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The Impact of Food Justice Advocates in Creating and Influencing Public Policy

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by

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Dedication

Dedicated to my family. My Nana, who cultivated my curiosity and creativity. My Gramps, who demonstrated the value of diligence and craftmanship. My Mom, who taught me adventure, perseverance, and humor. My children Mark, Michael, Joseph, Daniel, Mariah, & James who give me purpose and playfulness. Most of all, Jennifer, my wife, partner, best friend, soulmate, keel, rudder, and north star, who provides me with connection, passion, and love.

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Abstract

This case study explored the impact that food justice advocates had on creating and implementing public policy to provide access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food for the residents of New Haven, Connecticut. The problem the case study explored is in 2020 food insecurity affected 22% of the residents of New Haven, more than twice the national average. This qualitative case study used grounded theory to analyze the experiences of 31 food justice advocates who were members of a coalition of researchers, food service providers, non-profit agencies, grassroots organizations, and residents tasked with improving the city's emergency food system. The coalition, The Food Access Working Group (FAWG), valued the participation and contributions of Single mothers, Black, Hispanic, and Latino members with lived experience of food insecurity; members whose demographics were affected by food insecurity at rates above 30%. Through thematic analysis, the core category of relationships emerged along with the sub-categories of diversity, lived experience, & conflict. These categories suggested a theory that coalitions can positively affect public policy by forming strong relationships and connections between diverse groups of individuals, institutions, and organizations with similar broad goals who work together to meet those goals despite differences in approaches and philosophical beliefs, and by incorporating lived experience into the framework of their advocacy efforts. The implications of the case study are coalitions that manage interpersonal and intergroup conflict can foster creativity and respond quickly and efficiently to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Concerns with the United States' food system, including universal access to adequate and healthy food, the availability of culturally appropriate food, increasing numbers of overweight and obese children and adults, frequent food safety incidents, and the effect of industrialized agricultural practices on the economy and the environment, have led to the rise of a nationwide food movement. The food movement is comprised of organizations and activists advocating for a variety of issues, including food security, sustainable agriculture, food justice, food sovereignty, local food, and slow food (McInnes et al., 2017). In response to these concerns, the City of New Haven created the New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC) in 2005. Subsequently, NHFPC formed the Food Access Working Group (FAWG), a collaborative of food service providers, community groups, residents, and city officials charged with improving New Haven's food system and its emergency food system network (New Haven Food Policy Council, 2015).

Researching the advocacy efforts of FAWG provided an opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of a wide range of interventions and theories that have been suggested in the growing body of research on food movements in the U.S. Hoefer (2005) proffered that a coalition's influence is greater than the sum of any single group's efforts. Several research studies have concluded that combining the reformist strategy of the food justice movement with the radical approach of food sovereignty activists may result in greater potential for transformation of the food system (Clendenning et al., 2016; Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011; McInnes et al., 2017). Teles and Schmitt (2011) determined that "successful advocacy projects must simultaneously pursue opportunities at the local, state, and federal level, as well as across governmental institutions" (p.31). Freudenberg

et al. (2011) proffered that the inclusion of public health officials in advocacy efforts can be beneficial in developing and shaping public policy. The goal of many food-movement organizations and coalitions is to influence public policy. FAWG is a quasi-governmental body with the potential to shape policy at the local level and influence policy at the state and federal levels. The current body of literature on the food movement does not include a study of a food advocacy coalition that incorporates all the characteristics suggested in the literature for an effective advocacy strategy—characteristics FAWG possesses. This dissertation is an attempt to formulate new theories regarding the effectiveness of coalitions in influencing public policy toward food insecurity.

Significance

This research provides an effective advocacy model or theory, or both, for food system reform and transformation, which in turn may lead to a more sustainable, healthy, and just food system for all persons. The research offers insights into the causes of food insecurity, how families cope with food insecurity, and the barriers families face in obtaining adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2014).

Background

Lack of adequate food has both immediate and long-lasting consequences across all age groups. Many studies have demonstrated that children ages 6–11 living in food-insecure circumstances have higher incidences of inappropriate behavior, lower academic performance, and their brain development and function were negatively affected (Alaimo et al., 2001; Hobbs & King, 2018; Howard, 2011; Murphy et al., 1998). McLaughlin et al. (2012) showed that 11- to 17-year-old adolescents in the same cohort have “increased odds of past-year mood, anxiety, behavior, and substance disorders” (p. 1300). McIntyre et al. (2013) revealed hunger during childhood is a strong predictor of depression and

suicidal thoughts. Garg et al. (2015) research suggested maternal depression is an independent risk factor for household food insecurity in low-income families with young children (p. 309). Gregory and Coleman-Jensen (2017) found a strong correlation between food insecurity and the prevalence of 10 common chronic diseases affecting adults.

Problem Statement

Food advocates in New Haven, Connecticut, struggle to provide access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food for those citizens who are food insecure. Food insecurity affected 10.5 of US households in 2020. Single-parent households with children are most likely to experience food insecurity: 27.7% of single mother households and 16.3% of single-father households. Black and Hispanic households also have higher incidences of food insecurity at 21.7% and 17.2%, respectively (Coleman-Jensen, 2020). Food insecurity in Connecticut, at 11.8%, is slightly above the national average. However, 22% of the residents of New Haven are food insecure, affecting 25% of the city's children (Santilli & O'Connor Duffany, 2018). Food insecurity affects 31.2% of New Haven's Hispanic and Latino residents and 35.2% of its Black residents, more than double the national average (Gundersen et al., 2021).

New Haven, Connecticut

To understand the causes of hunger and food insecurity in New Haven, it is necessary to understand the context of the local food system. Local food systems are situated and influenced by state, regional, national, and global food systems. New Haven's local food system is shaped by the policies and economics of the state of

Connecticut, neighboring states in New England, and the co-members of its tri-state area, New York and New Jersey. Allen (2010) suggested that local food systems are rooted in historical and cultural practices as well. Allen recognized that such practices create "...differences in wealth, power and privilege [that] exist both among and within localities" (p. 296). In New Haven, the proximity of a prestigious Ivy League university to food banks, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and impoverished neighborhoods is an attestation to these differences.

The history and culture of New Haven are conterminous with the history and culture of Yale University. Established by an act of Connecticut's General Assembly in 1701, the collegiate school of Yale operated first from the town of Killingworth, then Saybrook, before establishing its current location in New Haven, in 1716. The following year, Yale adopted its name from a wealthy benefactor, Elihu Yale, the step-grandson of New Haven's co-founder, Theophilus Eaton. Among Yale's contributions to agriculture is the creation of the first professorship in agriculture and applied chemistry in 1847 (Schiff, n.d.).

As of 2021, Yale was New Haven's primary employer, with 14,000 employees. With an endowment of over $42.3 billion and property holdings of $3 billion, the university contributes $13 million to the city and an additional $5 million for property tax on its commercial properties. Yale has a multitude of programs and initiatives that boost the local economy and benefit the citizens of New Haven, including a program that helped more than 1,000 residents purchase homes (Ferreira, 2020; Yale endowment, 2021; Yang, 2016). Despite Yale's contributions, its relationship with the city and its residents has ranged from tenuous to rancorous.

Over a quarter of the city's residents live in poverty, with food insecurity afflicting 50% of the residents in some neighborhoods, ranking among the nation's most impoverished populations. New Haven has a property crime rate above the national average and is the second most dangerous place to live in the state (How Safe, 2020; Regulski, 2022). Shawn Woods, Connecticut's 83rd State Treasurer, expressed, "Yale, which is a major player in New Haven and in our state, offers a lot of value, but in New Haven, it also represents inequality and the gaps in society from the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'" (Ferreira, 2020). During his election campaign, nominee Justin Elicker raised concerns about Yale's reclassification of property from commercial to academic, resulting in a loss of $3 million in tax revenue. The loss was offset by an increase of $2.5 million in Yale's voluntary contributions the following year, which resulted in a yearly net loss (Davila IV, 2019). Post-election, Mayor Elicker joined Reverend Scott Marks, the activist and founder of New Haven Rising, in calling for Yale to contribute more to the city, to make up for the $146 million they do not pay in property taxes. Sarah Miller, Elicker's transition team co-chair, remarked,

> $146 million a year could provide New Haveners with enough teachers to reduce all class sizes by half; build 887 more units of affordable housing; put 12,000 little kids into critically needed quality day care; reduce the mill rate from 42 to 27; and fix one million potholes. (Appel, 2019)

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, grounded-research, case study is to explore the experiences of food justice advocates and to understand the challenges and successes they encounter in attempting to provide access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food to the citizens of New Haven.

Research Questions

My dissertation explored two questions. Firstly, how do food justice advocates impact food security? Secondly, why do food justice advocates impact food security? The first question seeks to reveal interventions that have had, or are having, an impact on food security in New Haven neighborhoods. Asking *how* interventions have an impact shifts the focus from why there is a problem to the examination of "factors that promote positive change in communities and foster community resilience" (Fulbright-Anderson & Auspos, 2006). The second question explores why these interventions have an impact. Although there is a strong correlation between poverty and a lack of food security (food insecurity), research suggests that other factors cause food insecurity, some of which are not fully understood (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2014). By asking why, I developed a better understanding of the factors that cause food insecurity as well as the interventions that can lead to food security. Asking the question why also revealed contextual differences between successful interventions in New Haven and similar successful and unsuccessful interventions practiced by other research participants.

Definitions

Alternative Food Movement. Those who have advocated for more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, fairer food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the United States (Slocum, 2006).

Citizenship. The concept of the citizenship framework as full participation in society was developed as an outreach approach to persons with mental illness and homelessness and subsequently included addressing persons with substance abuse issues. Citizenship is a measure of the strength of people's connections to relationships, rights, responsibilities, roles, and resources, in addition to a sense of belonging in one's community and society, available to people through public and social institutions and the informal, "associational" life of neighborhoods and local communities. This framework draws on social science theories of citizenship that emphasize civic participation as a measure of one's involvement in society and the need to create participation opportunities for members of marginalized groups. It also draws on social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of social networks in enhancing people's participation in society (Rowe, 2014; Rowe et al., 2007).

Culturally Appropriate. Food that corresponds to individual and collective consumer desirability, demand, and preferences (Nestle, 2014).

Food Insecurity. Lack of access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food.

Food Justice. A movement that works to build and support strong and sustainable local food systems and ensure equal access to fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant, ethically produced food. Pertinent concerns of the food justice movement are the inequalities and barriers to access, the environmental consequences of industrial food production, and the widespread consequences of increasing corporate monopoly over food markets (Galli

Robertson & Clift, 2017). The practice of identifying and activating community-based economic solutions to increase racial equity and self-determination in food systems (CT Community for Racial Equity, n.d.).

Food Security. Access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food.

Food Sovereignty. The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their food and agriculture systems (Nyéléni, 2007).

Acronyms

CAANH. Community Action Agency of New Haven

CABHN. Connecticut Association of Basic Human Needs

CARE. Community Alliance for Research and Engagement

CCC. Citizens Community Collaborative

CCOF. California Certified Organic Farmers

CDC. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CFAN. Coordinated Food Access Network

CMHC. Community Mental Health Center

CNI. Community Nutrition Institute

CSFP. Commodity Supplemental Food Program

CTCORE. Connecticut Community Organizing for Racial Equity – Organize Now!

DESK. Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen

DMHAS. Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

FACE. Focus, Act, Connect Every-day

FAO. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAWG. Food Access Working Group

FFCRA. Families First Coronavirus Response Act

FQHC. Federally Qualified Health Center

FRAC. Food Research Action Center

IGO. An intergovernmental organization

IMF. International Monetary Fund

NHFPC. New Haven Food Policy Council

NICE. New Haven Inner City Enrichment Center

NRDC. Natural Resources Defense Council

PRCH. The Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health

REACH. Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health

RFA. Request For Application

SNAP. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SWAP. Supporting Wellness at Pantries

USDA. United States Department of Agriculture

UW. United Way of Greater New Haven

WIPO. World Intellectual Property Organization

WTH. Witnesses to Hunger

WTO. World Trade Organization

Assumptions

There are multiple definitions of food security and multiple methodologies to assess a household's food security status (Burchi & De Muro, 2016; Food and Agriculture Organization, n.d.; Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, 2003). This dissertation made the following assumptions based on the preceding statement:

The dissertation refers to the definition of food security and food insecurity as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (United States Department of Agriculture, n.d.). The USDA's lengthy and complex definition of food insecurity includes the language, "reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet." Numerous researchers redefine the USDA's definition of food security to as "access to adequate and healthy food." This dissertation assumes the term "adequate" does not fully convey the meaning of the term "desirability." The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) definition of food security used the term "food preferences" to define food security as a condition that relates to different cultural practices, as well as individual perceptions and preferences in food consumption (Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, 2003). Alkon and Norgaard (2009) used the term "culturally appropriate" to define food security. This dissertation assumes the term "culturally appropriate" best conveys the meaning of "desirability" and "food preference," and recognizes the cultural significance of desirability and preference. Such an assumption is necessary to provide a clear and concise definition of food security and food insecurity equivalent to the USDA's definitions and to recognize the significance of access to culturally appropriate food.

Employing specific methodologies to determine or verify a household's or individual's food security is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I assume a household

or individual is food secure or insecure if 1) they identify as food secure or insecure or 2) an agent or agency has determined the household or individual is food secure or insecure. If the validity of the data presented in this dissertation relied on the household or individual's food security status, the researcher has validated the food security status with methodology recognized by the USDA. These assumptions are necessary to ensure that the dissertation maintained a limited and manageable scope.

Scope and Delimitations

This dissertation addressed the barriers that food advocates confront and overcome while advocating for food security and providing food access to people who are food insecure. The participants in my research included members of organizations that were part of the New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC) Food Access Working Group (FAWG). The FAWG narrative was explored through the collective stories of the group's members. Their diverse perspectives on food advocacy are grounded in academia, social services, grassroots activism, and lived experience. I chose to focus on FAWG because of their specific emphasis on providing food access to community members who are food insecure. The FAWG's inquiry into food security was consistent with my research questions as FAWG endeavored to understand why all people did not have access to adequate, nutritious food and why policymakers view food as a privilege rather than as a basic human right.

The individuals and organizations that comprised FAWG advocated for other social issues including housing, clothing, mental health, addiction, and public health. While such issues may directly or indirectly affect food access or food security, they are beyond the scope of FAWG's mission to provide food access; therefore, these issues are

considered in my dissertation only as they apply to their effect on food access and food insecurity.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that informed my research was based on neoliberalism and the citizenship framework. Neoliberalism is a political and economic theory promoting public policy measures based on the deregulation of the market, the liberalization of global trade and industry, and the privatization of government-controlled interests (Steger & Roy, 2021). Deregulation and privatization have led to the rise of non-profit organizations taking on the role of providing food to marginalized groups that are food insecure. The government, in turn, uses the growing role of food justice organizations as a justification to offer fewer entitlements and privatize more social programs and entitlements (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Clendenning et al. (2016) argued that not only do neoliberal policies lead to the domination of the food system by corporate food regimes, causing an imbalance in food consumption, but they also impose inequities within the food system and obstruct efforts to change it.

The concept of the citizenship framework as full participation in society was developed as an outreach approach to persons with mental health challenges and homelessness and subsequently included addressing persons with substance abuse issues. Citizenship is a measure of the strength of people's connections to relationships, rights, responsibilities, roles, and resources. Additionally, citizenship is interested in people's sense of belonging in one's community and society, available to people through public and social institutions as well as the informal, "associational" life of neighborhoods and local communities. This framework draws on social science theories of citizenship that emphasize civic participation as a measure of one's involvement in society and the need

to create participation opportunities for members of marginalized groups. Citizenship also draws on social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of social networks in enhancing people's participation in society (Rowe, 2014; Rowe et al., 2007).

Limitations

This dissertation has several limitations, which are related to the FAWG case study. I explored the achievements of coalitions through the lens of only one coalition, and more narrowly, through the narratives of its members. FAWG's focus on food access through soup kitchens and food pantries is a limitation insofar as it is not a sustainable practice; preventing food insecurity or establishing self-sustaining methods of food security are more desirable and longer-lasting solutions to food insecurity. For the past several years, the rate of food insecurity in New Haven has not improved; therefore, using these rates as a measure of effectiveness is a limitation. My research used qualitative inquiry to explore and evaluate FAWG's processes (Goodyear et al., 2014).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

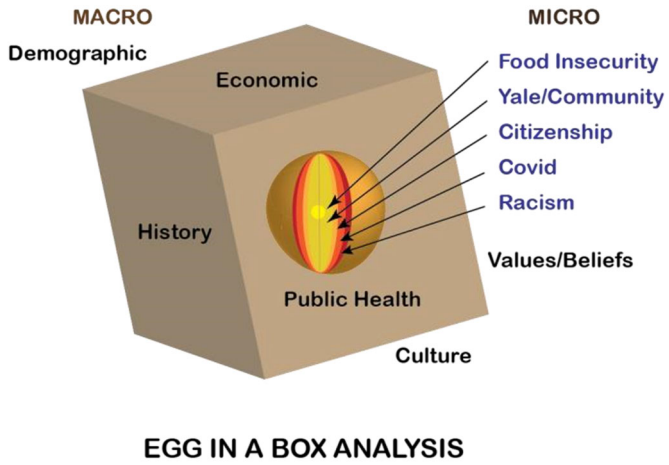
In her book *Constructing Grounded Theory,* Charmaz (2014) titled a section "The Disputed Literature Review". The dispute being, should a researcher perform a literature review before or after the research is conducted? Charmaz (2014), citing Glaser and Strauss (1967), noted that when the authors first developed grounded theory, they proposed the literature review be delayed until the researcher develops their theory. The authors reasoned those existing theories and preconceived ideas could contaminate and prejudice the development of a new theory. Corbin and Strauss (2008) recognized that although it is impossible to know what specific literature to review prior to a study, researchers' knowledge and experience with literature informs their research. They went on to describe various applications for "technical literature" to complement grounded theory research. Charmaz (2014) offered arguments both for and against delaying a literature review, but in either case, recommended tailoring the "final version of the literature review" to fit the grounded theory that emerged from the study (p. 307).

Through a conflict analysis lens, reviewing literature to inform my research was appealing. I selected my literature by applying a modified version of Bryne and Carter's (1996) social cubism model. The authors' model is a multifaceted approach to understanding conflict from historical, economic, religious, political, demographic, and psychocultural perspectives. Bryne and Carter recognized that each of these facets, which were linked to a specific side of a cube, are interrelated, and produce patterns of behavior that shape conflict. I also integrated Maire Dugan's (1996) nested theory of conflict approach. While social cubism examines the factors that lead to a conflict, the nested theory suggests practitioners explore the type of conflict: issue-specific, relational, structural: sub-system, and structural: system. The metaphor of a cube suggests that we

view conflict as multifaceted and interrelated—vertically, horizontally, and in a circular fashion. The nested theory, on the other hand, views conflict as layers of issues wrapped around each other. Using an egg as a metaphor, with the core issue represented by the yolk, surrounded by the membrane, thick white, thin white, shell membrane, and lastly the shell. Each layer of the egg represents the relationships and structural factors that contribute to the issue-specific conflict. I refer to the synthesis of these two models as egg-in-a-box Analysis (see Figure 1). I modified Bryne and Carter's model by substituting and combining religion and politics with values/beliefs, simplified psychocultural with cultural, and added public health, which included mental health perspectives. The issues that I chose to focus on specific to New Haven were food insecurity, Yale & community, citizenship, COVID-19, and racism. I viewed the box as macro issues and the egg as micro issues; although there were connections and overlaps of perspectives both between and within the box and the egg. While both COVID-19 and racism were global issues, I found that for many people living in New Haven, their perspective was very localized both in their view and response to these issues.

Figure 1

Egg-in-a-Box Analysis



My analytical approach to the literature review lent itself to Corbin and Strauss' (2008) suggested uses of technical literature. I used the literature review to formulate interview questions, enhance my sensitivity to concepts, act as a guide in the selection of theoretical sampling, and act as a data source for comparative analysis. Additionally, my literature review provided a context for my case study by exploring neoliberal theory and mentalities on food security as they relate to politics and culture in a broad sense. More specifically, I explored how politics and culture influence labor, charity, social welfare, and obesity. I concluded by providing an overview of the alternative food movement and its resistance to neoliberalism.

Food Regime Theory

And the world has been ever since a place of conflict and harmony, grace and malice, caring and cruelty, generosity and greed, division and communion.

