

Building emancipatory food power: Freedom Farms, Rocky Acres, and the struggle for food justice

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Abstract

While scholars who study issues of food justice use the term food power rarely—if at all—their arguments often position the rise of the food justice movement in the context of food power that sustains oppression in the food system. Similarly, many food justice activists and organizations produce an analysis of oppressive forms of food power, while placing the goals of the movement to create sustainable community-based interventions in the periphery. Yet, the pursuit of food justice is a dual process related to power. This process is characterized by the simultaneous acts of dismantling oppressive forms of food power and building emancipatory forms of food power. It also has deep roots in the historical arc of food politics in the Black Freedom Struggle of the civil rights era.

However, we know very little about this dual process and how black communities engage in it. In this paper, I juxtapose two cases of black farm projects—the historical case of Freedom Farms Cooperative (FFC) in Mississippi and the contemporary case of the Rocky Acres Community Farm (RACF) in New York—to explore the dual process of food justice. I conclude with a brief discussion on what the cases teach us about this dual process and its implications for scholars and activists who work on issues of food justice. Such implications provide insights into the possibilities of the food justice movement in the future and challenge the movement to include, more explicitly, issues of race, land, self-determination, and economic autonomy.

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Introduction

In September of 2015, WhyHunger published a short series of stories in its website's Food Justice Voices section about the relationship between state violence against black communities and the national struggle for food justice (Beckford, 2015). Organized by co-founder of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance Beatriz Beckford, the series was designed to "to lift up the silent, often unnamed killers of black bodies that are related to food, land and the lack thereof," she argued (Beckford, 2015, p. 1). Drawing our attention to the oppressive social, economic, and political forces that shape access to food in black and brown communities, Beckford further argued that "the intricacy of America's systems of oppression have always used land and food as weapons of choice" (Beckford, 2015, p. 2). Echoing the same sentiments civil rights activist Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer lamented in a 1968 article in the Wisconsin-based magazine *The Progressive* (White, 2017a), Beckford shed light on the many historical and contemporary instances in which food is framed as a weapon against communities of color. This weaponization process transforms food into a tool to maintain a larger agenda of racism, inequality, oppression, and marginalization. Such instantiations and processes can be largely understood as what some historians, legal scholars, and political scientists describe as "food power."

Traditionally, the concept of food power is theorized as oppressive or as a weapon in the context of inequality, global politics, and national security. Paarlberg (1978) defined food power "as the manipulation of international food transfers in the effective pursuit of discrete diplomatic goals" (p. 538). Wallenstein (1976) argued that food power is better understood as the use of food as an economic weapon to achieve political goals. Drawing on the work of Wallenstein, Gross and Feldman (2015) argued that food power uses food not only because of its economic use or "its essentiality to life, but also because of its significance to human existence: our cultural experiences, our

family and communal lives, our pleasures, and our bodies" (p. 433). They suggest that food power can be "exercised not only through direct control over food supply and food availability, but also by impacting people's access to adequate food" (Gross & Feldman, 2015, p. 380). Similarly, McDonald (2017) argued that food power could be "deployed indirectly, in the form of trade or humanitarian assistance, or directly, in the form of giving or withholding food in times of crisis" (p. 3).

Together, these notions reveal that food power is simultaneously a historical symbol of political freedom and a mechanism that creates uneven access to food (Howerton & Trauger, 2017). In international contexts, food power has maintained what sociologist Phil McMichael (2005) called the "corporate food regime," which led to the corporatization of agriculture throughout the world. This corporatization depends on production methods employed by large farms and technologies developed by large agribusinesses that ignore the detrimental impact of these methods on small and medium-scale farms and the environment (Lyson, 2004). In the U.S. context, food power manipulates access to the means to grow, consume, and distribute foods, dovetailed with the maneuverings of the corporate food regime. These maneuverings create conditions that shape how we understand food justice and the movement associated with the concept. Here, food justice is defined as a historical set of ideological commitments, frameworks, and strategies designed to eradicate inequalities of race, class, gender, and sexuality reproduced in the food system and society that contribute to the rise of hunger, poverty, and food insecurity (Glennie & Alkon, 2018; Hislop, 2015; Sbicca, 2018).

