

COMMUNITY EPISTEMIC CAPACITIES
FOR EPISTEMIC SELF-DETERMINATION
IN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation seeks to address an important but underexamined part of communities' survival and flourishing in the face of marginalization and oppression: *community epistemic capacities* and *community epistemic self-determination*. I distinguish community epistemic capacities as a subset of community capacities, to mean the abilities of a community to gain, maintain, adapt, and continue the knowledge needed to solve problems and flourish. I have argued previously that community epistemic capacities are necessary for a community to meaningfully participate within the larger society in just, deliberative processes. This dissertation argues in part that community epistemic capacities are also necessary for a community to effectively engage in their own, independent projects (often in cooperation with other communities) which are important to the communities' members, particularly ones which promote the survival and flourishing of the community. I take this other application of community epistemic capacities to be a form of self-determination for communities. I focus in this dissertation on epistemic self-determination as an important sub-set of self-determination. By epistemic self-determination I mean the ability of community members to jointly engage in epistemic projects and determine the epistemic practices of their community, which can include methodologies for knowledge production and evaluative assumptions.

To understand community epistemic capacities and self-determination, I contrast them

with the Capabilities Approach, including the growing literature on collective capabilities. I also look at the environmental justice and food sovereignty paradigms – two activist discourses which take seriously the importance of both justice within larger institutions, as well as justice claims for communities to be able to build their own alternative projects outside of those institutions. The latter justice claim, which I call self-determination justice, has been insufficiently examined in political philosophy, but as I argue it is vital for community survival and flourishing. The justice conversations in these discourses help explicate the community epistemic capacities and self-determination framework, and these concepts likewise help deepen our understanding of these social justice movements.

With this understanding in place, I apply the concepts of community epistemic capacities and community epistemic self-determination to a number of topics to show how they can inform our understanding of policy, activism, and transdisciplinary research. I explore the concept of trust as an epistemic capacity, and look at ways in which external experts can ameliorate a lack of community epistemic capacities through structured decision-making. I also look at how policies in food systems and the environment can be evaluated based on the degree to which they promote epistemic self-determination or undermine it. In the final chapter, I discuss a transdisciplinary project I have been conducting with partners in La Via Campesina and KRRS to look at women's barriers to participation in the food sovereignty movement in India. This work not only provides illustrations of the concepts discussed in this dissertation in its findings, but the study itself stands as a useful model of how incorporating a concern for community epistemic capacities and self-determination can inform external experts' work with communities.

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Introduction

An Overview

Woburn, Massachusetts, a blue-collar town outside of Boston, was the site of an environmental injustice when industrial chemicals leached into the ground water, resulting in almost thirty cases of leukemia in children living in the town. When the EPA found no connection between the carcinogens and the cancer, the community came together and over time was able to understand and eventually criticize the assumptions and values embedded in the scientific aspects of the EPA's study. Community members worked with researchers to conduct their own studies which reflected the knowledge and values of the community (Brown 1993). The Woburn case highlights the importance of what I call in this dissertation *community epistemic capacities* and *epistemic self-determination*.

There is a wealth of literature in other disciplines on community capacities, by which is often meant something like “A set of dynamic community traits, resources, and associational patterns that can be brought to bear for community building and community health improvements” (Norton and McElroy et al. 2009). This literature deserves greater examination within the field of philosophy, in part because some kinds of capacities are related to key philosophical issues about justice for communities and individuals in societies. The kinds of community capacities I will focus on, which had not previously been explicitly treated in the literature, are *epistemic capacities*. I distinguish *community epistemic capacities* as a subset of community capacities, to mean the abilities of a community to gain, maintain, adapt, and continue the knowledge needed to solve problems and flourish. I have argued previously (Werkheiser 2015) that community epistemic capacities are necessary for a community to

meaningfully participate within the larger society in just, deliberative processes. This dissertation will argue in part that community epistemic capacities are also necessary for a community to effectively engage in their own, independent projects (often in cooperation with other communities) which are important to the communities' members, particularly ones which promote the survival and flourishing of the community. I take this other application of community epistemic capacities be a form of self-determination for communities. As with community capacities, there is a wealth of literature on self-determination, this time much of it coming from within philosophy, though only a small portion of this literature looks at self-determination for communities. Here I will focus on *epistemic self-determination* as an important sub-set of self-determination. By epistemic self-determination I mean the ability of community members to jointly engage in epistemic projects and determine the epistemic practices of their community, which can include methodologies for knowledge production and evaluative assumptions.

Community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination can help us understand many of the issues at play in literatures on environmental justice and food sovereignty. For example, food sovereignty is described as advocating agricultural practices which “Draw upon local and traditional knowledge in combination with laboratory studies to farm in such a way as to meet local cultural needs, provide for human health and conserve biodiversity” (Menser 2008, p. 31). The Principles of Environmental Justice call for informed consent and an acknowledgment of “The right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation” (Principles of environmental justice 1991). These commitments can be best understood by employing the

concepts of community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination. Given cases such as Woburn, some communities may demand on justice grounds that social institutions or policies consider epistemic capacities, and indeed actively build up these capacities in marginalized communities. This would be done to support the community's self-determination to pursue projects to help it overcome environmental injustices *and* to enable more just participation by the community in decisions about the amelioration of those environmental injustices, and the prevention of future environmental injustices. These two kinds of claims point to two kinds of justice in environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses, one focused on participation within larger social institutions, and the other focused on building projects outside of those institutions. These twin justice demands inform this dissertation's discussion of what community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination mean to affected communities, and what duties society has to promote them.

The relationship of epistemic capacities to self-determination is rarely addressed, even in discourses like the Capabilities Approach which have much to say on the topic of capacities. The Capabilities Approach has a useful conception of capacities as being the internal half of capabilities, along with the external half of real social possibilities to use those internal capacities. The Capabilities Approach is traditionally highly individualistic in its focus, but there has recently been a growing body of literature on the capabilities of collectives, as well as the ways in which communities (as opposed to the overarching society) can support the development of individual capabilities. Taken together, I see these as a community Capabilities Approach which may be a useful way to understand community epistemic capacities as part of that internal half of a community's capabilities.

However, community capabilities, because they are extensions of the individual-focused Capabilities Approach, has not explored the implications of capacities for self-determination. Briefly, the Capabilities Approach, including its collective versions, tends to emphasize the external opportunities society should provide to individuals and communities to exercise their capacities, since without those opportunities the capacities are empty. That is, they focus on making justice claims against societies which do not provide external opportunities to flourish, and potential justice claims based on the internal capacities half are often reduced to other external opportunities, particularly the opportunity for education. This dissertation in contrast focuses on those community capacities (in particular, on community epistemic capacities) and argues that it is possible for a community with internal capacities but no real social possibilities to utilize those capacities to *create* self-determined possibilities for using those capacities. This could be done either outside of the dominant society (and perhaps in secret if the expression of those capacities is actively suppressed rather than merely not supported by the dominant society), or by changing the dominant society to give real social opportunities for self-determined expression of the capacities.

When looking at the epistemic capacities of a community for epistemic self-determination as this dissertation does, resources from the literature on social epistemology can become quite useful for understanding the value of epistemic self-determination, and how to promote and partly compensate for a dearth of epistemic capacities in a community. Social epistemology takes seriously both the ways that groups facilitate individual knowledge production and application, as well as the ways in which communities themselves can be said to know, believe, and so on. Social epistemology, then, can help to make sense of the discussion of

epistemic self-determination for communities, and suggest particularly important community epistemic capacities for achieving this self-determination, such as inter- and intra-community trust. However, this literature rarely examines the implications of this social knowing for questions of justice. Fertile possibilities can arise by bringing social epistemology into conversation with the issues raised by environmental justice and food sovereignty advocates. For example, social epistemology can help understand what the costs are for an incorrigibly low trust in external experts on environmental and food system matters, and how to at least partially compensate for these costs in a just way.

Many of the tensions within community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination can be drawn out by looking at the transdisciplinary research I have been conducting in collaboration with La Via Campesina, an international food sovereignty group, and KRRS, a local food sovereignty group in India, on barriers to women's participation in food sovereignty movements in India. La Via Campesina is very explicit in the importance of women for the food sovereignty movement as well as being committed to the model of an international, non-hierarchical umbrella organization. Both of these values come out of their understanding of and commitment to participatory justice. However, many of the local food sovereignty movements which are a part of Via have not successfully promoted women's participation in their movement. Through a series of focus groups conducted by transdisciplinary partners in several states in India, this research seeks to highlight the barriers women have faced, their approaches to overcoming these barriers, and their understandings of how these barriers limit their and their community's flourishing.

This work highlights some of the elements in this dissertation. The first is that careful

examination of how a radical food sovereignty movement actually plays out in one society illustrates the arguments made in previous sections. Food sovereignty movements such as this one take food to be boundary objects for bringing together a host of justice issues and hurdles for socially marginalized and oppressed communities to have the self-determination, including epistemic self-determination, to flourish. The ways in which this social movement has progressed highlights the importance of community epistemic capacities. The second reason this work is useful for the dissertation is that it brings up an important issue – the tensions that can arise between community-level flourishing and individual or sub-group flourishing. Internal participatory justice is vital for true community flourishing, but tensions will nevertheless arise between the flourishing of a community and the flourishing of individuals or sub-groups. When they do, a community with participatory justice must have the capacities, including epistemic capacities, to address these questions in an open way by being publicly justifiable to its members. Community epistemic capacities are necessary for a community to have self-determination over their flourishing, and this flourishing must be done in a way that simultaneously promotes the flourishing of all members of the community. A third way in which this research enriches the dissertation is by providing a model of transdisciplinary work. I argue that working with external experts is vital for communities to flourish, but it is also vital for flourishing that those interactions do not erode the community's self-determination. This is a particularly difficult navigation when academics study marginalized communities with low levels of epistemic capacities, even if one of the goals of the study is to benefit the subject population. The work I have done with Via and KRRS can be a useful case study to illustrate these arguments, and a model for what epistemically just and fertile transdisciplinary projects

can look like.

Overall, in this dissertation I use the frameworks of environmental justice and food sovereignty to address two related questions: what is the nature and importance of community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination, and what are the implications of this importance for questions of justice to communities? Ultimately, I argue that a community's epistemic self-determination requires community epistemic capacities. Additionally, I argue that at least in the cases of the marginalized and oppressed communities which the environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses address, social institutions have a positive duty on practical and justice-based grounds to promote community epistemic capacities and community self-determination. Further, when these opportunities are not provided, community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination are even more important, as they allow communities to resist, reform, and build projects outside of unjust dominant social institutions. By examining a few key examples, including trust and structured decision-making, an epistemic self-determination account of some food and environmental policies, and a case study with women members of a food sovereignty activist group in India, this dissertation demonstrates how community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination can be analyzed, why they are important, and practically how their lack can be addressed, either internally or externally.

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter one explores environmental justice and food sovereignty, which will be used to frame the rest of the dissertation. Specifically, this chapter looks at an ambiguity in the justice claims of both movements. Chapter one argues that

there are two important conceptions of justice claims in these movements: the first, more discussed, conception concerns participatory justice for communities within larger social institutions, whereas the second, much less discussed, conception concerns self-determination independent of those institutions. This chapter does not argue for the superiority of one conception over the other, but rather that the second conception has been undervalued and underexamined until now, and is quite important particularly in the context of some communities. This chapter is important for the overall argument because it shows that, particularly in regard to community management of environmental and food systems in the face of marginalization and oppression, communities need certain capacities in order to achieve opportunities for justice, and to flourish and resist in the face of injustice. This chapter also sets up the question of what supporting self-determination would look like, which will be addressed in later chapters.

Chapter two of the dissertation focuses the conversation about self-determination justice onto *epistemic self-determination*, and contrasts that with epistemic dependence on untrusted external experts. This chapter argues for the value of epistemic self-determination in particular, and further argues that public policy can be evaluated by how it helps develop or undermine communities' epistemic self-determination. It then shows how such an evaluation can inform policies which are important to food sovereignty activists, in this case looking at food laws and policies in the US, and policies which are important to environmental justice activists, in this case looking at policies around climate-change-induced harms to the global poor. Ultimately, this chapter argues that at least for marginalized and oppressed communities, policies which encourage epistemic self-determination should be pursued by social institutions, and that

regardless of whether the larger society does indeed pursue epistemic self-determination as a goal, marginalized and oppressed communities should pursue it on their own as means of empowering their communities. On the other hand, policies which undermine epistemic self-determination ought to be modified or abandoned by policy makers, and resisted by marginalized communities. This chapter is important for the overall argument of the dissertation because it introduces the underexamined epistemic aspects of these justice questions, and looks at how this could be applied to practical policy analysis. This chapter, along with chapter one, sets up the question of how best to promote self-determination, which is addressed in the next two chapters.

Chapter three of the dissertation lays out the concept of community epistemic capacities and argues for its importance as a way of understanding and promoting epistemic self-determination, and as a policy goal. It does this via comparisons and contrasts with the Capabilities Approach, specifically the small but growing body of literature on collective capabilities. Chapter three will discuss how thinking about capabilities for communities changes the Capabilities Approach. It will then argue that collective capabilities does address some of the individualistic emphasis of the traditional Capabilities Approach, but it undervalues capacities for self-determination, specifically the ability of a community to *create* possibilities for using those capacities in a self-determined way. Thus while my account of community epistemic capacities could be seen as being an extension of a community Capabilities Approach, it is a departure from the way this is typically conceived. This chapter will then draw on social epistemology to briefly look at a specific community epistemic capacity, trust, as a way to illustrate what a more complete taxonomy might look like. It will also look at an example, structured decision-making, of a way that a larger social institution could take seriously the

responsibility of working with a community with low levels of epistemic capacities. This chapter is important for the overall argument of the dissertation because it introduces the idea of community epistemic capacities as essential for epistemic self-determination for communities, and explores ways that taking seriously the justice demands discussed in previous chapters could alter the action of more powerful actors toward marginalized communities.

Chapter four lays out the transdisciplinary research I have been conducting in collaboration with La Via Campesina, an international food sovereignty group, and KRRS, a local food sovereignty group in India, on barriers to women's participation in food sovereignty movements in India. Chapter four demonstrates that even a radical community focused on social justice can recreate and reinforce marginalization of sub-groups within the community. When this happens, this chapter argues, a community with participatory justice must have the capacities, including epistemic capacities, to support marginalized sub-groups, and those groups can develop capacities of their own to overcome or change these problems. This chapter is important for the overall argument for the dissertation because it introduces a real-world case study of the issues in the previous chapters, in ways which both demonstrate and enrich the points made previously.

A Note on Communities

Before moving on, it is worth discussing what is meant by a “community” in the sense it is being used in this dissertation. Communities are often seen by activists, and increasingly by academics, as important sites of injustices and harms on the one hand (e.g. Nyéléni 2007; Wittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010). or objects of value and important components of

individuals' lives on the other (e.g. Evans 2002; Schlosberg Caruthers 2010; Minkler, Vásquez, Tajik, and Petersen 2008). Many governmental institutions have recommended or mandated engagement with communities in policy decisions (e.g. HUD Demonstration Act 1993; EPA Public Participation Guide; National Research Council 1994; 1996; 2008; Farm Bill Stakehold Listening Sessions, 2015 – these examples will be discussed further in later chapters). This dissertation can be seen in a sense as taking seriously the activists in food sovereignty and environmental justice contexts who make claims about their communities, and as trying to understand the ways in which their discourse uses the term. That being said, there are some important characteristics of a community which must be present for it to be possible to possess anything like epistemic capacities. Thus, it is worth briefly thinking about how communities can have capacities before looking at why they ought to. Much has been written in collective intentionality discourse on the nature of joint actions between a few individuals in groups, in which those individuals participate for only a particular period of time (e.g. Gilbert 1989, 1990, 1996; Schmitt et al. 2003; Tollefsen 2002a, 2002b; Tuomela 1988, 2007), such as a game of tennis. There has also been work in this literature on what collective intentionality looks like in large, formal configurations such as nation-states (e.g. Gilbert 1996; Searle 1995, 1997), and on cultures whose institutions create the background for joint actions (Gilbert 1989; Tuomela 2007). However, insufficient work has been done on intentionality for the important kind of collectives commonly referred to as communities – groups which are smaller and more personal than nations, more permanent and full-time than ad hoc groups like juries, less formally structured than legal entities like corporations, and yet are actors rather than (just) a site of cultural background assumptions.

This is an unfortunate oversight, as communities are an important scale for environmental injustices and activism, as well as a host of other social problems, responses, and interventions. A definition of community and how it functions collectively would be quite helpful when thinking about these issues. For example, there are many arguments for how and why a community should develop its capacities (e.g. Chaskin et al. 2001; Freudenberg 2004; Freudenberg et al. 2011) but it is presumably important to know whether the group in question *is* a community if we want to build its community capacities. Are we missing key groups of people who ought to be included in the community for efficacy or justice reasons? Are we including two or three communities into one, perhaps dooming the project of capacity building to failure or the injustice of misrecognition? Is the group too nascent a community for capacity building to be effective, and effort should be spent instead on forging the community in the first place? These questions and more complicate discussions of why and how to build capacity. Also important are questions about the extent to which communities can act collectively. Issues of community consent and participation (as opposed to consent and participation by a number of individuals in a group) requires that the community be able to act collectively, and perhaps to have collective knowledge, interests, and other robust agential characteristics. Understanding when a group of people is enough of a community to act collectively is an important but often unasked questions in academic discourses looking at social justice movements arising out of communities.

A working definition of the kinds of communities that are of interest in environmental justice and food sovereignty literature – those which are valued by their members, can be the subjects of injustices, are able to engage in collective actions, etc. would be of use to academics thinking about communities and collective intentionality such as in this dissertation, but also to

policy makers working with communities, and organizers working in their neighborhoods to build community. Fortunately, the literature on collective intentionality provides resources which can be used for thinking about what a community is and how it functions. Drawing on the literature on collective intentionality, as well as insights from social justice movements, I argue that there are three necessary requirements for a group of people to be able to act as a community: connection, affiliation, and cooperation. These necessary requirements not only helpfully exclude groups which are not best thought of as a community, but also point at the nature of a community as an entity which can have intentional states, knowledge, and actions.

The first requirement for a community is *connection* – that there is a collection of individuals affected by many of the same issues. For people living in the same geographical area, many of these issues will be environmental, from the daily weather to pollution to invasive species. There are other sorts of issues which can affect a community as well, such as laws targeting a particular group, or dependence on a sector of the economy or a particular industry, but dispersed communities can be affected by shared issues as well. This connection of shared problems and opportunities can motivate cooperative projects and ground much of the collective attitudes discussed below. This can be seen as a version of the “all-affected” principle, and as Goodin (2007) says, it's possible for there to be many “fine-tunings” of the principle: “Perhaps, for example, not every old interest ought automatically entitle one to a say in the matter” (p. 51), or for our purposes, for membership in the community. Nevertheless, it is an egalitarian, democratic principle of membership (p. 68).

Further, because communities are not stable nation-states, but smaller groups of affinity, without formal membership criteria or laws, some of the tensions about whether an “all-affected”

principle for membership should instead be an “all-subjected” principle or a “formal membership” principle (Fraser 2008; Näsström 2011) can be eased. This is because the communities of interest to this dissertation are ones existing inside larger, formal societies, and so are not likely to pass formal laws of their own to which some non-participants are subjected nor have formal criteria for membership.¹ Further, “all-subjected” stakeholders in a community of affinity (unlike a nation-state) would mostly be applicable as a category to those either engaged in joint projects (and therefore subject to others' intentions and actions in the project) or who identify strongly with the community (and therefore have a stake in what the collective vision for the community's future is), thereby bringing in some of the desiderata of the “all-subjected” or “formal membership” requirements.

However, an “all-affected” criterion for full participation has several other potential problems, such as the so-called “butterfly effect” of unlimited affectedness, the problem of shifting borders, etc. (Karlsson 2006). For many working in issues of food sovereignty, this tension is resolved through solidarity with others, a situation in which communities support one-another's struggles both materially and emotionally, and see the rights and interests of individuals not in the community, as well as other communities and their members, as things which ought to be supported wherever possible, and which act as constraints on any one community's actions (see Nyéléni Declaration. 2007). Solidarity will be discussed in more detail in chapter one.

It is worth noticing that this is a largely external requirement. It would be possible to look

¹ This is not the case for communities which are the kind discussed in environmental justice and food sovereignty literatures, but which also have a formal structure, most notably indigenous tribes with enrollment rules and internal laws. In examples of that sort, assuming the tribe is best thought of as a single community (which is probably not the case for some larger tribes, but may well be for smaller ones), this is an example of an overlay of a formal society and a community, and so not surprisingly is susceptible to some of the questions about belonging that most communities escape (see, e.g. Goldberg-Ambrose 1994; Hagan 1985.)

at who is affected by particular issues and notice that a group of people are coincidentally affected by many of the same issues (for example, because they live in the same neighborhood), without asking them their ideas about community. It is also worth pointing out that this requirement does not come out of literature on collective intentionality, but rather social justice movements which try to point out mutual injustices to build cooperation to address them, such as the literature on environmental justice (e.g. Brown 1993; Bullard 1990), which we will examine in more detail in chapter one.

The second requirement for a community does draw on the literature on collective intentionality. It is *affiliation* – that there is the existence of a group of individuals who each consider themselves to be and consider others to be members of a certain community, and this belief is an important and valued part of their identity.² They collectively believe that they are a community, and have collective intentions, often an intention for that community to flourish over time. This is an internal requirement in that assessing it would require knowing what members of the potential community believe and the attitudes they have. This requirement has several interesting features. First, those who consider themselves to be members of this community and those considered by others (who consider themselves members) to be members of the community will generally not be identical. This is most obviously because many of those considered to be members do not have the capacity to consider themselves or others to be members (e.g. young children), but there are other reasons for the non-identity. One is that

² “Important” and “valued” are of course relative, and it is the case that some people value their communities more than others, and that we all value some of the communities to which we belong over others. Despite lying on a spectrum, these are important aspects of affiliation, because as we will see the justice claims about communities are grounded in part by the importance they play in people's lives. Thus we get something like a sliding scale – it is more important to support communities, and more wrong to undermine them, the more important they are to their members.

members of the community might not all know one another (though the third requirement below puts some constraints on this), but use some formal marker for judging someone else to be a member of the community, such as where they live, their religious membership, and so on. Alternately, there might not be an easy shibboleth to distinguish community members, but the community is still large enough that not all members know one another, in which case people considered by others to be members might be a series of overlapping circles rather than a single circle shared by all within it. It then might make the most sense to say that although no individual knows all the community members, the community *collectively knows* who its members are, in the sense that knowing what the community knows (or “knows”) is a better predictor for what knowledge will factor into collective decisions than what individual members know (compare to Petit's collective intentions, below).

Another interesting feature of this requirement is that the people believing that *they* are a community have a “collective attitude.” As Tuomela argues in his (2002), a collective attitude is an attitude which is held in the “we-mode,” meaning that people use the term “we” and believe statements along the following lines: “We (rather than I) X” where X is an attribution of a mental state, and have a shared common knowledge (I know that she knows that I know...) that everyone in the group also has the same attitude in the we-mode (pp. 17-19). For the purposes of this dissertation I will use Tuomela's phrase of collective intentions, attitudes etc. and his concept of the “we-mode” and “I-mode,” because it is a clear formulation for this definition of community, but there are other possible formulations, such as Gilbert's (1989; 1990; 1996) “joint” action, goals, etc. or Petit's (2003) “social integrate.”

In the case of communities, a sentence to which members would agree (thereby showing

a collective attitude) is “We are a community,” which is separate from “I am a member of this community, and so are these individuals” (though recall that this “we” may well be vague as to the exact members, and if forced to be specific will most likely differ for different members of the community). This is an important distinction, because it is the ground on which other collective attitudes and collective intentions rest. Most important is to have collective intentions as we-the-community. A collective intention can be conceived in several ways (Tuomela 2002 p. 19-22), but for our purposes it suffices to say that many people in the community think or are disposed to think “we as a community intend to Y,” with Y being some goal intended by the community and (perhaps only therefore) endorsed by the community member agreeing to that statement. This is important in part because if people do not see themselves as voluntarily committed to any collective project with their community, it is possible that they are being coerced into membership.

A common and important collective intention is the collective intention to flourish as a community. It is important because it unites members of the community engaging in many joint actions and individual actions which further community flourishing. This collective intention leads to many joint projects by various members of the community, as well as individual projects in the “I-Mode” on behalf of the community. For example, if an individual engages in a project to benefit the community (e.g. goes to medical school with the goal of coming back and opening a free clinic), or works to enforce a community's norms (e.g. deciding on her own without consulting others to erect a “slow down, children present” sign because she knows her community has a problem with fast drivers in this neighborhood), she might be acting in the “I-Mode” on behalf of her community. On the other hand, if a group of individuals who are

members of the community decide that they together will engage in projects as a group (e.g. organizing an annual festival, constructing a medical clinic, or working to change speed limits), then they are engaging in collective action motivated by their larger collective intention for the community to flourish. This requirement of members collectively and individually valuing the community, of having it play an important role in their identity, and intending collectively, particularly for it flourish, ought to make us suspicious of candidate “communities” which are formed only for individual instrumental benefit, such as a carpool.

The third requirement for a community is *cooperation* – that members of a community have a tendency to help other members of the community with individual projects they are trying to accomplish, and that there are many overlapping collective projects that either persist or are regularly formed. This applies to more than just those collective projects which are justified by the collective intention, such as for the community to flourish, described above. Rather, these are simply joint projects such as neighbors deciding that they will play a pickup game of basketball together, or work together to collectively fix one neighbor's car. It is not necessary that there be any single joint project that the entire community engages in (recall the members who are very young children), but the existence of large projects which engage many members of the group make it a more obvious candidate to be a community in our sense. It is worth noting that this requirement is a less external judgment than the first, but more external than the second. A group of people's collective projects could be studied through interviews, and a diagram of such a study could find a nexus of overlap emerge from those cooperative projects which could be thought of as an indication of a community, without asking the people about their community. This requirements does not necessitate that people live in the same geographical area, but it does

eliminate “communities” of people who don't tend to work together. As with the above requirement of affiliation, there may be members of the community who engage in few if any cooperative projects. This is presumably true for members who are young children and the like, but also for “free-riders” who rarely help fellow members of their community. I will argue in chapters one and two that self-determination for communities implies just organization within communities, but the requirements listed above for mere communities contains know such requirement, because communities can be unjust (though they ought not, as I will discuss in following chapters).

This concept of cooperation as a requirement for community is similar to Gould's social ontology of individuals. As Gould has argued, an understanding of full agency and the social ontology of democracy (2014) requires communities. For Gould, full agency involves “not only the capacity for choice, but also a process of the development of capacities and the realization of long-term projects over time, as well as the cultivation of relationships” (16). Developing capacities and realizing complex, temporally distant projects (and of course developing relationships) make this version of agency presuppose interdependency among individuals. These relations form a community character for those agential projects the book describes as “common activities” or “joint activities” (16). As Gould says, “In these cases, the activity is oriented to shared ends or goals, and the social group is understood as constituted by individuals in the relations rather than as existing holistically above or beyond them” (16). These communities of shared projects and goals develop “power-with,” which Gould quotes Amy Allen to define as a capacity of a group “to act together for the attainment of a common or shared end or series of ends” (cited on 185). Voluntary formation of these communities is “probably a

normative desideratum” (233), but not necessary. People can belong to multiple such communities through choice or accident, and they need not be within a single nation, nor even geographically contiguous if they are an “epistemic community” (199-200). Indeed, transnational communities existing across and beyond political borders are an important part of the development of globalization Gould responds to in her (2014) book (e.g. 234).

