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Food Security vs. Food Sovereignty:
A Qualitative Analysis of Food Justice Narratives and Activist Identities
Among Community Gardeners in Atlanta

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Abstract

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By Andrea Abbate

This paper demonstrates the exclusionary practices of Alternative Food Institutions (AFIs) embedded in white systems of power. I explore whiteness in one dimension of AFIs—community gardens—and offer theoretical interventions and social movement strategies to dismantle racial barriers within the alternative food movement. It draws on in-depth interviews from three kinds of members of community gardens—plot holders, volunteers, and employees—to illustrate the range in narratives surrounding food justice as well as perceptions of food justice activism. The ways in which these discourses contrast with current research trends may have a significant effect on determining how future research on food justice is conducted. Broader conceptualizations of food justice in regards to both food security and food sovereignty could help community gardeners recognize structural racism and shape future anti-racist practices within AFIs. Further research should examine whether such contrasting discourses occur in other social movement contexts in order to study activism from a more holistic approach.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Alternative Food Institutions: Definitions	4
Community Gardens as White Spaces	8
The Forgotten History of Community Food	11
Theoretical Interventions to Reduce Racial Barriers in Community Gardens	13
AFIs as Potential Spaces for the formation of Activist Identities	16
AFIs, Activism, and Race: Relevancy in Atlanta	19
Methods	21
FINDINGS	24
<i>Food Justice Narratives</i>	24
Charity Narrative.....	25
Educational Narrative	26
Empowerment Narrative.....	27
<i>Different Narratives Across Role Categories</i>	29
Plot Holders	29
Volunteers.....	30
Employees	31
<i>Food Justice Activist Identities Linked to Narratives</i>	32
Discussion	35
Table 1: Role Category and Food Justice Narratives	42
Table 2: Role Category and Activist Identities	43
References	44
Appendices	48

Introduction

The food system in the United States is and historically has been characterized by issues of food security inequality, ecological destruction, and lack of community engagement.

Alternative Food Institutions (AFIs) were designed to address such concerns, in an attempt to revitalize communities and provide increased access to healthy foods (Slocum 2007; Birky 2009; Workman 2014). While several forms of AFIs have been developed, and aim to improve the food system in particular ways, for the purpose of this study, I will be focusing on one such AFI, the community garden.

Community gardens, or “any place where two or more people garden together” (Kantor 2001: 25), developed out of a unique history dealing with injustice and thus were positioned well to ameliorate social, economic, and environmental concerns. In urban spaces in particular, where people of color face myriad forms of institutionalized racism that impact their ability to consume fresh produce, community gardens have the potential to provide them with fruits and vegetables, while also educating and employing local residents. Studies show that community gardens offer many benefits, particularly to the urban poor, including improved food access, quality of nutrition, and strengthened social relationships among family and community members (Crossney and Shellenberger 2012; Hallberg 2009; Wakefield 2007).

While community gardens boast significant benefits, critics emphasize that these spaces fail to involve and empower people of color who could benefit the most from such programs. Community gardens, along with AFIs in general, are spaces predominantly occupied by whites. Thus whites “continue to define the rhetoric, spaces, and broader projects of agro-food transformation” (Guthman 2008: 434). Whites involved in the alternative food movement tend to

develop community gardening projects without acknowledging concerns of race, inequality, or white privilege (Sbicca 2012; Guthman 2008). Furthermore, community gardens often reproduce white privilege by hiring white people to lead their organizations, implicitly excluding minorities from the organizations' mission by failing to recognize racial inequalities as part of their advocacy work. For this reason, "current activism reflects white desires more than those of the communities they putatively serve" (Guthman 2008: 441).

Presently, scholars define food justice and conceptualize food justice activism in specific, yet potentially restricted terms. Scholars like Sbicca (2012: 465) propose that in order to achieve food justice, "alliances across different spectrums of society should be created to actively challenge racist and capitalist forms of exploitation in order to build community between groups who have histories of conflicts," namely whites and people of color. Yet the discrepancies that exist between communities facing food injustice and white individuals serving those communities suggests that white community gardeners may not include racial inequality in their conceptions of food justice. Polletta and Jasper (2001) suggest that not only intense, but also casual participation in social movements could influence an individual's formation of an activist identity. Little research has been conducted to evaluate how community gardeners themselves conceptualize food justice, and whether they identify as food justice activists.

Previous scholars have called for further research to understand how and to what degree people of color experience exclusionary practices in the realm of AFIs (Guthman 2008). Better understanding the sentiments and identities of community gardeners is an important way to measure the success and vitality of AFIs in terms of achieving their goals to improve disenfranchised peoples' food systems. In order to strive toward the most just and sustainable food system, participants in the alternative food movement, regardless of race, must feel included

and empowered to contribute to the food justice movement. “Consumer politics is insufficient to bring about food justice because many communities don’t have the buying power to obtain organic, sustainable, local and boutique food” (Sbicca 2012: 459). Instead, revitalizing community ties through food justice organizations is essential.

I begin by detailing the characteristics of AFIs and community gardens. Next, I address whiteness as a system of power within the modern community gardening movement, and reflect on the movement’s origins, which were rooted in African American and Latino influences. I then offer two theoretical interventions, food justice frameworks and Critical Consciousness Theory, to address racial barriers in contemporary AFIs. Next, I investigate how community gardening can be categorized as a social movement, and consider the role of activism in dismantling institutionalized racism within the alternative food movement. I highlight the relevancy of food justice activism in Atlanta and discuss my methods.

My findings contrast with current scholarship and offer new insights about how participation in community gardens may inform one’s perspectives of food justice and impact one’s identity as a food justice activist. Furthermore, I illuminate a clear distinction in the way that scholars discuss food justice and the way that community gardeners do so. Community gardeners tend to blend narratives of food security and food sovereignty in their conceptualizations of food justice, while scholars assume that members of the alternative food movement consider food justice as intertwined with institutionalized racism. I use social movement scholarship to examine how community gardeners might recognize their white privilege and contribute to food sovereignty movements as ally activists. By investigating these perspectives from the standpoint of plot holders, volunteers, and employees, I examine how food justice activist identities vary across role categories in AFIs. Through qualitative analysis and

thematic coding, I explore the links between participation in community gardens, food justice narratives, activist identities, and race. I suggest that scholars study food justice from the perspective of social movement actors and that AFIs implement strategies to address white privilege. I also encourage scholars to apply my bottom-up approach to understand other social movements from the perspective of advocates themselves.

Alternative Food Institutions: Definitions

Alternative Food Institutions (AFIs) can be defined as “those that advocate more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the U.S.” (Slocum 2007: 522). As an umbrella term, Alternative Food Institutions include farmers markets, various types of cooperatives, community supported agricultural (CSA) organizations, food hubs, and community gardens. While all AFIs aim to improve the quality, sustainability, and accessibility of food for all persons, they do so in different ways and are influenced by their own unique history.

Community Gardens originally developed as a reaction to economic hardships and issues of food security. As early as the 1890s community gardens were initiated to teach children and the unemployed practical agricultural skills (Birky 2009). During the Panic of 1893¹, Americans used community gardening to augment food security. Scholars understand food security as the ability for individuals and households to access food that is “sufficient, safe, and culturally appropriate” so that they can carry out healthy and successful lives (Kirkland et al. 2013: 66). After this preliminary stage in the initiative’s history, wealthier people began to take back the lands on which community gardens were built in order to develop new industries to keep up with

¹ The Panic of 1893 was an economic recession in the United States that lasted until 1897. Scholars suggest that the recession had its origins in agricultural markets and produced significant agricultural shocks (Dupont 2007).

increasing city populations and economic growth (Birky 2009). Land was never made permanently available to community gardens, likely due to the lack of political power of the urban poor (Birky 2009). In the early 1900s, support for community gardens regained momentum once the U.S. became involved in World War I. Individuals planted community gardens to provide local food so that the U.S. could ship larger amounts of food overseas to its allies (Birky 2009). The Great Depression in 1929 once more boosted America's interest in community gardening as a means to produce inexpensive food. The rise of the modern community garden movement began in the 1970s with the creation of the American Community Gardening Association in response to "gas shortages, high food prices, and poor urban conditions" (Birky 2009: 21).

Since the 1970s community gardens have sprung up throughout the nation, and with this growth has come a broadening of issues that participants seek to address through community gardening. While many community gardens have developed in whole or in part to ameliorate issues of food security, particularly for marginalized populations in urban neighborhoods, they also address issues of environmental preservation, education, youth and community engagement, and can supplement community households' income (Birky 2009; Slocum 2006). Thus they can take on many styles and forms, ranging from education centers for children, oases for adults, or therapeutic spaces for the elderly. Particularly in urban settings, creating community gardens offer a plethora of benefits in terms of economics, education, health, environment, and community building (Workman 2014). Gardens in vacant lots offer an opportunity to bring members of the community together who may lack the land necessary to create a garden in their homes while beautifying the neighborhood. Participants have the opportunity to purchase less

food from supermarkets stocked by companies who rely on industrial agriculture, and instead grow their own fresh produce.

Despite these differences, contemporary community gardens tend to share a few main attributes. For example, gardeners typically pay a small annual fee (\$10-\$100) for a small plot of land, about 10 by 12 feet that they maintain. The fee may go towards general maintenance of the garden, such as lawn mowing, as well as water bills and land taxes. The gardeners may be asked to sign a contract stating that they agree to uphold a series of expectations, such as to only use organic practices, water and tend to their plots regularly, put tools away after borrowing them, etc. Community gardeners can plant whatever they choose, as long as the plants are not invasive, and are free to keep all of the produce they harvest. Some gardeners may choose to offer up any surplus produce to food banks or other community members.