In relation to this definition, most scholars who study food justice position the movement as a direct response to the affluent and classist characteristics of consumer-led food movements (Minkoff-Zern, 2017). Some scholars have argued that the movement rises as a response to the community food security movement's main focus on white communities and producers (Alkon & Guthman, 2017). Others have even argued that food justice rises in response to state-sanctioned discrimination and racism against black farmers and native populations (Alkon & Norgaard, 2009).

While scholars of food justice use the term “food power” rarely if at all, their arguments often position the rise of the food justice movement in the context of food power that sustains oppression in the food system. Similarly, many food justice activists and organizations analyze oppressive forms of food power while placing the goals of the movement to create sustainable community-based interventions in the periphery. They also suggest a linear path to food justice that begins with dismantling oppression, followed by the building of sustainable solutions or community-based interventions. Yet, the struggle for food justice is a dual process related to power. This process is characterized by the simultaneous acts of dismantling oppressive forms of food power and building emancipatory forms of food power. It also has deep roots in the historical arc of food politics in the Black Freedom Struggle of the civil rights era and is visible through the work of a small group of black food justice activists today. We know very little, however, about this dual process and how black communities have engaged in it.

My aim in this paper is to explore the dual process of food justice by examining how it is navigated by black communities in historical and contemporary contexts. To accomplish this, I juxtapose two cases of black farm projects: the historical case of Freedom Farms Cooperative (FFC) in the Mississippi Delta during the civil rights era and the contemporary case of Rocky Acres Community Farm (RACF) in central New York State. While these two cases focus more on building emancipatory forms of food power within the dual process of food justice, they enhance our overall understanding of the entire process. In the sections to follow, I begin by briefly describing the research methods used to generate data for this research. Then, I juxtapose the cases of FFC and RACF to explore the dual process of food justice. I conclude with a brief discussion on what the cases teach us about this dual process and its implications for scholars and activists who work on issues of food justice. These implications provide insights into the possibilities of the food justice movement for the future that reach beyond the act of accessing food. These insights challenge the food justice movement to include, more explicitly, issues of

race, land, self-determination, and economic autonomy. Moreover, they reveal a neglected way of thinking about the concept of food power as a mechanism of emancipation, empowerment, and resistance, in historical and contemporary contexts.

Research Methods and Data

In order to explore the dual process of food justice, I used a qualitative collective case study approach (Stake, 1995). This approach is characterized by a set of cases examined to provide insights on a specific issue or phenomenon (Stake, 2003). It is used when a researcher is interested in a set of cases for the sole purpose of gaining insights and uncovering knowledge about a specific phenomenon, and not necessarily the cases themselves (Luck, Jackson, & Usher, 2006). Robert Stake (2003) describes this approach as the instrumental case study method extended to several cases. In the instrumental approach, “the case is of secondary interest,” Stake argued, “it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (p. 137). While the cases are still examined in depth and situated in their specific contexts, the focus of inquiry is not the set of cases. In this study, the approach enabled me to deliberately focus on exploring the dual process of food justice via my two cases: FFC and RACF. Specifically, I consider how these two farm projects navigate this dual process in their specific contexts.

Four specific methods were used to collect and analyze data to generate the cases: archival research, content analysis, participant observation, and semistructured interviews. The data for the FFC case was collected and analyzed in three phases. First, I conducted extensive archival research at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) in Jackson, Mississippi. Specifically, I collected and analyzed the records of FFC and the papers of its founder, civil rights activist Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer. The Hamer papers at MDAH include—along with her speeches, personal writings, and newspaper clippings—detailed reports, internal documents about FFC’s day-to-day operations, budgets, background information, and correspondences. Second, I merged data from my archival research with a systematic content analysis of several scholarly