These three requirements for a community are often interlinked and mutually reinforcing, but they can occur separately, unlike other potential candidates for requirements, such as the existence of community norms and social “facts” (Searle 2003). many of these alternate requirements come for free when our three requirements are fulfilled – for example, the existence of community norms and facts are both necessary for and built out of cooperation to solve the shared issues in the connection requirement, and are enforced and “made real” in large measure by the collective attitudes of the community. To illustrate the separability of these requirements we will next examine cases of groups which only meet one requirement to any great extent. Of course, other combinations and degrees of quasi-communities are possible.

In groups which meet only the first requirement of connection, there is no recognized community by the individuals, nor do they often cooperate with one another, but they do share a common fate on many issues. An example of this would be a collection of people who do not see themselves as a community, perhaps because this collection cuts across other identifying lines such as neighborhoods or ethnicities, but who are all nevertheless affected by the presence of many polluting industries and the plans for many more to be built in the area. Such a collection of individuals will be personally affected by these pollution sources, but their chances to do anything about these factories, and perhaps even to understand the scope of the problem, will be

severely limited by the lack of community (much more on this kind of example will be said in later chapters). Perhaps these individuals ought to forge a community identity and begin working together, but these would be further steps on the road to being a community.

In groups which only meet the second requirement of affiliation, the community is an identity, but one with no reality of much cooperation, nor a large set of shared issues. It is a bit difficult to come up with examples of an ideological community which does not also have cooperation or a common set of issues (what Kurt Vonnegut called a “Granfalloon” in his novel *Cat's Cradle*). What would *not* count as an example are non-community affiliations such as loyalties one might have for one's ethnicity, or one's gender. Even if one saw these as being important to one's identity, and were predisposed to favor fellow members of those identities, it does not follow that members of that identity collectively see themselves as being in a *community* with everyone of a similar identity. Though it is true that many people belong to more than one community, the total set of all affiliations that feed into our identity is much larger than the subset of our community affiliations.

A possible candidate for a “community” which does fulfill only the second requirement is a community formed around being a fan of a particular television or movie series. More than just fans of the shows (which would be a non-community affiliation), “members” identify strongly as members of this “community,” (e.g. with visual insignia) and work hard to promote the community's ends (e.g. by participating in online discussion fora). However, knowing that two individuals each considers herself to be a member of this community does not entail that the two know each other or cooperate with each other on projects other than the project of promoting this “community,” nor whether they are affected by any shared issues other than the popularity of the

show. It might mean, however, that this would be a good ground for cooperative projects, especially if they come to share problems; certainly one could imagine using membership in this community as a basis for cooperation following a natural disaster, supporting a charity, and so on. However, as in the previous example this would be a further step on the road to being a true community.

In groups which fulfill only the third requirement, there is a set of cooperative projects with no recognized or organized community nor many shared issues. An example of this might be a new neighborhood. At first, this is merely a collection rather than a community, because all of the individuals have allegiances and identities only outside of this group, such as with their families and the communities they left. Further, the issues that matter to them are ones happening in these other communities and their families. Assuming a cultural background of cooperation (Gilbert 1989; Tuomela 2007) individuals begin helping each other with individual goals and working cooperatively on collective projects. While they may work together in this way with their neighbors, it is not necessary that they see themselves as being in a community together, nor are there enough shared issues to cross over into significance. An increase in shared issues brought about by the shared fate of their increasing number of cooperative projects, and a growing sense of community, is another important step which could be taken.

There will be borderline cases of course, but when these three requirements are achieved, it is probable that there is a community which comprises a group of people who will work together, share knowledge, and respond to shared issues motivated by their membership within the community and their commitments to that community. There is also at least sometimes what Petit (2003) has called a “social integrate” best analyzed as an ontologically distinct entity with

its own doxastic and epistemic states. This is because members of the community will hold attitudes about the collective in the we-mode such as “we (as a community) believe/think/like/want/etc.” based on their common knowledge of the community and its history. These collective attitudes will inform actions taken on behalf of the community, in particular for collective actions involving many members of the community. At such times, knowing what the community thinks/wants/etc. is a better predictor of what collective actions will be performed than what the individuals think/want/etc. as individuals. Petit (2003) illustrates this with the example of how groups often resolve the paradox of the “discursive dilemma.”

The discursive dilemma arises in situations in which groups have to decide whether to make a decision collectively based on group members' current preferences, or let the logical consequences of previous decisions rule the day. At such times, group members face a choice: “They may maximize responsiveness to individual views, running the risk of collectively endorsing inconsistent sets of propositions. Or they may impose the discipline of reason at the collective level, running the risk of collectively endorsing a conclusion that a majority of them – perhaps even all of them – individually reject” (p. 175). Petit argues that groups which have collective identities and goals are under strong pressure to endorse the latter option and minimize inconsistencies, and in fact often do so. This is because in order to be taken seriously as an identifiable group with goals to outsiders, the group cannot be viewed as arbitrary and capricious (it would be difficult to enter into agreements with a wildly unpredictable group). Further, in order to be taken seriously as being effective at promoting its goals by insiders it must consistently pursue them; otherwise it have difficulty maintaining its membership (it is unlikely that one would join and work to promote a group which often changed its goals radically) (p.

177). Two clear cases of this pressure can be seen in judicial systems and in political parties, which change their positions only slowly and try to minimize inconsistencies.

Thus, Petit argues, the resolution of the discursive dilemma taken by groups is often for the group to act more like a trustworthy, rational agent who reliably acts on previous commitments and expressed values, even at the cost of not representing the will of the members. Given this, it makes sense to understand the group and predict its actions based on what one knows *about the group* and its past actions, its commitments, goals, etc. as opposed to what one knows about the members, other than their preference to maintain and promote the group. Coming back to our requirements for a community, when all three are met, the community has a strong pressure to be predictable as a group because they value their community, want it to flourish, and engage in collective projects which may well benefit from others cooperating with the community as a collective (indeed, as we will see in the rest of this dissertation, the goal of many activist projects is to get social institutions to engage with marginalized communities more and better than they currently do). Therefore thinking about the group's goals and having those guide choices becomes significant. A caveat – Petit is focused on social integrates as intentional subjects, and so does not discuss the counter-pressure, but it is worth mentioning. If a community or other group becomes too bound by tradition that it either cannot adapt to changing circumstances, or cannot represent current member interests, it is also likely to fail in achieving its goals and to have widespread defection. Thus a balance between rationality and responsiveness, or tradition and change, is an important addition to his account.

It is important to note that these requirements for community do not imply that individuals must be members of only one community, nor set an arbitrary standard on the

strength of the community and the duration that it lasts. These are important reservations. As Amartya Sen has pointed out, “group affiliation is not always beneficial” (2004, p. 41), both because communities can abuse non-members and oppress members on the one hand, and because members of the community may be seen merely as a member of that community by others, which can be an unjust failure of recognition (more will be said about recognition justice in chapter one). The above caveat on the discursive dilemma also shows us that groups may become intolerably unable to represent current member interests. This definition does not require that individuals necessarily ought to be members of a community as defined here, nor does it necessarily take communities as ontologically prior to individuals as some communitarians do (e.g. Taylor 1985). Rather, this definition merely identifies those communities to which people belong. In so doing, it provides a way of thinking about the strength of the community based on the number of shared issues, the extent to which people exhibit collective attitudes, and how frequently they work on collective projects. It also begins to provide a way to think through when someone ought to consider herself or be considered a member of the community, based on how well they follow the requirements. The requirements also do not specify hard and fast rules for the size of a community. However, strong networks of cooperation and collective projects, and strong networks of members knowing one-another and feeling a sense of belonging with one-another do become less likely at larger scales.

This definition of community has implications for justice concerns. More will be said about justice for communities and their members throughout this dissertation, but aspects directly connected to these requirements for communities can be touched on here. There are four kinds of action implied in the above definition of community: individual (“I-mode”) actions with

one's goods as the goal, individual actions taken with the community's goods as goals, collective (“we-mode”) actions with the goods of some individual or individuals as the goal (e.g. cooperating to lift a neighbor's car out of a ditch, or start a business together), and collective actions with collective community goals. The ability to engage in collective actions and actions for the good of one's community (three out of the four possible kinds of action) represent a kind of community freedom, over and above individual freedom to engage in actions for one's own benefit. Carter in his (1999) describes communal freedom as “Freedom of a group of individual agents to perform a set of agentially distinct actions . . . in combination” (Carter 1999, p. 248). Limiting these freedoms may be seen as an injustice shared by all the members of the community, and indeed can perhaps best be thought of as an injustice against that community. In extreme forms, these limits may extirpate the community by rendering collective actions and attitudes impossible, which given the importance of community to many, is likely to be a profound harm and a grave injustice absent strong justification (this will be discussed in more detail in chapter three).

Further, groups of people can be affected by various injustices, with those injustice tracking communities to which they belong, as well as where they live, their race, their gender, and a host of other distinguishing and intersecting characteristics. This can be seen as individual injustices, but ones which come in part because of membership to a given community. A community likewise can be harmed in its ability to pursue its collective goals by injustices based on distinguishing and intersecting characteristics of it and its members. These can be seen as community injustices (both forms of injustices will be discussed in more detail in chapters one and two).

This does not mean that community harms cannot possibly be understood as happening at the individual level; rather that such a reductive analysis is unnecessary to demonstrate that unjust harms have occurred. Further, as we will see throughout the rest of this dissertation, many groups fighting against injustices see harms and injustices as happening to their communities, and this dissertation can be viewed in part as looking at the consequences of taking that claim seriously. In all the above cases of injustice, individuals can, of course, work to end injustices perpetrated against them and their community politically, participate in decision making processes to avoid further oppression, work to mitigate the negative effects of the injustices or adapt themselves to them, and a host of other strategies of the oppressed. They also might engage in these strategies collectively as a community. As Schwartzman (2009) says, “The debate between liberals and communitarians is often cashed out in these terms, and yet it seems overly simplistic to say that either individuals are all that matter normatively or groups are all that matter. Rather, people are constructed in part through their membership in various social groups, and social groups are made up of individuals” (180). Discussing communities' roles in justice, particularly participatory justice, will be addressed in the rest of this dissertation.

Chapter One:

Environmental Justice and Food Sovereignty

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of environmental justice (EJ, as it is known by practitioners) and food sovereignty, which will be used to frame the rest of the dissertation. The two movements share many areas of concern and approaches, and are natural allies on many issues (Mares and Peña 2011; Pimbert 2009). environmental justice and food sovereignty will provide a context and set of test cases for discussing justice, collective capabilities, and community epistemic capacities in subsequent chapters. In order to do this effectively, this chapter will also disambiguate the ways in which environmental justice and food sovereignty conceive of justice.

This chapter will argue that there are two important kinds of justice claims in these movements: the first, more discussed, kind concerns justice for communities within larger institutions (which can be divided into concepts of distributive, participatory, and recognition justice), whereas the second, much less discussed, kind concerns justice for communities to pursue projects outside of those social institutions, and which rests on a concept of self-determination justice. Self-determination as a concept is recognized in the literatures on environmental justice and food sovereignty, but what has not been discussed is what conception of justice underlies it, and what self-determination justice demands of dominant institutions. This chapter will begin examining these questions. In doing so, this chapter does not argue for the superiority of either conception of justice over the others, but rather for the importance of

disentangling the differences between them, as well as the importance of self-determination justice for some communities. An understanding of different kinds of justice for communities within environmental justice and food sovereignty could be of use for activists, because an awareness of all the conceptions of justice underlying the movement, and the ways in which they differ, can help avoid unnecessary divisions which undermine their effectiveness. Such an awareness can also avoid papering over real differences within the movement which might otherwise lead to disorganization as people work at cross-purposes. For policy makers and representatives of powerful institutions, understanding the various justice claims being made can help with planning how those claims can best be met. In the context of this dissertation and other academic projects, these differing conceptions are important because they show that, particularly in regard to community management of environmental and food systems in the face of domination and oppression, communities need certain capacities in order to achieve opportunities for justice, and to resist and flourish in the face of injustice.

Environmental Justice and Food Sovereignty

Environmental justice (EJ) as a set of overlapping discourses is focused primarily on disproportional impacts of environmental harms on marginalized groups. At the 1991 People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, seventeen principles of environmental justice were adopted. The document names groups requiring special protection such as Native Peoples in the US, workers, and future generations; it names particularly egregious environmental issues such as nuclear testing and hazardous waste; and it lays out requirements for environmental justice including self-determination for all peoples, participation “as equal partners” at all levels, and informed consent (Principles of Environmental Justice 1991; see Appendix for a full list).

Environmental justice discourse is prominent among activists, such as the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition (MEJC), which brings together organizations from all over the state and “Works to achieve a clean, healthy, and safe environment for Michigan's most vulnerable residents in alignment with the principles of environmental justice” (Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition 2013). Environmental justice is also a prominent discourse among scholars who in “Hundreds of studies conclude that, in general ethnic minorities, indigenous persons, people of color, and low-income communities confront a higher burden of environmental exposure from air, water, and soil pollution from industrialization, militarization, and consumer practices” (Mohai et al. 2009 p. 406). Perhaps the earliest and most effective such study was the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice's study *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States* (Lee 1987) which showed that toxic waste processing and storage occurred disproportionately in communities of color in the US. Environmental justice is also a vibrant discourse among policy makers who have placed mandates regarding EJ into law and policy in many federal agencies (e.g. Executive Order No. 12898 1994).

Environmental justice is often regarded historically as an expansion of the civil rights movement into environmental concerns beginning in the US (Mohai et al. 2009; Newton 2009; Taylor 2000). Led primarily by women of color in urban areas (Shrader-Frechette 2002 p. 6), the movement has also disrupted the traditional environmental movement which was less focused on urban areas and the plight of the poor (Principles of environmental justice 1991; Shrader-Frechette 2002; Taylor 2000). An early watershed for Environmental justice was the protests in Warren County, North Carolina, where the EPA issued waivers in the early 1980s to allow PCBs to be dumped in overwhelmingly African American and poor communities without the usual

safety precautions. Though the protests eventually failed, environmental justice as an issue was brought to the attention of many (Newton 2009). Environmental justice is concerned with different aspects of the environment in the broadest sense, defined as wherever people engage in all the important activities of their lives, which is conceived variously as where we “live, learn, and work” (“What is environmental justice” EPA.gov), or “live, work, and play” (Novotny 2000), or some similar formulation. One element of this environment, which has been growing in prominence in EJ discourse, is the food system (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). This increasing concern can be viewed as a further expansion from civil rights to environmental justice, and now for environmental justice to cover food justice as well (Sbicca 2012). Food justice in this sense focuses on individual and community access to Sen's “baskets of entitlements” to food (1983) and whether those entitlements are justly apportioned (Sbicca 2012), as well as how environmental problems affect food and ground water (Brown 1993; Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). However, this is not the only approach to food justice, and another prominent movement, related to environmental justice, is food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty as a set of overlapping discourses is focused primarily on the right of peoples to have sovereignty over their food system (Our World is Not For Sale 2001). They further see this commitment as implying a radical vision of justice, for “[food sovereignty] points to the way entire rural communities, local cultures, and longstanding social relations are brought together through the production, preparation, and consumption of food” (Thompson 2015, p. 75). Arguably,³ the term was introduced in 1996 (Tlaxcala Declaration 1996) by La Via Campesina (which this dissertation will generally refer to, as members of that organization also do, as

³ For some recent scholarly challenges to the idea that Via was the first to use the term food sovereignty, see McMichael 2014; Edelman 2014. None would argue however that Via was a very prominent early exponent of the term, and have continued to advocate for and develop the concept in the years since.

“Via”), an organization of self-described “peasants” who see their food practices as essential to their community's identity and survival, and further see threats to their food practices as arising in large part from the exploitative institutions of global capitalism (Nyéléni Declaration 2007; Our World is Not For Sale 2001; Tlaxcala Declaration 1996). The food sovereignty discourse articulates multiple principles addressing these issues, including putting control locally in a way that recognizes traditional local territories, building knowledge and skills for the communities (thereby respecting traditional cultures without forcing communities to be museum cultures in order to sustain their ways of life), and working with nature (Nyéléni Synthesis Report 2007). Food sovereignty was originally a term used predominantly by activists (unlike environmental justice which from early days has had broad impact among scholars and policy makers as well as activists), but this is changing as work engaging with food sovereignty and its analysis of the dominant model of “food security” have recently begun gaining traction in academia (e.g. Menser 2008, 2010; Schanbacher 2010; Whittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010). Food sovereignty has also been gaining uptake among policy makers, including at the UN (Claeys 2013), and among countries in South America, who have been adding clauses protecting food sovereignty into their constitutions (Whittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010).

Environmental justice and food sovereignty criticize the dominant institutions of global capitalism from corporations to governments to international organizations like the IMF, and are resisting the ways that those institutions and their practices harm marginalized people and their communities. These critiques and resistances take many forms, but one prominent theme of these concerns how communities and individuals should exist *within* dominant, oppressive, marginalizing institutions and interact with them. Critiques in this theme seek to make those

institutions more just toward and more representative of the oppressed and marginalized. The conceptions of justice underlying this theme have been examined in academic literature and are typically described along familiar lines of distributive, participatory, and recognition justice (e.g. Figueroa 2006). We will next review these concepts in environmental justice and food sovereignty before looking at another theme of critiques and resistance *independent from* those institutions, based on self-determination. Before doing so, however, it is worth mentioning that in both kinds of justice, individuals as members of communities or other groups (e.g. race or class) are important for thinking about these issues, but so too are communities themselves. Communities of individuals are often the subject of unjust harms, and communities can be the subject of unjust harms, and communities are often a locus for addressing injustices and their effects.

Distributive, Participatory, and Recognition Justice

There has been a strong thread of distributive justice in environmental justice and food sovereignty since their inception, calling for just distribution of harms as well as goods. For environmental justice, a central injustice is that vulnerable, marginalized, or oppressed communities, particularly communities of disproportionately high ethnic and racial minorities, are targeted to receive the dominant society's environmental harms. In the highly influential *Dumping in Dixie* (1990), Bullard argues that “Black communities, because of their economic and political vulnerability, have been routinely targeted for the siting of noxious facilities, locally unwanted land uses and environmental hazards . . . and are likely to suffer greater risks from these facilities than is the general population” (p. xiv). Since that book was published, a wealth of work on environmental justice has looked at increased environmental harms for individuals as

a result of membership in an oppressed or marginalized community. At the same time, that work has also identified environmental goods ranging from clean air and water to access to wilderness, which accrue to largely white, privileged communities (e.g. Gottlieb and Fisher 1996; Grijalva 2011; Mohai, Pellow, and Roberts 2009; Sbicca 2012; Suagee 1994; Taylor 2000).

Food sovereignty similarly sees distributive justice for communities of individuals as important. The Declaration of Nyéléni, which like *Dumping in Dixie* for EJ drove much of the literature on food sovereignty after its release, says that food sovereignty requires in part “sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities, including those who are hungry, under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalised, at the centre of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies” (Nyéléni Declaration 2007). This is a call for more just distribution of the goods of healthy, culturally appropriate food. It also comes out against unfair distribution when it says that food sovereignty “rejects the privatisation of natural resources” and “rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity or component for international agri-business” (Nyéléni Declaration 2007).

In addition to distributive justice, another important conception of justice recognized within these movements is participatory justice. On this conception, mere equitable distribution of goods and harms is insufficient (as well as being very unlikely) absent just participation by affected stakeholders in those decisions affecting them. Without participatory justice, environmental and food policies push marginalized stakeholders into the position of patients, dependent on more powerful stakeholders. This concern is acknowledged in many policy recommendations. The National Research Council calls for involving communities “early and often” (Kasperson 1986) in risk decisions, as part of gaining their consent, which is one

important element in just participation. This can make risk characterizations and decisions “more democratic, legitimate, and informative” (Stern and Fineberg 1996). Environmental justice and food sovereignty have acknowledged since their inception that participatory justice itself is a goal for both movements, as well as instrumentally useful for other kinds of justice (Principles of Environmental Justice 1991; Nyéléni Declaration 2007 – see Appendices 1 and 2).

Environmental justice argues that participatory injustice occurs when affected stakeholders do not have meaningful participation in the decision-making process around environmental risks and harms (Bullard 1990; Mohai and Roberts 2009; Shrader-Frechette 1991, 2002; Taylor 2000). Thus it calls for participatorily just inclusion of affected stakeholders, both directly on participatory justice grounds, and because it will lead to fewer distributive or recognition injustices (Shrader-Frechette 1991, 2002; Taylor 2000). Individual stakeholders are more likely to be successful in pushing for representation if they are part of a community with a collective commitment to help one-another, and they will be more effective in their participation if they can draw on community capacities to learn about the issues, evaluate possibilities, and support each other so that they are less likely to be coerced into choosing an option based on a lack of resources (Goodman et al. 1998; Freudenberg et al. 2011; Minkler et al. 2006; Shrader-Frechette 2002). Food sovereignty too recognizes the value of participatory justice, which in part “Promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors that helps resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities” (Nyéléni Declaration 2007). This can be seen when they that a driver for developing the food sovereignty movement was the desire of small-scale farmers' associations to have their “Voice heard and to participate directly in the decisions that were affecting their lives” (The

International Peasant's Voice 2011), or when they (critically) support the inclusion of food sovereignty into nations' constitutions.

There is a growing acknowledgment in policy discourses of the importance of participation in policy formation and implementation. The USDA, for example, has an explicit commitment to informing stakeholders and obtaining input from them, particularly around controversial issues like the Farm Bill and animal welfare (Farm Bill Stakehold Listening Sessions, 2015). Likewise, the National Research Council in the US has repeatedly (1994; 1996; 2008) called for participation of the public with scientists and policymakers in risk decisions at “Every step of the process that informs risk decisions” (National Research Council 1996, p. 76). This emphasis on participation is justified in part on justice grounds on behalf of public stakeholders as well as making policies “More democratic, legitimate, and informative for decision participants,” and in part because it makes policies and decision-making for these organizations more effective “By improving problem formulation, [and] providing more knowledge” (National Research Council 1996, p. 79). It can also improve the interactions between stakeholder communities and experts by “Determining appropriate uses for controversial analytic techniques, clarifying views, and making decisions more acceptable.” (ibid.) As we will see in chapter three, self-determination increases the ability of both individuals and communities to meaningfully participate in these decisions.

Recognition justice requires that “Individual and group identity is respected, which entails an appreciation for local experience and knowledge, traditional beliefs, and environmental heritage” (Figueroa 2006). The identity people have as individuals and members of groups is easily overlooked by focusing only on distribution and participation. In food

sovereignty, food is seen as co-constituted with individual identity and community identity. This means that the practices around food are an important constitutive element in creating, maintaining, and adapting individual and community identity on the one hand, and on the other the identity of those communities and individuals are important constitutive elements of their food practices.

It is easier to see this with examples of communities and individuals with strict and explicit norms. For a community of devout Muslims, that identity (and the individual identities of the members) have a large effect on food practices, including production, preparation, consumption, and disposal. At the same time, adopting new food practices can alter a community or individual sense of identity. For individuals, speaking on a personal level, changing my food practices to eliminate animal products fed back up into my sense of identity as a “vegan,” which then led to other changes arising out of that identity, such as no longer wearing leather products. This was a voluntary change; for communities, many in the food sovereignty movement fear an involuntary change to community and individual identity as new food practices are forced upon them in a profound failure of recognition justice, which in extremis can be an existential threat. As the “Declaration of Atitlán” declares, food sovereignty is a “collective right based on rights to our lands, territories and natural resources, the practice of our cultures, languages and traditions, and is essential to our identity as Peoples” (Declaration of Atitlán 2002). Recognition injustices, then, can include the elimination of community practices and knowledge, which are not lost for an individual, but rather fail to be passed on to future generations, and often include knowledge such as languages and cooperative food practices (Adamson 2011; Pimbert 2006; Settee 2007) which only work when in community. It can also include the loss of community identity which is

so important to the community and its members, but which is warped and eroded by violations of food sovereignty (Adamson 2011; O'Neill 2000). The harms can even include the death of communities as members split up and move to cities to find work, unable to maintain their community in the face of integration into the modern industrial food system (Pimbert 2009; Schanbacher 2010; Whittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe 2010).

Recognition justice is also important in many conceptions of environmental justice. One environmental recognition injustice that has been discussed in EJ literature is a loss of environmental knowledge, values, and other elements of the community's "environmental heritage" (Figueroa 2006) which the community as a whole possesses and in parts of which individual members participate. Ultimately environmental injustice can lead to the death of communities when environmental insults become so extreme that everyone who can afford to leave does so (Bullard 1990).⁴

To pick one example from the literature which employs recognition justice and which fits squarely into both environmental justice and food sovereignty, O'Neill (2000) says:

"Fish, especially salmon, are necessary for the survival of the native peoples of the Pacific Northwest, both as individuals and as a people. Fish are crucial for native peoples' sustenance, in the sense of a way to feed oneself and one's family. Fish are also crucial for subsistence, in the sense of a culture or way of life with economic, spiritual, social, and physical dimensions – a way to *be* Yakama, or to *be* Tulalip." (p. 5)

This is very much an argument from recognition justice. As the paper continues, when pollution has caused these fish to have toxic levels of various contaminants and government agencies

⁴ With this tripartite scheme of justice pursued within social institutions, I am leaving out "restorative justice," which is if anything an area even less explored in the environmental justice literature than recognition justice. I take restorative justice to similarly be a justice claim pursued by communities acting within society in order to pursue restoration for previous environmental harms, and for that restoration to take into account concerns brought up in participatory and recognition justice. For a fuller treatment of restorative justice, see, e.g., (Figueroa & Waitt, 2010).

respond by getting people in these communities to eat less fish, they are preserving individual health but furthering the injustice and harm against the community (p. 8-9) through a lack of recognition. O'Neill goes on to say, this time more in a participatory justice vein, that this is an example of a larger problem where people doing Quantitative Risk Assessments (QRA's) for toxic exposures and other environmental problems for these communities fail to take in the lived experience of community members and the knowledge and institutions of the communities themselves (p. 31-3).

These notions are about the reform of social institutions that often harm individuals and communities based on arbitrary markers of group membership. These injustices are real, explicitly present in the environmental justice and food sovereignty movements, and important for activists, academics, and policy makers. However, there is another conception, self-determination justice, which is also present among activists, yet which has been much less discussed in academic discourses. In the next section we will explore what is meant by self-determination in environmental justice and food sovereignty contexts, before looking at what kinds of justice claims underlie these concerns.

Self-Determination in Environmental Justice and Food Sovereignty

Self-determination is an ambiguous concept without a clear definition or agreement on what entities can possess it. Rather than national sovereignty or some other competing concept, self-determination in this dissertation refers to the way I see this concept often being used in environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses. In my interpretation of these literatures, self-determination here is focused on the survival, flourishing, and just arrangements of

communities, with particular attention paid to a community's environmental heritage and food system. Self-determination in this sense includes the ability of a community to effectively engage in joint projects which are important to the communities' members, particularly ones which promote the survival and flourishing of the community. This concept of self-determination also includes a goal of participatory justice within the community for its projects.

