Fall 2019

Research Justice as Reciprocity: Homegrown Research Methodologies

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Recommended Citation

Articles

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Abstract

This article describes and demonstrates a methodology for research justice through what I call "homegrown" research methodologies, or methods that are emergent from and responsive to community needs. While academics develop, study, and deploy research methods that are ethical and rigorous, they often don't capture the complex, lived realities of participants' lives. Research justice, in contrast, directly responds to community needs as identified by the community; centers community members as experts in the research process; and "creates, maintains, and engages" experiential, spiritual, cultural, and mainstream knowledges of community members (Jolivétte, *Research Justice* 1). I develop and articulate a theoretical approach for research justice to show how universities can contribute to communities by conducting ethical, useful, and justice-oriented research.

Introduction

Food is a central element in what it means to be human. We grow, harvest, purchase, prepare, cook, and share food with one another on a daily basis. Food metaphors are central for who we are and what we do. "Putting food on the table," "bringing home the bacon," and "bread winner" are (although often gendered) common metaphors for the ability to work and contribute to a household. We celebrate with food at major holidays and community gatherings. We bring food to those who are sick or who experience the loss of a friend of family member. Likewise, we cook for those with new children or those who give birth. In some religions, food is a dominant component of rituals where we are invited to the table for a communal meal, or where offerings are made to "feed the gods." Food occupies an important space in the range of human experience from life to death, intertwined with living in and being part of a community. Thus, when we think of community literacy, food is often a part of that literate backdrop.

Those who go without food often seem deficient because of food's essential nature. If food is an essential part of our humanity, then we must look to populations in need of that essential element and discover how we, as rhetoricians,[1] might use our gifts to restore their humanity and dignity. The goal of this essay is to present some

theories for using our talents as researchers and writers to promote social justice for food insecure populations. In what follows, I discuss how food and food insecurity has been discussed in community literacy scholarship, branching outward to rhetorical theory and writing pedagogies to show the kinds of contributions that are possible. Central to giving back to communities is the notion of reciprocity, a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and community. I rely on the concept of research justice to think about how we might use one of our strengths as academics—performing research—to promote social justice in food insecure communities. Research justice approaches inherently involve enacting concepts such as cultural humility into our interactions with vulnerable populations, resulting in the emergence of what I call homegrown research methods; these are approaches to research that emerge from community knowledges and which might empower and allow those same communities to thrive. I conclude with some possible trajectories for ways we can cultivate these homegrown methods for research in food insecure communities.

Food Insecurity and Social Justice

The past ten years has seen growth in attention to what has been called "food literacies" in the field of writing studies. Food literacy refers to a larger understanding and awareness of the complex relationships between global food systems, health issues, corporate interests, economics, poverty, and the environment. The concept of food literacy is generally pluralized as these relationships emerge as different networks within specific local contexts. Scholars have pointed to the unique opportunity that service-learning and community engagement provide to educate students about local and global food literacies. As Veronica House explains:

> Because food sovereignty and food justice are some of the most important issues of our time, issues that tie to topics of ecological collapse, peak oil, racism, poverty, corporate capitalism, overpopulation, disease, and hunger, service-learning practitioners are well-positioned to help launch initiatives in colleges and universities across the country, in partnership with our local communities, to address community-centered food literacy. (4)

She sees "connections between food studies, rhetoric and composition, and service-learning that involve enhancing students' ability to think and write critically about the systemic, root causes of societal problems by mobilizing them to join in or help to lead community discussions surrounding the local, organic food movement, food justice, and community-centered food literacy" (4).

Michael Pennell continues this work as editor of a 2015 special issue of *Community Literacy Journal* on Community Food Literacies. Contributors to that special issue explore the ways that we might engage students in community-based projects that enhance their understanding of food literacies in specific community contexts. For example, Lucia Durá, Consuelo Salas, William Medina-Jerez, and Virginia Hill look at a low-income after-school program using an asset-based approach that leverages local community knowledges. Other articles in that volume address fermented food

communities, agricultural literacies, cookbook literacies, and permaculture practices, demonstrating the breadth of this approach to community engagement.

