

'Harvesting a participatory movement': Initial participatory action research with the Jewish Farmer Network

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Abstract

The Jewish Farmer Network (JFN) is a North American grassroots organization that mobilizes Jewish agricultural wisdom to build a more just and regenerative food system for all. This paper presents methodological findings and reflections from the initial stages of a participatory action research (PAR) collaboration led by the authors and JFN organizers centered on *Cultivating Culture*, JFN's

inaugural conference in February 2020. For this early iterative phase, we used a PAR approach to guide event ethnography to both facilitate and understand collective movement building and action. This work included pre-conference collaborative research design, a participatory reflection and action workshop with roughly 90 participants, eval-

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uative surveys, short ethnographic interviews, and ongoing post-conference analysis with researchers and movement organizers. While this data was first analyzed and organized for JFN's use, we present findings to demonstrate the effectiveness of foregrounding event ethnography within a PAR research design at an early stage of movement formation, especially how elements of event ethnography can address some of the limitations of using PAR with a nascent network of farmers. Our work revealed themes in the movement of Jewish farming: the politics of identity in movement building, the tensions around (de)politicization, and the production of Jewish agroecological knowledge. We reflect on the utility of using PAR to frame scholar-activism and propose future inquiries for Jewish agrarianism.

Keywords

Participatory Action Research, Agroecology, Jewish Farming, Event Ethnography, Scholar-Activism

Introduction

The Jewish Farmer Network (JFN) is a grassroots organization that was founded in 2017 and has since connected with over 2,000 farmers. Working at the nexus of sustainable agriculture, food justice, and Jewish life, JFN mobilizes "Jewish wisdom to build a more just and regenerative food system for all" (JFN, n.d., para. 1). The network began when two farmer-organizers recognized a collective reverence for the interconnections between Jewish heritage and farming, and the desire for Jewish farmers to build community around the ethics and rhythms of Jewish agriculture. JFN began to facilitate dialogue among Jewish farmers who find both spiritual and professional nourishment in turning to their own agricultural traditions instead of orienting toward others' cultural or ancestral practices.

In February 2020, JFN hosted *Cultivating Culture*, a four-day conference of Jewish farmers at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Maryland. This event gathered over 160 people primarily from North America, along with Europe and Israel, in order to build community, share Jewish farming knowledge, and celebrate *shabbat* (weekly day of rest). This was the first large gathering of Jewish

farmers in North America in recent memory, filling a shared need for individuals connected to both Jewish and farming spaces. It was an opportunity to direct and catalyze a growing movement that embodies justice, regeneration, and ancestral connection to the land and each other. The conference was the focus of our event ethnography, where ethnographic methods were used to generate thick descriptions of the participant experience at a multiday event (Aguilar Delgado & Barin Cruz, 2014; Holloway et al., 2010). The conference also marks the beginning of a still-ongoing participatory action research (PAR) process, the first year of which we explore in this paper.

Our research objectives are twofold. First, we develop and demonstrate the potential for using event ethnography methodology within a PAR research design to facilitate collective movement-building and action at conferences. Secondly, we illustrate the role these methods play in the formation of a nascent social movement while holding the long-term visions of a cyclical PAR process.

We show how our use of event ethnography methods within PAR supports community-engaged research relationships and a thick description of JFN's organizing that we use to frame our scholar activism. Moving toward a radical food geography praxis (Hammelman et al., 2020), we strive to address the "dearth of studies of alternative agri-food movements and great potential for collaboration between academia and agri-food movements" (Fernandez et al., 2013, p. 123). Given a similar lack of scholarly attention to Jewish agrarianism, this paper lays out future directions for work on Jewish farming, agroecological knowledge, and land ethics.

This project was initiated by two geographers with backgrounds in Jewish farming and agroecological education. We both have extensive contacts in the field dating back to our pre-academic careers in both Jewish and secular farm-based education. These longstanding commitments to the field of Jewish farming and the resulting relationships we tend are integral to our ability to blend academic questions with grassroots social organizing.

Besides providing insights on our methodology, our research process revealed tensions re-

garding the politics of identity in movement-building and the processes of agroecological knowledge production and exchange. We continue to ask questions such as: How can PAR support the inclusion of excluded voices in this movement? What can PAR reveal about the tensions around (de)politicization of a movement that might engage some participants and alienate others? What role is PAR playing in agroecological knowledge politics and production?

This paper begins with a brief background on JFN's emergence within the Jewish farming movement, and how we conceptualize the connections between Jewish farming and agroecological movements and practices. We foreground our methods with a literature review of ethnography at field-building events and PAR within agroecology, with an eye toward how they can complement each other in an early-iterative movement phase. We then explain our methods before, during, and after the conference. The findings section explains the interrelated results from the participatory workshop, surveys, ethnography, and data analysis, and the initial outcomes of our PAR process. We then discuss how we use PAR to frame our scholar-activism, the implications of using PAR and ethnography at an early stage of organizing, and our future outlook on this work.

Jewish Farming, JFN, and Agroecology

The JFN has myriad roots in a vast web of Jewish environmental organizing in North America. The network's founders first convened a group of Jewish farmers casually over lunch at the 2016 Hazon Food Conference,¹ an annual meeting of culinary experts, farmers, activists, artists, and Jewish leaders interested in improving community health and sustainability through developing deeper relationships with food and farming. While a collection of Jewish Community Farming (JCF)² organizations focuses on the integration of agriculture with experiential education and Jewish life, this movement supports the development of *institutionalized* educational nonprofits. JFN organizers recognized a gap and an opportunity to organize a community:

individual, small-scale, and/or production-oriented Jewish farmers or farmworkers have little or no formal networking connections to, knowledge-sharing pathways with or financial support from the larger JCF institutions. With JFN's founding, dispersed and diverse farmers come together around a shared need to connect with Jewish farming knowledge, to find a community of peers, and to be seen equally in both their Jewish and farmer identities.

There are synergies between Jewish farming frameworks and agroecology which, when combined, can bring cultural specificity to sustainable or ecological farming. Agroecology is the science, movement, and practice of sustainable agriculture and resource management (Altieri, 1989; S. Gliessman et al., 1998; A. Wezel et al., 2009) based on the application of ecological principles such as recycling, efficiency, diversity, regulation, and synergies (Francis et al., 2003; Wezel et al., 2020). Agroecology is also defined as "a social movement with a strong ecological grounding that fosters justice, relationship, access, resilience, resistance, and sustainability" (Gliessman, 2013, p. 19). While much of the agroecological literature focuses on resource-poor farmers in the global south (Altieri, 2002), and not all Jewish farming is agroecological or even small-scale, Jewish farmers' reclamation of traditional agricultural knowledge and practices are in line with agroecology's focus on using traditional knowledge to the benefit of agroecosystem health (Altieri, 2009; Alzate et al., 2019).