secondary sources on Hamer and FFC. These include two key biographies of Hamer: Kay Mills' (1994) *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* and Chana Kai Lee's (2000) *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*. Other key scholarly works I analyzed include Asch (2008), Nembhard (2014), and White (2017a). Third, I conducted ethnographic research in the summer and fall of 2017 in Mississippi. During this time, I participated in a series of events and talks to commemorate the 100th birthday of Hamer at the Council of Federated Organization's (COFO) Civil Rights Education Center at Jackson State University. I also traveled to the original location of FFC in the Mississippi Delta and conducted semistructured interviews with two key informants at the Fannie Lou Hamer Museum who knew Hamer and her work on FFC. These questions focused on Hamer's work on poverty and hunger throughout the Delta. I wrote detailed fieldnotes about these experiences, which also helped me develop this case.

The data for the RACF case was collected and analyzed in three phases. First, I collected data through participant observation. I worked with RACF's owner and operator, food justice activist Rafael Aponte, on several farm projects and community food programs throughout Central New York, and served alongside Aponte on the inau- rural Tompkins County Food Policy Council. Through these experiences, I was able to observe how Aponte framed his food justice work not only on the farm but also in the context of the local food environment of the county. I kept a file of fieldnotes on these interactions and observations. Second, I conducted one on-farm semistructured oral history interview with Aponte. My interview questions were separated into four segments and asked about his (1) food justice activism, (2) journey to farming, (3) farm history, and (4) experience as the only black farmer in the county. After the interview, I followed up with several semistructured informal interviews with Aponte and others while developing the case to gain more insights on some things discussed but not elaborated on during the initial oral history interview. Third, to analyze the interviews and my field notes, I looked for themes that arose during our interviews

concerning his perspective on the work and process of food justice. Specifically, I used food justice as a theoretical framework to interpret these themes and develop this case.

The Freedom Farms Cooperative: Food, Race, and Land in Ruleville, Mississippi, 1969–1977

During the 1960s and 1970s, Sunflower County, Mississippi, was the epicenter of food insecurity, hunger, racism, and poverty in the U.S. At the time, over 4,000 black families in the county who resided in or around the town of Ruleville lived below the poverty line, less than 0.2% of blacks owned land, and rates of infant mortality and diet-related illnesses were among the highest in the nation (Lee, 2000; White, 2017a). In terms of labor, the majority of blacks in the county were employed by the agricultural industry. While some of them lived on plantations working as sharecroppers, by the late 1960s many were forced off plantations due to the mechanization of the cotton industry. Yet, many of those who were forced off continued to work as low-paid farmworkers on other plantations. This shift from being sharecroppers to farmworkers impacted the ways in which many rural black communities accessed employment and food, exacerbating issues of displacement, hunger, and poverty. Set against this backdrop, these conditions reshaped how many black residents viewed land. Many saw agriculture and land as sites of oppression and exploitation. However, Hamer, a former sharecropper turned civil rights activist, thought that if blacks could reimagine their relationship with land—in the context of freedom, agrarianism, and economic independence—they could be empowered to resist and survive their current plight.

At the time, Hamer was known for her work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and her speech during the 1964 Democratic National Convention. However, following the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Hamer turned her attention to addressing the food needs of poor displaced black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta to extend the civil rights agenda. Building on her civil rights experience and a strong belief in black self-determination, Hamer founded the FFC in 1969. This cooperative was

built on a philosophy of empowerment and analysis of the importance of land (Lee, 2000). In the context of land, Hamer believed that the politics of land access were extremely important to the freedom and survival of her community. “Because of my belief in land reform, I have taken the steps of acquiring land through cooperative ownership,” Hamer stated in her famous 1971 speech, “If the Name of the Game is Survive, Survive” (Hamer, 1971). “In this manner, no individual has title to, or complete use of, the land,” she continued; “the concept of total individual ownership of huge acreages of land, by individuals, is at the base of our struggle for survival. In order for any people or nation to survive, land is necessary” (Hamer, 1971). By linking land and freedom, Hamer conceptualized a framework of cooperative ownership that cultivated “many opportunities for group development of economic enterprises which develop the total community, rather than create monopolies that monopolize the resources of a community” (Hamer, 1971). In this way, cooperative ownership opposed the “individualistic notion of economic development, freedom, or progress” (Nembhard, 2014, p. 178). This opposition in the context of black communities echoed sociologists W. E. B. Dubois’ and Chancellor Williams’ notions of black economic progression at the intersection of economic sustainability, cooperation, and community (Nembhard, 2014).

