sustainability, community health, and democratic governance in a comprehensive and contextualized way. The three elements of a transformative food politics include the transition to collective subjectivities, a whole food system approach,

and a politics of reflexive localization. I argue that C2C takes not only a whole food system approach in their work, but pushes the notion of transformative food politics even further as they take a holistic approach which addresses socioecological systems by the way of ecofeminism. Together, merged with their intersectional approach, C2C is engaged in changing social systems in order to change the food system.

In an effort to extend to the work of what is required to transform the food system, I utilize the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and ecofeminism to illustrate the transformative possibilities in addressing the intersecting systems of oppression that exist within the food system. I present how these theoretical frameworks provide a comprehensive approach for the food movement to think more holistically about socioecological systems and systems of oppression. While together, intersectionality and ecofeminism provide a comprehensive analysis of food system problems, when combined with the transformative politics at the heart of food sovereignty, these frameworks offer a radical praxis to transform social relations in the food system.

Intersectionality and Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism explains and addresses intersecting oppressions, and is an important framework for C2C to uphold to ensure that their work is intersectional. Most simply, intersectionality refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies, and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power (Yuval-Davis 2006:197). The French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the term ecofeminism in 1974 (Salman 2007). Like intersectionality, ecofeminism has been described as a praxial theory, a movement, and a perspective (Mallory 2012). It can be understood as the fusion of

environmental and feminist concerns. Ecofeminism emerged from the intersections of feminist research and the various social movements for social justice and environmental health that exposed the linked oppression of gender, ecology, race, and species (Gaard 2011).

Porter and Redmond (2014:263) discuss how gender and feminism is given little attention within academic literature about the U.S. food movement, but assert that “a gender lens forms a necessary part of the foundation for undoing sexism.” Therefore, it is essential to raise the visibility of women’s work in the U.S. food movement in an attempt to address gender oppression. Ecofeminism offers a guiding framework to reform gender relations.

Moreover, ecofeminism’s attention to intersecting forms of oppression within the food system is useful because it allows for a comprehensive understanding that is attune to the deeply connected structural oppressions related to race, class, and gender. For example, Shiva (2009) unpacks the gendered politics of food, illustrating how corporate globalization driven by capitalist patriarchy has transformed food, food production, and food distribution. In her analysis of seed and food production transferring from “women’s hands to corporate hands,” she argues that with the commodification of food, women’s knowledge, work, skills and productivity related to food are being destroyed, furthering the marginalization of women (2009:18). This illustrates how the production of food is clearly embedded in interconnected systems of oppression.

Although uncommon, some food movement literature identifies intersecting oppressions. For example, Reynolds and Cohen (2016) analyze the possibilities of urban agriculture through theories of intersectionality and structural oppression in an effort to

explain how individuals' abilities to influence policies affecting their communities is limited due to discrimination based on intersecting identities. The authors argue that such theories,

“...help us understand that issues such as the lack of income that prevents some households from accessing fresh and healthful food are not merely a function of individual failures to secure employment or manage personal finances, but rather a function of social cues, professional connections, and often, the intersection of multiple levels of oppression that span generations, as well as political and geographical boundaries” (Reynolds and Cohen 2016:11).

This illustrates how an intersectional analysis can provide food movement activists with a deeper understanding of how individual positionalities are deeply connected to structural oppressions. This research echoes Reynolds and Cohen's (2016) argument, which asserts that efforts to address injustice through AFIs must attend to social and political structures, such as structural racism and the origins of political disenfranchisement.

The intersecting oppressions – namely race, class, and immigration status- faced by farmworkers are critically addressed through an intersectional approach at C2C. Collins and Bilge (2016:11) provide a cohesive description for the purpose of this research:

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped by not a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.

This explanation encompasses the ways in which intersectionality seeks to address the matrixes of intersecting conditions of social life. Collins (2000) uses intersectionality to refer to particular intersections, and understands these take place at the individual and

group level, but that social position is always located within a system of “interlocking oppressions.”

Ecofeminism is similar, but adds that many ailments of social life contribute immensely to ecological degradation, and that ecological degradation is linked to the domination of all oppressed humans. Ecofeminism is often found in scholarly food and agriculture literature in regards to vegetarianism (Gaard 2002), women participating in community supported agriculture (Mallory 2012; Delind and Ferguson 1999), agricultural diversity (Sachs 1992), and women of color in urban farming (White 2011). However, ecofeminism is not often used as a framework within the food movement, despite the fact that groups like C2C use ecofeminism as both a comprehensive analysis and a value system that guides their food activism in a socioecologically holistic way.

Merging Intersectionality, Ecofeminism, and Food Sovereignty

As Levkoe (2011) contends, food movement initiatives need to simultaneously consider and address social justice, ecological sustainability, community health, and democratic governance. C2C exemplifies how an ecofeminist, intersectional approach, combined with striving for food sovereignty, provides a comprehensive framework to address intersecting oppressions within the food system, especially with prefigurative solutions. For example, C2C is concerned with the fact that farmworkers face structural barriers that restrict them from owning land. With food sovereignty as the goal, C2C is attempting to gain capital for indigenous farmworkers in Northern Washington to buy land to live on and to grow their own food. If farmworkers own their own land, they will have more control of their food source and the ways in which it is grown. Traditional ways of farming that most farmworkers are familiar with do not use pesticides and are much more

in line with earth's natural cycles. It is in this regard that achieving food sovereignty could address ecological sustainability and democratic governance.

Central to transformative change is utilizing food as an entry point to address a much broader range of issues (Levkoe 2011). Intersectionality pushes this form of politics by calling attention to how many factors mutually influence one another in social and political life (Collins and Bilge 2016). This must include attention to capitalism, patriarchy, and ecocide. Ecofeminism argues that in order to ensure the survival and flourishing of all life systems on the planet, the patriarchal values of domination, exploitation, and control that condition Western attitudes toward nature, must be replaced with the more life-sustaining feminist values of nurturance, care, and reciprocity (Gaard 2011). Furthermore, ecofeminism contains a constructive, prefigurative vision that seeks to transform existing relations in ecologically sound and just ways. The attempt to reconcile and improve upon the relationship between humankind and nature is central to ecofeminist thought, as is the belief that by applying the lens of intersectionality to analysis, a transformed understanding and assessment of the complex relationship between humans and the natural world is possible (Mallory 2012). Nowhere is this more necessary, perhaps, than in the relationship between humans and food.

I argue that utilizing the conceptual frameworks of intersectionality, ecofeminism, and food sovereignty together provides a comprehensive approach for the food movement to think more holistically about socioecological systems and systems of oppression. For example, an intersectional analysis provides C2C with a deeper understanding of the interconnected systems that construct farmworker's lives and how lives are shaped by many axes of social division (Collins and Bilge 2016). In their democratic approach, C2C

develops projects that come from and are led by farmworker communities that are impacted by structural oppressions stemming from the food system and the greater society. Ecofeminism grounds C2C's work in a way that values all forms of life while food sovereignty serves as a holistic goal, addressing issues related to power and resources. This thesis illustrates how participating in a form of transformative food politics that centers changing social systems is central to changing the food system.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

This research relies on qualitative research methods, utilizing in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis. These methods helped me to understand the views and perceptions of members involved with Community to Community (C2C), while also analyzing the ways in which their conceptual frameworks are portrayed on their website, blog, and Facebook posts. Given that C2C is a women of color led organization, the methodology for this project is based in feminist epistemology, which seeks to reveal marginalized perspectives.

Feminist Methodology and Epistemology

Feminist researchers have modified existing research methods while producing a distinctive body of writing about research practice and epistemology (DeVault 1996). Feminist methodology shifts the focus from men's concerns in order to reveal women's perspectives. Additionally, feminist researchers have made significant contributions by advancing concepts and practices that resist "dualisms" (DeVault 1996:35). Feminist methodology is often concerned with how, or whether, knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that may not consider the gendered nature of social life (Landman 2006:430).

Underlying this methodology is feminist epistemology, which asks who can be agents of knowledge, what can be known, how is knowledge validated, and what is the relationship between knowing and being (Landman 2006:431). Feminist epistemology questions the ways in which mainstream conceptions of objectivity, knowledge, and reason emerge from the perspective of a male or masculine values, interests, emotions, and

attitudes. It seeks to reconfigure conceptual frameworks of particular sciences to reflect women's interests. Feminist epistemology is rooted in the idea that people are the experts of their own experiences (Anderson 1995). Feminist research is driven by, and aimed towards, a desire to challenge multiple social hierarchies of inequalities (Doucet and Mauthner 2006). Issues of power, knowing, and representation are significant contributions of feminist research. Therefore, employing feminist research methods was important for this study because C2C addresses power relations, which negatively impact not only women, but also other marginalized groups based on race, ethnicity, citizenship, and class. In following the foundations of feminist epistemology, I aimed to elevate the perceptions of those involved in this women of color led organization.