What makes Jewish farming Jewish? Jewish farmers turn to ancestral texts, such as the Tanach, Talmud, and Pirkei Avot, for agricultural knowledge frameworks and practices around soil care and composting, seed keeping, closed-loop nutrient cycling, crop planning, animal husbandry, and cycles of rest and release for both the land and those who labor. Growing and processing culturally important plants such as cucumber (Janick et al., 2007), barley, grapes, wheat, and garlic provide material and spiritual connection to the cycle of the Jewish agrarian calendar through foodways and the body. Observing *shabbat*, the weekly day of rest, is a

¹ For more information: <https://hazon.org/calendar/hazon-food-conference/>

² For more information: <https://www.jewishcommunityfarming.org/about>

mechanism for honoring labor, learning, and cycles of time.

Jewish farmers engage with longer cycles of time, which most notably includes *shmita*. Meaning “release” in Hebrew, *shmita* is a Jewish agricultural law that structures time and land management in cycles of seven years. Although it is a biblical law, some modern Jewish farmers and environmental organizations in North America are reengaging with *shmita* today as an agroecological value and practice. In brief, during the seventh year, Jewish law mandates that agricultural lands should be not cultivated, must become communal land (i.e., fences must be removed), and that all debts are forgiven.³ At the soil level, *shmita* leads to microbial, nutrient, and structural regeneration. At the community level, *shmita*’s economic restructuring promotes the redistribution of land and capital. On a spiritual level, redistribution and release are practices of freedom. The practice requires farmers to perennialize growing spaces and preserve food to survive, steward wild edibles, think on multiyear production cycles, share resources, create mutual aid networks, and practice nonproductivist ways of being. Such a reorganization of the food system through applying *shmita* principles is a political agroecological movement approach, on which JFN⁴ and other Jewish environmental organizations⁵ are dialoguing and acting.

Theoretical and Methodological Framing: Event Ethnography and PAR with Farmers

Event ethnography is a data collection method that includes participant observation, field journaling, interviews, audio recordings of sessions, and collection of other informational material (see, for example, Garud, 2008, and Zilber, 2011). The method generates thick description that includes in-depth accounts of participants at a defined event (Aguilar Delgado & Barin Cruz, 2014), allowing event organizers to understand the participant experience of their events (Holloway et al., 2010).

It has been used in conference settings such as the policy-focused World Conservation Congress (Brosius & Campbell, 2010) and the multidisciplinary creative gathering Emerge (Davies et al., 2015). Event ethnography has contributed to the literature on field-configuring events (FCE), which is defined as a temporary gathering where people from diverse organizations come together to “announce new products, develop industry standards, construct social networks, recognize accomplishments, share and interpret information, and transact business” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1026).

Participatory action research is an approach that brings together diverse stakeholders to integrate research, reflection, and action as an iterative process that engages participants at multiple phases of the research cycle (Cahill et al., 2010; Cahill & Torre, 2007; Fortmann, 2008; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Whyte, 1991; Wilmsen et al., 2012). PAR with farmers has been used to advance agroecology as a participatory, transdisciplinary, and action-oriented approach (Méndez et al., 2013). It is used to further the growth of alternative agri-food movements across the United States (Fernandez et al., 2013), as well as in Europe (Cuéllar-Padilla & Calle-Collado, 2011; Guzmán et al., 2013), Latin America (S. R. Gliessman et al., 2017; Méndez et al., 2013), Africa (Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Mapfumo et al., 2013), and elsewhere.

While PAR can adapt to the context of the community and the timing of its implementation, certain limitations are present when a social network is in an early stage of formation. It must be noted that the process of developing a network and building capacity through PAR can require ample time, resources, and social capital from researchers and other stakeholders (Méndez et al., 2017). The PAR literature touches on the variations in PAR implementation, given a social movement’s stage. In some cases, PAR is employed to strengthen nascent local actor networks as an initial step that

³ These mandates only apply to lands in Israel, but are being applied in the diaspora today.

⁴ At JFN’s 2020 Cultivating Culture conference, *shmita* was prominently featured in the educational programming, with a three-part Saturday evening session block devoted to the topic.

⁵ For examples, see Hazon’s *Shmita* Project (<https://hazon.org/shmita-project/overview/>) and *Shmita* Project Northwest (<https://earthministry.org/the-shmita-project-northwest/>).

precedes organizing around other goals. For example, a small- and medium-sized organic producer group in Andalusia, Spain, initiated a PAR project to create stronger social relations among producers and achieve mutual recognition of shared challenges within the organic certification process (Cuéllar-Padilla et al., 2011). In reference to PAR, researchers in Andalusia contend that “the organizational development of local actor networks is one of the strongest points of this methodology” (Cuéllar-Padilla et al., 2011, p. 381).

On the other hand, when social ties exist they can be strategically leveraged in a PAR process to achieve shared interests or other goals. Two projects from Nicaragua leveraged decades-old grassroots and revolutionary organizing relations among rural farmers. Movimiento Campesino-a-Campesino (Farmer-to-Farmer Movement) structures made possible the mobilization of 19 NGOs and 833 farmers in order to measure small farmers’ agroecological resilience after the devastating 1998 Hurricane Mitch (Holt-Giménez, 2002). In another PAR process, multiple stakeholders in a northern Nicaraguan community formed a coalition that included agricultural cooperatives, researchers, and NGOs to address the shared goals of ending seasonal hunger, increasing access to healthy food, and transitioning to more resilient food systems (Méndez et al., 2015). In these examples, the projects used both existing historical and ideological ties among actors and participatory facilitation techniques from the Movimiento Campesino-a-Campesino, which has historically leveraged agroecology as a core food-sovereignty strategy. The adaptability of both agroecology (Bell, 2018) and PAR (Kindon et al., 2007) to different cultural, political, historical, and environmental contexts is helpful in the formation of a farmer network once there is traction.

While adaptability and methodological openness are strengths of PAR, variation across contexts helps reveal the challenges of using PAR during a nascent phase. Some PAR practitioners stress the immense researcher and staff labor that goes into multiyear processes where research and nonresearch partners collaborate in the earliest stages and continually attempt to harmonize all stakeholders’ needs, capacities, and methods

(Méndez et al., 2013), such as in projects with farmers in Vermont and Nicaragua (Méndez et al., 2015). An ecological study on flower harvest yields in Washington state engaged multiple stakeholders early on and then repeatedly throughout the research in order to define and redefine research questions, ultimately revealing political limitations in system change, resilience, and sustained participation with undocumented workers (Ballard & Belsky, 2010). By contrast, some PAR projects are brought into existing organizations, projects, and partnerships to bring more validity or attention to the issues in policy arenas or to address a specific issue. This was the case in a participatory analysis of the transnational manifestations and leftist praxis in climate change activism (Reitan & Gibson, 2012). Other PAR projects spark researcher-NGO partnerships themselves (Ferreyra, 2006), where NGOs are already formed and researchers may need to devote time to both understand and gain access to the network.