In social justice discourse among activists in environmental justice and food sovereignty, it is well recognized that self-determination in the sense we are using it is important in itself and necessary to avoid other injustices. For example, the Nyéléni Declaration, one of the first explications of food sovereignty, is concerned with injustices in economic relations, gender relations, the preservation of marginalized cultures, land reform, and a host of other issues brought together by food practices. It calls for giving local food providers control over their food systems, localizing food systems at the expense of remote and unaccountable institutions like corporations, and building knowledge and skills of food providers and their local organizations as well as supporting the passing of this knowledge to future generations. It also seeks to build up “Local organizations that conserve, develop and manage localized food production and harvesting systems, developing research systems to support this, ... and reject[ing] technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these,” as well as “promot[ing] positive interaction ... that helps resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities” (Nyéléni Declaration, 2007). The Principles of environmental justice (1991) states that “environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.” For groups working at the intersection of EJ and food sovereignty, for example urban and particularly native communities working on preserving their communities'

food and water systems, self-determination is a widely used concept (e.g. Reed and Norgaard 2010).

Additionally, some academics have discussed the importance of self-determination as part of food sovereignty and environmental justice (e.g. Desmarais and Wittman 2013; Figueroa 2006; Werkheiser and Noll 2014; Whyte Forthcoming B). In the context of food sovereignty, this is perhaps most fleshed out by Michael Menser (2008). Menser describes food sovereignty, and via in particular, as engaging in a form of participatory democracy he describes as “MaxD,” which is significant because unlike other forms of political movements, MaxD is committed to “(i) democratic self-determination; (ii) capacity development for individuals and groups; (iii) delivery of economic, social, and/or political benefits; and (iv) the construction, cultivation, proliferation, and interconnection of movements and organizations that embody the first three tenets.” (p. 24) This means that food sovereignty is not focused on institutions, especially the state, as the only legitimate means of political expression. Instead, food sovereignty supports communities engaging in political actions outside of reason-giving and deliberation to also include actions like socio-ecological sustainable food production. As Menser points out, food sovereignty “Aims to cultivate and proliferate an alternative model of agricultural *production* and a corresponding political program,” (p. 31) one which “Draws upon local and traditional knowledge in combination with laboratory studies to farm in such a way as to meet local cultural needs, provide for human health and conserve biodiversity” (p. 31). This is a program of community self-determination and self-development, following the commitments laid out in Menser's definition of MaxD above.

In the context of environmental justice, a good example of scholarly work incorporating

self-determination is Taylor's (2000) overview of the creation of EJ as a paradigm. There, she stresses the importance of self-determination to the movement. She uses the Principles and other documents to define self-determination primarily as “The rights of people of color to determine their own political, economic, and cultural futures” (Taylor 2000, p. 542) but says that self-determination also involves “reflection and self-healing” (Ibid.). Taylor argues that because the environmental experiences of people of color are quite different than the experiences of Whites, there was a redefinition of environmental activism by people of color to have three new components: “autonomy or self-determination, land rights, and civil or human rights” (Taylor 2000, p. 533). The different environmental experiences of people of color relevant to self-determination are that “people of color had little or no choice about where they lived, what jobs they did, or how they interacted with the land” (534). As a result, “one of the enduring struggles of people of color is that of self-determination—the struggle to define who they are and how they interact with the land” (ibid.).

This focus on self-determination as (in part) promoting the development of the members of the community and the community itself helps explain some of the commitments we find in environmental justice and food sovereignty which might otherwise seem unrelated to the environment or food.⁵ When Via organizes itself in a horizontal, non-hierarchical structure, when food sovereignty and EJ resist privatization or other moves into the global capitalist system, or

⁵ Flora (2011) and others have argued that the inclusion of “All manner of movements for liberation from oppression, from the Zapatistas to the women’s movement” (p.545) under the banner of food sovereignty as the various declarations of food sovereignty do, is too great a burden for one idea, especially one merely about food (see also, e.g. Thompson 2015, p. 75). However, these issues are seen by advocates as inherently interconnected and inseparable. Indeed, advocates of food sovereignty contend that trying to deal with food in isolation will inevitably support currently existing (and unjust) power structures which harm community self-determination (Nyéléni Declaration 2007; Our World is Not For Sale 2001; Tlaxkala 1996). The same is true of the environmental justice movement, which sees the “environment” as encompassing a broad sweep of sociological, historical, political, and economic as well as ecological and geographical features.

when special attention is paid to making sure women have a strong voice in decisions – these can all be seen as moves to strengthen the community and its members, and promote their individual and collective agency.

Self-Determination Justice

The focus on self-determination as a goal is prominent among activists in environmental justice and food sovereignty, and increasingly recognized by academics. The question then is what concept of justice is underlying this call for self-determination, and what kind of claims self-determination justice makes on the dominant society. One might think that self-determination justice can best be characterized negatively as a right to autonomy for communities – that dominant institutions must not undermine or block communities' attempts at self-determination. However this does not go far enough. Distributive justice as used in environmental justice and food sovereignty does not only say that society must not distribute goods or harms unjustly, but that the society has a duty to distribute goods and harms justly. Participatory justice not only decries marginalization and exclusion of relevant stakeholders, but also calls for their just inclusion in decisions which affect them. Recognition justice, too, is not defined by non-interference with people forming their identities, but rather actively calls for the recognition of those identities and the inclusion of them in decisions. Given the positive duties attached to these rights, a more parallel structure of self-determination justice would be that the dominant society and dominant institutions have a duty to help build up communities within the society and to support the self-determination of those communities. Self-determination injustices, then, arise when societies harm communities, but also when they neglect marginalized communities in favor of supporting privileged ones. The three characteristics laid out in the

introduction of communities as the concept is understood in environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses – connection, affiliation, and cooperation – are important to recall here, because they argue for self-determination for communities

Cooperation is important as a justification for self-determination for communities. Recall the ideas of “Communal freedoms” (Carter 1999) or “Collective capabilities” (Ibrahim 2006) of communities – that many projects important to individuals are nevertheless located within a community, and could not be pursued by an individual acting by herself, and in fact are often required for the development of many individual projects and freedoms (Evans 2002). These communal freedoms can be understood as part of self-determination as it is being used in this dissertation. If we grant that social institutions have a *prima facie* duty to promote freedoms or capabilities for members of the society, then promoting the self-determination of a community to determine coordinated projects and achieve them is an important part of that duty.

At the same time, the requirement of affiliation is also important as a justification for self-determination. Many people see their own identity as co-constructed with their community, and see the community flourishing as a good they wish to pursue (examples of which can be found in the next section on self-determination in the environmental justice and food sovereignty contexts). Self-determination in the sense it is used in EJ and food sovereignty discourses is focused in large part on communities coming together and deciding what their collective vision for the community is, and deciding on and executing projects to further that vision. Thus, increased self-determination means a greater ability to pursue this widely shared goal. If we grant that social institutions also have a *prima facie* duty to support members of that society in pursuing goals in line with their conceptions of the good, then promoting the self-determination

of a community to determine its identity and promote its flourishing is an important part of that duty as well.

Finally, the requirement of connection is an important justification for self-determination for communities. That people are connected by being affected by the same issues in their day-to-day lives suggests that on democratic grounds, they ought to be able to come together to have influence over those issues. People who are affected by similar issues and do not make up a formal body, but do often engage in some of the collaborative projects (the nexus of which forms the community), and who identify with the community and seek to have it flourish, ought to have a say in those projects and the collective vision of the community. If we grant that social institutions have a *prima facie* duty to promote democratic processes at local levels, then promoting the self-determination of a community to work on these issues is part of that duty as well.

The considerations above highlight reasons for a society to support at least some degree of self-determination for communities even in an ideally just world. On instrumentalist grounds a group with internal participatory justice can make the group better at achieving their joint goals and in determining goals which capture as many interests of the members as possible. This is in addition to the inherent value of participatory justice as a procedural goal which is often present in the food sovereignty discourse (Schanbacher 2010; Whittman, Desmarais, Wiebe 2010). As we will see in chapter two in the discussion of epistemic self-determination, there are also reasons for a marginalized or oppressed community in our non-ideal world to seek self-determination as a way of better participating in decisions within the larger society.

The above also foreground the importance of justice within and between these communities. If some members of the community are not able to participate in determining or pursuing joint projects, or if their ideas are not included in the vision of community flourishing, then there is little reason to think an unjust “self-determination” would be of much use. The sense of self-determination found among environmental justice and food sovereignty activists is similar to Gould's concept of democratic self-determination as a mode of organizing common activities, which better fleshes out questions of participatory justice within and between these communities. As Gould says, self-determination in this sense is included within democracy, understood as “A requirement of equal rights of participation in decision making on the part of all those engaged in a common activity, defined by shared goals” (Gould 2014, p. 88) An individual's rights in a democracy to freely determine her own activities requires that no individual has (*prima facie*) a right to determine joint or shared activities more than any other participant. This is because we are equal and require each other for the realization of our joint projects, no one should (*prima facie*) have more say over those joint projects, and so they must be decided democratically. Gould calls codetermining shared or joint activities along democratic lines *self-determination* by the collectivity. Though democratic participation is a human right for Gould, *mere* democratic participation is not sufficient for satisfying the demands by members of a community on one-another. Rather, Gould's argues for the concept of Equal Positive Freedom (EPF) as a necessary element of self-determination. EPF can be understood as “*prima facie* equal rights of access to the conditions for self-development or self-transformation” (26-7). This requires “relational equality” (27) within communities, and also further grounds the right individuals to form communities to achieve joint projects and to support their individual

development.

The only restrictions on this *prima facie* equal participation are justice claims to being more affected by particular decisions for particular stakeholders (Gould 2014, pp. 87-9). In today's globalized economies, for example, this may well mean that distant stakeholders such as marginalized subsistence farmers have a more fundamental claim to restricting the actions of a food security policy than do the powerful experts and farmers in dominant societies.

This concept of self-determination justice is also not silent on how communities ought to interact with each other. The central concept of this interaction is solidarity. Solidarity is, like rights or democracy, a problematically vague concept, so it is useful to be clear as to how the term should be understood in this context. The model of solidarity at play in environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses has perhaps best been articulated by Carol Gould, who argues that solidarity is not merely mutual aid or fellow-feeling as some other theories attest, but rather “Solidarity specifies the more general category of mutual aid to cases where there is some degree of fellow feeling and a positive moral obligation to act, presumably along with an altruistic motivation to provide such aid” (107). Gould argues that solidarity can exist not only between individuals or individuals and groups, but “can extend also to relations among groups or associations, where these are increasingly cross-border or transnational. The entities standing in this sort of solidarity with each other are thus conceived of as networks of interrelations with other individuals or associations” (110). This kind of solidarity is necessary for communities to achieve full self-determination for the same reason that individuals need to relate to others to achieve full agency and self-development: in order to support a community's capacities and ability to achieve its joint projects it needs the mutual aid of other communities, and further to

achieve larger goals such as fundamental changes to society, many communities will have to cooperate on joint projects.

This conception of self-determination balances the goals of individual and community autonomy with the importance of cooperation, solidarity, and just relations within and between communities (Gould 2004; 2014). It also has the advantage of drawing on goals already present in policy and law on the one hand⁶ and activism on the other. As Gould says, people's

“Development of capacities, building of relationships, and fulfillment of long-term goals depends both on their own choices, individual or joint, and on the availability of the means for their freedom to become effective, where several of these means are specified in human rights. We can rightly be critical when these prerequisites are not provided through social and political organization, which instead should aim to fulfill them” (Gould 2014, p. 74).

With this concept of self-determination justice in place, we can see how it plays out in EJ and food sovereignty. For environmental justice, particular attention must be given to the ways in which the environment is conducive to supporting a community's self-determination. This includes topics as diverse as access to environmental information like soil and groundwater tests; public community spaces (e.g. parks) that are safe, accessible, and useful; workplaces that are both safe and empowering for community members; and support for community-generated plans to improve the environment around them. For food sovereignty, particular attention must be paid to food and food systems as central to community self-determination. This includes topics as diverse as control of land and water for community food production, access to information about available food and the system which produces it, and support for communities to develop their

⁶ For example, self-determination is explicitly recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) as well as the United Nations Charter (1945). Of course, these are more in-line with the conception of self-determination as founding a state. However, a debate about the extent of a term enshrined in law may well be easier than a debate about inserting a term or concept in the first place.

own food practices and system. For both groups, an important part of supporting self-determination is support for those communities to connect with other communities to engage in critical solidarity and joint projects. Such goods are often available for privileged communities. For marginalized communities these goods are often unavailable, and indeed those communities' self-determination is often undercut by the dominant society.

To illustrate what self-determination justice looks like within a community, it is worth looking at a particularly important issue in food sovereignty and environmental justice discourses – gender justice. Via, for example, has Assemblies of Women that meet regularly to discuss women's issues, and release important declarations and policy statements (women and gender issues in Via will be discussed in-depth in chapter five). In environmental justice too, there is prominent concern for gender issues and for the particularly harmful environmental injustices visited on women (Principles of Environmental Justice 1991). Indeed, women have taken a strong leadership role in EJ since its inception (Shrader-Frechette 2002 p. 6).

This stress on women's participation in the movement and the good of women in these communities more generally can be well explained by the concept of self-determination we have been using thus far on three grounds: as a good to be pursued for members of the community, as a good for the community as a whole to achieve various joint projects, and because of the requirement of justice within a community which is part of self-determination. Recall that one goal of self-determination for a community is the flourishing of its members. This would strongly support special attention being paid to the improvement of women's lives as a group within the community of individuals suffering particularly. Further, such a focus is good for the community as a whole, as is acknowledged in these movements. Via does not simply call for the

inclusion of women because it would be good *for them*. It also calls for the recognition of the value of women's knowledge and skills to the community, and is careful to include their valuable perspectives, experiences, and insights in order for the community to do better. As Wiebe says in her (2013), “Side by side and in solidarity with the men of La Via Campesina, we bring political analysis, experience and energy to the shared goal of creating a future that is more just, egalitarian, peaceful, ecologically healthy and life-giving” (p. 5). Internal justice for women strengthens the community and makes it more effective at self-determination, both by making consensus decisions more well informed, and by making them actually consensual and thus more likely to be adopted by community members (such as women). Finally, self-determination as it is used in food sovereignty and environmental justice discourses is not only focused on the goods of the community and its members, but also on just relations within the community and between the community and others. To understand this it is necessary to look at the concept of justice underlying this call for self-determination.

It is clear from these examples that while the ultimate purpose may be individual flourishing and agency (if one does not accept that groups can have interests independent of individual interests), the scale of intervention is at the community. For example, in the realm of environmental justice, communities can collectively gain knowledge about environmental pollution and its effects on members' health, and then both fight for uptake of this knowledge leading to changes in institutions, and adapt their practices in light of this knowledge, again as collective projects (Brown 1993). In food sovereignty, communities of food providers fight politically for their collective right to sovereignty over their food practices; collectively engage in those practices, develop and improve them, and continue them into future generations; and

work as a community with other communities on those projects (Adamson 2011; Hoover 2013; Menser 2008; Pimbert 2006; Schanbacher 2010; Settee 2007; Whittman Desmarais and Wiebe 2010). Returning to the issue of gender justice in food sovereignty and environmental justice, we can see that this concept of self-determination justice requires just interactions within communities under the ideas such as Gould's EPF or Menser's MaxD. Self-determination is not merely a procedural approaches to justice but is also focused on outcomes for communities and their members, and an outcome of half the population having their agency undermined is not acceptable.

Conclusion

Self-determination is a well recognized concept, though it usually is conceived of at the level of nation-states, or of people to exercise once to form a nation-state (e.g. Moore 1998). However, self-determination can also be understood at the community level as an ongoing right, where it is understood as something like “the right of a particular group of persons to define, justify and concretely articulate the normative framework under which they act, deliberate, and plan with others. This requires the development and exercise of the capacities required to engage in such activities” (Menser 2008 p. 24). Communities, rather than individuals, are the possessors of this concept of self-determination, as well as the possessors of the necessary capacities for achieving it. However, this focus on communities is part of individuals connecting with one-another and achieving their goals. Indeed, this kind of self-determination can be understood “as the adaptive evolution of a self-regulating entity seeking to maximize the agency, equality, and the good of its members over time” (ibid.). This existence of the community to maximize the agency, equality, and the good of the individuals is necessary because full agency of an

individual requires both the support of a community to achieve individual goals, as well as the existence of interrelationships between people in a community and the creation and achievement of joint projects and goals (Gould 2014, p. 16). At the same time, of course, in order for the community to achieve sufficient self-determination and capacities, it is necessary for the community to flourish. This is sometimes a goal of the individuals – many in the food sovereignty and EJ movements value their communities highly and one of their goals is for their community to do well over time. Given, however, that the goals of this self-determination must be on the one hand the good of individual members (who might have different or even contradictory projects from one another), and on the other hand the good of the community over time, there may well be instances of conflict between these aims of self-determination. Within environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses, however, there are many more instances when the goods of the individual members of a community more-or-less align with each other and with the collective good of their community.

As stated earlier, the goals of distributive, participatory, and recognition justice in environmental justice and food sovereignty – working with, opposing, and making claims on institutions to make them more just and help their communities – and the goals of self-determination justice – building and protecting projects outside of those institutions – are not always in opposition. Certainly one could be committed to a combination of both (and in fact, much of the work in EJ and food sovereignty draws on both). However, devoting time to reforming dominant social institutions or working on projects outside of them are certainly different projects, and a coalition of groups working on environmental justice and food sovereignty may well want to have conversations about where to best focus and devote time and

energy. From a philosophical standpoint, these two perspectives are predicated on different conceptions of justice – where the emphasis for justice within institutions might be on informed consent, meaningful participation at all stages, the right of veto, and so on for communities, the emphasis for justice independent of those institutions might be on building capacities, internal organization/solidarity with others for communities, and so on. From a policy standpoint, respecting both kinds of claims requires different reforms and projects. Communities must have the capacities to utilize the opportunities for justice that dominant institutions might make available, and to create opportunities when they are not provided.

Chapter Two

Epistemic Self-Determination

Introduction

As we have seen, activists in the environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses are making justice claims to have self-determination for their communities – that is, to effectively engaging in joint projects which are important to the communities' members, particularly ones which promote the survival and flourishing of the community. As we saw briefly in chapter one and will see in more detail in chapter three, to engage in those projects, communities must build up the capacities to do so. While any number of projects might fall under this category, in this dissertation we will focus in on epistemic self-determination to engage in knowledge-related projects, and on epistemic capacities. In this chapter we will examine epistemic self-determination in the context of food policies and environmental policies, through the lenses of food sovereignty and environmental justice.

Section one will explain what is meant by epistemic self-determination. With this framework in place, sections two and three will briefly look at some food policies in the US, and show that while some are likely to support the epistemic aspects of self-determination, others are more likely to increase dependence on distant experts in ways which undercut those forms of self-determination. Section four will use epistemic self-determination as a lens for thinking about recently proposed climate change policies, and argue that epistemic self-determination is important for adapting to the changing environment of the anthropocene, and that the loss of epistemic self-determination is a serious potential harm in the anthropocene that should be

factored into decisions, such as the international calculus on climate change losses and harms. This chapter will not generate a full evaluation of the broad spectrum of food and environmental policies, which exist at international, national, regional, and local levels. However it will use a few examples to illustrate the concepts in the dissertation, and those illustrations will suggest what such a comprehensive analysis might look like. Ultimately, this chapter argues that food and environmental policies which work through empowerment ought to be pursued, particularly by marginalized or oppressed communities, both on participatory justice as well as effectiveness grounds. Further, those which work through disempowerment ought to be campaigned against. Food and environmental institutions have the potential to support epistemic self-determination in ways which increase community and individual flourishing and political power or not, and this is an important but underexamined normative element of food policy and environmental policy. Thus, this chapter is useful as an exploration of an underexamined topic when thinking about environmental justice and food sovereignty, and could also be of use to policymakers and activists thinking through how best to empower communities.

Before moving on to those sections, however, it is worth first briefly addressing a possible tension in drawing on the self-determination justice discourse in environmental justice and food sovereignty to suggest policy evaluation and reform. Recall that self-determination justice claims, unlike the distributive, participatory, and recognition-based justice claims, is concerned with building projects outside of, and perhaps even actively opposed to, state, corporate, and other social institutions. Given this, one may well wonder if policy changes are the right focus for self-determination justice or would even be welcome by activists.

This is a reasonable concern, but fortunately self-determination has the resources to at

least partially address it. Recall that self-determination justice calls for communities, societies, and institutions to be co-created by those affected. Thus it is quite probable that ultimately many social institutions and even entire states would need to be radically altered or abolished to reflect on-the-ground communities which may cross traditionally conceived borders. New international institutions may also need to be formed to accommodate these growing self-determined communities and the relations within and between them (for an interesting exploration of what this might look like, see Gould 2014). In our current non-ideal world, lacking in such well developed alternative institutions, food justice activists face deep problems and inequities in food systems and few resources for the most oppressed to address these issues. Thus, practically, any moves by social institutions, even unjust institutions, to increase capacities should be welcome, because these capacities can be used to further improve those institutions, *as well as* to pursue projects outside of them. For example, La Via Campesina supports policy changes to encourage land reform and to fight violence against women. It also (though critically) supports enshrining food sovereignty into states' constitutions. It supports these and a host of other reformist goals while also advocating for pursuing goals outside of oppressive social institutions (Tlaxkala Declaration 1996). What this concern is pointing to in part is a worry about creating dependence on ultimately unreformable institutions, so as we look at food policies which support or erode epistemic self-determination in the next section, we must be wary of policies which incentivize epistemic dependence (as opposed to interdependence) and subordination to external experts.

Epistemic Self-Determination

By *epistemic self-determination*, I refer to the ability of community members to jointly determine and engage in the epistemic practices of their community, which can include

methodologies for knowledge production and evaluative assumptions. As discussed in chapter one, this concept of epistemic self-determination, like self-determination more generally, requires a goal of participatory justice within and between communities in making this determination and engaging in epistemic projects. Just epistemic self-determination is desirable as an instantiation of general self-determination, and the arguments in the previous chapter support the promotion of epistemic self-determination. Further, epistemic self-determination is a necessary requirement of meaningful participation (in a way that other forms of self-determination may not), and thus the general arguments in favor of participatory justice also support the promotion of epistemic self-determination.

As Kristin Shrader-Frechette has pointed out, for participation in policy decisions to be meaningful, the process must include meaningful alternatives. For alternatives to be meaningful, they must include alternative evaluative assumptions and methodologies which can better embed stakeholders' values (Shrader-Frechette 1991, p. 207). To pick a somewhat hypothetical example, when studying links between a particular pollutant in fish and cancer for people eating the fish, scientific experts' evaluative assumptions may prefer type II errors (false negatives) due to their value of “certainty.” They may also focus in their methodology on an exposure risk for typical adult males. The exposed community may prefer methodologies looking at community members who eat far more of the fish, such as children and the elderly, because that embeds their values of respecting these groups. They may also prefer type I errors (false positives) in questions of cancer affecting these vulnerable populations, because this embeds a community value of “better safe than sorry.”

Because Shrader-Frechette is looking at *minimums* for meaningful participation itself,

rather than the goal of individual and community flourishing advocated in a fuller concept of self-determination (Gould 2004, p. 48), Shrader-Frechette argues that this requirement of meaningful alternative methodologies and evaluative assumptions may require government expertise and funding to generate these epistemic alternatives. Her requirements are a valuable beginning for thinking through epistemic capacities for democratic processes, but a goal of fuller self-determination requires more than just the participation she is concerned with. State-supported articulation of alternative methodologies and assumptions is insufficient for self-determination for several reasons. First, because self-determination is focused on community and individual growth, outsourcing the generation of alternatives robs the stakeholders of opportunities for development. Second, it runs the risk of recognition injustice if the external experts misunderstand the values of the community. Third, it increases epistemic dependence on this expertise, which may be withdrawn at a future time, and which can be the product of a conflict of interests as the outside experts are answerable to their role as representing the values of the community while also being beholden to the funders of their work, who might be biased against the communities. Fourth, in our non-ideal world, it is the case that a participatory process may well require that stakeholders vigorously speak up for their preferred alternatives and defend their rights to participate, in order to overcome accidental or intentional erosion of the participatory process. In such non-ideal circumstances, the dependency on external epistemic expertise becomes a greater liability.

Given all this, epistemic self-determination must also include affected stakeholders having the capability to *generate* their own questions and epistemic projects, as well as generate or defend their own methodologies and evaluative assumptions which embed their values (even

if these are ultimately altered or abandoned in deliberation with experts). While self-determination is focused on flourishing for both the individual and the community, it is the case that individuals require a community for developing and using complex epistemic methodologies. The necessary alternatives Shrader-Frechette advocates for could be generated by individuals in theory, but in practice it is much more likely that they will be generated by communities. Even highly trained scientists depend on the epistemic community of science to articulate and critique methodologies, and systematically apply these to generate knowledge. As Hardwig (1994) said,

“An attempt at epistemic self-reliance – even by the experts within their own fields of expertise – would be sheer folly. Experts, too, must rely on others to possess the evidence for their beliefs within their disciplines or even their subspecialties. In a culture as complex as ours, even knowledge is often unavoidably based at least partly on trust in the testimony of other experts.” (p. 84)

This epistemic mutual dependence within a community is presumably at least as necessary for non-scientists. Thus, to achieve individual epistemic self-determination, it is important to promote communities' epistemic capacities (as will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three) and epistemic self-determination.

This insufficiency of state-supported alternatives is closely related to the difference between an epistemic self-determination account and one of epistemic proceduralism arising out of deliberative democracy (e.g. Peter 2008; Longino 2002). Epistemic proceduralism shares commonalities with epistemic self-determination, including a concern for “epistemic fairness” (Longino 2002), a suspicion of mere consequentialism of finding the single “correct” answer to social questions as the justification of social-epistemic arrangements (As is found in approaches to democratic theory as diverse as, e.g. Estlund 1993; List and Goodin 2001) (though while also

sharing an optimism about the possibility of participatorily just social arrangements to produce effective knowledge systems), a recognition of the value of “epistemic diversity” (Peter 2008, p. 34), and goals of justice within these structures, such as “transparency and reciprocity” (Peter 2008, p. 51). Pure epistemic proceduralism focuses attention on the important issue of the role of epistemology in democratic deliberation and participation, as well as the reverse. However, Epistemic proceduralism and deliberative democracy more generally tends to work from ideal theory in a way that the discussion of self-determination as a means of resistance for communities in our non-ideal world explicitly rejects. Thus, while epistemic proceduralism can point usefully toward a possible model for what just participation in a community's epistemic self-determination might look like, it is less valuable as a model of what marginalized or oppressed communities should strive for in extant societies.

Epistemic Self-Determination in Food Policy

With the above framework in mind, we can begin to think through how it could be used to evaluate and critique policy. This critique will also help us reflect back on the concept, which will help set the stage for chapter three. The two arena which we will use to explore epistemic self-determination is food policies viewed through a food sovereignty lens, and (in the next section) an aspect of climate change policy viewed through an environmental justice lens. National and international food policy makers must balance a wide variety of goals, some of which can easily be mutually realized, and some of which are in considerable tension with one another. These goals can include health and safety for consumers, such as the policies governing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (fsis.usda.gov). These goals can also include food security for consumers, defined as reliable

access to a wide variety of nutritious and safe food (Definition of Food Security 2006), which is addressed by various policies of food assistance. Food policy also has goals around supporting the economic sustainability of producers and distributors, pursued with policies like agricultural grants and information resources (Rural Funding Resources, 2015), as well as supporting environmental sustainability through policies on land use, fertilizer application, and the like (Land Use 2012). Another suite of goals concerns just treatment for workers at all points along the food chain, which is pursued by laws governing everyone from farmworkers (Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act 2010) to meat packers (Safety and Health Topics: Meat Packing Industry, 2015) to fast-food employees. Sometimes policies pursue these goals individually, and so may be at cross-purposes to one-another, such as when the USDA funded research and marketing for Domino's Pizza to use more cheese to support US dairy interests while also having policies to promote better nutrition and less fat consumption (Moss 2010). At other times policies balance multiple goals, such as the USDA purchasing commodities from farmers in the US to distribute to schools, foodbanks and households (Agricultural Marketing Service, 2015).