Research suggests that community gardens are particularly advantageous to the urban poor, who can improve their level of food security and quality of nutrition through participation (Crossney and Shellenberger 2012; Hallberg 2009; Wakefield 2007). Community gardeners often note a significant difference in household food costs by substituting produce they grow themselves for store-bought foods (Wakefield 2007). Community garden projects have been shown to reduce participants' food insecurity, increase vegetable intake, and strengthen family relationships (Carney et al 2011, Baker et al 2013). Participants not only report that they have improved access to nutritious foods, but culturally appropriate foods as well, a key element in the definition of food security². Community gardens were also shown to increase community connection as participants shared their produce and knowledge with one another (Crossney and Shellenberger 2012). In addition to increased social interaction, participants report mental and

² Baker (2004) examined the trellising systems that Chinese community gardeners used to grow high quantities of Asian produce. The methods they used in Toronto's community gardens were similar to those they had used before emigrating.

physical benefits of having a quiet green space in the middle of the city (Poulsen et al. 2014). Other perceived benefits include a connection to nature, the breaking down of social barriers between diverse individuals, transforming vacant lots into safe communal spaces, and enhanced bodily health (Poulsen et al. 2014). Creating those green spaces has also been shown to positively impact property values of surrounding houses and buildings (Birky 2009). They can also regulate the ecosystem and contribute to an enhanced level of biodiversity of an area (Birky 2009).

Despite the many documented benefits of community gardens, their progress in terms of addressing food security in the face of economic hardship has been limited. Millions of people in the United States continue to lack access to nutritious foods, particularly in urban settings (USDA 2009). In the 1980s, cities experienced a net loss of supermarkets, despite nationwide store openings surpassing closings (Eisenhauer 2001). “Supermarket redlining,” the trend of locating supermarkets outside of impoverished inner city neighborhoods and developing them in affluent suburbs, continues to this day, and has had significant impacts on the health of the urban poor (Eisenhauer 2001). In fact, racial and ethnic minorities in low-income populations living in urban environments experience the most limited access to nutritious foods and the highest levels of food insecurity (Freedman and Bell 2009). Many low-income or minority communities are located in food deserts, or neighborhoods where it is nearly impossible to buy healthy foods or fresh produce. In total, approximately 23.5 million people live in food deserts, and nearly half of them are also low-income (USDA 2009).

Furthermore, the limited options available to those living in food deserts are frequently unhealthy. Low-income communities and communities of color often live in food deserts that not only lack fresh produce but where liquor stores and fast-food chains abound (Carmin and

Agyeman 2011). With limited access to healthy alternatives, community members consume unhealthy foods high in fat, sugar and sodium puts these vulnerable populations at risk for severe health consequences. In the USDA's 2012 report, *Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts*, these consequences are highlighted, "as impoverished and minority populations are already more likely to have poor access to health care and fitness facilities, limited access to healthy food may compound the effects of this deprivation" (Dutko et al. 2012). Due to supermarket redlining and other disenfranchising practices of structural racism, low income and minority populations are at a greater risk of obesity compared to non-Hispanic whites, also putting them at risk for cancer, heart disease, and type 2-diabetes (Sbicca 2010: 8).

Community Gardens as White Spaces

While the potential benefits of alternative food programs are noteworthy, AFIs such as community gardens may not be reaching their intended audience of low-income and minority populations. Those involved with community gardens are predominantly middle class, well educated, and white (Slocum 2006). Even in areas with high concentrations of black and Latino residents, researchers found that community gardeners are disproportionately white (Hoover 2013; Guthman 2008). Community food has become embedded in white culture; in spaces like community gardens, "whites come together, stick together and then become impenetrable to others despite their desire to be otherwise" (Slocum 2006: 527). Though participants often promote community gardens as spaces where anyone is welcome, in practice they lack racial diversity. Community gardens reinforce the values, routines, and preferences of the white middle class and thus reproduce white privilege (Lockie 2013). For example, AFIs often appeal to whites who are interested primarily in the personal benefits of community gardens, such as stress

relief, the time to socialize with other community members, the satisfaction of growing one's own organic food, and the opportunity to escape the bustle of city life and retreat to green space (Wakefield et al. 2007; Crossney and Shellenberger 2012). As a result, while the intent of AFIs may not be racial seclusion, it is often the outcome (Lockie 2013).

This implicit racial exclusion is further compounded by the interconnection of race and social class in the United States. Individuals of low socioeconomic status are more likely to be non-white (Reardon et al. forthcoming; House & Williams 2000). Community gardens are often preserved spaces for community, ethnic expression, and antigentrification activism, but they can also emerge out of gentrification itself (Aptekar 2015). Community gardens that are constructed in neighborhoods after gentrification has taken place will inherently have more white participants, since low-income, often minority populations have already been pushed outside of the neighborhood's boundaries. Some scholars view community gardens as public spaces designed with the potential to break down racial barriers in urban environments (Shinew, Glover, and Parry 2004). In spite of community gardens being racially and ethnically diverse, the most advantaged gardeners may (intentionally or not) construct a dominant vision for the space, assuming that white values are universal while in actuality they may not reflect the needs of non-white participants (Aptekar 2015; Guthman 2008).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus illuminates why this phenomenon might occur. The socialized norms of community gardens as white spaces may explain how white members' way of thought and action could be guided by concepts of whiteness. The habits that whites develop within these spaces, especially in terms of constructing dominant visions or narratives, may lead to symbolic violence over people of color, reinforcing their place in the social hierarchy

(Bourdieu 1986). Cultural reproduction explains the cyclical nature of AFIs' whiteness being inherited generation after generation; the whiteness of community gardens is likely to persist as long as issues of race and class continue to be overlooked (Bourdieu 1986). The community garden has thus, in a certain context, become a symbol of white privilege, regarded as "a delectable sight that enhances the living environment of the affluent, mostly white professionals in the same way as an organic farmers market or a pedestrian plaza" (Aptekar 2015: 225).

Community garden participation certainly demands a particular level of privilege; an individual must have the time to devote to growing food without compensation. Someone who comes from a low-income family may work full time, or work several jobs in order to remain financially stable, and thus cannot afford to spend extra time gardening. Owning a plot in a community garden often comes with a fee of around \$100 per year, which could be a financial burden for low-income individuals. As race is inextricably linked to education level and other forms of social capital, lack of nutritional knowledge is another potential barrier that prevents non-whites from accessing or valuing community gardens (Moxley 1981). Minority and low-income children are overrepresented among obese children in the U.S. and research suggests that this disparity could be due to lack of parents' nutrition knowledge (Cluss 2013).

Other scholars suggest that lack of knowledge may not be a primary factor in people of color's absence from the alternative food movement, and instead highlight the history of whiteness as a system of power. The disenfranchisement and exploitation of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Chinese, and Japanese within the agricultural system in the United States over centuries certainly suggests that growing one's own food "would not have the same aesthetic appeal that it does for white, middle-class alternative food aficionados" (Guthman

2008: 394). White gardeners sometimes attempt to recruit low-income people of color into the alternative food movement, touting the benefits of “getting your hands dirty in the soil” (Guthman 2008: 394). At the same time, they may fail to acknowledge their white privilege and the historical violence against black and brown bodies, particularly within the food system. These well-intentioned attempts at inclusion in reality do little more than include “the more advantaged poor into an already privileged and advantaged system” (Trivette forthcoming).

The Forgotten History of Community Food

Whiteness, being essentially universal and normalized, unconsciously shapes both the relationships and culture of community food (Slocum 2006). But community gardens were not always embedded in whiteness. The history of America’s community gardens is actually rooted in African American and Latino contributions (Hoover 2013). Black farmers in the south developed community-based cooperatives and initiatives in conjunction with civil rights organizations to mobilize for food security (Alkon, Hope, and Agyeman 2014). Organizations such as The Colored Farmers Alliance and Cooperative Union were developed with social justice interests and progressive economic agendas in mind, protecting small farmers and sharecroppers from competition with their larger counterparts while supplying black urban residents with fresh food (Alkon et al. 2014). Appealing to the USDA for safeguards, black farmers played a significant role in drawing the public’s attention to past discrimination and advocating for social justice. In the early 20th century, many African Americans were migrating from the rural south to seek economic opportunities in northern cities, such as New York, Chicago, and Detroit. At this time, the Detroit Urban League sponsored garden contests in African American neighborhoods

to beautify overgrown yards and promote community engagement³. These home gardens later spread throughout the city and eventually expanded to vacant lots, where a group of black senior citizens known as the “Gardening Angels” developed intergenerational community gardens that thrived until the 1980s (Cialdella 2014).

The legacies of these programs are still alive today; a variety of community food organizations across the nation are working to challenge preexisting forms of institutionalized racism and address forms of environmental injustice that disproportionately affect people of color. In Detroit, black women activists using an ecofeminist perspective participate in urban agriculture to defy the racial and class-based obstacles to healthy food (White 2011). In Chicago and West Oakland, food deserts are being transformed into urban oases by and for people of color (Sbicca 2010; Block 2011). Here in Georgia, the Nation of Islam purchased farmland to grow organic food specifically for African Americans (Guthman 2008). Other programs include anti-oppression trainings, youth education programs, community nutrition classes, and community events designed to transform underserved communities (Sbicca 2010).