Clearly, defining a “movement” or project stage varies from community to community, and PAR during the formation of a farmer network differs from PAR with an established network. When strong social ties or forums for airing differences do not exist, there are limitations on including or hearing from a wide range of possible members. In this study, members of the community are geographically dispersed, have yet to strengthen trust and social connections, may have differing motivations for participation, and may have differing views of the movement. Event ethnography addresses some of PAR’s limitations at this early organizational stage, allowing us to gather diverse voices, guide research questions during the conference, and interpret data through the eyes of more participants.

Methodology

We use event ethnography within a PAR research design to initiate a long-term research project centered on JFN’s inaugural conference, Cultivating Culture. This involved coordination between JFN organizers and researchers before, during, and after the conference to continually harmonize objectives and methods. Given our use of PAR research design here and throughout the paper, it must be

noted that the PAR process is far from being complete; rather, the research discussed here marks its initiation and helps frame our scholar-activist work. Because this conference was pivotal in gathering and helping to define JFN's movement, the community involved in this PAR project is diverse and geographically dispersed. Still, participants come together around a set of shared needs and values, making this community an exciting prospect for long-term PAR. Here, we describe the process of research design and data collection and analysis through planning meetings, interviews, participant-observation, surveys, a participatory workshop with conference attendees, and post-conference participatory analysis. Some of the tasks, such as interviews and participant observation, were carried out exclusively by the two authors in order to respect participant privacy. The two authors are henceforth referred to as the researchers or "we." Many of the research tasks were carried out collectively by the two authors and the two JFN organizers, henceforth referred to as the "research team."

Pre-Conference Research Methods

This process began five months before the conference and developed over a series of meetings held with the research team. During these sessions, organizers consulted us (the researchers) on the four conference goals, which include (1) grow relationships among Jewish farmers, (2) empower Jewish farmers with agricultural wisdom, (3) set a direction for the future of JFN, and (4) prove need and viability of JFN to funders. We explained our ethnographic methods for the conference and our overall PAR approach. The research team discussed how this process could assist in achieving the conference's goals through a final session that would facilitate reflection and collective visioning, and participatory analysis with both conference participants and the research team. We then collaboratively designed the workshop, called "Harvesting a Participatory Movement."

Because the JFN organizers expressed a need for help in documenting the conference for funders, we assisted in designing post-conference evaluative surveys to assess how well it met the conference's goals. This allowed JFN organizers to focus

on other tasks. Post-conference surveys were disseminated on paper as participants left the conference and online the following week. While we were not involved in the design of the online registration, data from the enrollment survey was useful in establishing the demographics of conference participants.

Conference Event Research Methods

During the four-day conference, we did ethnographic work, observing and interacting with other participants in facilitated sessions, in casual gatherings, in lounges, and at meals. Between sessions and meals, we conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with participants to elicit diverse perspectives on how they define JFN, how they contribute to the movement, and what they wish to gain from their participation. Each individual interview was recorded, and we took field notes during and after the interviews. Two times per day, we compared and discussed our notes from the facilitated sessions, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews. We also met twice during the conference as a research team to reflect and harmonize our reflections with the JFN organizers. These reflections and notes guided preparation for the participatory workshop by generating a list of pre-selected themes for collective visioning of potential projects.

During the "Harvesting a Participatory Movement" workshop, we led over 90 participants through a PAR-informed session that consisted of four parts. First, we introduced the session and the research project. We used song and physical movement, which helped transition participants from the previous plenary session on climate change. Second, we asked individuals to reflect on the weekend by talking about their general conference experience with a partner nearby and then by moving around the room to answer eight questions on large poster paper. Third, people gathered in self-selected working groups to generate ideas based on conference themes. We began by presenting pre-selected themes, then asked participants for additional themes. Participants were asked to form groups based on each theme (e.g., Jewish seed keeping, farm business planning, queer Jews, etc.) by self-selecting the theme they were most inter-

ested in discussing. We asked the groups to develop a project idea related to their theme and to prepare one person to deliver a 30-second share-back. More specifically, groups were asked to describe what JFN could do to support the project idea, including the minimum and maximum ways they could imagine being supported.

Participatory analysis, described as a process of collective knowledge production “*with*, rather than separate *from*, participants” (Cahill, 2007, p. 181, emphasis in the original), took place during this workshop with all participants, as well as with the research team (described below). In the full-group share-back discussion, participants were prompted to reflect on how their ideas and those of other groups could be integrated into JFN programming. The groups provided reflection and analysis on each other’s findings, constituting both participatory data collection and analysis with the greater community of participants. Finally, the session concluded with a song, sharing of seeds, and gratitude.

Post-Conference Research Methods

These data were collected by the research team on poster papers and in notes and recordings. In a series of post-conference meetings, the research team collaboratively processed and analyzed the PAR session’s group findings in conjunction with interviews and surveys results to provide a comprehensive description of the composition, happenings, and outcomes of the conference, as well as an analysis of how participants view the present and future of the movement. During this analysis, researchers transcribed the individual interviews, then removed identifying information from interview transcripts in order to share content with the JFN organizers while protecting participant privacy. As part of an iterative analysis, the researchers did an initial round of qualitative coding of the interviews based on themes of knowledge production and politics of identity, shared them with the JFN organizers, and restructured the coded themes based on the JFN organizers’ input. The JFN organizers also provided feedback on the participa-

tory workshop, reflected on conference goals, and shared their own experiences of participating in a PAR-guided process. The research team collaboratively authored an internal report that detailed the research and findings from Cultivating Culture.

Post-conference, several outcomes from the participatory workshop have turned into actions, namely in the form of community calls, affinity group meetings, and new projects within JFN (detailed below in the findings), where the researchers are both participants and co-leaders. While the researchers assisted lightly with the planning of a virtual 2021 conference, the research team collectively decided to omit participatory workshops or ethnographic work at the online COVID-19-era conference due to online burnout, feasibility, and workloads. The outcomes from this first year’s iteration of a PAR process continue to guide questions and inform a 2022 research cycle, explained in the future directions section.

Findings and Outcomes

This section presents findings from our interrelated methods. We begin with an overview of the demographics of the farmer attendees from the survey data. Second, our ethnographic data further contextualizes or “thickens” our understanding of participant experiences. Third, we summarize the findings from the participatory workshop, describing how we used event ethnography to inform the workshop. This section concludes by describing the initial outcomes from the PAR-guided research process.

Survey Findings

Registration data reveal that attendees were a mix of farmers, aspiring farmers, lapsed farmers, and nonfarmers (Table 1). Participants were mostly younger than 45, with about half being between 26 and 35 years old. About half of the participants identified as female, with 16% identifying as a non-binary gender. Generally, attendees engaged in more “nonconventional” forms of farming,⁶ as only 17% of participants stated that they own land and 15% stated that they earn a majority of income

⁶ Many participants worked on communal land owned by nonprofits, synagogues, or other community institutions. This falls outside of “conventional” family farm structures, which make up more than 97% of farms in the U.S. according to the USDA (n.d.).

from farming. However, participants did have a considerable amount of experience, with 30% reporting over 5 years of farming experience, from a poll conducted during the introductory session of the conference (Figure 1). After the conference, over half the participants responded that the conference considerably grew their relationships among Jewish farmers and empowered them with Jewish agricultural wisdom, which were the first two conference goals directed at individuals. For example, the conference considerably or moderately increased the “understanding of the connection between Judaism and agriculture” for 90% of conference participants (Figure 2). These survey findings are further elaborated on below through interview data.