Kai T. Erickson (2018)

Kai Erickson (2018) marked the beginning of societal conflict when humankind transitioned from a hunter-gatherer society to an agricultural society; he proposed this was the point at which humans first had the ability to accumulate wealth. Recounting food regime theory is a useful starting point for understanding the history of hunger and food insecurity in the US and the emergence of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is the predominant political and economic force cited by contemporary researchers as one of the root causes of hunger and food insecurity globally as well in the US. Friedmann and McMichael (1989) introduced food regime theory to illustrate the history of the relationship between agriculture and industry and its impact on the rise of global capitalism and the development of independent liberal states. The first food regime was from 1870 to 1914, followed by a second food regime from the 1950s to the 1970s. The

authors characterized the first food regime as the emergence of an international food system based on European imports of grains and livestock from the British "settler" states of the US, Canada, and Australia and the exportation of European manufactured goods, including labor and capital, to build rail transportation systems, to the former colonies. This period also marked the apex of the colonial system, with the expansion of French and British rule over Asia and Africa and the colonization of the Philippines, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico by the US. With the cumulation of the colonial system came the parallel rise of liberal nation-state systems in Canada and Australia. Three new relations between world agriculture and industry emerged during the first food regime:

- A shift from complementary product trade to specialized production based on Ricardian's principle of competitive advantage.
- Chemical and mechanical inputs replaced biological inputs and labor. Agriculture's reliance on industries to supply inputs and process produce, such as milling grains and preserving meat. A growing international railway system provided transportation to and from industrial and agricultural centers and expanded the reach of trade.
- International trade of industry and agriculture expanded while simultaneously creating commercial family farms organized into domestic agro-industrial systems as food became a manufactured product.

New Haven, Connecticut was settled by English planters in 1638. Edward Atwater (1881) recounted that planters sustained themselves during their first year on the plantation settlement by planting corn, raising livestock, hunting wild game, and fishing the rivers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (1901a), 75% of Connecticut was farmland. With only 7% of land being arable land, and much of the remaining land well-

suited for dairy pastures, 75% of the arable land was devoted to cultivating hay which, in turn, supported the dairy industry. The dairy industry in 1901 generated $7 million in product, which accounted for 31.2% of the gross income of all farms in Connecticut.

The relationships that defined the first food regime were readily identifiable in Connecticut's agro-industry. Connecticut specialized in dairy farming, which resulted in the manufacturing of cheese, cream, butter, ice cream, condensed milk, and fresh bottled milk. Jenkins (1926) reported the population of milk cows in Connecticut rose from 85,000 in 1850 to 141,000 in 1923. He attributed this growth to advancements in mechanical processes: the milking machine, the corn harvester, and the grain silo. The silo enabled feeding year-round and reduced the need for pastures. By 1927, Connecticut farmers were shipping 25 million quarts to nearby states (p. 398–399). In New Haven, manufacturing had long since replaced agriculture. The city led the state in manufacturing from 1890 to 1900, producing $40.1 million in goods and accounting for 11.6% of the state's product. Weapons and ammunitions were the primary industry in New Haven with the agroindustry playing a secondary role with slaughterhouses and meat packing plants (U.S. Census Bureau, 1901b).

According to Friedmann and McMichael (1989), the second food regime, from the 1950s to the 1970s, was characterized by the decolonization of Asia and Africa and the expansion of liberal nation-states. Fueled by the exportation of wheat, the U.S. dominated world agriculture. In the process, wheat exports negatively impacted the local production of food in the importing countries, often leading to an unstable food system. The second food regime was marked by several other notable features:

- Agro-industry became a transnational sector with the growth of food as an input to manufactured products.

- Intensive meat production came to rely on agricultural inputs of corn and soy.
- The production of sugar beets and soy oils in Europe and the US led to the decline of sugar and oil imports from the global south.
- States intervened and controlled agricultural markets.

The authors concluded that the second food regime resulted in "the growing power of capital to organize and reorganize agriculture undercuts state policies directing agriculture to national ends, such as food security, articulated development and the preservation of rural/peasant communities" (p. 95). While these impacts applied to developing countries, the effects of food security were felt at home as well as abroad.

Hunger in the US

The second food regime corresponded to the development of a cognizance of hunger in the US. The prosperity of the post-war United States diminished the memories of those who witnessed the suffering during the years of the Great Depression. The 1968 documentary "Hunger in America" awakened the nation's awareness of hunger. The film opens with a graphic and tragic newsreel of a doctor's futile attempt to save the life of a baby dying of starvation. Charles Kuralt lamented:

> He was an American, now he is dead . . . Food is the most basic of all human needs. Man can manage to live without shelter, without clothing, even without love. Poverty, as unpleasant as it is, is bearable. But man can't remain alive without food. America is the richest country in the world, in fact the richest country in history. America spends a colossal amount of money to feed the world; 1 ½ billion dollars a year to feed the rest of the world.

Kuralt then cites the statistic that with a US population of 200 million, 30 million live in poverty, 5 million of which receive government food assistance, yet, “10 million Americans are hungry” (CBS News, 1968).

Two months before the CBS news report aired, William S. Gaud (1968), Administrator of the Agency for International Development, in his address to the Society for International Development, spoke these words in response to the successful efforts to end hunger and create self-sufficient crop yields in Pakistan, India, Turkey, and the Philippines,

> These and other developments in the field of agriculture contain the makings of a new revolution. It is not a violent Red Revolution like that of the Soviets, nor is it a White Revolution like that of the Shah of Iran. I call it the Green Revolution.

While the war on world hunger was being fought America seemed blind to its own hunger. After growing concern, President Richard Nixon (1969) turned his attention to America’s needs. In his 1969 speech to Congress he declared,

> But in the past few years we have awakened to the distressing fact that despite our material abundance and agricultural wealth, many Americans suffer from malnutrition. Precise factual descriptions of its extent are not presently available, but there can be no doubt that hunger and malnutrition exist in America, and that some millions may be affected.

So began Nixon’s war on hunger. The United States Department of Agriculture was his army; his appointed general was Secretary of the USDA, Earl “Rusty” Butz. Nixon wanted inexpensive food and Butz would deliver. Up until the 1930s, farmers would produce so much that they would drive their prices down to the point where they could not cover their own costs to produce crops. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal

offered a solution: the government would pay farmers to not produce, thus keeping prices elevated. The government also purchased excess grain with inadequate yield to meet demand, and stored it for years, protecting farmers and consumers from major market shifts. This was the system Butz inherited, but he would quickly change it. Butz cut off subsidies and encouraged consumption by promoting exports such as the 1972 grain sale to the Soviets. What farmers lost in price they made up in volume. Butz ushered in the era of maximum production agriculture (Philpott, 2008). Despite Nixon's efforts to boost agriculture and implement programs to address increasing food insecurity, by the end of his tenure in 1974, the price of staples in the U.S. was escalating, which created a food crisis (Rothman, 2016).

During the beginning of the second food regime, New Haven had all but abandoned agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1950), with 47,700 workers New Haven was the second-largest employer in Connecticut and was only surpassed by Hartford and Bridgeport in the number of manufacturing jobs. Population growth in CT outstripped the region and the US through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s (Srivasava, 2016). Mayor Richard C. Lee, who served New Haven from 1954 to 1969, was known throughout the country for the city's pioneering urban revitalization efforts. In the face of declining manufacturing and rising unemployment and poverty, Lee was able to leverage more federal aid per capita than any other city (von Zielbauer, 2003).

Some of Lee's accomplishments included a downtown mall, a coliseum, a revamped commercial waterfront, and numerous civic buildings. Lee's efforts were bolstered by initiatives put in place by the previous Mayor, William Celentano, and Yale's urban planners. Despite the abundance of federal dollars and expertise, several projects failed or were short-lived. Other projects suffered collateral consequences, such as the

displacement of 600 businesses and families during the construction of the Route 34 highway extension. In addition to displacing neighborhoods, the highway segregated the city's communities and changed how people connected and flowed. Yale, on the other hand, benefitted and prospered thanks to the urban planning efforts. The city's reconfiguration put Yale on a par with Harvard and MIT and despite its struggles, revitalization resulted in building a city that was better off than other comparable East Coast cities (Zaretsky, 2018).

Neoliberalism

The transition from the first food regime to the second also corresponded to a transition from classic liberalism to embedded liberalism (McMichael, 2009). Classic liberalism, the dominant economic theory from the late 17th century to the 1930s, espoused the benefits of a free market economy with minimal government regulation or intervention other than promoting free trade and protecting private property. The economic crisis of the Great Depression led to the rise of Keynesian economics, which advocated for controlled capitalism, an adherence to market principles regulated by an active government controlling monetary flows and levying high taxes to pay for extensive social welfare programs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" and Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society," the predominant political and economic programs from 1945 to 1975, were inspired by Keynesian philosophy. The economic crisis of the 1970s ushered in a new era of liberalism—neoliberalism (Manfred & Ravi, 2010).

Neoliberalism promoted public policy measures based on the deregulation of the market, the liberalization of global trade and industry, and the privatization of government-controlled interests (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism is hailed as an essential cornerstone of freedom and democracy by its proponents. Busch (2010) used the phrase

"freedom to operate" to sum up neoliberalism. Milton Friedman, one of the architects of neoliberalism, opted for "freedom to choose," the title of his seminal book (Friedman & Friedman, 2008). Harvey (2005) observed that neoliberals hail the market as a means to guarantee individual freedom. He further asserted that while neoliberals advocate for freedom of market choices, they do not advocate for the freedom to organize trade unions, political parties that promote regulation, and democratic forms of governance. Polanyi (1954), as cited by Harvey (2005), recognized the dangers of the double standards of freedom decades before neoliberalism came to fruition. He asserted,

> Planning and control are being attacked as denial of freedom. Free enterprise and private ownership are declared to be essentials of freedom. No society built on other foundations is said to deserve to be called free. The freedom that regulation creates is denounced as unfreedom; the justice, liberty, and welfare it offers are decried as a camouflage of slavery (p. 36).

Harvey proposed that neoliberalism in theory defers from neoliberalism in practice. He, like Polanyi, recognized that the theory is selectively applied. He pointed out that the US government operates with huge budget deficits and encourages consumer debt while imposing neoliberal austerity measures on the rest of the world. While he admitted he was uncertain neoliberal policies were designed to restore class power, the policies have resulted in massive financial inequity.

Sensitizing Concepts

Harvey (2005) did not specifically analyze the impact of neoliberalism on agriculture and the food system. He noted that neoliberal policies have impacted labor and the environment, two critical agriculture inputs. Neoliberal policies have created a disposable workforce that favors industry profits over social responsibility. This is

accomplished by shifting capital globally in search of the cheapest labor while at the same time restricting migration and immigration. Workers are forced to migrate illegally and are susceptible to exploitation (p. 168). It is estimated there are 11 million undocumented workers in the US, many working in fields, dairy farms, meat packing plants, and restaurants (Yee et al., 2017). It is not unusual for a farm worker to labor 12 hours a day for a meager $36.00 (Sims, 2019).

Deregulation and privatization also led to the rise of non-profit organizations taking on the role of providing food to marginalized groups that are food insecure. The growing responsibility of food justice organizations provided further justification for the government to provide fewer entitlements and privatize more social programs and entitlements (Alkon & Mares, 2012). This negative feedback loop places more responsibility on non-profits, which must operate with less and serve more people.

Poppendieck (1997) described the shift from hunger being the responsibility of the State to private organizations and individual acts of charity as a shift from "food as a right to food as a gift" (p. 138). She concluded this shift was caused by the Regan administration and the Republican Party's policies of cutting welfare and social programs, resulting in a proliferation of food pantries and soup kitchens. The "roll-back" of social services and the "roll-out" of private institutions is classic "neo-liberalization" (Peck & Tickell, 2002). However, the term would not enter the academic lexicon for another two years (Magness, 2018). Poppendieck (1997) advocated for the *Medford Declaration* proposal, which suggested that hunger in the US could be addressed by taking a two-step approach. Firstly, a return to Keynesian policies with the State providing social programs to make food available to those that need it, and secondly, eradicating the underlying causes of hunger (p. 155).

The United States Department of Agriculture (2022) reported U.S. food assistance programs totaled $96.1 billion in fiscal year 2018, while in 2017, 26% of the households that were food insecure used a food pantry (Coleman-Jensen, 2018). Poppendieck (2014) noted that despite the prominence of food banks, soup kitchens, and food donations, government programs provide most of the food assistance. She asserted that a secondary benefit of food charity organizations is they provide a "safe space" for food advocates to operate from and resist cuts to food assistance programs. The neoliberal twist is food charities rely heavily on corporate donations from retail food stores such as Walmart. Corporations whose employees rely on government subsidies such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid far exceed the value of their donations. Poppendieck (2014) proffered that Walmart's investment in charity is motivated by a desire to sustain beneficial government subsidies (p. 187–188).

On average, spending on subsidies has more than doubled since 1997, although spending nearly tripled during the 2008 recession and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (see Figure 2) (United States Department of Agriculture, 2022). At the same time, on average, food security has remained steady (see Figure 3) (United States Department of Agriculture, 2021). The spikes in the two graphs are attributed to the 2008 recession. Recalling Poppendieck's two-pronged approach to ending hunger, we can infer from the figures that government programs have not provided relief from hunger. In the revision of her 1997 paper, Poppendieck (2014) maintained ending hunger requires economic policies that promote full employment that provides living wages and benefits (p. 187). These policies run counter to neoliberal economic policies emphasizing controlling inflation and rolling back social welfare expenditures (Harvey, 2005).

Figure 2

USDA expenditures on food assistance programs

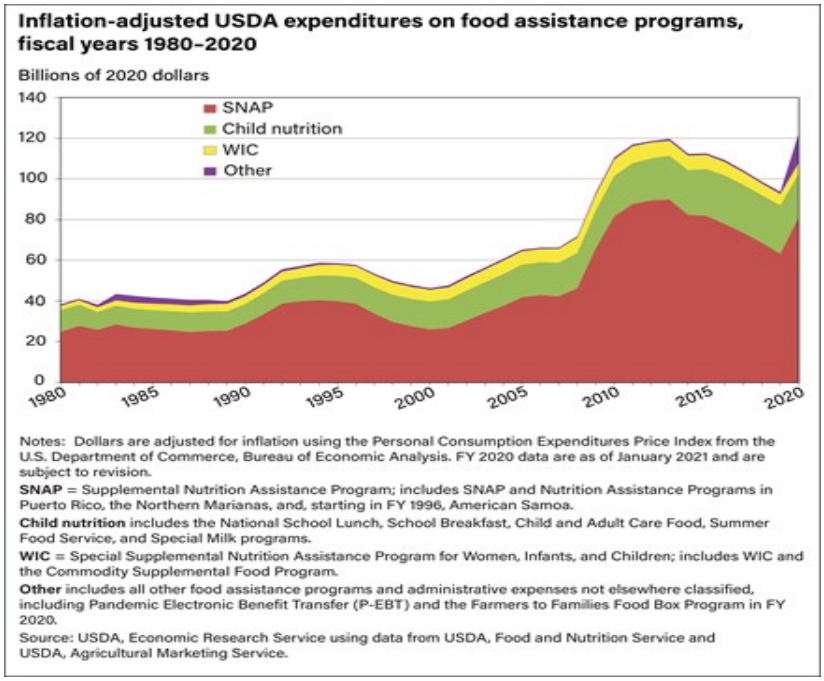
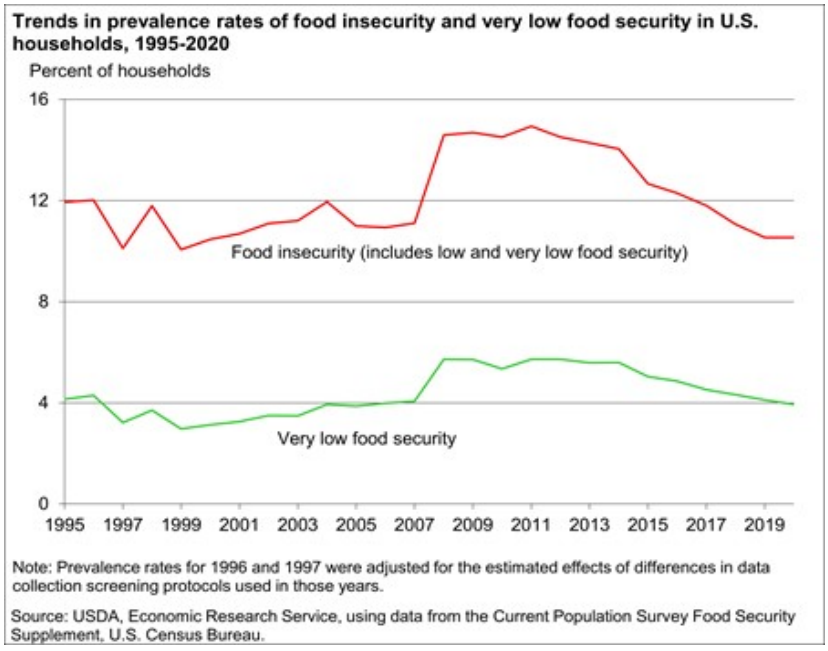


Figure 3

Prevalence of food insecurity



Neoliberalism led to the rise in power of several intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) as forums to coordinate trade and monetary policies and to negotiate the removal of trade barriers, the most prominent being the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The policies of these organizations led to the globalization and consolidation of agriculture markets, resulting in a few dozen corporations controlling the majority of the global food supply (Tirado, 2015).

Under neoliberal trade policies, corporations have profited at the expense of the environment, small-scale farmers, and consumers. Corporations motivated by profits have placed an emphasis on producing inexpensive, highly processed, sugar- and salt-laden food, resulting in the consumption—and in many cases overconsumption—of food lacking nutritional value. Nutritional habits in the US have resulted in an obesity prevalence of 41.9% between 2017 and 2020 with 14.7% of the population over 18 diagnosed with diabetes during the same period (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022a, 2022b)

Guthman and DuPuis (2006) established that not only does neoliberalism create obesity but also the idea that obesity is a problem. We have seen that U.S. agricultural policy, from Roosevelt through Butz to the present, is one of overproduction. Neoliberalism is a project commodifying everything, including land, labor, and money. Market commodities have replaced public utilities, education, and social services. Even our behaviors are commodified, especially in regard to moral judgments such as drugs, sex, and gambling (Harvey, 2005; Reith, 2007). Commodities are marketed for consumption, that is, overconsumption, with the food industry creating a plethora of cheap calories and “supersize” meals. Guthman and Dupuis (2006) proposed that the

overproduction of calories is ultimately consumed and stored as fat. They further asserted that market products are developed to promote overconsumption of food in the form of diet foods, pills, and exercise plans—all commodities unto themselves.

Guthman and DuPuis (2006) suggested the phenomenon of overconsumption converges with the sedentary lifestyle of modernity and the scientific belief that humankind is genetically predisposed to store fat. These factors have led us to the current obesity epidemic. Neoliberalism's mandate to privatize applies to the body as well; individuals are responsible for governing and regulating themselves. We circle back to the premise of freedom of choice; neoliberalism requires people to choose the consumption of goods while at the same time regulating themselves. To be a good citizen, one must engage in market activities such as diet foods, pills, gym memberships, and the latest diet fad to shed the pounds one gains through overconsumption. Socially constructed norms of thinness as good and fatness as bad reinforce these behaviors.

The Alternative Food Movement

The alternative food movement is a collection of political food activities including organic food, fair trade, slow food, local food, food sovereignty, urban agriculture, food safety, permaculture, sustainable farming, vegetarianism, veganism, and some of the central themes of my case study—food justice, food access, food security, and antihunger (Hoey & Sponseller, 2018; Sbicca, 2015).

The food movement is grounded in the civil rights movement, particularly the Poor People Campaign, a march and occupation of the National Mall in Washington, DC. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. organized the event before his assassination and Ralph Abernathy brought the protest to fruition in 1968. The photographs and description of the "The Hunger Wall" (see Figures 4 & 5) on display at the National Museum of

African American History dramatically captured the essence of the campaign (“A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond,” n.d.; Keyes, 2016)

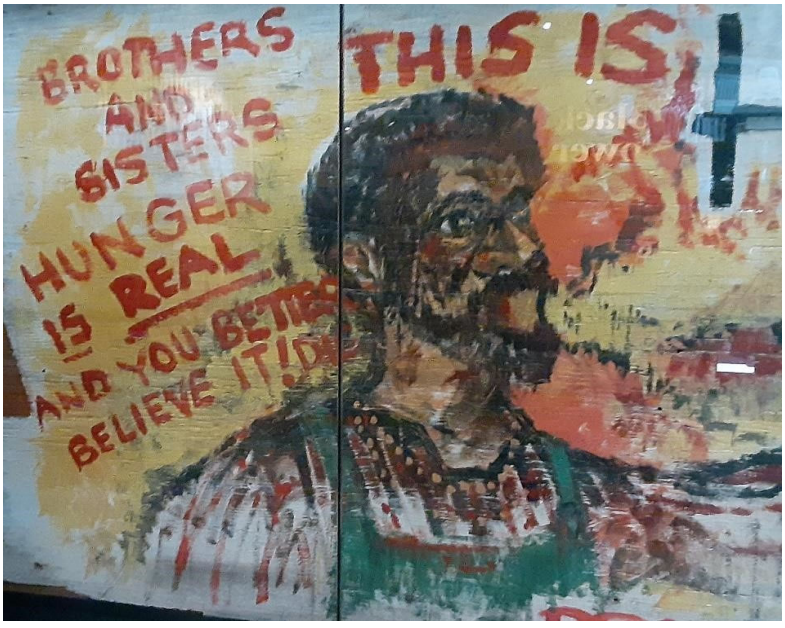
Figure 4

Hunger Wall Resurrection City Washington, D.C., Gift of Vincent DeForest

People’s Art in Resurrection City. Painted on a plywood tent wall, this mural illustrates the interracial nature and diverse concerns of the demonstrators. Civil rights activists, cultural revolutionaries, hippies, gang members, and common poor folk lobbied for radical changes in America’s economic system. The meager result—increased federal funding for food stamps and school lunches—came later.