At the core of FFC was a food-provisioning program that consisted of a community “bank of pigs” and an extensive vegetable operation (FFC, 1973). Supported financially by members of FFC and individual contributors, this program created a reliable, local source of protein and nutritious vegetables for families throughout Sunflower County. One of the most influential contributors to FFC was the National Council of Negro Women’s (NCNW) program of women’s self-help and empowerment (Nembhard, 2014; White, 2017a). The purpose of this program, as stated by NCNW then-President Height, was to help “people meet their own needs, on their own terms” (Nembhard, 2014, p. 180). Aligned with Hamer’s survival plan for rural blacks and philosophy of self-determination, the NCNW’s self-help program donated the first set of pigs to support FFC’s bank of pigs in

1967 (White, 2017a). Within three years, the donation yielded over 2,000 pigs and fed over 1,000 families throughout the county.

The vegetable operation began when FFC purchased its first 40 acres (16 hectares) of land west of Ruleville. Within two years, cooperative members produced thousands of pounds of fresh, culturally appropriate vegetables to poor families, including collard greens, field peas, corn, sweet potatoes, butter beans, okra, tomatoes, and string beans (White, 2017a). Due to the high volume of vegetables produced, FFC often had a surplus, which was sent to many poor families in urban areas such as Chicago. By 1972, FFC acquired 600 more acres (243 ha) of land and expanded its operation to include cash crops such as cotton and soybeans that could be used to offset some of the farm’s debt (White, 2017a). It also dedicated land to be used for raising catfish and grazing cattle. As a result, FFC created an alternative food system that not only met the food needs of poor rural blacks but also allowed this population to use its own agricultural knowledge to produce the food. To this end, poor rural blacks used emancipatory food power to create an autonomous agrarian space to meet their needs and sustain their community.

Alongside the food provisioning program, the cooperative provided civil rights classes and subsidized housing, education, and social services to sustain poor rural blacks and whites as well (Asch, 2008). For instance, during the same year FFC purchased land to develop its vegetable operation, it also developed its subsidized housing program. This program helped over 40 families—who were mostly displaced sharecroppers and farmworkers—purchase homes with profits from FFC’s cash crops and small loans from banks willing to support the cooperative (Lee, 2000). Regarding its education and social services, FFC generated revenue to support the establishment of a grant and scholarship program. As a result, at least 25 high school students received scholarships and educational grants to “pursue college studies and vocational training,” and FFC assisted hundreds of needy families with what they called “Out Right” grants, according to a 1973 FFC status report (Freedom Farm Corporation, 1973). The Out

Right grants were given “to families in need of financial assistance to purchase food stamps or medicines, clothing, and other necessities” (Freedom Farm Corporation, 1973).

This holistic approach to addressing community food access and more broad issues allowed FFC to last almost a decade without any government support. However, according to historian Chris Myers Asch (2008), “grand visions did not translate into lasting change” (p. 259). From its outset, FFC experienced two years of drought and floods that affected crop production and had financial troubles keeping up with land payments (White, 2017a). By 1971, FFC’s social service programs began to take up more of its profit. In response to this, FFC’s board of directors decided to “separate the farming operation of the program from the social service activities” until the profit from “the farming can support the social programs” (Freedom Farm Corporation, 1973). Moreover, with the death of Hamer in 1977, the cooperative lost some of its biggest contributors who had supported the operation because of Hamer’s role.