While alternative food institutions with an emphasis on food sovereignty for people of color do exist, people of color’s interest and participation in alternative food practices does not make community food less white (Slocum 2006). Contemporary urban agriculture remains dominated by whites and continues to be considered a white middle class activity (White 2011; Slocum 2006). When exclusions may not necessarily be physically visible, examining the structure of AFIs often reveal a disconnect between the mission to serve marginalized populations and the reality of white members’ limited scope of food justice due to their social

³ Smithsonian Gardens. 2013. “Gardens All on Their Own: African American Gardens in Detroit.” Retrieved Jan. 12, 2017 (<https://smithsoniangardens.wordpress.com/2013/02/12/gardens-all-their-own-early-african-american-gardens-in-detroit/>).

position. Organizations that employ narratives about diversifying their staff and engaging with diverse communities are still restricted in their ability to branch out; white employees often have “habits that keep them from fully understanding how racism, perceived or real, impacts African American participation” (Finney 2014: 103). People of color involved in AFIs may have perceptions in terms of a community’s needs that differ significantly from their white colleagues (Finney 2014: 107). The mainstream white narrative of “bringing good food to others” by recruiting disenfranchised communities’ involvement into community gardening fails to recognize the alternative food movement’s black origins (Guthman 2008). Viewing food justice as a gift from whites to people of color, rather than a tool to empower black communities to develop programs for themselves, often leaves participants disappointed when they realize that underserved community members do not actually resonate with these projects (Guthman 2008).

Theoretical Interventions to Reduce Racial Barriers in Community Gardens

Scholars examining the whiteness of AFIs often call for participants to use food justice frameworks and critical consciousness in order to address their racist or exclusionary practices (Slocum 2006; Straubhaar 2014). Both of these strategies involve the recognition of race and class privilege. Regarding community gardens as projects rooted in food justice may help to mold these spaces into potentially inclusive, anti-oppressive organizations that not only benefit the most underserved communities in theory, but also in practice.

Researchers describe food justice as being concerned with both access to and sovereignty over healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food in the context of institutionalized racism (Sbicca 2009). Rather than viewing food access issues from solely an economic perspective, a food justice framework “links food access to broader questions of power and political efficacy...[it] can help to illuminate the race and class privilege masked by this

approach” (Alkon and Norgaard 2009: 300). Acknowledging white power’s influence in the implicit exclusion of people of color from community gardens could have significant effects. Perceiving community gardening not only as a healthy social activity, but also as a form of food justice could extend the alternative food movement to include those who would benefit most from its practices in more meaningful ways. For instance, contemporary food justice projects initiated by white outsiders for communities of color may actually be “exacerbating the very systems of privilege and inequality they seek to ameliorate” (Passidomo 2014: 385). Guthman (2008: 433) explains the problematic nature of these efforts: “how the African Americans who are the target of these efforts appear to reject them in some sense replicates the very phenomenon being addressed—the effect of white desire to enroll black people in a particular set of food practices.” Implementing a food justice framework may promote social change in the form of people of color holding positions of power in community gardens, rather than simply being regarded as the targeted audience of AFIs’ missions (Sbicca 2010).

These racial boundaries within community gardens may be perpetuated by white people using the term “food justice” without offering a clear definition of what they believe that term means (Passidomo 2014). Whites may use the term without recognizing food justice’s inseparable links to institutionalized racism and white privilege (Passidomo 2014). Failing to recognize their social privilege and attempting to recruit minorities into the alternative food movement could result in the problematic “White Savior Complex.” Straubhaar (2014) explains this phenomenon as the white outsider believing that he possesses the key role in uplifting the poor and oppressed, ultimately reinforcing social hierarchies of power.

Scholars also suggest a critical consciousness and partnership approach to dismantle such oppressive systems of power (Straubhaar 2014; Baker et al 2013). At the core of Critical

Consciousness theory is the reflection and questioning of social structures that marginalize groups of people (Diemer et al. 2016). Those reflections allow individuals to address and consequently mobilize to change those perceived injustices. Community gardeners with high levels of critical consciousness would be able to recognize that whites disproportionately dominate the AFIs within which they work. That recognition would allow them to address that concern not only by recruiting people of color to join in their programs, but also, and more importantly, working alongside organizations that support people of color's food sovereignty goals. Community gardeners with low levels of critical consciousness would likely fail to acknowledge white privilege in AFIs, ignore the issue, and perhaps blame people of color for not being more involved. Paulo Freire, the developer of critical consciousness theory, argued that interventions designed to build awareness of social inequalities could foster and develop high levels of critical consciousness. For example, expanding school reading lists to include contemporary books on how race shapes academic achievement could instill in students the motivation to advocate for change (Diemer et al. 2016).

Community gardeners could implement such interventions to address structural racism within the alternative food movement. Scholars like Sbicca (2012), Alkon and Norgaard (2009), and Slocum (2007) define food justice as inherently concerned with issues of critical consciousness, race, and food sovereignty, and not solely with food security, charity, or colorblindness. Yet little research has been done to analyze whether community gardeners hold similar views as such scholars. Passidomo (2014) suggests that whites might not recognize food justice as concerned with institutionalized racism. I sought to better understand how a network of primarily white community gardeners perceived the term "food justice" in order to identify how and if race came into play in their narratives.

AFIs as Potential Spaces for the formation of Activist Identities

The Alternative Food movement, with its emphasis on “socially inclusive alternatives to the industrialized food system” and “community-level collective action” is inextricably linked to activism (Lyson 2014: 310-311). Community gardeners’ dedication to social change via alternative methods of food production may be framed as activism in that their approaches, at least in theory, both promote increased access of healthy foods to communities in need, and provide opportunities for individuals to participate in the alternative food movement. While the word “activism” may connote crowds of chanting citizens marching in the streets to support particular causes, the term’s literal definition is more nuanced, and in the realm of food justice, refers “very broadly to engagements that aim to change the food system, or activities associated with...the ‘alternative food movement’” (Brower 2013: 83).

Researchers suggest that activist spaces and identities can form through everyday life activities; activism should not be limited to ostentatious protests and similar political practices (Ophélie 2016; Almanzar, Sullivan-Catlin, and Deane 1998). Seemingly trivial practices, such as community gardening or other forms of AFI participation, may be fundamental strategies for social change (Ophélie 2016). Linking these everyday practices with the term “activist” promotes the creation “hemeratomias,” or ordinary alternative spaces central for social change (Ophélie 2016). Yet, in order to label individual, everyday behaviors as activism, one must know the motivations behind them to consider them as such (Almanzar et al. 1998). By interviewing the community gardeners in this study, that is precisely what I sought out to do.

Lyson (2014) regards community gardeners as “urban agriculture activists” based on their shared promotion of local urban food. Their activism takes shape through formal nonprofit work, or informal practices such as volunteering at farmers markets or participating in

community-supported agriculture exchanges. The activists that Lyson studied did not participate, at least not primarily, in conventional forms of activism such as protesting. Instead, they organized educational garden workshops with underserved populations such as youth or refugees, or simply grew “a substantial amount of their own food at their urban residences” (Lyson 2014: 318). Yet Lyson’s work suggests that the label of urban agriculture activists did not come from the community gardeners themselves.

Collective identity theory and social identity theory illuminate how community gardeners may develop such perceptions of their work as activism through group identity formation. Hunt and Benford (2004) highlight Marx’s focus on class-consciousness to explain such a phenomenon. Group members recognize that they possess shared values and interests, and identify that they belong to a particular social group (Stets and Burke 2000). That recognition is key in developing group solidarity. Preexisting solidarities, along with emotional connections to a particular cause, the perception of group-based injustice, and belief in the group’s value in achieving social change are strong motivating forces that lead people to join activist causes (Hunt and Benford 2004; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Curtin 2016). Members of any particular activist group share the same understanding of “some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change” in order to recruit other members “to act in concert to affect change” (Benford and Snow 2000: 615).

Community gardeners reported their three primary motivations for participating in food justice activism as the desire to challenge the industrial agriculture system, create inclusive communities, and educate and empower others to grow their own food (Lyson 2014). Collective identity, or those connections to the interests of a particular group, “obliges one to protest along with or on behalf of them” (Polletta and Jasper 2001). In the case of community gardens, that

form of protest may look more like Ophélie's (2016) subtle hemeratomias than conventional marching or chanting through the streets. Participation in activist activities "transforms activists' subsequent biographies," and can influence their personal identities long after one's involvement in a particular movement (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 296). This is true not only for people who participated intensely and for long durations of time, but also for those whose participation was more casual; in fact, members of social movements may view such casual involvement as an everyday form of activism (Polletta and Jasper 2001). Thus, participation in community gardens could be an essential step in developing a food justice activist identity.

While social movement scholars have focused on collective identity as critical for participating in activist causes, Bobel (2007) challenges that conception and recognizes the resistance of some social movement actors to identify as activists. While actions such as protests are somewhat normalized in contemporary American culture, activists possess "a marginalized social status that can be risky, time-consuming, and inconsistently rewarding" (Simi 2016: 491). Many people do not openly identify as activists nor participate in political activism in order to conform to certain standards of society (Simi 2016). Social movement actors with solidarities or emotional connections to a particular cause may participate in activism but refuse to call themselves activist; Bobel (2007) identifies this distinction between "doing activism" and "being activist." Activists in his study tended to claim that label only when they had achieved a level of rigor, fighting tirelessly and sometimes at extreme levels to bring about social change (Bobel 2007). Only those who "live the issue" earned the title of activist; those who participated in activism but did not identify as activists often mentioned that they knew someone else who was doing much more than they were (Bobel 2007). Previous research shows that environmentally conscious individuals prefer "lifestyle changes rather than activism," perhaps due to the intense

connotations that the word “activist” incites (Harvey 2016: 374). This conceptualization of lifestyle changes being disparate from activism contradicts Almanzar et al.’s (1998) notion of both practices existing on the same continuum.