Pennell's own research occupies the intersection of pedagogy and food insecurity. He works with faculty at his university to assess food insecurity among college students and determine how we might foster awareness in the composition classroom. He also investigates intersections of food studies and social media in classroom contexts. Such work opens up a larger focus on how food literacy intersects with social justice. In "The Food Justice Portrait Project: First Year Writing Curriculum to Support Community Agency and Social Justice," Ruth Cary presents opportunities to use "food justice as a pedagogy to teach about critical thinking, issues in social justice, reciprocity, and personal agency by connecting students to people who create positive change in the world" (141). Expanding the research in a different direction, Abby Dubisar draws our attention to food as a feminist issue and food waste as a rhetorical one, noting that "food and eating as cultural rhetorics illuminates how ideologies accompany food discourses" which helps to illustrate how we rhetorically construct different food expectations for different groups of people (118). Steven Alvarez demonstrates how food literacies can be localized and encultured; using the concept of taco literacies, he describes a community-engaged writing course in which students experience more sensual and affective approaches to food, which helps set the stage for social justice awareness in the class.

This overview of scholarship on food literacies illuminates the broader connection between food systems and social justice. Underlying that connection is the foundational work that writing studies scholars have done to ensure that community engagement work is social justice work. Within that social justice orientation are the inherent values of equality and reciprocity for community engagement. Adam Banks argues that our scholarly contributions must have an effect beyond campus:

> intellectual work must make our collective claims of and desires for community engagement real—not through official programs but by getting off campus and actually engaging and being engaged. Community literacy work must be about community even more than about literacy itself and must begin with the beauty, power, and agency of the communities we enter and the people we hope to build with. (x)

This valuing of community and a concomitant attention to hope echoes Paula Mathieu's work in *Tactics of Hope*, where she argues that our work in composition must have a public, social justice dimension. She outlines multiple approaches scholars have taken to enact the "public turn," including community publishing, service-learning, community-based literacy, social and cultural issues in the classroom, and public writing opportunities. Mathieu details her own work with street newspapers and homeless communities to argue against a "strategic orientation" in which the university thinks it can control what happens in local communities and toward a "tactical orientation" in which community engaged partnerships are grounded in "hope as a critical, active, dialectical engagement between the insufficient present and possible, alternative futures—a dialogue composed of many voices" (xv). Likewise, Eli

Goldblatt's work approaches the disconnect between universities and communities, arguing that often, rather than fostering a reciprocal relationship, faculty approaches are often one-sided and focused more on academic approaches than community-based ones. Goldblatt calls for a "model of community-based learning and research in which students and their teachers are not so much providing services as participating in a collective effort defined by academics and local citizens alike" (283). In the model he presents, "faculty and students devise projects based on research into local citizens' needs or approach recreation centers and libraries to house tutoring projects or screening programs" (275). He models his work on Saul Alinsky's methods to community organizing as a way to privilege community approaches and perspectives in engagement work. Finally, Deborah Mutnick's work with basic writing has provided important insights into how pedagogy is inherently a social justice enterprise. Valuing the diverse perspectives of basic writers and their place in the university is part of the social justice mission that her scholarship enacts. She outlines a community-engaged learning community centered on the concept of freedom to argue for an "integrative, rigorous pedagogy [that] supports the development of critical consciousness, and… that it resists the neoliberal evisceration of higher education that, at its worst, renders such transformative learning impossible" (375).

Across all of these conversations is a deep commitment to creating partnerships and projects that enact reciprocity for community partners. Too many projects, as we can see in the scholarship, have benefitted the university sometimes at the expense of the community. Drive-by service-learning projects, un-usable or missing end products, publications that are not shared with community partners, and failed partnerships are plentiful in the literature on service-learning and community engagement. And while failure is an important learning moment, the commitment to social justice and reciprocity asks us to continue working toward better, more equitable partnerships. I would argue that food, as an inherent human need and desire, can be a learning edge where more reciprocal relationships can grow.