Taken together, these dynamics led to a major shift in the day-to-day operations of FFC and the cooperative’s closing in the late 1970s. Nonetheless, the significance of FFC is rooted in its central analysis and ability to operate in its context. FFC was more than just a farming cooperative that provided a reliable source of local, nutritious foods to poor rural communities in Ruleville and the greater Sunflower County area. The analysis at the core of the cooperative was linked to a philosophy of self-determination, community action, and resilience. This analysis created a space for communities to be in charge of ensuring their own liberation from oppression, exploitation, racism, poverty, and other forms of inequality. Despite its ultimate closing, the vision for FFC lives on today through many farm projects in rural and urban black communities across the U.S.

The Rocky Acres Community Farm: Food Access, Local Food, and Race in Ithaca, New York

Since the early 1970s, Ithaca, New York (NY), has been an emblem of the alternative agriculture

movement and nationally known for its devotion to the production, consumption, and distribution of local, nutritious foods. As the largest city in Tompkins County, Ithaca’s devotion to local food is visible through a number of places like the Ithaca Farmers Market, the vegetarian-based Moosewood Restaurant, GreenStar Co-Op natural foods market, Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County, and the Cornell Small Farms program. Additionally, the Ithaca Farmers Market offers five access points across the small city and some in the greater Tompkins County area. However, in a place like Tompkins County—where all people should be able to access local food based on its availability—many low-income people and people of color still struggle to access it. For instance, in 2016 approximately 13.5% of the county’s residents were food-insecure and 17.1% of children were food-insecure (Gundersen, Dewey, Crumbaugh, Kato, & Engelhard, 2018); 20.1% of all residents lived below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

In an effort to address the struggles of food-insecure populations of color in Ithaca and neighboring towns, black farmer and food justice activist Rafael Aponte and his wife Nandi developed the 10-acre Rocky Acres Community Farm in 2013. Located just south of New York Route 34B, in the small village of Freeville on the outskirts of Ithaca, RACF is a critical farm space within the county’s agricultural scene for black and brown people “who normally aren’t part of that picture, both historically and culturally,” Aponte told me when I interviewed him. “For people of color, that history is full of exploitation and trauma.” The exploitation and trauma Aponte states are directly connected to instances of racial violence toward people of color, sanctioned by systems of domination organized around race, class, food, and agriculture. These systems of domination have penalized and disempowered, for example, black farmers (Green, Green, & Kleiner, 2011) and Native Americans (Norgaard, Reed, & Van Horn, 2011) in the United States, which impacted their respective relationships with land. For black farmers, land historically provided a sense of security that went beyond farming as a means of food security that included

economic security. In the case of Native Americans, land is historically and culturally embedded in the sacred relationship between nature and humans, linked to food provision and land stewardship. However, due to state-sanctioned land dispossession and genocide, some members of these communities now view land cultivation as a source of trauma linked to inequality and slavery (Alkon & Norgaard, 2009; Daniel, 2013; Green, Green, & Kleiner, 2011; Norgaard, Reed, & Van Horn, 2011).

Drawing on this historical understanding of land relations, Aponte converts the farm into a classroom to help communities of color realize and reclaim their own agrarian power in the context of race, history, culture, power, and land. This farm space, moreover, creates an avenue for conversations about the structural barriers and systems that impact access to food while also recovering the often-overlooked history of food and agriculture in communities of color (Bowens, 2015). Recovering this forgotten story, specifically, illuminates how communities of African and Caribbean descent used agricultural knowledge as a form of power in the past to create and sustain community. However, this analysis does not leave out how trauma, exploitation, and inequities have shaped access to food and land in these communities. To address these inequities, Aponte argues that communities must “create an alternative to that system while dismantling [the current food system] that is grinding both people and the planet up.” Aponte links this problem to the capitalistic characteristics of the American food system. “Part of the problem,” he told me, is that we believe and are “so invested in capitalism that we uphold businesses, the concept of being an entrepreneur, having a business, and hold that as a value.”

