



Intersectional coalitions towards a just agroecology: weaving mutual aid and agroecology in Barcelona and Seville

Francesco Facchini¹ · Daniel López-García² · Sergio Villamayor-Tomas¹ · Esteve Corbera^{1,3,4}

Accepted: 4 December 2023
© The Author(s) 2023

Abstract

Although in theory social justice is considered as a core dimension of agroecological transitions, alternative food initiatives related to agroecology have been criticised for their exclusionary practices based on important social and economic biases. In this article, we adopt the lens of political intersectionality to study two cases of Agroecology-oriented Food Redistribution Coalitions in Spain that emerged to address the rising levels of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. We find that the coalitions represent a convergence of diverse social struggles, placing intersectionally marginalized groups at the centre of their activism. However, we also uncover that coalition members participate in different ways depending on their socioeconomic profiles, which could perpetuate inequalities in organizational practices. One major point of tension is the need to balance the goal of providing access to healthy and sustainable food with the affordability of such produce. This leads to the adoption of hybrid food networks that include conventionally produced food. We also highlight that while the predominance of women in these coalitions reflects the unequal distribution of food-related care work in society, the collectivization of such work through AFRCs practices points to a transformation of gender relations. Territorialized alliances between actors from urban and rural settings and between urban centers and peripheries are established through the coalitions. However, such networks fall short on involving large numbers of agroecology-oriented initiatives and providing direct encounters between consumers and producers. Overall, the article underscores the importance of addressing intersecting inequalities within alternative food initiatives and argues that intersectional coalitions offer an intriguing example of how to promote such understanding and pave the way towards (more) just agroecological transitions.

Keywords Agroecology · Intersectional coalitions · Convergence · Food insecurity · Mutual aid · COVID-19

Abbreviations

AFRCs Agroecology-oriented food redistribution coalitions
RAMUCA Red de redes de apoyo mutuo de Sevilla

Introduction

The agroecological perspective was initially developed to examine the negative effects of the green revolution on rural areas and propose sustainable agroecosystem management at the farm scale (Altieri 2018; Sevilla Guzmán 2006). However, the focus of agroecology has expanded to encompass the transformation of the entire agri-food system (Mason et al. 2021; Gliessman 2007), and to the analysis of power and governance aspects in transitions to agroecology-based food systems (Anderson et al. 2021; González de Molina et al. 2019; Rosset and Altieri 2017). Despite claims that social justice is a core component of

✉ Francesco Facchini
francesco.facchini@uab.cat

Daniel López-García
daniel.lopez@cchs.csic.es

Sergio Villamayor-Tomas
sergio.villamayor@uab.cat

Esteve Corbera
esteve.corbera@uab.cat

- ¹ Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB), UAB Campus, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain
- ² Institute of Economics, Geography and Emography, Spanish National Research Council (IEGD/CSIC), Albasanz 26-28, 28037 Madrid, Spain
- ³ Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA), Passeig Lluís Companys 23, 08010 Barcelona, Spain
- ⁴ Departament de Geografia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, UAB Campus, 08193 Bellaterra, Spain

agroecological transitions (Anderson et al. 2021; Sevilla Guzmán and Woodgate 2013), the social dimension of alternative food initiatives promoting these transitions has been underexplored and primarily researched by white, male, Global North scholars in Global South countries (Gómez et al. 2012). This lack of attention to social justice has been criticized for potentially perpetuating class, gender, and race divides and promoting elitist consumption practices within alternative food movements (Simón-Rojo 2019; Zitcer 2015; Goodman et al. 2012; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Connelly et al. 2011; Guthman 2011; Slocum 2007; Agyeman and Evans 2004).

In this article, we examine the potential of the concept of intersectional coalitions in understanding how the social justice dimension of agroecology is put in practice. For this purpose, our research focuses on two case studies of food redistribution coalitions in Barcelona and Seville, Spain, where different grassroots and Agroecology-oriented Food Redistribution¹ Coalitions (AFRCs)² emerged during COVID lock-downs (2020) to address the problems of rising food insecurity and hunger (Fernández de Casadevante et al. 2022; Nel-lo and Checa 2022). These self-managed initiatives weave together a diverse array of social organizations and individuals into intersectional coalitions converging against food insecurity with an orientation towards agroecological principles. Drawing on such case studies, we ask: *What are the characteristics of these coalitions? How are intersectional axes of difference (class, gender, race and ethnicity, territory) reflected upon and tackled in the coalitions? And what lessons can be learned from these experiences for the advancement of a (more) just agroecology?*

Opening a dialogue with political intersectionality debates represents a way to tackle the social justice gap in agroecological studies and practices. Political intersectionality allows us to critically interrogate the ways in which different axes of inequality are combined in situations of marginalization, and to investigate the creation of coalitions based on intersectional solidarity, i.e. forms of cooperation between groups that address a diversity of issues and injustices across social divisions, such as gender, class, ethnicity,

or sexuality (Ciccia and Roggeband 2021; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1986).

The COVID-19 pandemic also offers a relevant context to assess the social promise of the agroecological movement. Existing calls for transitions towards agroecology and food sovereignty to provide alternatives to the corporate-driven food regime have acquired new relevance in this conjuncture (Van der Ploeg 2020; Altieri and Nicholls 2020; Loker and Francis 2020). A myriad of AFRCs emerged to tackle the inequalities caused by the vulnerabilities of global food systems based on industrial agriculture—that were exposed during the pandemic (Rivera-Ferre et al. 2021; Clapp and Moseley 2020). The pandemic exacerbated already existing socio-economic inequalities, with an additional 5 million people (from 119 to 124 million) pushed into extreme poverty during 2020 (Lakner et al. 2021). This also meant a worldwide increase in food and nutritional insecurity levels (FSIN 2023; FAO 2021; HLPE 2020; IPES-Food 2020; Khorsandi 2020). Said inequalities can be traced back to a food regime based on corporate power and neoliberal ideas (Tilzey 2018; McMichael 2009), and rooted in a history of racist, patriarchal, and colonial relations that prioritise capital accumulation over the right to food (Anderson et al. 2021; Pimbert and Lemke 2018; Holt-Gimenez and Harper 2016).

By promoting food redistribution practices based on mutual aid, solidarity and participatory governance, AFRCs also aimed to provide alternatives to conventional food aid (Fernández de Casadevante et al. 2022; Nel-lo and Checa 2022). In the context of processes of neoliberal reconfiguration of state intervention and the dismantling of government safety nets (Harvey 2007), food insecurity reduction in so-called ‘rich’ countries of the Global North has mainly taken the form of food aid and has been uptaken by food banks, philanthropic organizations and charities (Riches 2018). In Spain, 16% of the food-insecure population relied on these entities for food relief in 2021 (Moragues-Faus and Magaña-González 2022). Large numbers of leadership roles in Spanish food banks are occupied by ex-representatives of the agri-business industry, as part of a clear marriage between food philanthropy and the corporate world (Viladrich et al. 2018). The use of surplus produce to feed the hungry seems to be aligned with the interests of this sector globally, which annually throws away millions of tons of food that cannot be competitively placed in the market (Dowler 2003). This model responds to the logic of distributing ‘left-over’ food to ‘left behind’ people (Riches 2018). Charities and food banks have been criticized as a form of ‘uncritical solidarity’ that does not question structural causes of food insecurity (Pérez de Armiño 2014). It has been argued that these organizations inadvertently contribute to the very food insecurity they aim to alleviate (Riches and Silvasti 2014; Poppendieck 2014; Dowler 2003).

¹ We prefer to adopt the term ‘redistribution’ over ‘distribution’ or ‘delivery’ to underscore the coalitions’ orientation towards food justice, rather than mere food aid.

² Grassroots initiatives composed of networks of social organizations and individuals that mobilize to collect and/or purchase food in local markets and shops and then redistribute it among food insecure people (mainly marginalized groups like women, migrants, and other disadvantaged communities). The redistribution of food happens based on mutual aid and collective action, with participants serving as both volunteers and beneficiaries. In the considered case studies, mutual aid initiatives created alliances with agroecology-oriented producers and retailers in order to redistribute sustainable, healthy food through their networks.