Research Questions

This research is a case study interested in the operations of a specific organization and the views of its participants. My overarching research question is: *How is intersectionality useful in expanding our understanding of the food movement?* To unpack this question I ask the following sub-questions related to the values and work of C2C:

- How does the combination of eco-feminist and food sovereignty values help evaluate, and respond to, the problems experienced by farmworkers in North America?
- How does C2C understand the relationship between eco-feminism and farmworkers?
- How does C2C understand the relationship between food sovereignty and farmworkers?
- How does C2C apply intersectional links between food sovereignty, farmworker rights, and eco-feminism in practice?

Research Design

Of central significance to this case study is how those formulating and guiding C2C perceive and understand the connections between eco-feminism, food sovereignty, and farmworker rights. A qualitative case study allows the researcher to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources (Baxter and Jack 2008). This approach ensures that the issue is explored through a numerous lenses, which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be understood. According to Yin (2003:49) a case study design should be considered when: (a) a focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the context. It is for these reasons that I adopted a case study approach to investigate C2C. The combination of semi-structured interviews and content analysis allowed me to triangulate themes and relationships between what members of C2C articulate and how that is represented on their website and Facebook page. Last, participant observation gave me a brief glimpse into C2C’s practices and activities.

Site Access

I discovered C2C when I was working on a research project associated with the Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA). C2C is a founding member of the DFTA, as well as a member of their farmworker stakeholder group. After visting C2C’s website, I was immediately interested in the way C2C frames their work in ecofeminism and food sovereignty. I contacted the founder and executive director of the organization in July 2017. After multiple phone calls and emails in which I described my research design and

goals, she agreed to participate in my project. She asked that I come spend a week with the organization in Bellingham, Washington to conduct face-to-face interviews and physically observe the work that they do. I spent a week conducting interviews and participant observation at C2C in October 2017.

Positionality

Since I was intimately involved in the setting as a participant observer and interviewer, I had to have an awareness of my positionality and the potential for reactivity within the setting (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that in qualitative research, it is imperative that the researcher reflect on their own positionality, or role and social location in relationship to the context or setting. Reflexivity - the concept that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in it, or influence on the research - informs positionality (Bourke 2014:4). The identity of the researcher impacts perceptions, which ultimately affects the entire research process. I identify as a 26-year-old, white, female graduate student from an upper-middle class background. Therefore, going into a women of color led organization I was entering as an outsider. As a white woman, I was careful that I did not attempt to speak for research participants who are people of color, rather my work aims to reflect the voices of those who participated in my research. As a graduate student, I am familiar with the conceptual frameworks of ecofeminism and food sovereignty, as well as issues faced by farmworkers, so I was able to relate to my participants on that level. However, I was an outsider insofar as I do not come from the same communities that C2C focuses on working with. My background in sociology and research interests unquestionably affected my data, from what I noticed during participant observations, to my interactions during interviews.

These were all considerations I was continually aware of throughout the entire process, knowing that my background and perspective will be reflected in my conclusions.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews

I conducted nine semi-structured interviews with two of C2C's team members, three other employed individuals, and four volunteers. Semi-structured interviews helped me gain insight into the individual perceptions and experiences of those involved with C2C. In semi-structured interviews, the interview guide focuses on a list of relevant research topics to encourage the participants to speak freely and address topics and experiences that the participants see as relevant (Lofland and Lofland 2006). My interview questions revolved around the respondent's personal history with food and agricultural issues, their own understandings of ecofeminism and food sovereignty, and how these conceptual frames are manifested in their work (see appendix A). Interviews varied in length, but typically lasted about forty-five minutes. All but one of the interviews was voice recorded and later transcribed verbatim. For the interview in which the participant did not feel comfortable being recorded, I took detailed notes of her responses during the interview and immediately wrote detailed, in-depth field notes about her responses once the interview had concluded.

Sampling

I used convenience sampling to identify participants interested in this study. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate, are included for the purpose of

the study (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016). In this case, with my outsider status, the recruitment of my interview participants was left up to the Executive Director of C2C. She emailed members of the organization about my project and those who expressed interest were recruited. Availability was also a factor in my sampling; therefore one of C2C's employees, Alan, verbally recruited various participants who were physically in the office during the time of my visit. All participants signed informed consent forms, following the guidelines of my IRB protocol.

My sampling frame included anyone that was involved with C2C. This included board members, employees, and volunteers. I interviewed six females and three males. Their ages ranged from twenty-two to sixty-five years old. Three of my participants identified themselves as farmworkers and one identified as an undocumented DACA recipient. Their time involved with C2C ranged from fourteen years to four months. I had hoped to conduct more interviews, however due to my outsider status with C2C, I was completely reliant upon the Executive Director to garner interest in interview participants, which made it difficult to recruit more people.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a research technique in which the researcher takes an active role in the setting she is observing (Becker and Geer 1957). This type of observation enhances the quality of the data obtained during fieldwork and enhances the quality of the interpretation of data (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011:264). I employed this method as a way to understand the type of work and organizing that takes place on a day to day basis at C2C. I conducted participant observation on two days during my week spent at C2C. As Schwartz and Schwartz (1955:344) contend, participant observation is a process of registering,

interpreting, and recording. I was actively engaged in these processes during my time in the field.

To capture my observations during my time in the field, I memoed and wrote comprehensive fieldnotes. Memoing as a research technique helps the researcher articulate assumptions and subjective perspectives about the area of research (Birks, Chapman and Francis 2008:432). Memos work alongside other sources of data such as transcripts and fieldnotes to provide supportive documentation for the study. I wrote memos throughout the time when I was in the field. Immediately after each observation, I wrote up extended fieldnotes, pulling on both my memory of and memos on the day's events. In constructing my fieldnotes, I utilized Wolfinger's (2002) comprehensive approach to note-taking, where I systematically and comprehensively described everything that happened during each trip to the field. This method of note-taking forced me to recreate the events in the order they happened which allowed me to recall details that may have otherwise been forgotten.

I actively participated on two days during my time at C2C for a total of five hours. My first experience in the field included participating in a Dignity Vigil, which is a weekly event that C2C participates in where members of the community come together to stand in solidarity with undocumented and immigrant community members. The Vigils also serve as a space to come together to stand against law enforcement and federal immigration collaboration, which leads to deportation. I attended a Dignity Vigil in front of the courthouse for three hours with one of the C2C volunteers. Community members that joined the Vigil all held signs (provided by C2C) that said things like "ICE Watches Us, We Watch ICE," "No Human is Illegal," and "No BPD Support of ICE."

My second day of participant observation included joining the executive director after she asked me if I would participate in the recording of their weekly radio show. I agreed, and then spent two hours in the studio where they record their radio show, *Community Voz*. The show is an “ecofeminist radio show which presents the grassroots work that local people are doing across intersecting movements” (C2C 2016). I spent the first half of my time in the studio listening to the executive director and another C2C volunteer record their discussion. I was then brought in to the recording room with another member of C2C where we both participated in the talk show.

My time as an active participant observer allowed me to better understand some of C2C’s community activism, as well as how they portray their work on their radio talk show. I was able to physically participate in their work on both of the occasions. At the Dignity Vigil, I carried a sign alongside other community members, and on the radio show I participated in the conversation that was later broadcasted. While my time in the field was limited, it was useful in helping to understand the type of work taking place at C2C, and how ecofeminism and food sovereignty are manifested in this work. It gave me a physical experience to reflect upon and consider as I made sense of my data later in the process.

Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is one of the numerous research methods used to analyze text data (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). I performed content analysis on the material from C2C’s website, their 368 Facebook posts from 2017, and five of their broadcasted radio shows. Content analysis allows for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). On the website, I executed content analysis of C2C’s mission and vision statement,

the description of their food sovereignty and participatory democracy programs, and their blog. On their Facebook page, I looked specifically at their posts from January-December 2017. Lastly, I listened to five of C2C's radio shows where I took detailed memos of any material that was relevant to my research questions, at times transcribing quotes verbatim if a participant was speaking directly to questions asked in my interview guide. Listening to C2C's radio shows helped me further grasp how ecofeminism and food sovereignty are manifested in C2C's work and organizing. It also increased my understanding of the ways in which those involved with C2C articulate the intersection of ecofeminism, food sovereignty, and farmworker organizing. Employing content analysis on the variety of media materials associated with the organization gave me something to cross-reference and extend my findings from the interviews. All of the textual materials were copied from the website, Facebook, or from my own memos, into a Word document. I was then able to upload all of the Word documents into NVivo to begin coding and analysis.

Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed verbatim using a computer application called *Transcribe*. I then uploaded the interview transcriptions and all of the textual content into the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 11. I started with coding my interview transcriptions. I utilized an open coding technique to identify initial concept indicators I found to be informative. Concept indicators help stimulate an idea, process, or concept by the researcher (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and were critical in developing my coding scheme. These concept indicators were words, phrases, and sentences that occurred frequently across interviews. This first round of coding helped to create broad codes like *ecofeminism*, *capitalism*, *food sovereignty*, *farmworker organizing*, and *intersectional*.