Figure 5

Hunger wall section



Potorti (2017) observed that before the National School Breakfast Program was instituted in 1975, the Black Panthers, at the behest of co-founder and Minister of Defense Huey Newton initiated the nationwide Free Breakfast for Children Program. The program began in Oakland and grew to 36 sites by 1971, eventually serving 50,000 children in 45 communities. The Black Panthers expanded their food activism efforts to provide free groceries in impoverished Black communities under the People's Free Food Programs. The Black Panthers believed that capitalism was an oppressive system and enterprises that controlled goods benefited at the expense of those that suffered. Their food programs shunned government and philanthropists, relying solely on donations from local businesses, churches, and community members. Known for their radical approach to "policing the police" with patrols of gun-brandishing members, the Black Panthers were no less radical in their food activism. Businesses that refused to contribute food, both White- and Black-owned, were ostracized by the Panthers for profiting at the expense of the community. Potorti (2014) pointed out that in their effort to fight capitalism, the Panthers "relied on the imperatives of capitalism to get businesses in line with their program," a contradiction that is relevant in the present resistance efforts to neoliberalism (Alkon, 2014; Guthman, 2008; Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011).

In the face of government opposition, the power of the Black Panthers declined as their leaders were arrested or assassinated. The "Hunger Lobby," activist groups including the Community Nutrition Institute (CNI), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the Food Research and Action Committee, continued to lobby Congress and the USDA to mitigate the causes of hunger throughout the 70s. These groups, backed by public opinion, were able to use the courts and lobby Congress to pressure the USDA and impact policy (Berry, 1982).

In 1981 the Regan administration ushered in the neoliberal era along with massive cuts to food programs, leading to the rise of the anti-hunger movement. Poppendieck (2014), citing the Food and Hunger Hotline, noted that from 1980 to the early 1990s the number of emergency food providers in New York grew from 30 to over 700, providing over 30 million meals per year. Today, Feeding America, a network of over 200 food banks across America, feeds 40 million people a year by redistributing donations from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers (*Our History*, n.d.). The Connecticut Food Bank, an affiliate of Feeding America, distributed 24.7 million pounds of food in 2018 to Connecticut residents, including those living in New Haven (Connecticut Food Bank, 2019). The anti-hunger movement in New Haven is supported by a coalition of academic, non-profit, private, and community-based organizations and individuals. The City of New Haven, Yale University, United Way of Greater New Haven, and Witnesses to Hunger New Haven are a few of the organizations that work with New Haven's 65 food banks and soup kitchens to provide meals and groceries for the city's food insecure residents.

One of the most successful and visible alternative food movements is the organic food movement. Since the widespread use of chemicals was introduced to farming in the late 19th century, there has been worldwide resistance to chemicals and to the damage they cause to our bodies and our environment. Organic farming and food gained popularity in the US with the support of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture. The California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) introduced the first certification program in 1973. Farmers from Vermont and Maine followed up with their own standards as did other states. The varying state standards caused confusion and the credibility of organic farming came into question. Farmers turned to Congress to establish a standard, which

resulted in the passage of the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 (Kuepper, 2010). Organic sales reached $1 billion in 1990; by 2019 they topped $50 billion, representing 5.7% of the food sold in the US (Granatstein, 2020; Organic Trade Association, 2020). Alkon and Guthman (2018) argued that the organic food movement has not challenged the agro-industry but merely created an alternative that is becoming another profit center for the agro-industry supply chain. Scholars and activists are joining Alkon & Guthman in calling for an alternative food system that is not only sustainable but also considers justice for laborers and consumers, particularly groups that are or have been historically marginalized by society and the food system: immigrants, women, and minorities (Galli Robertson & Clift, 2017; Sachs & Patel-Campillo, 2014; Slocum, 2006)

Gather New Haven is a nonprofit born through the merger of two nonprofit organizations: New Haven Farms and New Haven Land Trust. They manage seven farms and over 50 community gardens, which produce 15,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. Their mission goes beyond supporting organic farming. According to their website, their “innovative programs center on the intersections of urban agriculture, public health, community development, education, and environmental stewardship” (Gather New Haven, n.d). Gather New Haven partners with many of the same organizations and individuals that support the antihunger movement; however, they have not collaborated directly on any substantial projects.

Gather New Haven’s mission falls within the definition of a food justice organization with strong ties to urban food and local food, as well as the organic food movement. Gottlieb and Joshi (2013) defined food justice as “ensuring that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported, and distributed, and accessed are shared fairly.” In other words, food as a right, not a gift. The

reality for the 11% of the food insecure population is food is uncertain. Two other groups that promote a food justice agenda in New Haven are CT Community for Racial Equity (CTCORE) and Witnesses to Hunger. Visiting Fulbright Scholar Mary P. Corcoran observed and interviewed members of New Haven Land Trust (now Gather New Haven), Witnesses to Hunger, and CTCORE during her six-month visit to New Haven in 2018. Corcoran (2018), citing Tornaghi and Certomà (2019), concluded that these three organizations represented a political continuum beginning with Gather New Haven, followed by Witnesses to Hunger, and ending with CTCORE. The continuum starts with organizations that build the capacity to disrupt and activate political activity; organizations in the center develop political awareness and form solidarity; and organizations at the end of the continuum begin movements to transform social order and dismantle racialized systems.

Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011) also developed a political continuum with four gradations: neoliberal, reformist, progressive, and radical. They argued that reformists, such as those in the antihunger movement, reinforce the neoliberal agenda, and are a component of the corporate food regime. Witnesses to Hunger, with its strong ties to the New Haven Food Policy Counsel and food bank system, has elements of reformist politics. Witnesses to Hunger's racial equity work and education work have elements of progressive politics, while their ties to CTCORE represent their radical political inclinations. In contrast, Gather New Haven, with its initiatives to grow fresh, healthy food, provide space to garden, and establish educational programs, is firmly situated in progressive politics. CTCORE is classified as radical, with a primary agenda of resisting racialized spaces and dismantling the neoliberal system while creating new systems. Both

progressive and radical politics represent the food movement in the US and resist neoliberal mentalities.

The placement of three of New Haven's food advocacy groups on the political continuum illustrates the challenges the food movement faces and the significance of studying advocacy groups and their political approaches. Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) argued that reformist politics reinforce neoliberal policies, yet soup kitchens, food banks, and the reformist organizations that support them fulfill an immediate and dire need. It is difficult, if not impossible, to allocate resources to advocating for radical change when you are looking for your next meal or a meal for your neighbor. Progressive organizations, whose ranks are predominately White, provide the space, resources, and training to create social and racial justice. Progressive organizations may not support neoliberal mentalities and agro-industry practices, but by employing market strategies and submitting to the influences of their funding sources, they do not resist neoliberal politics. To foster social change, according to Holt-Gimenez and Wang (2011), food advocates must adopt radical politics. The challenge for radical food advocates is to build coalitions with progressive and reformist advocates to create new systems that can dismantle neoliberal systems.

Citizenship and Framing Conflict

Michael Rowe has been researching and writing about citizenship for the past 20 years. The citizenship framework is a pragmatic framework for understanding conflicts that marginalized groups experience within our society. The five Rs of citizenship — roles, rights, responsibilities, resources, and relationship — correlate with elements of Coser's (1967) definition of conflict, "A struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources, a struggle in which the aims of opponents are to neutralize, injure,

or eliminate rivals" (p. 8). Resources as a source of conflict align directly with the concept that full citizenship requires access to resources. Roles can determine one's status and power. Furthermore, roles and power can be curtailed or enhanced through denial or access to rights. Groups and individuals have a social responsibility to society that is grounded in moral values. Lastly, the relationship between groups is a defining characteristic of conflict while the relationship of members within a group shapes their response to conflict.

Coser's (1967), assertation that opposing groups must "endeavor to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals" evokes images of the type of overt social unrest and violence experienced during the civil rights movement, or more recently the racial conflicts in Ferguson, Los Angeles, and Baltimore — or perhaps images of the actions on our southern border, the rampant gun violence in Chicago, the rash of police shootings of unarmed black citizens, or the siege of the Capital on January 6, 2021. However, conflict is not limited to overt violence. Social groups are affected by covert conflict when opposing groups attempt to neutralize and eliminate them through the process of denying them their access to citizenship. Marginalized groups are pushed to the edges of society. Their voices are silenced because they have been denied a role in society. Their rights are infringed on, their resources curtailed, their relationships disrupted, and their responsibilities trivialized.

Citizenship informs the research and advocacy work of Yale's Citizen Community Collaborative (CCC), as well as the research and advocacy work of FAWG and Witnesses to Hunger (WTH) through CCC's members, Billy and Bridget's involvement and influence with these organizations. Societal conflict informed this dissertation and the citizenship framework illustrated the relationship between food insecurity and societal

conflict. The 5 Rs of citizenship — roles, rights, responsibilities, resources, and relationships — are the sensitizing concepts that informed my research.

Post-pandemic

The pandemic caused turmoil in the food system. Restaurant closures weakened demand for meat, dairy, and produce causing an odd mixture of gluts and shortages. Farmers euthanized chickens and dumped milk, while consumers in some locations could not purchase milk or eggs. A meat packing plant in South Dakota was closed due to 500 cases of COVID-19. Immigrant farm workers suddenly became essential workers. Unemployment rose from 3.5% in March 2020 to 14.8% in April 2020. Feeding America estimates that food insecurity rates rose from 10.9% in 2019 to 13.9% in 2020.

The Government's response to the pandemic was confusing. While The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) allocated $2 billion to SNAP, representing a 40% increase in monthly benefits, the Trump administration and the USDA unsuccessfully pursued a rule change that would eliminate food assistance for 3.1 million people and free lunches for 265,000 children. A year later, the USDA under the Biden Administration provided an additional 1 billion dollars a month in benefits.

Acts of charity abounded in this period; Sheetz, a convenience chain donated 5 tons of food to healthcare workers and communities struggling with food insecurity, Publix purchased excess milk and donated it to food banks, Blake Shelton donated $150,000 to an Oklahoma food bank. Still, many food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters struggled to keep up with demand. New Haven saw increases in soup kitchen and food pantry demand soar up to 100%. In the first months of the pandemic, a drive-by food pick-up had to turn away 100 vehicles.

The pandemic exposed the inequities of neoliberalism. Fastcompany (2020) reported billionaires have increased their wealth by 10% while 22 million Americans lost their jobs. Cities reported COVID-19 disproportionally killed African Americans. In Michigan, African Americans accounted for 33% of COVID-19 cases and 41% of deaths, though they represent only 14% of the overall population. In Chicago, 72% of the deaths have been among the city's Black residents, though they make up 29% of the population. The Associated Press reported 94 publicly traded companies, some with market values exceeding 100 million, received a total of $365 million in low interest loans, while small businesses were told the money ran out on the first day of the offering. NPR reported banks received over $10 billion to process the loans; in a series of class action lawsuits in California and New York, plaintiffs alleged Bank of America, Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank, and JP Morgan Chase, "shuffled" loans to maximize fees from larger customers rather than process loans from small companies despite regulations directing it be first come, first served.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, neoliberals blamed the ensuing financial crisis on weak government policies. Left-wing anti-capitalists blamed neoliberals and hailed the pandemic as an end to neoliberalism and globalization as we know it. Economists and scholars continue to discuss and debate neoliberalism's role in the pandemic and the future of neoliberalism.

Invitation to Collaborate

When I applied for a research position with the Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH) in June of 2018, I was interviewed by Michael Rowe, PhD, the Co-Director of PRCH and Principal Investigator of the Citizens Community

Collaborative (CCC), along with his associates Billy Bromage, Director of Community Organizing and Annie Harper, PhD, a cultural anthropologist conducting research on how marginalized populations cope with poverty and financial difficulties. The interview was interesting because PRCH did not have a position available that I could fill. Michael, Billy, and Annie were all interested in my perspectives on food insecurity, and we discussed how my research lined up with their citizenship research. Michael invited me to "hang out" and suggested that funding sometimes becomes available. I was invited to attend the PRCH staff meeting and join CCC. CCC is a collaborative of researchers from PRCH, along with several members from New Haven neighborhoods, involved in community outreach. Subsequently, Billy invited me to join the Food Access Working Group, a collaborative of social service providers, advocates, local government, businesses, and researchers formed by The New Haven Food Policy Council. FAWG is tri-chaired by Billy, Kim Hart (a community activist), and Jill Dotlo (Community Liaison and SNAP Coordinator for Community Action Agency of New Haven).

I was moved by the devotion and emotion at these meetings. The meetings were rich with thick data, and I experienced two defining moments. Kim stated at an FAWG meeting that she was heartbroken and distraught that the summer lunch program was not reaching enough children. "I know these children are hungry because they relied on free lunches during the school year. We have to do a better job at getting the word to the parents about these programs," Kim pleaded. "We have the food, and we can't get it to these children." Soon after, at a CCC meeting, Michael observed, "These meetings are really such a learning experience; I wish we could record and capture what we are doing so we can educate other community organizers."

Michael's comments struck an intellectual chord with me while Kim's plea stirred my emotions. I realized that through my dissertation I could record the lessons we were learning about community organizations, and I could follow my passion for food justice by studying how the citizens of New Haven addressed food insecurity through their research and advocacy work.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Rationale

Numbers and statistics fascinate me. I enjoy exploring patterns in statistics over time and comparing statistics between people, places, and events. However, my fascination does not end with an investigation and determination of the means, modes, and deviations of a given data set. Rather, driven by curiosity, my nascent fascination compels me to further my inquiry. I want to understand the how and why behind the numbers and statistics. Corbin and Strauss (2008) expressed that qualitative research gives researchers an opportunity to connect with the people behind the numbers. Gundersen and Ziliak (2014) found that our understanding of food insecurity is informed primarily by quantitative studies, and they suggested, "qualitative research would give a more complete picture of U.S. food insecurity, and it could establish new perspectives that could then be used in collecting quantitative data." Goodyear et al. (2014) defined qualitative studies as studies that "tell the stories behind the numbers, capture unintended impacts and ripple effects, and illustrate dimensions of desired outcomes that are difficult to identify."

Researching food advocacy groups in New Haven lends itself to case study methodology. My research questions explored the "how" and "why" of food insecurity advocacy within the context of food advocates working together to achieve food security in New Haven under unique circumstances. The inquiry of a phenomenon (food advocacy) in a specific context (food insecurity in New Haven), is the basis of half of Yin's (2014) definition of *case study research*. The other half of Yin's definition is the features of a case study. One feature is case studies explore a complex and "distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points" (Yin,

2014, p. 17). Three of these variables are the in-depth nature of the inquiry, the temporal nature of the case study, and the influence of external circumstances on the case study.

In-Depth Nature of the Inquiry

The in-depth aspect of my case study was in the multifaceted approach to food advocacy from the perspectives of government, political, academic, non-profit, and grassroots organizations. The research explored individual and group approaches to advocacy as well as the interactions between various organizations and the resulting impact on food insecurity policies and social attitudes.

Temporal Nature of the Case Study

My case study analyzed events that took place over time, resulting in multiple data points. The temporal nature of a case study added to the complexity of the data. Data from multiple points converged to create new data. Case studies are also bound by time, a feature that I discussed in the design of the case study (Yin, 2014).

Influence of External Circumstances on the Case Study

Food advocacy in New Haven is influenced by several external factors, most notably state and federal food policies as well as economic conditions and policies.

Case Study Design

Yin (2014) recommended that a case study design consist of five components: questions, propositions, units of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 29). I discussed my research questions in Chapter 1: How do food justice advocates impact food security? Why do food justice advocates impact food security? My proposition was that food advocates can influence public policy through their efforts. My unit of analysis is the individual advocates and organizations that advocate for food security.

I chose to deviate from Yin's recommendations for analyzing and interpreting the data. Diaz Andrade (2009) suggested that the grounded theory methodology provides an alternate means to analyze and interpret data. Diaz Andrade argued that researchers should align their theoretical perspective with their research methodology (p. 42). An interpretive approach to research aligns with my worldview of social constructivism.

Social constructivists view truth as a construction of meaning built through relationships (Glaser & Strauss, 2012). My case study explored those relationships and described the truth constructed from those relationships. Facts like truth are contextual. Riessman (2008) found in her review of several qualitative studies that "verifying facts was less important than understanding their meanings for individuals and groups" (p. 187).

Diaz Andrade (2009) believed an interpretive approach provides the researcher a vehicle to express the research participants' voices and points of view (p. 44). My research participants identified as advocates for food security. Their voice is their primary tool for supporting and defending their cause. An interpretive approach is logically the most suitable approach to both analyzing and presenting their voice.

My interpretive approach is informed by Charmaz (2014) constructivist grounded theory method of analyzing data and developing theory. The purpose of my case study was to understand the successes and challenges food justice advocates encountered as they promoted food security. Through grounded theory, I was able to transform my understanding into a theory and model so the advocacy successes can be repeated and the challenges minimized.

Site Selection, Research Participants, Time

The case study is bound by individuals and organizations that advocated for food security in the city of New Haven. I use the term *research participant* as I feel the terms *population* and *research subjects* objectify the participants. Participants more accurately reflects the partnership in conducting, analyzing, and benefitting from the research.

Most of the research participants were members of the New Haven Food Council's Food Access Working Group (FAWG). The participants also included members of Witnesses to Hunger, New Haven Chapter (WTH), an organization that FAWG was instrumental in forming and developing. Additionally, three participants were researchers from universities that influenced the FAWG agenda. Some of the participants represented multiple organizations, had multiple roles, or both. For instance, Billy, a research participant, is one of the Tri-Chairs of FAWG, a founding member of WTH, and a member of Yale's Citizen Community Collaborative (CCC).

The case study is bound by the formation of FAWG in October 2012 and the disbandment of FAWG in February 2020. FAWG was a working collaborative of food service providers, community groups, residents, and city officials charged with improving New Haven's food system and its emergency food system network (New Haven Food Policy Council, 2012). Representatives of organizations such as CCC, United Way, Witnesses to Hunger New Haven, Connecticut Food Bank, Community Action Agency of New Haven, and Southern Connecticut State University actively participated in meetings, activities, and research. FAWG met monthly to share information and to plan collaborative projects for the coming months.

WTH is a group of community members with lived experience of hunger and poverty advocating for food security (Who we are, n.d.). WTH met monthly to share

information and plan activities. Activities included handing out flyers on the town green regarding legislative action under consideration that impacts SNAP benefits, participating in food symposiums hosted by Yale to raise awareness about food insecurity, launching a Facebook page and website, and sharing photos and stories of living with food insecurity at an exhibit at the State Capitol, followed by a meet and greet with state legislators.

CCC is a group of mental health advocates, researchers, scholars, recovery support specialists, people in recovery, and other practitioners and community members, all working together to fulfill the promise of social inclusion and full community membership for people with mental illnesses (Citizens, n.d.). CCC met biweekly to update members and coordinate ongoing activities. Several members of CCC were also members of FAWG or WTH or both. While CCC's primary focus is populations with mental illness, the Citizenship model is being applied to other marginalized groups such as those recovering from addiction, returning citizens from incarceration, refugees and immigrants, and populations subject to poverty and food insecurity.

Interviews

When I began my research, I chose to focus on individuals that identified as food advocates. Through my research, I learned that there are food advocates and food activists. *Advocacy* is "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal," whereas *activism* is "one who advocates or practices activism **:** a person who uses or supports strong actions (such as public protests) in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). I used the term advocate or advocacy in many cases activist and activism could have applied, though neither term is completely accurate. The participants in the case study practice both advocacy and activism along a

dynamic continuum. For the purposes of my case study, I only used the terms advocate or advocacy.

The study's 31 participants consisted of advocates who were members of organizations that were members of the New Haven Food Policy Council's Food Access Working Group (FAWG). Initially, I identified twenty-five potential participants from a pool of FAWG members, but through theoretical sampling and snowballing, I added six participants. Two of the participants were researchers that were not members of FAWG; however, their action research had a major influence on FAWG's success and philosophical framework. The participants were comprised of diverse groups of researchers, service providers, grassroots advocates, local and state employees, and AmeriCorps members. Twenty-two of the participants identified as female and nine identified as male. Forty-two percent of the participants indicated they had experienced food insecurity at some point in their lives; 33% indicated they had recently experienced food insecurity. Thirty-nine percent identified as BIPOC, while the remainder of the participants identified as White. Thirty of the interviews were conducted and recorded on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a single interview was conducted in person. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Participants shared personal experiences with food insecurity, advocacy, and advocacy organizations, living in New Haven, the COVID-19 pandemic, and racism.

Data Collection

Grounded theory data collection is a process of interpreting what we hear, see, and sense as we interact in the setting we are studying (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews with participants formed the basis of my initial codes and provided an opportunity to begin my comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and memo writing. I was a member of

FAWG, WTH, and CCC prior to and during my research. While I did not formally collect data, I was able to observe these groups, which allowed me to describe and interpret the culture of my participants and their shared values, beliefs, and language. The ethnographic nature of these observations allowed me to immerse myself into the culture of the case study participants (Creswell, 2013).