Theoretical framework

In this section, we draw attention to a noteworthy gap in the study of social justice within agroecology literature. We also delve into critical viewpoints that shed light on the socio-economic biases associated with agroecology-oriented food initiatives. The concept of political intersectionality is introduced and underlined, suggesting that bridging these fields can enrich our understanding of the social justice aspect of agroecology. This approach simultaneously broadens the debate on political intersectionality beyond its traditional focus on feminist social movements.

Agroecology and social justice

Agroecology is a holistic approach that comprises a set of farming methods, a science and a social movement (Rivera-Ferre 2018; Wezel et al. 2009). It integrates issues such as food sovereignty, food security and agency (HLPE 2019), and has been presented as “the ecology of the entire food system” (Mason et al. 2020). Agroecologists strongly argue for fair bottom-up governance and multi-actor participatory processes as ways to tackle power imbalances in food systems transitions towards agroecology (López-García et al. 2021; Anderson et al. 2021; Méndez et al. 2017), along what has been called ‘Political Agroecology’ (González de Molina et al. 2019). Assemblages of different actors along the food chain, as well as non-human actors and infrastructures, are needed in order to enable food movements and agroecology-oriented farmers to access the decision-making spaces regarding food systems sustainability (López-García and González de Molina 2021; Marsden et al. 2018). Claims for the scaling of a transformative agroecology highlight the importance of the creation of plural subjects and coalitions with other movements and struggles, especially in the urban contexts of the Global North (Anderson et al. 2021; López-García and González de Molina 2021; Tornaghi and Dehaene 2020; Dale 2019), while grassroots experiences are pointing at the creation of an intersectional agroecological movement (Snipstal 2017).

Despite the theoretical claim that social justice and equity represent core dimensions of alternative food networks and broader agroecological transitions (Anderson et al. 2021; Sevilla Guzmán and Woodgate 2013; Dumont et al. 2016; Feenstra 1997), the social dimension of alternative food initiatives has been explored much less compared to the environmental one, and has been mainly developed by white, male and Global North researchers in Global South countries (Gómez et al. 2012). The lack of attention to social justice in the study of the sustainability

of these initiatives has been highlighted and criticized by several authors (e.g. Zitcer 2015; Goodman et al. 2012; Connelly et al. 2011; Guthman 2011; Slocum 2007; Agyeman and Evans 2004). In particular, critical accounts have pointed out the potential exclusion from these ‘alternatives’ of a large part of society (Goodman et al. 2012). In fact, there seems to be a social and economic bias as these spaces tend to be available only to those who have the economic means as well as social and cultural resources to access them (Guthman 2011). This potentially contributes to the reproduction of class, gender and race divides (Zitcer 2015; Goodman et al. 2012; Slocum 2007). Moreover, trends in political and ethical consumption of sustainable and healthy food can result in new forms of social distinction, whereby elitist practices within alternative food movements establish differences between those who eat good food and others who are ‘industrial eaters’ (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). In some cases, alternative food initiatives as those related to agroecology have also been found to promote both farmers’ and consumers’ self-exploitation, showing some negative features hidden by ‘moral economy’ discourses (Galt 2013).

Most literature addressing social (in)justice in agroecological transitions focuses on gender and emerges from the intersections with feminist scholarship and practice (e.g. Di Masso et al. 2022; Silva et al. 2022; Zaremba et al. 2021; Maisano 2019; Morales et al. 2018; Zuluaga Sánchez et al. 2018; Busconi 2017; Khadse 2017; Siliprandi 2015; Pérez and Soler 2013). Less attention has been given to the study of how injustice and inequalities emerge from the intersectionality of social divisions that include, but are not limited to, gender differences.

Political intersectionality, coalitions and food justice

The term “intersectionality” emerged from the critiques and struggles of Black feminists in the United States (e.g. Collins 2015; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1986; Davis 1983; Combahee River Collective 1977), subsequently joined by racialized and indigenous women from across the globe. These activists challenged the class and race biases dominating mainstream feminist discourses, which had primarily centered on the experiences of middle-class, Western white women. Intersectionality points at “how lived identities, structural systems, sites of marginalization, forms of power, and modes of resistance intersect in dynamic, shifting ways” (May 2020, p. 21). It advocates for matrix-based analysis of systems of oppression and coalitional responses that go beyond single-axis orientations to challenge systematic inequalities (Collins 2015). In particular, political intersectionality focuses on intersectionality as a praxis (Townsend-Bell 2009), and has been mainly applied in the analysis of women and feminist social movements (e.g. Irvine et al. 2019; Roth

2017; Lépinard 2014; Verloo 2013; Ferree 2009; Beckwith 2000). Political intersectionality critically analyzes the ways in which disadvantaged groups are (or are not) represented and empowered within organizations, and the creation of coalitions³ across different social divisions, such as gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. (Collins and Chepp 2013).

Based on political strategies of convergence (Borras et al. 2018; Tramel 2018), these alliances between movements are considered examples of 'intersectional solidarity', that is, forms of cooperation between groups mobilizing different constituencies defined by social divisions (Ciccina and Roggeband 2021; Townsend-Bell 2021). Intersectional solidarity involves an “ongoing process of creating ties and coalitions across social group differences by negotiating power asymmetries” (Tormos 2017, p. 712). Some authors aim to identify levels of intensity and ‘transformative potential’ of intersectional solidarity (Ciccina and Roggeband 2021), while others draw on the idea of active solidarity to examine the degree to which movements enact intersectional solidarity in their organizational practices (Einwohner 2019). Other studies focusing on coalitions from an intersectional perspective have pointed to the role of ‘bridge actors’ and how their engagement in a decolonial-intersectional logic of action can be essential in the construction of these alliances (Townsend-Bell 2021; Roth 2004). Problems associated with these coalitions have also been documented, such as the ossification of LGBTQ+ and immigrant rights movement alliances around goals that matter to the most privileged segments of their respective communities (Adam 2017).

Calls have been made for an extension of the intersectionality debate beyond feminist movements, and also to the ones not necessarily defined by gender, sexual orientation, class, or race—e.g. the environmental or the agroecological movement—as every social movement is shaped by multiple intersecting inequalities and power dynamics (Roth 2021; Einwohner 2019; Collins and Chepp 2013). Such extensions of the debate should recognize the role and struggle of Black feminism in the development of intersectionality theory, and be aware of not reproducing the very political relations intersectionality scholarship critiques and sets to transform (Hancock 2016). The adoption of intersectionality concerns in agroecology-related literature is still incipient and mostly related to food sovereignty and food justice struggles (e.g. Motta 2021; Montenegro de Wit 2021; Smith 2019; Bezner Kerr et al. 2018; Brent et al. 2015; Sachs and Patel-Campillo 2014). In fact, food insecurity and hunger often converge in marginalized social groups as a result of interlocking systems of class, race, gender, and ethnicity (Sachs

and Patel-Campillo 2014). While mainstream approaches to food insecurity rely on market-based solutions and neo-liberal ideas, a radical feminist stance on food insecurity points at tackling the issue from a food justice perspective (Sachs and Patel-Campillo 2014). Some authors have also pointed out the need to link food justice and environmental sustainability approaches to address food insecurity, around the ideas of agroecology and food sovereignty (Di Masso et al. 2022; HLPE 2019).

Methodology

The use of case studies has been a recurring feature in intersectional analysis of social movements and coalitions (e.g. Acciari 2021; Alver 2021; Corradi 2021; von Wahl 2021; Terriquer et al. 2018). This can be traced back to the tradition of intensive case study research in social sciences that emphasizes the complexities of social life and allows to delve into its diversity, variation, and heterogeneity (McCall 2005; Ragin 2000). This article draws on two case studies of intersectional coalitions in the city of Seville and the metropolitan area of Barcelona. These coalitions bring together a diverse array of social organizations and individuals, which in turn mobilize different social and political constituencies to address the enhanced food security challenges brought by the pandemic. The two coalitions redistributed food based on mutual aid relations, inspired by agroecological principles. However, they differed in the extent to which these principles were translated in practice, as will be shown later. They also differed in their level of institutional formalization and working logic, e.g. in features such as the degree of formalization and spontaneity of the initiatives, the more or less centralized logistics, or the contextual nature of their action. These differences and similarities made these cases relevant to make eventual comparisons.