I then went through my first round of coding on C2C's website materials, C2C's Facebook posts, and my own fieldnotes and memos. Following the same method of open coding, I was able to create new codes like *the system* and *patriarchy*, while also utilizing simultaneous coding, which refers to applying two or more different codes to a single qualitative datum (Saldana 2016:94). This method was useful in order to find out how different codes overlapped with one another, which aided in my second cycle of coding. During my second cycle of coding I began assigning subcodes to help break down major codes by their important details. Subcoding is useful when the researcher realizes that the classification scheme may have been too broad (Saldana 2016:92). For example, I was able to break apart the initial code of *ecofeminism* into subcategories like *value system* and *Mother Earth*.

Upon finishing my second round of coding I decided to go back through the Facebook posts and categorize them by themes. Creating a chart (see Appendix A) allowed me to quantify the many conceptual themes and issues. The chart was useful as a tool for triangulating my other data. It also revealed the prevalence of themes that were not present in my interview data, like *white supremacy* and *fascism*. Additionally, I ran word search queries in NVivo for the words "intersectional" and "system" in order to better understand what my interview participants really meant when they used these terms. Through this entire process I took analytic memos (Saldana 2016), which helped me to make connections between codes and identify patterns. This is how I reached my conceptual and theoretical understandings of what is taking place within C2C. This process ultimately led me to my fundamental discussion about how C2C is participating in a form of transformative food politics in their approach to social justice work, but pushes the

conceptual framework even further as they take a holistic approach, which addresses socioecological systems through ecofeminism. In the following section I attempt to illustrate how C2C is engaged in a form of transformative food politics that centers changing social systems in order to change the food system.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

Part I: Introduction

Community to Community Development

Located in downtown Bellingham, Washington, the offices of Community to Community Development reside on the second level of a historic building on bustling Holly Street. Their office space includes two sections. The first has several desks as well as the founder's office. The second space - referred to as the Social Forum Room, is used to hold inclusive and innovative conversations about their work. The walls are lined with posters, fliers, and flags- each with a different message to tell. A painting of a farmworker in the fields, a poster for immigration reform with the words "We Are Human" and a red flag reading "It Takes Roots to Grow the Resistance" stand out upon first entering the room. To the right there is a mantle filled with various trinkets, artwork, and awards. A large portrait of Cesar Chavez sits atop the mantle with a poster titled "What We Believe" in the center.

The images filling the Social Forum Room are symbolic of the beliefs, practices, and work that is happening at C2C. The organization was founded in 2004 by Rosalinda Guillen, a Mexican farmworker who has participated in organizing work for decades. C2C is a women of color-led grassroots organization that strives to reclaim humanity by redefining power relations (C2C 2016). Their beliefs "are based on the notion that society should arrange its relationships so that everyone has equitable access to the fundamental democratic processes affecting their everyday lives" (C2C 2016). C2C maintains a commitment to projects that come from, and are led by, community members who are directly affected by the inequities that exist within modern society. They work to identify common goals and actions among people from marginalized communities and those that

believe in sustainability and social justice. Their solutions come from dynamic participatory processes with the ultimate goal to create “system transformations.” Their social justice work is structured in three major program areas: Participatory Democracy, Food Sovereignty, and Movement Building. C2C’s mission and work is influenced by the community organizing model of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker’s movement in California and Washington State. The organization’s values and principles stem from the World Social Forum process developed in Porto Alegre Brazil (C2C 2016). C2C also upholds a core commitment to ecofeminism and understands food sovereignty as a means to achieve their broader social and environmental goals. The following sections help explain each of these unique influences in greater detail.

Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Worker’s Movement

In the early 1960’s, Cesar Chavez emerged as a labor union activist who organized workers in the fields of California. He formed the National Farm Workers Association in 1962, which later received national attention because of the historic Delano grape strike (Ferriss and Sandoval 1997). Chavez later formed the United Farm Workers (UFW) in 1969 with support from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (Strohnbehn 2011). He was able to draw attention to the plight of farmworkers through boycotts, marches, and hunger strikes. Chavez built alliances with consumers and led successful boycotts of lettuce and grapes. His leadership was based on a commitment to non-violence, personal sacrifice, and a strict work ethic. Chavez’s commitment to non-violent change and justice was inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. In his approach, he introduced solidarity organizing across different issues and communities. It is these practices and values that influence Community to

Community's mission and work. For example, C2C upholds a strong commitment to non-violence in their protesting and organizing model. They actively choose not to engage with violence and exemplify the successes of peaceful protests and marches. Many of these ideas have resonance in the World Social Forum.

The World Social Forum

Every year since 1971, the world's corporate and government elite have gathered at the end of January in Davos, Switzerland at the World Economic Forum (WEF) to discuss the future of corporate-led globalization (Becker 2007). In 2001, community organizers, trade unionists, young people, academics, and others began to meet in Porto Alegre, Brazil to rethink and recreate globalization so that it would benefit people rather than capital. Organizing around the slogan "Another World Is Possible," the World Social Forum (WSF) began as a protest against the WEF and as an effort to develop a shared vision of alternatives to the predominant, market-based model of globalization (Smith et al. 2008). The WSF has become an important focal point for the global justice movement. It is a setting where activists can meet other like-minded individuals and groups from other parts of the world, expand their understandings of globalization, and plan joint campaigns to promote their common goals. The founder of C2C, Rosalinda, attended the WSF in 2003 and was influenced by their principles of participatory democracy. The idea that "another world is possible" is prominent in C2C's mission, dialogue, and Facebook posts. For example, the opening quote on C2C's website reads, "We are grounded in the belief that 'another world is not only possible, she is on her way' – Arundhati Roy" (C2C 2016).

Community to Community in Context

Bellingham is the largest city in Whatcom County and is the thirteenth-largest city in Washington. The city has a population of 87,574 as of 2016 census data (US Census Bureau 2018). Whatcom County has a population of 216,800. Bellingham is bordered to its north by British Columbia, Canada, and Skagit County to its south. For thousands of years, Whatcom County has been home to the people of the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish and Semiahmoo tribal groups (Employment Security Department 2017). In the 20th century, the local economy was prosperous due to the national demand for timber and salmon, which commodified the ancestral land and natural resources of these indigenous people.

Whatcom County is home to Western Washington University as well as two community and technical colleges. The economy of Bellingham employs 42,108 people (US Census Bureau 2018). Males in Bellingham have an average income that is 1.31 times higher than the average income of females, which is \$42,738. The income inequality is 0.479 which is lower than the national average (Data USA). As of the 2016 Census, Whatcom County is 79.5% non-Hispanic White, 9.2% Hispanic or Latino, 4.4% Asian, 3.8% Two or More Races, 3.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.2% Black or African American, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The makeup of Bellingham is even less diverse, where 84.9% identify as non-Hispanic White (US Census Bureau 2018).

In the state of Washington, there are 37,249 farm operations (NASS 2017). In 2016, the top 10 commodity crops in the state included apples, milk, potatoes, cattle, wheat, cherries, hay, hops, grapes, and pears (WSDA 2018). Washington ranked 17th nationally in average size of farms as of the 2012 census data. There are 1,482 farms in Whatcom County

(WSDA 2018). Today, Whatcom County produces the most raspberries of any county in the United States and was ranked fifth in the nation in blueberry acres in 2012. The County ranks among the top three percent of the country's 3,075 farming counties with nearly a \$360-million market value for its agricultural production. Farming is most prevalent in the lowlands of the county in and around Lynden, Ferndale, Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas. Most of the farmworkers that C2C works with live outside of Bellingham, in other areas of Whatcom County. Agriculture is a steady influence in the northern parts of the county, but still reproduces many of the same inequities and problems farmworkers experience elsewhere.

In regard to the demographics of farm operators in Washington, there is a clear stratification based on race. In 2012, 92 percent of farm operators were non-Hispanic White, with the second largest category being operators of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin at 5 percent (NASS 2017). Principal farm operators in Washington are primarily male, with only 20 percent or 7,519 operators identifying as female. In regards to farm size, 94 percent of Washington's farms are small farms, selling less than \$250,000 per year on an average of 10-49 acres (WSDA 2018).

Farmworkers in the United States and Washington

According to the Farm Labor Survey (FLS) of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, hired farmworkers make up a third of all those working on farms (Economic Research Service 2016). There are just over one million hired farmworkers in the United States. Employment is highly seasonal: In January of 2011, there were 808,000 workers, while in July the figure stood at 1,184,000. Of these farmworkers, 56 percent work in crop agriculture and the remaining 44 percent work in livestock. More farmworkers are located

in metropolitan areas, than in non-metro counties. In Washington State, 95 percent of farmworkers are located in metropolitan areas (Economic Research Service 2016). For example, a majority of the farmworkers that C2C works with live outside of Bellingham, in other areas of Whatcom County. In 2001, there were 42,500 hired farmworkers in Washington state (NASS 2018).