Event Ethnography Findings

Throughout the conference, short semi-structured interviews captured participants’ intentions, observations, and reflections on Jewish farming and on organizing Jewish farmers as a cohesive social movement. These qualitative data informed decisions we made about our participatory workshop and informed collective analysis during the workshop with about 90 participants. These interviews recorded in-depth accounts of why participants showed up to the conference and who they are. Several conversations noted that the “misconception that there is no such thing as a Jewish farmer” is addressed “by there being a gathering like this.” One participant understood the gathering as an opportunity “to explore where Jewish identity and living close to the land intersect, and to inspire young people and hook them up with resources.” While registration data captured how individuals identified, these interviews gave more insight into the politics of inclusion and participation. One person, who identified as a queer Jew of Color expressed appreciation that JFN can “hold space for my queer identity and it be a non-issue. And not only a non-issue but to be more than the only one. . . . Giving that space is a really important thing to overall spiritual growth because oftentimes, those two

Table 1. Participant Demographics from Registration Data (n=150)

Farmer Identification	Percent
Aspiring farmer	12%
Current farmer	49%
Lapsed farmer	9%
Does not identify as farmer but works with land	14%
Not a farmer	13%
Did not report	3%
Age	
Less than 18	4%
18–25	13%
26–35	47%
36–45	20%
46–55	5%
46–65	5%
66 and older	2%
Did not report	3%
Gender	
Female (exclusively using she and her)	53%
Male (exclusively using he and him)	30%
Nonbinary (using they and them)	13%
Did Not Identify with Pronouns	3%
Did not report	1%

Figure 1. Experience in Farming Among Cultivating Culture Participants (n=82)

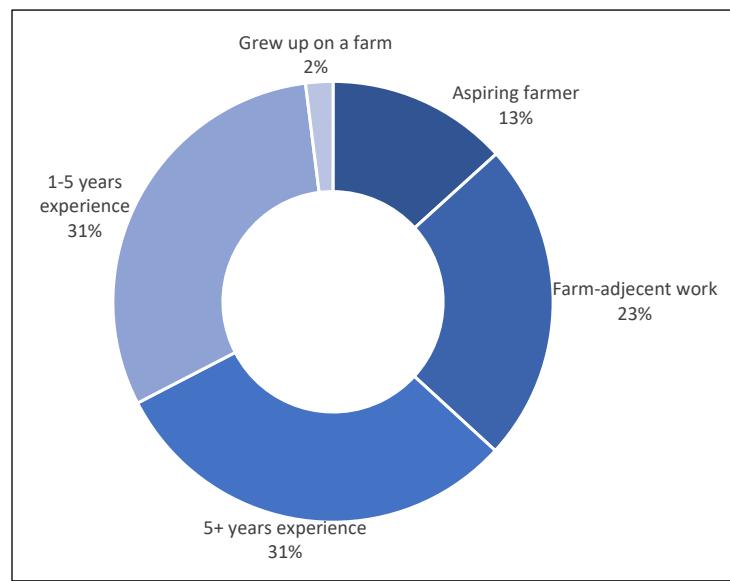
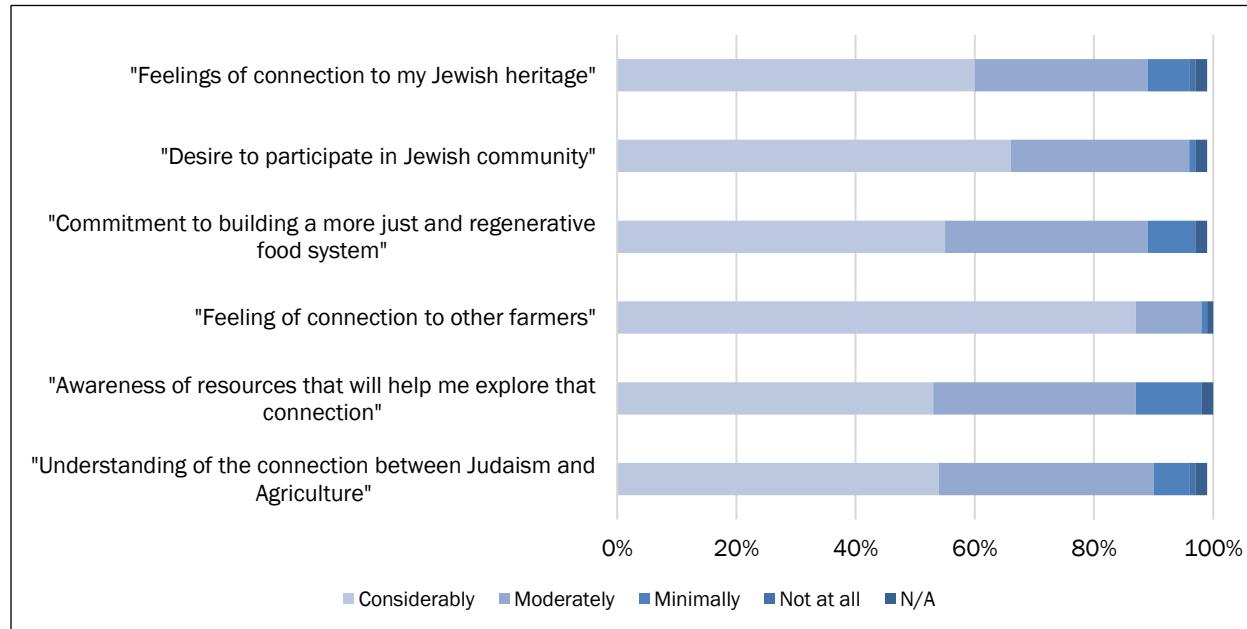


Figure 2. Post-Conference Survey Responses to Questions on Conference Goals (n=83)



things are in conflict."

In understanding who showed up to the conference, interviews gave insight into how people learned about the network. One participant explained that:

At the end of last year, I attended the Biodynamic Conference and then the Young Farmers Conference at Stone Barns back-to-back. Shani [Mink, co-founder of JFN] was at both of those and I found the JFN sticker on the floor, just like on my footpath, and was like *did someone plant this here for me*. It was kind of like a dream that I didn't know I was dreaming it had literally fallen in front of me. . . . At both of those conferences, she held a little meet-up for Jewish farmers. I was one of the only people at the table at both of those meet-ups.

This story shows the outreach to secular farming communities to recruit farmers who are Jewish into the network. Participants, including the one who shared this story, emphasized their desire to engage with ancestral Jewish knowledge. The participant from above explains that:

It [is] increasingly important and pretty neces-

sary to root myself in my own traditions rather than taking from other people's [traditions] even if other people's traditions have been offered to me as a pathway to healing. To know that the answers I am seeking lie in Jewish texts is really exciting and I know very little about the Jewish relationship to land and agriculture, so I am here to learn about those things.