By linking his critique of the food system to capitalism, Aponte conceptualizes an analysis that sheds light on how the commodification of food is linked to the market mechanism at the center of economic historian Karl Polanyi’s (1957) *The Great Transformation*. This market mechanism is inextricably connected to what I refer to as the dominant U.S. corporate agriculture movement. While many scholars refer to corporate agriculture as a hegemonic market-based structure or regime

(McMichael, 2005), I use the term *movement* to capture the actors of the system who ensure that it is sustained. These actors include agricultural colleges, government agencies, and large transnational agribusiness organizations that support commodity or conventional agriculture (Lyson, 2007). This type of agriculture “is grounded on the belief that the primary objectives of farming should be to produce as much food/fiber as possible for the least cost. It is driven by the twin goals of productivity and efficiency” (Lyson & Gupthill 2004, pp. 371-372). As a result, the movement is often criticized by proponents of alternative agriculture for manipulating the factors of production (land, labor, and capital) to meet its goal of efficiency and productivity while ignoring the destructive effects (degradation of the environment, marginalization of small-scale farmers, conventional farming, unhealthy foods, processed foods, and cheap foods) of this process on people and the environment.

The power to facilitate the land conversation in relation to an analysis of inequities and capitalism, moreover, represents Aponte’s ability to exercise his emancipatory food power and his “right to land,” representing what Kerssen and Brent (2017) describe as “land justice—the right of underserved communities and communities of color to access, control, and benefit from land, territory, and resources” (pp. 285–286). The right to land, as the foundation of all farming and agricultural practices, is always a struggle for food justice activists in both urban and rural areas.

While Aponte has multiple enterprises and off-farm income that allow him to be able to maintain the land, he still struggles to address the food needs of low-income communities of color in a place like Tompkins County through RACF. Yet, one of the most important programs developed by RACF is its Harvest Box Program. Started in 2015, the Harvest Box Program is a partnership between Aponte and the Youth Farm Project (YFP) in the nearby town of Danby. Through this program, RACF places community agency and youth development at the center of the farm planning process. As Aponte put it, the program “is about meeting people, more so meeting people where they’re at, giving them control over something that they

should have control over—their food system.” Even before a seed is placed in the ground each year, community participants fill out a brief questionnaire asking them to indicate the types of vegetables they would like the program to produce and the price point at which they would be willing to purchase them. Then their recommendations are integrated into the larger growing plan of the farm alongside staple crops such as collard greens, cabbage, kale, watermelon, and fresh herbs. While all community food needs are not met through this single program, community members are able to choose the types of food they would be willing to purchase in their box.

Each harvest box includes a weekly share of 5–8 pounds (2.3–3.6 kg) of local, fresh, and nutritious foods at US\$12 per box, unlike the community supported agriculture (CSA) model, which provides seasonal shares that are paid for prior to the growing season. Participants can access this program at locations where low-income people and people of color are usually found, such as Pete’s Grocery and Deli, John’s Convenience store, the Southside Community Center, Titus Towers, and McGraw House in downtown Ithaca. For communities outside of Ithaca in the greater Tompkins County area, who lack the infrastructure or transportation to access local fresh foods, the harvest box is also accessible through the YFP’s mobile market stand. By bringing food directly to these communities, Aponte and YFP seek to provide a sense of dignity for participants. This program reflects a type of emancipation from the county’s local food scene which McMichael and Morarji (2010) describe as “not simply about access to resources, but also the terms of access” (p. 240).

As a result, the Harvest Box Program is “not quite a CSA,” but re-imagines how the CSA model can work when community agency is placed at the center. The program enables the community to use its agency in deciding what foods it wants, where it wants to access them, and how much it is willing to pay for it. All funds generated by this program come from “the economic power of the community and based on the principle that everyone should have access to healthy, affordable food of their choosing and have the ability to make decisions on how that food is produced” (Youth Farm

Project, “Harvest Box,” n.d., para. 1). Moreover, the program provides an avenue for low-income people and people of color to actively resist the dominant local food movement in the area, not through direct confrontation, but through alternatives that reflect their needs and realities. In this way, by placing community food needs at the center of the farm and the farm planning process, RACF articulates as a vision and strategy of building emancipatory food power intertwined with a structural understanding of inequality that perpetuates inadequate access to food and agriculture. This vision includes a historical analysis that positions people of color in the context of land relations that provide beneficial outcomes and empowerment.