The policies used to pursue these different goals vary widely, and these variations in policy promote quite different practices. Given the different possible food policies which might be enacted, it is possible to analyze and evaluate these policies not only by how well they realize their stated goals, but also what community and individual practices are supported. Of course, a similar point could be made about other issues which bring together complex policy goals with multiple stakeholders within governments, businesses, communities, and groups of individuals (indeed, climate change, which will be discussed in the next section, is similarly implicated in

many levels of action). However, given of the universal nature of food (everybody consciously engages with food every day, often in more than one way as a producer, consumer, preparer, etc.), the importance of food to cultural and personal identity (Reed and Norgaard 2010), and the ways in which food implicates many social-ecological systems and political institutions (Patel 2009), it is little wonder the food sovereignty activists see food as having the possibility to be an extremely powerful “boundary object” which can bring together multiple perspectives and forms of expertise (Robinson 2004; Star and Geisemer 1989; Trompette and Vincke 2009). As an important book on the food justice movement says, the vibrant and growing activist discourse around food justice “Resonates with many groups and can be invoked to expand the support base for bringing about community change *and* a different kind of food system.” (Alkon & Agyeman 2010, p. 1) Thus food policies have an exceptional potential to benefit or harm the wider society, and so deserve special attention.

Food Policy and Self-Determination – “The Bad”

To see how evaluating particular food policies by whether they promote or undermine self-determination for stakeholders ought to work, particularly epistemic self-determination, a few examples of food policies and their effect on epistemic self-determination can help illuminate the distinctions above and point to what such a more ambitious analysis would look like. This is a separate question from whether or not the policies or institutions are themselves self-determined by affected stakeholders, though unsurprisingly we will see overlap.

First it is useful to look at contemporary food policies which do not adequately promote self-determination, particularly epistemic self-determination, or even undercut it in various ways.

The use of the term “the bad” in this title, as well as “the good” in the next, should be understood as an oversimplification; there is certainly a continuum of support or erosion of self-determination by food policies, and the policies we will discuss fall at various points along it. Further, policies which are quite poor at promoting self-determination may be good at other important policy goals. In such cases a complex evaluation would need to be carried out. This dissertation is not arguing that promotion of epistemic self-determination in a community trumps any other good; merely that it is a currently under-recognized goal which ought to be included in that calculus. Thus, the examples below are intentionally controversial. It would be possible to critique the examples below as not harming or helping epistemic self-determination with empirical data about these programs, they serve to show the framework of epistemic self-determination in which such a question could be settled.

Perhaps the most obvious example of policies which undercut self-determination is the practice of food “dumping” (as it is characterized by critics), in which wealthy nations with highly subsidized agriculture (particularly the US) give excess food directly to impoverished countries with food shortages. This policy has been widely criticized for many years (e.g. Barrett and Maxwell 2007; Ruttan 1993; Schulz 1960; Thompson 2010) on several grounds. “Dumping” often provides food which is undesirable to the recipients and undercuts traditional food culture (e.g. providing wheat to communities with corn-based cultures). It can also drive farmers, unable to compete with free food, off their farms and into industrial labor in geographically distant cities. This fails the test of being self-determined, in that the supposed beneficiaries of the policy were not given the opportunity to co-determine the policy, and had they been given that opportunity, it is highly doubtful they would have approved the policy that is being implemented.

This policy also weakens communities' epistemic self-determination. New and unwelcome food provided for free undermines communities' culture centered around food production, preparation, consumption, and understanding. It can also lead to a loss of knowledge and epistemic processes based on those food practices if the direct food aid is continued for an extended period. *In extremis*, these policies can lead to the unwilling dissolution of communities entirely, as its members, particularly in the next generation, disperse to find work.

Though less severe, there are also examples of policies undercutting self-determination domestically. One example is the fight against raw milk sales. The Food and Drug Administration (“Federal Government Gains Permanent Injunction Against Raw Milk Producer” 2011) has obtained injunctions against raw milk producers and conducted armed raids of Amish communities and others selling raw milk (Linnekin 2011). Another example is bans or regulations enacted by state agencies against urban food production. In the vibrant urban farming movement in Detroit, for example, food policies illegalize urban livestock (Pluta 2014) and have made controversial land use changes which further marginalize urban farmers (Gallagher 2012). This has had the effect of cutting off nascent knowledge and epistemic practices around alternative dairy practices on the one hand, and urban farming and urban animal husbandry on the other, before they have a chance to grow. Another example is the move from production kitchens to the heat-and-serve model of school lunch preparation (Gaddis 2014). This has had the effect of limiting the skills which people (mostly women) employed in this industry could learn and model for students, as well as use them outside of the school, perhaps at home to prepare meals or to pursue further careers in the food industry. It also had the effect of limiting the ability of the school to adapt to changing demographics, budget cuts, and other challenges

disproportionately faced by schools in marginalized communities. These policies and others make communities less self-determined by vitiating community attempts to control their food systems. Further, the policies undermine growing community epistemic capacities around food.

In the US, nutrition guidelines such as the famous “food pyramid” and its successors like “my food plate” have been introduced at least in part to benefit individuals and communities by providing information to lead to more healthy food choices for individuals and more nutritionally conscious food policies (Peters, Fick and Wilkins 2003). However, these guides have been criticized for allowing corporate and other interests to determine the guidelines (Nestle 2002). They have also been criticized for not recognizing cultural and religious food requirements, geographical origin-based dietary restrictions (such as lactose intolerance which is more common among descendents of Asians and Africans), and other differences among differing ethnic and community groups by positing a universal guide (Freeman 2013). Nutrition guidelines are meant to be helpful, but they themselves are not sufficiently self-determined by affected stakeholders. Further, they can undercut epistemic and other self-determination in communities by increasing dependence on external experts at the expense of community or family self-determined knowledge. Particularly in marginalized ethnic and religious groups, teaching these guidelines to children and new parents undercuts self-determination for the community around their own nutrition knowledge.

Another example of domestic food policies of assistance which can undermine self-determination is food assistance. In the US, money for food is provided to qualifying low-income citizens through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and special aid is given via the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

These programs unquestionably help many people, with over fifty million people annually receiving benefits, many of them children in critical stages of development (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Eligible Food Items 2015). However, there are restrictions on who qualifies for these benefits, and what can or cannot be purchased with SNAP and WIC. These restrictions are open to charges of participatory injustice by responding to powerful actors in food systems rather than affected stakeholders, and to charges of representative injustice by ignoring community differences in food requirements and preferences, particularly for marginalized cultures. They can also undercut self-determination within communities by again increasing dependence on distant expert who are unanswerable to dialogue or deliberation with the affected stakeholders. The free food provided by WIC in particular, which is highly regulated, has the potential to undercut traditional community knowledge about food for young children and mothers by making the ingredients far more expensive than foods selected by this policy.

A final example of a program with potentially negative consequences to self-determination are certifications like “organic.” Though “organic” labels are desired by many consumers and sought after by many producers, the certification system is not without its problems, and has the potential to undercut epistemic self-determination. The process to determine the requirements to receive the certification are opaque and rarely if ever incorporate the voices of working small-scale farmers. This, combined with a lack of resources to help people learn how to achieve and maintain certification, has the potential to reduce epistemic self-determination. Obtaining the “organic” label as a producer, and using it as a proxy signal as a consumer, can replace other methods for learning about sustainable farming in a community and

adapting to changing circumstances such as climate change. Phrases like “better than organic” is growing in currency among small-scale farmers to describe these more self-determined practices and to engage with consumers in farmers' markets and other venues, but the regulatory weight behind the “organic” label and the markets it can open are still quite powerful (e.g. Getz and Schreck 2006; Goodman and Goodman 2007; Follett 2009).

Food Policy and Self-Determination – “The Good”

Other food policies have the potential to develop self-determination generally and epistemic self-determination in particular, again regardless of whether the policy itself was justly self-determined. An example of promising policies are those surrounding local food promotion, including farmers' markets, food hubs, and food co-ops. These local food programs are not without their problems; two important concerns are that the local food movement risks masking other, overriding justice or environmental concerns governing what we should purchase or consume, and that an emphasis on local foods can lead to a form of jingoism (e.g. DeLind 2011; Werkheiser and Noll 2014; Navin 2014). These are important concerns, but food justice and food sovereignty, let alone more general epistemic self-determination, does not require local food production. food sovereignty activists, as was mentioned above, calls for meaningful community control of local food systems, which when combined with networks of solidarity does not require that food be grown locally.

That being said, local food production can be an important tool in building up or preserving community capacities, including epistemic capacities, and self-determination. For example, they have the potential to build connections between neighbors to help create and

increase community connections, and can be a piece of the puzzle to give individuals and groups more transparency and self-determination over their food. As a particular example of local food policies increasing epistemic self-determination, among policymakers there is a growing interest in and support for food hubs, which address the “middle” market between large-scale food distribution of major farms and large-scale buyers on the one hand, and local direct-marketing via CSAs and farmers' markets on the other. Smaller farmers aggregate their products and use the hub to connect with larger purchasers than they would be able to serve on their own. This is surely useful for mid-range producers, but more importantly for our purposes, food hubs have the recognized potential to be a “Community entity” which “Are able to respond to changing consumer demand for innovation, quality, and variety more deftly than any single producer or any conventional retail outlet” because they can work to build epistemic capacities for the hub members. Further, “Food hubs may also facilitate the transmission of social values along with the sense of social connection, exchange and trust” within the hub and between the hub and consumers. Food hubs are themselves often self-determined, working as non-profits run by the members of the hub (Matson, Sullins, and Cook 2013, p. 11), and they work to provide more avenues of self-determination for individual food producers and consumers as well as larger communities (For more in-depth work on food hubs in a particular geographical context, see Blay-Palmer, Landman, Knezevic and Hayhurst 2013, an entire journal issue exploring food hubs in Ottawa).

Another example of policies potentially developing epistemic and other forms of self-determination are the creation of food policy councils. These councils typically bring together individuals and community representatives from around the community with business interests,

government workers, and scientific experts, to develop food policies at (typically) a state or city level. While these groups may be created entirely by un-self-determined fiat, once in place they have the potential to be quite self-determined and to give greatly increased self-determination to stakeholders in their food policies (Schiff 2008). The creation of these councils can be an example of policymakers working to further self-determination. Likewise, the abolition of these councils, as happened in 2014 to the Michigan Food Policy Council, is an example of policymakers (in this case the administration of the governor of Michigan's) greatly eroding self-determination via food policies (See ICC Food Policy Subcommittee 2014; Jackman 2014).

A final example of positive food policies are those which preserve and encourage the development of epistemic self-determination directly through support for Traditional Knowledges (TK). For many indigenous and other communities, TK is an important part of epistemic self-determination, because it is not only a collection of knowledge, but also methodologies and evaluative assumptions for solving problems and interacting with the environment in ways which are effective and which embed community beliefs and values (e.g. Berkes, Colding and Folke 2000; Berkes 2008; Nadasdy 2009). Food policies which engage with and promote TK, such as some versions of adaptive management of food resources (Berkes, Colding and Folke 2000), have the potential to support the epistemic self-determination of the communities, improve the self-determination of the larger food systems and policies by including historically marginalized stakeholders, and increase the efficacy of these systems and policies by benefiting from the knowledge and alternative methodologies which are part of TK. One note of caution here – institutions and policymakers must be very careful when engaging with TK to do so in ways which do not exploit the communities possessing TK nor undercut those communities'

epistemic self-determination.⁷ A further exploration of how experts ought to interact with marginalized communities of knowers can be found in chapters three and four.

A good example of respecting and supporting TK in a project around food systems can be found among the Karuk people of the Klamath River area of the Pacific Northwest. The Karuk people in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, primarily Northern California, have severe problems of community sovereignty and viability, many of which can be analyzed as being focused around food. Their traditional food practices have been curtailed, illegalized, and/or made impossible. Dams are exterminating salmon runs. Hunting game and fishing is strictly regulated by wardens, leading to altered hunting patterns (at night, in secret, and alone), the arrest of many Karuk people, and a great reduction in food from hunting. Karuk people also do not have access to their land which now “belongs” to private owners or state parks, making foraging for mushrooms, acorns, etc. impossible to do in sufficient quantities to supplement their food, and making traditional practices to increase the fertility of their land such as burning illegal. (Karuk Tribe n.d.; Karuk Tribe 2007; Pierce 1998; Norgaard 2004; Reed and Norgaard 2010)

Attempts by authorities to alleviate these problems in response to activism have not been in a food sovereignty paradigm. For example, the US government and the California and Oregon State governments have given food aid directly to the Karuk people such as free canned goods, cereals, and the like, and indirectly via food stamps and other food aid programs. Thus far, the outcomes from these programs have not been positive. Many Karuk people feel that their culture

⁷ An interesting guideline for how to successfully interact with TK is the Climate and Traditional Knowledge Workgroup (CTKW)'s “Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledge in Climate Change Initiatives,” which advocates primarily for two principles – “Cause No Harm” and “Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.” (2014)

and way of life is being eroded by their inability to obtain the kind of food in the manner that has been co-constituted with their culture. (Karuk Tribe n.d.; Karuk Tribe 2007; Pierce 1998; Reed and Norgaard 2010) 42% of Karuk respondents living in the Klamath River area are “food insecure” or “hungry” despite relying on food assistance. (Norgaard 2004) At the same time, they are also suffering from obesity and diabetes (Reed and Norgaard 2010). Poverty rates are nearly three times the US average (Norgaard 2004).

To address these issues, a number of projects which support rather than undercut TK are being pursued. These projects seek to “Explore when, where and how Karuk TEK [Traditional Ecological Knowledge] can be integrated into research and thereby landscape level conservation” (Reed, Sarna, Diver, Lynn 2012) with a particular focus on food species like salmon and acorns, as well as making the landscapes more fire resilient. This project and others like it have the potential to do several useful things for the Karuk. They could help preserve TK by valuing it in an official context, support TK by providing insights from modern adaptive management practices, make it easier to implement TK on the landscape by incorporating some of the insights of TK into management plans, and hopefully make the landscape from which Karuk get much of their traditional foods more resilient to the increasingly frequent wildfires that are predicted in a climate change model (Karuk Tribe of California 2006). Most importantly for our purposes, because this TK incorporates the knowledge, methodologies, and epistemic values of the community, it increases their epistemic self-determination.

Epistemic Self-Determination in Environmental Policy

Another context for looking at epistemic self-determination is environmental policy.

Specifically, the policies currently being debated around adaptation to the anthropocene in general, and climate change in particular. Here, too, we see that this framework proves useful for an academic understanding of the issues, as well as policy and activist orientations to the justice issues in this emerging situation of adaptation to a changing world.

Adaptation to the anthropocene is essential, even assuming partial success for remediation and mitigation schemes addressing the various anthropogenically driven environmental changes we are living through. These adaptations will in part be physical, as we make both purposive changes to our environment in response to our previously accidental changes, as well as changes to our infrastructure. They will also in part be socio-political, as we must adapt our institutions to a new era. In this section I will focus on this second kind of adaptation. Successful socio-political adaptation requires, particularly for marginalized communities (both because they have worse access to resources and because they are likely to receive the brunt of early harms from climate change and other environmental damage in the anthropocene), requires epistemic self-determination as these communities engage in adaptation on their own and in coordination with other communities and larger social institutions. There are at least three ways in which self-determined epistemic projects will make communities more resilience in the anthropocene, and will benefit other communities, and the larger society as well. The desirability of community resilience in a time of unpredictable environmental change counts as another practical reason to pursue epistemic self-sustainability, on top of the justice-based reasons discussed in previous sections of this chapter and of chapter one.

The first benefit to resilience of community epistemic self-determination is that epistemologies self-determined by communities are more likely to be responsive to local

conditions. As climate change destabilizes broad weather patterns that have existed throughout human history, affecting flora, fauna, sea levels, and a host of other variables we are only slowly coming to understand, we are increasingly moving toward a period of disparate micro-climes. Additionally, the effect of our civilization on the environment is very irregular; the damage generated by our global culture is not spread equally over the face of the Earth. This further fragments our world into often very small environmental regions, each with its own unique problems and opportunities. Furthermore, pollution and the negative effects of climate change are and will be disproportionately felt by the poor, minorities, and other marginalized groups with quite varied means of response. All this points to the benefit of localized, responsive knowledge.

The second reason on practical grounds for preferring epistemic self-determination is that self-determined epistemologies are likely to be quite diverse, and therefore more resilient. If some of the values and methodologies of some epistemologies are not particularly well adapted currently, that is not a reason to abandon them. Situations can change, sometimes quite drastically. Environmental catastrophe might be the most likely example in our modern world, but various social catastrophes such as war, displacement, economic collapse and so on all have the possibility of making previously successful practices and values now counterproductive, sometimes to the point of being fatal. At the same time, previously suboptimal approaches may now hold the key to survival. Much like genetic variety in a population suddenly encountering disease or environmental change, epistemic diversity between communities increases the likelihood that some strategies will survive compared with a state of uniformity. These successful strategies can then be adopted with modifications to other contexts in a process of rich epistemic

dissensus.

A third resilience-based reason to pursue epistemic self-determination is that it allows communities to engage in forming the relationships within and between communities necessary for survival. As Whyte (2013) says in the context of Native American tribes, “Ecological challenges stemming from climate change may cause tribes to be concerned with the relationships that constitute collective continuance. Collective continuance is composed of and oriented around the many *relationships* within single communities and amid neighboring communities” (p. 3, emphasis in original). In order to meaningfully engage in relationships, with other communities, non-humans, large institutions, and the other possible relationships Whyte names, I argue requires the community to have the epistemic self-determination to develop those relationships, understand them, and continue them into future generations.

In the anthropocene, this epistemic self-determination is simultaneously more important than ever, and more under threat than ever, from various directions. As traditional knowledges (e.g. of local ecosystems) are rendered less useful or dangerously misleading, these must be supplemented by new research, which can often benefit from engagement with science communities (Whyte, Forthcoming). However, this engagement can often be done in ways which provide the non-science communities with recommendations based on methodologies they don't understand, motivated by unknown values. Additionally, for many communities the anthropogenic drivers to these changes themselves are very opaque, as are the reasoning behind continuing them. For a marginalized community far from the centers of power, the social institutions, inertia, economic cost-benefit analyses, and political considerations which undergird the practices producing a draw-down of aquifers are at least as unknown as what their

community will look like absent traditional ground-water sources. This is a loss in epistemic self-determination, as the human side of socio-ecological systems become much less localized, and intervening in global institutions sometimes requires relying on analyses made by distant others and presented fully-formed.

Given, then, that community epistemic self-determination is very valuable, and that it risks being lost due to anthropogenic environmental damage by other, much more privileged and powerful communities and larger societies, it stands to reason that this loss should be mitigated, ameliorated, and compensated by the wider society. Due to the global nature of these environmental harms, the “wider society” is presumably an international one. Fortunately, the nations of the world are in the early stages of forming policies for dealing with losses due to climate change and other anthropogenic environmental harms. The most promising of these is the Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, or as the slightly unfortunate acronym has it, “WIM.” It is the task of WIM to address losses to countries and communities, particularly poor ones, from climate changes. It is still too early in the international debates on WIM to know exactly what the mechanism will look like, but presumably there will be an international fund at least for compensating poor countries, communities, and perhaps individuals for losses, and there may be another fund, or part of the original fund, for loss prevention as well (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2014). The UNFCCC tends to focus on economic losses due to climate change, however a recent technical paper was focused on the existence of “non-economic losses,” and how these must be taken into account as well (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2013). While the term “non-economic” for the broad swaths of losses not often captured by

markets is unfortunate, and indeed pushes that document back into considering “non-economic” losses in economic terms after all, it is at least a beginning in policy which could in theory be expanded to include epistemic self-determination.

One of the recognized potential harms of the anthropocene in that technical paper is epistemic loss. There is growing awareness of the loss of “indigenous/local knowledge” in climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2013, p. 4), and this can be easily extended to other anthropogenically driven environmental change, from species extinction through overfishing, to fertilization runoff, to light pollution, and so (depressingly) on. This loss of knowledge is often viewed from the perspective of a loss of a corpus, and the harms associated with it include a loss of something a community values, and a harm to cultural or community identity (Figueroa 2006). On the other hand, this loss of knowledge is also sometimes viewed from the perspective of a loss of methodologies, and the harms associated with it include harm to the knowledge-holders' ability to adapt and survive (Chief, Daigle, Lynn and Whyte 2014). The harms and losses from both perspectives are real and important to address in a time of anthropogenic environmental harm, particularly for those cultures (such as many indigenous cultures) which recognize their values, identity, plans, and knowledge as mutually supporting each other (e.g. Wildcat 2013; Voggesser, Lynn, Daigle, Lake and Ranco 2013). The loss of epistemic self-determination is an undervalued perspective on knowledge loss, but it is a possible one, and as I have argued a useful perspective for understanding community resiliency, and thus could and should be incorporated into the final WIM mandate when it is negotiated in future Council of the Parties negotiations.

Conclusion

The above examples show that food and environmental policies can be evaluated by their effects on the underexamined but important issue of community self-determination, including epistemic self-determination. This evaluation is over and above a more traditional critique of policies themselves as arising out of just participatory processes. The effect on epistemic self-determination of various policies is an important standard for evaluating different strategies of cooperation and coordination between communities and between communities and larger social institutions. With self-determination, stakeholders are able to evaluate proposed assumptions, methodologies, and policies to see if they reflect their knowledge and values, and to develop and articulate their own projects as alternatives to the choices given to them by those in power. These alternatives are then brought up and advocated for by stakeholders with self-determination in a just participatory process. This has the potential to be a fertile process more likely to hit on effective policies than in a top-down, hierarchical process. Given the problems associated with modern industrial food systems, let alone the problems on the horizon from the anthropocene, from environmental harms to seemingly unavoidable systemic failures leading to famines, a more epistemically rich process seems desirable.

Self-determination also has the potential to lead to greater understanding and support of food and environmental policies by the stakeholders, if those policies are in fact in the best interests of the communities as they see them. There are many problems arising out of food, such as obesity, diabetes, consumer waste, food poisoning through improper preparation, runoff through misapplication of fertilizers and pesticides, etc., that have some component in policy application by stakeholders. The same is true for environmental issues, such as a lack of

precautionary adaptation, usage-induced droughts, CO2 emissions, pollution due to fertilizer mis-application, etc. Given all this, an increased understanding and “buy-in” by stakeholders in policies and recommendations from external experts is desirable. Cultivating epistemic capacities in communities to understand these policies and recommendations, and encouraging transparency and accountability in more powerful groups, are more likely to succeed than draconian but ill-understood or endorsed rules. Though many of the environmental changes on the horizon, including many to our food systems, from anthropogenic drivers are ineluctable in the near to middle term, our responses to them are much less fixed. In the case of social adaptation in particular, we can adapt in ways which are more likely to be effective or more likely to be ineffective, and in ways which are themselves more or less ethical, and more or less supportive of individual and community flourishing. The context of communities' epistemic self-determination at least is one example of more just, localized, and anti-hierarchical social institutions being preferable on both practical and ethical grounds.

Evaluating environmental and food policies by how well they promote self-determination is not a common metric, let alone evaluating them in terms of epistemic self-determination. Nevertheless, given the strong value epistemic self-determination has, and the power of policies to promote or erode it, this is an evaluation which ought to be more widely pursued in food and environmental policy conversations. Finally, as self-determination makes communities better able to pursue their own vision of the good and to participate more effectively within the larger society, marginalized or oppressed communities have good reason to pursue it, even in the absence of support from larger institutions. Academics researching environmental and food systems can also inculcate epistemic self-determination. This can be done in part through open

communication about external expert methodologies and their assumptions, and providing what resources communities need (time, money, access to those experts) to critically evaluate both the conclusions and the methodologies, to see how well they work in a particular community's contexts. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Chapter Three

Collective Capabilities and Community Capacities

Introduction

The previous two chapters looked at environmental justice and food sovereignty, and examined different conceptions of justice underlying calls for participation within and reformation of existing dominant institutions on the one hand, or self-determined projects outside of and even resistance toward those institutions on the other through epistemic self-determination. In either case, these justice claims require more than mere opportunities for participation or self-determination. Rather, these opportunities must be matched by concomitant capacities to exploit these opportunities or they are merely empty gestures. Further, this is occurring at a community level. As the previous chapters suggested, many kinds of participation and self-determination are only realizable for communities. Thus, an understanding of what communities need in order to participate justly and engage in just self-determination is an important topic. One potentially promising literature is the Capabilities Approach. This is in part because the Capabilities Approach takes seriously both just participation and the ability to work on one's own independent projects as part of a flourishing life (see Appendix 3). Further, the Capabilities Approach takes seriously the idea that certain things must be true of an actor in order for her to pursue those projects which are constitutive of a good life, and that this is part of important justice claims on behalf of these actors. It is true that the Capabilities Approach has traditionally looked only at capabilities for individuals, but there is a growing literature on capabilities for collectives, such as communities. This is a promising discourse for addressing the questions suggested by the first two chapters of this dissertation, and suggests some important

considerations for making justice claims on societies on behalf of communities. However, the community capabilities approaches have not been able to break from the Capabilities Approach's individualistic roots sufficiently to realize the potential of communities to resist and flourish in the face of marginalization and oppression. Thus an alternative is called for, which I suggest is a focus on community capacities.

This chapter will discuss how thinking about capabilities for communities changes the Capabilities Approach. It will then argue that collective capabilities does address some of the individualistic emphasis of the traditional Capabilities Approach, but it undervalues capacities, specifically the ability of a community to *create* possibilities for using those capacities. This section will then suggest an alternative focus on capacities, and will single out *community epistemic capacities* as a more useful way to think through what communities need for self-determination and participatory justice. It will end with a look at one particular epistemic capacity, trust, as well as a brief examination of what distant experts can do when working with communities with very low epistemic capacities in order to help develop those capacities moving forward. This work, then, is useful for policymakers in trying to understand what justice claims require of them, for activists and community organizers to understand how to best support their communities' abilities, and for academics thinking through questions of justice and social epistemology.

The Capabilities Approach

A brief survey of the literature on the Capabilities Approach (CA) to emphasize a few key points will be useful before moving on to collective capabilities. CA has been a growing

discourse in academia and policy, and has been most influentially laid out in the work of Amartya Sen (1979; 1999; 2004) and Martha Nussbaum (2004, 2011), but other important accounts include Elizabeth Anderson's (1999) and that of Wolff and de-Shalit (2007). CA is concerned with people's capabilities to achieve a flourishing life. Of course more needs to be said about many parts of that sentence.

The most agreement is found in the discourse on the question of what a capability is. As mentioned in chapter one, Sen (1983) argues that famine is not a result of a lack of food, but rather people having insufficient “entitlements” to procure food. For people living in cities, this might mean in part a lack of sufficient income relative to the price of food. For subsistence farmers, on the other hand, it might refer in part to a crop failure due to drought. For both hypothetical people, the situation would be complicated by other entitlements in what Sen refers to as their “basket” which might offset these problems, such as a social safety net, family support, and so on. Similarly, in his (1999), Sen argues that poverty for individuals should not be measured by income, but rather by positive freedoms – capabilities – to lead a life worth choosing. Further, this assessment can not only be made for the individual, but as a way of looking at the progress of a country's development by how well a country provides these capabilities for its citizens, a measure for which GDP is a poor substitute.