Most farmworkers in the United States do notoriously demanding work, under difficult conditions, for nearly unlivable wages. Farm work is physically uncomfortable and often exposes laborers to severe weather conditions and hazardous materials (Getz, Brown and Shreck 2008). Unstable housing, social isolation, and exploitative relationships with supervisors add to the stressful conditions they face. Farmworkers have historically been subjected to a “doctrine of ‘agricultural exceptionalism,’” in which workers have been excluded from many labor protection laws (Perea 2011:96). To further complicate the policy affecting agricultural laborers, it is important to consider the Agricultural Employee Exemption from the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Ten classes of employees were denied protections by this act, two of which were agricultural workers and domestic workers. This act - meant to ensure the rights necessary to earn a safe and fair wage so they could participate in the economy - was part of President Roosevelt’s post-Great Depression New Deal. With the decision to exclude agricultural workers from the protections afforded under this act, Congress ensured that farmworkers lack the Constitutionally-backed right to organize and advocate for fair and equitable labor practices (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). There are now over two million agricultural workers who are denied the right to bargain collectively because of the exclusion (Perea 2011). This reflects the assertion that law not only reflects society but constitutes it as well,

exemplifying how law normalizes and naturalizes social relations, especially those that marginalize non-citizens and justify their exploitation (Ngai 2014).

Additionally, in 1942 the U.S. government established the Bracero Program to help Mexicans enter the U.S. labor market, which granted Mexican laborers temporary permits to work in U.S. agriculture (Minkoff-Zern 2014). Laborers in Mexico were contracted by U.S. agricultural growers to work in the United States for a single growing season, after which they were required to return to Mexico. The Bracero program provides an important foundation for current guest worker policies, which were formulated in the late 1990s. In agriculture specifically, “growers frequently declare that without low-wage foreign labor they would be forced to cut back production or shutdown their operations altogether” (Hanson and Spilimbergo 2001:616). In brief, the Bracero era was pivotal in setting up an industrialized form of agriculture that was dependent on highly exploitative labor processes (Mitchell 2012).

Immigrants and Undocumented Farmworkers

While C2C supports all farmworkers, it focuses most on the precariousness of immigrant and undocumented farmworkers. The US Department of Labor’s National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) is the only survey that ascertains the legal status of noncitizen farmworkers. The share of hired crop farmworkers who were not legally authorized to work in the US grew from roughly 15 percent in 1989-1991 to almost 55 percent in 1999-2001. Since then it has fluctuated around 50 percent of farmworkers who are undocumented (Economic Research Service 2016). Furthermore, the Department of Homeland Security estimates that 11.4 million undocumented persons reside in the United States (Borjas 2016). In 2014, there was an estimated 250,000 undocumented individuals

living in Washington state (Pew Research Center 2018). However, identifying actual numbers of the undocumented population is difficult due to their “hard-to-detect and hard-to-identify status” (Borjas 2016:4). Currently, around 75 percent of farmworkers in the US are from Mexico, and about 8 percent are from Central America (Economic Research Service 2016).

Immigration status affects farmworkers’ abilities to advocate for improvements in wages and working conditions. Employers have used the lack of documentation to hinder farmworkers’ attempts to unionize and advocate; organizing efforts have been broken when employers threaten to call immigration services (Rodman et al. 2015). The fragile and complicated status as an undocumented worker further complicates their ability to organize and demand change regarding their working conditions. The following section will unpack how members of C2C understand their work with farmworkers, especially through the frameworks of ecofeminism and food sovereignty, which reveals the significance of intersectionality as a concept and theory that can expand our understanding of the food movement.

Part II: Conceptual Dimension

“Everything is Connected” – Challenging Intersecting Systems of Oppressions

Intersectionality, as a social-theoretical contribution of feminist theory, refers to how social structures combine to create distinct social categories, experiences, and forms of oppression (Hulko 2009). For example, the structures of race and gender intersect to create a “matrix of domination” in which each defines a social position in the race and gender hierarchy (Collins 1990). Race and gender are not the only social structures that intersect: race, gender, class, disability, nation, sexual orientation, and age are all

intersecting systems of oppression. Collins (1990) argues that these distinctive systems of oppression are part of an overarching structure of domination. That is, systemic relationships of domination and subordination structured through social institutions such as schools, businesses, and government agencies represent the structural dimension of oppression. Furthermore, every social position is defined by an interaction between these hierarchal systems. In focusing on groups defined by the intersection of these social structures, there is opportunity for improved analysis and structural transformation.

At Community to Community, there is a fundamental belief in the idea that “everything is connected” and that they must “address it all.” Tamara, a female volunteer with C2C who identified herself as a “white ally” describes this in an interview as:

We address full systems rather than viewing problems as an isolated incident. You understand how they are a piece of all of these larger oppressive systems and all of these systems, not just of oppression but of interdependence. And so growing that interdependence really makes lasting solutions rather than temporary band aids on a situation.

While Tamara used the word growing, she is speaking to the importance of understanding the interdependence and connectedness of various oppressions. So in what way does C2C understand everything to be connected? They understand it through the values and principles of ecofeminism. In upholding ecofeminist values, they see food sovereignty as a means to achieve the “system transformation” they are ultimately striving for.

C2C’s activism attempts to address the structural issues that have exploited not only farmworkers but also the planet. C2C identifies capitalism as a key factor in many of the injustices they are tackling. In their blog, they write about how capitalism continues to fail communities, and how neoliberal capitalism has turned everything into a commodity. Jose, a “white-passing Latino” who is a recipient of the DREAM Act and serves as a volunteer with C2C articulates this as “the very capitalist way of dehumanizing people for economic

agricultural benefit is really deeply rooted in our country.” He is referring in part to the ways in which farmworkers have historically been subjected to a “doctrine of ‘agricultural exceptionalism,’” in which farmworkers are excluded from many labor protections and laws (Perea 2011:96). Capitalism exploits farm laborers with the support of a legal system that excludes agricultural workers from the protections afforded under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. The exclusion of farmworkers from being legally protected is a form of institutional oppression. C2C attempts to bring these structural oppressions into the broader public’s awareness. For example, at their weekly Dignity Vigils members of C2C and other community volunteers join outside the courthouse with signs about racial profiling and making Bellingham into a “real sanctuary city.” In doing so, they are creating a space for community dialogue about local issues that affect not only farmworkers but all people of color in the city. This exemplifies how C2C’s intersectional work addresses farmworkers and other marginalized groups.

At its roots, C2C is a farmworker organizing advocacy group. However, in their attempt to restructure social systems that oppress farmworkers they believe that many issues are intertwined with larger problems that extend beyond the experiences of farmworkers. For example, the founder of C2C, Rosalinda, stated:

We start with the farmworkers and then they articulate [their needs] and then we figure out how we’re going to intersect all of the other work that we’re doing. It feeds in with immigration and undocumented people, racism. It all has to fit in because you can’t just work on one and not the other because they’re connected and you can’t ignore it.

This exemplifies how C2C understands their work to be tied to the larger goal of addressing entire social systems. Their organizing with farmworkers has led them to engage in a holistic form of transformative food politics, where they address systemic forms of

oppression, attending to both marginalized groups and the natural world. The following section expands this discussion as it illustrates C2C's approach to socioecological concerns through ecofeminism.

The Interconnected Possibilities of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is the fusion of environmental and feminist concerns. It analyzes how gendered and environmental oppressions stem from similar conceptual and material roots, and tend to reinforce one another (Mallory 2012). A central theme of most versions of ecofeminism is the integration of personal, social, and environmental issues and the development of multidirectional political agendas and action (Lahar 1991). This theme was echoed in my interviews - the idea that *everything is connected* was mentioned often. This included the land, the people who work the land, the consumers, patriarchy, racism and capitalism. In attempting to address the associated interconnected oppressions, C2C sees ecofeminism as capable of addressing them all, simultaneously.

Lincoln, a volunteer with C2C, expressed his perception of ecofeminism as the “antithesis of capitalism and patriarchy” and in his understanding, it could therefore serve as a tool to “dismantle a lot of those ideas.” Members of C2C discussed how ecofeminism is a foundation which illuminates what capitalism and patriarchy are doing to the earth. For example, Mies (1993) argues that it was predominantly men who have promoted growth, technology, science, and progress as solutions to ecological and economic crisis. Instead, ecofeminism insists that patriarchy must be replaced with egalitarian forms of social organization where men and women have equal power and the natural environment is treated with respect, focusing on how it can be sustained rather than exploited and destroyed (Mies 1993).