Interviewing participants provided me a venue for theoretical sampling and deeper inquiry into the emerging concepts. Interview questions were open-ended and elicited responses from the participants that pertained to the concepts and phenomena I was researching (Creswell, 2013). The interview questions prompted the participants to tell a story about their perception of an experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I began the interviews by posing two questions:

- Can you tell me about your experience with food insecurity?
- Can you tell me about your experience with advocacy?

The answer to these questions and developing themes from preceding interviews helped shape follow-up questions during the interview and in subsequent interviews.

- Tell me about your latest experience with (follow-up on themes from answers above)?
- How do you feel (themes) affect your daily life?
- How do you feel your life affects (themes)?

Other interview questions:

- Can you describe your organization and its activities?
- Tell me about your involvement with your organization?
- How has your organization affected how you approach advocacy?

Glaser and Strauss (2012) caution researchers that the development of a theory can be hampered by a lack of relevant data if the researchers rely solely on a pre-planned group to collect data (loc. 896). A substantive theory can be expanded by including comparison groups. FAWG, WTH, & CCC are pre-planned groups, although the diverse composition of these groups and the numerous other groups that participate in FAWG nevertheless provided an adequate means of comparison.

Other Data Sources

I reviewed data from meeting minutes, press releases, news stories, and observed committee meetings and community events. These data sources were used to fact-check and validate data collected in interviews (Chaitin, Linstroth, & Hille, 2009; Charmaz, 2014, Marshall & Rossman, 2011, loc. 221).

Coding and Analysis

The process of simultaneously collecting and analyzing data is a method distinctive to grounded theory. Memos provide a means to begin to think theoretically about the codes and to develop concepts and categories. Charmaz (2014) described categories as emergent and intuitive rather than formalized through the process of axial coding. I employed clustering and creating mind maps of data using MAXQDA2020 software to help me visualize my data and the relationships between categories and concepts (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Researchers recommended writing various types of memos and following a variety of procedures for memo-taking. Glaser & Strauss (2012) formulated a structured process of steps to follow to prepare memos. Corbin & Strauss (2008) continued to advocate for breaking memos down into categories in a structured manner. However, in the third edition, Corbin's recommendations became more relaxed, placing less

importance on structure and more on developing a consistent and fluid habit of writing memos. Charmaz (2014) likewise preferred a less structured form of memo-writing and encourages researchers to write memos judiciously. The following is a compilation of Corbin's and Charmaz's recommendations for writing memos that I used as a guide to memo writing:

- Code and write memos soon after each observation or interview.
- Use a descriptive heading or title.
- Include narrative quotes and MAXQDA2020 codes.
- Provide evidence.
- Get into the habit of updating and reviewing memos.
- Be conceptual and analytical rather than descriptive.
- Focus on the actions and processes.
- Ask questions and note what questions remain unanswered.
- Make comparisons.
- Sort, order, and identify patterns.

At the conclusion of an interview, I created a memo with my overall impressions of the participant and noted any new data, concepts, and themes that reinforced existing concepts and themes. I revised memos or created new memos during the transcription process in an intuitive manner. The process of data collection, memos, and comparative analysis is not, as Charmaz (2014) cautioned, "a recipe." Grounded theory welcomes fluidity, spontaneity, and innovation.

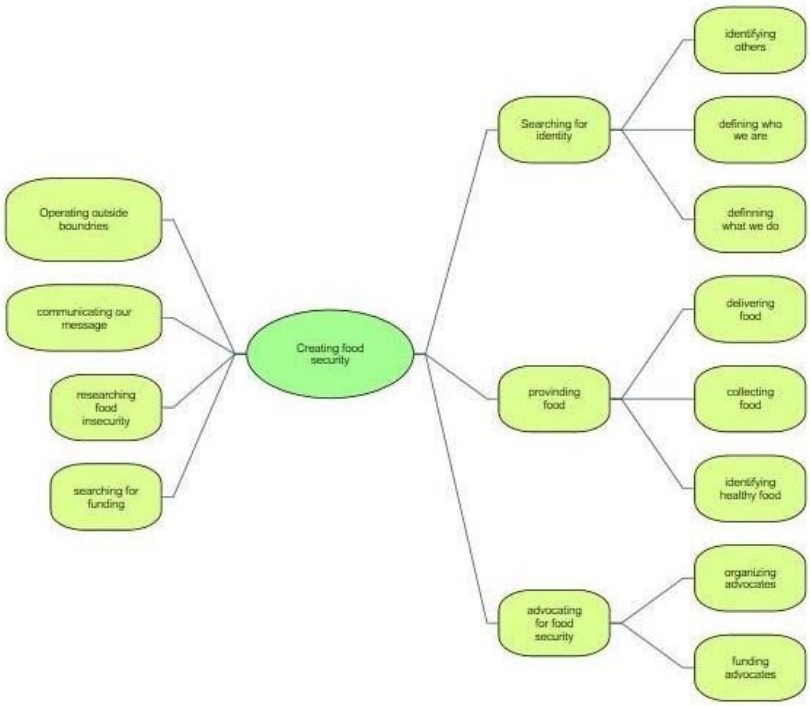
I can relate to Charmaz's "not a recipe" metaphor. I am an accomplished cook, yet I seldom follow recipes. Quite often, I start off cooking with a recipe in mind. Yet, as I prepare my meal, my intuition and creativity lead me to add and subtract ingredients,

experiment with processes, and adjust my technique. My approach to coding and analyzing was like my approach to cooking.

Before I began coding, I formulated a list of initial codes under the category of Creating Food Security (see Figure 6). When I began coding interviews, new codes quickly emerged. My approach to coding was "more is better". Initially, I coded every line and abundantly created codes. My codes were gerunds, so I focused on verbs: "I became interested" was coded as "getting involved". I created memos for the codes that included my thoughts on the codes and how the code related to other codes and emerging categories. As the interviews progressed, I began to axial code using MAXQDA's visual tools to group codes into categories, combine codes, delete codes, and rename codes. (See Appendix 1.)

Figure 6

Initial Codes



Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is sampling "places, persons, and situations that will provide information about the concepts" the researcher is studying. Theoretical sampling can lead to further refinements of the sample based on new concepts developed after the data from the initial sample is analyzed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, loc. 2837). Charmaz (2014) described theoretical sampling as a method to focus, refine, and develop theoretical concepts. She recommended theoretical sampling "to develop properties about categories until no new properties emerge." As my coding process progressed, I refined my codes, categories, and themes. My memo became more elaborate, and I began to theorize how themes and categories were related. I began to visualize my theories by creating maps in MAXQDA (See Appendix B).

Theoretical sampling affected my coding, interview questions, and selection of research participants. For example, while coding the first interview, the concept of racism emerged along with several codes related to racism. During the first few interviews, as concepts emerged, I added questions to subsequent interviews. These questions related to the concepts of racism, COVID-19, Yale, and social justice. When concepts emerged and new categories and codes added, I would revisit and recode previous interview transcripts. As the coding proceeded theoretical sampling allowed me to code less text and focus on the dominant themes though I would always be looking for new themes.

Most of my research participants were drawn from people I had worked with while I was a member of FAWG, CCC, or WTH. Theoretical sampling led me to add three participants I had not considered. Participants often mentioned advocates that impacted FAWG in some manner. Some advocates' names were repeated several times by several different participants. Participants P16, 19, and 28 names stood out from other

names because their names were not only frequent but their names were also associated with a particular theme. Therefore, I sought out those advocates to participate in my research.

Research Gap

My methodology and participants filled three research gaps noted by Gunderson & Ziliak (2014):

1. More qualitative research is needed to provide data that quantitative studies cannot provide.
2. The research sample should include food-secure as well as food-insecure subjects to gain greater insight into the causes of food insecurity.
3. The research team should be interdisciplinary.

My case study incorporated these suggestions as it is a qualitative study of a group that is composed of members who identify as food secure or food insecure. The participatory research approach creates an interdisciplinary team "allowing for a richer set of questions and multiple approaches to interpreting responses" (Gundersen and Ziliak, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

The participants I selected for my case study presented some unique ethical considerations. I was an Affiliated Researcher with Yale PRCH, CCC. This was a volunteer position I accepted to gain experience working with a community organization. Through CCC, I began to participate in FAWG and WTH. Having lived experience with food insecurity, I was truly a "witness" and was welcomed into the group. After my second meeting, I was asked to participate in a subcommittee that was charged with writing a mission statement. The resulting mission statement was as follows:

"Our mission is to unite our community (New Haven) in identifying, addressing, and creating positive solutions to food insecurity through:

- Sharing our stories of our lived experiences
- Investigating the underlying causes of food insecurity
- Educating our community and policymakers
- Encouraging and supporting community voices
- Advocating for social and economic justice"

Witnesses to Hunger's mission is to share their members' stories and actively pursue opportunities for their voices to be heard. This case study has the potential to amplify their voices and expand their audience. Likewise, CCC aspired to grow their international community beyond its current boundaries. My case study introduced citizenship work from the mental healthcare field into the previously uncharted area of conflict analysis and resolution. FAWG's monthly meetings served as a venue for researchers to discuss and collaborate on research projects. The participants included seven researchers representing four different universities. This case study is an opportunity to share and collaboratively analyze valuable data with fellow researchers.

Beneficence

The participants welcomed my participation and my research into organizations. The risk of this case study creating any harm was minimal and the possible benefits are considerable. The minimal potential for harm lay in the open, and sometimes frank, discussions at CCC, FAWG, and WTH meetings. At times, participants expressed frustration with institutional or organizational processes that hampered their research or advocacy efforts. I took precautions with disclosing these frustrations. The most reliable

precaution was to share my data with members before I incorporated any data into my case study.

Validity/Credibility

I followed the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited by Marshal and Rossman, 2011, to ensure validity and credibility in qualitative research. The first procedure was member checks: sharing my data and my analysis of the data with participants. Member checks not only prevented the disclosure of harmful data but also ensured that the participants agreed with the data. The second procedure was triangulation/peer debriefing: gathering data from multiple sites and discussing findings with peers. While FAWG was my primary participant, their members were spread across many sites within New Haven. I presented my data and analysis at FAWG and CCC meetings and solicited feedback. For more in-depth analysis, I shared memos and monologues and requested written input. The third procedure was prolonged engagement. Prolonged is a subjective term, however, I believe the 24 months I engaged with the participants before the interviews began and my continued engagement with the participants during the case study case qualify as prolonged.

Creswell and Miller (2000), as cited by Marshall and Rossman, 2011, likewise suggested member checking, triangulation, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement to ensure “the rigor and usefulness of qualitative study.” Additionally, I followed the authors’ suggestions of searching for disconfirming evidence, engaging in reflexivity, developing an audit trail, and collaborating to ensure validity and credibility.

Chapter 4: FAWG Case Study

My wife's family lives in an area of Tennessee just south of an area called the Kentucky Bend. The only way to get there is through Tennessee. You see, the Kentucky Bend is a peninsula defined by the Mississippi River that forms a border with Missouri to its east, west, and north, leaving Tennessee to its south. I could point to the exact locations on the Mississippi River that define the beginning and the end of the Kentucky Bend. I could describe the area of water between these two points and talk about the people that live on its banks, the commerce that flows through the river, and the wildlife habitat in this geographic location. But to truly define the Kentucky Bend, I would have to go beyond its beginning and endpoints. I would have to describe the waters that feed this portion of the Mississippi, which created the oxbow that defines the Kentucky Bend—the Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Wabash Rivers, to name only a few. What is the significance of the rivers that flow through the Kentucky Bend? How did those waters contribute to the First Nations losing their land through genocide? Or to the introduction of cotton and the enslavement of Black Americans? Where do the waters go after they leave the Kentucky Bend—those almost infinite number of tributaries that form the Mississippi Delta?

So, it was with this case study. FAWG was created on October 12, 2012, and its last meeting was on February 4, 2020. Those dates defined the beginning and end of this case study. But to truly understand FAWG is to also understand the tributaries that flowed into FAWG: researchers like Alycia Santilli, Michael Rowe, and Marianne Chilton as well as community organizers like Billy Bromage, Kim Hart, and Susan Nappi to name a few. The river continued to confluence and bifurcate. Like the Mississippi, the FAWG is a complex set of relationships of inflows and outflows. The Kentucky Bend is only a small

piece of the Mississippi River and the FAWG is only a small piece of the New Haven food advocacy movement. While this is a case study, I also presented the people and organizations that influenced FAWG and the people and organizations that FAWG influenced.

When I interviewed Kim Hart, she shared an experience about a woman who retold a story she had heard at an advocacy meeting. “That upset my nerves,” Kim admitted. “Why? Because we are an advocacy group. These women need to get out there and tell their own story. How dare she tell someone else’s story when a person is better able to do it themselves?

Taking Kim’s advice, I did not attempt to tell somebody else’s story. My findings are a compilation of the story of FAWG as told by its members. I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing their stories only to the extent of removing utterances, changing tenses, substituting pronouns for proper nouns to add clarity, and compiling sentences to create a smoother timeline. I have limited my own narrative to presenting facts related to dates and descriptions of people and organizations.

Background

On February 4, 2020, a group of 15 volunteers from educational institutes, nonprofits, and grassroots organizations as well as concerned citizens—collectively known as the Food Access Working Group—gathered at the United Way of Greater New Haven to discuss food security, food access, and food advocacy issues and initiatives underway in New Haven, CT. Before the noon meeting commenced, small groups of people greeted each other like the old friends they were. The tri-chairs, Billy Bromage, Kim Hart, and Jill Dotlo had been members of FAWG since they began meeting in 2013.

Many others in attendance had also been there from the beginning, including the first presenter, Alycia Santilli.

As she had for more than a year, Alycia reported on the progress of the New Haven Food Assistance Resource Guide, a listing and map of 53 food pantries, soup kitchens, and providers of free meals in communities across New Haven. The guide was a collaborative project funded through grants obtained by CARE (Community Alliance for Research and Engagement) and compiled with the assistance of the members of FAWG. In typical fashion, representatives of the New Haven Food Policy Council, United Way, Witnesses to Hunger, and the Summer Meals Committee offered updates on the status of their current and planned activities. The meeting concluded early, and the members honored each other and the work they had accomplished in the past seven years; today would be the last time they met as FAWG. A member present that day recalls Billy stating, "The work continues. It is all about relationships and we have spun off many initiatives."

FAWG was a working group of the New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC). NHFPC was conceived by the City Council in 2005 and conducted its first meeting in 2007. The NHFPC's mission was to build and maintain a food system that nourishes all people in a just and sustainable manner. The NHFPC worked to achieve its "…mission by collaborating with the many stakeholders in the food system, creating a forum for community members to have a voice on food issues, and providing guidance to the City on food policy" (New Haven Food Policy Council, 2012, 2015). The efforts of the NHFPC reached a crescendo at the New Haven Food Summit in October of 2012, where the NHFPC unveiled a draft of the *New Haven Food Action Plan*. The plan was a result

of the collaborative efforts of 130 diverse organizations. It outlined 16 strategies to achieve three goals:

1. Increase access to healthy food for all people of New Haven.
2. Strengthen New Haven's local food economy.
3. Encourage healthy food choices through education and marketing efforts.

The Food Action Plan called for the formation of working groups to carry out strategies to meet the plan's goals; FAWG was one of those working groups.

Forming a Group, 2011–12

A year later, when I interviewed Alycia she recalled:

> It was really shocking to me as a newer person in New Haven at that time, back in 2009, to see how deep food insecurity was in New Haven. We found in our research that in a third of low-income neighborhoods, people were reporting food insecurity; one in three people is huge. When food insecurity really bubbled up to the surface, as you know there are high rates of all sorts of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and there are high rates of asthma. As an organization that was looking to make an impact on an issue, it just felt like we could not overlook the issue of food insecurity in New Haven if we were going to approach chronic disease prevention from a community level. It was a no-brainer in terms of food security being an issue that we needed to focus on. Starting in 2010, we started slowly getting involved in issues related to food insecurity in New Haven. I have been active, and other CARE staff have been active with FAWG and with the New Haven Policy Council.
>
> CARE is housed at Southern Connecticut State College, the College of Health and

Human Services, and the Yale School of Public Health. Alycia and other CARE staff's participation in the NHFPC was instrumental in producing the Food Action Plan and the formation of the working groups. Billy Bromage, a social worker and community organizer, remembered how he became active in FAWG during his internship, and subsequent employment at CARE:

> When I was at CARE, we did some food advocacy as part of our public health response. At the time I was involved with the New Haven Food Policy Council. I was not a member or anything like that, just somebody that attended regularly. We ended up breaking into these committees—working groups—and I volunteered to co-chair. I might have even chaired because nobody stepped up right away to be the co-chair of what became the Food Assistance Working Group. We were a scrappy group; for a while there was maybe like 8 or 10 of us. We would rotate to different meeting places so people could attend. Every so often we would meet at Stop & Shop because Kate Walton was working as their community liaison person. She could get us a room and she did not have to travel across town to attend a meeting.

Billy, who has a master's degree in social work with a concentration in community organizing, used his education and experience to recruit folks from a pool of community agencies, food providers, and community activists. Jill, who became one the tri-chairs of FAWG, shared:

> Billy was the mover and shaker. He connected all the dots. He was knowledgeable if you want to know about anything food related. I was so inspired by what was going on that I started a newsletter at Community Action Agency of New Haven

(CAANH) dedicated to food insecurity in New Haven. Billy gave me leads and suggested different people I should talk to. Then I started to attend the FAWG meetings. It was that simple. I just sat in on meetings and I just thought, "this is interesting and maybe there's something I can do to help".

Kim, who completed the FAWG leadership trio, revealed how she began her involvement with the NHFPC:

> Billy kept telling me, Kim, come on, come on. And I was like, OK, one day I finally did. And I became a member. I was the only African American, the only Black person on the whole council. But now they are very diverse. My biggest drawback for not wanting to join was, what do I have to offer? I don't have all the knowledge and the reports and all that. I don't know how to get the reports. The one thing that Billy told me that stuck with me, he said, "Kim, because you have the experience, because the Food Policy Council is all about food insecurity and how to eradicate it, your personal experience can bring a wealth of goodness and to this meeting." Then we had our annual meeting and that's where FAWG was born—at the annual meeting. And I was a part of that!

Accomplishing Goals, 2012–13

When I asked Billy about his experiences with FAWG, he recounted a story of the group's contribution to securing funding to feed New Haven's elderly population:

> Kate used to work at the food bank, and she had written the application for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). She was like, "this is ridiculous, we don't have this program." Kate, she is a hell of an advocate; she's tough. She was up in arms with the fact that we had written this plan and it had never gone anywhere. We saw an opportunity. I started organizing with her and

> Pat Wallace, who was the director of elderly services, and we worked with the Area Agency on Aging and different people that worked with seniors. The three of us, we just kept working and building a coalition, talking about it all we could, working with End Hunger. We went to the FRAC (Food Research & Action Center) conference—this was auspicious—there was a group that met at the end of the conference from New England. I went to the meeting and the crew from End Hunger Connecticut was there and people I knew from Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Everywhere I went I used to rail about CSFP; I was hot on CSFP at the time. The CSFP organization, a woman from New Hampshire and this guy from Detroit, were chairs and they were pushing for CSFP, a program that was funded in 40 states, but not in CT. They educated us on how to apply for the program and the people from Rhode Island and us pushed our senators, [Senator] Murphy from CT along with [U.S. Representative] Rosa [DeLauro] pushing in Congress. With just a little pushing, they were able to get Connecticut and six other states funded. That was kind of cool and we have had CSFP ever since. The spark of that came out from FAWG, which I was really excited about. I was excited that we could achieve something like that. So that was big. And then we just kept going. FAWG became its own thing and became a catch-all for anything having to do with food security.

Another early accomplishment was FAWG's contribution to expanding the Summer Meal Program. Children who received free meals during the school year were at risk of going without meals during the summer months. Summer Meals is a USDA program, administered by the state, that provides funding to distribute meals during the summer months. Billy detailed FAWG's relationship with Summer Meals:

End Hunger was managing the program with the city, then we came in and added FAWG, and a lot of people and energy to it. In the first summer we participated there was a 23% increase in meals served, which was, unheard of around the country. You cannot obviously track these statistics to one thing. But I do think the supper program [sites that served free meals] was minimal when we started. We helped with the proof-of-concept phase through our advocacy and proving that supper sites were very popular and continuing to do outreach. There were maybe eight total supper sites around the whole city when we started. We did a lot of work on securing supper sites, working with the Catholic Worker House and different people to say, "Hey, will you guys host a supper spot?" The supper program grew significantly in the number of kids getting meals and in the number of sites.