A capability is not the same thing as a “functioning,” a term Sen introduced to describe the various “beings” and “doings” that make up a given person's life. “While the combination of a person's functionings reflect her actual *achievements*, the capability set represents the freedom to achieve: the alternative functioning combinations from which this person can choose” (1999, p. 75). In order for something to be a capability it must be a real possibility, rather than being

merely formally possible but practically impossible. In this reading, a true capability has two important elements – an internal *capacity* to do something and the social conditions which provide real social *possibilities* to exercise those capacities (Alexander 2008, p. 57). Sen describes these as a mix of Rawls's primary goods with the “relevant personal characteristics” that allow someone to convert those primary goods into actual abilities to promote one's ends, and points out that a person with disabilities might have a much larger basket of primary goods and yet be less able to pursue her objectives than an able-bodied person with fewer primary goods (1999, p. 74). For Nussbaum, capacities are conceived of as internal capabilities, which are themselves based in part on “innate equipment,” which are then developed through interaction with the environment (so an internal capability like literacy is based on innate equipment to process symbols in that way, developed by education). Possibilities, on the other hand, are conceived of as “social/political/economic conditions” in which to use that inner capability. These two requirements together gives what Nussbaum calls “Collective opportunities.” She points out that societies may well achieve one and not the other, such as by having pro forma possibilities without giving members of an oppressed group the internal capabilities to take advantage of them, or by educating marginalized people into having internal capabilities, but then giving them no real social possibilities to utilize those (2011, p. 21-22). For the purposes of this dissertation I will continue with Alexander's terms of “internal capacities” and “social opportunities” both to avoid confusions that can arise in Nussbaum's and Sen's formulations, and because the term “capacities” tracks well with literature about communities.

If it is relatively clear what capabilities are, how they ought to be assessed is less so. As Sen famously points out, there is a real difference between the wealthy person fasting and the

person without enough money to buy food, despite having the same functioning (1999, p. 75). One is a justice problem, whereas the other is not, but how are we to know in less clear cases when it is an injustice? It is comparatively easy to assess the functioning of an individual or society; indeed this is the sort of thing development indexes are often designed to do. Assessing total opportunities taken and not taken is less methodologically obvious, particularly if you are trying to differentiate merely formal possibilities from real ones. This problem is recognized by authors in the field (e.g. Alexander 2008 p. 60-1; Sen 1999 p. 75), who acknowledge that looking at functionings is often the only reasonable stand-in. Indeed, if no one in a country chose a particular functioning that people in other countries routinely chose, it would be reasonable to doubt that it was a true capability. Another issue with assessment divides Sen and Nussbaum. Whereas Sen argues that we can use capabilities to compare two people or two societies, doing so would not be against any kind of absolute scale. Rather, two people or two societies would differ on which capabilities they had to which extent, and often it would not be clear which was doing better than the other (2004). While Sen seems to privilege some capabilities as being more important than others, such as political participation and the other elements of his “instrumental freedoms” which allow other freedoms (capabilities) to be produced (1999, p.38 - 40), he is quite clear that deciding what capabilities to pursue is a value judgment that should be made by the society in question. As he says,

“There can be substantial debates on the particular functionings that should be included in the list of important achievements and the corresponding capabilities. This valuation issue is inescapable in an evaluative exercise of this kind, and one of the main merits of the approach is the need to address these judgmental questions in an explicit way, rather than hiding them in some implicit framework” (1999 p. 75).

On the other hand, Nussbaum has famously defended a list of “central capabilities,” which ought to be present for all humans (full list in Appendix 3), and a failure to provide these as a problem of justice. Thus societies and individuals can be evaluated along an absolute scale. Without such a scale, Nussbaum argues, the capabilities approach does not tell us much about justice, because it can only compare capabilities, and it may well be the case that some functionings for which we might have capabilities are bad or unjust (2011, p. 29). Wolff and de-Shalit, in their (2007), largely agree with Nussbaum's list, but argue that there is a hierarchy within that list, because some capabilities are “fertile,” in that having them leads to the development of many other capabilities (e.g. political participation), while some lacks of capabilities are “corrosive disadvantages,” since lacking them makes many other capabilities impossible, either due to the lack of internal capacity or external social opportunity (e.g. illiteracy). Anderson, in her (1999), strikes a middle position between Nussbaum's fixed list and Sen's general neutrality by arguing for three important “spheres” of capabilities, but not enumerating all the capabilities that might fall within those spheres. Her spheres are for the capability to function 1) as a human being, 2) as an equal participant in cooperative production, and 3) as a citizen (p. 317-318).

With this brief background in CA, a few points can be made which will be important for thinking about collective capabilities. First, it is important to highlight that CA is focused on increasing agency. CA can be seen as a response to analyses which simply mindedly look at the welfare of people without looking at their freedom and agency to choose. As Sen says, “focus has to be, in this [capabilities] analysis, on the freedoms generated by commodities, rather than on the commodities seen on their own” (Sen 1999 p. 74). As mentioned before, it is a lack of

freedom and agency which is the real problem, for which a lack of income is only a poor proxy. This is an important point, because in Sen's understanding of capabilities, which ones ought to be supported and valued is a decision of the community. Thus there is a two-way relationship between the individual who exercises her capabilities to shape her society, and the society which promotes capabilities, thereby shaping the life of the individual (1999 p. 18-19). For Nussbaum, freedom and agency are highly important, intrinsically valuable aspects of capabilities (especially 7 and 10 in her list; see Appendix 3), as well as important instrumentally for realizing all the capabilities, though the outcomes of democratic deliberation are circumscribed by the list of central capabilities. Nussbaum also rejects Sen's division of capabilities into "welfare" and "agency" freedoms; for Nussbaum, all the positive freedoms or capabilities are about developing agents, and allowing them to have the kind of flourishing life which is part of a complex understanding of well-being (2011 p. 197-201). Wolff and De Shalit see developing agency as not only a highly "fertile functioning," but also important because of the way it adds to "capability security," their concept of the degree to which one can be confident that the capability will continue (2007). Anderson agrees with Nussbaum that freedom and agency are important capabilities in themselves, as they are a part of all three of her spheres, and are also important to attaining others (1999).

Another important point is that the capabilities approach shares some but not all of the background assumptions of traditional liberal theory, leading some authors (e.g. Nussbaum, who argues that her capabilities approach is in some important sense Rawlsian, 2011 pp. 77-9) to describe it as a liberal theory, whereas others (e.g. Alexander 2008) contrast a capabilities approach against liberal theories. One point on which the capabilities approach differs from some

traditional liberal theories like Rawlsian justice is its commitment to actual flourishing of people, rather than more formal equality. One way in which this difference can be highlighted is Sen's case of a person in a wheel chair. This person might need far more of Rawls's "primary goods" in order to have a flourishing life, but that could only be seen by looking at the actual life of the person, rather than just the goods to which she had access (if we stipulate that she is not the "least well off" in her society in virtue of her share of primary goods, thereby avoiding Rawls difference principle) (Alexander 2008 p. 31-52). Additionally, while Nussbaum herself sees her list of capabilities as a "thin" conception of the good which might be agreed to by many diverse people as opposed to Sen's use of freedom as an "all-purpose normative value" (Nussbaum 2004, p. 194), it is a more robust theory of what a good life ought to include than is the formal justice and preferences (Nussbaum 2004) model in many liberal theories.

On the other hand, something that the prominent approaches to capabilities shares with many versions of liberalism is the focus on individuals and aggregates of individuals. CA looks at the capabilities in an individual, or evaluates societies by looking at the aggregates of each individual, but takes no account of the capabilities of communities or societies. Nussbaum says capabilities apply "only derivatively to groups" (2011 p. 35). Sen says that "Individual freedom is quintessentially a social product" (1999 p. 31), but they remain "Socially dependent individual capabilities" (qtd. in Ibrahim 2006). As a result, Charles Gore argues, though the capabilities approach takes more information of people's lives into account when thinking about justice than do utilitarianism or Rawlsian theories of justice, it still leaves out important information. This is because, he argues, communities are vital to securing individual capabilities and so ought to be taken into account, and people strongly value communities, and so insensitivity to them would

miss an important part of the decisions people make for a flourishing life (Gore 1997). The “social conditions” for opportunities to exercise capabilities are insufficient for Gore's critique. This is because they are at the level of whole societies, in tandem with the internal capacities at the level of the individual. This dichotomy, quite common in liberal theory, ignore the intermediate level of communities (and other intermediate levels like families and so on). This is unfortunate given the importance of communities to people, the ways in which they enable freedoms for individuals, and the ways in which they work in changing larger social institutions, as we have been and will continue to be discussing. Gore wrote this as a critique of capabilities, but since Gore's article, there has been a relatively small current within capabilities discourse on capabilities for communities, to which we now turn.

Collective Capabilities

The literature on collective capabilities is small enough that it is reasonable to look at each prominent work in some detail to tease out their commonalities and differences.⁸ It bears pointing out that these works are on collectives generally, including groups that would not fit into our definition of communities (such as, for some of the authors, ethnicities or co-ops). However, what they say is relevant to communities, and indeed they tend to take some (undefined) notion of communities as their major exemplar. Nussbaum's 7th central capability of affiliation (see Appendix 3) stresses the importance of people being able to form into groups and work cooperatively, and for those groups to be just. This is assumed in these authors' works, but they argue that affiliation does not fully cover the importance of communities, because it does not

⁸ Though she is not explicitly working within a Capabilities Approach, Gould's discussion of social ontology of individuals withing communities, discussed in the context of the requirements of a community in the introduction, could be viewed as another contribution to this literature.

speaking to the capabilities of the group itself, which are separate from the individual's capability to be a member of a group.

Peter Evans in his (2002) argues that the implications in Sen's account of capabilities points toward the necessity of collective capabilities, which Sen does not address as a “Good Manchester liberal” (p. 56). For Evans, collective capabilities are essential, and perhaps even prior to individual capabilities, because “In practice, my ability to choose the life I have reason to value often hangs on the possibility of my acting together with others who have reasons to value similar things. Individual capabilities depend on collective capabilities” (p. 56). Unions, political parties, consciousness-raising groups, and the other formal collectives people join are, for Evans, essential not only for the kind of collective actions which can secure an individual's capabilities to have a meaningful life, but also as the sites where values and methods of following one's values are constructed. Therefore, when assessing a society, looking at the capabilities it makes available to communities is highly relevant, and evaluating an individual's capabilities in part based on their ability to be a member of a community, but also the capabilities of that community. It might be argued that Evans's approach to collective capabilities is to value them merely instrumentally in order for people to actually have given capabilities, but even if this were true it would still show that one ought to develop community capabilities in order to help individuals. For other authors, community capabilities are more inherently valuable.

Schlosberg and Caruthers in their (2010) article on environmental justice and capabilities for indigenous groups argue that the capabilities approach offers an inclusive definition of justice, which is useful for indigenous groups pursuing justice, but that it must be expanded to include collectives. This is in part because, like Evans, Schlosberg and Caruthers see

communities as a vital site for converting goods, rights, and so on into the ultimate well-being of people's lives (p. 15), and in pursuing and securing those goods through political action. Further, the authors argue that many movement groups “Articulate their concerns from a community standpoint” (p. 17). That is, using our terminology, many people fighting for their communities do so collectively in the we-mode of a community member, and are pursuing collective goals. They see their primary concerns as the good of their community (p. 18), and so ignoring this important aspect to people's lives is a recognition injustice. Interestingly, these authors see Sen's approach as being more amenable to their project than Nussbaum's, because Sen takes more seriously the collective deliberation by communities to settle on goods than Nussbaum's list allows.

Solava Ibrahim, in his (2006) article, distinguishes between individual capabilities along the lines typically understood in the literature, and collective capabilities, “Generated through the individual's engagement in a collective action” (p. 404). As Ibrahim says, “The expansion of collective capabilities not only requires the use of agency freedom (i.e. individuals pursuing goals other than their own), but also involves the participation in a collectivity” (p. 404). What this dissertation has termed collective action Ibrahim calls “Self-help,” and argues that this is a common response among the poor to a lack of resources and marginalization in a wider community. Ibrahim does not distinguish between what we have labeled collective community-goal-based action and collective individual-goal-based action, but refers to examples of both as occurring within self-help. For Ibrahim, the capabilities of collectives are not only ways of evaluating their ability to support individuals as in Evans, nor the additional requirement of community being an object of concern in Schlosberg and Caruthers, who therefore see collective

capabilities as a project the community works on. Ibrahim also believes that collective capabilities are a set of capabilities (such as speaking a language) which can only be accessed by an individual as a member of a collective with that collective capability. As he says, “They [collective capabilities] are thus the new choices that the individual alone would neither have nor be able to achieve unless he/she joins a collectivity, such as a self-help group” (p. 398).

When talking about groups, a reasonable concern is the high frequency with which groups and group identity are implicated in violence, recalling Sen's warning discussed above that “group affiliation is not always beneficial” (2004, p. 41). This concern is taken seriously by Stewart in his (2006). He agrees with the previous authors that there are many benefits to belonging in groups for individuals in terms of their overall welfare as well as expansions of their capabilities, due to the increased force a group can have for securing capabilities, and because the sense of belonging to a group is itself an important element of the capability of self-respect. To support these points, he looks at a variety of “good” groups among the global poor, such as agricultural producer organizations, common resource management groups, women's self-help groups, squatter's rights groups, and so on (p. 192-7). However, he also looks at “bad” groups among the poor which have lead to violent conflict, which he says is a problem because violent conflict limits everyone's capabilities. The groups he looks at, the IRA in Northern Ireland during the “troubles” of the 1960s-1980s, and the Zapatistas in Chiapas Mexico when they initially took up arms, were formed because their soon-to-be members were oppressed because of group characteristics (Catholicism in the case in Northern Ireland, indigeneity in the case in Chiapas) and the subject of high levels of “horizontal inequality” with other groups, and they wanted to advance their group's capabilities as well as their individual capabilities.

Lessening those horizontal inequalities was an important step in the peace process in both cases (p. 192-4). Stewart does not see this as an argument against groups, but rather the opposite: an important aspect of policy must be to ensure horizontal equality and the capabilities of groups both for justice reasons and to forestall violent conflict (p. 201-2). (I should state that I disagree with his examples of “bad” groups, largely because I disagree with his idea that all violence, even committed by victims against their oppressors in order to stop further violence against them, is bad and limits everyone's capabilities. Such an argument however would take us too far afield.)

Though none of the authors address it, there is an important potential problem waiting in this account: how should we think about cases where collective capabilities conflict with individual capabilities? In many cases, this objection can be avoided. For example, losing some individual capabilities to the community is often “worth it” by the increase in other capabilities the authors discussed. However we can imagine a case where what is lost is so important that the other gains are not obviously worth it, such as an individual's death for the good of a community. Another way to try to avoid this objection is to point out that people often highly value their community, and by our definition are committed to some extent to the flourishing of the community. Thus they may be willing to sacrifice their individual capabilities. While in those cases we probably should respect their choices, presumably not everyone is as willing to sacrifice important capabilities for the good of their community as are others.

In cases which persist despite these attempts at avoidance, a more serious response is called for. An important thing to remember is that CA focuses only on the capabilities that people ought to value. If we ignore for present purposes the difficulty of meta-analysis of norms, we

could probably agree that a highly patriarchal culture ought not value the capabilities of oppressing women and so women in the community should not have to sacrifice their individual capabilities for those group capabilities. On the other hand, we could also probably agree that the individual capability to abuse the commons is not one individuals ought to value, and so they should give up that individual capability to promote collective capabilities to manage those commons. However, we can also imagine situations in which what's at stake are collective and individual capabilities which ought to be valued, such as the capability for a community to continue compared to the individual's capability to life, if the individual is asked to sacrifice her life in order to save the community (e.g. in defending the community from inter-community violence). When we speak of “Capabilities we ought to value,” One reason we ought to value a capability is that it contributes to flourishing. However the question depends on perspective – we can ask “Does this capability contribute to my flourishing?” Or we can ask “Does this capability contribute to the community's flourishing?” Depending on perspective, one could prioritize the individual over the community, or vice versa, or prioritize one or the other based on some aggregation or hierarchy of capabilities, and there is not an obviously correct perspective (if we take on board the arguments about the value of both communities and individuals in this dissertation). However, my inclination is to side with Sen's description of assessing the value of capabilities generally – such decisions are best made by deliberative processes which are participatively just (1999 p. 75). This discussion will be explored in more detail in chapter five, in the context of women's participation in the food sovereignty movement in India.

The few authors working on collective capabilities provide important reasons why we ought to look at communities' capabilities – community flourishing is a goal of many people for

which they will fight if necessary, communities are a way for people to make more individual capabilities real, and membership in a community can provide (depending on the community's capabilities) an array of further collective capabilities which enrich a person's life. Thus many important capabilities which already exist and which ought to be encouraged will be missed entirely by counting up the individuals' capabilities and ignoring the collective's. Such an assessment of collective capabilities is surely possible if one can assess individual capabilities; one need merely look at what the community can do, both in internal capacities and opportunities within social institutions.

Collective Capabilities in Environmental Justice and Food Sovereignty

This section will think through community participatory justice as conceived in environmental justice and food sovereignty in light of a collective capabilities approach. Ultimately, this section will argue that collective capabilities offer some strategic benefits to the EJ and food sovereignty movement for justice claims as well as theoretical insight. However, the composite nature of capabilities underemphasizes the importance of capacities for communities. That is, it neglects the ways in which a community with capacities can find ways to exercise these even in the absence of external opportunities, either within the community in secret if needs be, or by fighting to change the external opportunities available. This section will then draw on recent work in social epistemology to show how highlighting one kind of community capacities, community epistemic capacities, can be useful theoretically and practically.

From a perspective of making justice demands on the wider society, collective capabilities offers an approach which captures many of the issues which are important to

environmental justice and food sovereignty, and which has large and growing support among policy makers. From empirical studies in development to metrics like the Human Development Index (HDI), the capabilities approach is increasingly seen as an important way to help people and evaluate policies and whole societies (Alexander 2008 p. 59-61). Drawing on CA, particularly community capacities, can provide powerful rhetoric and theory to, for example, critique a development policy in which land is strip-mined for ore, the proceeds of which will in part pay to relocate, educate, and integrate the indigenous residents into mainstream society.⁹

Traditional versions of CA might argue that increasing the income of the indigenous people in this case might actually increase their poverty by eliminating the capabilities to lead the lives they have good reason to value (e.g. Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2001), namely their traditional, land-based lives, and the capability to participate politically in a meaningful way about issues which affect them. On the other hand, some traditional CA might not land that way, depending on the value of the education, training, integration into cities, and monetary payment. Certainly Nussbaum's account might overrule the residents' preference to live in their traditional homeland if their new lives would have more flourishing according to her list of central capabilities. Collective capabilities approaches, on the other hand, would be more likely to agree with the indigenous communities resisting the relocation, because even assuming that the total capabilities set for each individual would increase, by being dispersed they would lose many of their collective capabilities, and the community itself could lose all its capabilities and cease to exist. This is an injustice perpetrated on the individuals who value the community and who use the community to live a flourishing life, and to the community itself which was not given an

⁹ As is happening in parts of central India – See Roy 2011.

opportunity to participate meaningfully in this decision (e.g. Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010). This move to collective capabilities, then, provides a framework for explicating and defending the commitment to communities and participatory justice in food sovereignty and environmental justice.

Another benefit to thinking through issues in environmental justice and food sovereignty from a community capabilities framework is the way that CA conceives of poverty as a relative lack of capabilities, rather than a lack of income, or any other absolute lack. This can help reconceive several problems in environmental justice and food sovereignty. First, EJ activists and scholars must often argue with policymakers and other powerful actors about the extent to which marginalized communities are targeted for environmental harms which benefit other distant communities. Some studies (often commissioned by the industries in question) have found no or only a very small correlation (e.g. Anderton et al. 1994) between Locally Undesirable Land Uses (LULUs) and poverty or race (Mohai et al. 2009). Though these studies have been called into question based on their use of non-epistemic values to shape their research (Steel and Whyte 2012), another critique coming out of the capabilities approach can be useful. Poverty, and race in the US are often highly correlated with a lack of capabilities, but actually looking at the capabilities of a community and the members of that community might shed light on the location of LULU's. Though this would require empirical studies along the lines of the UCC study *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States* (Lee 1987), one could well imagine that communities of poor minorities who nevertheless have relatively high community capabilities, perhaps because they are highly organized around improving their community and combating environmental injustices, and have members of their community in political positions in the city fighting for

their interests, as well as access to sympathetic academic scholars doing work on EJ, would have fewer new LULUs proposed than a similar community without those capabilities. If true, this would be a useful contribution both for community organizers trying to avoid LULUs, and would show that LULUs are not located fairly.

Another way that CA's conception of poverty could intersect with environmental justice and food sovereignty is in the common tension between the need for jobs in a community and the need for a healthy environment. While it is unlikely that the capabilities approach could on its own resolve this tension, which might be an inevitability for some communities in a capitalist system and is at least a highly endemic and difficult problem, the capabilities approach offers a way to think through any specific proposal. It can be seemingly impossible to compare twenty lower-middle-class jobs to a .5% increase in particulate pollutants in a city. It is also not easy to compare cheaper food and work in factories on the one hand with locally produced food that is time- and labor-intensive and vulnerable to drought on the other. Collective capabilities offers a system to evaluate the two options, by working out the capabilities set for the community in the possible scenarios. This is not a simple Risk-Cost-Benefit Analysis (RCBA), because it is not a technical question to be resolved to a clear answer by experts – a framework which is problematic from the perspective of participatory justice for communities (Shrader-Frechette 1991; 2002; 2010) as well as for building up their capabilities (as will be discussed in chapter four). Rather, it is a tool for helping a community to reflectively examine their pluralist, non-equatable values and their best chances for flourishing as individuals and communities (it is also qualitative rather than quantitative, which has both some advantages and drawbacks). Concerns such as free time for association and play which are sometimes under-addressed in decisions

about these proposals are highlighted by Nussbaum's list (see Appendix 3), and deciding as a community on the important capabilities as Sen recommends might help a community become more aware of itself and its values.

These benefits of community CA are real, but there are aspects of the approach which are less helpful or even counterproductive to the environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses. One problem with the capabilities approach comes, perhaps ironically, from its focus on identifying injustices. CA's framework of internal capacities to do a thing and social opportunities to do it is useful for articulating demands on the state and other powerful institutions to create those social possibilities and help inculcate those internal capacities, but it can place too little agency in individuals or groups with capacities to *make* opportunities. I assert that while CA is right to say that formal possibilities without internal capacities are empty, they are wrong when they say that internal capacities without formal opportunities to express them are fruitless (e.g. Nussbaum 2011 p. 21-3).

Particularly in the case of communities, a capacity to do something allows avenues of expression much larger than merely having or not having the opportunity to do something. This is because a community with capacities can use those capacities to resist the dominant society that (to use Sen's phrase) inflicts unfreedoms on the community, either infrapolitically by carrying out the practice in secret (e.g. Native American communities carrying out illegal traditional food production, see Reed and Norgaard 2010) or politically by fighting to change the dominant institutions which limit their self-generated opportunities or to be left alone by them. This is also true for individuals to some extent, pointing to a problem with CA generally, but the ability to act despite no opportunity to do so in the wider society is far richer for communities.

Ibrahim (2006) discusses the importance of self-help groups for poor people, but by thinking of those as collective capabilities, his argument is oriented to the larger society making those self-help groups possible. While it is certainly desirable to live in a society where such groups are allowed or even encouraged, and a society which does not do so can rightly be accused of being unjust, if the society does not respond to these charges and continues to limit the possibilities for these associations, the capabilities approach offers little in the way of resources to help people. Yet forming groups without good social possibilities for doing so has long been an early step in effective political resistance.

This emphasis on social possibilities is perhaps less of a problem for those justice claims in environmental justice and food sovereignty which emphasize working with, pressuring, and changing dominant institutions. If this is the focus the capabilities approach points to the ways in which dominant institutions fail the community, and can be quite beneficial. But when environmental justice and food sovereignty address how to help a community organize and fight back, or when groups within the food sovereignty and EJ traditions work to build alternative systems within the society, they are working on community capacities, and the discourse on capabilities has not focused on this half of combined capabilities; in particular they have paid insufficient attention to the resources such capacities can be even without social opportunities. To point out what such a focus might look like, this dissertation will next highlight community epistemic capacities, drawing on some recent work in social epistemology.

Before looking at community epistemic capacities however it is worth addressing a possible objection to conceiving of community capacities in this way: it might be argued that these are not mere capacities, but actually examples of collective capabilities, in that the society

has not so thwarted these capacities as to make them truly inexpressible. Perhaps societies which merely undermine community capacities are still providing some limited opportunities, and so these are still best thought of as capabilities. Therefore, it could be argued, while we might want to focus on capacities, a full understanding of what the community can do requires also taking into account what larger institutions are allowing them to do. It is true in one sense that some opportunities must be available or a functioning could never occur. However, as mentioned earlier CA looks at positive freedoms. When a society provides no resources for social opportunities, or, as has happened with the extermination of languages, works as hard as it can to remove all possibilities and undermine the capacity (Nettle and Romaine 2000), it seems overly kind to say that these societies are providing *some* possibilities by accident. Rather, despite the injustices of the society to not provide opportunities or actively stifle them, the community is *making its own* opportunities to express their capacities in defiance of dominant institutions. It is this ability which focusing on community capacities highlights, and which focusing on community capabilities can miss.

Another possible objection is that emphasizing capacities within marginalized communities puts one in a paternalistic position relative to those communities. Collective capabilities approaches as currently conceived make prescriptions on the dominant society, namely that they ought to promote public opportunities to exercise internal capacities or the opportunities to develop internal capacities. These prescriptions are largely justice-based claims, but they can also be viewed as recommendations – a society will function better by providing opportunities for at least some kinds of collectives to flourish. At the same time, that emphasis has little to say to communities. A focus on capacities (as in the next section) also makes

prescriptions on society, but in addition it makes prescriptions on members of oppressed groups about what they should do to promote their own flourishing. These prescriptions are largely strategic – they propose ways that communities can build up their ability to survive and effectively resist unjust institutions. There are also justice claims built into this focus however, as community epistemic capacities pushes us toward justice both within and between communities. This may be seen as a problematic stance to have toward these communities, perhaps by being paternalistic, or by placing the burden on communities to fix the injustices rather than on the perpetrators.

This objection can serve as a useful warning to be careful in the way this dissertation speaks of and to these communities, but it is not the case that focusing on communities' capacities lets unjust institutions off the hook; rather it provides resources to communities in the presence of unjust institutions to survive, flourish, and resist and change those institutions. Suggesting these strategies is also not paternalistic, as it is not a call for inculcating these capacities in communities regardless of their wishes. All this can be seen in the section below on trust, which points out that some communities have incorrigibly low trust in external experts, and then thinks through how those communities can still avoid at least some of the harms associated with that lack of trust. A slightly better case for paternalism could be made for the importance of justice within oppressed communities. As we will see in the final chapter on women's participation in food sovereignty, it can indeed be a difficult balancing act supporting marginalized sub-groups within marginalized communities (such as women within peasant communities in India) on the one hand while maintaining just relationships between communities on the other. However, pointing out injustices in conversations predicated on respect, and

working to support the people within those communities in their pursuit of addressing those injustices, is possible without descending into paternally dictating how those communities must be arranged.

Community Epistemic Capacities

This section of the chapter will examine the need for communities to have epistemic capacities in order to either meaningfully participate with larger institutions in decision-making processes, or to build alternatives to those institutions and interact with them critically.