Fieldwork activities were conducted by the first author in both cities, between November and June 2022. These consisted of 25 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with mutual aid group members, farmers, promoters, shop owners and a cooperative representative. Interviewees were selected according to purposive sampling and snowballing (Kelly 2010), based on each individual’s role in each coalition (See Table 1). Interviews were realized in Spanish and translated by the first author. Participant observation was also conducted to triangulate interview insights with the direct involvement in the two selected AFRCs. Since the initiative in Seville ended after the most dramatic moment of the pandemic (March-June 2020), direct engagement in this case was limited to a community kitchen that was still considered an element of the formerly existing coalition. In Barcelona, participant observations were realized during the activities of the cooperative that deals with the logistics of Alterbanc,

³ Fundamentally, coalitions refer to situations where different social movement organizations collaborate to achieve a shared objective (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010).

Table 1 Fieldwork activities and interviews characteristics

	Alterbanc	RAMUCA
Total interviews	n = 11	n = 14
Gender of interviewees	Male (n = 6); Female (n = 5); Non-binary (n = 0)	Male (n = 3); Female (n = 11); Non-binary (n = 0)
Role of interviewees	Farmer/Producer participant in coalition (n = 4) Mutual aid group participant in coalition (n = 4) Alterbanc promoter (n = 2) Logistics cooperative representative (n = 1)	Farmer/Producer participant in coalition (n = 2) Mutual aid group participant in coalition (n = 9) Shop owner (n = 3)
Participant observation	Logistics cooperative activities: organizing and delivering produce bought by Alterbanc; Mutual aid groups activities in two neighborhoods: assemblies, collection of surplus food from shops and markets, preparation and redistribution of food boxes;	Community kitchen activities: cooking, preparation and redistribution of meals;

as well as in food redistribution events and assemblies of two mutual aid groups. Participant observation in the two settings especially allowed us to investigate more in-depth the social relations that characterized each initiative. Interview transcriptions and field notes were coded and analyzed with NVivo software. The coding process involved two rounds: the initial round employed an inductive approach to identify recurring themes and arguments, while the second round was dedicated to refining and systematizing themes informed by theoretical considerations. Interview excerpts were chosen to highlight and support the main argument, with a focus on their relevance to patterns observed in the broader dataset, representing more general views.

We believe that adopting a political intersectional perspective also implies acknowledging that knowledge itself—including the one produced in this article—is situated (Hara-way 1988) and that “data, facts, and experiences are always ‘located’ in terms of gender, class, race/ethnicity, color/cast, sexuality, culture, language, status, age, ability, and geopolitical background” (Corradi 2021, p. 153). For this reason, we consider important to unveil our own positionality. Although we may differ in the degree of work precariousness in the academic context, we are all white-skinned cis-men situated geopolitically in the Global North. We consider ourselves to be working towards self-awareness of the social, economic and political privileges that this position guarantees us. Our direct involvement with the agroecological movement varies, but we share the willingness to contribute with critical reflections to address and question its biases. This commitment guided our decision to initiate this study, as we identified several captivating aspects within AFRCs related to both the overcoming and the reproduction of such biases. The connection of some of the authors to the Spanish agroecological movement also played a role in the selection of the case studies. In these specific instances, we recognized that agroecological activists played pivotal roles in guiding coalitions, steering them towards agroecological principles. As we started this project, our idea was also to give support

to the agroecological movement and especially to the considered food initiatives by facilitating spaces for debate and reflection. The study design initially entailed a participatory process to delve more thoroughly into the relation of the coalitions with agroecology and their potential to enhance the social justice dimension of agroecological transitions. However, different factors prevented the realization of this process. Notably, activists deeply involved in numerous initiatives expressed reservations about participating in additional processes due to feelings of being overwhelmed and a lack of free time. Some research participants also raised concerns about being involved in too many interviews and research activities without witnessing meaningful feedback from the academic community. Furthermore, others underscored the limitations of participatory methodologies based on past experiences, even pointing out potential manipulative consequences associated with participatory research.

Characterizing the AFRCs

Background

In the neighborhoods of many Spanish cities and metropolitan areas different grassroots, AFRCs have emerged during the lockdowns related to COVID-19 sanitary control measures in the spring of 2020. AFRCs aimed to address the problems of rising poverty, food insecurity and hunger (Fernández de Casadevante et al. 2022; Nel-lo and Checa 2022). AFRCs share similar features with the solidarity food banks and pantries that were established in Spain during and after the 2008 economic recession, and with other solidarity networks that emerged in Southern European countries to provide services and goods—beyond food—in response to neoliberalization processes and austerity measures in the aftermath of the economic and immigration ‘crises’ (see Carney 2021; Villamayor-Tomas and García-López 2021; Alberich 2016; Cabot 2016; Rakopoulos 2016). Neoliberal

conditions of austerity and privatization indirectly contribute to the creation of systems of mutual aid that concurrently function as forms of protest, organizing and social care (Izlar 2019). Solidarity networks offer community-based care and support services to both citizens and non-citizens—including immigrants and refugees—bypass market intermediaries and temporarily serve as a substitute for state welfare (Rakopoulos 2015). Besides neoliberal processes, the pandemics conjuncture determined a renewed emergence and prevalence of such networks, as part of how oppressed communities ensured their ‘collective survival’ to the crisis (Bell et al. 2019). In the context of food actions, these voluntary associations are considered to be pursuing a ‘critical’ solidarity leaning toward food justice, and are often part of broader movements that aim to transform social conditions, with food being just one of their many grievances (Bell 2021; Viladrich et al. 2018). Participants in these initiatives are considered to be both volunteers and recipients of help, following a community-based approach rooted in collective action (Viladrich et al. 2018; Shepard 2015).

AFRCs redistribute surplus foodstuffs from shops and supermarkets, conventional food purchased *ex-profeso* in small retailers, as well as fresh produce provided by peri-urban agroecology-oriented farmers among the neighbors – especially women, migrants and marginalized social groups. These self-managed initiatives often weave together a diverse array of social organizations and individuals, such as neighborhood community groups, grassroots unions, agroecology-oriented farmers, local grocery shops, and associations struggling for women’s and migrants’ rights. They can thus be conceived as coalitions in which different social movements (neighborhood, feminist, agroecological, migrants’ rights, sex workers’ rights, etc.) converge against food insecurity with an orientation towards agroecological principles.

Case studies’ history, functioning and objectives

Created in the spring of 2020, as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic started its dramatic outspread, Alterbanc defines itself as an ‘agroecological food bank’⁴ that aims to redistribute organic and fresh produce to marginalized people through mutual aid groups based on solidarity and participation. Although Alterbanc started as an informal network of activists and farmers, it soon became a formal association in order to be eligible for public funding, which soon after arrived together with individual donations and private grants.⁵

⁴ <https://alterbanc.org/>

⁵ Public funding was obtained on different occasions by the municipality and the autonomous community government, while private money came from individuals, philanthropic foundations and solidarity economy foundations.

Alterbanc uses such funds to buy fresh fruits and vegetables from the peri-urban agroecology-oriented farmers who have joined the network, and pay for the logistics work provided by a distribution cooperative. A truck collects the produce from the outskirts of Barcelona and delivers it to mutual aid groups that exist in distinct neighborhoods of the metropolitan area—known as *xarxes de suport mutu*.⁶ These groups also collect surplus food in local markets and shops, and place it together with the organic fruits and vegetables from Alterbanc in boxes that are distributed among food-insecure members. Alterbanc is thought of as a collaboration between collectives that are considered to be marginalized by capitalism and the corporate food regime, especially people suffering food insecurity and food poverty, and economically precarious small-scale agroecology-oriented farmers. Alterbanc claims to empower and dignify the participating collectives by acknowledging the work of farmers—by paying a fair price for their produce—as well as the right of marginalized people to fresh and quality food. Alterbanc promoters frame it as an alternative, agroecology-oriented model to conventional food aid, an example that they want to give to show—especially to the local government institutions—that there can be another way of addressing the problem of food insecurity. Alterbanc’s advocacy efforts encountered various obstacles, ranging from bureaucratic red tape to legal constraints within the administrative system. The primary outcome was sporadic funding acquisition, rather than a more transversal and transformative shift in local food aid policy.