Research Justice and Reciprocity

Creating more equitable partnerships across universities and communities is at the heart of what Cushman calls "networks of reciprocity" (7). Such networks of reciprocity are based on "the give-and-take relationship between the researcher and community," a relationship that is a constant, self-reflective, and critical negotiation of power structures produced within and through that relationship (Cushman 16). Cushman's work points us toward one area where academics, as experienced researchers, have a unique perspective and skill: research. Research is an essential part of many writing projects, and as scholars, we have a commitment to our own research, which sometimes conflicts with community projects or partnerships. Powell and Takayoshi continue Cushman's work by focusing our attention on the humanity of research participants. Building reciprocal relationships, they write, requires "an attentiveness to the personalities, desires, needs, and knowledge of the people involved; an attentiveness to the give-and-take of human interaction; an attentiveness to participants as human

beings" (396). Part of attending to participants' humanity is asking how they have benefitted from the relationship (397) and how we acknowledge and account for participants' needs in order to truly give them what they want, even if it may be something we do not expect. Powell and Takayoshi write, "We found that our participants were interested in reciprocity, but they wanted to define the terms of that reciprocity outside the context of the research project....what they wanted in exchange were not things that fit within our preconceived ideas of what the studies would give them" (400). This observation is significant because it requires us to allow participants to determine what they want and need in that moment, which may not be measurable or deliverable in a material form, or in a form that *we* want. Across many fields outside of writing studies, scholars often think that reciprocity indicates measurable outcomes or writing-related narratives, documents, media, and products for the community partner. Other measurable outcomes could also include hours tutoring youth or volunteering. Less tangible or measurable benefits could involve access to resources, time, or affective relationships. Like Powell and Takayoshi show us, participants often need us to inhabit roles that the academic researcher paradigm does not provide.

Further complicating the notion of reciprocity are the layers of administration of community groups. Many of us work with not-for-profit agencies or organizations who themselves directly serve the community. As Shumake and Shah have asked, are we developing a reciprocal relationship with the organization itself or the people it directly serves (10)? Rowan and Cavallaro observe the dominant principle that working "directly with community members is of paramount importance in the process of establishing, developing, and sustaining equitable and ethical community partnerships" (23). But the drive to work directly with community members, especially those from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, can feel like a colonizing act; as Clark observes, many participants experience "research fatigue" and the feeling of "being over-researched," especially when there are no tangible benefits to their participation (955). Research fatigue is more likely with populations that are more difficult to access, which include vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the disabled, and the homeless. Reciprocity, in this case, must be genuine, which is difficult when community partners may have been participating, sometimes for years, in research at other sites. Moreover, overcoming the power dynamics between the university and community may limit the ability for true reciprocity to occur; community member needs may encompass affective or non-measurable outcomes, which are difficult to articulate in a memorandum of understanding.

Reciprocity may be situational and exigential, meaning it can change for each individual and constituency involved and could fall outside of the range of what we, as academics, understand as a benefit. An example might be a community organization that needs one deliverable, but the older adults it serves want human interaction. Reciprocity, then, can be emergent, in flux, and contradictory. How, then, do we negotiate the concept of reciprocity in research partnerships when faced with these complications? I turn, then, away from the idea of reciprocity as an ultimate goal and toward the idea of research justice to show how sometimes we must rethink our methods and our outcomes to respond in humane ways to those we work with in the community.

Indigenous Perspectives on Research Justice

Traditional knowledge production in universities has been grounded in the first world, knowing subject who researches, categorizes, and objectifies other humans, places, and non-human entities (Mignolo). Such an approach privileges the western, detached researcher who is seeking institutionally-tailored forms of originality or truth, often at the violent expense of indigenous, non-western, and non-dominant others. In engagement research, we might see this as a university researcher who suddenly becomes interested in a local trend or social issue and decides to research and publish on it. Or it might be a scholar-teacher who develops a service-learning partnership in order to assess or evaluate outcomes for her students. In both cases, the community partner is colonized and community knowledges mined for the institutionally focused purpose of producing academic scholarship and publications.