Conclusion

In this paper, I juxtaposed the cases of FFC and RACF to explore how the dual process of food justice is navigated by black communities in historical and contemporary contexts. This exploration is important given that scholars and activists who work on issues of food justice tend to characterize the movement in the context of oppressive forms of food power while placing the building of emancipatory food power in the periphery. As stated at the outset of this paper, this dual process has origins in the Black Freedom Struggle during the civil rights era and is visible through the work of a small group of black food justice activists today. Both cases presented here illustrate this point. Although FFC was created over 40 years before RACF in a socially and historically distinct context, they share similar attributes in that both created autonomous rural farm spaces for black and other marginalized communities to grow food, resist inequality, and cultivate community agency. To do this, both farms and their programs were supported by community economic power and built on the philosophy of self-determination. Through these cases, I shed light on the analyses and programs at the foundation of both farms that enhance our understanding of emancipatory food power and the dual process of food justice. These analyses and programs focused on a vision and strategy of resistance to power struggles intertwined with a structural understanding of the inequalities that perpetuate inadequate access to

food and agriculture.

Moreover, the FFC and RACF cases enrich our understanding of the dual process of food justice. For example, seeing food justice articulated as a dual process in both cases sheds light on how food is used as an entry point to facilitate a larger agenda of racial justice, self-determination, economic power, and community power. Whether the dual process of food justice is used to enhance the realities of poor black displaced sharecroppers in the 1960s in Sunflower County or today with low-income communities of color in Tompkins County, clearly a food justice agenda uses food as an initial point to understand larger societal issues. Here, this agenda includes the project of reimagining and repositioning the importance of land to the food justice movement. Here, land is not just about access to property or a site to farm, but rather a reimagining of land relations in communities in which inequality has reshaped their view of land. For black communities, specifically, FFC and RACF designed their farm spaces as a way to use land as a form of empowerment. Within this farm space design, issues of race, self-determination, and economic power took center stage in the development of educational and food programs. Their uses of land as a space to both grow food and learn how to resist oppressive forms of food power illuminate how having access to the economic resources to access land can open the door to transforming how certain communities view land. I note that this project of reimagination is not isolated from that of gaining access to land or the necessary resources, political or economic, to obtain it. As Fannie Lou Hamer once said, "Give us food and it will be gone tomorrow. Give us land and the tools to work it and we will feed ourselves forever" (Freedom Farm Corporation, 1973). Here, Hamer suggests that food provision is only a temporary project if communities do not have the resources like land or economic power, which provides a way for us to think about how to sustain the movement going forward.

While this article focused more on the emancipatory component of the dual process of food

justice, future research is needed. For instance, there is a need to explore and expand the analysis of food power and investigate other cases, both historical and contemporary, that could build additional understandings of emancipatory food power. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, this type of food power has been overshadowed by the oppressive forms of food power and neglected by both scholars and activists. Partly as a result, the food justice movement is currently at an impasse (Minkoff-Zern, 2017) and many are actively engaged in conversations about the future of the movement (White, 2017b). Activists such as Aponte, alongside others like Karen Washington of Rise and Root Farm in Upstate NY, Malik Yakini of D-Town Farms in Detroit, and Leah Penniman of Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, NY, are raising "questions about using resources and unearthing missing voices in agriculture" (2017b, p. 21), sociologist Monica White argues. Therefore, to contribute to these conversations, I propose that activists and scholars position an analysis that considers this dual process of food justice at the core of the movement's organizing framework. This dual move related to power gives a way to understand not only contemporary instances of food justice, but also the long history of the movement in marginalized communities, especially black communities in the U.S. Thus, this new way of thinking about food power illustrates the use of food power as an analytic to understand and interpret contemporary and historical instances of food justice; extends narratives of the movement beyond a sole focus on oppressive forms of food power; and provides insights that illuminate the possibilities of the movement in the future to include race, land, self-determination, and economic autonomy.

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