Still other studies suggest that the conceptualization of activist identities is more complex than simply those who claim the identity and those who do not. Curtin (2016) creates distinctions between own-group activists and ally activists. Own-group activists recognize the collective disadvantages of their group, and contextualize those grievances through social action. Ally activists recognize the collective disadvantages of the out-group and privileges of the in-group that place them in a position to advocate for social change on behalf of others. Being aware of one’s privilege, or developing a kind of critical consciousness that Straubhaar (2014) and Diemer et al. (2016) suggest, both recruits individuals into activist causes and allows activists to leverage that privilege as a resource for advocacy. In the case of community gardeners, whites could potentially develop ally activist identities to engage with food sovereignty issues of people of color with limited access to healthy foods.

AFIs, Activism, and Race: Relevancy in Atlanta

As an ethnically diverse city with a recent surge of urban farming and community gardening, Atlanta is a key location to study the intersections between AFIs, race, and activism. The 2015 census reported that about 53% of Atlanta’s residents are African American, 40% are white, 5% are Hispanic or Latino, and 4% are Asian⁴. Due to systematic displacement, commonly referred to as gentrification, the black population in Atlanta has steadily decreased over the past two decades, while the white population has increased; in 1990 black people made

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2010. “Community Facts.” Retrieved on December 10, 2016 (<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>).

up 67% of the city's population and whites made up 31% (Aka 2010). Atlanta, as a city positioned in the South, has a deep, tragic history rooted in slavery and the exploitation of black bodies within the natural environment and food system.

The consequences of that history remain significant today. Institutionalized racism in the form of supermarket redlining has produced striking inequities within the food system, leaving thousands of people without access to fresh produce and other nutritious foods. In Atlanta, hundreds of households are located over one mile away from a supermarket and do not own a vehicle (Ver Ploeg et al. 2011). Many of those households are located in food deserts that are predominantly comprised of people of color. Meanwhile, predominantly white neighborhoods in Atlanta are expanding and thriving. In 2015, researchers found that Atlanta had the highest level of income inequality of all U.S. cities, with the top 5% of households earning nearly 20 times as much as the bottom 20% (Morath 2015). In the midst of these issues of income inequality, systematic displacement, and unequal access to food, community gardens and urban farms have been on the rise. Since the Atlanta Regional Commission created the Atlanta Local Food Initiative in 2005, gardens have continued to spring up; there are now over 100 community gardens and urban farms throughout the city.⁵ Recognizing the food injustice prevalent in this city, the 2005 initiative was created “out of a collective need for and commitment to a transformed Atlanta food system, in which every citizen, regardless of socio-economic status will have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food.”⁶

At a time when food justice appears to be a high priority for Atlanta, determining who are the stakeholders within the alternative food movement is essential. Understanding who community gardeners are in Atlanta and how they view their work are the first steps toward

⁵ Atlanta Regional Commission. 2016. “Atlanta Local Food Initiative.” Retrieved December 12, 2016 (<http://www.atlantaregional.com/environment/atlanta-local-food-initiative>).

⁶ Ibid.

building a food system that empowers people of color to lead progressive food movements in their city. Recognizing perceptions of the term “food justice” as well as who identifies as a food justice activist, informs how the alternative food movement must advance to truly benefit those most in need.

Methods

In order to obtain my sample of community gardeners in Atlanta, I reached out via email to approximately one dozen organizations in Atlanta, 8 of them non-profits, that are involved with community gardening or urban agriculture. I had several contacts due to previous volunteer experience working with three of the organizations, and I was able to conduct a simple Internet search to connect with other similar organizations around Atlanta. I conducted follow-up emails and phone calls to people who were interested in participating or willing to share my email with community gardeners that they knew. I connected with the first 20 people who reached out to me directly stating that they would be willing to be interviewed. I conducted interviews from November 2016 through February 2017. I met with participants at a mutually agreed upon location, either a community garden that they were involved in, or a coffee shop. I asked participants questions about their history of and current involvement with community gardening, previous and current activist experiences, and their perceptions of food justice. 4 interviews were conducted over the phone and 1 was conducted over Skype. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes.

I recorded, transcribed, thematically coded, and analyzed all of the interviews. I used abductive analysis, as I encountered surprising observations that did not fit existing theories in terms of both food justice narratives and activist identities. Abductive analysis is a pragmatist approach

that emphasizes the interrelation among theory, observations, and methods and requires a continuous process of speculation (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). It requires that researchers possess familiarity with existing theories throughout every research step and aims to produce new hypotheses or theories based on qualitative findings. Unlike many qualitative researchers who use a grounded theory approach, I extended existing theory to a new, practical area when I found unexpected observations; I considered existing theories of social movement activism and conceptualizations of food justice in relation to those surprising observations. I also perceived observations in relationship to one another, such as role category, race, and narratives employed.

All of those 12 organizations that I originally contacted, along with 8 others, are represented by the 20 participants I interviewed, either through past work or volunteer experience, or through personal or work connections. Most of the participants mentioned other organizations or other people involved with urban agriculture organizations at some point in the interview. At the end of the interviews, participants often recommended additional individuals for me to contact who also participate in community gardening. Because I used snowball sampling, I gained insight into a particular network of community gardeners in Atlanta (Kowald and Axhausen 2012). That network also likely represents gardeners that are highly involved and invested in community gardening and willing to share their experiences with a stranger, and/or have enough free time to meet for an interview without compensation.

The sample contained 20 individuals, 16 of whom are women and 4 of whom are men. Participants' age ranged from 22 years old to 78 years old, with most participants in their 50s or 60s. One man, Jamal, is African American; one woman, Amara, is half African American, half white; one woman, Camila, is Hispanic. The other 17 participants are white. I acknowledge that as a white woman not directly involved in the community gardening projects of my participants,

I may have been viewed as an outsider, and they thus may not have shared sensitive information with me about their perceptions of race and/or food justice. The few people of color in my study may have been particularly hesitant or uncomfortable sharing such information with me due to a lack of a perceived space of trust due to my lighter skin (Finney; Twine 2000). Still, Amara, Jamal, and Camila each explicitly mentioned race in their narratives of food justice, as I describe in the analysis in the pages that follow, which suggests that I attained a certain degree of rapport with them.

Participants were classified into three role categories: plot holders, volunteers, and employees. Participants self-identified as belonging to one of those three categories based on the nature of their involvement with their particular community garden(s). My sample consisted of 4 plot holders, 5 volunteers, and 11 employees. Plot holders reported paying a fee of anywhere from \$10-\$100 a year in exchange for a plot of land, usually about 5 feet by 8 feet, in a community garden. They are free to grow what they please in their own plot and usually sign a contract agreeing to dedicate a certain amount of volunteer hours to the garden each year. Plot holders typically reported spending around 2-4 hours a week working in their respective community gardens.

Volunteers who made up the second category dedicated their time to improve community gardens without compensation. Most of the volunteers had completed a Master Gardener certification, which involves intensive horticultural training, often at a college or university, followed by regular community service projects, including environmental education, research, and garden maintenance and building. The volunteers in my sample reported volunteering with school gardens, working with groups such as Girl Scouts, and working on other environmental

projects such as native plant restoration sites. Volunteers reported working in community gardens anywhere from 2 hours or less a week to 40 or 50 hours a week.

The 11 employees worked for a total of 7 distinct organizations and received compensation. Some employees were community garden managers or coordinators, others were volunteer coordinators, and others held executive positions. One woman, Pam, works for a real estate management company that is beginning to build community gardens in apartment complexes. Several employees, like Pam, have been involved with community gardening for a few years or less. Others have dedicated two or three decades to this work. Employees ranged from part-time (10 hours a week) to full-time (40 hours a week).

FINDINGS

Food Justice Narratives

Throughout the interviews, when I asked participants to explain what food justice means to them, three predominant narratives arose, each acknowledging white privilege or explicitly evoking race in varying degrees. I call the first narrative the charity narrative, as it relates to giving away food to those in need. The second narrative is the educational narrative, which highlights community gardens as an educational tool that could be used to achieve food justice. The third narrative is called the empowerment narrative, because it is concerned with explicitly empowering people of color to achieve food sovereignty through community gardening.

Table 1 summarizes whether community gardeners used charity, educational, or empowerment narratives. “X”s represent that a participant expressed a particular narrative. Eight participants (40%) articulated only one narrative, and seven participants (35%) articulated more than one narrative. Five participants (25%) did not express any of the three narratives. The table

is organized by role category, with participants who are most involved positioned at the bottom of each category. For example, Kirsten worked the greatest number of hours per week out of all of the volunteers, and Grace, Isabel, and Jamal held executive positions in their respective organizations.

Charity Narrative

The first narrative, which I call the charity narrative, is one reminiscent of that found in Guthman's (2008) *Bringing Good Food to Others*, and often included mentions of donating food to food banks, or giving away surplus food grown at community gardens to individuals in need. Participants who used this narrative highlighted the importance of everyone having access to healthy food. They viewed donating fresh produce from community gardens to communities in need as a significant way to address food security issues. One of the employees, Tom, who supports over 100 community gardens in Atlanta through his work, explained:

Some of the gardens donate a portion [of the crops to the food bank], or they have a plot that is dedicated to donating, and then they have other people that grow big gardens for the expressed purpose of donating everything...in the last two years we have hit 180,000 pounds of donated food.