Ecofeminism is anchored in a critical analysis of the power relations between dominant groups and those that are marginalized. While my interviewees never explicitly used terms like “power relations,” they did mention *capitalism* and *patriarchy*. They recognize the ramifications of these structural systems and strive to dismantle them. C2C’s mission statement reads, “We strive to reclaim our humanity by redefining power in order to end settler colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy in their external and internalized forms” (C2C 2017). In grounding their work in ecofeminism they are able to attempt to address inequitable systems of power that are interconnected with the oppression and exploitation of humans and the natural world. Combined with the political practice of food sovereignty, C2C envisions the possibilities of more egalitarian power relations.

A volunteer at C2C expressed a central hypothesis of ecofeminism, where the position and treatment of women in Western culture is connected symbolically, psychologically, economically, and politically to the treatment of nature (Gaard 2001). However, C2C extends this hypothesis by linking it to one of the most marginalized groups in U.S. society, farmworkers. This demonstrates the ecofeminist belief that the domination of nature is associated with the domination of other human beings. One of the lessons for the food movement is that in connecting the exploitation of the land with the exploitation of farmworkers, ecofeminism helps to grasp how many social and environmental problems stem from an overarching structure of domination.

The intersectionality of ecofeminism illustrates the idea that the people, land, and food are all connected. Amanda, a female volunteer with C2C, explains:

Ecofeminism is about making sure that the people who work in the fields aren't being subjected to things that are coming from the patriarchal system of dominating the land, and subduing the land, and using chemicals and GMOs and things like that. You know, for me, ecofeminism is honoring that feminist idea of holistic kind of

approaches to growing food and taking care of the people, the soil, the land, the things that grow and all of those things are connected. I mean you can't really separate them.

Understanding that various social and environmental issues are connected is critical. After all, the conceptual frameworks that are used to justify racism, sexism, and the mistreatment of nature are interwoven and mutually reinforcing (Warren 1991). This point speaks to the potential of ecofeminism to address intersecting oppressions within the food movement. For example, many food justice initiatives place issues of race, class, and gender at the forefront (Holt-Gimenez and Wang 2011). However, such initiatives could potentially broaden their understanding by applying an ecofeminist lens to highlight the *interconnected* nature of such social structures. The case of C2C shows how an intersectional framework can create solutions for not only farmworkers, but all oppressed peoples, as well as the land.

"It's a Values thing" – Ecofeminism's Role in the Organization

In addition to providing an analysis of oppression and power, ecofeminism comes from an awareness of the beauty of the natural world, and the human tendency towards compassion and caring (Cuomo 2002). Interviewees repeatedly mentioned the values of compassion and caring. Ecofeminism is understood as a value system that views people and food in a way that is nurturing to the earth. It also allows members of C2C to "think about things in a compassionate way." Not only do these values guide the organization's work, but the organization seeks to embody these values on an interpersonal level. Ecofeminist values are considered "in meetings, in the way we treat each other, and the way we approach our work and find solutions," explains Julia, a lawyer who volunteers with C2C and works on racial profiling among undocumented immigrants in the area. This

sentiment was reflected by the founder of C2C who referred to ecofeminism as “a values thing” which affects how C2C implements the work that they do, as well as how they treat each other.

Sandra, a white female who works in the front office of C2C touches on perceived challenges involved in upholding ecofeminist values: “It’s how you lead, it’s how you behave, it’s very difficult. You have to become conscious of it all the time.” As a patriarchal society, Sandra is expressing how it can be challenging to act in more nurturing and compassionate ways due to the ways in which we are socialized. The founder of C2C further mentions the challenges of an ecofeminist organization in a patriarchal society. “So what does it mean to have an ecofeminist organization and for women to lead as ecofeminists? It’s again, another experiment. It’s a learning experience.” The idea that an ecofeminist organization is an experiment speaks to the uniqueness of their approach. Most food movement organizations do not take an explicitly ecofeminist approach, specifically one centered on farmworker organizing. Thus, C2C’s commitment to ecofeminism demonstrates a promising avenue for deepening the work of the food movement. Taking on an ecofeminist perspective enables organizations to be more compassionate, while revealing the interconnectedness of oppressive systems. In doing so, the movement can begin to dismantle some of the patriarchal values that are deeply engrained in society.

Furthermore, interview participants discussed ecofeminism’s foundational role in their work. Elliot, a male Latino farmworker in his thirties and a C2C coordinator, stated:

It [ecofeminism] keeps us really grounded and focused and it’s something to keep always working towards...that we can always be better people, and challenging us also. A lot of our internal oppressions that we have, especially as a man and people of color, I think we display that in some ugly ways sometimes so it’s good to have this organizational framework that kind of challenges a lot of that narrative.

For Elliot, upholding ecofeminist values serves as a counterbalance to internalized oppressions that can manifest in values and ways of living, namely practices based in exploitation and competition. Ecofeminism instead assumes that healthy interactions are based on caring and compassion, and the creation and nurturing of life (Besthorn and McMillen 2002). Julia, a female volunteer with C2C, discussed such values as: “Ecofeminism allows things to develop, grow and be nurtured. It is a sustainable, compassionate approach. It is in opposition to our current value system that is based on consumption and extraction.” Ecofeminism moves away from ideas based on capitalism’s growth and brings an awareness back to the ways in which all things living are connected. C2C not only seeks structural transformation, but also strives to redefine the current value system from one that is based in the commodification of people and the natural world, to one that has compassion for all forms of life. Ecofeminism guides C2C’s form of transformative food politics in a way which allows for a socioecological approach, addressing entire social and ecological systems.

“Mother Earth has a Voice” - Considering Environmental Consequences Before Profits

A food system “gathers all the elements- environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, and institutions- and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes” (Niles et al. 2017:2). One of the major issues embedded in the food system is how it contributes to widespread environmental degradation. Problems include demands on water availability for irrigation, an increase in pollution from agricultural inputs and soil loss, and an increase in energy demands for food production (Vermeulen, Campbell and Ingram 2012). The drivers and

patterns of global climate change are well reviewed and have been linked to activities involved with the food system. It is estimated that agriculture and associated land use changes account for 24 percent of total global emissions (Smith et al. 2014), while the global food system may contribute to up to 35 percent of greenhouse gas emissions (Vermeulen et al. 2012).

C2C is aware of environmental problems in the food system and their belief in ecofeminism elevates the ethical nature of human relationships to the nonhuman natural world. My interviews repeatedly mentioned the consideration of “Mother Earth” when asked about perceptions of ecofeminism. Lincoln exemplifies this when he states: “Part of ecofeminism is recognizing Mother Earth as a living being with rights and taking into account her state of being when it comes to agriculture.” Here, Lincoln references the earth as a feminine entity who must be protected by rights in our production of food. This further illustrates the need to intervene in the relationship between oppressive structures that perpetuate such environmental degradation. Central to this is the call for compassion towards all things living, which would ameliorate many of the harmful agricultural practices addressed by C2C.

Alan, a recent college graduate who was hired by C2C in the summer of 2017, articulates this as, “Fundamentally though, ecofeminism means that Mother Earth has a voice and it’s up to us to listen and protect the earth, the Mother Earth, the best way we can.” C2C continuously considers the environment in all that they do through an understanding that their work is part of an “intersecting circular process” (C2C 2016). In other words, C2C understands all of their work to be linked because of their intersectional approach, which seeks to change socioecological systems. In highlighting the

interconnectedness of issues initiatives are better suited to join forces with other movements and create deep, systemic changes that address destructive social structures and values. Food sovereignty is critical to the development of such praxis.

Conceptions of Food Sovereignty

As a concept, food sovereignty recognizes political and economic power inequities in the food system. Food sovereignty addresses power, as it seeks to dismantle the monopoly of the corporate food regime and create democratically controlled, regionally-based food systems (Alkon and Mares 2012). McMichael (2005) defines the corporate food regime as an industrialized food system structured around corporate control and premised on neoliberal economic principals. While the ‘corporate food regime’ was never explicitly mentioned at C2C, the “corporate controlled food system” was often discussed in interviews when talking about food sovereignty. In practice, food sovereignty seeks to prioritize the rights of nations and peoples to control their own food systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures, and environment. At C2C, food sovereignty is an ultimate goal. Elliot, who has worked for C2C for six years expressed, “food sovereignty provides a framework for what we should be striving for.”

Members of C2C refer to the “political aspect” of food sovereignty, where there is consideration of who is in control of the resources, specifically land and labor, and how it can be changed. Indeed, food sovereignty is a distinctly political concept, which focuses on policy change (Fairbairn 2011; Block et al. 2012). Policy transformation is discussed on C2C’s website under both their Food Sovereignty program and Participatory Democracy program. C2C partakes in various legislative processes. They took legislative positions on different bills that were up for vote in Washington State in 2016. For example, C2C was

opposed to two house bills that dealt with pesticide legislation, specifically pesticide drift. They assert that the pesticide legislation proposed is inadequate and they “call for the State of Washington to bring the State to full compliance with the current new rules enacted by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and work to create legislation that adequately protects farmworkers and citizens from pesticide drift” (C2C 2016). This signifies their political actions in striving for food sovereignty as well as their approach to interconnected issues related to both farmworkers and the environment. Using their website as an educational tool, they broadcast what they think is the best political approach to various intersecting problems. C2C explains why or why not they support various legislation, which exemplifies their political activism through community education and advocacy.