Decolonial methods, as Smith explains, attempts to re-center indigenous, colonized, marginalized epistemologies: "it is about centering our [Indigenous] concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (39). In short, decolonial methods "ensure that research with indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful" to them and their communities (Smith 9). Those methods might often be contextual and emergent based on the communities, populations, and contexts in which research takes place. Thus, a researcher does not engage a community in order to "study" a phenomenon, but works with local communities and knowledges to highlight those specific cultural epistemologies as valid and important. San Pedro and Kinloch see this work as "advocating for humanizing and decolonizing research approaches that do not *other* and oppress people but that value stories, dialogic listening, and self-determination" (375S). Similarly, Jackson and Whitehorse DeLaune offer storytelling as a decolonial form of listening.

While we may consider participatory and community-based research methods humanizing, they often still circulate in the colonial system of traditional, authoritative knowledge production. As Eve Tuck demonstrates, too many vulnerable and marginalized populations have been exploited and harmed by researchers' narrow-minded approaches to communities. She reminds us that it is "primarily Native communities and/or urban communities—that have troubled relations with research and researchers. The trouble comes from the historical exploitation and mistreatment of people and material. It also comes from feelings of being overresearched yet, ironically, made invisible" (411-12). But it is not just that Indigenous and urban communities have been "forced subjects" (412); they have also been treated as damaged goods. Thus, research on these marginalized and exploited communities contribute to what Tuck calls "damage-centered research" or research that records

> pain or loss in an individual, community, or tribe. Though connected to deficit models—frameworks that emphasize what a particular student, family, or community is lacking to explain underachievement or failure—damage-centered research is distinct in being more socially and historically situated. It looks to historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to

explain contemporary brokenness, such as poverty, poor health, and low literacy. (413)

While such research approaches intend to help alleviate historical and contemporary oppression, in reality, they reinforce views of vulnerable populations as broken, hopeless, ruined, and thus, not quite human. Aurora Santiago-Ortiz continues Tuck's work to suggest that we can reframe our orientation to research with communities:

> By reframing the way researchers work with communities, we can counter the narratives that reseat communities as unable to resist dehumanization. Critical service-learning is not exempt from tropes that view communities through either deficit or damaged-based lenses, and I extend an invitation to rethink and recast the ways we frame these critical projects. (46)

This deficit model can be an unspoken and often invisible ideology within community engagement work. Seeing the community "in need" or "in crisis" rather than a source of strength and knowledge can unintentionally invoke the idea of brokenness. This is especially the case with issues like hunger, homelessness, or any other social problem that we might think can never be eradicated.

Tuck proposes that an alternative could be "to craft our research to capture *desire* instead of damage" because "desire-based research frameworks are concerned with understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives" (416). For Tuck, desire can encompass both loss and hope, providing a way for participants to determine their own narratives about their lives and articulate "the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities" (417). Embedded in this approach is the observation that community members are experts whose knowledge is critical to understanding communities and cultivating reciprocity in community-based relationships.

I propose the concept of research justice as a methodology that embraces the research participant as an expert who understands his or her own needs; exposes the limitations of the researcher; and can be used to develop what I call "homegrown" participatory methods. We have rich scholarship in the field that emphasizes research reciprocity, collaboration, and participatory research,[2] but I want to extend those theories toward research justice, which seeks to honor all human beings and their personal, spiritual, and cultural knowledges. Research justice works to empower communities to conduct their own research, ask their own questions, and see their own spiritual, communal, cultural, and lived experiences as forms of expertise. To bring research justice into our field would mean not only to continue to empower participants but also to recognize their expertise as forms of knowledge making that we need in our research. It also asks us, as researchers, to enact a form of cultural humility that allows research justice to flourish.

Research justice is at the heart of what could be called homegrown research methods, or methods that emerge from participants' home cultures or literacies. I use "homegrown" in this context because of the metaphor's relationship to food. To call something "homegrown" is to locate it in a backyard context, a neighborhood location, a community setting. In opposition to institutionalized and commercial devel-

opments, homegrown is grassroots-focused, seeded from last year's crop, which could be a crop that has been seeded for generations in one yard or community. For instance, I still have a rhizomatic plant that I bought in my first year of living in the Midwest. For 16 years, that plant has thrived in the summer outdoors and survives the wintertime in a hot and dry home. Every spring, I take it outdoors, cut off the dead tendrils, break off new growth, and stick it back in the soil. Around the same time, I look for small shoots of tomato seedlings in my garden, what I often call "volunteers" from last year's tomato crop that will spring forth and become this year's garden. Sometimes, those seeds cross-pollinate from other crops. One year, my children carved pumpkins on the front porch, leaving seeds under the eaves of the house. They also happened to carve a few squash along with the pumpkins. The next spring and summer, we were gifted with a thriving set of vines that produced a beautiful crop consisting of a vegetable that was not quite a pumpkin and not quite a squash (see figure 2) . Homegrown indeed.