The second year, End Hunger Connecticut and FAWG helped write a grant to the National League of Cities and FRAC to expand our summer program in the city. The money was to retrofit those little school buses used to distribute food. The school got some big coolers, and they got money to pay some of our cafeteria workers. It was basic craft; it was folding tables they could put out to put food on. That is something I'm really proud of; I think FAWG was really instrumental in expanding The Summer Meals program. And this conversation we are having now about feeding kids all these days, I wouldn't say that we are responsible in our organizing that pushed it all the way. But I think that we helped initiate and have kept the conversation at least on a low boil and sometimes more than that over the years, and I think that has been a major accomplishment.

Centering on Lived Experience, 2013–15

Under the heading of "catch all for anything to do with food security" was advocacy training. In 2013, FAWG supported advocacy training for women who had lived experienced with food insecurity. Kim passionately spoke about how she got involved with advocacy before joining FAWG:

> My first real taste of advocacy was when I was homeless and living in Stepping Stones Transitional Housing, and every fourth Wednesday of every month they would have a meeting from 5:30 to 7:30, and dinner was included. In the beginning I was going just for the dinners. I had no intention of being an advocate. But I wouldn't leave right after dinner because, you know, I just couldn't in my conscious mind leave, even though a lot of people did. I hung around and finally got it and I started getting more involved. Then it wasn't so much a chicken dinner that I was going for, it was about the issues that they were talking about. That is where I learned how to testify before the Senate in Hartford. That is where I learned how to be on a panel discussion at the Black and Hispanic Caucus in DC. Because the advocacy bug bit me.

Kim and eleven other women were paid to attend the FAWG training facilitated by Billy and Sharon Taylor. Kim continued with her advocacy story, "He trained us to speak to reporters, he trained us how to do an elevator speech. To get your point across with three bullet points. He taught us, along with a coalition of people, because we always had different people teaching us."

The following year, in 2014, the women had an opportunity to put their advocacy skills into action. Kim and two of her classmates, Jo-Ann and Miracle, participated in the

Witnesses to Hunger photo project. “The whole premise behind Witnesses is to tell your story through photos. We want to tell our stories to people who can do something about it, meaning lawmakers and policymakers,” Kim explained.

Marianne Chilton founded Witnesses to Hunger in 2008. She reminisced about discussing photographs with a group of women from Philadelphia and how those photographs made their way to Washington DC and eventually to New Haven,

> We are talking about the photographs and what does almost all of it come back to; as a child, I was beaten, neglected, abused, raped. The first exhibit of Witnesses to Hunger is all about commitment to the women in Witnesses; what is their priority? When I do these reciprocal focus groups with them and people have chosen these main themes, main issues, their main issue is safety. And what is at the root of safety? It is that they have been violated so many times. How do you get a policymaker, someone like Senator Casey, to come into the exhibit and understand this? Very difficult! What we managed to do in the original Witnesses to Hunger exhibit was we created a booth that had three videos. Three people could sit in the booth at the same time and listen to videos. One was called Trauma and Violence, the other one was Anger. Because we had a ton of photographs of people expressing their anger, a lot of anger, justifiable rage. The third one was Imagine; it started out with John Lennon’s piece Imagine, “no need for greed or hunger, etc.”
>
> The other thing is how do you get people to not continue to abuse you if you are going to talk about your trauma? How do you get it so that it is not retraumatizing to the people who are talking about their trauma and traumatizing to the people who are listening? How do you get them to maybe take some action

on SNAP benefits, WIC, et cetera, et cetera? This has been my life's work so far, and I am still working it. But why we have hunger in America is very obvious: because of colonialism, enslavement, imperialism, capitalism, etc. Again, people say, "Oh, we can't get rid of capitalism, let's just improve SNAP." No, I am done with that. No one wants to be on food stamps. No one wants to be on that.

New Haven happened because Rosa DeLauro is so cool, and she wanted this. We had our exhibit at the House of Representatives. Rosa DeLauro was there. She was very deeply moved by the people that she met from Philadelphia and moved by those photographs that she said, "Are you willing to come to New Haven?" And we said, "Absolutely." And that is how we did it; we got members of Witnesses—by that time we were in Philly, Boston, and Baltimore—to come with us to New Haven to kind of get them up and running. It was the women from Philly, Boston, Baltimore who pulled in the New Haven folks, thanks to the connections with Rosa DeLauro, who got Billy, this food group [FAWG], and Kim, who was already an advocate. They got interested in the way that Witnesses was doing advocacy.

Alycia remembered being at the New Haven City Hall photo exhibit:

I have such a vivid image of being in the atrium and there is a podium and all of these amazing photographs displayed and the Witnesses are there. Rosa DeLauro was there, it was great. Having that kind of photo voice project to focus on really galvanized Kim and Billy to be able to organize grassroots advocates, people with lived experience to advocate around food security.

Billy provided details on who attended the meeting and insights into the day's events:

> We had an exhibit at City Hall, which was well attended. There was a lot of bigwigs there. Michael Rowe and Larry were there, the mayor was there, then we went to Rosa's house. We had organized this conversation with all the influential people in New Haven to watch videos. The FQHC, CEOs, somebody fairly high-level from CMHC. Rosa shuttled everybody over. She served hors d'oeuvres and drinks and we all chatted. It didn't really end up being much, but it was it was a good conversation. And then Witnesses sort of limped along a little bit.

A year later, in 2015, FAWG joined with other agencies and non-profits from across the state to organize Connecticut Witnesses to Hunger. Members came from communities that included Amston, Bridgeport, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, New Haven, New London, Westport, and Woodbridge. Kim recalled:

> With the New Haven Witnesses, we were showing how inner-city people, how poor people that reported food insecurity lived. With the Connecticut group we wanted to show that food insecurity was rampant throughout the whole state, no matter what the zip code was, no matter what town, city, or county you lived in, you know that there was always someone who suffered from food insecurity. I was blown away when I learned there was food insecurity in Woodbridge. Are you kidding me? Woodbridge, Connecticut. [Gasps] But, yeah, there were. So, we recruited people from all over.

Billy offered details of the resulting photo project that took place in February of 2016:

> PRCH was involved, Hispanic Health Council, CABHN, the Connecticut

> Association of Basic Human Needs, and some other partners. End Hunger Connecticut were the leaders, DMHAS funded it, Advocacy Unlimited funded some of it. There was a statewide exhibit at the Legislative Office Building in the hallway at the lobby. We did a photo exhibit of seventy-something photos from people all around the state.

Growing an Organization, 2015–2017

FAWG's early successes with the CSFP Grant, advocacy training, the Witnesses to Hunger Photo Project, the Summer Meals Program, and their relationship with Senator Murphy and Congresswomen DeLauro attracted attention and, more importantly, resources and new members. Susan Nappi of United Way of Greater New Haven Recalled:

> My boss said, there's this group of emergency food providers. They meet monthly. It is real ragtag, really catch-as-catch-can. They want us to take on the leadership of the FAWG. And she said it is inappropriate because if we do it is going to take on a tone. We are a funder; it is inappropriate for us because then that changes the dynamic of the group. She said just show up at that meeting, take notes, and try to help. And Cherie Grant, who was at the food bank, was like, please take this on. I was like, no, but we will give you the space to meet as often as you need to, we have this beautiful conference room. We just kept meeting and then we just started forming relationships and it grew, and it grew and grew.

Jill Dotlo remembered the early meetings at United Way and offered her perspective on the growth of FAWG:

> When we began to go to United Way, there still were not a lot of people. I believe that we really grew because we were welcoming, and that is the number one thing

> you need to be if you want people to join forces. FAWG began to increase, and more and more people came, and we just served a great purpose of telling people what was out there and how it worked.

Steve Werlin, Executive Director of Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK) and an original member of FAWG, noticed FAWG's growth: "You know, within a few years, more and more people started attending. It became clear that there was interest, not only in policy work, but also advocacy work on the ground level and discussing operational issues."

James Cramer, A Yale Divinity School graduate and Executive Director of Loaves and Fishes, an emergency food provider, discussed his interest in FAWG:

> When I first started going to FAWG, there were only one or two providers in the room. There were a lot of people like Billy who are not associated with a food provider. He is very interested in food; he is an activist. Mark was there. He is big into the union, but he is not a provider. I realized that there were a lot of providers in communities of faith. I just saw this huge opportunity to connect activists and the people of faith who are doing the groundwork and try to get folks to respect both groups' languages because I speak both groups' languages.

Susan was one of the people doing the groundwork through her faith community, which led to her involvement in FAWG.

> I went under the auspices my church, A member of the Food Policy Council said to me, "Come to a Food Policy Council meeting," so I did. That was in 2016 or 2017. And I just listened for a while to understand what was going on. I continued to go to the meetings and listen more than participate because I was not that knowledgeable and I learned a lot about what goes on in New Haven and how

> much it is interconnected with feeding people and how many different agencies participate, some that I didn't even realize that do, and it was very interesting. In 2018 they asked me to join the council and I have been with them ever since.

In 2016, the relationship with the NHFPC and FAWG was impacted by a new member. Austin Bryniarski, a Yale graduate student, reflected on his involvement:

> I became a member, and it was really through the counsel that I found myself building relationships with people who had been doing anti-hunger, anti-food insecurity work for a long time. In 2016 the city had just hired its first food system policy director. I went to an annual meeting and was nominated and selected to be the vice chair of the Food Policy Council alongside a chair who was someone who I came to look up to and learned a lot from in terms of food justice. At some point he had moved out of New Haven and into Hamden and he was no longer eligible to be the chair of a New Haven commission. By sort of an accident, I became the chair of the Food Policy Council. I would go to FAWG meetings regularly while I was chair of the Food Policy Council, mostly as just a matter of staying updated and doing due diligence, being present and making sure there was still a connection between FAWG and the broader council. FAWG took on a life of its own in a way that a lot of people who went to FAWG meetings did not go to council meetings and vice versa. I do not think that was a bad thing. I think for something to be a working group of a larger council and for there not to be a ton of connectivity between them, it made me think that I want to go and get a sense of what was going on. FAWG was a good thing because a lot of the interest within FAWG, at least according to the meetings that I went to, was in

programmatic questions around collaboration and technical assistance and sometimes opportunities for advocacy.

Lori Martin founded Haven's Harvest in 2016, adding food waste and reclaimed food to FAWG's agenda. The website for Haven's Harvest summarizes their organization: "Haven's Harvest offers timely and reliable surplus food pick-up and delivery in the New Haven area, connecting businesses with community sites through the transfer of high quality excess food." Lori espoused FAWG's value to her organization:

> When I first got there, it was Jill, Billy, and Kim—and I love Kim, I love them all. I have always appreciated Kim's cheerfulness and sweet spirit and welcome to everyone there. That is obviously how she walks the world. The most powerful thing that happened was to learn about Alicia's work at CARE. I think that was the year they must have done the survey in October, and they got that information back out to the community by December, which is powerful. That is why I was there. I went to get that type of information. I want to know what is happening in the city in terms of what the food insecurity rate is and who might the partners be and what are the concerns? We use that information; of the six poorest neighborhoods Fair Haven has the highest food insecurity rate, and that is my adjacent neighborhood. When we started, once we figured out the pillars of where people get food in the city, we know that is where to take the food. Where are the people in those neighborhoods? Because that is who needs to be served the most. The overlay for that, of course, is those People of Color, often in those neighborhoods and we are White people, and we are cognizant always and at this point we will say we strive to be anti-racist, but noticing: What does that look like when we show up and try to make connections in that community? And that is

> never something that I take for granted; never a day goes by that I do not keep that in my head, in my heart. We talk about our work not being charity work, that we do this work in solidarity with people; that for me is always the key. And I talk about that with volunteers, so they understand, we are not here to save the world. We are here to save each other, to do it together.

Hyclis Williams, a family service worker with New Haven Public Schools, food advocate, and volunteer at Haven's Harvest, recalled:

> Lori is such a wonderful person; she is just spectacular. Eventually, we started to get the donations at our site [New Haven Public Schools]. Every Friday, people look forward to that. We get donations from Yale, Quinnipiac University, and UNH. Lori has done the work to get all these different people to help and to donate food. She has a phone app that they can sign up to donate food on. I volunteer to go pick the food up and bring it to our school. Lori emailed me one day and said she attends this meeting and wants volunteers to come and tell their story. Ever since I went there [FAWG] I never stopped going. When I got to FAWG and realized this is not just me. I learned about the Connecticut Food Bank. I got to know a little bit more about them and see what the soup kitchens and everybody else is doing. I happened to go to some of the soup kitchens too and see what they get for donations. I thought, you know, there is a lot of food out here, but are we getting it to the right people? When they made a list of the food resources in New Haven and you look at the map, you see there's food everywhere that people can get. But then the quality is another thing: It is canned goods and dried beans and poor people food. At FAWG, I did learn a lot about food and food distribution, food waste, and the fact that we were

trying to work as a team to reduce food waste and to reduce hunger and to get food to the to the people who need it. That was good work for me. And I really like that.

Creating New Opportunities, 2017–2018

Kim chronicled her efforts to grow Witnesses:

I tried to start up Witnesses in New Haven. I did it by word of mouth. Drexel [University] helped me; they came down on September 25, 2017. We were able to get the lower level of 660 Winchester, which is the Stepping Stone. Everybody was saying that they were going to come, but only one person showed up. I brought that information back to the FAWG meeting. They said, "So how did the recruitment go? How many people did you get?" I said, "One person, my niece, said she felt sorry for me." Susan [Napi] says, "Look Kim, I think that this is a great idea. I think it is a great opportunity for New Haven. I think what United Way is going to do is blast it out to all 600 of our community organizations." Then she blasted it out to everyone she knew through her organization. We said the next meeting is going to be on January 20, 2018. Drexel came down again, and it was super. We had a lot of people who were in attendance, and we served lunch, we gave bus passes. Lunch, transportation, and childcare: those are three major draws, right?

Billy, who was now working at CMHC and PRCH, added:

We had that meeting in January 2018. Bridget [Williamson] was a huge help and she recruited probably half the people that showed up. We had about 25–30 people at St. Paul St. James where Loaves and Fishes is. It was great; we had a ton of energy generated that day and Witnesses has been slamming since then. That was exciting. I should mention, getting funding from the United Way was

critical. The fact that Jason, Elie, and Susan Nappi really believed in us and put money aside in their budget—that was huge for us to have some money to be able to spend on stipends.

Bridgett, who is a Peer Advocate and employed by PRCH, divulged,

We had been meeting for a little while, probably over a year when Billy came up and was saying, “Listen, we are starting to open up this chapter about Witness to Hunger.” It was on a Saturday, the first day I was there at the church on Olive and James. It was really cool in there. They had a nice spread of food for lunch. To me, food and meetings go together. The reason why I joined was because I came from a family of 10. You talk about food insecurity. I do not remember a lot of times when I was younger when there was food on my table. I literally had to stop being a kid to provide food and medicine for my grandmother and brother. I was robbed as a child to become an adult at 11. I believe it is paramount for me to be a part of something bigger than myself, especially with my lived experience.

Susan Napi shared her thoughts on United Way’s contribution to Witnesses’ growth:

I was like, how can we support Witnesses? I think we started out just with small bits of money. I saw them growing more in Kim’s leadership and Billy’s leadership and having more and more meetings, and I asked them, what can we do? First it was supporting refreshments for their meetings. Then it was supporting gift cards for their meetings. You know, even refreshments, it still connotes I am doing something for you. Instead, we will give you gift cards. You can do whatever you want. I was trying help promote their autonomy. Then we

supported childcare for them. At one point, we gave them a laptop and said, “You can have space here.” And then we said, “We can help you go for grants.” Then they got grants together and we helped write the grants. We were just trying to be an extra set of hands with our own view and our own access to resources and trying to marry those things. Jason’s work really supported them to becoming what they are today.

As Witnesses grew, Susan delegated the support of Witnesses to Jason Martinez. Jason recalled:

It was through Susan’s work with Billy and Kim that I was introduced to Witnesses to Hunger. Then I spent the next two and a half years seeing how United Way could play a role in supporting folks like Witnesses and the work that they are doing and should be doing. I started attending meetings on Saturday with Kim and Billy, having to balance, who am I to come in and tell folks how they need to do things? Rather, how can I just be a support and how can I be a presence and without patronizing or making it come across like I knew any better than they did. At the same time, I always wanted folks to feel like, “Oh, he is one of us.” So, I was very open about my history, about being on food stamps and my mom struggling. Because I did not want folks looking at me like, “Who are you from United Way?” Which of course, they did not. They were the most welcoming group that I have ever been a part of. I never felt that they looked at me any certain way except as a support. It was really thanks to Susan; she was the one who said United Way needs to support Witnesses. It was because of her that we made a formal grant to Witnesses to support their overall operational costs. We met with Kim and Billy and said, “Here’s kind of overall big buckets of where we

> like you to use these dollars, but we are not going to tell you how to spend it, you know what your group needs." They did the surveying at mobile pantries to get an idea of what the community needs were, what the challenges were. It was important that folks from the community who looked like those who are in line at those pantries were the ones doing the surveying—that was so critical. And of course, we paid the members through stipends because if anyone is going to give up their time, they deserve to be paid for their time. They have value and that should be demonstrated. WTH came in at the Hamden, in April of 2019. We had the Hamden Hunger Summit, and Witnesses came and did small group sessions at different tables. How valuable that was! I still have folks who talk about that to me.

In 2018, with the support of Rosa DeLauro, United Way was able to secure a grant to fund 12 AmeriCorps Vista service members for three years. Holly Velleca described her experience:

> I found out about AmeriCorps because I was originally looking at Food Corps. I did not end up doing the Food Corps because my application was too late in the year. But through Food Corps, I found out about AmeriCorps and the Vista program. I really had no idea what it was going into it. I just saw that United Way was looking for somebody who wanted to work on their food security efforts in the New Haven region. I ended up doing my interviews with Jason and Ellie, and then I got offered the position and I started in August of 2018. From the people that I have met at Vista's trainings and orientations, a lot are just coming out of college and kind of doing the program because they don't really know what they want to do. And for me, that was totally different. I was there for the work

experience. I really was looking at it as a full-time job. And United Way treated me like an employee, which is not the case for a lot of AmeriCorps Vistas. They are kind of treated like interns. The whole point of AmeriCorps Vista is to build capacity for the programs that you are in service to. That is how my role with Witnesses and FAWG came to be. I was mostly working with Witnesses and FAWG my first year. Regarding FAWG, I would take notes sometimes, I would attend the meeting as United Way's representative, I assisted with summer meals—kind of marketing and outreach with some FAWG representatives. With Witnesses. Again, I was there as a United Way representative when Jason could not make it. I would go and sit in on the meetings and let him know what was going on and wherever we could step in and assist with United Way's resources, we would discuss. I helped Witnesses set up some social media accounts. The big one was their Facebook account. And I created a page for them and then transitioned it over to Wanda and Deborah, I believe. And I helped train them on how to use it. I really didn't want to be the one owning it. I just wanted to help set it up and let them own it, however they wish to do so. Another thing with Witnesses that I did was to help with making fliers, and I helped with the website a little bit. And then the other one was when we went to the capital for Hunger Awareness Day, and they had their photo voice project. The Witnesses that participated in that project would email me their pictures and I would compile it for them and keep everything organized. Then when they came into the office, we all worked together to write captions and titles for their photos. Then I organized everything, and I printed it out and then we went up to the Capitol with them.

The same year Holly began her service with AmeriCorps and Witnesses reorganized, CARE responded to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Request for Application (RFA). Alycia recounted:

> REACH [Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health] is a grant program through the CDC. Similar to CARE's trajectory, the CDC has also been more and more focused on systems-level change, community-level change. While the REACH program has been around for a while and has been focused on chronic disease prevention, it had previously been focused more on individual-level behavior change and has started to shift towards looking more at systems-level change to address chronic disease prevention. When the RFA came out for REACH, there was a whole section on nutrition that they were asking communities to respond to different strategies that they wanted to see in communities. New Haven was just well suited for the types of activities that the CDC was asking for. They were really interested in increasing access to healthy foods for low-income populations and for Black and Brown communities. We had been working with the New Haven Food Policy Council and with FAWG. We knew that there was a lot of potential to do some work around increasing access to healthy food. Our focus for the REACH grant has been on encouraging food pantries to adopt food service guidelines and through a program called SWAP, Supporting Wellness at Pantries. That has been a big focus of our work in terms of increasing access to healthy foods at food pantries—trying to get pantries to focus more on how they can bring in inventory that is healthier and in the foods that people have been requesting for years. People want access to healthy food. They feel like there is this kind of stereotype or misnomer that people who are food

> insecure don't necessarily have or want access to healthy foods, but we feel like we've heard over and over again from people who are facing the issue every day that they do want access to fresh, healthy foods. They want fresh produce. They want fresh meat. We as a community must come together and figure out a way to make sure we're providing that. REACH also allowed us to look at the systems across New Haven.

Latha Swamy joined the City of New Haven as Director of Food System Policy in September 2018. She offered her views on the New Haven food advocacy movement:

> Work in New Haven is very focused on downstream solutions to systemic issues. So that is thinking about food pantries, working with food banks, and emergency food system. I am more interested in upstream solutions like holding corporations accountable or government accountable or changing policies, so we do not even need food pantries or an emergency food system. I describe it this way: it is like having a water tank and there is a leak and then you put a Band-Aid on it or plug the hole. That is the emergency food system. But what I am really interested in is examining the structure of the water tank and then fortifying the structure or redoing the structure. I went to FAWG—because I was not initially interested but obviously it is part of my job—and it was one of the more active working groups. I obviously went right away to see how I could fit in and be of help. I started off with giving updates of my work that are relevant to the emergency food system. And that is one way where we were able to find out about cool partnerships or ways that people could interact with me as a city official to actually make some change in policy or relationships or processes in the city. I definitely advocated for that internally.