This demonstrates the creative capacity of gatherings like this not only to attract people of Jewish identity but to help attendees learn from ancestral knowledge and have the opportunity to make those practices relevant in their farming and community life.

Ethnographic data also gave insight into tensions in the movement that stem from identity and inclusion. Quotes from two interviewees illustrate varied political reflections on the name "Jewish Farmer Network":

I hope that we can also be really careful about our politics . . . calling ourselves a *Jewish Farmer Network* runs the risk of replicating and mirroring the way that Jewish farming has been used as a tool of displacement in Palestine.

What I would like it to be, as the *name* implies, an opportunity to network, to create the contacts and continue doing farm work minus the layers of ideology, social justice, et cetera.

These two perspectives potentially present clashing views, as the first participant expressed the politicization of the name, while the second participant is concerned with keeping the name depoliticized to remain as inclusive as possible. This section briefly demonstrates the effectiveness of short interviews at conferences. Most relevant is how they helped identify tensions, which presents opportunities for JFN to open up dialogue, given that these tensions can work to build movements rather than limit them at an early organizing stage.

Participatory Workshop Findings

At the end of the conference, we facilitated a closing participatory workshop to capture the emerging ideas and conversations from the conference. Participants responded to eight questions on poster papers dispersed around the room (Figure 3 and Table 2). After answers were filled out, we asked attendees to share, which prompted responses such as:

Talking about the deep pain and grief of being in relation to land . . . and thinking about the sorrow that has kind of soaked that land and the literal blood that has soaked that land. . . . The space was held for those conversations with so much compassion. There was so much deep listening, and I think that paired with so much joy and playfulness allowed for us to feel . . . a real vibrational quality to this experience. [The conference] didn't just feel intellectual, [the conference] was felt. I think that is also stemming from spirituality being centered here, and the frameworks around spirituality, almost coming second. There was this element of like the true divine spirit being here, so that

Figure 3. Introducing the Participatory Workshop with Poster Paper on the Walls



Photo by Neta Shwartz.

helped [the conference] not only to be informational, but really transformational.

This testimony and others, shared publicly, is indicative of the emotional and spiritual vulnerability that many participants brought to the conference and the network.

The second part of the session grouped people into small working groups to collectively brainstorm future programs within JFN, responding directly to conference goal 3. Fourteen groups were established collectively: the research team presented 10 themes related to conference topics, and individual participants contributed four more when asked to add any themes that they thought were missing from the list. We guided participants through a brainstorming process in small groups, asking them to imagine future programs, projects, goals, and outcomes (Figure 4). Groups described the minimum and maximum contributions or resources they would need from JFN to bring their ideas to fruition. Groups were prompted to reflect on and compare their ideas with those of other groups, especially those that pertained to the creation of new JFN programming, what should be prioritized, and who their ideas can serve. For each of the 14 groups, we summarize the findings from this participatory analysis below by grouping them into three programmatic agendas useful for both movement-building and research agendas: social

Table 2. Reflection Questions and Example Responses, Featuring Responses that Were Either Repeated or Reflect Themes in the Rest of the Data

Reflection Question	Example Themes and Responses
What did you bring to this JFN community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business planning: “Willingness to talk about money transparently and share the specifics starting up a new farm business” Technical farming knowledge: “Vegetables and farm planning”; “Science background” Community skills: “Heart connection, awareness of needs, care for class and inclusiveness”; “Energy and time and desire for change”
What did you learn or gain this weekend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Jewish) Farming knowledge: “Seed saving”; “Shmita” Greater sense of Community and Connection: “Friendship and support”
How will you apply something that you learned here at home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply/Learn Jewish Agricultural Knowledge: “Applying shmita concepts to my business relationships” Staying Connected: “Spreading the word so other lone, Jewish farmers know they’ve got a crew 2 back them”
What was challenging for you or missing from this gathering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing Diversity: “It would be cool to be able to host some people from indigenous and POC organizations speaking on/informing our conversations on diaspora, solidarity, land justice, etc.”
Where/how do you fit into the JFN movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing into my farmer and Jewish identities: “I am just starting my farming life, and through this conference have integrated that with my Jewishness. I feel I fit as a community member, representing Colorado and community-based/driven farming.”
How do you imagine staying involved in JFN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regionalization: “Regional chapters of JFN for local connection and meetups” Online meetings: “Zoom-based learning sessions”; “skill sharing”; “source unpacking” [learning from traditional Jewish texts on agriculture]
What support or resources from JFN would be meaningful to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Support: “Collective purchasing”; “Posting of grants” Learning: “Zoom classes throughout the year to continue learning” Farmer Connection: “Facilitation connections between farm/farmers/aspiring farmers”
Without logistical, financial or geographic limitations, what are your dreams for Jewish farmers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building solidarity across difference: “Shmita as a catalyst for movement organizing and solidarity” Regional/Chapter building: “Reclaiming intimate connection with the land within Jewish communities”; “providing Jewish value-informed education/info regarding farming/ranching practice, food systems work, and sustainable community building”

networking, education and training, and Jewish land ethics.⁷

There were eight working groups that focused on social networking projects (Table 3). This was highly representative of the conference’s buzzword, “community,” which was echoed through speeches, presentations, dining hall conversation, interviews, reflections, and songs (see Figure 5). Since its inception, JFN has focused on inclusivity across a spectrum of “Jewish” and “farmer” identities, and the conference reinforced the importance of this priority, especially the importance for building community to relieve the frequent invisibility of

being a Jewish farmer. However, this session created an opportunity to imagine more specific affinity groups within the network around location, sub-identity groups, and communities of practice. Regional listservs, gatherings and learning for Jews in the Northeastern U.S., Southeastern U.S., and in Israel were clear asks from participants. The Queer Jews brainstorming group specifically asked for more programming space or a panel at the next conference.

There were three groups dedicated to education and training projects, in which participants focused both on Jewish agricultural wisdom and

⁷ It is important to note that we name thematic categories to draw out general themes, and that most groups blur the boundaries between two or more categories. The intersectional identities of each group reflect overlapping agendas and possibilities for collective movement building. For example, the Queer Jews group highlighted the members’ need for social networking within their own group, but also centralized their interests in queer education and land ethics.

more technical aspects of farming (Table 4). Participants imagined that JFN could provide support through organizing resources and leading learning initiatives. On Jewish agricultural wisdom, this includes curating curriculum and events specifically oriented toward connection to land and nature, along with ancestral time.

Moreover, groups imagined a Jewish seed library and having access to agriculture-related Torah learning. They also want to have holiday retreats, apprenticeships on each other's farms, and skill shares. On the technical side, participants need business planning and start-up support, especially for for-profit

farms, for which JFN could provide a job board and land board. JFN could also assist in marketing, networking with investors, collective grant-writing opportunities (to eliminate individual competition), and creating financial transparency among peers (Figure 6). Participants envisioned a potential Jewish farm incubator space with low-cost leasing for Jewish farm start-ups and the creation of a JFN grant program for for-profit farms.