“Community epistemic capacities” is a novel term, combining the epistemic capacities of individuals with the idea of community capacities, which have been defined as “A set of dynamic community traits, resources, and associational patterns that can be brought to bear for community building and community health improvements” (Chaskin 2001). Community capacities are generally seen as a way for communities to represent their own interests and participate meaningfully in research and policy questions (e.g. Goodman et al. 1998; Freudenberg 2004; Minkler et al. 2006). The work on community capacities in general is large, but it has not looked at what epistemic capacities ought to be included in any list of community capacities for action. Community epistemic capacities will provide a useful way to highlight community capacities rather than combined capabilities, and the term itself can be useful for academics working on social epistemology and academics, policy makers, and activists working on community participatory justice.

There are (at least) three aspects of epistemic capacities which are best understood at the community level, as opposed to individual epistemic capacity such as personal memory. First, in

order for individuals to make good decisions they need to be part of a community of knowers (e.g. Nelson 1993; Goldberg 2010; Freudenberg et al. 2011; Goldman 2004). Complex methodologies relying on robust evaluative assumptions that result in strong prediction and control of a wide variety of situations (such as, for example, the ones found in science) are not the sort of thing developed and held by individuals. Even scientists, despite being individually very well-educated, must rely on their epistemic community of fellow scientists. An isolated ecologist would presumably not feel that she could adequately model an entire ecosystem based on just her observations without access to the work of other researchers. For non-scientists, the burden of each member of the community having to separately learn entire methodologies and conduct research is an even more impossible burden (Hardwig 1994).

However, by distributing the epistemic load among people in the community who are well suited by inclination, time, and resources to do a given epistemic task and share their contributions with the community, collective research becomes possible, both for communities of scientists and non-scientists. Simply depending on other (e.g. scientific) communities is insufficient if the community does not feel that their values are well represented by others (Whyte & Crease 2010; this will be discussed in much more detail in the section on trust below). This element of epistemic capacity, then, can best be understood by looking at the community. As discussed above, this is best thought of as a capacity rather than a capability for the community – if communities have the capacity to enable individual members to have the capability to learn the community's collective methodology, this can be exercised even without the social opportunities to do so, such as the passing on of illicit knowledge within a community (e.g. Reed and Norgaard 2010).

A second community-based aspect of epistemic capacities is that if members of a community are engaging in a self-determined project, either individually or in cooperation with other community members, to further or represent their community's needs, they need to know what their community's needs, interests, beliefs, goals, and so on *are*. In order to accomplish this, the community must have the capacity for members to have knowledge about it. While this could be understood as the capability of each individual member of the society to learn about and understand her community, it is more useful to think about the community's epistemic capacity to distribute knowledge about itself and be understood by its members. This is because interventions to increase this capacity are best made at the community level, for example through education efforts by the community, regular meetings, etc., and because this capacity can be effectively studied not by testing each individual's capacity to study her community and learn about it, but by looking at efforts, institutions, and knowledge networks (e.g. Bidwell, Dietz, and Scavia 2013) at the community level.

A third aspect is that communities *themselves* can usefully be viewed as having knowledge and acting epistemically (e.g. Freudenberg 2004; Goldman 2004). As we saw in the introduction from Petit's discussion of social integrates, can at least say that various groups (such as communities) can have their behavior predicted without having to know the intentions and beliefs of the members of that group by instead attributing attitudes to the collective (Tollefsen 2002; Pettit 2003). Further, members of communities often take the relevant locus of values and knowledge which they might use to inform their participation in decision-making processes to be their community rather than themselves as individuals (e.g. Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010; Tuomela & Miller 1988; Searle 2003). Traditional community knowledge is something many

food sovereignty and EJ activists are trying to preserve, and building new community knowledge is something EJ and food sovereignty activists would like to achieve in their community. There are four community epistemic capacities within this aspect which are important for participatory justice and community flourishing – the community capacities to gain knowledge about problems, maintain that knowledge inside the currently living generations of community members (for example in the face of dominant institutions which do not recognize it), adapt knowledge to changing circumstances, and to continue that adapted body of knowledge to future generations.

Given the three aspects just discussed, there is a clear importance for community epistemic capacities in environmental justice and food sovereignty. In the next section, we will next look at an example of how thinking about community epistemic capacities can benefit communities and increase participatory justice for them. In the example of trust as a community epistemic capacity, we see that in both participatory justice and what I have characterized as self-determination justice, community epistemic capacities are necessary for communities to flourish and interact with external, powerful institutions and experts in ways which maintain their sovereignty and autonomy. In the example of structured decision-making, we see one possible way to interact with communities with low epistemic capacities, removing the excuse to just throw up one's hands as a policymaker.

Epistemic Trust

We have discussed community epistemic capacities as the abilities of a community to gain, maintain, adapt, and continue the knowledge needed to solve problems and flourish. This

includes the ability to meaningfully participate with other communities and the larger society in just, deliberative processes on the one hand, and the ability of a community to have self-determination on the other. We have also discussed three aspects of epistemic capacities which are best understood at the community level. This exploration was meant to be broadly applicable to any community epistemic capacity. An exhaustive list and description of every community epistemic capacity, and indeed such a description might be impossible. It is probable that descriptions of particular community epistemic capacities change in different configurations of socio-ecological systems—for example, “communication” is presumably a community epistemic capacity, as is something like “memory”, but these both look quite different in non-literate band society than in modern society—and it is conceivable that entirely new capacities arise in some configurations of society. However, it is worthwhile to drill down on one particular community epistemic capacity to see what such a process would look like.

This section, then, examines epistemic trust as a community epistemic capacity. It will briefly gesture at the existing literature on trust in socially relevant philosophy of science to show that while it has much to contribute (including to this dissertation's project) that literature misses crucial aspects of trust for at least some communities. These communities are ones for which the kind of inter-community trust in experts essential for most accounts of democratic science and similar projects is impossible, and possibly undesirable. This section will then look at some of the harms facing such communities, and what can be done to address or mitigate them. Drawing on resources in social epistemology, this chapter uses trust to show how one community epistemic capacity functions. This chapter distinguishes between intra-community and inter-community trust, and between participatory and self-determination epistemic trust. This

section also serves as an example of the kinds of prescriptions made on marginalized communities by this theory, as was discussed above. Ultimately, this section of the chapter argues that for communities of incorrigibly low dependent trust in the dominant society and its experts, the typical approaches of science communication will not work. Instead, that community must develop the community epistemic capacity of internal trust networks as alternative sources of knowledge, and as a way of building limited, self-determination trust in external experts. At the same time, this distrust is not an excuse for expert communities to ignore the perspectives and problems facing these low-trust communities.

Without community epistemic capacities, communities are the dependent patients of external experts, and as a best-case scenario can be surveyed about their desires and beliefs by those experts, with all the problems in that method discussed in previous sections (Shrader-Frechette 2002). The community cannot reasonably articulate its assumptions, develop and evaluate its perspective, question the methodologies or procedures of others, act independently to deal with problems in a way that is likely to be successful, nor perform any of the other actions which are necessary for just epistemic participation and community flourishing. One community epistemic capacity we have not yet examined is trust. By *epistemic trust* I mean the tendency to accept information as reliable and act on it when provided by a source, which is therefore trusted. This definition can cover both individual trust as well as trust by communities. As a beginning we can say that intra-community trust networks and inter-community trust analyzed at the scale of communities (c.f. Fricker 2002) give individual members of a community access to useful information, more epistemic capacities, and allow the community to collectively pursue its goal of flourishing.

At the level of member benefits from the community epistemic capacities, intra-community trust provide individuals with what Goldberg (2010) calls both positive knowledge (because we will have a *prima facie* reason to trust answers to our questions or what we are told spontaneously) (p. 56-78; see also Hardwig 1994), and negative knowledge, which he calls “coverage” (because we can trust that something very important will be told to us, if we have not heard it then we can reliably know that it is not true) (p. 154-184). Inter-community trust of communities by other communities gives these same positive and negative knowledge and epistemic capacities at the community level. Moreover, trust is what Wolff and De-Shalit (2007) might call “fertile” for communities, because it greatly benefits other community epistemic capacities. Intra-community trust networks are necessary in order to spread information within the community (part of the community epistemic capacities to “maintain” and “continue” knowledge discussed in chapter two). Inter-community trust networks allow the community to share information with other communities, while trust also allows a community to distribute the epistemic load of difficult problems, either intra-communally or inter-communally (part of the community epistemic capacities to “gain” and “adapt” knowledge discussed in chapter three).

The importance of trust to epistemic projects and participatory justice has been acknowledged in philosophy of science and other discourses, such as social epistemology. However, the emphasis has typically been on intra-community trust within expert communities, and on building inter-community trust between expert and lay communities for more just and effective epistemic projects. What has been less discussed is the question of how a lay community which will not and possibly *should* not trust expert communities can nevertheless flourish.

Intra-community trust by expert communities is a prominent approach to thinking about trust in the context of philosophy of science. It is widely acknowledged by philosophers that science depends on trust within scientific communities (e.g. Hardwig 1991; 1994). The multi-authored paper in a scientific journal is a testament to division of epistemic labor dependent on trust, and the theoretical replicability of experiments notwithstanding, it is the case that scientists routinely trust findings endorsed by their community and use them in their own work. Trust is an important part of how these communities flourish and develop, and much of their epistemic capacities rest on it. Even many of what we might call more socially relevant works in the philosophy of science appeal to trust and trustworthiness as a reason to make scientific institutions more just, inclusionary, and effective (e.g. Harding 1993; Longino 2002; Rolin 2002; Scheman 2001). These arguments appeal in part to the value of intra-community trust for expert communities, where as an aspirational ideal, individual members and the scientific community as a whole are both trusting and trustworthy in a mutually supporting network of relationships, greatly increasing their epistemic capacities.

Another prominent way in which trust appears is its place in the discourses around the democratization of expertise and inter-community relationships between expert and lay communities. This approach typically has two elements. In the first, the importance of trust in experts by lay communities is highlighted, and expert communities are therefore enjoined to be more trustworthy so that lay communities will be able to justifiably trust them, avoiding the public having to blindly and sometimes incorrectly decide whom to trust (e.g. Goldman 2001; Hardwig 1994). Creating trustworthiness can include efforts such as making expert communities more inclusive and justly representative of many different kinds of people and perspectives (e.g.

Longino 2002; Scheman 2001), having strong and transparent mechanisms for critiquing and reforming expert communities' knowledge and methodologies (e.g. Grasswick 2010), or taking on projects that come out of and are highly relevant to the lives of underrepresented groups (e.g. Harding 1993). In the second element to this approach, expert communities are enjoined to have more inter-community trust of lay communities' knowledge systems and incorporate them more into the privileged expert discourse. This can be done by arguing for the valuable contributions other knowledge systems can and have already made to dominant expert discourses (e.g. Harding 2011 pp. 33-38; Settee 2007), but authors highlighting this element are careful to not simply propose TEK and other non-expert knowledge as a valuable resource to be mined, but something which must be incorporated only through mutually beneficial relationships of inter-community trust (e.g. McGregor 2004; Ranco et al. 2011). It can also be done by arguing that community participation in research can make it more effective, in terms of its rigor, relevance and reach (Balazs and Morello-Frosch 2013), objective (Harding 1993; Scheman 2001), and so on. These two elements together argue for inclusive, participatory discourses built around mutual trust between expert and lay communities.

However, not all communities trust external experts from the dominant society (such as scientists), and this is not always due to poor communication, or a lack of inclusivity on the part of expert institutions, or even an easily reparable transgression of boundaries by scientists or other experts. In extreme versions of these cases, it may well be impossible to establish the kind of inter-community trust relationships advocated for in the mainstream discourse on democratizing expertise. If so, it is important to look at ways to build alternatives in order that the low-trust communities' voices can still be heard in dominant projects, and to mitigate the

harms that come from not being able to participate in such projects.

One source of incorrigible distrust is betrayal in the past. This might be a history of prominent abuses (e.g. Thomas & Quinn 1991; Deloria 1995) or a single, highly influential incident (e.g. Wynne, 1989). Another source of incorrigible distrust is the perceived likelihood that experts will exploit a community's traditional knowledge or warp and corrode it (e.g. McGregor 2009). Either source of distrust can create what Whyte and Crease have called “Poisoned-well cases” (2010) where “Distrust in experts is an explicit and irreducible element in multilateral negotiations over scientific and technical issues,” and there is “No hope for a technical argument to succeed” (p. 418). If the “well” has been “poisoned” too thoroughly, the community in question cannot build trust (at least over a reasonable time scale) with better communication or even by seeing some reforms made in expert institutions. This is a case of low credibility for the expert communities, but it may also be a case of low trustworthiness as well (see Rolin 2002 for a discussion of the difference). In situations when a community has repeatedly been betrayed by members of expert communities, or when they very justifiably fear the effects of epistemic dependence on external experts to their TEK and other traditional knowledge, it is difficult to argue that they ought to have more inter-community trust, even if there are high costs for their distrust. Given how much we depend on the knowledge of experts, communities do not lose their trust lightly. As Hardwig (1994) says, “Occasional lapses from the practice of the ethics of expertise would not ordinarily make an expert's testimony completely untrustworthy. Similarly, a few untrustworthy experts would not undermine the rationality of appeals to the authority of that kind of expert, not even if the layperson cannot tell which experts are untrustworthy.” (p. 88) However, “If its knowers are indeed often untrustworthy, it might

well be rational for a culture to refuse to rely on them. But that distrust would bar the culture from arriving at maximally rational beliefs and decisions” (p. 89). The relationship of expert to non-experts is one of vulnerability (ibid.); when marginalized and oppressed communities do not trust experts, it is often for quite good reasons.

While this lack of trust may be understandable, it can have extremely negative consequences for the communities. In communities with high trust in external experts, the information and guidance those experts provide fills an important role in their community flourishing. The community can use expert guidance to offload many decisions, and when the community does come together to make its own decisions about goals and practices, it can use a wealth of information, which was generated by complex methodologies which were quite expensive (in terms of both labor and capital) to develop and implement. In communities with incorrigibly low trust in external experts, however justified that distrust by previous harms, that community is further marginalized and damaged by vulnerabilities which arise from ignorance about important matters which will affect them. A lack of the positive knowledge trust in external experts provides is costly, as is the less obvious lack of negative knowledge. Low-trust communities can lose Goldberg's concept of coverage discussed above, leaving communities prone to unfounded guesses and conspiracy theories which can impede their collective projects and waste energy. A tragic example of this was the difference in trust of public health experts between predominantly White and predominantly Black communities in the US during the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. A lack of trust by Black communities, as a result of a history of abuse by members of that expert community such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, led to far lower efficacy in education campaigns and behavior changes. This contributed to the higher

incidence of HIV/AIDS in these communities and slower changes in behavior to reduce risk than in predominantly White communities which had more trust in recommendations by public health officials. (Thomas & Quinn 1991)

Moves to address this problem, even if we stipulate that the “well” is too poisoned to simply increase trust by communities in science, are still possible. Most importantly, intra-community trust networks along with inter-community trust with other lay communities must be developed as community epistemic capacities. As was mentioned above, intra-community and inter-community trust are important for all communities, but they are particularly vital if the community is not in a position to depend on external experts. This is because strong intra-community and inter-community trust networks support the formation of other community capacities, epistemic and otherwise. If a community has many well developed epistemic capacities, it can make up for some of the deficiencies arising from a lack of trust in expert communities. First, community epistemic capacities can help the community to perform some of its own science, mitigating the harm of losing access to scientific resources (e.g. Popular Epidemiology in Brown 1993; maintaining and adapting TEK in Van Wynsberghe 2002). Second, they can provide the community other ways to benefit from external expertise in the absence of dependent trust.

Without trusting the motives or information from a given source, it is still possible to think that when that source makes a claim, it might be worth investigating *whether* it is true or not, particularly when it involves an issue which is highly relevant to the community, as long as a community has enough epistemic capacities to carry out this investigation without exposing itself either to abuse or to corruption by the parts of the other's methodologies and values that the

community sees as harmful. Indeed, arguably this is what scientists do when they work with indigenous knowledge systems – they do not trust these communities, burdened as they are with superstition (from the scientists' perspective), but they see them as a valuable source of things to investigate, and they can learn (perhaps with scare quotes – “learn”) from them in a critical way, where they take what they see as valuable and leave the rest (e.g. Deloria 1995; Harding 2011; McGregor 2004). Examples of the reverse relationship toward dominant experts include the Walpole Island Heritage Center (Van Wynsberghe 2002). At the Center, when external experts are brought in to conduct research that the community cannot currently carry out, the community shadows the experts to learn how to do what they are doing, so that the community can critique the methods, and adopt them in the future if they see fit.

Before moving on it is worth addressing a possible concern. Writers from post-colonial science, TEK, and other discourses strongly critique the traditional move of Western science to separate knowledge from the people who create it, and treat it like an object which can be taken up independently (e.g. McGregor 2004 p. 390). It might be wondered whether this critique problematizes the reverse relationship of marginalized groups separating out individual knowledge claims by dominant expert communities. This concern can have two forms. The first is a justice concern – is this advocating for an injustice committed against dominant knowledge systems? The response to this form of the concern lies in remembering that these communities of incorrigible low trust are usually distrustful because of marginalization by dominant knowledge systems and by other dominant social institutions. In such cases, if it even is an injustice, this can be viewed as in part a restitution for previous injustices, and in part an example of oppressed communities fighting back. The other form of this concern is that individual “pieces” of

knowledge from external experts are not separable from their overall knowledge systems, and so will smuggle in the very value systems and methodologies some of these low-trust communities are trying to avoid. This is a serious concern, and explains why some communities such as the Amish in the US are very careful before bringing in outside pieces of knowledge and technology. However, as long as this danger is kept in mind, it is demonstrably the case that communities with high community epistemic capacities such as the Amish can utilize some knowledge while still preserving elements of autonomy that are important to them.

Building intra-community and inter-community trust networks for these low-trust communities is a large project which can take serious amounts of time and does not guarantee success, though the discussion on how to use structured decision-making processes to build community epistemic capacities is a valuable example of useful tools for that difficult project. Others (e.g. Freudenberg et al. 2011) have written extensively on how to build capacities as a whole, and some of those techniques can work for the community epistemic capacity of trust as well. What we can say, drawing on our definition of communities, is that as communities engage in more collective projects, and as they increase the extent and frequency of thinking collectively of themselves as a community and come to recognize their shared issues, they will presumably increase their trust in fellow community members. As they engage in projects which require collaboration with other communities, there is the possibility of building up inter-community trust as well. In both cases, of course, this can be damaged when one party betrays the trust of the other, as we have seen in this section.

Up until now we have been looking at building alternative trust networks which cut out dominant experts, due to their being untrustable by the communities. This is very much in

keeping with the food sovereignty concept of developing alternatives to unjust systems rather than reforming them discussed in section two. However, to the extent that the low trust comes from marginalization and abuse, there are justice claims on those dominant expert communities. Other than building intra-community trust and inter-community trust with other lay communities, another way to mitigate the harms associated with incorrigible low trust in external experts is for dominant expert communities to still take the low-trust communities' interests and perspectives into account, despite the communities' unwillingness to share or participate. As stated previously there are high costs to a lack of trust in external experts, but one serious potential cost – the lack of their perspective and the issues important to them affecting participatory science – can be mitigated by expert communities taking these questions up regardless.

Of course, this will need to be done carefully and will not fully replace participation. The risk of misrepresenting the lives and misunderstanding the needs of the marginalized group is high, but this does not give dominant experts an excuse to ignore marginalized groups thereby furthering their marginalization. The decades of thought on standpoint theory (Harding 1993) provides a promising starting ground for the attempt. There is also no promise that research once done will be taken up by the low-trust community. This is irrelevant from a justice standpoint, but if the previous step of building community epistemic capacities to allow the community to critically evaluate the information also takes place, the chances of truly beneficial knowledge being taken up increases. Also, though I have been speaking of communities which by stipulation cannot come to trust external experts in any reasonable period of time, if there is a chance of the community building up inter-community trust relationships, these projects can do much to show that such relationships might be worthwhile.

These two approaches are by no means a perfect solution for a situation of incorrigible distrust of external experts, but it points both to a way for communities in this situation to flourish, and to the demands placed on dominant institutions by this situation. It also again highlights the importance of community epistemic capacity, even in the absence of possibilities in the larger society. In the next section, we will look at a model of engaging in decision-making processes with communities with low community epistemic capacities.

Community Epistemic Capacities in Structured Decision-Making

This example will argue that community epistemic capacities are necessary for meaningful participation in decision-making processes, decision-making processes can be structured in ways which overcome deficiencies in community epistemic capacities when possible, and when this is not possible steps can be taken before and during the process to increase the community's epistemic capacities. These steps can include the structured decision-making processes themselves, which can be evaluated by how well they contribute to increasing a community's epistemic capacities for the future. This is an important point, because it would be a very problematic outcome for the project of this dissertation if community epistemic capacities became an excuse to not engage with a community (e.g. "They don't have sufficient epistemic capacities as a community, so rather than consult them let's just treat them like an epistemic and moral patient and do what we think is best for them"). As the previous section on trust and this section will show, it is possible (though difficult) to engage with communities with low epistemic capacities, and in fact to do so in a way which builds up those capacities for future problem solving.

If we grant that there are community epistemic capacities in at least the three aspects discussed earlier in this chapter, then communities can be evaluated on the degree to which they promote each aspect: how helpful the community is to members epistemically; how well understood the community is by its members; and how epistemically functional it is (defined as being able to collectively gain, maintain, adapt, and continue the community's collective knowledge). This will tell us whether the community can be sufficiently informed to meaningfully participate or give consent in a deliberative process. The need for being sufficiently informed is well understood in literature on participation (e.g. Derr et al. 1981; Teuber 1990; Elliot 2011). While this is often seen in the framework of “informed consent” along the medical ethics model, which de-emphasizes the value of participants being able to form knowledge themselves rather than have it be provided to them, the work of Kristin Shrader-Frechette has stressed the need for individuals to have the ability to learn about the issues at hand and bring their knowledge, with their values embedded into it, to the table (e.g. 1991; 2002).

All of these approaches to sufficiently informed consent, however, are focused on individual members of communities and individual participants in decision-making processes. While individual epistemic capacities are important, community epistemic capacities increase the individual's epistemic capabilities, and they allow the community itself to have its goals reflected in the process. When these community epistemic capacities are not sufficiently present, decision-making processes should be chosen very carefully to help overcome the lack of capacities. For people interested in ensuring meaningful participation it is necessary to evaluate a community's epistemic capacities and respond to any lack. This includes organizations like the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency, which require

meaningful participation and informed consent from affected communities (HUD Demonstration Act 1993; EPA Public Participation Guide), who currently seek to ensure informed consent mostly by thinking through what is required on their end – making information available, encouraging people in communities to come ask questions, etc. It also includes members of a community trying to see how best to help their community meaningfully participate in decisions which affect it.

One model for structured decision-making processes which has some promise to overcome deficiencies in community epistemic capacities is so-called “Citizen juries” or “Citizen panels” which are based on the assumption that “If given sufficient time and resources to learn about a topic, average citizens have the ability to understand complicated issues, deliberate on a set of potential responses, and provide well-reasoned decisions.” (Konisky & Beierle 2001 p. 819) This model can at least mitigate some of the problems of a lack of community epistemic capacities by not requiring that the participants come in with a large amount of prior knowledge about a topic, because it provides access to any needed expertise and enough time to understand the issue at hand, though as designed it doesn't make up for other epistemic capacities, such as a good working understanding of the good of the community and the views of other community members.

If there is a large deficiency in community epistemic capacities, it may not be possible for decision-making processes to be structured to function regardless. In such cases, when there is a strong mandate and/or desire for meaningful participation, it may be necessary to develop these capacities prior to the deliberative process. There has already been some work on how to address other kinds of deficiencies in stakeholder groups engaged in participatory decision-making, such

as deficiencies in desire to participate and trust (e.g. National Research Council 2008), and this would be a good starting place for thinking through how to make up for deficiencies in community epistemic capacities as well. It may be the case that the mandate to have meaningful participation by affected communities actually mandates things like providing money and space for the community to get together, access to lawyers and scientists, and a host of other aid to develop their community epistemic capacities before the decision-making process can even begin.

One way of developing community epistemic capacities worth particular attention is by the deliberative process itself. Decision-making processes can be evaluated by whether they build up community epistemic capacities. There is a wealth of literature on structuring and evaluating decision-making processes (e.g. Chess 2000; Chaskin 2001; Konisky & Bierle 2001; Rowe & Frewer 2004; Sunstein 2006; Webler & Tuler 2010; Tuler 2011). However, there is little agreement on the standards that ought to be used for evaluation, or even what goals the processes should have. Is a good process one which resolves conflicts (Coglianese 1997)? One which satisfies the participants (Landre and Knuth 1993)? One which comes up with correct answers, or at the very least an accurate awareness of the risks and degrees of certainty involved in an issue (Sunstein 2006)? Perhaps this focus on the “correct” outcome misses the value of ongoing evaluation, long-term impacts, or some other evaluations set by participants themselves (Chess 2000)? Given these radically different ideas, something like a consensus has emerged at least that any evaluation of structured decision-making ought to acknowledge multiple different goals (Patton 1982; Chess & Purcell 1999). Many of the goals used to evaluate decision-making processes are useful, but there has not been a discussion in the literature about the way structured

decision-making processes can help a community epistemically for future projects, despite the importance of community epistemic capacities to participatory justice discussed above.

Some decision-making processes take input from members of the public in order to better reflect the views of affected stakeholders, for example by conducting surveys, but they do not increase those communities' epistemic capacities in so doing (a separate process to use survey data would be possible, by widely publicizing it in the community and using it as a jumping-off point to meet and discuss issues, but this would be a separate project of development from the survey itself). Indeed, some structures of decision-making have the potential to actually decrease community epistemic capacities by increasing dependency by the community on external experts, increasing distrust of science, eroding knowledge networks in the community, and so on. While there has been some work on the long-term effects of structured decision-making processes on the willingness of communities to participate in future processes (e.g. Chess 2000), how well they develop the epistemic capacities of the communities which participate is a separate question which has not been examined in the literature. There are promising instances of processes which develop epistemic capacities, such as the case of the Anishinabek/Ontario Fisheries Resource Center (McGregor 2009). This Center not only conducts environmental assessments which integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with scientific knowledge, but works hard to increase what we have been calling the epistemic capacity of the communities. At the Fisheries Resource Center, the biologists solicit and support the community to participate at all stages, and over time this has built understandings of the assessments which lets the participation be more effective.

At the Center, the community itself is largely driving the processes, but even when

external organizations decide on the structure, there are models which have the potential to increase community epistemic capacities. One of these is what's known as “Study circles,” which “provide average citizens with a forum to learn, exchange views and experiences, and become engaged in issues of community importance. Study circles provide open access to citizens, and present participants with an opportunity to strengthen their civic capacity through the chance to increase their understanding of community concerns and assets and to help build a network of community contacts” (Konisky & Beierle 2001 p. 818, but see also McCoy et al. 1996). By providing time, space, and resources for members of the community to come together and learn about an issue as well as form better intra-community relationships, these Study Circles also have the potential to increase community epistemic capacities, though it is unfortunate (if somewhat predictable) that study circles are rarely used in situations with actual potential to affect policy (Konisky & Beierle 2001).

Groups coming together to deliberate and decide on a particular course of action is a hallmark of participatory justice, but it has long been recognized that there are better and worse deliberative decision-making processes. Work up to this point on how to structure, evaluate, and modify decision-making processes have ignored the importance of community epistemic capacities, but they are essential for meaningful participation and just procedures.