The *Red de redes de apoyo mutuo de Sevilla* (RAMUCA)⁷ also emerged in the first days after the declaration of the pandemic. A group of activists from the city center was worried about the potential impact that the pandemic would have on urban disadvantaged groups. RAMUCA aimed then to create a mutual aid group and a solidarity fund to support people hit by the crisis, including precarious or informal workers who lost their jobs or elderly people who were afraid of going to the groceries. The initiative spread rapidly from the center to other neighborhoods of the city, leading to the creation of twenty-eight mutual aid groups in a few weeks, which became known as *ramuquitas*. Several taxi drivers also supported the network, by delivering food, medicines, or clothing. A ‘food group’—encompassing mostly women engaged in the local agroecological movement—was also established to collect help demands and offers, and channel donations accordingly. Each *ramuquita* established a connection with a local grocery store, where the donation of the person who wanted to collaborate was gathered. The money was devoted to buying fresh vegetables and basic foodstuff at

⁶ Mutual aid networks.

⁷ Network of mutual aid networks of Seville.

Table 2 Participant profiles based on socioeconomic characteristics and forms of participation

	Race and Ethnicity	Class	Gender	Previous involvement in social movements	Forms of participation
Profile 1	Racialized people, migrants, <i>pueblo gitano</i>	Lower	Predominance of women	No	Majority in mutual aid groups
Profile 2	White people, Spanish origin	Middle / Lower middle	Predominance of women	Yes	Majority in steering groups and coordination

the store, while the individual or family needing support was invited to collect it. Agroecology-oriented producers also contributed to the network with food donations. The initiative worked autonomously from local administrations, and the activity of RAMUCA ended shortly after the pandemic's lockdown period, when activists joined other local social organizations in a public denouncement of the unresponsiveness and inefficiency of the local government and other institutional actors to address the social issues exacerbated by the crisis, including food security.

Diversity in coalitions and intersectionality of struggles

The two studied AFRCs emerged as diverse assemblages of a wide array of organizations and initiatives that belong to different social movements. In Hospitalet del Llobregat (metropolitan area of Barcelona), the mutual aid group that works with Alterbanc has been mainly promoted by local solidarity economy initiatives, but is based on a complex network structured in nodes. In these nodes, collaborative relations—e.g. channeling donations or goods, exchanging information, providing spaces for redistribution activities, etc.—are created among remarkably different sorts of social actors. The network is weaved together by community groups such as formal neighborhood associations, but also by migrant women groups who help each other while struggling for their rights, entities that represent the *pueblo gitano*⁸ and promote their culture in the neighborhood, as well as grassroots initiatives who advocate for basic housing rights. Economic actors are also present in the network, including the above-mentioned local solidarity economy initiatives, organic or conventional food retail shops and agroecology-oriented cooperatives and farmers.

Through the relations that are created across this network, the objective of the mutual aid groups and their practices intersect with other issues and struggles. In Hospitalet, it mainly encounters the struggle of migrant, racialized women working as caregivers and the *pueblo gitano*, both marginalized social groups mobilizing to face different sorts of oppression. The intersection with migrant organizations is

common to other mutual aid groups in Barcelona's metropolitan area, and to RAMUCA as well, especially in the collaboration with a community kitchen working with women victims of gender-based violence—mainly coming from Latin America—and an association for the rights of immigrants with African origins. RAMUCA also encounters the struggle of Sevilla's sex workers who self-organized for the recognition of their rights and denounced the injustices created by current related legislation. One of the leaders of this group explained in an interview how the pandemic made their work impossible, like other informal jobs. RAMUCA's donations and support contributed to alleviating their already precarious living conditions, and provided an opportunity to meet other activists and organizations. As reported by the activist, the 'Feminisms of the Souths'⁹ is a new initiative that: "Began to be woven in times of pandemic, when they would call me from another collective, for example, the day laborers or the caregivers, [...] because there were comrades who had no place to sleep and were sleeping on the street" (Mutual aid group participant 1, RAMUCA). The alliance—seeking feminism from below and pushing against mainstream and institutionalized versions of it—reunites day laborers of the massive greenhouses of Huelva, caregivers collectives, sex workers and other feminist organizations and individuals. In this encounter, the sex workers' collective is also getting to know about new topics such as sustainable farming and agroecology.

Exploring political intersectionality in AFRCs

Participant profiles and forms of participation

Two participant profiles can be identified in the studied AFRCs according to their socioeconomic background (Table 2). The first profile is predominant in the mutual aid groups, and larger in size. It mainly includes women, lower-class, racialized or migrated people who did not necessarily have previous experience in social movements and grassroots political action. Having a precarious economy

⁸ Romani people.

⁹ <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/feminismos/la-revolucion-de-las-comadres>

is a distinguishing element of people in this profile. As a *ramuquita* coordinator in the working-class neighborhood of Pino Montano points out: “They were either single-parent families, or migrants who did not have any resources at that time. Families of gitanos who were going through very bad times and then families with a very precarious economy, who could not rely on other safety nets” (Mutual aid participant 2, RAMUCA). In Barcelona, participants of the mutual aid groups share similar characteristics with those of *ramuquitas* and they predominantly include migrated women with children, who were either unemployed or held informal jobs as caregivers.

The second profile—named ‘steering group members’ hereafter—is predominant in the steering groups which initially promoted the initiatives and mainly assumed coordinating roles. Both in Alterbanc and RAMUCA, the individuals who started the initiatives are white lower-middle to middle-class activists who were already involved in social movements before the pandemic and were born in Spain. As one of the interviewees explains, in the RAMUCA food group: “We were around ten people, coming from social movements, some producers, a baker, etc. I would say most of us, if not all, were activists from social movements, especially from the agroecological movement for food sovereignty” (Mutual aid group participant 3, RAMUCA). In Alterbanc the steering group is also formed by white people active in environmentalist, agroecology and solidarity economy movements, most of them men. All of these participants rely on an income thanks to more or less precarious jobs in the field of agroecology and the social and solidarity economy – some in logistics and advisory cooperatives, others as producers, and others as researchers.

Women’s predominance in the steering and the mutual aid groups was a remarkable feature of both AFRCs. The RAMUCA food group was composed of women only, and the report they produced to measure their estimated impact noted that over 70% of food package beneficiaries were also women (RAMUCA 2020). In Barcelona, mutual aid groups were also mostly female, with men being rarely involved. The only exception is Alterbanc’s steering group which has a stronger presence of men compared to women.

Alternative food redistribution activities

The main objective of Alterbanc and RAMUCA is the redistribution of food, but steering group members are very specific about the fact that it is not just any kind of food. Interviewees across both initiatives suggested that they represented an alternative to conventional food aid, which is normally based on low quality surplus from large distribution companies and industrial agriculture. For example, a member of the agroecological logistics cooperative which collaborates with Alterbanc suggested that:

“The tenders [mainstream food banks] make purchases that are very detached from the territory; they are mainly tuna, milk, canned food [...] There is another side of the coin, they are distributing junk food. [...] It seems very irresponsible to me that the public administration is promoting this type of food. It’s like saying ‘you are poor, eat some Doritos and shut up!’” (Logistics cooperative representative, Alterbanc).

Farmers contributing to both AFRCs shared this critical view, and emphasized the right of impoverished social groups to healthy and fresh produce. For instance, farmers who have joined Alterbanc declared to be aware of the limitations of sustainable food in terms of accessibility, and often stated that in their projects they are trying to offer fairer prices. Nevertheless, with Alterbanc their produce arrives to people who could not prioritize these foods over others at all, because they are in a much more precarious situation compared to the ones they usually work with.