Finally, there were three groups focused on Jewish land ethics, which included seed keeping, *shmita* (the Jewish agricultural law mandating eco-

Figure 4. A Working Group in Discussion



Photo by Carl Mink/Millburn Camera ASAP Photo.

logical and economic remission that includes allowing fields to lie fallow one year out of every seven), and land justice (Table 5). The Jewish Seed Keeping group expressed concerns about the disappearance and lack of stewardship of “*our* seeds.” This group wants to connect seed-saving practice to Jewish tradition through storytelling. Moreover, they asked questions on what Jewish seeds are and what the history of seeds is in the Jewish community. They are interested in identifying new Jewish seeds and the future of Jewish seeds. The *Shmita* Possibilities group worked on

Table 3. Social Networking Groups

Group Name	Group's Asks for Jewish Farmers Network (JFN)
Jews in the Southeast	Requested a listserv and as much as their own conference.
Jews Farming in Israel	Requested JFN representation in Israel, creating a relationship with farmers in the USA, and a social media account.
Jews in the Northeast	Requested resources on Jewish texts, network regional coordination, and as much as funding and land.
Social Alchemy Pods	Requested that JFN identify “catalysts” and to work with partner organization Regenerate Change to convene regular discussion meetings.
Researching JFN Experiences	Requested that JFN share resources and awareness of the group and as much as financial support for research.
Queer Jews	Requested that JFN promote and provide financial and organizational support for a queer and Jewish-specific gathering.
Jews of Color	Did not generate an ask for JFN during the session.
New to JFN/Exploring	Requested web services and regional-based coordinators for JFN.

generating a vision for further work on *shmita* from the work done at the conference, which featured four simultaneous sessions on *shmita* learning from different teachers. The group asked that “JFN is

responsible for providing [*shmita*] programming that is practical and tangible, not just fantastical,” and suggested that “programming around *shmita* should be about celebrating and adapting its suc-

Figure 5. Why Are You Here? Responses at the Conference in the Beginning Session



Image generated by word cloud software during the conference.

Table 4. Education and Training Groups

Group Name	Group's Asks for Jewish Farmers Network (JFN)
Jewish Agriculture Education	Requested a listserv, forum, or resource database so that working groups can develop more ideas, along with a more major ask of providing or supporting an apprenticeship program.
Farm Business Planning	Requested more sessions on financial transparency of working farms and that JFN speak with major foundations to get us access to more funding opportunities.
Starting a Farm or Project	Requested a JFN job board and land board with more paid and production-based jobs, along with a more major ask of creating Jewish grants for non-501(c)(3) farms and an initiative for Jewish communities or landowners to evaluate land resources by connecting them with farmers.

Table 5. Jewish Land Ethics Groups

Group Name	Group's Asks Jewish Farmers Network (JFN)
Jewish Seed Keeping	Requested to build a Jewish Seed Breeders group and a Jewish Seed Library, along with support for training, programs, and online organizational support.
Shmita Possibilities	Requested that JFN provide programming on [shmita] that is tangible not just fantastical, as programming around shmita should be about celebrating and adapting its successes, but also learning from its flaws.
Land Justice in Judaism	Requested to make programs for community members to engage in discussion on this topic.

cesses, but also learning from its flaws.” The group also noted that Cultivating Culture’s embrace of community *Shabbat* observance is a catalyst to integrating *shmita* principles into community practice. The Land Justice in Judaism group engaged in ethical and solidarity-based discussions on the connection between U.S. land and Israel-Palestine land, exploring Jews’ unique position at the intersection of “colonized” and “colonizer,” and engaging with histories of displacement. People and programming at the conference embodied radical vulnerability around identity expression, and many participants are ready to expand the radical organizing in the network.

Overall, these working groups represent the diversity of interests, engagements, and directions of farmers who attended Cultivating Culture, laying out future possibilities for programs for JFN. While these groups were temporary and plans incomplete, this brief activity provided a synthesis of themes addressed at the gathering and motivated some participants to continue working on these topics post-conference. In the next section, we reflect on some initial and ongoing outcomes of the PAR process that are related to this session.

Initial Outcomes of the PAR Process

Our year of research collaboration produced several outcomes that go beyond any specific method and are situated in the overarching PAR approach. After the conference, analysis and action was two-fold. First, the researchers and JFN organizers processed data and conducted iterative participatory analysis to write an internal report for JFN’s board, funders, and future grant-writers. This report supports conference goal 4 of “proving the need and viability of JFN to funders in order to build a more just and regenerative food system.” The JFN organizers were able to respond to the analysis of the conference, reflecting on where there were successes and challenges in terms of inclusion in a newly formed community of Jewish farmers. Together, the research team made notes about

changes that could be made to the next in-person conference gathering in 2022.

Second, the ideas from the participatory workshop have guided JFN’s 2020–2021 programming—namely in virtual, COVID-19-era—form. Directly following the conference, participants from the workshop self-organized an online Queer Jewish Farmer affinity group. This group held a panel called “TransPlanted—A Panel of Trans Jewish Farmers” at JFN’s 2021 virtual conference. This materialized out of a specific ask from our participatory workshop at the 2020 conference and brings the need to center gender nonconforming farmers into action. Additionally, in June 2020, students and other academics from the conference founded a monthly JFN Researchers group, which shares resources and knowledge on a range of studies directly related to or adjacent to JFN.

The interest in seed-keeping and exploring Jewish seed traditions was strong at the conference, and has resulted in a new JFN project: the Jewish Seed Project.⁸ JFN is sharing 18 varieties of *Cucumis melo*, a hairy melon akin to the cucumber known as *qishu'im* in the Torah, with community members interested in cultivating seed and sharing photos, taste tests, and stories about the traditional crop.

Similarly, the conference revealed the community’s strong interest in exploring Jewish land ethics and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, JFN became the new host of a Jews and Land Study Group,⁹ originally developed by founders and former staff of the now dormant Jewish Farm School¹⁰ (2005–2019) in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The curriculum originated from conversations with Philadelphia-based Sankofa Community Farm¹¹ Manager and Educator Chris Bolden Newsome, about the necessity of knowing one’s own stories in order to effectively partner in the work of liberation. Since May 2020, 14 study groups have engaged more than 120 JFN participants on topics of Jewish homeland, forced exile, diaspora, connection to

⁸ For more information: <https://www.jewishfarmernetwork.org/jewishseeds>

⁹ For more information: <https://www.jewishfarmernetwork.org/jews-land>

¹⁰ For more information: <https://www.jewishfarmschool.org/>

¹¹ For more information: <https://www.bartramsgarden.org/explore-bartrams/the-farm/>

land, and place-based farming. Participants collectively wrestle with both the histories of Jewish oppression and those of Jewish complicity in the oppression of others, including Jewish participation in the colonization of Native American lands and slavery. In all of these groups, participants from the conference and the JFN community were given the space to be leaders and take action on the issues that are important to them.