Conclusion

Meaningful participation can make decisions “more democratic, legitimate, and informative” (National Research Council 1996, p. 79). When communities with sufficiently well developed epistemic capacities exist, meaningful participation and informed consent from the

community are possible. When community epistemic capacities do not exist, it is not possible for a community to participate and give consent, and participation and consent must then find difficult workarounds. Therefore, it is within the remit of many organizations to increase epistemic capacities in the communities from which they are trying to obtain consent. Moreover, community epistemic capacities render epistemic self-determination possible. Thus, on self-determination justice grounds, it is the responsibility of more powerful social institutions to promote these capacities in marginalized communities. As the examples of trust and structured decision-making showed, there is at least the possibility that this can be done as part of the engagement itself. When social institutions are not willing to promote these capacities, it behooves activists in those communities to work to develop them on their own in order to promote community flourishing. In the next chapter, we will look at a community of activists who work conscientiously and aggressively on such projects, but who yet have marginalized sub-groups within the community. When such conditions arise, it becomes important to think through how the marginalized sub-group can improve their situation, what it takes for a radical, activist community to notice its own blind spots, and how external experts (both academic and from larger activist groups) can intervene in ways which do not harm the community.

Chapter Four

Intracommunity Justice and Capacities: A Case Study in India

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss a transdisciplinary project I have been conducting with La Via Campesina and the women and men of KRRS, an India-based radical food sovereignty movement. This work is valuable for this dissertation for several reasons. First, it provides a close examination of a particular food sovereignty movement and demonstrates the importance of community epistemic capacities. Second, it highlights a tension that can arise between community flourishing on the one hand and individual or community sub-group flourishing on the other – specifically, the problems women continue to face even in justice-focused communities – and points at ways to address those tensions. Third, it serves as a model for collaborative projects between external experts and activist communities which, I argue, can provide useful knowledge and be conducted in a manner which benefit the epistemic capacities of the community. Thus the content as well as the methods by which the research was designed and carried out are useful, both for academics and activists interested in gender justice, epistemic self-determination, and community flourishing via capacity building.

Situating the Research Partners' Backgrounds

It is becoming increasingly common for researchers to situate themselves “In order to be open about the motivations and assumptions from which they are proceeding, and to openly wrestle with ways in which their class, sexuality, and ethnic, race, or caste background impact the scene about which they write” (Ramanathan 2005). The research discussed in this chapter

was designed, carried out, and analyzed in partnership between several stakeholder groups: representatives from Via, representatives from KRRS (both women and men, who due to this project's focus might best be viewed as separate groups of stakeholders), and myself (with helpful advice from Dr. Linda Kalof in the Sociology Department at Michigan State University). Given the transdisciplinary nature of the researchers then, it is particularly important to situate the interests and background of these groups, because these greatly influenced the goals and design of the project.

Situating Via, and its Value of Participatory Justice for Women

As was discussed in chapter one, La Via Campesina (Via) is an international umbrella organization that works to promote food sovereignty and community flourishing by supporting local activist groups of subsistence food producers. An important consequence of the organization's commitment to participatory justice is the high value it places on the participation of women. As was also discussed in chapter one, this is motivated in part by a recognition of justice due to women, and in part because of the potential benefits Via perceives as coming from women's full participation. According to the Nyéléni Women's Statement, "Women, historical creators of knowledge in agriculture and food, continue to produce 80% of food in the poorest countries, are currently the main guardians of biodiversity and crop seeds, [and are] the more affected by neo-liberal and sexist policies." (2007) More recently, Via's 4th International Assembly of Peasant Women in Jakarta said in its manifesto, "The organized peasant women are convinced that the future is promising, as there is no possibility of moving back in the progress and triumphs achieved, and even less so in the minds of women. We are fighting for the sovereignty of the land, the territory and the body and saying no to violence against women in all

its forms.” (Women of Via Campesina International Manifesto 2013) Via is engaged in a number of programs to aid the lives of women, and pays particular attention to their participation in the food sovereignty movement. Indeed, members of Via often say that it was the incorporation of women's voices into Via, which happened only after the organization had been an active peasant rights group for some time, that allowed it to realize the importance of sovereignty and of food as uniting themes for the many issues facing small-scale farmers in the global South. As they say, the Nyéléni Declaration came about only because of the participation by women, who had taken important leadership roles prior to that meeting (Desmarais & Wiebe 2010; personal correspondence with Via members).

However, despite this impressive commitment to just participation by women in the movement, there is still much to be done. In particular, many local organizations which Via connects have not been as effective at dismantling the barriers to women's full participation in the movement, nor indeed to the society out of which that local movement has emerged. This puts Via into a quandary: on the one hand, they greatly value participatory justice for women. On the other hand, they are committed to a non-hierarchical organizational structure that develops and supports networks of mutual aid and solidarity. This organizational commitment makes it unclear how they can best provide the support to women in those activist communities that suffer from gender-based participatory injustices, without dominating the groups in question.

Situating KRRS, Indian Rural Activism, and Women in the Movement

An example of an organization with quite radical commitment to food sovereignty, and yet one which could improve significantly in terms of meaningful participation by women, is

KRRS. “KRRS,” which is also often referred to as “Raitha Sangha” by members, stands for Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha. This translates to the “Karnataka State Farmers’ Association” (thus when members refer to it as “Raitha Sangha,” they mean the “Farmer's Association”). KRRS is a large, radical organization from the south Indian state of Karnataka. This organization began in 1980 (prior to the coining of the term “food sovereignty” in 1997 and prior to the creation of Via in 1993) (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013; Kripa 1992), and brought together isolated, smaller local farm groups which had existed in Karnataka for decades previously (Mukherji and Sahoo 1992). Like Via itself, KRRS uses its focus on food production to address larger justice issues. As one member of the group said in an interview,

“Our movement is Gandhian and its final objective is the realization of the 'village republic', a form of social, political and economic organization based on direct democracy, economic and political autonomy, and self-reliance. All members of the community participate in decision-making about the common questions that affect them. Specifically, the movement is strongly based on Gandhi's philosophy of swadeshi, or home economy. This means that political and economic power must reside in the villages through democratic village assemblies. The needs of the villages should be met first and foremost through local production and consumption. Swadeshi emphasizes local technologies and cultures. By relying on a localized economy for village needs, everyone can aspire to work and a dignified life” (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013, p. 1).

The group has campaigned against injustices based on caste and indigeneity, and has worked on explicitly feminist issues (many of these will be discussed in greater detail in further sections below), such as opposing the imposition of state-run liquor stores in their communities (which the organization views as harmful to the women in the community who cannot stop their husbands from wasting money, time, and health), campaigning for more women in government, objecting to the Miss Universe pageant in India, and in particular focusing on marriage – both by supporting inter-caste marriages, and by advocating for “simple, self-respect weddings” which

do not force the bride's family to spend money they cannot afford on lavish weddings, nor force them to petition an upper-caste priest to perform the ceremony (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013, p. 2). Finally, KRRS sees food sovereignty as grounding mutual aid and solidarity, and as a result they have engaged in anti-GATT and anti-WTO protests, which they view as required by standing in solidarity with other justice groups (because they don't perceive the WTO or GATT as being immediately relevant to their interests, but stand in solidarity with groups that do) (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013, p. 4-5).

KRRS is a radical organization, which, while espousing non-violence against living beings (though making an interesting exception for GM organisms) has engaged in direct actions like the destruction of liquor stores, burning fields of GM crops and occupying or destroying offices of GM companies, and destroying the first Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet in India as a statement against the global food system (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013, p. 3). KRRS also recognizes the importance of internal participatory justice. Members are organized by the village they live in (in order to address local issues), which are then arranged by taluk (regions), districts, and states. In addition to upper-caste men, the group has members who are women, indigenous, or lower caste (Khadse and Bhattacharya 2013, p. 2). This encourages people who would not normally build relationships within their villages to get to know each other in different contexts, which both supports those village communities' flourishing, and hopefully makes those villages more just. KRRS has a Women's Wing that was created in the 1980s, and has a provision for all-women meetings for strategy-building.

However, despite this stated commitment to women participating fully in the movement, and explicit attempts to include women, many structural barriers remain in place. These issues

are in part a reflection of Indian society generally, and the culture of activism in India in particular. The only time an all-women strategy meeting had been held at the time this research began was in 1987. Women are underrepresented within the leadership at every level. The Women's Wing of the organization has a president, and in districts and taluks there are also women elected to positions in the Women's Wing, but these women leaders do not currently have any process of coordination or initiatives for the entire Wing. Women's Wings are not uncommon in rural Indian social justice movements, due in part to the Gandhian tradition, but they are often founded by men, who then also set the agenda for the Women's Wings to work on, by dominating the over-arching leadership positions (Kishwar 1988). In many Indian rural activist groups, "There are hardly any instances of rural women having pressured movement leaderships to ensure that women share the gains of the movement." (p. 2757)

In KRRS Women are elected to general leadership positions (outside of the Women's Wing), but only rarely. In the State Committee, out of approximately 15 leaders, only two are women. One of them is the President of the Women's Wing whose husband was active in KRRS for the past 30 years, the other is the daughter of the late leader of the movement. They both observed during our study that they have benefited greatly from being the daughter or wife of "Someone." This is in spite of the symbolic importance of women in KRRS, as in rural movements in India generally. For many men in these movements, the idea of women participating in the movement is celebrated, but rarely one that is considered a good idea for the individual women he knows personally. This is due both to a lack of resources (time, money, transportation, etc.) for women to participate, and to norms against women asserting themselves that way. As Kishwar (1988) says about rural movements in India generally, this often has

repercussions in her personal life: “While women victims of police and other attacks are often projected as heroines and martyrs, their own husbands and communities often reject and ostracize them should they suffer sexual assault while defending the community” (p. 2756).

As the KRRS partners in this project said, these issues facing women are serious problems in their organization today. Women’s limited participation is a problem that KRRS shares with movements of every kind in India, and they are keen to better understand the problems and work to redress them. This was particularly the case for women in the movement, though some of the men in the movement expressed support for this project as well, though with reservations about opening KRRS up to criticism at an international level.

Situating Myself, Academics Generally, and Philosophers in Particular

As a non-Indian, English-speaking, male philosopher, I may not be the most obvious choice for a partner on a collaborative project working on justice issues for women in KRRS. The previous chapters of this dissertation show my interest in these issues and in ethical collaborations between members of different communities. I cannot speak to the particular reasons the other research partners agreed to work with me as an individual – I initially met a representative of Via at the Workshop on Food Justice and Peace I was co-organizing at Michigan State University, and the idea for this research project emerged from discussions with her and members of KRRS, and throughout the process had direct contact more often with Via than with KRRS. It is worth discussing why members of activist communities might want to work with academics at all. In chapter three, we discussed the ways in which trust by communities in external experts can be beneficial through the provision of both positive

knowledge and negative coverage, though also why that trust is sometimes difficult to build, maintain, or repair. We have discussed throughout this dissertation how academics can conduct research with communities in ways which reflect the values of the community, build epistemic capacities in those communities, and which are understood by the community sufficiently to critique and to incorporate on their own, perhaps by conducting further studies themselves (recall the example of the Walpole Island Heritage Center). When academics can engage in a project with a community, in a project important to them both, in a way where both the process and the results can be useful to those communities, it is not surprising that such a project could be agreed to by communities. However, there is a particular question not addressed in preceding chapters, namely why communities would want to work with a philosopher as opposed to, say, a sociologist.

It is important when addressing this question not to over-emphasize the differences between disciplines. The main contributions an academic researcher can bring to a transdisciplinary project are available to many academics irrespective of their discipline – access to resources from their university and understanding of the grant system, the access to and ability to explain primary-source texts, the ability to think critically about a problem and help develop a research program to address it, etc. The main differences lie in emphasis and repeated practice, and in this respect some of the emphases and practices philosophers engage in can be quite useful for problem-focused, transdisciplinary research.

One such emphasis is questioning assumptions. As will be described below, the process of developing the research goals, questions, and methodology took far longer than in many projects, because they emerged out of conversation and consent between all the research

partners. In these conversations, Via and KRRS partners asked many fundamental questions about the purpose of science, the fundamental assumptions underlying particular aspects of methodologies already existing in the literature, the ethics of how to conduct a study and what to do with data, and a host of other important questions. This conversation required a willingness and even an eagerness by the academic partner to engage in these deep-level questions – something many philosophers have, by temperament, training, and habit. Another emphasis in philosophical training useful for transdisciplinary projects is conceptual analysis. Many philosophers prize and practice the ability to look at the conceptual architecture underlying a discourse, draw out its implications, examine its usefulness, and ameliorate unnecessary confusion. This can be an important part of developing border-crossing skills of transdisciplinary communication. This is in part because academic partners must be able to explain and justify the concepts and commitments embedded in their own epistemic communities, and it is also in part because many transdisciplinary projects have multiple stakeholder group partners, and facilitation between the different value systems and concepts at play is vital. Conceptual analysis can be an important part of the skill of facilitation, for example by helping the different groups find epistemic common ground to inform research (O'Rourke & Crowley 2013). A final emphasis in philosophy worth discussing is normativity. There is a tendency (though again not a rigid requirement or boundary) for researchers trained in the social sciences to restrain themselves from engaging in normative conversations with members of the community they are studying. Yet normative conversations were a vital part of the early conversations among all the research partners in this case. Normative concerns about justice were what motivated the activist partners to engage in this research in the first place, and so having these normative conversations

was important for establishing trust and shared goals early in the process, coming to understand one-another's values as the methodology was designed, and then discussing and interpreting the data analysis. There are projects where social scientists are comfortable engaging in normative conversations with their research partners, such as in Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches (Whyte 1991), and indeed this project is very much in the PAR tradition. However, the practice philosophers make of normative conversation can at least sometimes give us an advantage. Indeed, in all the above cases, the training of philosophy, and the interests that led me to be a philosopher in the first place, enabled my participation in this project.

Research Goals

Through discussion, goals for the research project were developed. These were not explicitly laid out, something which might be a good idea for future projects, so the language of these goals is in part my interpretation of our conversations. The first goal was to better understand the situation of women in KRRS, and specifically the barriers they had to full participation. The second goal was to *improve* the situation for the women whose lives were being studied through the research. As one partner said, the most desirable outcome would be that the second goal would make information obtained for the first goal already out-of-date. A third goal was to generate a case study of the activism sparked in the second goal, that would have useful application in other contexts, such as different parts of the world, other oppressed groups, or activist groups working on other issues. A fourth goal was to develop a research methodology that would have some aspects that could be usefully applied to other contexts by researchers and academics. A fifth goal was that the methods would be well enough understood by the public partners to be replicable and modifiable if they chose to continue the work after the

researcher was no longer involved. A sixth goal was to provide a model of how to conduct ethical and effective transdisciplinary projects. A seventh goal was to contribute to academic discourses through publication of the results in academic venues (such as, but not limited to, this dissertation), but for the language in those documents to be accessible by all the parties, and to be created in an open, transparent way. For example, much of the language in this chapter has been viewed by and commented on by my partners for accuracy, as have presentations I've given on this work to academic audiences. An eighth goal was to ideally help, and certainly to not harm, Via or KRRS. This goal included concerns about not harming the reputation of either organization, particularly through the research project and through publication in scholarly venues, strengthening KRRS while pursuing participation for women within the group, helping or at least not harming Via's and KRRS's relationship with one-another, working with Via to help the women in these communities without violating Via's organizing principles, and so on.

Given the large number and wide scope of these goals, it was difficult to determine a research project and methods which would achieve them. Thus, it was only after many conversations over an extended period of time that the rest of the project could be developed. However, this time was far from wasted – the conversations themselves allowed for knowledge exchanges which benefited all parties, and allowed for the slow buildup of trust between the partners (which was particularly necessary for the seventh and eighth goals). Building up the trust networks within the research team and incorporating as well as increasing the epistemic capacities of the different communities they were representing was a vital aspect of the project, on both justice and epistemic grounds, and these aspects of the project were enhanced by the careful advanced planning.

Research Methods

The Methods Section of many studies can be dry reading, but at least in this case, they were fundamental to the shared goals of the project – they were designed in participatorily just ways with the stakeholders; incorporated the perspectives, values, and knowledge of the research partners; and were transparently developed so that the activist stakeholders understood the methodology and the reasons behind it well enough to conduct further research themselves in other contexts if they chose. Thus, rather than use an off-the-shelf methodology (though aspects of many other studies were discussed and some were incorporated, including work I had done previously on other projects), a place-based, community-based and situation-based method was developed. This was in keeping with feminist Participatory Action Research (PAR) meta-methodologies (e.g. Yoshihama and Carr 2002), which call for maximal involvement by all partners at all stages of the project.

The research had two main phases of data collection. These were carried out by the Via representative in Karnataka in cooperation with senior women in KRRS. The partners carrying out the research had conversations, role playing exercises, debriefings, etc. to maintain consistency with the goals of the project. The first phase consisted of in-depth background interviews with people who had been involved in KRRS for decades (some of whom were still active in the movement and some of whom had since left the movement) for background. These were primarily women, but some senior men were also interviewed. These interviews have not been coded, but were gathered partly to get a better understanding of the history of the movement for partners who have not been directly associated with it, and partly because it was seen as a way to gather a permanent record of important institutional knowledge that was in

danger of dying out with the knowers.

In the second phase, research partners conducted focus groups, in two rounds. The focus groups were made up of women who participate directly in the movement, women who participate indirectly (e.g. by willingly taking on extra work at home to allow their husbands to participate directly), women who are no longer active in the movement but were in the past, and women interested in joining the movement but were currently only peripherally associated. This was done intentionally to provide a wide range of opinion and experience on the issue of barriers to women participating in the food sovereignty movement. To find women unknown to the KRRS research partners (particularly important for the categories of “women interested in joining” and “women who participate indirectly”), snowball sampling was used to follow up on women's recommendations regarding which other women to include or ask for more possible participants (Noy, 2008; Goodman, 1961). The “snowball” was started initially by recommendations from the two women leaders in KRRS's State Committee, as well as women recommended by the Via liaison. We held focus groups with women from five different districts of Karnataka. In the first round, thirty-five women were interviewed in small groups of five to fifteen women. Interviews were between forty minutes and two hours depending on the participants' desire to contribute. The discussions took place at locations that put the lowest demands on the participants in terms of travel and time.

The focus groups were held in the language most convenient to the women in the group, usually Kannada. The focus groups were recorded for later translation prior to analysis. A facilitator fluent in the language in which the focus group was being held would lead the discussion by introducing the main questions, and steering the conversation back to the questions

if the conversation wandered too far, or asking follow up/clarificatory questions. The six questions leading the focus groups were:

1. In your opinion, what are the goals of KRRS?
2. What are the different roles for men and women in KRRS?
3. What are the structural barriers to women's participation in KRRS?
4. What strategies do you use to overcome barriers to participation in KRRS?
5. Would you encourage your female family members to participate in KRRS?
6. If you could change anything about KRRS, what would you do to strengthen the organization?

These questions were designed to spark a fruitful conversation, and to focus the attention of the group on the idea that issues which they might have considered to be personal, family problems (e.g. a woman's husband doesn't want her going out to the meetings because she needs to take care of his parents) could usefully be viewed as *structural* barriers. It also helped to focus their attention on positive strategies, both political and infra-political, to overcome these barriers, and encouraged them to share their strategies and discuss the possibility of new ones. Examples of follow-up questions asked spontaneously by the facilitator to steer the conversation back to these foci when they wandered away include:

1. If you and your husband are both active in KRRS, what are the differences in your participation and why? (Spontaneous question)

2. How can your husband support you to participate more in KRRS? (Spontaneous question)

(these questions were asked when the conversation became overly focused on a personal relationship with a woman's husband).

Participants were encouraged to continue thinking about these issues, and a second round of interviews was held for a chance to follow up and expand the conversation. In the second round, twenty-one women of the first thirty-five came together for six hours of conversation on the original topics, as well as additional topics. The second round of questions added two more lead questions:

1. What can you offer to KRRS?
2. What have you gained from participating in KRRS?

The second round of discussions also included lengthy unprompted discussions on the strategies women activists use to ban liquor stores, the role of fundraising and funds management in the organization, and the appropriate level of autonomy of for the KRRS Women's Wing.

Usually, group discussion proceeded as follows: short introductions were given by everyone in the room and an explanation of who the research partners are, including those not in the room, as well as an explanation of the funding, goals, what would be done with the information, and how participants could contact the research partners in the future if they had any questions (this section was not recorded). Once the recording began, the first question was introduced, the women were given a few moments to think quietly about their answer, they were

then allowed to ask clarifying questions, and this then moved naturally into their responses. Their answers were typically embedded in personal examples and anecdotes, which would then lead to larger, more abstract points. As these points were discussed, they were frequently re-grounded in the personal, particularly when one participant wanted to disagree. As Krueger (1997) has pointed out, focus group members modify their opinions or their assertions, based on the conversation within the group. This is sometimes viewed as a difficulty to overcome (e.g. Kidd and Parshall 2000), and indeed it does mean that facilitators must be careful to intercede in domination of the group by a few strong personalities, but this change also allows for a consensus to be built as fellow members of a community, who value the perspectives of fellow members, alter their opinions based on the participation of others. Particularly for a project such as ours looking at the focus group as a consciousness-raising activity, this is a strength rather than a weakness. The facilitator would interject if she was unclear about the larger point the participant was evoking, such as in a long personal anecdote.

Content analysis of the conversations (White and Marsh, 2006) was carried out via qualitative coding of the transcripts, based on Ahuvia's (2001) method of interpretive content analysis and public justifiability. Unlike Ahuvia's traditional definition of content analysis (p. 139), the themes elucidated were not quantified based on frequency, beyond a relative assessment (i.e. "self-respect" was the least common of the three themes, "identity" was more common, and "capacities" was the most common theme). This was due to the interrelation and co-occurrence of the themes in particular arguments made by participants. For Ahuvia, detecting latent content in a text (such as implications) which lies "underneath" the manifest content (such as words used), can be made more robust by collaboration with multiple researchers, who

explain and justify their interpretations of the text, and come to build a shared understanding with the other researchers (ibid.) In this project, where research partners came from very diverse backgrounds, this public justifiability became important on justice grounds in order to avoid silencing the perspectives of some partners, as well as being fertile epistemically. Understanding the structural issues or strategies being described, often obliquely, by discussants required attention to interaction between the different speakers over time, and a sensitivity to cultural conversational norms based on nationality, gender, caste, and so on. By employing the diverse experiences, understandings, and sensitivities of the research partners, public justifiability helped to ensure that competing interpretations were given extensive consideration.

The unit of analysis was the idea being expressed, rather than the word, sentence, or even speaker turn as many traditional content analyses use. Smaller units of analysis could have allowed for a more objective code book and less ambiguity in categorization, but at the cost of the rich, latent meaning in the text (Morse 1997). Ideas can often emerge in a back-and-forth between two or more participants. Units of coding built out of ideas, categorized into themes, helped to achieve our goal of representing the contextualized contributions of the women (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, Koole, and Kappelman, 2006). Categorization of ideas into themes via content analysis was initially conducted by researcher partners working independently from one-another. Each partner identified ideas being expressed on the topics of the research project (understandings of the movement and organization, women's contributions to KRRS, structural barriers to women's participation, strategies to overcome these barriers).¹⁰ These were then

¹⁰ The data analysis of this project is still a work-in-progress, and thus the final thematic categories in this chapter may change over time before this is published in the form of a white paper for Via or in an academic journal. The current thematic categories in this chapter more closely resemble my interpretations than the final, mutually agreed upon categories might.

collected and grouped into themes by each researcher, who created a “code book” of themes and paradigmatic examples. The individually generated code books were then explained and justified to other researcher partners. As the final code book is generated, the discourses will then be re-analyzed by researchers working in groups to discuss and come to consensus on what themes salient discussions fall into.¹¹

This methodology has some drawbacks (such as the women who were not able or willing to participate in both rounds). However, it was designed with several purposes in mind. One purpose was to understand the situation facing women in the organization (in order to promote the first and seventh goals). This is a complex question, and focus groups have been shown to be quite effective at studying “Social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The focus groups provided an opportunity for group deliberation, defined as “Debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants” (Chambers 2003, 309). By giving leeway for the conversation to go where it wanted (as long as it stayed generally on the topic), the group deliberation was allowed to emerge. Further, by giving the subjects an opportunity to come back and speak on the topic further, participants who were reticent at first to speak, or who weren't as quick to come up with their contributions, as well as participants who had further reflected on their beliefs in light of what was said, were able

¹¹ This content analysis came closest to an “off-the-shelf” method, in that it was based on research I had done previously with farmer focus groups in Michigan (though with some situational adjusting in conversation with the other research partners, particularly around the areas of translation). Though the makeup of the focus groups was quite different in this project, reflecting the needs of the situated problem, I am grateful to Zachary Piso, Samantha Noll, and Christina Leshko for their help with generating the content analysis method that informed this one. That project will appear in (Piso, Werkheiser, Noll and Leshko Fothcoming).

to share their ideas.

Another purpose motivating the design of the focus group was to begin to work on the second and eighth goals by helping women in the community. As Pini (2002), Wilkinson (1999), and others have argued, focus groups have the potential to be useful as a “feminist research method.” In Pini's work with poor women working as food producers (in the Australian sugar industry), participation by women in these focus groups “Made the invisible to many women visible; it enabled connections to be made between individual and collective experiences; it facilitated challenges to dominant beliefs; and it provided space for discussion and reflexivity about gender issues.” (Pini 2002, p. 339) It is for this reason that she advocates for focus groups as an “Empowering strategy for participation.” (p. 339). Focus groups, then, were an important part of the picture of promoting the women in the community by giving them space and resources to raise their own consciousnesses (Bartky 1977) and begin to work toward an improvement in their situation.

Findings

The conversations in the focus groups were very productive, both in terms of data gathered for academic and activist use as we will discuss in this section, as well as leading to concrete benefits for the women who participated, as we will discuss in the next section. The research team identified three themes emerging across the focus groups. The themes identified were 1) self-respect; 2) identity; and 3) capacities. As we will see, these themes are closely related and often occur near each other in a single speaker's turn. (this was an impression by the research team; a formal study analysis of the proxemics has not been attempted). There are many

potential ways to divide up a complex text like the transcripts of course. The research team settled (at least tentatively; discussions and analysis are still ongoing) on themes which seemed to occur widely, and which occurred in all aspects of the focus group discussion – when discussing their understanding of KRRS, women's contribution to the movement, barriers to women's participation, and strategies to overcome these barriers.

Theme 1: Self-Respect

The least prevalent theme in the discourse was self-respect. One of the principles of KRRS is “self-respect” for its members and for peasant farmers and their communities generally. In this, it is closely in alignment with the principles of food sovereignty (see Appendix). This principle was of particularly resonant to our participants as women. The personal impact of social activism through KRRS for many participants was to build their self-confidence – to step out of their homes (particularly meaningful in a culture where it is difficult for women to step outside the home and interact with strangers), confront society, confront the state and the police, and the various exploitations the agricultural community faces. As one participant said:

In any level with any officer, in any debates, or at any place where my rights collapse, at that place KRRS is there to support my fight. I too must get more people involved in this kind of movement and must go ahead for fighting; this kind of determination and the mental attitude took birth in me only after I put on this shawl. [the shawl she refers to is a green shawl worn by members of KRRS as a symbol of farmer self-respect and dignity, and the fight for food sovereignty].