Mutual aid group members appreciated, indeed, the quality of the fresh produce received. One of them noted:

“For sure you notice the quality, you cannot compare a celery arriving from Alterbanc with a celery that we collect from the market, they are different things. And people are very happy knowing that we have the donation of Alterbanc because their products are very good, they are organic, and the taste is also different” (Mutual aid group participant 1, Alterbanc).

However, the food redistributed through AFRCs is generally not sustainable or organic. In the case of Barcelona, mutual aid groups rely on other sources of provision besides Alterbanc. The food collected with them in local shops and markets during the participant observations is mostly produced conventionally. Likewise, even though the promoters of RAMUCA belong to the agroecological movement and try to collaborate with farmers and local agroecology-oriented shops and cooperatives, most of the food they actually redistribute is also bought in conventional local shops. A recurring source of internal debates in the coalitions is the tension between the prices of sustainable and local produce and the need to cover the food security needs of as many people as possible. As an agroecological activist and researcher reports in Seville: “Agroecological products are more expensive because we seek a fair remuneration for the farmers, and this leads to contradictions when considering the right to food or proposing campaigns for food insecurity reduction” (Mutual aid group participant 4, RAMUCA). Steering group members from both cities note that debates emerged recurrently as many AFRCs participants proposed to buy or collect food in large supermarkets instead, in order to obtain more food with fewer resources. In disadvantaged neighborhoods away from the city center of Seville, buying

organic or agroecological foods was not even considered as an option.

According to the research participants, the issue of contrasting prices across food produce is linked to a broader problem concerning the perceived exclusivity of sustainable and quality foods within public opinion, and the actual class and cultural biases of the agroecological movement. In both coalitions, activists highlighted how the price barrier results in a discourse affirming that agroecological consumption is only for the middle-class, the bourgeois, the ‘eco-posh’. For an interviewee in Seville, this class bias is not just a perception based on a discourse, but a reality, inasmuch as “Unfortunately, agroecological initiatives move in a field of privilege that is very difficult to relocate or deconstruct, precisely because a large part of the consumers belonging to agroecological initiatives come from socioeconomic contexts quite far from those where processes of food insecurity occur” (Mutual aid group participant 4, RAMUCA).

These biases and differences in privileges also point to the problem of who has the right to decide over what is an appropriate diet. In RAMUCA, a steering group member reported an anecdote of an issue that originated a lot of discussion within the AFRC:

“A boy from a supermarket in the 3000 Viviendas, which is a very disadvantaged neighborhood in Seville, sent a shopping list for €50. He managed to squeeze in many things. He is from that neighborhood and hangs out every day with these people. He said ‘Look, for 50 euros I offer all this. I know this is what people eat here’. And some comrades began to propose another shopping list for that small supermarket, following agroecological criteria. [...] On the one hand, it was okay, we were all for agroecology, but on the other hand, where the hell are we leaving the class axis? [...] It generated a lot of conflict for me. [...] Intersectionality was conspicuous by its absence every time agroecology was put above anything else” (Mutual aid group participant 5, RAMUCA).

As previously stated, the RAMUCA food group, compelled by the pressing demand to meet increased food requirements, quickly moved away from agroecological-only criteria. Instead, they began to collaborate with local conventional food retailers yet excluded large supermarkets. The *ramuquitas* were always let free to decide what to offer in food boxes. Mutual aid groups participants in both cities talked about nutritious and quality food—highlighting the importance of working with local actors against the power of large corporations of food retail—while its sustainability and relation to agroecology often took second place. Furthermore, it was always stressed how important it was to adapt food boxes’ content to participants’ realities, including religion, or the number of children in the household. These

cases seemed to give less space to debate compared to the matter of quality and production practices, and food was distributed according to the specific needs of participants.

Solidarity relations

Mutual aid and solidarity are the most important principles that inspire the work of AFRCs. As an interviewee in Barcelona explained, “This project is based on ‘you give me and I give you’. You give me your energy, you give me your time, it doesn’t need to be a whole day, even if it is just an hour, two hours a week, and then on Saturday the products are distributed equally to all people” (Mutual aid group participant 1, Alterbanc). These principles are translated to reciprocity and horizontal relations among participants, which according to the latter distinguish them from conventional charities. While charities are based on a difference between ‘the helper’ and the ‘helped’—inevitably putting the latter on a lower level—food insecure people joining the mutual aid groups participate directly in the activities needed for the redistribution to work, such as food collection and placing in boxes, or the assemblies where these activities are coordinated and organized.

The horizontality provided by the solidarity relation does not correspond to a homogeneity in the forms and frequency of participation of AFRCs members. In both cases, it was observed that there was normally a leading group of people who were responsible for most of the tasks, while many others only joined in specific and easier jobs, or just showed up to collect food. Mutual aid and steering group members in Barcelona seem to accept these unequal degrees of participation, and in some cases highlighted that it is important to acknowledge the diversity of ways in which a member can contribute: “*There are people who will not be interested in being in the space where to think about the organization, there can be people who are just interested in more specific tasks such as unloading the truck, more logistical tasks*” (Mutual aid group participant 2, Alterbanc). RAMUCA’s model based on private donations and activists coordinating the purchase and delivery of groceries also relates to a diversity of participation practices. As pointed out by an interviewee, “There were people putting their bodies and others supporting economically” (Mutual aid group participant 1, RAMUCA). In many cases, this diversity reflected the social and class differences between areas of the city, with central neighborhoods being the main origins of donations and peripheral ones the main receivers.

Such diversity of participation strategies facilitates widespread engagement, but is not exempt from problems and contradictions. One of the steering group members in Hospitalet explained how the conditions of marginalization of the neighborhood resulted in the multiplication of public social services and social economy cooperatives

interventions. According to her, such a welfarist model has contributed to the spread of a culture of passive expectation of help among the most vulnerable residents, which needs to be addressed and is not always easily subverted through the mutual aid group. In Seville, RAMUCA is more clearly divided between ‘help givers’, including the food group in the center and the *ramuquitas* in the other neighborhoods, and ‘help receivers’, including those collecting food boxes. As one of the founders of the food group highlighted in an interview:

“The aid was actually mutual among some people, and then other people used the services. But come on, in those moments you're not going to get purist. Of course, there would be about 200 or 300 people who were part of the network. That does not mean that the help was only between them, they helped other people who may not be actively involved in the network. [...] In the end, it had its share of welfarism, and its share of mutual aid, self-management of a part that provides help and support to another part” (Mutual aid group participant 5, RAMUCA).

Many interviewees pointed out that the solidarity relations developed through Alterbanc and RAMUCA were underpinned by feelings of love, care, and empathy. The coordinator of a community kitchen part of RAMUCA describes these relationships as: “Bonds, or love pacts that have to do with the acceptance and understanding of the other, the other in his/her singularity, that you do not intend to change, what you want is to share lentils, love, hope and political activism” (Mutual aid group participant 6, RAMUCA). The initiative is organized by a non-profit feminist organization that offers support to women who have been victims of violence, and provides them with a safe space to share different sorts of activities. The community kitchen was initially thought of as an opportunity to spend time together, share food and recipes and socialize. The kitchen’s life stories heard during fieldwork were tragic but the atmosphere cheerful, with people laughing and dancing ‘cumbia’. Besides the beneficial effects that taking care of each other has on the participants in the kitchen, the kitchen’s coordinator explained that care assumes a political value through the project. Empathy is pointed out by participants in both AFRCs as a facilitating factor in bringing together individuals who have different life histories, belong to distinct social classes, and come from diverse countries. Some interviewees highlighted that the conditions given by the COVID-19 crises provided an opportunity to be more empathetic across classes, as many people that thought to be able to rely on an economic security—and to belong to the ‘middle class’—were suddenly vulnerabilized because they could not work. As a RAMUCA member pointed out: “Here in Seville what I saw was that many of our comrades

got together thanks to empathy, acknowledging the needs of others, and the fact that today you are middle class and that tomorrow you are lower class” (Mutual aid group participant 1, RAMUCA).