At C2C, food sovereignty is a means to consider and care for the environment.

Alyssa, a female farmworker who works for C2C explains:

I think food sovereignty is kind of just the separation of agriculture from the capitalist, patriarchal systems that have been kind of engrained in almost all societies, going back to a system that can be sustained, that is in accordance with the way Mother Earth is so that it doesn't hurt Mother Earth, both for the benefit of the land but as well as the benefit of the people who work in it and as well as the people who eat the food.

This statement exemplifies how C2C's ecofeminist values manifest in their approach to food sovereignty. Conversely, C2C sees food sovereignty as a means to achieve their ecofeminist vision. Because food sovereignty addresses issues of power and seeks to take back control of land and resources, it will therefore lead to a more democratically driven food system. Members of C2C assume that by gaining sovereignty from powerful entities and elites, it will address the exploitative labor conditions that currently prop up the food system.

C2C sees food sovereignty as a holistic solution that does not degrade the planet.

Another volunteer at C2C, Lisa, perceives food sovereignty as a framework that “views everything as a whole, integrated, cooperative system.” When asked what food sovereignty means to her, the founder of C2C, Rosalinda, expressed:

It’s about sovereignty, about the human, the sovereignty of the person to be able to eat what they want, when they want, the way they want to do it and knowing that you’re eating food that is not hurting or destroying anybody or the earth. And so to be sovereign in the whole system, it means that you actually have a say in all of it, everything. Food sovereignty is about all the way down to protecting the land, growing the food people want to eat, implementing the types of rules, guidelines, law, ordinances, whatever is needed to form a social and governmental structure that guarantees every human being in that foodshed has sovereignty over their food. That it is not controlled by corporations.

The term foodshed was initially used to describe the flow of food from producer to consumer at a city scale (Horst and Gaolach 2014). The concept has re-emerged as a response to the ecological and social destructiveness of the global, industrialized food system. The idea of a foodshed centers on proximity and self-reliance, linking to both social and environmental sustainability (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson and Stevenson 1996). In this case, Rosalinda is using the concept of a foodshed in a spatial sense, referring to the geographic region that produces food for a particular population. Given the emphasis on local and regional control by food sovereignty movements and scholarship, land justice is an obvious requirement for an equitable foodshed. Moreover, food sovereignty addresses intersecting forms of oppression reflected in land ownership inequalities relating to race, gender, and class. The following section will expand this discussion as it unpacks the praxis dimension of C2C’s work, or, how their guiding frameworks are manifested in their work.

Part III: Praxis Dimension

Food Sovereignty Enacted

In 2010, C2C spent three days at the U.S. Social Forum developing the Statement from the People's Movement Assembly on Food Sovereignty. The statement comes from frontline communities struggling to survive in urban and rural areas, and lays the groundwork for their food sovereignty program (C2C 2016). The Assembly consisted of over 200 individuals who helped write the declaration. Groups from all across the U.S. attended, while some were organizations from Europe, Africa, and other places throughout the Global South who "were more advanced in their conversations about food sovereignty." And, according to the founder of C2C, this is where the US Food Sovereignty Alliance was solidified.

Overall, the Statement lays out various commitments including democratizing land access and dismantling structural racism. The statement calls on others in the US to demand an end to global land grabs and endorses actions that include the liberation of land and water resources for the production of food and sustainable livelihoods (PMAFS 2010). The statement culminated after seeing the devastation of Detroit, when the local economy crashed and people in the city did not have access to food. These were mostly poor Latinx and African American communities that were devastated because businesses had moved out. Community members in Detroit began to grow their own food on empty lots, creating community gardening projects and their own food sources. Members of C2C who attended this meeting saw the example of community gardens in Detroit as food sovereignty in practice. This contributed to their understanding of food sovereignty as a means to transform how and where we grow food.

At a local level, C2C celebrates the successes of a local farmworker union and their achievements towards food sovereignty. Familias Unidas por La Justicia (FUJ) is a local independent farmworker union in Bellingham which C2C is closely involved with. FUJ is the third independent farmworker union formed in Washington in thirty years and the first union led by indigenous workers. With the help of C2C, FUJ had been fighting for bargaining rights with a local berry farm for over four years (C2C 2016). After many strikes, marches, and boycotts, FUJ successfully negotiated a historic union contract in the summer of 2017. Representatives signed a collective bargaining agreement with contractual benefits for members of FUJ who hand harvest berries. Among the benefits union members will receive include an average of fifteen dollars per hour and a labor management communications committee (FUJ 2017). This historic contract was mentioned by the C2C civic coordinator, Elliot, in his interview:

I mean contracts come and go, even with Familias Unidas, the company can refuse to negotiate in two years so it's something that we know could be taken away. But with the food sovereignty component, [we are] using a contract as a means, as a way to get where you want to be, towards the ultimate goal. You tweak the system a little bit by getting a contract for farmworkers, get them economic justice. We're using that as a platform for something bigger.

Successes like this may appear small but are crucial in achieving food sovereignty.

C2C also puts food sovereignty into practice within their Farming Cooperative, Jardin de Tierra y Libertad (Land and Liberty Garden). The garden is on a plot of land that has been tended by farmworker youth and their parents for five years. The garden serves as a space to teach others about agroecology and traditional farming practices from Oaxaca, Mexico (C2C 2016). The farmworker families working on the land eat the food that is grown there. The excess food is shared with other families who do not have access to organic produce. Because food sovereignty implies particular rights of individuals and

communities to define their own food system, the Farming Cooperative serves as a space where power and control is returned back to the farmworkers who will later consume the food. Many farmworkers come to the United States with a wealth of knowledge about how to grow and prepare healthy food, but often they cannot afford it, nor do they have access to land to grow it. The garden is a space where farmworkers are able to secure more healthy food choices. The goals of food sovereignty are large and global, but at a local level creating spaces where farmworkers are able to gather and grow food in traditional ways can serve to empower farmworkers and create a sense of community. While the garden provides a space for farmworkers to grow food, they still do not own the land.

Land reform is a crucial component to food sovereignty, and C2C is striving for land ownership. Rosalinda, the founder of C2C, explained an endeavor that the organization is working on with members of the local farmworker union, FUJ. Together, they want to buy at least one hundred acres of land where they plan to establish an Oaxacan community. The community members will live and grow their own food on the land, having complete control of their food choices and the ways it is grown. Their goal is to have the land within the next five years. For C2C, establishing land ownership for indigenous farmworkers is a specific example of food sovereignty enacted. Once the community is established on land that they own, it will exemplify food sovereignty on a local scale – something that is no longer just a possibility but as something that has been achieved.

C2C extends their ideas of food sovereignty beyond farmworker justice, in a Bellingham neighborhood. In my interviews, I learned that in Birchwood the only grocery store was recently shut down. Birchwood is the most diverse area of Bellingham, with over twelve different languages spoken at the middle school. It is a low income neighborhood

and a primarily Latinx community. After the corporate grocery store shut down it left many people with nothing but a Subway, a Little Caesar's, and a small Mexican market. The Birchwood Food Desert fighters is a project that C2C was actively working on when I visited the organization. C2C is involved in an effort to elevate the voices of the community members to find out what they want to replace the old grocery store. In doing so, C2C volunteers are going door to door with a survey to determine what the community wants and needs in regards to a new grocery store. C2C will share the needs of the neighborhood with local officials and push to get the kind of store that is wanted within the community. In doing so, C2C is "empowering community members" and amplifying their voices, rather than just addressing the food desert in whatever way they see fit. This exemplifies how their commitment to food sovereignty expands beyond their work with farmworkers to include local food injustices. Thereby, C2C is upholding the democratic component of food sovereignty that calls for community members to have their voices heard in decision-making processes.

Ecofeminism in Practice: When Women Lead

As stated by the founder of C2C, an ecofeminist organization is an experiment. Furthermore, what it is to *be* an ecofeminist organization and how that is manifested in their work was articulated in various ways. Ecofeminism is present in the everyday lives of members of C2C. They act mindfully and with compassion in their interactions with each other and in their project planning, in an encompassing effort to transform the patriarchal values that are so deeply engrained in our society. Ecofeminism leads their resistance because as Brianna said, "we don't want to continue down the same path." It guides C2C's work and how they think about solutions.