Another employee, Casey, who works part-time as a garden director, said: "We design a program to provide food for some underserved communities, and I'm always trying to figure out how to get excess food to somebody that's not me." Nancy, a volunteer, mentioned a program initiated by her fellow Master Gardeners to transport surplus produce from local community gardens: "...They take that [food] throughout some of the more depressed areas...and they have a route that they go each week and sell that produce to people who don't have easy access to it otherwise." Camila, who is a garden manager, talked about a similar program that she helped to implement in her community:

Sometimes we have an excess of stuff...so we'll package that up as we're going around the neighborhood delivering to seniors, you'll see somebody outside and just ask them if they want some produce...so we ended up giving away, we had like, I don't know, 100 something bags of greens that we gave away.

Two employees from the same organization, Jason and Isabel, mentioned free farmers market programs that they had developed to give food away to people in need, and Helen, a volunteer, spoke about how she had given away plots for free to members of her community who are “struggling financially.” Participants who did not directly participate in such programs also tended to associate the terms “food justice” or “food justice activism” with food distribution programs such as those described above. Jill, a master gardener, said: “So as a food activist I think I would be gardening and going into apartment complexes in communities where I know there's need and trailer parks...but I don't go into those communities.” When utilizing this charity narrative, some participants used highly sympathetic language or became visibly emotional; Nancy began to cry when I asked her what food justice means to her. Tom said: “It's very powerful to give your food directly to a family that's gonna put it on their table that night with these little kids with big brown eyes looking up at you and they're beautiful and amazing and you wanna help them.”

Educational Narrative

The educational narrative viewed achieving food justice by means of agriculture as an educational tool. Participants frequently mentioned offering classes or community programs to get more individuals involved with community gardening. Jamal, who started his own organization involving urban agriculture, explained that part of his work involves offering educational programs to senior citizens: “So several times a week I'll go to a garden and meet with the gardeners, and sometimes we'll do a formal education activity where I'll be presenting

stuff to them and, you know, just a learning teachable moment in the classroom.” Kristen, a Master Gardener spoke of her volunteer work with school gardens:

We take anything in the garden and look at the garden and tie in with the curriculum, how we can work in gardening and build a successful experience for the students to grow a seed on their own, to grow a carrot...and then from a literature standpoint then writing on it reflecting, presenting.

Jason, who runs an after-school garden program with children, said: “Food justice to me is providing an opportunity to people to learn how to grow some of their own food.” Several gardeners mentioned their involvement as a good example for others to follow; the visibility of gardening in public spaces allows people to view their practices and perhaps get involved with similar food justice activist activities in the future. Helen, for example, said: “People can come and they can see practice that we’re doing and we have classes and stuff that shows them that they can take home to do at their own homes.” Matt, a plot holder, expressed similar sentiments: “Just showing people by doing, that they can do it themselves too and encouraging people to come in and be gardeners with us is, that’s important activism I think.” Statements highlighting the ease of learning how to grow one’s own food, such as “anybody can garden” or “it’s not rocket science,” often accompanied this educational narrative.

Empowerment Narrative

The empowerment narrative differs significantly from the charity narrative, stressing the importance of inspiring communities in need to achieve food justice for and by themselves, rather than offering free donations. Participants who used this narrative mentioned the fact that their job was primarily to support community gardens without interfering too much or taking total ownership over the garden. Tom explains:

We are just lifting them up when they need a little help...we are just there to hold up the existing structure, the infrastructure, and the human social network in the garden and not make it look like we are running it or tell them how to do it or what to do.

Participants who utilized empowerment narratives sometimes articulated their perceived drawbacks of a charity narrative. Amara, for example, who works in a community garden in a predominantly African American neighborhood, said:

If your goal of your program is to improve a community, the end goal should be for your job to not be necessary. You shouldn't be coming in from outside forever to help them...It's not just about producing food and giving it to people, it's about empowering people to invest in their own communities.

Community gardeners like Amara that used empowerment narratives focused on the long-term outcomes of their involvement, and reported gaining information about the needs of a community before implementing any programs. Grace, who works at the same community garden, expressed a similar concern:

I kind of indirectly see where sometimes the folks in this community have a negative view of outsiders coming in, particularly white outsiders coming in and...this is not my words, this is their words, that they stay long enough just to get their picture taken with a bunch of black kids and then they're outta here.

Others emphasized their role in achieving food justice as assuring that communities in need participate in gardening on their own terms. Karen, for instance, who is developing a community garden in a predominantly Latino neighborhood, mixed charity and empowerment narratives when she said: "I'm gonna be giving them fresh free or inexpensive fresh grown vegetables and the ability to grow them themselves if they wish." She employs a key aspect of the empowerment narrative here, ensuring that involvement is never forced and expectation of

participation is never assumed. Jamal explicitly conveyed his desire to empower African American communities through food production:

I come to this work from a Nationalist perspective, like I always have thought that we needed to be more responsible, and when I say ‘we’ I mean African Americans, be more responsible for our own food, clothing, and shelter production in order to develop as a nation within a nation.

As demonstrated by participants’ responses, community gardeners using empowerment narratives tended to speak explicitly about race when offering their perceptions of food justice, especially in comparison to those using charity narratives.

Different Narratives Across Role Categories

These three food justice narratives differed significantly based on participants’ role category within community gardening (as either a plot holder, volunteer, or employee). While plot holders tended to speak about food justice in ways that evaded any of the three narratives altogether, volunteers mostly used charity narratives, and employees tended to use all three narratives. See Table 1 for breakdowns of which participants used which narratives.

Plot Holders

None of the plot holders expressed any of the aforementioned food justice narratives. They did not mention donating food, educating others, nor empowering communities from within. Instead, when asked about food justice, they had comparatively brief responses about access and equality. One plot holder, Izzie, said: “To me it means sort of equitable access to nutritious foods, it means that produce and healthy options are available to everybody and not just to somebody that lives in an affluent area that has a Whole Foods.” Anne said: “I mean what it makes me think about is that food be grown in such a way that everybody can have access to

healthy food and good food.” While some plot holders tended to address privilege or systems of power, they did not explicitly mention the ways that they strived to achieve food justice, either through charity, educational programs, or empowerment initiatives. Matt, for example, said:

Here in an urban setting like we’re at I think, we have a lot of food injustice in that people who are...people who make less money have less access to really fresh, healthy, living foods that come with privilege or access to land to garden. I guess to me food justice would be about access to real healthy stuff without having to be sort of enmeshed in the whole corporate distribution system, agribusiness.

Matt’s mentioning agribusiness was part of a key theme in plot holder’s responses to food justice’s meaning. They tended to describe food justice as something for which larger institutions were responsible and culpable. Lily invokes fast-food chains, media, and lack of nutritional information as primary sources of food injustice:

I think one of the problems with the fast food movement has been the access is so easy, the prices have been relatively low compared with restaurants and maybe even with buying your own food and cooking it and so forth. But also the aggressive marketing and lack of proper education about nutrition and about obesity and all that kind of thing, it’s all tied together.

Plot holders’ food justice narratives contrasted with those of volunteers and employees in that they seldom connected their involvement with community gardening to issues of food justice. Gardening was a personal hobby, while food injustice was another matter entirely.

Volunteers

Volunteers mostly expressed charity narratives. Four out of the five volunteers (80%) used charity narratives when they explained what food justice means to them or at other points throughout their interviews. Three out of those four individuals used only charity narratives and

did not employ either of the other two. Daniele, for instance, spoke about charity quite explicitly throughout her interview:

Here in the U.S. I know there's a lot of people who are hungry, especially since 2008...and so I do contribute to the local community food bank, but I know a lot of that is canned food and...so I see the need for more food at different levels like school children or local homeless shelters...I mean I do contribute to organizations like that, charitable organizations.

Helen articulated similar sentiments: “I think it’s important in our community to do what we can, which is us taking over [produce] to the co-op and us giving a couple [free] beds to families.”

Kristen, who volunteers full time (50 hours a week) with an organization involved with community gardens in schools, was the only volunteer who used empowerment food justice narratives. Her responses aligned more with those of employees, who expressed all three narratives. She also overtly used language of empowerment when describing food justice, although her focus was more on students than people of color:

So food justice, even though somebody might not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, to know how to grow it and learn themselves allows for that justice. For students to learn how to do it themselves, if within the environment that they’ve been born out of no choice of their own can’t get to those things, to understand or to have a vote on what they wish to eat...I think it’s primarily giving students the knowledge of what they can do to empower them...

Employees

As conveyed previously, most employees articulated more than one narrative throughout their interviews. Camila, for example spoke about giving bags of extra collard greens away to people, and also conveyed the importance of keeping the cost of plots to \$20 a year “because I want those single moms or single dads or the elderly person [participating].” She also highlighted the importance of being cognizant not to give all the plots away to “young white people” from outside the community and to protect the garden’s unique diversity: “I love having

them [young white people] in the garden, I just can't have a garden full of them." Isabel, who spoke about giving away food at free farmers markets, also recognized that low-income, minority communities have both the desire and knowledge to achieve food justice for themselves:

We went into our first meeting with them years ago and we were like 'we're gonna be bringing you a garden and you're gonna love it and you're gonna realize how much value it is.' But everyone in that room said 'I want access to food, I want healthier choices, I wanna eat organically, I wanna eat because I don't wanna get sick.' They were all of the reasons that everybody else was saying. We just for some reason assumed that this, you know, group was not going to be saying these things, and they did.