Identifying Structural Issues, 2018–2019

Professor Mary Corcoran from National University of Ireland Maynooth arrived in New Haven in the summer of 2018 as a visiting Fulbright Scholar. She immersed herself in the New Haven food movement during the fall of 2018 and returned in the early summer of 2019. She expressed her thoughts about her visit:

> Witnesses are amazing the way that they mobilize. Also, the way that people like Billy supported the organizing, without getting in the way as a white man. I really think the way they all work together creates energy and momentum to get things done. It's different than some other groups where you just see people lose steam and the momentum dies down. That doesn't seem to have happened with Witnesses, especially with the core group, but really, it's larger than the core group. They really do keep going on, you know. I just loved the idea of voice. I thought that was brilliant, just telling the story, using their voice and the idea of having visual images, I just find visual culture is so much more important for them to communicate. Like if language fails you because, you know, it doesn't work for you or you don't have the language to use in a scenario, then using your voice, using visuals, I think can be so powerful. But I also felt Witnesses to Hunger, it's like an intervention, it's like here's an intervention in this public space. "I'm going up to Hartford (LOB) and I'm going to, you know, bear witness at a public hearing and talk about my life." And it focuses people's minds for as long as they are listening and looking. But I think without follow through that is more targeted, I think it would be hard to make an impact. That is just my sense, but I don't know.

I thought there was a lot of duplication between the Food Policy Council and FAWG because it was kind of the same cast of characters, except FAWG was much wider. I thought there were a lot of reporting of issues. There was not really that much deliberative communication at the Food Policy Council. It was kind of reporting stuff and ticking boxes and circulating information. I sensed that some people around the table were trying to make it more strategic, more political, more food justice. But I think that was quite hard. I mean, there were more voices, more people around the table at the FAWG meetings. But I felt that if you've got a trajectory of stuff going from charity to reform, to radicalism, it was very much I felt, the voices representing the charities, the food banks, the turkey drives that was really strong. It just did not seem like politics to me, it didn't seem like policy. There seemed an inordinate emphasis at some meetings on getting people to volunteer to hand out turkeys to poor people. The other thing that surprised me was the thing about the police substations being used as food banks. How can this be? You know, who could think that that was a good policy? You want to try and reach the most vulnerable and marginalized people some of whom may have issues with their immigrant status and say, "come to the police station to get some food."

The standpoint presented by CT CORE was impressive. They had a politically worked out analysis and belief in the power of change and vision of where they wanted to go through community organizing. I also thought it was a huge ask. I mean, you are really starting from a very low base to try and transform something [the current food system] that's so embedded and so institutionalized. But I thought that their politics made a great deal of sense connecting back,

thinking about generations of dispossession in American society, and aligning with other kinds of poor people's movements in the south. And that there are examples around the states of where farmers have, particularly people of color, have tried to reclaim and to become cultivators of the soil or their own managers and to organize that.

Susan Napi echoed some of Mary's findings:

There are a lot of complex problems that need to be solved that the work has highlighted for me how complex this work is. I mean, in the six years I really was immersed in the work, White supremacy was, of course, a thing that we knew about, but we were not skilled at dealing with it. And a lot of the people in the food justice space were more about food provision than food justice. It was about doing more of the same, which was just giving food, giving food out, not questioning the fact that when the food bank sets out its goal of giving out more food, that is food injustice because you are essentially saying you need to do more of the same stuff and you're not going to address the root causes of this issue. CTCORE came about. I saw them and met with them. They were the real deal with dealing with food justice from a perspective of Black communities in particular. I knew that that space was important. I also did not know how to marry the two. So how do you bring the people along who have been working in this food space, who have come from this view of more pounds out is good to getting them to switch to see how while their hearts are in the right place, there is an aspect of that food work that perpetuates injustice and disparities. I think I was exiting just as that was coming to the forefront.

CTCORE was "…dedicated to dismantling systemic and structural racism in

Connecticut, Black liberation, and restorative transformation (CT Community for Racial Equity, n.d.).” CTCORE was a host site for the AmeriCorps Food Justice Project in Connecticut. Kelly Shreeve, a recent graduate student, provided leadership for CTCORE’s Food Justice Network during her service with AmeriCorps. Kelly talked about her experiences,

> I first remember trying to make a connection with Witnesses way back in my first year of AmeriCorps. Kim and Billy reached out to me because they wanted to connect with CTCORE. We had our first meeting and I remember Kim and Billy coming in and talking about what the connection was between Witnesses and CTCORE. That was a connection that we were interested in exploring, but not quite sure how to solidify. From my perspective, Witnesses was doing more food access work and CTCORE was doing racial justice, systemic change work at slightly different levels and with slightly different interest. Witnesses, they have changed a lot over the last two years. The training with CTCORE was a culmination of a little bit more of coming together. But I think for a while there, it was like Witnesses was really interested in just trying to get food to people and obviously understands that race is an issue. Racial injustice is an issue, but not focusing specifically on racial justice advocacy. And CTCORE was very much focused on racial justice advocacy. Until Witnesses was interested in moving into the racial justice advocacy realm it was a little bit difficult to figure out, how do these two organizations support each other or work together? CTCORE did not do a great job of being interested in, like advocating for SNAP. I think that there could have been a little bit more flexibility there from CTCORE as well. But they

had kind of a hard line against emergency food, just not the realm that they worked in.

I continued to go to Witnesses as somebody who represented CTCORE and as somebody who just was really interested in all forms of food advocacy. I wanted to be a part of Witnesses, help Witnesses as much as I could, and keep a finger on what Witnesses was doing so that when I went back to CTCORE if there was anything that came up at CTCORE that would have helped Witnesses, I could advocate and put in a good word for any sort of connection that made sense if one came up. By keeping tabs on both organizations' work, I could find overlaps.

The connection there really came in when Witnesses started being interested in moving into racial justice advocacy. Maybe not advocacy, but at least training and learning and how all that kind of works together. Billy pulled me aside at one point and said they are interested in getting training and could Essa potentially provides that training and could I help facilitate that conversation. I reached out to Essa and connected Billy, Essa, and Kim and they said, "Is this something we all want to try to do?" That is how those racial justice trainings with CTCORE came about—it was that behind-the-scenes connection. It was a great overlap. I mean, we just had to bide our time for about two years until something came up. This makes sense because otherwise I think it would have felt forced. There is a piece of organization collaboration that sometimes you just have to wait it out until something makes sense and just keep tabs on each other. Kelly also reflected on what she learned during her time at AmeriCorps: I grew to become more appreciative of what I call "emergency food" than I had been before. My experience in academia was, "We need to stop giving people food;

> we need to change systems." Having been on the ground, I realized, yes, we need to change systems. Also, people really need food right now, we cannot just stop giving food out—that needs to be also a piece of the strategy. We cannot just kind of romanticize system change without acknowledging that, yes, people need to also just be handed food. Like that is a very important piece that, to me, feels kind of backwards from how a lot of people address food. Usually, people start with the "We need to get people food" and then they go to the systems, which I guess kind of happened to me. First, in college, I was like, "Oh, we need to give people food." And then through my graduate degree, I was like, "Oh, no, we need change systems; that's where it's at." Then I developed this nuanced opinion of it is both and at the same time. How do we keep both of those wheels turning and not neglect either one of them? I think sometimes people can get siloed in one or the other; either they are only interested in giving people food and they haven't thought about systems, or they're only interested in systems they are not acknowledging the fact that we need to also hand people food sometimes. Witnesses does a good job of putting those two together with the idea that people need food access and advocating for SNAP at the same time. They do a really good job doing both.

Transitioning Roles, 2019–2020

The minutes of FAWG's January 2020 meeting indicated Billy, Alycia, Kim, Susan Harris, Hyclis Williams, Lori Martin, Steve Werlin, Jill Dotlo, Latha Swamy, Holly Velleca, and James Kramer were all in attendance. Also in attendance were a representative from CTCORE, several representatives of the CT Food Bank, and nine other members from various community organizations. The meeting proceeded in a

typical fashion; during the first 30 minutes of the 90-minute meeting, members introduced themselves, including a short description of why they were involved in food work. Following introductions, organizations would provide brief organizational reports and announcements.

Referencing FAWG's previous agendas, the most frequent reports during 2019 were presented by United Way, CT Food Bank, and CAANH. The agendas reflected DESK, NICE Center, American Heart Association, and Project Access also presented updates on their organizations' efforts. The agenda category *Others* included any other organization that wanted to present updates. Steve Werlin and James Crammer were frequent contributors, providing updates not only on their organizations' activities, but other food-access related happenings in the city.

The next hour was dedicated to more detailed reports. Latha presented Food System Policy Director's reports. Alycia presented a CARE Grant update. January 2019 marked the beginning of CARE's Resource Mapping Committee update, which led to the creation of the *New Haven Food Assistance Resource Guide*. Kim, Billy, or Susan would present an update on Witnesses to Hunger. During the spring and summer months, the meetings typically ended with Billy providing an update on the Summer Meals Program and an ensuing discussion regarding the coordination of logistics.

Witnesses to Hunger came to a consensus that one of their high priority policy efforts would be New Haven summer meals outreach and filling the August meal gap; a period during which children do not have access to school provided meals (Witnesses to Hunger New Haven, n.d.). On June 22, 2019, members of Witnesses and another 50 volunteers distributed flyers in neighborhoods with high rates of food insecurity. The flyers provided residents with locations, dates, and times of 75 school meal sites in New

Haven and Hamden that would be serving meals from June 34 through August 16. The following Monday, five members of Witnesses attended a press conference to tell their stories. Among the attendees were Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, New Haven Mayor Harp, and Hamden Mayor Leng.

The summer of 2019 also marked the addition of another committee created from the CARE grant: CFAN (Coordinated Food Access Network). Alycia explained how CFAN came about:

> We [CARE] have mostly focused on system-level issues. It is not like we said, "Oh, food insecurity is an issue here in New Haven. Let's go open a food pantry." CFAN is trying to look across the entire system and figure out how we can better streamline services for people who are trying to access food and make it so difficult for people to access food in New Haven. It was more about, what is the system that is available here in New Haven that is trying to address this need? And how can we try and help to improve the system? We have always come more from a systems approach of trying to tackle the problem from a higher level.
>
> That is how we got to CFAN—years of community members wanting a more unified system of food assistance programs in New Haven. The food system is a disjointed system across New Haven. We have a lot of food pantries and soup kitchens. But for somebody who is experiencing food insecurity, it is really challenging to figure out what program is open when. What is the eligibility? How do you access it? What we're trying to contribute to the work is, how do you break down some of those systemic barriers so that it's easier for people to access healthy food? And then, of course, we have a focus on healthy foods at CARE,

wanting to increase the availability of healthy foods among low-income populations.

I have so much respect and admiration for Kim, Susan, and Wanda and all the other folks who are involved in Witnesses. It was a natural progression; both Billy and I come from a community organizing background, so the importance of authentic engagement of community voices in these processes and in decision-making is just something that is baked into our philosophies as community organizers. It was not a stretch for us to include Witnesses' voices in decision-making processes as we moved forward. Specifically, with CFAN, we were explicit from the beginning that people with lived experience should be at the table helping us make decisions on how we can make the system work better for the people who are trying to access it. We cannot answer that question without having people at the table who are actually accessing the system. That is where Witnesses comes in. We try hard to have equal representation at the table from people who have lived experience on the CFAN Committee. We have four members of Witnesses to Hunger that are on our steering committee in leadership positions. Kim is one of the chairs.

Kim espoused the value of lived experience:

I call Witnesses the experts because we are the experts; we are lived experience. People are writing about it, but they are not living it. Because we are living it, we could tell you firsthand experience as to what it is like to go stand in a food pantry line. You know the food pantry opens at eight o'clock in the morning. You got to get there at 6:00. Five-thirty is even better to be one of the first 10 in line because if that food pantry is giving out chicken, eggs, milk, they're not going to have 100

> of them. They're going to have like 20, 25, of them, if that, right? Me, I want to at least be in the top 10. I knew that if I was in the top 10, I was guaranteed to get the best of the best.
>
> I am a part of the CFAN group because I have my ear to the ground. I am able to incorporate that into whatever it is that I'm saying. My favorite saying is that learned and lived experience go together. I mean, you need learned experience, you need to know the numbers and how many kids go to bed hungry each night. We need to know that. But we also need to put a face to the numbers, OK? Like my kid went to bed hungry last night and I felt terrible because I was part of this. There was nothing I can do about it.

As 2019 ended, the folks sitting at FAWG began to discuss FAWG's role as a working group of the New Haven Food Policy Commission. Jason Martinez discussed the thought process:

> It didn't feel like a working group. It really felt like a talking group. It was important to have providers at the table for the information sharing, for the opportunities, to be on the same page if there were specific needs going on or if a pantry was going to be closed; this was a great place to come and share that and people kind of knew that. It was a lot of the same announcements that you were hearing at the Policy Council you are now hearing at FAWG or you were hearing at Witnesses, or Summer Meals. I think at one point all that main work was happening at FAWG. It just seemed like those big buckets of work were now happening at smaller tables. Then the FAWG became just an opportunity to give updates happening at those tables, which I mean, you know, that value is also important. But the FAWG wasn't the ones doing the work. Folks started feeling

> like, Is there still a need for this? A small group of us did come together and really kind of planned out, what are the big pieces that FAWG is providing or should be providing and are those things already happening elsewhere? We went through every single thing we could think of that FAWG was a part of or that FAWG was leading and then realized, well, the Summer Meal committee is doing that now and Witnesses is doing this now and CFAN is doing this now and Food Policy Council is doing that and realized, well, all those groups doing all those important pieces that maybe were once at FAWG, Is there really a need? It was then that the decision to kind of disband FAWG was kind of formally made, but not until we were sure that all the things that FAWG had been or was doing would still continue elsewhere. We did not want to lose the important work that was going on. I think it was a hard decision for many, but I think it made sense for sure.

FAWG held its last meeting on February 4, 2020. Billy's closing remarks that day are worth repeating: "The work continues, it's all about relationships and we have spun off many initiatives." (Chadukiewicz, personal communication)

Continuing the work, 2020

On January 31, 2020, "the Trump administration declared a public health emergency in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Despite the announcement, the U.S Health and Human Services reported the risk of contracting the virus was low" (Aubrey, 2020). The Centers for Disease Control reported on February 29, 2020, that three patients in the state of Washington had tested positive for COVID-19 and one of the patients had died (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). On March 4, Alycia emailed the CFAN agenda for the March 12, 2020, meeting. The two items on the agenda were reviewing CFAN goals and revising the Food Resource Guide. On March 11, President

Trump declared the novel coronavirus a national emergency (AJMC, 2020). That same day Alycia sent an email to CFAN members that the next meeting would focus on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

CFAN email

Hi everyone,
We are **changing the location of tomorrow's CFAN steering committee meeting to DESK** (directions below). We are hoping to accommodate more participants as we will focus the majority of the meeting on supporting food programs through the COVID response.

We will also be logging onto this webinar at 11AM:

The City of New Haven Health Officials—Health Director Maritza Bond and Community Services Administrator Dr. Mehul Dalal—are presenting COVID-19 Planning and Preparation Webinars for Community Partner Organizations on Thursday March 12, 2020. Please consider joining by following the link at the end of this message during the appropriate time for a desired webinar.

• 11:00 AM – Homeless Services Providers – Shelters, Soup Kitchens, Pantries

If you're not planning to attend in-person, you can log onto the webinar here: click on this link to join the meeting: https://bit.ly/2TXFUsj

DIRECTIONS TO DESK:
DESK is located in the basement of Center Church's Parish House at 311 Temple Street. You can enter via the **basement door** on the north side of the building (to the left when facing the building). DESK has does **not** have onsite parking; but with Yale on break, there should be plenty of street parking (metered) within a block or two. Give yourself an extra 15 minutes or so to find parking (just in case).

Email or call me on my cell (below) if you have any questions. THANK YOU!
Alycia

Alycia Santilli, MSW
Director, CARE
Southern CT State University

Alycia shared the events that followed:

> COVID has been hugely challenging, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic when systems just sort of fell apart. Pantries were closing left and right within the first few weeks because no one knew what to do and if there was any potential of an infection at a pantry. I mean, things just completely shut down. A lot of our pantries are volunteer-run, and a lot of the volunteers are seniors. Pantries were shutting down because seniors were afraid to come in and be in congregate settings to give away food. It was disruptive at a time when food insecurity was increasing because people are losing their jobs and struggling financially. The first few weeks were intense, just problem-solving and troubleshooting and constantly trying to figure out what was going on. But we

had CFAN in place. It was never the intention for CFAN to be an entity that's responding to a pandemic or any type of emergency. But here we were, this organized entity that had already been meeting for several months, and we're ready to pick up and dig in with our partners across New Haven. In fact, Latha, the Food Systems Director for the City, was approached by the mayor. He said, "Hey, what are we doing around emergency food? We need to pull together a task force so we can respond." And Latha was able to say, "No, that is a duplication of something that already exists. Let's lean into CFAN and utilize this infrastructure that already exists." We were able to play a role in helping to coordinate the response around emergency food. At the beginning, we were having daily phone calls as a network and anybody who was dealing with emergency food systems in New Haven could join. We would have anywhere from 20 to 50 to 60 people on our calls. Just sharing information and raising the question: Does the health department have guidelines for what we should be doing? Nope. OK, we will develop those with the health departments. All these people who are either immunocompromised or over 60 cannot get to the pantries and they shouldn't be coming to the pantry; What can we do as a community? We set up a volunteer delivery system. We got funding from Yale to do that fortunately and we were able to hire some staff to run it. But the whole delivery system, we were serving over a thousand households per week and that was all with volunteers. The delivery system component was volunteer-run, with some funded staff to kind of support the infrastructure. Because we have CFAN in place, we were able to respond to the needs of the community quickly. We set up the food delivery system within the first three weeks of the pandemic, and we were up and running

and got to a thousand deliveries within a few weeks after that. It speaks to the power of coalition-building and the power of being organized and having community partners and community members who are already coming together and being able to activate that network to respond. Overall, those of us who are active with CFAN are proud of the role that we were able to play in responding to the crisis. It provided a space for people to come together and share resources, share volunteers, share ideas, and keep organized and moving forward. And that is exactly—even though we had no intention of responding to an emergency—that was exactly what the intention of CFAN was from the beginning. So yeah. So COVID I mean, it has been a wild ride with the emergency food system, but we were able to eek it out.

Table 1

Selective Themes and Chronological Timeline of Events

CODE	Years	Description
Forming a group	2011–2012	The Food Access Working Group (FAWG) is formed with membership drawn from members of the New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC) or through existing members' relationships.
Accomplishing goals	2012–2013	The early years of FAWG are marked by the success of obtaining the CSPS (Commodity Supplemental Food Program Grant) and the growth of the Summer Meals Program. FAWG forms a relationship with Senator Chris Murphy and Congresswomen Rosa DeLauro.
Centering on lived experience	2013–2015	FAWG successfully supports advocacy training for women who have experienced food insecurity. The women share their stories of food insecurity at the State Legislative Office Building and New Haven City Hall. FAWG strengthens their relationship with Congresswomen DeLauro and forms a relationship with Professor Maryann Chilton of Drexler University, the founder of Witnesses to Hunger (WTH). FAWG demonstrates their commitment to listening and responding to the needs of community members experiencing food insecurity. Kim Heart emerges as a leader of FAWG and Witnesses to Hunger.
Growing an organization	2015–2017	United Way of Greater New Haven (UW) actively supports FAWG's mission. Membership increases with more food providers attending meetings: representatives from soup kitchens, food pantries, and surplus food distributors. FAWG continues to support and contribute to the growth of the Summer Meals Program and WTH.
Creating opportunities	2017–2018	UW supports the growth of WTH and enlists AmeriCorps' service members to assist FAWG and WTH. Bridgett recruited women from the community and members of FACE (Focus, Act, Connect, Everyday) to join WTH. The City of New Haven hires Latha Swamy as Food System Policy Director. The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) receives CDC grant and begins to develop the Food Resource Guide starts to plan the formation of the Coordinated Food Access Network (CFAN).
Identifying Structural Issues	2018–2019	CT Community Organizing for Racial Equity (CTCORE) attends FAWG and provides racial justice training for WTH. Professor Mary Cochran researches the New Haven food movement while a visiting Fulbright Scholar. Members of FAWG and WTH participate in her research.
Transitioning roles	2019–2020	CFAN is formed through the CARE grant. WTH members are appointed to leadership positions with CFAN, The Summer Meal Committee, and Racial and Ethical Approached to Community Heath (REACH). FAWG is dissolved. NHFPC, CFAN, WTH, and the Summer Meals Committee collectively fulfill FAWG's mission and objectives.
Continuing the work	2020	CFAN quickly and efficiently respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: Time periods are characterized by their dominant theme. These themes occurred throughout the life of FAWG case study, not only during a specific time frame.