Ecofeminism, combined with women leadership and a distinct organizational model, offers a path to create a paradigm shift. For example, C2C strives to empower women's voices and place women in leadership positions, specifically marginalized women, who do not often get these opportunities. In fact, "to rescue the value of feminine intellect and leadership" is central to C2C's mission (C2C 2016). Community to Community is able to illuminate issues related to gender oppression in the food system. For example, highlighting women activists in leadership positions is a central feature of C2C's Facebook posts. In doing so, they strive to empower women through a feminist vision of leadership. C2C is working to radically reform gender relations using their organizational structure as an example of the role of women in the food movement. With ecofeminism as a guide, they are able to address interlinking socioecological oppressions and exemplify possibilities of reformed gender relations.

In regards to farmworker organizing, multiple members of C2C expressed during interviews the uniqueness of women leadership in farmworker organizing. This sentiment reflects the literature which tends to focus on male leadership within organizations like the United Farmworkers (UFW), providing a patriarchal interpretation of its origins (Rose 1990). Although farmworker women have been involved in labor organizing for decades, opinions vary about whether unions like the UFW empowered women, reinforced conventional gender roles, or did both (Golichenko and Sarang 2013). Nonetheless, scholars have found that women are central to grassroots organizing in Mexico and Mexican migrant communities (Seif 2008), therefore members of C2C think it is beneficial for farmworkers to see women leadership in organizing efforts in the United States.

In their Facebook posts, C2C shares examples of women in leadership roles around the world. For example, in April 2017, C2C shared an article titled “How Women-Led Movements Are Redefining Power, From California to Nepal” (Chitnis 2016). In the post, C2C quoted this excerpt from the article, "In the face of growing corporate power, land grabs, economic injustice, and climate change, women’s movements offer a paradigm shift." This excerpt speaks to how women are crucial to dismantling oppressive social structures, namely capitalism and patriarchy. As a result of gender inequalities at the institutional level, the top levels of social movement leadership have often had a male face (Morris and Staggenborg 2004). C2C strives to change this portrayal through their commitment to ecofeminism, by attempting to redefine gender relations by empowering women to take on leadership roles.

In a Facebook post from October 2017, C2C shared an article titled “Black Women-Owned Construction Company Awarded Contract to Replace Flint’s Contaminated Water Pipes” (Savali 2017). When sharing the article, C2C wrote “WHEN WOMEN LEAD!!!” (C2C FB 2017). In posting this article, C2C is exemplifying the possibilities of women leadership. Because the United States is a patriarchal society, women are not always in positions of leadership. For example, 26.4 percent of university presidents are women and only 21 percent U.S. Senators are women (Pew Research Center 2018). Eagly and Carli (2007) assert that there is a gender bias that exists such that men are associated with being leaders because they more commonly demonstrate masculine traits that signify leadership, whereas women are less likely to be perceived as leaders because they are more likely to demonstrate qualities of compassion. This is a manifestation of gender stereotypes that are deeply embedded in Western patriarchal societies. Community to Community serves as an

example of how to dismantle such ideas in practice by having women in leadership positions. This further demonstrates how C2C is challenging intersecting systems of oppression in their organizational dynamic.

Resisting Fascism and Dismantling White Supremacy

Through my analysis of C2C's Facebook page and interviews, *dismantling white supremacy* and *resisting fascism* turned up as two major themes. On their Facebook page, C2C shared multiple articles about the growing white nationalist movement in the US, including the resurgence that is happening locally in Bellingham. In Bellingham, there is an organized group of young, White, pro-Trump men that formed in the summer of 2017. In an interview, a member of C2C referred to this group and noted that Whatcom County used to have a big presence of neo-Nazi's and KKK members . Bellingham had the strongest and longest lasting KKK presence in the state of Washington in the 1920's and 1930's (Griffey 2007). The city is now seeing a reappearance of similar types of blatant racism. While discussing this as one of the major issues C2C was responding to at the time, Eliot explained:

There's a Proud Boys chapter here that calls our office all the time and harasses us, follows us online and does like trolling things. You know, I think people respond to that but they don't respond to the other parts, the systemic part. There's like a disconnect that people aren't seeing, and it's our job as organizers to make sure that's clear and make those connections. Even though it takes time I think we have to realize where everybody's political conscious level is I guess, where they're at, and it's our job to, to kind of like, open their eyes and to see for themselves, you know, the injustices that are happening and how we can take them on.

Eliot touches on multiple facets of C2C's work in discussing their recent harassment from a local white nationalist group. He explains that local community members are more aware of flagrant racism, like the local Proud Boys club, but are less attune to the larger, structural racism that happens locally.

One of the major issues C2C helps inform the local community about is racial profiling and immigration enforcement and detention by local law enforcement. They generate public discourse about local, structural racism through weekly Dignity Vigils. In conjunction with a local campaign, *Keep Bellingham Families Working*, which seeks to make Bellingham a sanctuary city, members of C2C and local community members come together to stand in solidarity with undocumented and immigrant families and people. The Vigils also serve as a space to stand against law enforcement and federal immigration collaboration which leads to deportation. When I attended one of these Vigils, we stood outside of the courthouse holding posters about racial profiling, ICE enforcement, and the idea that no human is illegal. In the two hours we spent outside the courthouse with signs, community volunteers spoke to me about how the weekly vigils build a sense of community, as well as comfort. Brianna, a female “activist” volunteer spoke about this in our interview:

Doing the Dignity Vigils, that for me is, well, it is exciting. It is also like a healing process because a lot of us have so many stresses and so many things that are going on in the world today that are pretty stressful and maybe we don't feel like we can address all of those issues. It can be very overwhelming, and so standing at a Dignity Vigil and being visible and kind of becoming the village square if you like, is a very healing process.

The Vigils provide a space where dialogue happens with local community members about the more structural and systemic issues happening locally. For example, during my time at the Vigil, a white woman walked out of the courthouse and inquired about what we were doing. Brianna and another volunteer informed the woman that we were bringing awareness to the racial profiling happening in town, and how they are ultimately pushing for a civilian oversight board of the police. This woman responded by telling us that she worked in the jail and that there was no racial profiling in the jail. Brianna informed her

that racial profiling happens in the community and that she might not hear about it in the jail because people are scared to talk about it. While the woman was rather uninterested in hearing what activists had to say and instead criticized one of the posters, claiming “it doesn’t make sense,” the interaction illustrates how C2C seeks to create structural change at the most basic level, community education. In physically showing up every week to stand in solidarity with some of the most marginalized people in their community, they inspire conversations about the issues they are confronting. This also highlights their intersectional work at the point of race and immigration status. These systems of oppression directly relate to their food sovereignty efforts. Because food sovereignty addresses issues of power and control of land and resources, they understand it is necessary to address legal barriers, like immigration status. In doing so, there is potential to transform the existing discriminatory structures.

Solidarity with Other Movements

Solidarity, as it is traditionally defined, refers to ties between social groups (Einwohner et al. 2016). Solidarity can take various forms. Some understand solidarity as a product of shared identities (Dean 1996), while others find that context, specifically threats, enable the creation and sustainment of solidarity (Kay 2005). C2C upholds a strict belief that they are to be active participants with other popular people’s movements (C2C 2016). The ways in which C2C maintains solidarity with other movements happens both physically, by showing up to other groups events and protests, and virtually, through Facebook. The internet, specifically social media, is a place that facilitates communication between all types of social activists. Social media constitutes a channel through which

social movements not only communicate but also organize their actions and mobilize their constituencies (Gerbaudo 2018).

The degree to which C2C is involved with social movement solidarity revealed itself during my analysis of their Facebook posts. These posts included successes and victories of other organizations, sharing an event of a partner group, and posting pictures of C2C members at another organization's events (C2C FB 2016). The types of groups C2C stands in solidarity with was diverse. Some of the most shared groups included: Grassroots Global Justice Alliance; US Food Sovereignty Alliance; Redline Salish Sea; Bellingham Racial Justice Coalition; Food First; and System Change, Not Climate Change. This diversity once again reflects their intersectional praxis. These groups fight for indigenous people's rights, to transform the food system, and for a democratic and sustainable society that places people and the planet over profits. This exemplifies how movements can mobilize together based on their intersecting social and environmental justice work.

C2C understands their work to be a combined effort with other groups and that "unity of movements is necessary" (C2C FB 2017). C2C's intersectional approach was further on display in April of 2017 when C2C posted: "See you all at the People's Climate March tomorrow at Maritime Heritage Park 11:00 am. We will be representing Farm Workers, Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and Immigrants. Another Food System is Possible" (C2C FB 2017). In this post, C2C is connecting climate change and their work to transform the food system. Not only is C2C speaking to the interconnectedness of the earth and people, they are showing up in solidarity to march for an interrelated cause, the climate. They are portraying their organization as a movement connected to other movements, which allow them to increase their social network and mobilize together.

Standing in solidarity with other movements, both physically and virtually, creates a synergy between social movements that enables greater possibilities for change. If movements can identify how their activism intersects with other organizations, and how they are fighting against the same structural forces, together movements can foster greater mobilization and gain access to resources.