Territorial networks

Alterbanc and RAMUCA established important alliances across spaces and territories in two ways, between the rural and the urban and between the center and the periphery in urban areas. Alterbanc connects mutual aid groups and solidarity economy projects in the neighborhoods of Barcelona with peri-urban and rural agroecology-oriented farmers. The promoters of the initiative highlighted how while belonging to different spaces, the city and the rural or peri-urban areas, the two groups share situations of precariousness and marginalization, and form an alliance in order to face them. A key actor in facilitating the intersection between the two groups and spaces is an agroecology-oriented logistics cooperative, which deals with collecting the produce from the farms and transporting it to the neighborhood where it will be redistributed by the mutual aid groups. In the case of Seville, the relations with farmers coming from peri-urban and rural contexts are more loose, mainly consisting in exceptional solidarity donations of fresh vegetables and meat from agroecology-oriented farmers. However, RAMUCA allows for the coordination and organization between the center and the periphery of the city, which according to the research participants is something unusual for the local social movements’ context. As an experienced activist from the central neighborhood of La Macarena pointed out:

“There were *ramuquitas* in neighborhoods that are never structured with (social movements from) the rest of Seville, (and) [...] that has never happened in Seville. [...] There were Poligono Sur, Poligono San Pablo, Cerro Amate, Pajaritos, (peripheral and impoverished) neighborhoods that historically [...] do not coordinate with us (from city central neighborhoods) [...], because we do not know how to do it, among other things. On this occasion we were close to thirty territories, coordinated and organized. And that was very exciting” (Mutual aid group participant 5, RAMUCA).

Although territorial alliances are established through the coalitions, the number of agroecology-oriented production and distribution initiatives that are involved in these networks is limited, and these have some specific characteristics. They are mostly economically consolidated projects, in which participants are used to dedicate time to activism, beyond their economic activity. An interviewee from the cooperative that collaborates logistically with Alterbanc emphasized that only three out of the fourteen

agroecological farms which regularly participate in the cooperative displayed a genuine commitment to Alterbanc. In this regard, and based on fieldwork insights and interviews, three main reasons for such limited engagement can be identified. First, a lack of a political culture of grassroots participation in decision-making might be discouraging agroecological practitioners from joining assemblies or seeing the AFRCs as a priority for their farms. Second, the economic precariousness that characterizes many agroecology-oriented farmers often results in them being worried about their own livelihoods, rather than being focused on projects that may benefit other disadvantaged social actors, such as the AFRCs. Third, the difficult conciliation of work and family life is also a barrier to participating in AFRCs, especially for female farmers.

Another challenge observed in the establishment of territorial alliances was the limited number of direct encounters between consumers and producers that occurred in the coalitions, at least during fieldwork. As the agroecological model is normally based on the creation of close relationships between these actors, Alterbanc's contributing farmers initially proposed to create opportunities for encounters, such as farm visits. However, even after the end of lockdown mobility restrictions these farm visits have never been realized. Some tentative attempts to engage with consumers entailed farmers sending instructional videos to the mutual aid groups featuring recipes on how to prepare specific vegetables.

Discussion

The coalitions studied in this article weaved together a very diverse array of actors and created platforms where different struggles intersect and are tackled simultaneously. While the main goal of the coalitions was to address food insecurity, the convergence among such diversity of social organizations, economic actors and individuals allowed for an encounter among social movements and struggles. The concerns for the sustainability of food systems raised by agroecological activists and farmers not only met the need to feed food insecure people and ensure food justice, but also the struggle for dignified housing, sex workers' rights, the fight against violence on women and the recognition of migrated and racialized people's rights. Considering Motta's (2021) typology of food movements, the studied coalitions bridge across alternative food movements, food justice movements and feminist food movements, but also include movements that mobilize other grievances, such as women, workers, housing and migrants' rights. This political strategy of convergence in such new alliances resonates with similar trends among social movements at the transnational level—e.g. radical agrarian and environmental movements—based

on an increased acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of multiple crises and issues created by patriarchal capitalism and corporate-led food systems (Borras 2018; Tramel 2018). Recognizing oppression as constituted by multiple and interacting social structures, activists in social movements are more and more aware of the intersectionality of lived experience, showing what has been called 'intersectional consciousness' (Greenwood 2008). This awareness manifested clearly in the way mutual aid groups have cared for vulnerable members of their community during the pandemic, in the considered case studies and elsewhere (e.g. Lofton et al. 2022; Lloro 2021; Markowitz 2020). Activists specifically identified women, elders, migrants and other racialized groups, low-income families, and the unemployed because of their unique vulnerability to COVID-19 and the resulting economic and food insecurity issues. Intersectional consciousness is the basis for intersectional solidarity and intersectional activism (Tormos 2017; Doetsch-Kidder 2012), which in the studied cases emerged in different ways. Intersectional forms of solidarity adopt a strategy of affirmative advocacy (Strolovitch 2007), which entails redirecting the political agenda—and the allocation of resources—of social movement organizations, interest groups, and advocacy groups to the issues that affect intersectionally marginalized groups. In both RAMUCA and Alterbanc, activists mobilized to redistribute resources to marginalized groups—with a clear reorientation of goals in the case of agroecology activists and farmers—and made pressure on governmental institutions to tackle their issues. Concerning political advocacy, the studied coalitions show an intersectional approach by advocating for policies that address multiple forms of oppression, e.g. the lack of access to healthy and sustainable food for marginalized social groups and the marginalization of small-scale agroecology-oriented farmers by the corporate food regime in the case of Alterbanc. However, the efforts of coalitions to change public policies hardly obtained results, and point to the need for critical reflections on the role of state institutions in the scaling of agroecology (González de Molina et al. 2019; Giraldo and Rosset 2017; Levidow et al. 2014).

Advanced forms of intersectional solidarity—'transformative praxis' (Ciccio and Roggeband 2021)—entail that organizations involved in coalitions adopt alternative 'politics of accountability', i.e., critical scrutiny of organizational practices and the use of inclusive forms of deliberation to counter the (re)production of inequalities both within and between collaborating organizations (Townsend-Bell 2011). In our case studies, mutual aid groups and steering group members did not consider the differences in the forms of participation problematic. On the contrary, interviewees highlighted how distinct levels of engagement enable different profiles of people to participate in the AFRCs. Diversity in the contribution to the

cause—from practical work to decision-making—seems to correspond to greater inclusivity. However, the fact that white, Spanish origin and lower-middle to middle-class activists mainly act as steering group members and coordinators while racialized, migrated and lower-class members participate or receive help in the mutual aid groups could point to a reproduction of intersecting inequalities in the organizational practices and deliberation processes within the coalitions (Einwohner et al. 2021).

Along this, the reproduction of welfarist practices was not framed by the activists as necessarily leading to unequal relations, but rather the result of how privileged or disadvantaged positions influence the positionality and capacity to act of the coalition members. In the case of RAMUCA, wealthier people from the city center were the main donors of the initiative while marginalized collectives in the periphery received most food packages. In intersectional alliances, activists from different backgrounds and movements strategically use power from across their communities to provide support and to organize with multiple goals in mind, while still centering the most vulnerable in the community (Markowitz 2020). Indeed, steering group members can be identified as ‘bridge actors’ (Roth 2004), whose role within the AFRCs is key to unfolding decolonial approaches to weave intersectional coalitions, thus putting their privileges to serve common aims and needs. Nevertheless, the improvement of mutual aid relations towards horizontal forms of social organization should continue to be considered a priority if we want to radically change the way social services are delivered—including food aid (Bell 2021; Izlar 2019). Participatory action research and bottom-up governance methodologies developed by agroecology-oriented research and practice can definitely play a key role in assembling the coalitions, constructing collective agency, and managing power relations within AFRCs (López-García et al. 2021; Marsden et al. 2018; Méndez et al. 2017).