Stacy similarly acknowledged potentially problematic aspects of such charity narratives:

"There's a group where I live that was actually going into Atlanta bringing fresh food for some of the people that were homeless in a park... So in theory, these people were doing a great thing."

But she explains that the group's efforts were all for naught. The population they were attempting to serve either did not want that food because their "palette [was] not used to really good food" or they would eat the produce and spend the money that they would have used on food for that day on drugs. She goes on to hint at educational and empowerment narratives, "I think everyone deserves to be exposed and to be able to grow or purchase fresh food."

Employees thus valued donating food, educating people about growing their own food, and empowering disenfranchised communities to achieve food justice for and by themselves.

Food Justice Activist Identities Linked to Narratives

Before asking participants about food justice activism, I asked them simply if they considered themselves to be activists or had participated in forms of activism in the past. Their responses confirmed Bobel's (2007) findings. Participants who identified as activists were

hesitant to do so. Most participants associated the word “activism” with traditional forms of protesting or marching, and made it clear that they were not engaging in that kind of activism. Responses to the question ‘Do you consider yourself to be an activist?’ included: “Yes, in a more subtle slow turtle kind of way;” “Yes, in a small way;” “I’m kind of a quiet activist;” and “In some ways I am but I’m not a flaming activist.” Participants often followed up by telling me that they knew someone or could think of someone who was doing much more activism work than they were.

While most of the gardeners were hesitant or reluctant to claim the title of activist, the majority of participants ultimately told me that they consider themselves to be an activist. 14 out of the 20 participants (70%) expressed this notion, with several citing past activist experiences such as marching or protesting for causes they believe in. Across all role categories, respondents tended to associate activism with conventional, “loud” methods of protesting and marching. Plot holders, volunteers, and employees all mentioned activists being “out there banging on doors and getting petitions signed,” “in opposition to something,” “out in the streets,” “holding up signs and yelling chants” and “getting arrested for something [they] believe in.” Kristen, the full-time volunteer, said: “I don’t like the connotative meanings of activist, activism, because I would like to believe that I am open-minded and respect people coming from different places and different perspectives.” Sometimes, participants viewed their work in community gardening to be a form of activism. One plot holder, Matt explained:

That stepping outside of agribusiness as the sole source for what we eat is important in my own life. My own participation in that matters, but I also do it as sort of an example for others. The community garden is great for that because of these audiences that we have coming through, and just showing people by doing...that’s important activism I think.

When asked specifically about food justice activist identities, on the other hand, responses significantly differed by role category (between employees, volunteers, and plot holders) and the type of food justice narratives they employed. Employees, who were far more likely to express educational and empowerment narratives than plot holders or volunteers, also identified as food justice activists far more often. Nine out of the 11 employees (82%) identified as food justice activists, whereas none of the five volunteers (0%) and only one of the four plot holders (25%) identified as such. See Table 2 for details.

Employees who viewed their own work as a form of food justice activism seemed to expand their notions of activism to broader scopes than the conventional methods stated previously. Casey, a part-time employee and garden director, explained: “I mean I think of activism as this kind of resistance to the norm, and so we can be activists just by educating ourselves and sharing that education with others.” Jason, who works work children in an after-school gardening program and considered himself to be an introvert, said: “I like to think that just disseminating knowledge that I’ve gained from my experiences...is a form of activism in itself.” Maria, talking about her community gardening work as activism, said:

Helping to create a beautiful space for people to be, to experience relaxation and tranquility and peace...To me [activism is] that empowerment of having that skill of growing your own food, of having that connection to the earth and to your food, of watching the kids especially understand, give food an origin and place it in a solid context.

Jamal said: “To me the greatest activism that I could be involved in at this point is increasing production in our communities so that we can offer folks locally grown food in abundance.”

Eight out of 9 (89%) of the employees who expressed empowerment narratives also identified as food justice activists. Two individuals expressed empowerment narratives but did not identify as food justice activists. Kristen, who volunteers with school gardens, and Karen, who recently got

involved with community gardening through her job, both explained that they do not like the connotative meanings of activism.

The eight employees who both articulated empowerment narratives and identified as food justice activists all reported having direct contact with people of color through their work in community gardens. Notably, Jamal, Maria, and Amara, who identified as members of a racial or minority group, were three of those eight employees (38%). Two other community gardeners reported having direct contact with people of color through their work, but did not articulate empowerment narratives. Karen conveyed both charity and empowerment narratives, but was hesitant to call herself an activist, initially responding: “No, not at all” but then followed up with: “but I think people who grew up in the 60s like I did, you don’t call yourself an activist, but you are. It’s just inbred in you, you see a wrong, you wanna make it right.” Finally, Helen, who directly works with Latino populations as well, did not consider herself to be an activist or her work to be a form of activism. Prior contact with people of color in another capacity had no influence on one’s food justice activist identity.

Discussion

I found that more intensive role category, use of empowerment narratives, minority identities or interactions, and food justice activist identities were all positively correlated. In other words, participants who spent 40 hours a week involved with community gardening projects also tended to use empowerment narratives and identify as food justice activists more than their counterparts who were less involved. Kristen, for instance, was the only volunteer to express empowerment narratives, and she spends significantly more time with community garden projects (50 hours a week compared to 2-10 hours a week) than her fellow volunteers. Because Kirsten dedicates just as much time as employees (if not more), her work with

community gardens appears to be a priority, rather than a hobby. In this sense, she shares the same intense involvement as employees despite (or because of) the fact that she does not get paid for her work. The three predominant narratives that participants expressed demonstrate their perceptions of food justice as connected to both food security and food sovereignty. Charity narratives invoked messages of food security, particularly of advantaged groups giving away or bringing free food to those in need. Empowerment narratives invoked messages of food sovereignty, highlighting the importance of disadvantaged groups playing a leading role in achieving food justice for and by their own efforts. Educational narratives fell somewhere in between that spectrum. Many participants invoked all three narratives almost interchangeably throughout the interviews.

Plot holders, all of whom are white, only used vague descriptions of food justice and did not consider themselves to be food justice activists. Meanwhile, volunteers, who dedicated slightly more time to community gardening, used primarily charity narratives to talk about food justice. Employees who dedicated still more time, and likely more effort to community gardening, and who identified with a minority identity or frequently engaged with people of color, identified as food justice activists and used educational and empowerment narratives much more frequently than the former two role categories.

These findings directly contradict Polletta and Jasper's (2001) research that suggests that even casual participation in a particular cause could influence an individual's personal biography and lead to the formation of an activist identity. Perhaps the key feature of that transformation is recognizing one's work as activism. The community gardeners that I interviewed, particularly the plot holders and volunteers, failed to view their participation as a form of activism. Instead, they often viewed it as an activity for their own personal benefit. Further research should explore

the role of an individual's identification of activist causes in the formation of activist identities, along with the motivations behind individual everyday activist practices that Almanzar et al. (1998) call for.

Identifying as a person of color or engaging with people of color on a regular basis through one's community gardening work were both positively correlated with food justice activist identities and empowerment narratives. Acknowledging race differences, rather than dismissing them, thus related to participants' urge to empower communities by growing their own food, not simply give them free food. These findings suggest that employing critical consciousness could impact community gardeners' abilities to become ally activists in the fight for food sovereignty. Previous scholarship has called for "more reflexivity on the part of whites and those with different forms of privilege to find ways to build a diverse food and farming movement that actively engages structural inequality" (Sbicca 2010: 23). Future longitudinal research is needed to address the efficacy of potential critical consciousness intervention programs' impact on community gardeners' food justice narratives and activist identities.

Future longitudinal research could also offer insight about how and when community gardeners' use of narratives shifts. The findings in this study demonstrate that plot holders, volunteers, and employees, spoke distinctly about food justice. But it would be incorrect to assume that community gardeners' narratives develop from charity to empowerment as their involvement in the alternative food movement increases. Scholars should explore how people who advance in levels of involvement (from plot holders to volunteers to employees) gain or shift their food justice narratives over time. Further research should also determine whether engaging with people of color through their work was a more salient factor than role category in terms of impacting activist identities or altering food justice narratives.

My findings directly contrast previous scholars' perceptions of food justice being concerned primarily with issues of food sovereignty. Sbicca (2010) goes to great lengths to conceptualize the food justice movement as something separate from charity. He notes food banks, soup kitchens, and other public services as forms of charity distinct from food justice programs. Yet, when the community gardeners that I interviewed employed charity narratives, they were explicitly associating food justice with those forms of charity aiming to improve disadvantaged peoples' food security situation. Sbicca (2010: 23) writes, "while charity may often be a better response to social problems than nothing at all, it is insufficient to overcome structural inequalities...this reactionary paradigm will always be playing catch up to the problems resulting from a structural nature." Slocum (2006: 341-343) articulates a similar point, "food security cannot be divorced from the issues of concern to communities...without attention to social relations, community food and similar movements will remain limited in scope no matter how welcoming or inclusive they aim to be." My findings suggest that there is a disconnect between the way scholars conceptualize food justice and the way that food justice activists do.