As part of self-respect, KRRS stresses the importance of speaking up regardless of education, and of mutual aid, which many of the women in our group said they appreciated: “See, if I get into trouble I can save myself. But when I want to support women farmers who have suffered like me, I also must be ready to fight for them.” The goal of self-respect also

includes transformation of class and caste prejudices, such as the daily displays of hospitality and (comparative) wealth which can be such a burden for the poor, particularly the women in a poor household:

After coming into Raita Sangha I started to wear respect-worthy clothes. I have changed in my speech, walk, attitude and behaviour. Also I adapted a simple way of life for example when someone drops in at mealtime I offer whatever food is there at home to that person [rather than preparing a new meal when guests arrive – what a “good woman” of her caste would do]. Raita Sangha taught me to conduct myself in a simple and natural manner. I like to say that the development of my personality happened because of this.

This individual and communal self-respect extended for some participants to a respect for the role of women. Participants would state that women should be proud of the contributions they can make to the organization: “We are not like our men who go out and give speeches. We know how to do concrete things, because we know how to manage a house.” Many participants also listed the ways that women make unique contributions to the movement. One activist tells this story, echoing a point Kishwar made in her (1988) about women on the front lines of protests:

Because the women stood in front, the men were spared. We told the police, ‘Take the women if you want.’ I said, ‘If you think we are wrong, take us and go.’ Let them do what they want to. We went ahead with the determination that we would win. Could men do that? No. Do you know what they would have done to men? They would have beaten them up and locked them up. They would not have released them for a long time.

Participants discussed ways in which they draw on self-respect to motivate other women in the movement to take a more active role, and to help themselves resist familial and public pressures to stay at home. One senior leader interviewed in the first phase of the research offered the following anecdote:

Even now, when we bring a taxi and we want to go to the current office, I still have to go from house to house to call everyone. I have no problem, I do that. I call them, ‘Come

along women, all houses have problems, come.’ By chance if I hesitate then they will say, ‘You should be there in front of us, if not, we won’t go.’ I ask them, ‘When will you go forward? Why do you need me all the time? You also should have self-respect and go ahead like me.’ I say that and make them understand. And prepare them to go by themselves.

Some participants encouraged those who had not yet successfully made this argument to their families:

We must teach the family, parents in law, husband and children that we are doing important work. Sometimes they understand everything and he may not be busy, so he will permit me to go. But even after having understood everything, if he is busy, he will say, “How can you go?” When he puts forward such a question, we cannot walk away [from our commitment to KRRS], by saying “I am going to do what [my husband wishes].” We have to do all his work till ten o’clock, [if we are expected to come by ten thirty] and then tell him that I would go even if he did not give me a ride. We must come away even by rebelling. The situation is not always the same at home. Sometimes the family allows me to go; sometimes they stop me from going. We must have the attitude of managing all these situations.

As an aside, the comment about driving is indicative of women's limited mobility. Living in a farm far from the village center requires transportation to reach meetings, and most women living on farms don't know how to drive. As one of the research partners at KRRS joked, “If we opened a driving school for women and a cooking school for men, we could increase participation of women by 50% in a year.”

When it came to discussions of structural barriers and programs to remove those barriers (rather than “manage” them as in the above quote), self-respect can be an ambivalent concept. On the one hand, it was drawn on by some participants to emphasize personal responsibility rather than structural change, as when one participant said that asking one's family for permission to leave the home and attend meetings was not much of a burden for those with self-respect: “If we have enough courage, determination, and confidence, and if we behave in such a

way that the family will begin to trust us, then nobody will say no. The onus is on the women.” On the other hand, some participants argued for the importance of opportunities for women to build self-respect, such as leadership training and women-only spaces to discuss issues and help one-another, and the creation of more opportunities for women to exercise that self-respect in positions of authority within the group. In fact these discussions led to concrete actions, as will be described in the Early Effects section below.

Theme 2: Identity

A slightly more common theme, closely related to the first, was identity. Specifically, the identity many women had for themselves internally and imposed by society of “pativrata” (roughly, the Hindu virtue of excellence as a wife) on the one hand, and the identity of “activist” on the other, which was often spoken of by referring to the green KRRS shawl. These two identities were balanced differently by different women in the focus groups. As the wife of one senior KRRS political leader said approvingly of “pativrata” motivating participation in KRRS, “Her part is there in his fights. When he accepts his fight that means it is her fight too.” Some women believe that domestic work is the most advantageous way for them to contribute to the movement as men have the comparative advantage in the public sphere. Those participants often said that women “opt out” of public work because men are more suited for it. One participant described her and other women's support this way:

Since the Raitha Sangha is good in our area, if the men call us out, we do go and participate. When they go to other towns we give them food and other help from here. We do so much that even after they reach their destination, our homes won't yet be tidied up because of all the cooking. By the time we clean up the utensils and other things, it would be evening... by which time they would have returned and we start again to prepare food for them. We have to arrange beds for them and ask about the

program: how it went, who said what, how the speaker should have said such and such a thing... sometimes they would have no time to explain as they would want to rest and we read about it only in the papers the next day or we learn about it when we speak to someone the next day.

The same woman said later, “I cannot be involved everyday from morning till evening. And also, we [women] will not get as much respect as he gets outside in the society [as an activist]. That is why it is right that we participate in the major movements and that we dedicate the remaining time to the family.”

For those wanting to take a direct role in the movement, the balancing act between the responsibilities and self-concept involved in the identities became more obviously a strain, with participants saying things like, “Outside, people recognize it [the shawl]. Officials respond to the green shawl to get work done. And inside the home, then comes the balancing act between them [priorities].” Or as another participant said, “Our men do not support us in the same way that we support them. Because our responsibilities are more in the family. They will not be able to manage all those but we can. I think it is difficult for them to handle those. I have to think of all that. But I think that I have to overcome all that and get involved.”

Many participants stressed the idea of some women being “lucky” to have “good husbands” who can make it possible for their wives to participate. In one sense this was directly true in that nearly every married, non-widowed participant in the focus group said that she received permission from her husband to participate in KRRS generally and to attend specific events. This comes out of the identity of the husband as the head of the household and the wife as subservient, as many of the women admitted. Less obviously, good husbands were ones that could “manage” when women leave the home for activism, and will “cooperate” (two very

common terms used when discussing good husbands). This is illustrated in the following speaker turns:

W1: We do not need freedom, we need cooperation. When the men go away for two days, we manage everything at home. In the same way if even they manage when we are not there, then, only then, it is possible [for women to participate]. If by chance you are away for two days and when you return if there is a fight, then the next time you will not feel like coming at all. It is only possible when they cooperate.

W2: Husbands could cooperate for their wives to spend more time for the organization if they [the husbands] so wish. Man can take care of the land and the woman can take care of the family. But some men could say, 'What is this to you? I am the head of the family, and so I will go out. You stay and take care of the household, you take care of the land and the workers.' He could put the responsibility on the woman and go away. With cooperation the couple could reduce the responsibility and get involved in the organization.

W3: All this is good to talk and listen. But tough to live through.

Neither the word “manage” nor “cooperate” means that husbands will share the domestic workload, but that they will allow their wives to reduce the load, either permanently (e.g. by hiring more servants) or temporarily (e.g. letting her make food in advance of a KRRS event). It was often mentioned that this sort of “cooperation” and “management” that women do may not be visible to the men.

There were some opinions offered in the focus groups about how to manage the domestic work required by *pativrata* and the requirements of activism. One strategy that came up frequently was that women activists should practice time management. Many participants described making arrangements so their husbands could “manage” at home. Some participants mentioned getting up at 3 or 4 in the morning to do their domestic work before leaving for any organization work. The timings of KRRS events are often inconvenient for women, interrupting their routine, particularly if they have young children. One suggestion was women-focused

meetings could be held at times convenient for women. But more common was the suggestion that women make more time, by getting up earlier or going to bed later, to get ahead on their housework tasks. Need for time management and planning also makes it difficult for women to join programs at last-minute notice, a common characteristic of social movements, and so many wished for earlier decisions and planning for actions. A common conversation that emerged in this debate was the role that women play in other women's entrapment, following Ambedkar's theory of the "graded inequality" that maintained the caste system (see Chowbe 2012). Identities such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law or eldest-son's-wife/younger-son's-wife can quickly become an exploitative relationship as the former exploits the latter.

For some participants, the solution lay instead in transforming women's identity by participating in the movement. As the Women's Wing President said in an interview from the first phase of research, "Now when I leave home and come away to do KRRS work, I feel that there are tasks which are as important as replanting the saplings." One alternative identity to *patrivata* that could emerge from activism in the food sovereignty movement, which several participants mentioned, was thinking of themselves as farmers (for an interesting discussion of the tensions in holding the identity of "woman" and "peasant" in India, see Roy and Borowiak 2003). "Farmer" as a term actually cannot apply to women in Kannada, the dominant language of KRRS members, making it an identity well respected in village life, but not one the women had identified with themselves before (even our translators had difficulties with these parts of the conversations due to this language issue). As one participant said, "See, if a farmer [men] sows seeds then if the farmer [women] do not go and work there, there would not be any harvest. There will be as much weed as the crop. Farmers [women] remove those weeds. Women are very

significant. It is the same in the movement.” Many of the participants were hopeful that this shift in identity could be brought to the wider society:

If a woman gets educated in the movement, then she will bring the household along with her. She will fulfill her children’s thirst for awareness. She will convey the Raitha Sangha ideology to them. When she explains at her house, it spreads to her family to her village and then it will go to the district. Then the farmers of the whole state will accept the concepts of Raitha Sangha and they will surge forward. When more importance is given to the involvement of women’s participation, our message and movement will spread fast (Activist from Mandya District).

Currently, as participants discussed at length, shame can come from the wider society for women’s involvement in KRRS (saying that people will ask, e.g. “Doesn’t she have anything better to do?” “Is KRRS such an organization that it is dependent on women to get work done?” “Don’t you care about your family and domestic work?” etc.). A public conversation could help challenge these assumptions and educate the wider community. One participant discussed directly both the problems faced by women in KRRS from the larger society, even if they have support at home to participate, and the necessity of changing the role of women in the eyes of their wider community:

Today even if our families support us, our society will pull us down. If a woman is bold and she protests standing in front of an officer, then even the neighbors are trying to discourage her. They say, ‘She doesn’t have in-laws and the husband does not care. She goes out and about.’ They are unaware of where I am going. They do not know that they are blind but I am informed and I am going to protest. To make them understand, we must bring them also with us. If we want to know what we are doing, we must at least bring two of them with us.

It was also discussed that within the movement it was important for men to view women in their identity as activists and possible leaders. That conversation, like the one on self-respect, led to concrete plans and actions, discussed in the Early Effect section below.

Theme 3: Capacities

The most common theme that emerged in the conversation was what we called “capacities.” Some of these were capacities for cooperation on self-determined projects within the activist community of KRRS. Very poor farmers in the groups particularly discussed how KRRS as an organization has supported them to escape poverty, for example by securing loans, mutual aid among members, and other forms of mutual aid and solidarity. KRRS also gives the opportunity for local marketing through collectivization/economies of scale, a prospect which attracted many of the participants initially. These self-determined projects are built outside of the larger financial institutions in India, and are parallel to other KRRS projects to resist and change those larger institutions.

Another benefit of participating in KRRS which often arose in the focus groups was what can be referred to as epistemic capacities. For many of the women in the focus groups, participating in KRRS meant demystifying the workings of the local and national government and financial systems. KRRS training includes learning how to question officials, how to require that they cite the law or policy requiring a given action, demanding names of superiors to complain to, and other empowerment through knowledge. In addition to this initial training, KRRS members build capacity to share knowledge and learn together as a community when confronted with new situations. This moves from the local up to larger scales. As one participant said: “When we start to solve small problems in the villages then it will be possible for us to tackle bigger issues. When we do not understand the small problems then we will not be able to understand the bigger issues.”

Many participants gave accounts of their triumphs for themselves and their community members using knowledge and skills gained through participating in KRRS. Participants stressed the value of learning the strategies KRRS employs, such as direct action against offenders' property, setting up local monitoring committees, collecting fines, applying the law, and so on. One woman, a president of her local KRRS who was interviewed non-anonymously in the first phase of the research, described an incident where the police were trying to threaten their community's land rights. This quote shows how the themes identified by the researchers often co-occur, as she describes the capacity of cooperation and education giving her the courage and self-respect to stand up to government officials, and how this identity of a courageous actor should be explained and carried over into her domestic identity:

The police said, 'This is our land.' 'What law are you talking about?' [we asked]. They did not say any law or rule. 'We are the law,' they said. They asked me to climb into the jeep. I climbed inside. They made another young man to sit there. I told him, 'Sir, if you take me, do you know how many people will come for me? Do you know what they would do to your police station?' ... He apologized and asked me to get down.

I told him, 'These 100 acres of land are not given by you. The Tahasildar is giving each a piece of land. Let me see what you will do after taking me to the station.' Tahasildar himself apologized. And I got down. Now we are sharing the land. Let him come. Let him work on the land, like how we work on the land. That is what we are demanding. We have worked here as we grew up. We are strong. We have not done any cheating. We must find a way to explain all this at our homes.

The narrator is the President of her local KRRS and comes from a much poorer and less well educated background than many of the other women in leadership positions in the organization. She stressed that she would not have known what to do in that situation but for what she learned as a member of KRRS. Many participants also mentioned the ways in which involvement in KRRS gives people exposure to other cultures, communities, castes, and lifestyles, and gives mobility into other parts of India which they might not otherwise have.

Capacities were also discussed in conversations about growing KRRS by connecting with women not in the movement on issues that had resonance with many women in rural villages. participants mentioned issues that affect women disproportionately, particularly social issues like gambling and alcohol, suggesting that the movement against illegal sale of alcohol may be an opportunity for cross-sector mobilization of women, with women from indigenous, dalit, pastoralist, and urban movements all being affected by alcohol abuse. This is a movement seen across rural India by different communities of women, not just farmer women (see Akerkar 1995 for a discussion of the divisions within the “women's movement” in India along ideological and class lines). As one woman from Shimoga stated, “How many women have lost how much because of this drinking? To tell you the truth because their men drink, even [women] have started drinking. We have seen in many places. Today the women of Raitha Sangha should fight this.” When discussing projects to build cooperative capacity with other women, issues such as education of girl children, popularizing simple weddings, domestic dispute resolution, demystifying government services for women were also all suggested by participants, though at lower rates. Many participants suggested that those issues could be addressed in ways which built capacities for cooperation with women in other movements on more issues in the future.

Another conversation where capacities often emerged was in discussions about how women could either overcome or remove barriers to their participation in the movement. It was often suggested that the way to do this was to build capacities among women. An example of overcoming barriers through building women's infra-political capacities was the possibility of women supporting one-another by sharing domestic labor, so that one woman from the group at least could attend the meeting, participate, and tell the others what had happened. When this

came up as a strategy in focus groups, it was quite contentious. Some women thought it would be a way to work in solidarity and mutual aid (a principle, like self-respect, of KRRS), but others objected. They complained that given how overwhelming domestic work is, taking on another woman's tasks (even if it meant not working at all some other day) might be literally impossible. There were also complaints that members of their household (parents and parents-in-law, husband, children, etc.) might object to the suggestion – the idea that a husband might not like their neighbor's cooking, or that family members could not adjust to the timing of another household, occurred in several different focus groups, even those with participants from the more militant districts of KRRS. In response to these objections, senior leaders spoke that their participation in the 1980s would have been impossible without the contribution of family and neighbor-women lightening their load. At that time, other women took care of the activists' small children, made food for her husband, and did her domestic work. They said that when necessary, it was possible at the time for two families to have a mutual understanding and help each other. Such senior activists also promised that if the younger women in their families wanted to get involved, they would offer to take on more responsibilities for them (why there was more mutual aid between women in the past in KRRS is unknown; the senior members of the movement who were interviewed did not know either, but one suggestion was that modern culture and technology had made households even in quite rural villages more self-sufficient, and thus cooperation between neighbors was less common).

An example of capacity building among women to politically remove barriers was a call to organize within the Women's Wing to explain the barriers they faced to men who might not understand them, and to organize to get them changed. This will be discussed more in the next

section, but it is worth highlighting one proposal which itself called for increased capacities within the organization. KRRS activities can be a significant drain on a family's finances, in terms of money flowing to social work and reduced income over many years. A man does not usually have to make a full report to his wife about his finances. But in the case of many women in the focus groups, they have to ask their husbands for funds to buy bus tickets to mobilizations, or the phone credit to organize calls, and he decides how much is needed (this is part of the permission a wife must obtain to participate discussed in the “identity” theme above). Confronting this can be intimidating for women, and there were several suggestions in the focus groups that KRRS change the way that it understands the “self-sponsorship” principle used for men, so that a general fund could be created to increase capacities to bring more women, the poor, and youths to events.

Early Effects

Because this project has the goals of aiding the women who participated in it and the organizations partnered in the project, in addition to learning about the situation, it is worth discussing what practical, concrete benefits have emerged from the work thus far.¹² One benefit has been to Via. The research partners in Via have presented on this work at their International Coordinating Committee Meeting in 2014 in Portugal. The committee and other attendees were very interested in the projects and its initial findings, and it informed the conversation at the conference on the situation of women in the movement. Via is now considering expanding the project to other regions, either being conducted by them or making the resources to hold these focus groups available to all local member groups (personal correspondence).

¹² Given all the work this research is doing in this dissertation, and the presentations I have made about this project to academic conferences, the benefits to my own work cannot be overstated.

As mentioned earlier, KRRS had one all-women's meeting in 1987, shortly after the Women's Wing being founded, but none since. This despite the fact that KRRS is now affiliated with Via, which has regular international all-women's meetings, and women's-only parts of general international meetings. As a result of the focus groups, both in terms of organizing the groups in the first place, which required articulating our reasons and convincing women to participate, and as a result of energy and ideas by the participants coming out of the groups, many of the study participants began advocating for another women's meeting. This allowed Via to support those women (rather than demanding KRRS have a women's-only meeting without any local call or support for such an event), and on January 24 and 25, 2015, KRRS had its first women's meeting in decades. More than 200 women came from 8 districts of Karnataka for two days to discuss and learn about the realities of women farmers. It was the first step in building a more functional Women's Wing of KRRS beyond the isolated leadership positions held by women. Each district made an action plan about issues they would like to tackle for women. The meeting was not transcribed, though the participants may draft a statement in the future, perhaps with help from Via and from me. The following descriptions of discussions emerging from the meeting, then, comes from reports by Via and KRRS leadership partners in our project. They are valuable for this dissertation as an example of a grass-roots discussion about building up a community (KRRS) by building up a marginalized sub-group within that community (women).

Increasing Women's Presence in KRRS

From their own experiences, women at the meeting suggested and debated strategies for getting more women to participate in KRRS. A commonly repeated refrain was that "If women are involved, more women will come." This was said to be particularly true if women were

visibly in leadership positions, but it was also suggested that women putting themselves out to speak in public if they were not leaders might inspire other women to women think “she is the lone woman, go keep her company.” This echoed what one of the senior members of KRRS interviewed in the first phase of the research said: “For women, not one of the benefits will simply come. If we just sit at home, they will tell us to keep sitting at home.” Another strategy was to organize and recruit from among each woman's neighbors in their villages. The meeting participants articulated that it is key that the organization goes into villages, reaching families regardless of class or caste. It was suggested that once women get aware of methods for resolving their problems, they will want to join, because, they said, women understand local issues better than men do. Along with this was a call to involve women of all ages, as often older women are most effective in liberating younger women from their homes. It was repeatedly stressed that through this process, women should not become enemies of other women.

Participation or Self-Determined, Autonomous Projects

The debate on self-determination for women by increasing the autonomy and effectiveness of the Women’s Wing versus participating in the leadership committees was a tension at the meeting. Some women wanted to develop their own, autonomous groups to pursue their own projects within KRRS at every level, while others argued for instituting participatory justice without building new models (recall the conversation in chapters one and two of this dissertation about these different strategies and the justice claims underlying them). The senior leaders argued that women should be involved in the KRRS general leadership directly, not through an autonomous women’s committee: “Raitha Sangha is like a family and should not be split.” However, they also said, that “if the men won’t go forward, we will go alone,” and that

women should form women's collectives. Other women said that nothing is lost if men are not there, but both men and women must fight together. Those supporting participation rather than self-determination stressed the need for "men's strength."

Junior leaders seemed more likely to support the idea of a self-determined, autonomous organization, for fundraising, and committees to manage funds. There was a call to make the Women's Wing more autonomous and less hierarchical, with more of a decentralized leadership model, but also with better communication and networking withing the Wing. Structurally, it was suggested that there could be women's committees at every level, and women should be called out in great numbers to participate. Financially, many said that funds should be managed properly by the women in the Wing, rather than the (male dominated) state leadership committee. Independent fundraising was scene by some as a good direction for the Wing, while others saw it as a daunting prospect. A big question in KRRS has been mismanagement of funds over the years, so many were suspicious of men appropriating any funds they raised if the Women's Wing didn't have financial independence within the movement. If the Women's Wing had self-determination in the movement, it was suggested, they could also have different timing to accommodate women and could work on women-specific issues. Some women also mentioned that men and women think differently, and therefore there should be a separate space.

Discussion

This research project has been mutually beneficial thus far for all parties involved. By engaging in conversations with one-another in women's-only spaces, the participants in the focus group were able to build a sense of themselves as a group, and build epistemic capacities for that

group. This allowed them to better understand their own situation as a woman, the situation for women more generally within the movement, and share and improve these understandings with others in the group. For many of the women in the focus groups, this was the first time they had discussed their home life and its challenges with women not in their family. Seeing the similarities with other women's struggles, and being asked to connect it to structural issues and ways that KRRS could be reformed allowed for a consciousness-raising experience for many in the group, which was the hope when initially choosing to create a focus group methodology as a feminist method (Pini 2002; Wilkinson 1999). These capacities, including trust and communication, built among the participants, has allowed the women in KRRS to begin building self-determination, most notably in the form of the self-determined women's meeting. At the same time, the data which emerged from this research is valuable for Via and KRRS to better understand the situation and think about ways to ameliorate it, most notably by supporting women's self-determined projects, and the data and the research methods can be applied by Via in other, wider contexts if they so desire.

For the purposes of this dissertation, this project provides a useful case study to ground some of the points in the previous chapters. The first is that even quite radical communities of activists, with explicit commitments to justice and flourishing for all its members, can fall prey to perpetuating structural marginalization and oppression of sub-groups within the community. This study focused on women, but given that there appeared to be a high correlation between women being able to negotiate both activism and the duties of home with their having privileges such as class, education, and caste, it is likely that similar injustices occur within KRRS along those lines as well. The second is that, as was argued in previous chapters, increasing the

representation of marginalized sub-groups within a community is good both for members of the sub-group and for the overall community itself. The participants in the focus groups discussed many ways in which even their limited participation was quite useful to the movement, and their energy and ideas in reforming KRRS (for example, by allowing needs-based support to participate rather than have everyone pay their own way) would strengthen the organization, as would their perspectives if more women were in leadership roles.

The third illustration this case provides is that an effective way for a group of people to enact change which promotes themselves as individuals and as a group is to build capacities, particularly epistemic capacities, to act *as* a group. The women in the focus groups discussed and developed infrapolitical networks of support, and developed networks for pushing for more public change within the organization. This was only possible when they conceived of themselves as a group – it would be impossible to argue for pushing for an all-women's meeting if you did not acknowledge that women as a group were being marginalized. It is also interesting that discussions of the difference between justice within and justice to pursue projects outside of the current institution, and which should be preferred when the “current institution” was a radical justice movement, was an important part of these conversations. Finally, this project serves as an illustration of how marginalized groups (Via, KRRS) and sub-groups (women within each) can work with external experts (me) in ways which are mutually beneficial, increase the capacities of the communities, and lay the groundwork for future independent projects, future collaborations, and future solidarity.

Conclusion

This dissertation seeks to address an important but underexamined aspect of justice for communities in the context of environmental justice and food sovereignty. Though environmental justice and food sovereignty activists often call for the development of community self-determination to pursue projects, it is not obvious the extent to which developing epistemic self-determination for communities is a requirement of justice that is morally binding on the social institutions and policies of the larger society or societies in which the community dwells, or what such development would look like. Given that many of these self-determined projects are for services which for other, more privileged communities are effectively provided by the state, it might be possible to think that to the extent that self-determination justice claims land, it is only as an amelioration of their marginalized status. However, this dissertation has shown that even in an ideally functioning society, community epistemic capacities and the community self-determination they enable, are still things which communities ought to want and have a claim to.

The above reflects the different possible audiences for this dissertation's message. For policy makers, this dissertation argued that on both practical and justice-based grounds, the development of capacities and self-determination for communities ought to be pursued when possible. It also provided a means of using that development as a metric for evaluating policies, and discussed ways in which communities could be meaningfully interacted with in democratic decision-making even in the absence of robust capacities on their part to do so. For activists and community organizers, this dissertation argued that community epistemic capacities and self-determination are necessary parts of resistance to and engagement with larger social institutions,

particularly in contexts of marginalization or oppression. It also provided grounds on which to make claims upon social institutions to facilitate the development of community epistemic capacities and self-determination, and started the conversation of how to develop those capacities and self-determination in the absence of outside support.

For academics, this dissertation argued that we have a duty when engaging with communities, particularly marginalized or oppressed communities, to do so in ways which account for a lack of epistemic capacities, and increase those capacities in the community, and help develop the community's epistemic self-determination. There is a useful role for academics to play in such a process, but it is a role which calls for humility and transparency with the communities as you explain the research sufficiently to render yourself more-or-less obsolete in conducting it in the future. The dissertation also provides a new understanding of community epistemic capacities and epistemic self-determination, ways of understanding and analyzing them, and arguments as to their importance. The environmental justice and food sovereignty discourses enables this dissertation to show that community epistemic capacities and community epistemic self-determination are currently underappreciated and underexamined in academic discourses about justice, but they are vital to the (both internally and externally) just functioning of communities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Principles of Environmental Justice (1991)

WE THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of environmental justice

7. environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
8. environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
9. environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
10. environmental justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
11. environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
12. environmental justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
13. environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
14. environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
15. environmental justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
16. environmental justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
17. environmental justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

18. environmental justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.
19. environmental justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
20. environmental justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
21. environmental justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
22. environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
23. environmental justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

Adopted today, October 27, 1991, in Washington, D.C.

AT NYÉLÉNI 2007, we deepened our collective understanding of food sovereignty which:

3. **Focuses on Food for People:** food sovereignty puts the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities, including those who are hungry, under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalised, at the centre of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies; and rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity or component for international agri-business.
4. **Values Food Providers:** food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programmes that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.
5. **Localises Food Systems:** food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together; puts providers and consumers at the centre of decision-making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.
6. **Puts Control Locally:** food sovereignty places control over territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations on local food providers and respects their rights. They can use and share them in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity; it recognizes that local territories often cross geopolitical borders and ensures the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories; it promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors that helps resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities; and rejects the privatisation of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes.
7. **Builds Knowledge and Skills:** food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organisations that conserve, develop and manage localised food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations; and rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g. genetic engineering.
8. **Works with Nature:** food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agroecological production and harvesting methods that maximise the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change; it seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialised production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

Appendix 3: Nussbaum's List of Central Capabilities (2011)

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. *Bodily health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. *Bodily integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. *Senses, imagination, and thought*. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.
5. *Emotions*. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)
6. *Practical reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)
7. *Affiliation*. (A) Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.) (B) Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.
8. *Other Species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. *Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. *Control over one's environment*. (A) *Political*. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. (b) *Material*. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

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