While the research team did not organize a participatory session or ethnographic work for JFN's 2021 abbreviated virtual conference, the themes from our 2020 work were intentionally and prominently featured in the 2021 conference programming. It is clear that ethnographic elements pulled out a diverse range of voices, some underrepresented in other Jewish or agricultural spaces. Our integration of these tensions and priorities during an initial PAR phase and into a future cycle of PAR is a framework for the continued inclusion of various perspectives, as well as a guide for future research questions.

Discussion: Framing Our Scholar Activism with PAR

Where scholarship and activism overlap is in the area of how to make decisions about what comes next.

—R. W. Gilmore (2007, p. 27)

We frame our research, combining PAR and event ethnography in collaboration with JFN, as scholar-activism, discussed here through our evolving scholar-activist praxis and how it can be improved. Central to scholar-activism is the ethical practice of *resourcing* and the triangulation of research questions in the coproduction of knowledge (Derickson & Routledge, 2015). We draw on radical food geography praxis, which emphasizes action through academic and social movement collaborations in the food justice sphere (Hammelman et al., 2020). In these collaborations, we emphasize our positionality and social relations within JFN's growing movement. We leverage these to challenge knowledge hierarchies both inside and outside of academia.

For Derickson and Routledge (2015), resourcing includes channeling resources from academics

to collaborators and answering questions that non-academic collaborators want to know. We began this collaboration by asking ourselves and our community partners how we could best serve them and the organization through our unique positionality as researcher-participants. This open approach is important for thinking outside of universalized ideas of "giving back," which can reproduce the power relations and harm that researchers are wishing to stop (Hammett et al., 2019; Ybarra, 2014). JFN needed help evaluating the conference and writing rigorous reports for funders. We helped design the evaluative survey questions and took on the detailed work of formatting survey documents and software. Post-conference, we worked with JFN organizers to analyze conference results for a donor report. This included making tables and charts (some of which appear in this paper) and compiling both summaries and analyses of attendees' experiences. This work represents a significant amount of would-be staff labor, to which we were able to contribute our skills in research design, note-taking, interviewing, and writing. This allowed us to make the "products" of our research process relevant to JFN's goals of progressive social and ecological change (Staelhi & Mitchell, 2005). We triangulated (1) JFN's needs (conference evaluation and gathering ideas from a broad group of participants) with (2) a "public" interest on the part of conference participants to engage in the formation of the movement and (3) our methodological and theoretical interests on using PAR and ethnography to further collective movement organizing among farmers.

As for the effects of our findings on the movement, our project helped illuminate and generate vocabulary for themes that JFN organizers were already engaging with implicitly: the politics of identity in movement building, politicization and depoliticization among Jewish farmers, and the politics of Jewish agroecological knowledge production and exchange. Scholar-activist outcomes need not necessarily be "good" for the movement, but can challenge the movement in a generative way, for "where scholarship and activism overlap is in the area of how to make decisions about what comes next" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 27). Our open-ended approach to helping JFN define its future

directions not only illuminated tensions within JFN, which organizers seek to hold rather than solve, but also outlined some concrete guides for action, which were generated by the participants themselves.

Our positionality within this movement is crucial for bridging multiple scales and spaces of knowledge coproduction, as both scholars of and activists in food systems (Reynolds et al., 2020). The co-production of knowledge between JFN organizers, conference participants, and ourselves contributed to experiential learning at the individual, organizational, and academic scales for over 90 people. We are both former nonprofit staff and participants of a professional development program in which we were peers of the JFN cofounders. Between the two of us, we have a decade of experience in the Jewish farming and education world and have built relationships with land and people at Jewish farming sites across North America. Within the Jewish farming movement, we are embedded in a web of relationships, the type of personal and activist relationships that demand a high level of accountability to a community or other group of individuals (Pulido, 2008). While recognizing the validity of PAR and scholar-activist research in multiple forms, we highlight the importance of using our pre-academic relationships and careers to further scholar-activist work. We echo the emphasis that other geographers place on making scholarship more socially relevant through scholar-activism (Croog et al., 2018), and we urge young scholars like ourselves, especially graduate students, to leverage these personal histories to implement relational and participatory methods as scholar-activists.

Given these relations, we cannot be merely researchers who dropped into the conference; we are researcher-participants who are a part of a community of struggle (Pulido, 2008). This struggle is an outward one of recognition and the right to exist at various crossroads of intersectional identities (including “Jewish,” “farmer,” and “Jewish farmer”), as well as an internal struggle within the network to define boundaries and inclusivity. The blurry line between “scholar” and “activist” or between “researcher” and “participant” attempts to delineate the multiple interpretations of the “field”

(Sharpe & Dowler, 2011). For example, one of us (the first author) was a presenter at the conference, independent of the participatory workshop, and the other (second author) was part of an volunteer conference advisory team that guided logistics. We argue that our toeing of these lines, coupled with our social relations, is precisely what gives us access to our “field”: the emerging 21st century Jewish farmer movement. Our “field” exists in bounded time and space during JFN’s four-day Cultivating Culture conference, as well as in virtual space before and after the conference.

We strive to challenge knowledge and power hierarchies by collectivizing the movement-building process within the Jewish farming field. Our efforts are simultaneously oriented toward scholarship. We are part of a long lineage of PAR practitioners and scholar activists. If an activist is “one who has a record of power or policy change” (Kendi, 2019, p. 201), we see our work as a building block in the cadre of scholar-activist literature that challenges positivist and extractive academia from the inside. Our work adds to the slow changing of research norms, and our responsibility is to continue reflecting on and editing our approach. In this practice, we see synergies with the Agroecology Research-Action Collective (ARC), a North America-based group of engaged scholars working on justice and sovereignty in food systems. We have embodied their principles of collaborative research development via ongoing collaboration, resourcing by providing valuable work, and dialogical interpretation to reach shared analysis (ARC, n.d., para. 3-6; Montenegro de Wit et al., 2021). We see ARC’s principles on working with institutions as a salient guide for future work.

Characterizing Event Ethnography as a Part of an Initial PAR Cycle

We see our PAR work as cyclical and our relations as long-standing, so we take several lessons into the next iteration of research. JFN’s need for evaluative surveys became clear (Nelson & Landman, 2020) after the initial research design and during the collaborative designing of our participatory workshop. The surveys addressed demographics of attendees and conference goals, but lacked direct questions about identity, attitudes, and future direc-

tions. Thus, there were shortcomings in how extensive the surveys were in relation to our research questions. While survey data were used to describe who came to the conference and to assess the conference's goals, we identified missed opportunities in data collection via surveys in 2020. For the virtual 2021 conference, we supported the redesign of registration surveys and matched them with post-conference surveys to determine who was served by the conference and whether certain groups were not served. Had we noticed JFN's need for surveys earlier, we could have incorporated them more intentionally into our 2020 data collection.