Figure 1: Vines growing across my shrubs from volunteer plant, 2015; photograph by author.

When combined with unique land and location, this mixture of seeds produced beautiful and unique fruit that grew on top of and within the shrubs in the front of my house (see figure 1). Like my homegrown vines, research justice seeks to take traditional research methods and root them in localized soil, letting them develop as hybrids within that specific situation, location, and place. But research justice also involves allowing everyday knowledge, experience, and research to take root and pollinate traditional methods to create more recursive and connected fruits of collaboration.

Figure 2: Image of pumpkin-squash hybrid, 2015; photograph by author.

According to Miho Kim Lee, research justice "is in itself a part of a racial, economic, and social justice agenda that insists on the rights of communities for their independent and autonomous capacity to not only effect policies that impact their lives, but to transform the notion of who has the right to determine research questions, designs, and methodologies on their own terms" (xviii). Called "A Strategic Framework to Achieve Self-determination for Marginalized Communities," the Research Justice project is an approach affiliated with DataCenter, a now closed hub that empowered communities to perform their own research studies to enact change. According to the DataCenter website, "Research Justice is achieved when marginalized communities are recognized as experts, and reclaim, own and wield all forms of knowledge and information." Part of that method involves providing training and research toolkits so that community members can access and enact their own research studies rather than relying on others to speak for them. This community-driven research approach is focused on providing leadership and methods training for their community leaders who want to use data to create lasting change.

At the heart of research justice is the idea that research is a basic human right. Appadurai reminds us that "all human beings are, in [a] sense, researchers, since all human beings make decisions that require them to make systematic forays beyond their current knowledge horizons" (269). And yet, that authority is denied to those who are considered deficient in some way. The deficit model not only sees the marginalized and less than, but it also takes away the right to access knowledge. Research

justice, then, is returning to those who have been denied the "tools through which any citizen can systematically increase the stock of knowledge that they consider most vital to their survival as human beings" (Appadurai 270). Such tools are often found within; they are the tools for survival inherent to communities and places but have been forgotten or denied as valid forms of knowledge.

Andrew Jolivétte builds on the DataCenter's work by introducing an indigenous understanding[3] of radical love that is centered on an experiential framework: "radical love as a fundamental aspect of a sacred Research Justice agenda requires that we see research participants as members of our family and not as a group of study participants or as sets of data to study and simply write about for our own career advancement" (7). The focus on radical love asks us to leave behind our own investments in pure research, in methods and approaches that are alien to local communities, and to see ourselves as part of a larger human community that is centered on respect and justice. In many ways, this approach is a form of open commensality, where everyone has a seat at the table. As Jolivétte explains, "By centering knowledge production and research projects based on cultural, spiritual, and experiential frameworks, we as academics attempt to share power and in many cases surrender our own power 'over' research subjects" (6). This sharing of power and surrender of control is key as it asks us to comport ourselves differently toward others, to shed the mantle of expert methodologist and open ourselves up to the equal sharing of perspectives and knowledge. And it also means we might have to actively help community members to foster their own methods and approaches, which may be antithetical to academic ones and which may require us to fade into the background and let the community shine as experts.

While I admit that my own projects are not anywhere close to training community members to enact their own research studies, we *should* all be thinking about how we might apply research justice principles to our service-learning and community partnerships. Rather than focus on reciprocal or equal outcomes for community partners, university researchers, and students, what if we focused solely on outcomes for community partners? What would happen if our partnerships were directed toward responding to the immediate and long-term needs of communities? What if we bucked the system, adapted our research methods, and changed our teaching so that the measurement of our success was the personal success of our participants, of long-term change in communities? What if we allowed the volunteers in our garden, the not-so-pretty fruits that emerge organically, to flourish and grow for themselves to produce something embedded in a real-life situation?