Alkon and Norgaard (2009:289) point out that a current theoretical and political gap exists "between scholarship and activism on sustainable agriculture" (Alkon and Norgaard 2009: 289). My findings stand in direct contrast to two current trends in scholarship in regards to food justice conceptualizations and casual social movement participation influencing activist identities and could have substantial implications for closing this gap (Sbicca 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001). Scholars are conceptualizing food justice in completely different ways than community gardeners. My findings suggest that we should study food justice not only from the perspective of scholars, but also from the perspective of people effectively striving to improve the food

system. Scholars are taking for granted that community gardeners are “urban agriculture activists” concerned with issues of institutionalized racism while community gardeners are either at best, hesitant to call themselves activists, or at worst, unfamiliar with the term food justice and its connection to racial inequity. At this rate, issues of race in the alternative food movement may perpetuate due to the lack of critical consciousness on members’ part. Structural inequalities limiting people of color’s access to healthy food will not subside without understanding food justice’s inextricable links to racism and actively advocating for anti-racist policies and practices. Critical consciousness intervention programs should be implemented in community gardens, schools, and elsewhere to address white privilege and whiteness as a system of power. Future research should continue to explore the narratives that community gardeners and others involved in the alternative food movement use to discuss food justice, and how those narratives relate to their perceptions of food justice activism.

Future research should also examine whether such gaps between scholarship and activism occur in social movement contexts other than the alternative food movement. Researchers might find that scholars are discussing trends in ways that do not align with social movement actors’ perceptions of their own advocacy work. This potential disjunction could have significant obstructive consequences for achieving progress through social justice activism. Rather than utilizing a top-down approach to analyze social activism spaces, scholars should value bottom-up methods to process information from social movement actors firsthand in order to make sense of such complex systems.

In the early stages of this study, I intended to explore the differences in food justice activist identities of whites and ethnic and racial minorities. Because African Americans make up over half of Atlanta’s population, I expected to receive responses from interested community

gardeners that were a relatively equal mix of whites and people of color. However, my sample turned out to be predominantly white, further proving previous scholars' work on alternative food institutions as white spaces. Due to my racially homogenous sample, I decided to shift my focus to analyze the various food justice narratives that were expressed in the interviews, and the connections between those narratives and participants' activist identities. Because the focus of my analysis shifted throughout the process, my initial interview questions did not target the question of differing food justice narratives as well as I would have preferred. I also recognize the limitations of conceptualizing race solely based on one's physical appearance; I only asked one participant with what race or ethnicity she identified, I felt that the race or ethnicity of all of the other participants was clear, but that was left up to my personal deductions.

What are the implications of community gardeners equating food justice to food security? What are the implications of white people going into food deserts, and recruiting people of color to participate in community gardening? Montalvo (2015) recognizes the dilemma of community food becoming dominated by whites, and poses a poignant question to AFIs: "what would our work look like if we shifted from asking how to 'attract diversity' to our organizations, and instead asked how to dismantle the cultures that oppress communities of color on a regular basis?" My findings on food security vs. food sovereignty narratives and food justice activism may lead us one step further in dismantling those cultures of privilege and oppression. Previous research discusses the potential for social change when activists recognize their own privilege, and use a critical consciousness approach to act as ally activists (Curtin 2016; Straubhaar 2014). If all white community gardeners were able to recognize their white privilege and work as ally activists alongside people of color, instead of bringing them free vegetables, how would the alternative food movement change? If we acknowledge race, recognize the true roots of the

community gardening movement, and make food sovereignty a priority, how would the future of food look?

Table 1: Role Category and Food Justice Narratives

	Charity Narrative	Educational Narrative	Empowerment Narrative
Plot Holders			
Izzie			
Anne			
Matt			
Lily			
Volunteers			
Helen	X	X	
Jill	X		
Nancy	X		
Daniele	X		
Kristen			X
Employees			
Tracy			
Amara			X
Casey	X	X	
Karen	X		X
Stacy	X	X	X
Jason	X	X	X
Tom	X	X	X
Camila	X	X	X
Grace			X
Isabel	X	X	X
Jamal			X

Table 2: Role Category and Activist Identities

	Activist Identity	Food Justice Activist Identity
Plot Holders		
Izzie		
Anne	X	
Matt	X	X
Lily		
Volunteers		
Helen		
Jill		
Nancy	X	
Daniele	X	
Kristen	X	
Employees		
Tracy		
Amara	X	X
Casey	X	X
Karen		
Stacy	X	X
Jason	X	X
Tom	X	X
Camila	X	X
Grace	X	X
Isabel	X	X
Jamal	X	X

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Recruitment Email

Dear gardener,

My name is Andrea Abbate, I am an honors student in the Sociology Department at Emory University. I am conducting some research on community garden participation and activist identities. I am looking for participants for this study who are willing to be interviewed for approximately one hour. All information collected would be kept confidential and anonymous. I am looking for participants who work or volunteer with community gardens or urban farms in the Atlanta area and that are at least 18 years old.

The interview will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon public location at a time and date that is convenient for you. I am unable to provide compensation for your time, but your participation is essential for my study and will be greatly appreciated.

Your participation will be completely voluntary, and you may choose to end your participation at any time.

If you are interested in being interviewed, please contact me by email at andrea.denise.abbate@emory.edu. You may also contact me by phone at 631-603-4627. If you are unsure of whether you wish to participate and would like to ask me any questions before deciding, please contact me and I will be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Andrea Abbate
Honors Student, Department of Sociology
Emory University

Appendix 2

Consent to Be A Research Subject

Title: *Community Garden Participation*

Principal Investigator: Andrea Abbate

Faculty Advisor: Melissa Pirkey

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

You are being invited to participate in a research study on how participation in community gardens is related to activist identities. I am asking you to participate because you have experience working or volunteering with community gardens or urban farms in the Atlanta area. Approximately 20 people will be interviewed for this research study. This study is being conducted for my honors thesis under the direction of Melissa Pirkey.

PROCEDURE

If you agree to participate, I will interview you for about an hour at a mutually agreed upon public location. The questions will be about your experience working and/or volunteering with community gardens, and your experience with activism. I will tape record the interview with your consent. These voice recordings will be transcribed and immediately destroyed.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this interview.

BENEFITS

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally. The information you provide, however, will add to our knowledge about community gardens and forms of activism.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will not include your name in the study results, but your position in the organization might be included. If you feel uncomfortable, quotations or narratives can be left out of the analysis at your discretion. You will never be asked for any personal information beyond your perceptions of your work, volunteer, and activism experience. All research records and recorded interviews will be kept in a locked secure location.

People other than those doing the research may look at the study records. Emory departments and committees that make rules and policy about how research is done have the right to review these records. We will keep all records that we produce private to the extent we are required to do so by law.

CONTACT PERSONS

If you have any questions, I invite you to ask them now. If you have any questions about the study later, you may contact me at adabbat@emory.edu or 631-603-4627. You may also contact my advisor, Professor Melissa Pirkey, at Melissa.pirkey@emory.edu.

Thank you for meeting with me today. This interview, as you may well know, is about your experiences with Alternative Food Institutions. I would like to learn more about your involvement with (insert organization name) and I am interested in how the organization operates as a whole. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? As we already discussed, you can ask me any questions you like during the interview and you may choose to decline answering any of my questions.

Part A--Personal Involvement in Alternative Food Institutions/ Community Gardens:

I would like to start by asking you a few questions about your background and previous involvement in alternative food institutions.

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your career path and how you started working/volunteering with community gardens?
2. Have you had similar jobs in the past?
3. What is your current job title and how long have you held the position?
4. Could you describe your current position for me? What are your roles and responsibilities?
5. Could you describe a typical day of work for me?
6. How many hours do you work each week?
7. What are some challenges you face in this work?

8. If you were trying to encourage people to volunteer for (insert organization name), what might you say are some benefits of working in the garden?

If all benefits are directly related to food/helping others, follow up with:

- a) Do you think there are any benefits beyond helping to provide food to those in need?

9. How do you feel you contribute the organization?

Part B--Questions for Employees About the Structure of the Alternative Food Institution/Community Garden:

Now, I would like to shift our focus to get a better understanding of the organization as a whole.

10. Could you tell me a little bit about the history of (insert organization name)?

- a) How were the community gardens developed? When and why did they develop?
b) What are the goals of the organization?

11. How many paid employees work for (insert organization name)?

12. How does (insert organization name) decide where a community garden will be built?

13. How do the community gardens work?

(For example, who takes care of the gardens? Who makes decisions about what gets planted?)

14. How many people typically work in the gardens on any given day?

15. Who is usually working?

(I will not give them prompts to see what they say at first, but if they are struggling to answer the question I will offer the following)

- a) Are they mostly volunteers, mostly community members, an equal mix of both?
b) Are there many employees there as well?

- c) Are they younger people or older people?
- d) Are they diverse? Do they come from different communities around Atlanta?

16. How much does (insert organization name) rely on volunteers?

17. Could you tell me how volunteers connect with particular community garden projects?

18. Do certain community gardens receive more volunteers than others? Why might that be?

19. Do you often talk with other people when you're at the garden?

a) If YES,

- i. What kinds of things do you talk about? (*Ask them to elaborate—they may only exchange pleasantries, but not hold conversations.*)
- ii. Are the people that you talk with mostly from the community?

b) If NO,

- i. Why do you think that is? (*They may say that they are there alone*)

20. Do you have any goals to improve (insert organization name)?

21. What is your vision of the organization for the future?

Part C--Questions about Food Justice Activist Identity:

Now, I would like to move on to hear about (insert organization name)'s impact on you personally.

22. Have you enjoyed your time working at (insert organization name)?

23. What do you think you've gained from this experience, if anything?

24. Are you familiar with the terms "Alternative Food Institution" or "Community Food Organizations?"

- a) If yes: What are your thoughts about these organizations in general?
- b) If no: what do you think they might mean?