Relationships

The core category of the case study was relationships. FAWG was formed by a group of individuals who had pre-existing relationships with each other through the NHFPC. FAWG's membership grew through relationships, its successes were based on relationships, and after FAWG disbanded, participants continued to value and rely on those relationships. Several FAWG members spoke about the importance of relationships:

> **P16:** The beauty of this was if you had relationships with people, you were able to utilize those relationships. And we did.
>
> **P5**: We build our relationships, we build our infrastructure, we look out for each other, and then we move forward.
>
> **P19**: It's such a cool story to just how everybody came together. I'm not sure what's going to happen now without FAWG there because those relationships we formed are lasting.

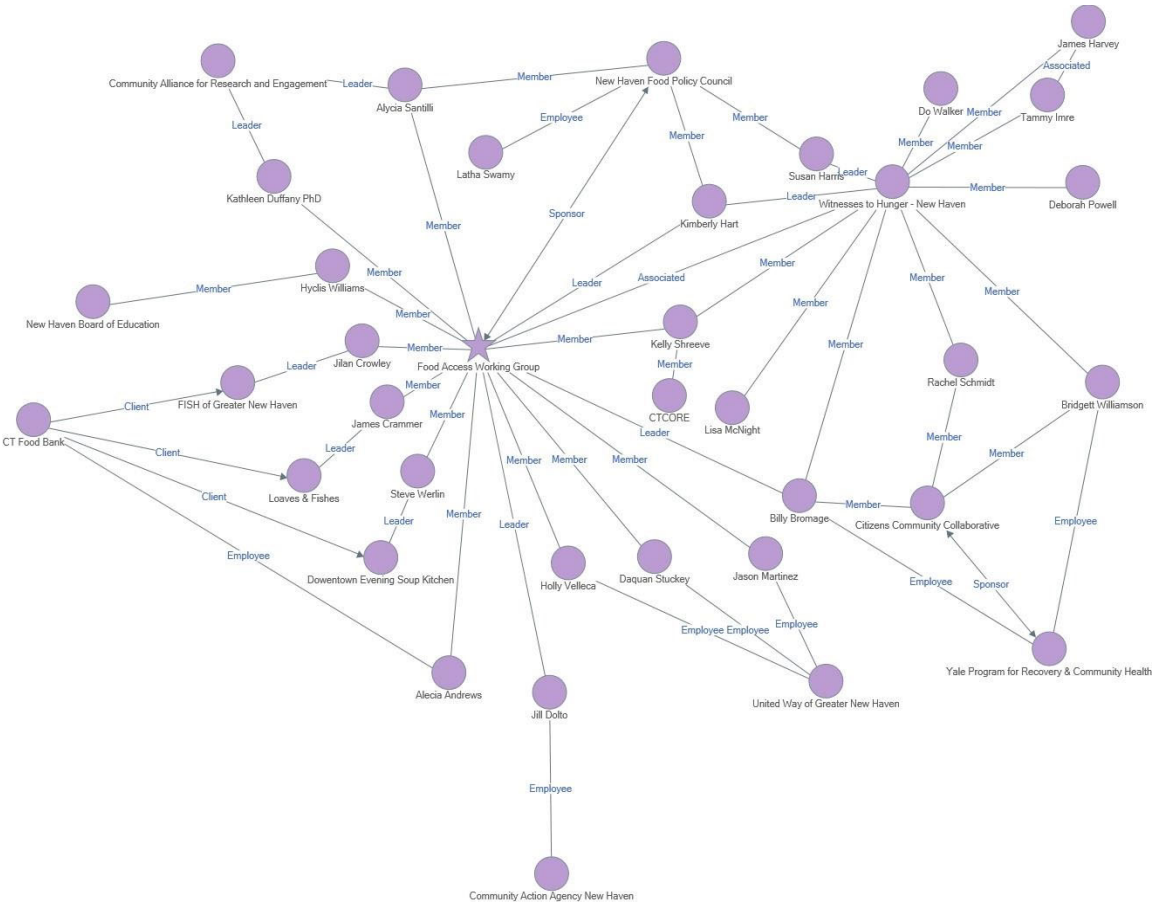
The category of relationships is reinforced by recalling that FAWG, along with five other working groups, was formed from the NHFPC. The initial members of FAWG had established relationships stemming from the NHFPC. Likewise, FAWG supported the formation of three new organizations that were built on both existing and new relationships. P5 provided an example of the relationship dynamics that continued after FAWG disbanded:

> A lot of the same people are involved. For example, one member is participating in CFAN, a leader in Witnesses, and one of the representatives in the School [Food Service] Task Force. She's bridging the three main areas that were the focus of FAWG.

Figure 8 illustrate that the organizations and people that were members of FAWG were interconnected with each other through multiple organizations and relationships or both.

Figure 8

Relationships



Note: The relationships depicted in this figure only represent a small fraction of the members of FAWG and their relationships with each other.

Diversity

The relationships formed through FAWG were unique in that they were between a group of diverse people having diverse roles. P1 recalled, “If FAWG did one thing well, and it did more than one thing well, it was creating a space to really build relationships of

different people." Figures 9, 10, and 11 illustrate the diversity of roles, races, genders, and experiences with food insecurity.

Figure 9

Role and experience with food insecurity

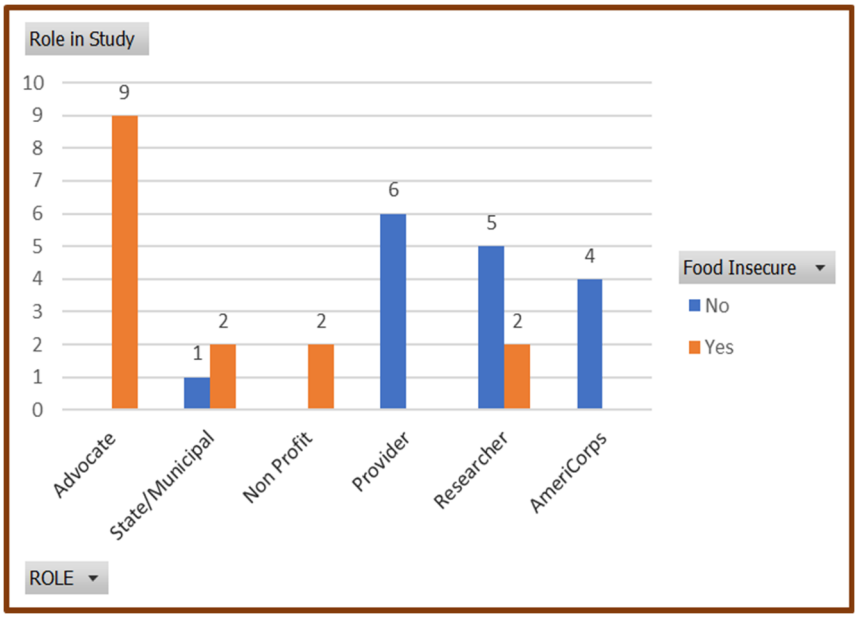


Figure 10

Race and experience with food insecurity

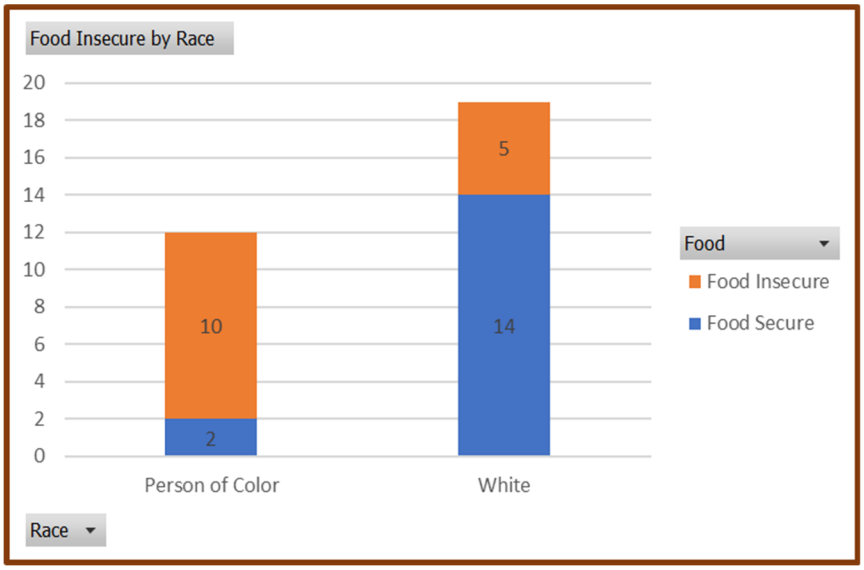
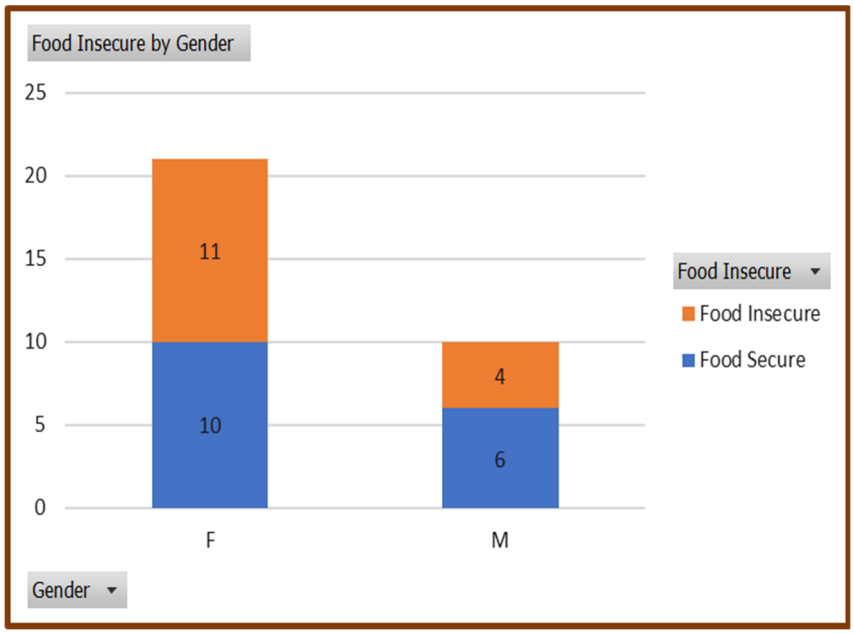


Figure 11

Gender and experience with food insecurity



Through axial coding, the sub-category of diversity emerged. The code *Recognizing diverse roles* described FAWG's diversity. Several FAWG members spoke about diversity:

> **P15**: I thought it was great because we had people representing all the different sectors of food insecurity as opposed to "this is our specialty, and this is what we do." It was a broad umbrella of what everybody was doing.
>
> **P5**: This is not about each member has the same thing. For us to do this together we must acknowledge everyone and what they bring to the table and how to get them there collectively.
>
> P1: FAWG had a number of different ways of working and thinking about food insecurity. One was policy change. Another was accountability—being accountable to people with personal experience with food insecurity. The third was programmatic, particularly among emergency food providers.

Centering on Lived Experience

The relationship between the diverse roles of researchers and persons with lived experience was a significant characteristic of FAWG and a contributing factor to the success of the organization. From the code *Centering on lived experience*:

> **P12**: My favorite saying is that learned and lived experience go together. I mean you need learned experience; you need to know the numbers and how many kids go to bed hungry each night. We need to know that. But we also need to put a face to the numbers, OK? Like my kid went to bed hungry last night and I felt terrible because I was part of this. There was nothing I can do about it.
>
> **P3**: We are doing this research from the beginning to the end and people with lived experience are advising, involved, leading, in terms of "Should we even be doing this? Is it interesting? Is it important? What kind of questions should we be asking? How do we reach people? What does this data mean? What does it tell us? These are the results. What do you think about it as a community?" Having that kind of continuum of involvement of experts by lived experience is again something our organization does by second nature.

Conflicts & Experiencing Tension

Axial coding also led to the emergence of the category *Conflict*. The code *Experiencing tension* described the tension participants experienced or observed that resulted from the "different ways of working and thinking about food insecurity." P5 stated, "In terms of policy this was always a struggle within FAWG: the policy versus program line. I'm not going to draw a thick dotted line in between those two. I think some people do and it makes sense for them."

The struggle or tension between policy and programs was further exemplified by the code *Understanding policy*:

> **P16**: I don't know a lot about policy.
>
> **P8**: I honestly don't follow policy as much as I probably should. I love that we have a food policy director for the City of New Haven not only because it gives us a voice within the city but also because it takes a lot of things off our plate.
>
> **P1**: How do we start a program to address this issue? My reaction was we don't. We need to shift the conversation away from that kind of thinking towards one of policy change.
>
> **P12**: Every parent wants their child to do better than them. The only way that I can do that is by doing what I'm doing right now, and that's trying to affect law and to affect policy in order to effect change because you can't effect change unless you affect law and policy.

The quotes typify the range of experiences participants had with policy. The diversity of the participants resulted in a diversity of responses across all categories, not only policy. The tension between views on policy and projects is only one example of a range of conflicts and tension found in the case study that included emergency food versus systemic change, individual responsibility versus structural issues, interactions with the community, and racism (see Table 2).

Table 2

Sources of Conflict

Participant	Code	Quote
25	Changing systems	"First, I thought, we need to give people food. Then I came to believe, no, we need to change systems. Then I developed a nuanced opinion of it's both and at the same time. How do we keep both of those wheels turning and not neglect either one of them?"
26	Changing systems	"There is support for the idea of systemic change. Yes, it's good to get food to people who need food, but it would be nicer if we didn't have to have a food pantry. It would be nicer if people had the resources available, either because there are more good-paying jobs or because their rent costs less or because there is a public safety net."
29	Changing systems	"A food pantry is the last solution you want to focus on if you'reworking on changing systems."
08	Defining Yale	"There are all sorts of benefits by virtue of Yale's presence here. I think we're very fortunate in New Haven to have that. But could Yale be doing more? Of course—a lot more. I think yeah, it's a mixed bag."
09	Defining Yale	"Anywhere you go you see Yale everywhere. I don't know where they come in. I don't know if they help the community out. I don't know if they donate to the food pantry to help these homeless people. All I know, they own almost all of New Haven. You got a lot of college students and they're the ones who were in those apartments they are building right now. Two high-rise buildings are supposed to be low income. But we're going to see who gets this. Is bad, is bad. And it's not getting better."
14	Defining Yale	"Any enterprise will have its good and bad, but on a whole, I give credit to Yale because what it has done for our community to provide jobs and health care and other resources."
17	Experiencing racism	"I grew up very privileged. I've been to private school my whole life. I never really had to face or see injustices in front of me. And I only saw them because I sought it out. I feel like there's just such a disconnect my own family and friends who aren't aware of these injustices because they aren't around it, or they don't have a reason to be or, to put it nicely, they have so much going on in their own lives, they just don't care."
20	Experiencing racism	"We shouldn't have to be fighting for these things. Like here I am, 50 years old, and the same thing that my grandparents were fighting for and the same things that my parents were fighting for their kids. I'm fighting for my kids and I'm fighting for my grandkids. And when does it get better? When am I not judged by the color of my skin? When am I judged by my actions?"
23	Experiencing racism	"But if I look at me and think about my sensibilities, think about my heart, my mind, how I operate in the world, if I really wanted to see racism and find a reason for my feeling the way I do, I could. Have I experienced racism? Probably. But if I really want to see these things, I would be a very angry person and I'm not choosing to operate that way."
01	Focusing on individual behavior	"There is a belief that people of racial groups are to blame for the disparities that they experience, which is false. It's a result of the structure in which they exist."
11	Focusing on individual behavior	"Our focus is on community-level issues related to chronic disease, moving beyond the public health view of focusing on individual behavior change for chronic disease prevention. Beyond telling people that they need to eat healthy and exercise; instead looking at our communities, looking at the system and trying to understand what the barriers are."
27	Focusing on individual behavior	"If somebody is diabetic, but there is not a grocery store where they can get fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and meat, that's not helping their health. It's not just about taking your medications. You have to learn how to eat right. You have to learn how to cook better in order to get better."

Research Questions

The connections between the core category of relationships and the subcategories of roles, diversity, and conflict embody the findings that led to the answers to my research questions and subsequently to a grounded theory. The answer to the first research question encompasses the core category of relationships and the subcategory of diversity. How do food justice advocates impact food security? *Food justice advocates impact food security by forming relationships between diverse groups of individuals, institutions, and organizations with similar broad goals.*

The answer to the second research question also rests on the premise of diverse relationships with the added element of working together despite the tension and conflicts that emerge due to the differences in approach and philosophical beliefs. Additionally, the hallmark of the organizations that were members of FAWG and now are members of new organizations is their commitment to center their work on lived experience. Why do food justice advocates impact food security? *Food justice advocates impact food security by working together to meet their common goals despite differences in approaches and philosophical beliefs and by incorporating lived experience into the framework of advocacy efforts.*

Collectively the answer to both the how and the why is: *Food advocates impact food insecurity by forming relationships and connections between diverse groups of individuals, institutions, and organizations with similar broad goals who work together to meet those goals despite differences in approaches and philosophical beliefs and by incorporating lived experience into the framework of their advocacy efforts.*

Summary

The Food Access Working Group (FAWG) was a working committee of the New Haven Food Policy Council comprised of a group of volunteers from educational institutes, nonprofits, grassroots organizations, and concerned citizens, that worked together to improve food access in New Haven. In the seven years FAWG was operating, they were instrumental in building relationships among food activists and supporting the formation and growth of three organizations: the Food Service [School] Task Force, Witnesses to Hunger, and the Coordinated Food Access Network. FAWG was disbanded in 2021, but the organizations they helped foster continue to improve food access for the citizens of New Haven and influence local, state, and federal food polices.

The success of FAWG and the organizations that continue to advocate for food security and food justice in New Haven rests on their strong relationships, diversity, ability to work together despite their differences, and commitment to value, acknowledge, and reward the expertise of people with lived experience. In the next chapter, I summarize my research and provide an analysis of how these factors contributed to the success of FAWG as well as offer a theory and tools that can be applied to food advocacy organizations or collaboratives.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of Case Study

The City of New Haven created the NHFPC in 2005 to address growing concerns with access to adequate and healthy food, the availability of culturally appropriate food, increasing numbers of overweight and obese children and adults, food safety, and the effects of industrialized agricultural practices on the economy and the environment. In 2015, NHFPC formed FAWG, a working collaborative of researchers, food service providers, non-profit agencies, grassroots organizations, residents, and city officials charged with improving New Haven's emergency food system network. Additionally, FAWG advocated for several local, state, and federal food-related policies and supported the formation and growth of local food organizations and initiatives.

FAWG came to represent a faction of the Food Movement in New Haven until it disbanded in February 2020. FAWG's primary focus was food access and food security informed by social justice. FAWG understood the importance of emergency food providers such as food pantries and soup kitchens while working to create a system that would eliminate the need for them. The organizations and individuals that participated in FAWG continue to represent the Food Movement and positively impact food policies and initiatives. The accomplishments of FAWG shine a light on the accomplishments of the individuals and organizations that participated in FAWG. Yet, as Hoefer (2005) proffered, a coalition's influence is greater than the sum of any single group's efforts.

Grounded theory research is sometimes conducted without writing a literature review. However, rather than focus on a specific topic, I took an analytical approach to writing my literature review. There is a strong correlation between poverty and food insecurity, Gundersen and Ziliak (2014) suggested other factors cause food insecurity,

some of which are not fully understood. My literature review explored the root causes of hunger and food insecurity through a conflict analysis lens.

Bryne and Carter's (1996) social cubism model and Maire Dugan's (1996) nested theory of conflict approach to analysis both recognized conflict is caused by many factors, just as hunger and food insecurity are attributed to many factors. By combining these two analytical methods, I examined the macro and micro factors that influenced food insecurity and the food movement from a historical, political, economic, cultural, demographic, and philosophical perspective. Food regime theory suggests that from 1870 to 1970 nation states enacted food policies to accumulate wealth and power. The economic crisis of the 1970s led to the resurgence of liberalism in the form of neoliberalism (Manfred B. S. & Ravi K. R., 2010). Neoliberalism promotes public policy measures based on the deregulation of the market, the liberalization of global trade and industry, and the privatization of government-controlled interests (Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberal policies led to the decline of federal funding for welfare and social programs resulting in a proliferation of food pantries and soup kitchens. Hunger shifted from being the responsibility of the state to the responsibility of individuals and nonprofit organizations. Neoliberalists viewed food as a gift rather than as a right (Poppendieck, 1997). Deregulation and free trade policies gave rise to the globalization and consolidation of agriculture markets, leading to a few dozen corporations controlling the majority of the global food supply (Tirado, 2015). Corporations profited at the expense of the environment, small-scale farmers, and consumers. Motivated by profits, corporations placed an emphasis on producing inexpensive, highly processed, sugar- and salt-laden food that lacked nutritional value. This led to 13% of the US population suffering from

diabetes and an obesity epidemic affecting 42.4% of adults (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022a, 2022b).