The remainder of this article illuminates places where homegrown research methods allow research justice to flourish and grow in small, circumspect ways. I provide these instances not as exemplars but as moments where something other than pure research or pure reciprocity shows up. I would argue that in service-learning work, research justice is cumulative. Reciprocity as research justice doesn't emerge overnight; it often takes time and occurs through small acts that build toward justice. Those acts are also motivated by an attitude or approach—one we might call cultural humility—that is inherent to research justice.

Cultural Humility

Everywhere people seek additional resources to support their existence, whether those are food, housing, unemployment, or social security benefits, is an opportunity for research justice. A concept dominant in the literature of community-based participatory research, health care, and social work, cultural humility is described as a lifelong process that encompasses the attributes of "openness, self-awareness, egoless, supportive interactions, and self-reflection and critique" (Foronda et al. 211). As a comportment, cultural humility asks researchers to place community first and their role as researcher second. Cultural humility also acknowledges the intense power differential in the way our world values different kinds of knowledges. Fisher-Borne et al. argue that cultural humility "makes explicit the interaction between the institution and the individual and the presence of systemic power imbalances" (177). Understanding the power differentials and academic ways of being in a world that divides us are necessary to enacting the cultural humility that can foster research justice.

Early discussions in service-learning scholarship focused on a Freirean concept of dialogue grounded in love and humility. Rosenberger asks us, for instance, "Are we able to build this stance of humility into the principles of service learning so as to create service learning practices that are encounters of learning and acting together in love and humility" (37)? Grabill encourages us to adopt this stance in our research commitments and orientations. Here we see the importance of articulating a way of being toward service-learning, one that encompasses the attitudes and feelings that enable and motivate our work. Service-learning and community engagement theories have attempted to move beyond love and humility as empathy and more towards compassion; as Hesford notes, empathy and compassion are not without political implications since empathy can be premised on superiority. Langstraat and Bowdon write that empathy and compassion are often interchanged, but they argue that compassion allows for more political action: "Compassion is usually more intense and entails both judgment *and* action, unlike empathy, which may result only in a judgment" (7). Empathy often asks us to see how other humans are like us; as we often see in student responses to community engagement, there is a tendency to identify with the plight of others, a sort of "that could be me" moment. But compassion provides a different orientation. Compassion grounded in cultural humility asks us to put aside our egoed desire to see ourselves in others and to let others' differences be. As Langstraat and Bowdon write, students "must be able to have compassion for someone whose behavior they cannot necessarily understand" (11). Compassion, as an extension of cultural humility, asks us to acknowledge the privilege inherent in the act of identification, to be open to behaviors, approaches, and experiences that we cannot understand, and to value those differences as forms of expertise.

Part of enacting a radical love grounded in cultural humility involves resisting the impulse to insert community engagement activities within the economy of the university, especially in terms of academic publishing. What might be termed the "data imperative" (Bay and Swacha) is the drive to collect and produce data that can result in new knowledge and publications; it permeates every part of the academy today, as well as most major institutions and businesses who seek logical, rational, and

quantitative evidence. Decolonial scholars might call this drive part of the colonialist impulse of higher education, and it is a struggle to escape from it. For many years, I actively resisted publishing on community engagement activities because I did not want to directly benefit from that relationship or from the needs of the community. I don't want to give a narrative that could be perceived as a "white savior" or one that provides me with even more privilege in an academy that denies entrance to so many others. But when it is grounded in a form of cultural humility (Tervalon and Murray-García), research justice also calls on me to share my own experiential knowledge so that others can enact more just, equitable, and humane connections between universities and communities. Research justice means acknowledging that our positions as university researchers are never perfect; we make mistakes. But acknowledging those mistakes requires that we open ourselves up to a vulnerability that can move us toward more just and equitable relationships that can bridge the boundaries that divide us. As Kellie Sharp-Hoskins observes, "vulnerability is essential to our ability to imagine engagement" (69). Hopefully, exploring different notions of belonging, justice, and place will help others to consider the ways they can humbly reorient their research.