Activists in the studied coalitions identified the tension between higher food prices and the need to reach as many food-insecure people as possible as a key barrier to turning sustainable produce into the predominant source of provision. This tension stimulated debates in the coalitions and points to the socioeconomic and cultural biases of alternative and sustainable food initiatives (Goodman et al. 2012; Guthman 2011). The acknowledgment of such biases and the intersectional nature of the coalitions as described above can be considered important steps to avoid the reproduction of exclusionary practices in alternative food initiatives based on class and race divides (Zitcer 2015; Goodman et al. 2012; Slocum 2007). In order to tackle this tension, coalitions adopt forms of hybrid food networks (Bloom and Hinrichs 2011; Whatmore and Thorne 1997) that are not limited to sustainable produce, they rely on local shops, and they introduce other criteria based on cultural and religion-based food

preferences. The significance of cultural diversity in promoting sustainability and social justice within food systems makes this aspect particularly intriguing (Williams-Forsion 2014). The engagement of a wide range of social organizations and individuals in the coalitions, extending beyond those focused solely on agroecology, undoubtedly played a significant role in prioritizing other criteria besides sustainability. However, the difficulty of scaling out access to food produced under agroecological principles to marginalized social groups poses a remarkable challenge for developing the equity dimension of agroecology. The fact that public funding is the main factor enabling the supply of sustainable food in Alterbanc and the continuation of the coalition in the future points again to the debate on the role of the state in scaling agroecology. Depending on the state in order to overcome the economic access issues associated with the higher prices of sustainable food may represent an essential problem, given the importance of autonomy for peasant agroecology (Van der Ploeg 2008) and the well-documented risks of conventionalization and co-option associated with the institutionalization of agroecology (Giraldo and McCune 2019; Ajates Gonzalez et al. 2018; Levidow et al. 2014). Relying on state support to facilitate a transition towards more sustainable practices in food aid interventions may also pose challenges given that neoliberalization processes have entrenched a corporate-driven model for food aid, aligning it closely with agro-industry interests (Riches 2018; Fisher 2017; Poppendieck 1998).

The predominance of women in food distribution and preparation activities in the studied coalitions reflects—and potentially reproduces—an unequal distribution of care-oriented food work, along with what has been called a ‘reactionary ethics of care’ (Pérez-Orozco 2014). The unequal distribution of care-oriented food work has been identified as one of the main challenges of sustainable food systems transitions (Federici 2012; Carney 2011), especially from agroecological perspectives (Anderson et al. 2021; Bezner-Kerr et al. 2019). As in AFRCs, activist contexts are often characterized by a disproportion in women’s engagement in uncompensated caring and emotional labor (e.g. Lloro 2021; Craddock 2019; Kennelly 2014). However, food redistribution practices and the social relations characterizing the studied coalitions also collectivize food-related care work, as well as politicize care and social reproduction. Collectivizing and de-privatizing food-related care work are considered essential steps towards building co-responsibility and transforming gender relations in food systems (Di Masso et al. 2022). Mutual aid groups collectivize at least three dimensions of food-related care work: food procurement and distribution inasmuch as the food is obtained through collective action; food preparation in community kitchens; and food-related knowledge through the exchange of recipes. This collective, community-based approach to care is

an instance of those “vital but underappreciated strategies for enduring precarious worlds” (Hobart and Kneese 2020, p. 2) that transcend conventional contexts of care—e.g. the nuclear family in cis-heteropatriarchy and the individual in neoliberal self-care ideology—and point to radical care practices and infrastructures (Dowling 2021; The Care Collective 2020; Hobart and Kneese 2020). Through these practices, communities self-organize for the reproduction of material life and try to trigger social change from there, thus adopting what have been defined as ‘*políticas en femenino*’¹⁰ (Gutiérrez 2017) as ways to improve local food systems’ ecological sustainability and social equity.

While gender, class and race are the most common categories addressed by intersectional studies, the cases considered in this article point to territory and space as other axes of oppression to be tackled. AFRCs address territorial and spatial differences by creating territorial networks between urban and rural contexts and between center and periphery within urban settings. This resonates with other analyses of food movements and how they address food inequalities (Motta 2021; Bloom and Hinrichs 2011). It also relates to geography debates on the role of place and space in the configuration of intersectional relations (Valentine 2007). In Europe, the farming sector has been characterized as marginalized (López-García 2020), and rurality and belonging to the rural space could be considered as conditions of subalternity (Bielewicz 2020; Franquesa 2019). To date, social and human geography have embraced intersectional approaches to investigate the interplay between socio-economic categories, power dynamics, and spatial dimensions, providing a more contextualized and dynamic perspective on intersectional relationships (e.g. Hopkins 2019; Mollett and Faria 2018; Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina 2018; Anthias 2013; Valentine 2007). While primarily exploratory in nature regarding this topic, this study suggests that employing the perspective of political intersectionality to explore how intersectional coalitions address spatial differences may also prove beneficial in broadening and enhancing these discussions. The territorial networks weaved by AFRCs bridge marginalized groups of both the urban and the rural context—in an effort to defy their subalternity—but show remarkable limits in the capacity to reach the latter. The development of a more advanced political culture of grassroots participation, the economic consolidation of the initiatives, the conciliation of work and family life and an increase in the number of encounters between rural and urban actors emerge from our analysis as potential key factors in the improvement of such territorialized coalitions.

Conclusion

Throughout this article we took some first steps towards understanding intersectional coalitions as intriguing examples of those plural subjects and multi-actor processes that are deemed essential for the scaling of a (more) just agroecology (Anderson et al. 2021; López-García and González de Molina 2021). We found that diverse social struggles converge in the considered coalitions and center their focus on intersectionally marginalized groups, but members’ varying participation forms based on socioeconomic profiles may perpetuate inequalities in organizational practices. Balancing healthy, sustainable food access with affordability leads to hybrid networks incorporating conventionally produced food. While women’s overrepresentation reflects unequal food-related care work, collectivization through AFRCs points to gender relations transformation. Territorialized alliances connect urban and rural, and urban center and periphery, yet we observed limited involvement of agroecology-oriented initiatives and direct consumer-producer encounters.

Overall, in this work we aimed to initiate a dialogue between agroecology and intersectionality debates by drawing on concepts (e.g. intersectional consciousness, intersectional solidarity, intersectional activism, bridge actors, etc.) that were originally elaborated based on the analysis of intersectional coalitions that are not focusing on food—but rather on feminist movements. Simultaneously, as we engaged in this dialogue, the article began to outline several valuable lessons and critiques that are unique to food-related movements but hold relevance for intersectional coalitions in a broader context. These include the pivotal roles of women in the collectivization of care work, the significance of territorial and spatial differences, the potential of (agroecology) participatory bottom-up governance processes in rebalancing power dynamics, and the ambivalent role of state support for coalitions, among others.

Territory emerges in our analysis as a novel category regarding equity in food systems. However, other categories and axes of oppression—e.g. sexuality, age, religion, etc.—were not explored in-depth and would require further attention. Moreover, despite the results of this study show that the considered coalitions reflect a remarkable degree of political intersectionality—both in the objectives and the ways in which activists mobilize, acknowledge their positionalities and tackle intersecting axes of oppression—further research and evidence would be needed to demonstrate the extent to which AFRCs can constitute a transformative praxis. In fact, this more advanced form of intersectional solidarity requires a sustained commitment to eliminating oppressive relations beyond the specific issues at hand—in this case, the enhanced levels of food insecurity in the pandemic

¹⁰ Feminine politics.

context—and demands actions aimed at eradicating all forms of power asymmetries within a coalition (Ciccia and Roggeband 2021; Townsend-Bell 2009). Such a praxis may overcome some of the economic and social biases of alternative food initiatives associated with agroecology, and transcend their potential reproduction as identified throughout this study. The dependence on public funding to tackle the price barriers of sustainable food for food-insecure people would also need further scrutiny. Future analysis might focus on the relations between the considered coalitions and governmental institutions, to reflect on the role of the state in scaling agroecology beyond class, gender, race, sexuality, age, territory and other biases. More generally, we call for an encounter between the fields of political intersectionality and political agroecology, and emphasize the need to both explore empirically and practically develop intersectionality in agroecological transitions in order to pursue just—and not only sustainable—food systems.