25. Do you think (insert organization name) is an Alternative Food Institution or Community Food Organization?

- a) If yes: Why? Why might that label be important?
- b) If no: Why not?

26. What does food justice mean to you?

27. Do you consider yourself an activist?

28. Have you ever participated in a form of activism? For what cause?

29. Do you consider your work at (insert organization name) to be a form of activism?

- a) If yes: How so?
- b) If no: Why not? What makes your work here different from your past activism for other causes?

30. Would you consider yourself to be a food justice activist? Why or why not?

- a) Even if you don't think of yourself as an activist, do you believe that you have a role in achieving food justice?

Part D--Conclusion:

31. Before we wrap up, is there anything else you wanted to share—either related to something we've already discussed or something new you wanted to raise?

32. Do you have any questions for me?

33. If I need to contact you in the future, for example, to clarify something in our conversation, is that okay?

34. Do you have any suggestions of somebody else that you think I should interview, that in your estimation might be open to being interviewed?

Thank you so much for your time today. It has been really interesting talking to you.

Appendix 4

Interview Guide for Volunteers

PI: Andrea Abbate—Honors Student, Department of Sociology, Emory University

Thank you for meeting with me today. This interview, as you may well know, is about your experiences with Alternative Food Institutions. I would like to learn more about your involvement with (insert organization name) and I am interested in how the organization operates as a whole. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? As we already discussed, you can ask me any questions you like during the interview and you may choose to decline answering any of my questions.

Part A: Personal Involvement in Alternative Food Institutions/ Community Gardens

I would like to start by asking you a few questions about your background and previous involvement in alternative food institutions.

35. Can you tell me a little bit about how you started volunteering with (insert organization name)?

36. Do you live here in this community?

a) If YES, use Community Members Interview Guide

b) If NO,

i. Where do you live?

ii. Do you feel connected to this particular community in any way? How so?

37. Have you volunteered for similar organizations in the past?

38. When did you start volunteering here? How long have you been volunteering here?

39. How did you choose this particular garden to volunteer for?

40. How many hours a week do you volunteer?

41. What are some challenges you face as a volunteer?

42. If you were trying to encourage people to volunteer for (insert organization name), what might you say are some benefits of working in the garden?

If all benefits are directly related to food/helping others, follow up with:

b) Do you think there are any benefits beyond helping to provide food to those in need?

43. How do you feel you contribute to the organization?

Part B—Questions for Volunteers About Interactions Between Volunteers, Employees, and Community Members & General Opinion

Now, I would like to get a better understanding of your interactions with others while you are volunteering, as well as your opinions of the organization as a whole.

44. Can you describe a typical day volunteering for me?

45. How many other people are usually working on any given day?

46. Who else is usually working?

(I will not give them prompts to see what they say at first, but if they are struggling to answer the question I will offer the following)

- a) Are they mostly volunteers, mostly community members, an equal mix of both?
- b) Are there many employees there as well?
- c) Are they younger people or older people?
- d) Are they diverse? Do they come from different communities around Atlanta?

47. Do you often talk with other people when you're at the garden?

c) If YES,

- iii. What kinds of things do you talk about? *(Ask them to elaborate—they may only exchange pleasantries, but not hold conversations).*
- iv. Are the people that you talk with mostly from the community?

d) If NO,

- ii. Why do you think that is? *(They may say that they are there alone)*

48. What do you think (insert organization name) does best and why?

- a) What makes this organization unique?

49. Do you think that (insert organization name) could improve in any ways? How so?
50. Do you feel connected to the mission and values of this organization?
51. Do you have a vision of (insert organization name) for the future? If so, what does it look like?

Part C--Questions about Food Justice Activist Identity:

Now, I would like to move on to hear about (insert organization name)'s impact on you personally.

52. Have you enjoyed your time volunteering at (insert organization name)?
53. What do you think you've gained from this experience, if anything?
54. Are you familiar with the terms "Alternative Food Institution" or "Community Food Organizations?"
- a) If YES, What are your thoughts about these organizations in general?
 - b) If NO, what do you think they might mean?
55. Do you think (insert organization name) is an Alternative Food Institution or Community Food Organization?
- a) If YES, Why? Why might that label be important?
 - b) If NO, Why not?
56. What does food justice mean to you?
57. Do you consider yourself an activist?
58. Have you ever participated in a form of activism? For what cause?

59. Do you consider your work at (insert organization name) to be a form of activism?
- a) If YES, How so?
 - b) If NO, Why not? What makes your work here different from your past activism for other causes?
60. Would you consider yourself to be a food justice activist? Why or why not?
- a) Even if you don't think of yourself as an activist, do you believe that you have a role in achieving food justice?

Part D--Conclusion:

61. Before we wrap up, is there anything else you wanted to share—either related to something we've already discussed or something new you wanted to raise?
62. Do you have any questions for me?
63. If I need to contact you in the future, for example, to clarify something in our conversation, is that okay?
64. Do you have any suggestions of somebody else that you think I should interview that in your estimation might be open to being interviewed?

Thank you so much for your time today. It has been really interesting talking to you.

Appendix 5

Interview Guide for Community Members

PI: Andrea Abbate—Honors Student, Department of Sociology, Emory University

Thank you for meeting with me today. This interview, as you may well know, is about your experiences with Alternative Food Institutions. I would like to learn more about your involvement with (insert organization name) and I am interested in how the organization operates as a whole. Do you have any questions for me before we begin? As we already discussed, you can ask me any questions you like during the interview and you may choose to decline answering any of my questions.

Part A: Personal Involvement in Alternative Food Institutions/ Community Gardens

I would like to start by asking you a few questions about your background and previous involvement in alternative food institutions.

1. How long have you been living in this community?

2. Where had you been living before?

3. What drove you to move here?

4. Can you tell me a little bit about this community?

(I am looking to learn more about their perception of the racial diversity here. I will not give them prompts, but if they are stuck, or don't know what I mean, I will suggest the following)

a) Do you know any history about the community?

b) Do you find it to be close-knit?

c) Does the community have any traditions or celebrations?

5. Do you know about the (insert organization name) community garden?

a) If YES, Do you feel that the garden has had any influence on the community? How so?

b) If NO,

i. Do you feel connected to the garden in any way? How so?

ii. Move to question #7 and SKIP section B.

6. Do you ever volunteer in the community garden or get involved?

- a) If NO,
 - i. Why not?
- b) If YES,
 - i. When did you start getting involved?
 - ii. How many hours a week do you volunteer?
 - iii. Can you describe a typical day volunteering?
 - iv. How many other people are usually working on any given day?
 - v. Who else is usually working?

(I will not give them prompts to see what they say at first, but if they are struggling to answer the question I will offer the following)

- e) Are they mostly volunteers, mostly community members, an equal mix of both?
- f) Are there many employees there as well?
- g) Are they younger people or older people?
- h) Are they diverse? Do they come from different communities around Atlanta?
- vi. What are some challenges you face as a volunteer and as a community member?
- vii. If you were trying to encourage people to volunteer for (insert organization name), what might you say are some benefits of working in the garden?

If all benefits are directly related to food/helping others, follow up with:

- viii. Do you think there are any benefits beyond helping to provide food to those in need?
- ix. How do you feel you contribute to the organization?

7. Do you feel that you personally benefit in any way from the community garden? How so?
(If participant has never heard of the community garden, ask whether they think they might benefit from it.)

Part B—Questions for Community Members About Interactions Between Volunteers, Employees, & Other Community Members, & General Opinion

You described for me a picture of what a typical day looks like in the garden. Now, I would like to get a better understanding of your interactions with others while you are gardening, as well as your opinions of the organization as a whole.

8. Do you often talk with other people when you're at the garden?
 - e) If YES,
 - v. What kinds of things do you talk about? (*Ask them to elaborate—they may only exchange pleasantries, but not hold conversations*).
 - vi. Are the people that you talk with mostly from the community?
 - f) If NO,
 - iii. Why do you think that is? (*They may say that they are there alone*)

9. What do you like best about the community garden?

10. Do you think the garden could improve in any ways? How so?

11. Have you enjoyed your time volunteering in the garden?

12. What do you think you've gained from this experience, if anything?

13. Do you feel connected to the garden in any way? How so?

14. Do you have a vision of the garden for the future? If so, what does it look like?

Part C--Questions about Food Justice Activist Identity:

Now, I would like to move on another topic to hear about your involvement with activism.

15. Are you familiar with the terms "Alternative Food Institution" or "Community Food Organizations?"
 - c) If YES, What are your thoughts about these organizations in general?
 - d) If NO, what do you think they might mean?

16. Do you think (insert organization name) is an Alternative Food Institution or Community Food Organization?
- c) If YES, Why? Why might that label be important?
 - d) If NO, Why not?
17. What does food justice mean to you?
18. Do you consider yourself an activist?
19. Have you ever participated in a form of activism? For what cause?
20. Do you consider your work at (insert organization name) to be a form of activism?
- c) If YES, How so?
 - d) If NO, Why not? What makes your work here different from your past activism for other causes?
21. Would you consider yourself to be a food justice activist? Why or why not?
- a) Even if you don't think of yourself as an activist, do you believe that you have a role in achieving food justice?

Part D--Conclusion:

22. Before we wrap up, is there anything else you wanted to share—either related to something we've already discussed or something new you wanted to raise?
23. Do you have any questions for me?
24. If I need to contact you in the future, for example, to clarify something in our conversation, is that okay?
25. Do you have any suggestions of somebody else that you think I should interview that in your estimation might be open to being interviewed?

Thank you so much for your time today. It has been really interesting talking to you.