Enacting forms of research justice via homegrown methods requires that we approach the research task with cultural humility grounded in a sense of radical love. While we might not articulate this stance to students as such, what we can do is foster an openness to the community-based knowledges they encounter and how those knowledges can become a part of—or supplant—our own research designs. As I have illustrated, homegrown methods are permutations and combinations of that which grows on the land and might be introduced to that same land. They are organic and emerge from human, material, cultural interactions. Often, they are not crafted; they are kairotic. The plant you want to grow may not have enough light, the right soil, or the right environment to thrive; but you can graft that plant to a native one to create something beautiful. Research in community settings can emerge in the same way.

My undergraduate and graduate students and I often work with a local Food Bank to develop research studies that address specific situations in the community, incorporate the needs of participants, and are informed by ethical and rigorous research methods. I call these methods "homegrown" because they emerge organically and symbiotically out of the needs of the community partner, students, and situations. Homegrown is used here without the hyphen to emphasize the symbiotic relationship between home and growth. Terese Guinsatao Monberg calls for a different kind of service-learning pedagogy for students of color, which would focus on the "deeper textures present in the place(s) they might call 'home'" (22). Understanding how those deeper textures can call forth new methods and approaches that are community and justice centered is at the heart of a homegrown approach. Unlike grassroots, homegrown is something cultivated with care in a home environment; it also connotes a family who grows their own food. Homegrown methods allow for this kind of family care and concern to dominate. For instance, my students often orally administer surveys to food pantry visitors[4] not only to account for possible literacy issues the visitors may have, but also so they can build connections via rich descrip-

tions of community needs with open-ended questions. Talking directly with food pantry visitors and collecting their thoughts and ideas makes an often exploited and demeaned group of people feel valued and provides them with a sense of human dignity that they may not otherwise experience in their everyday lives. Moreover, I often strongly suggest or require my students to volunteer with the food pantry or other agency in an effort to connect more deeply with community and human needs. Other classes have interviewed elderly community members who are thrilled to alleviate loneliness and experience a sense of companionship as they are asked to share their stories and suggestions for improved services at the pantry. While these instances may not seem that innovative, they try to enact a concern for research justice that is grounded in cultural humility, privileges the humanity and dignity of research participants, teaches students to engage with other humans in ethical ways, and provides needed data and stories for community organizations to use to craft grants, develop programs to better meet human needs, and assess current programs.

Rowan and Cavallaro observe that "In developing community literacy projects, we cannot start with what we want to create, but rather, we must strive to understand better what the community values in order to develop programs that meet the needs they identify for themselves" (23). Part of that is valuing and celebrating the strengths and desires of the community, or inhabiting an asset-based approach. Green argues, "asset-based theory means focusing on what already exists, what is already happening in the context, builds on what already exists, acknowledges what *is* present" (155). Asset approaches acknowledge the strength and resilience of communities, pointing out what they do well. Such approaches document not just the pain or problems in communities, but also the hope, vision, and knowledge of a community.

Homegrown methods, because they are grounded in home cultures and communities, can capture both pain and desire; they rely on a community's resilience to imagine what could be. They are inherently inventive as communities, and thus, are not stuck in a deficit or damage-based narrative; rather, they are able to reimagine themselves and their possibilities, to re-access the tools of their culture, their upbringing, their homes.

One example of a homegrown approach might be something like what Green describes as "double dutch methodology." In her chapter of the same title, she outlines the seemingly contradictory and fluid roles as a participant researcher with a Black youth radio collective. In order to understand how her position as researcher shifted and emerged rhetorically in different situations, she relies on the improvisational nature of the jump rope game double-dutch to understand how her role as participant observer was blurred. In one moment she might be attending birthday parties, high school graduation, and driving young people to pick up snacks, and in another, she is helping cultivate critical literacy skills and foster community knowledges among this group. It wasn't that she became embedded in the community before she studied them; rather, her researcher identity emerged as she participated. In this sense, the desire, hopes, and dreams of a community are emergent in the rhetorical context of engagement; they are not static, but responsive. As such, traditional research methods

and approaches may not be able to capture that desire. Rather, desire emerges in relationships and situations.