The interviews provided rich content that spoke to scholarship on movement building and agroecological knowledge politics. We recognize that the results presented a tiny fraction of the rich dialogue that was shared, mostly assessing attendees' perceptions at the outset of the conference. In the future, we hope to reserve more capacity and time to conduct interviews strategically between and after sessions on the last day. Conducting follow-up interviews with interview participants or other willing attendees was planned but was not possible due to respect for how much the global COVID-19 pandemic (which was declared shortly after the conference) affected our partners, participants, and us. Had it been appropriate, follow-up interviews with key actors, such as presenters at the conference, could have provided reflections on the politics of agroecological knowledge production. Moreover, incorporating interviews with board members and funders could have provided more analysis of movement and institutional politics and capacity.

We gained embodied lessons on facilitation during our participatory workshop, "Harvesting a Participatory Movement." The session was a collaborative idea generator and constituted part of the participatory analysis, as conference attendees not only shared their own ideas, but reacted to and synthesized those of others in small groups and during the full-group share-back. We preselected group topics with the JFN organizers (e.g., Jews in the Southeast, Queer Jews, etc.), added groups

throughout the conference, and asked for real-time input from participants by asking them to add themes. In a future iteration, we would make this even more participatory by recruiting conference attendees to be facilitators for each theme, putting facilitation trust in participants and giving them more power to mold their group's foci. This would allow for a more egalitarian distribution of power between researchers and participants, especially for marginalized voices, such as farmers of color and Queer farmers, to more directly represent themselves.

In future PAR cycles, this research will potentially expand the formal "action" phase. In this article, we frame initial outcomes, such as the formation of the Queer Jewish Farmer group, creation of the JFN Research group, and strengthened emphasis on seed-keeping, as actions that came out of research held at the conference. While these actions were initiated and supported to varying degrees by the research team, all of these outcomes came about rather "organically" without any major funding or institutional mechanism supporting the process. Only one member of the research team, namely JFN's part-time executive director, is not doing this work on voluntary basis.¹² In many ways, this demonstrates the value of the conference and participatory workshop; however, the reliance on self-organization might not be sustainable in the long term without dedicated professional support. Furthermore, many of the "asks" from the participatory section directly invoked financial support (Table 2; Table 4). We expect that this initial PAR cycle builds legitimacy for this work and is, therefore, able to expand to include more delineated and "traditional" PAR actions.

In sum, using event ethnography methods allowed us to address some of the limitations of PAR in a movement that is just forming. During the conference, our ethnographic work entailed listening to individual and diverse voices and situating them within a collective web. This revealed tensions in the community about how to approach (de)politicization and agroecological knowledge production. These insights not only helped us interpret survey and workshop data, but also

¹² As of June 2021, JFN is in the process of hiring two part-time workers, including a development director and network coordinator.

informed the questions we were asking in real time. Blending PAR and event ethnography at this early stage, during a field-configuring event, allows us to understand movement building not only as it is happening, but also as it is initiated.

Future Directions

This research demonstrates how event ethnography with a PAR research design can contribute to the formation of a social movement and collaboratively define future research agendas. We identify four areas of potential inquiry: (1) agroecological knowledge production and exchange among Jewish farmers; (2) how social movements build solidarity and maintain inclusivity; (3) Jewish agrarianisms; and (4) scholar-activism's potential for building equitable and just social movements. While this list is neither complete nor exhaustive, it gives some ideas of how this research can support a radical food geography praxis.

First, this research engages the production of agroecological knowledge in a context that bridges Jewish agrarian spaces with secular agroecological spaces. JFN provides space for knowledge exchange that is found in neither secular or non-Jewish agricultural gatherings nor in nonfarming-focused Jewish spaces. For example, engagement with *shmita* presents the opportunity to radically change perspectives, knowledge, and practices using ancestral understandings of time and place that differ vastly from Western worldviews. Additionally, Jewish seed-keepers maintain seed as a dual act of ancestral connection and sovereignty within varying social and political contexts. Other Jewish environmental values about waste reduction (*bal tashchit*), humane kosher animal slaughter (*shechita*), and fruit tree care are being taken up by Jewish farmers within JFN. Evident in our participatory workshop collective analysis, Jewish farmers are grappling with implementing ancestral knowledge in modern contexts in porous Jewish agrarian spaces, the specifics and dynamics of which remain understudied.

Second, this research explores questions concerning politics of identity and inclusion, highlighting JFN's challenge to maintain inclusivity while building solidarity. Some would prefer to depolitize the Jewish Farming movement, which may be

inclusive to people from more denominations but would effectively mute important conversations on race and justice. Others push strongly for a politicized movement that builds solidarity with indigenous, environmental, and social justice organizations, seeing this type of solidarity as integral to Jewish agrarian ways of being. This tension notably includes polarizing views pertaining to Israel-Palestine and Zionism, which in mainstream Jewish institutions are often totally avoided or excused. JFN seeks to hold these tensions while inviting all participants into dialogue, not to solve them. With regards to these issues, we ask how Jewish land ethics can be defined and brought into praxis in this movement of Jewish farmers.

Third, our research with JFN expands on Jewish agrarianism work that centers Jewish Community Farming (JCF) organizations (e.g., LeVasseur, 2017), by focusing on wider Jewish intersectional identities along with knowledge exchange between farmers who are unaffiliated with JCF organizations. Part of this work includes JFN's engagement with secular organizations, such as the National Young Farmers Coalition, Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture Association, and others. This engagement facilitates the networking with farmers "who happen to be Jewish" along with integrating and remaking conversations happening in the broader sustainable agriculture community through Jewish lenses. By focusing inwardly on shared ancestral knowledge and identity, JFN interrupts secular, often "white," appropriation of Indigenous and other peoples' agricultural and social technology by reconnecting people to their own knowledge traditions. This could be understood as an outward contribution that extends beyond the Jewish community, and also merits further study and theorization.

Fourth, this project illustrates the potential of scholar-activist work to enact change within both community organizations and academia. We notice the small ways in which our blending of scholarship and activism, undergirded by our use of event ethnography with a PAR approach, has contributed to collective movement-building. We observe this in the breadth of voices demonstrated in our findings. When those voices are included via PAR approaches, the movement can be more equitable

and serve more people. We have discussed the effectiveness and shortcomings of scholar-activism in this context and believe there is ever more room for further contributions.

In conclusion, we demonstrate here how a PAR approach combined with event ethnography at conferences is a mutually beneficial venue for meaningful scholarly engagement with social movement formation. Researchers, especially aspiring academics, should be encouraged to continue previous activist engagement, learning from

tacit knowledge and activist work while offering methods and theory from critical scholarship. Reciprocally, movement-builders should welcome and encourage scholarship, including PAR-designed research, in emerging social networks, especially among people who already have social commitments within the community. Together, this strategy will foster change from a legacy of extractive research toward a more inclusive scholar-activist standard of social scholarship and food system change.



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