Current food activism in the US traces its origins to the civil rights movement. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. organized the Poor People Campaign, a march and occupation of the National Mall in Washington, DC. Ralph Abernathy assumed leadership of the campaign after Dr. King was assassinated, and the march and protest took place in 1968. Protesters created "The Hunger Wall", a painting depicting the unified efforts of activists, hippies, gang members, and poor people of all races lobbying for changes in the economic system ("A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond," n.d.; Keyes, 2016). In 1969, The Black Panthers initiated the Free Breakfast for Children Program and within three years, the program was serving 50,000 children in 45 communities. Activist groups including the Community Nutrition Institute (CNI), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the Food Research and Action Committee (FRAC) lobbied Congress and the USDA throughout the 70s, resulting in various policies including increases in food stamps (Berry, 1982). In 1975, the School Breakfast Program (SPB) was authorized by Congress; by 2020, 15 million children in 91,000 schools were participating in the program.

Allen (2010) suggested that local food systems are rooted in historical and cultural practices. The history and culture of New Haven have been shaped by the history and culture of Yale University. As of 2020, Yale was New Haven's primary employer, with 14,000 employees. The city does not collect 141 million in property taxes on Yale's tax-exempt 30-billion-dollar real estate portfolio. Yale voluntarily contributes $13 million to the city each year and recently committed to contributing an additional 52 million per year for the next six years. Yale has a multitude of programs and initiatives that boost the

local economy and benefit the citizens of New Haven, such as donating tons of recovered food each year and making cash contributions during the pandemic for emergency food.

Yale's Citizens Community Collaborative (CCC) is a group of mental health advocates, researchers, people in recovery, and community members working with people with mental health challenges to achieve social inclusion and full community membership: what they refer to as Citizenship. Citizenship is not meant in the legal sense, rather a person's strong connections to the 5 Rs of roles, rights, responsibilities, resources, and relationship (Rowe, 2014). Citizenship is the theoretical framework that informs my research and the advocacy work of some individuals and organizations that participated in FAWG. Food insecurity marginalizes people by denying them full access to the 5Rs. Marginalized people who are denied access to resources and a role in society become embroiled in conflict. Advocating for greater access to resources provides people with the means to exercise their right to participate in the democratic process of shaping policy, fulfills their obligation to be responsible, and affords them an opportunity to form strong relationships.

The problem the case study explored is that in 2020 food insecurity affected 22% of the residents of New Haven—more than twice the national average. My methodology was a case study using grounded theory to analyze data collected through interviews with food advocates. My case study participants were 31 food justice advocates who were members of a coalition of researchers, food service providers, non-profit agencies, grassroots organizations, and residents tasked with improving the city's emergency food system. The coalition, The Food Access Working Group (FAWG), valued the participation and contributions of single mothers, Blacks, Hispanics, and Latino members with lived experience of food insecurity; members whose demographics were affected by

food insecurity at rates above 30%. The purpose of case study was to explore the experiences of food justice advocates and to understand the challenges and successes they encounter in attempting to provide access to adequate, healthy, and culturally appropriate food to the citizens of New Haven.

By applying grounded theory and theoretical sampling to the data collected from the interviews, the core category of relationships emerged. The subcategories of diversity and conflict characterized the relationships, while the subcategory centering on lived experience exemplified the diversity of the relationships and defined the approach of the food coalition to their social justice approach to their advocacy work.

Relationships

The significance of relationships as the core category of the case study is supported by several theories. Social capital theory suggests that networks of reciprocal social relations can engender trust, cooperation, and mutual support, which in turn brings about greater productivity of groups and individual members of the group (Putnam, 2000). During Billy's tenure with FAWG, he simultaneously participated in the Citizenship Project, an action research project conducted by Dr. Michael Rowe of PRCH. Rowe (Rowe, 2014; Rowe et al., 2007) developed the citizenship framework as an outreach approach to persons with mental illness and homelessness. The citizenship framework draws on social capital theory and the premise that well-connected social networks not only lead to an increase in an individual's productivity, but strong social networks also promote people's wellbeing and mental wellness.

The citizenship framework goes beyond measuring an individual's connection to social networks or relationships; it also values a person's role in society, their ability to access resources, their ability to exercise their human and civic rights, and their capacity

to act responsibly by contributing to society. The shorthand for the Citizenship framework is *The 5 Rs*: Relationships, Roles, Resources, Rights, and Responsibilities. WTH provided a vehicle for members to play a role in society as advocates, who are acting responsibly by exercising their civic rights of participating in local government to access more resources for themselves and their community.

Diverse Roles

Considering FAWG's grounding in the citizenship framework, it is not surprising that *diverse roles* was a significant sub-category of the case study. Malcolm Gladwell (2002) in his bestseller *The Tipping Point* suggested the rising popularity of consumer products, books, and television shows follows three specific rules, which are analogous to rules that lead to an epidemic. Malcolm refers to these rules as the Law of the Few, the Stickiness Factor, and the Power of Context. The Law of the Few states, "The success of any kind of social epidemic is heavily dependent on the involvement of people with a particular and rare set of social gifts" (Gladwell, 2002, p. 33). Malcolm calls these people with gifts Connectors, Mavens, and Salespersons.

A Connector's gift or role is their ability to bring people together. Billy is a Connector. He "connected all the dots" and the dots were most often people. A Maven gathers and disseminates information. Alycia is a researcher and an expert on public health, food insecurity, and racial inequity as evidenced by her research and published works. Salespeople are gifted in the art of persuasion. Kim is a seasoned advocate with a long resume of persuading politicians and policymakers. Advocacy by its nature is the art of persuasion so does it follow that every member of FAWG is a salesperson? To a degree, yes, but some people are particularly gifted as Salespeople, Mavens, or

Connectors, and in some cases a combination of these roles. Alycia is primarily a Maven, but she is also a Connector. Kim is a Salesperson, but she is also a Maven with her expertise on poverty and homelessness. The salient point is FAWG had a diverse membership that included people with a "particular and rare set of social gifts," which is required to start a social epidemic.

Building on Malcolm's model, I offer another critical role: Supporter. United Way's Susan Napi was instructed to "just show up at that meeting, take notes, and try to help." Later, Jason assumed Susan's role: "I spent the next two and a half years deep into that work and seeing how United Way could play a role in supporting folks like Witnesses and the work that they they're doing and should be doing." The culture of support permeated throughout United Way; AmeriCorps' Holly carried out the day-to-day tasks to support both FAWG and WTH: "The whole point of AmeriCorps Vista is to build capacity for the programs that you are in service to. That is how my role with Witnesses and FAWG came to be."

Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap (2005) espoused the value of diverse roles in fostering creativity. The authors suggested creativity stems from an individual's worldview, consisting of what a person knows and who they are; a blending of their education and experience with their cultural background and thinking style (p. 22). Homogeneous groups of people tend to think alike and have similar approaches to solving problems and generating ideas. Diverse groups, on the other hand, tend to have varied approaches to problem-solving and generate a wider range of ideas. The authors reasoned that increasing the sheer number of available options leads to the possibility of unique combinations of ideas, resulting in novel solutions. FAWG meetings provided a forum for expressing a wide range of thoughts and ideas. Recall Jason expressing, "It

really felt like a talking group. It was important to have providers at the table for the information sharing."

Conflict

Leonard and Swap (2005) recognized that diverse worldviews can also lead to conflict. Yet, they believed that harnessing the differences through vigorous debate was integral to the creative process. They borrowed the term "creative abrasion" from Jerry Hirshberg (1992) to describe this process. The authors suggested that the key to creativity is managing differences in ideas while simultaneously managing any interpersonal conflict that may arise. The members of FAWG successfully managed conflict despite the diverse roles they played, opposing beliefs, and divergent approaches to addressing food security. In many instances, the members of FAWG valued their relationships with each other and their shared need to provide food security above the value of their real or perceived differences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The answer to my research questions summarizes the fulfillment of my research purpose and offers a theory on how food advocates can impact food security. Food advocates impact food security by forming relationships and connections between diverse groups of individuals, institutions, and organizations with similar broad goals who work together to meet those goals despite differences in approaches and philosophical beliefs and by incorporating lived experience into the framework of their advocacy efforts.

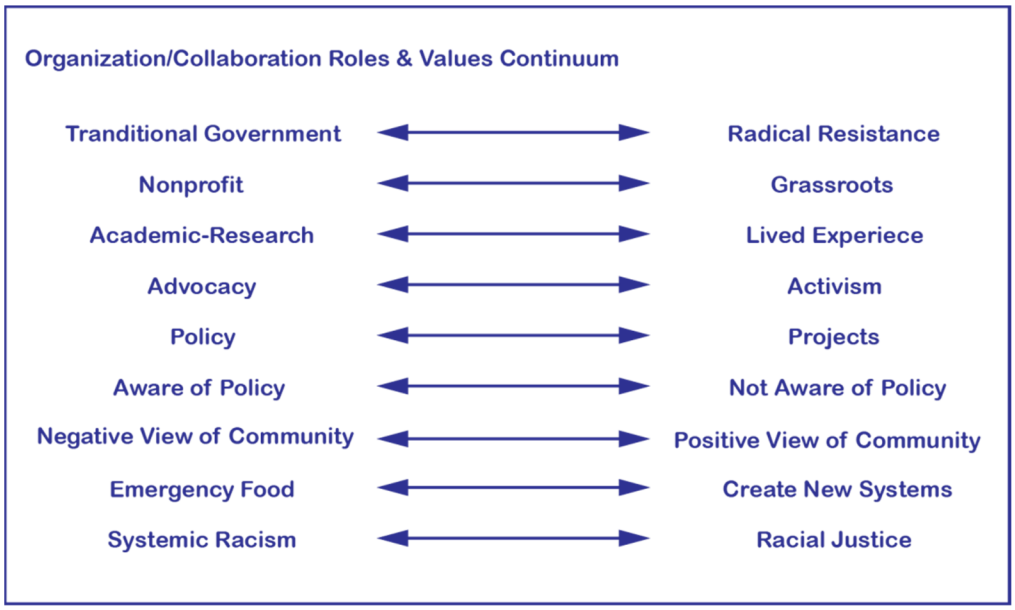
Holt-Giménez and Wang (2011) suggested that to foster social change, progressive and reformist advocates must build coalitions to create new systems that have the ability to dismantle neoliberal structures. The authors did not offer a framework to build a coalition of progressive, reformist, radical food advocates. The case study implies

the success of coalitions rests on the actors having an awareness of their differences and managing such differences to minimize interpersonal conflict and foster creativity: creativity that generates system changes while addressing the immediate needs of the community.

FAWG members discussed both the internal and external challenges they faced amongst themselves, in small groups, and in open meetings. While FAWG did not have a formal process of managing conflict, the case study suggests that they had an awareness of their diverse roles and beliefs. Through coding, I identified that participants had roles in organizations that could be broadly defined as traditional government, nonprofit, academic and research, grassroots, and lived experience. These organizations' approach to food insecurity was advocacy or activism with a focus on changing policy or undertaking projects. Among their values and beliefs was their awareness of how policy affected food insecurity, their view of their community, and their level of acceptance or resistance to the emergency food system and structural racism. These roles, approaches, beliefs, and values are not always absolute. Organizations and individuals in the case study operated along a dynamic continuum (see Figure 12). The case study indicated organizations and collaborations that have an awareness of their members' position on the continuum can better manage conflict.

Figure 12

Organization/Collaborative Continuum



When I planned my research, I did not know that FAWG would disband in a few years or that, within weeks of FAWG disbanding, the world's food system would be ruptured by the COVID-19 pandemic. I was struggling with how I would define the time boundaries of my case study and the disbandment of FAWG provided the answer. Measuring the impact of a collaborative effort is a difficult and subjective endeavor. Yet, we can infer from the timely and effective response to the pandemic by CFAN, WTH, and the Food Service [School] Task Force that FAWG contributed to those successful responses. Conducting additional research on the CFAN, WTH, and the Food Service [School] Task Force post-FAWG would provide valuable data on preparing and responding to a major crisis. Conducting a comparative analysis of the COVID-19 response in a city similar to New Haven would provide more data and additional insights.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated both the fragility of our food system and the ability of government actors to quickly enact policies to address the inadequacies of

the food system. Advocates must continue with their efforts to impact policies that will improve the food system and prepare our communities for the next crisis. The leadership of FAWG believed that the NHFPC, CFAN, WTH, and the Food Service [School] Task Force fulfilled the mission and objectives of FAWG. Yet, the data indicated that FAWG also served as an incubator for emerging organizations, a role that has not been filled. Incubators are responsible for the creation of companies and innovation of products across the US, including New Haven. In 2021, BioCT was created in New Haven to "...catalyze and accelerate growth in the life sciences..." (BioCT, n.d). To fill this vital role that FAWG left vacant, I suggest that New Haven form incubators to catalyze and accelerate the growth of organizations focusing on social justice issues and emergency response; two distinct fields that have tremendous synergy. The fields of social justice and emergency response would benefit from further research on the concept of community incubators to foster creativity and innovation.

Replicating the characteristics of strong relationships, diversity, and creativity that were the foundation of FAWG will require trained and experienced facilitators. Universities can fulfill this need by incorporating entrepreneurship coursework into their conflict analysis and resolution coursework, particularly coursework on leadership, creativity and innovation, and project management. Facilitators with these skills and access to a community incubator will have the skills, tools, and relationships required to innovate and formulate responses to society's toughest challenges.

The case study and resulting theory and analysis methods add to and enhance the understanding of the mechanics of building a successful food advocacy coalition. With additional research, my theory can be applied to other advocacy coalitions, in particular, community incubators. 2020 began with the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 began with the

Capitol insurrection, and 2022 began with Russia invading Ukraine. Conflict and crisis abound and forming coalitions to advocate for policies to respond to and prevent crises such as these is essential to building and maintaining vibrant and resilient communities.

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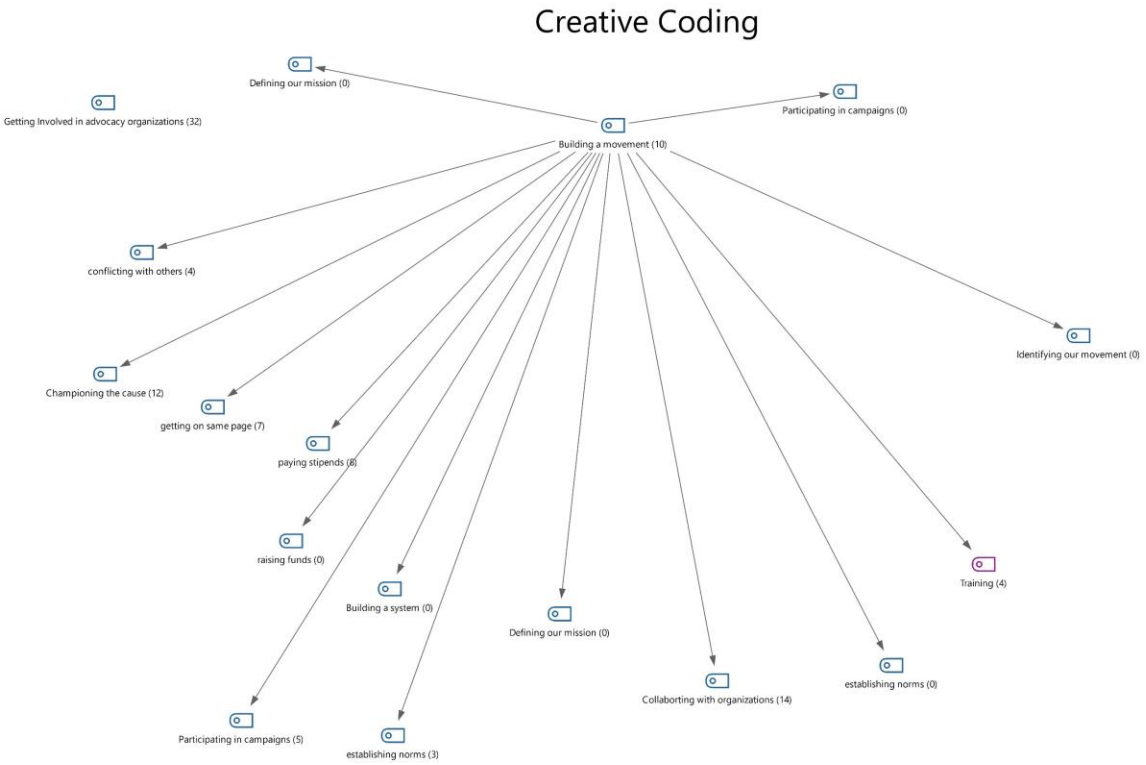
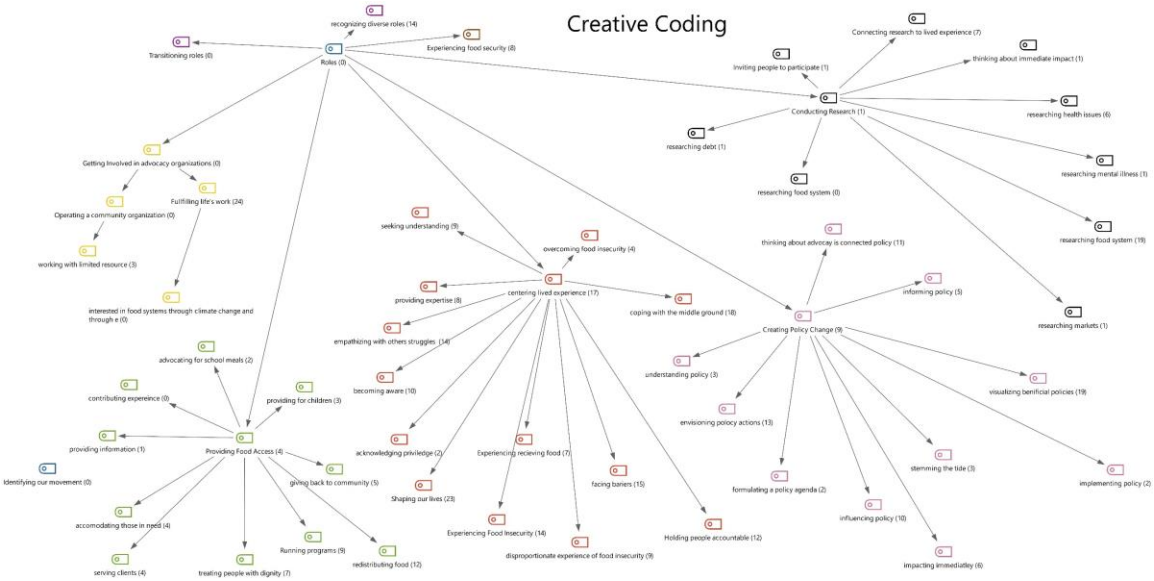
Appendix A: Axial Coding

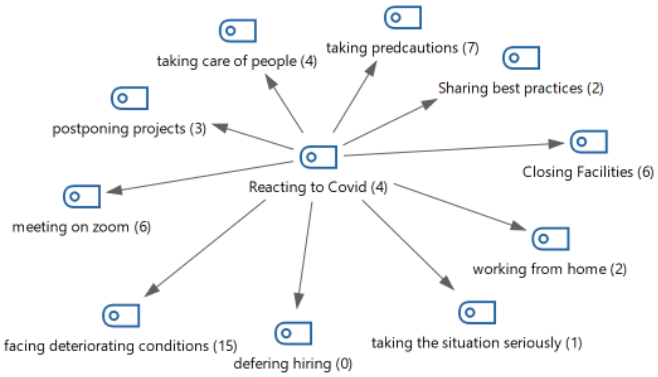
Example 1

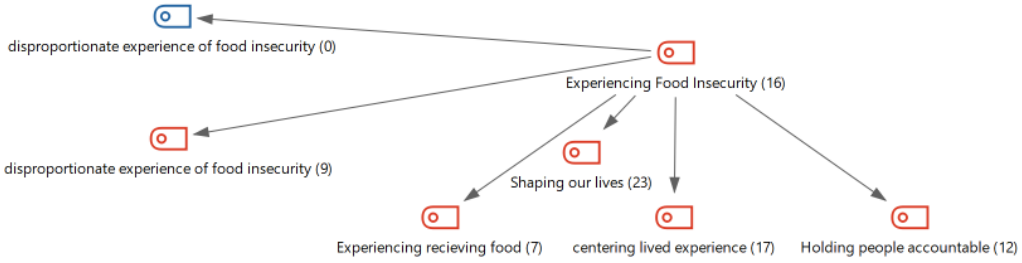


Example 2



Example 3


taking care of people (4)
taking predcautions (7)
Sharing best practices (2)
postponing projects (3)
Closing Facilities (6)
Reacting to Covid (4)
meeting on zoom (6)
working from home (2)
facing deteriorating conditions (15)
defering hiring (0)
taking the situation seriously (1)


disproportionate experience of food insecurity (0)
Experiencing Food Insecurity (16)
disproportionate experience of food insecurity (9)
Shaping our lives (23)
Experiencing recieving food (7)
centering lived experience (17)
Holding people accountable (12)

Appendix B: Theory Mapping