How, then are we to let that desire emerge via homegrown approaches to research justice? Before communities can access desire, they must see themselves as desiring. One way is to continually combat the damage and deficit narratives that presume brokenness. Motivational interviewing can be one approach to accessing that desire. In social and clinical psychology, motivational interviewing has been used for promoting behavioral change. The approach attempts to help clients overcome ambivalent feelings and promote self-efficacy. An example would be motivational interviewing techniques in counseling to help an alcoholic see themselves as able to change their life. Extending outward, Martin et al. provide one model for incorporating motivational interviewing into a food pantry context to encourage food security; they report that from their study, self-efficacy strongly correlates with food security. As food pantries and banks have become more business like, the focus has been on getting food out the door. Martin et al. argue that this approach to efficiency can undermine or forget pantry visitors' need for support and basic care. In short, to relate it to this essay, the focus on the efficiency of charity eclipses community strengths and resilience.

What if motivational interviewing could be used as part of a research justice approach to allow communities to access local knowledges and strengths? What if, like the DataCenter's approach, communities teach one another to enact a practice like motivational interviewing that would fit their particular contexts? Academics might be in a position to cultivate relationships that create the conditions of possibility for asset-based approaches and methods that honor and emerge from community knowledge-making practices. Kathryn Swacha, for instance, helped disabled and low-income seniors develop a cookbook with recipes that used food pantry staples while adapting to differently abled bodies. Such research affirms and values the specific knowledge making practices of that community of seniors. Homegrown research methods allow both participants and researchers to develop approaches that allow communities to see their own community knowledge as empowering.

Conclusion

If food is an essential component for our humanity, then perhaps as researchers our goal is to illuminate the resilience, desire, and humanity of those who lack food or who are insecure about their food sources. We can start by acknowledging the rich forms of information and knowledge that our food-insecure neighbors possess and recognizing connections across disparate forms of information. Sometimes research participants may share information that is important but unrelated to a scholarly project. Making sure that information is relayed and addressed is crucial. An interview with a community member or client may be the only opportunity they have to share an experience, ask a question, or provide feedback. Likewise, community members may disrupt, shift, or insert their own meaning making process a method, a form of the everyday forms of resistance by powerless groups that Scott illustrates in *Weap-*

ons of the Weak. These moments of resistance can be part of a homegrown research process. Focusing less on the data collected and more on immediate human needs, whether those be organizational or individual, opens up the possibility of cultivating deeper community relationships that can develop over time and incrementally. I don't believe these moments generate radical shifts or changes in the community, but over time and cumulatively, they can make a difference in how we see or experience food insecurity. And perhaps most importantly, they also force us to rethink how research can be more homegrown and humble and less institutionally bounded so as to promote change beyond the university.

Research must be grounded in the conditions in which it is planted. In doing so, it must allow for the unexpected desires of participants to spring forth, desires that may contradict or circumvent our own. Such desires are opportunities to listen to and establish trust with communities, which are only possible through a radical valuing of community knowledge and approaches; such valuing can only come from a sense of radical love. The key to enacting research justice is responding in just and humane ways to unexpectedness, always remembering with humility the other human beings who have been entrusted to us.

Notes

1. Thomas Rickert has argued that rhetoric is a fundamental commonality of all life, and hence, part of what it means to be human, which indicates that rhetoricians might make important contributions and connections between food and rhetoric.

2. Here, I would reference many important articles on reciprocity from scholars who represent a range of fields. These include Brady; Cushman; Cruz and Giles; d'Arlach, Sánchez, and Feuer; Grohowski; Henry and Breyfogle; Jacoby; Petri; Porter and Monard; Powell and Takayoshi; Reardon; Remley; Stanton.

3. I want to be clear, here, that I am not trying to co-opt an indigenous term for myself, but to point towards the important experiential understandings of the world that indigenous concepts like radical love can engender as we seek more just and equitable research relationships.

4. I use the term *visitors* here tactically as I wish to avoid referring to research participants as the more common used term, "clients." Client denotes a formal or even clinical relationship with an individual; it relates closely to the term "user." What we call our research participants can illuminate our own unconscious approaches to them and our research. So, in this sense, I prefer the term visitor, neighbor, or even friend to foster a more just and humane relationship among human beings.

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