Community to Community is engaged in an expanded form of transformational food politics that centers on changing oppressive social systems. Their work addresses socioecological systems in an effort to reform gender relations as well as human relations with the natural world. C2C holds a fundamental belief that everything is connected and that they “must address it all.” Ecofeminism provides an intersectional lens, which allows the organization to attend to many interconnected oppressions. Their ecofeminist approach advances the conceptual framework of transformative food politics as C2C strives to change social systems in order to change the food system. Stemming from their work to organize farmworkers, C2C is aware of the interconnected systems of race and immigration related to exploitative practices in the food system. C2C strives to redefine power relations and elevate the voices of those most affected by the food system with food sovereignty as the ultimate goal. The organization provides an example of ecofeminism in practice as they strive to uphold such values in their daily activities and project planning. Their emphasis on women in leadership positions offers a model of transformed gender relations, which other sectors of the food movement could emulate. C2C’s commitment to solidarity with other social movements speaks to the importance of synergy between social movements with interrelated causes. Overall, C2C’s intersectional approach provides a holistic framework for addressing the many intertwined socioecological issues of today.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Transformation is not something that happens in a vacuum. Even more so, transformation of social systems is a monumental task that is historically slow. As part of this process, Community to Community recognizes the need for and pursues the transformation of inequitable social systems in order to change the food system. Transformative food politics demands a comprehensive approach to food systems problems and requires the development of interrelated solutions. Community to Community is pushing this idea even further with their holistic approach to social justice. Their commitment to ecofeminism and food sovereignty provides the organization with a value system and overall goal that is attune to intersecting systems of oppression. That is, C2C has a deep recognition of how “everything is connected.”

The interconnected socioecological systems that make up the food system are made clear through intersectional frameworks like ecofeminism, which better explain, for example, how pesticide use is rooted in structural factors, like the capitalist drive for unending profit. This framework illuminates how the exploitation of the natural world and of humans cannot be separated. For members of C2C, ecofeminism is valuable because it emphasizes that people, land, and food are all connected. This is important for the food movement because it centers the interdependence of many problems that activists confront.

Ecofeminism serves as a value system for the individuals at C2C and manifests in their everyday work. It enables the organization to embody values like compassion and the nurturing of all life, in an effort to dismantle some of the patriarchal values that perpetuate oppression. In doing so, C2C attempts to redefine the current value system away from one

that is based on the commodification of people and the natural world, to one that considers social and environmental consequences before profits. Ecofeminism guides C2C's form of transformative food politics in a way that accounts for deeply intertwined social *and* ecological systems.

The radical goals of food sovereignty equip C2C with a means to work toward their ecofeminist vision. It provides them with a conception of what a transformed food system could look like by addressing issues of power and taking back control of land and resources from powerful entities and elites. Of overarching significance is how achieving food sovereignty would ameliorate the exploitative conditions that impact farmworkers and the environment. C2C recognizes that in order to transform the food system it is critical that those who work the land have the resources for a flourishing livelihood, one that is capable of also taking care of the land for future generations.

Sociologically, this thesis is significant because it analyzes intersecting systems of oppression - that is, large structural and institutional forces that affect every person. In looking at *how* individual positionalities are constructed by multiple axes, like race, class, or gender, we are better suited to create projects that address the deeper systemic oppressions that are experienced based on identities. Recognizing the intersections of multiple and overlapping oppressions as they relate to the food system is a needed focal point for both scholars and food movement activists. Additionally, this research expands the literature on intersectionality as it considers the state and projects of citizenship – and the denial thereof – and how immigration status contributes to the lived experiences of farmworkers. Because farmworkers are critical to the overall food system, addressing the inequities they face is central for food system transformation.

In synthesizing the conceptual frameworks of ecofeminism and food sovereignty, I am applying a theoretical approach that, to my knowledge, is uncommon. Therefore, this research contributes to ecofeminist scholarship as it discusses the possibilities of ecofeminism in regards to changing the food system. C2C has adopted the idea of food sovereignty as a means to achieve an ecofeminist vision, which is a radical proposition. The organizational structure of C2C is important for ecofeminist literature, as it exemplifies the potential of ecofeminism in practice. Combined, the frameworks provide the tools and guidance to engage in a distinct form of transformative food politics.

This theoretical approach illuminated how many problems embedded in the food system are intertwined with larger, systemic forces that perpetuate inequity and oppression. While this is not a recent discovery to sociologists, it is important to consider new ways of approaching such problems. Transforming social systems is a complicated process, which will continue to require innovative approaches to deepen our understandings of social life and how to improve it.

Lingering Questions

As a researcher, I am naturally left with even more questions after writing this thesis. While transforming the food system and changing social systems are a central component of this thesis and the work at C2C, it was not always clear what the result of a transformation would look like. Terms like fair, equitable, and sustainable are thrown around in food movement discourse, but how are these concepts enacted in practice on a larger scale? Fairer, yes, but for who? Is the treatment of animals considered in the goals of food sovereignty? Ecofeminism is attune to the interconnection of all things living, so does our meat production practices need to be changed in an ecofeminist vision? Is meat

consumption a component of a transformed, “sustainable” food system or do we need to radically reform our diets if we want to combat climate change? How will democratic power be maintained if we are able to redefine power relations through food sovereignty? And lastly, how can food movement activists maintain solidarity with each other to tackle the omnipresence of capitalism and its unending repercussions? These questions suggest that there is much more to understand and consider.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could employ a multiple case study comparison of food movement organizations that utilize intersectional frameworks. A comparison of frameworks and how they are manifested in their work would be useful for food activists as they could lead to a better understanding of which conceptual frameworks are most successful and why. More specifically, a comparison of women led organizations might yield important findings for ecofeminist literature. Future research could also utilize a network analysis methodology to see how and why organizations join in solidarity, and if in doing so, they are able to better mobilize together. In order to expand the U.S. food sovereignty literature, research could be done on other organizations like C2C, where examples of food sovereignty in practice are happening. If there are clear examples of what a transformed food system looks like, activists and scholars may be better suited to confront the challenges they are up against.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I realize your time is valuable and I appreciate this opportunity.

This interview is part of a case study I am doing on the organization you are apart of, Community to Community. I am interested in farmworker organizations and movements. This organization is a unique place to study due to the intersectional approach that is discussed in the mission statement. I want to learn how eco-feminism and food sovereignty is manifested in the work you do as an organization.

So you know, your identity here is completely confidential. I will not use your name in any write-up or presentation of the research. I also want to make the outcome of this research available to you once it is completed.

Is it okay if I record our talk today so that I can accurately record and recall everything you say here?

Questions:

A. History of and involvement in Community to Community:

1. Can you tell me about your involvement with food and agricultural issues?
2. Can you tell me a little about your history with the organization?
Probes: When did you become involved?
How did you become involved?
3. Of all the social justice organizations and volunteer opportunities that are out there, why did you choose C2C?
Probes: What are the most beneficial things you have learned while being apart of the organization?
4. What do you consider the most exciting thing about your work here?
5. What are the major problems that C2C is responding to

B. Perception and understanding of food sovereignty and food justice:

4. What does food sovereignty mean to you?
5. How do you understand the term “food justice”?
6. The C2C website states that the organization “discovered that food justice was not enough”. Can you elaborate on what this means in your own words, and why?
Probe: Why doesn’t the organization believe food justice is the right frame for accomplishing their goals?
7. Does striving for food sovereignty better support farmworkers?

Probes: If so, how?

How did the organization come to take on a food sovereignty framework?

8. How is food sovereignty enacted within campaigns and other organizing taking place?

C. Perception and understanding of eco-feminism:

9. The website states that at the core of Community to Community's work is a belief in, and commitment to, eco-feminism. I am interested to hear your personal understanding of eco-feminism. What does it mean to you?

10. Can you explain how striving for farmworker rights, eco-feminism, and food sovereignty intersect within the organization?

Probe: How does this intersection manifest itself in the community organizing you do?

11. How do you understand eco-feminism and farmworker issues to be linked?

Probes: Are there advantages to an eco-feminist approach? What are they?

D. Wrap up

12. Is there anything we haven't covered that you want me to know for my research?

13. As this study progresses, I would like it to reflect the areas of concern to Community to Community. Are there questions you would like to have asked and researched that would benefit the organization?

Thank you for your time. I immensely appreciate this opportunity to meet with you.

Appendix B

Table 1: C2C Facebook Posts Chart

Farmworker Injustices	56	15.2%
Solidarity with other movements	55	14.9%
Promoting C2C	40	10.9%
Immigration Issues	32	8.8%
Intersectional Analysis	29	7.9%
Climate Justice	28	7.6%
Ecofeminism	24	6.5%
Local Politics	19	5.2%
Racial Justice	19	5.2%
Resisting Fascism	18	4.9%
Food Sovereignty	13	3.5%
Solidarity Economy	13	3.5%
Community Action Alert	12	3.2%
Food Justice	10	2.7%
Total	368	