Acknowledgements We are extremely grateful to all the research participants for their availability and contribution to this work. Concerning funding, we acknowledge that this work contributes to ICTA-UAB “María de Maeztu” Programme for Units of Excellence of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (CEX2019-000940-M). FF also acknowledges the financial support provided by the ‘Plan Estatal de I + D + I’ of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (PRE2019-087557). SVT acknowledges the support of the Ramon y Cajal Fellowship of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (RyC-2017-22782). DLG acknowledges the financial support provided by MCIN/AEI/<https://doi.org/10.13039/501100011033> and by the European Union “NextGenerationEU”/PRTR funds, along the project TED2021-129660A-I00.

Author contributions All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by the first author. The first draft of the manuscript was written by the first author and all authors commented and contributed to subsequent versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding Open Access Funding provided by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Declarations

Competing interests The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

Ethical approval Ethical approval for the broader research project in which this work has been realized was granted by the *Comisión de Ética en la Experimentación Animal y Humana* (CEEAH) of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB).

Informed consent Verbal informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews and participant observations, and participants have been anonymized in the article.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes

were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article’s Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article’s Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Acciari, L. 2021. Practicing intersectionality: Brazilian domestic workers’ strategies of building alliances and mobilizing identity. *Latin American Research Review* 56 (1): 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.594>.
- Adam, E. M., (2017). Intersectional coalitions: The paradoxes of rights-based movement building in LGBTQ and immigrant communities. *Law & Society Review*, 51(1), 132–167. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45093979>
- Agyeman, J., and B. Evans. 2004. “Just Sustainability”: The emerging discourse of environmental justice in Britain? *Geographical Journal* 170 (2): 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2004.00117.x>.
- Ajates Gonzalez, R., J. Thomas, and M. Chang. 2018. Translating agroecology into policy: The case of France and the United Kingdom. *Sustainability (switzerland)* 10 (8): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082930>.
- Alberich, T. 2016. *Desde las asociaciones de vecinos al 15M y las mareas ciudadanas: Breve historia de los movimientos sociales*. Madrid: Editorial Dykinson.
- Alkon, A.H., and J. Agyeman. 2011. *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Altieri, M.A. 2018. *Agroecology: The science of sustainable agriculture*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Altieri, M.A., and C.I. Nicholls. 2020. Agroecology and the emergence of a post COVID-19 agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values* 37: 525–526. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-020-10043-7>.
- Alver, J. 2021. The negotiation of a feminist sisterhood in the pacific – two recent cases of intersectional alliance building. *Global Policy* 12 (2): 229–238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12962>.
- Anderson, C.R., J. Bruil, M.J. Chappell, C. Kiss, and M. Pimbert. 2021. *Agroecology Now! Transformations towards more just and sustainable food systems*. London: Palgrave MacMillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61315-0>.
- Anthias, F. 2013. Intersectional What? Social divisions, intersectionality and levels of analysis. *Ethnicities* 13 (1): 3–1. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812463547>.
- Beckwith, K. 2000. Beyond compare? Women’s movements in comparative perspective. *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (4): 431–468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00521>.
- Bell, F.M. 2021. Amplified injustices and mutual aid in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Qualitative Social Work* 20 (1–2): 410–415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325020973326>.
- Bell, F.M., M.K. Dennis, and A. Krings. 2019. Collective survival strategies and anti-colonial practice in ecosocial work. *Journal of Community Practice* 27 (3–4): 279–295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2019.1652947>.
- Bezner, Kerr R., C. Hickey, E. Lupafya, and L. Dakishoni. 2019. Repairing rifts or reproducing inequalities? *Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, and Gender Justice in Malawi, the Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (7): 1499–1518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1547897>.

- Bilewicz, A.M. 2020. Beyond the modernisation paradigm: Elements of a food sovereignty discourse in farmer protest movements and alternative food networks in Poland. *Sociologia Ruralis* 60 (4): 754–772. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12295>.
- Bloom, J., and C. Hinrichs. 2011. Moving local food through conventional food system infrastructure: Value chain framework comparisons and insights. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 26 (1): 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742170510000384>.
- Borras, S., T. Moreda, A. Alonso-Fradejas, and Z. Brent. 2018. Converging social justice issues and movements: Implications for political actions and research. *Third World Quarterly* 39 (7): 1227–1246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1491301>.
- Brent, Z., C. Schiavoni, and A. Alonso-Fradejas. 2015. Contextualising food sovereignty: The politics of convergence among movements in the USA. *Third World Quarterly* 36 (3): 618–635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1023570>.
- Busconi, A. (2017). Agroecología y soberanía alimentaria: hacia el empoderamiento del trabajo de las mujeres en América Latina. *Anuario en Relaciones Internacionales*. <https://www.iri.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/A2017medambArtBusconi.pdf>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Cabot, H. 2016. ‘Contagious’ solidarity: Reconfiguring care and citizenship in Greece’s social clinics. *Social Anthropology* 24: 152–166. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12297>.
- Carney, M. 2021. *Island of hope: Migration and solidarity in the Mediterranean*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Carney, M. 2011. Compounding crises of economic recession and food insecurity: A comparative study of three low-income communities in Santa Barbara County. *Agriculture and Human Values* 29 (2): 185–201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-011-9333-y>.
- Ciccia, R., and C. Roggeband. 2021. Unpacking intersectional solidarity: Dimensions of power in coalitions. *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4 (2): 181–198. <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X16145402377609>.
- Clapp, J., and W.G. Moseley. 2020. This food crisis is different: COVID-19 and the fragility of the neoliberal food security order. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 47 (7): 1393–1417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1823838>.
- Collins, P. 2015. Intersectionality’s definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142>.
- Collins, P.H., and V. Chepp. 2013. Intersectionality. In *Oxford handbook of gender and politics*, ed. Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 57–87. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Combahee River Collective. 1977. A black feminist statement. In *Words of fire: An anthology of African American feminist thought*, ed. B. Guy-Sheftall, 232–240. New York: New Press.
- Connelly, S., S. Markey, and M. Roseland. 2011. Bridging sustainability and the social economy: Achieving community transformation through local food initiatives. *Critical Social Policy* 31 (2): 308–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018310396040>.
- Corradi, L. (2021). Intersectional alliances to overcome gender subordination: The case of Roma-Gypsy traveller women. *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, 22(4), 152–166. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss4/11>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Craddock, E. 2019. Doing ‘enough’ of the ‘right’ thing: The gendered dimension of the ‘ideal activist’ identity and negative emotional consequences. *Social Movement Studies* 18 (2): 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1555457>.
- Crenshaw, K. 1991. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>.
- Dale, B. 2019. Alliances for agroecology: From climate change to food system change. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 44 (5): 629–652. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1697787>.
- Davis, A. 1983. *Women, race and class*. New York: Vintage.
- Di Masso, M., D. López-García, J. Clemente-Longás, and V. García-García. 2022. Taking food out the private sphere? Addressing gender relations in Urban food policy. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 46 (1): 108–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1936742>.
- Doetsch-Kidder, S. 2012. *Social change and intersectional activism: The spirit of social movement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dowler, E. 2003. Food and poverty in Britain: Rights and responsibilities. In *The welfare of food: Rights and responsibilities in a changing world*, ed. E. Dowler and C.J. Finer. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Dowling, E. 2021. Caring in times of a global pandemic: Introduction. *Historical Social Research* 46 (4): 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.46.2021.4.7-30>.
- Dumont, A., G. Pierre, M. Stassart, and P. Baret. 2016. Clarifying the socioeconomic dimensions of agroecology: Between principles and practices. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*. 40 (1): 24–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2015.1089967>.
- Einwohner, R.L., K. Kelly-Thompson, V. Sinclair-Chapman, F. Tormos-Aponte, S.L. Weldon, J.M. Wright, and C. Wu. 2019. Active solidarity: Intersectional solidarity in action. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jpxz052>.
- FAO. 2021. *The state of food security and nutrition in the world*. Rome: FAO.
- Federici, S. 2012. *Revolution at Point Zero. Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle*. New York: PM Press-Common Notions.
- Feenstra, G.W. 1997. Local food systems and sustainable communities. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* 12 (1): 28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0889189300007165>.
- Fernández de Casadevante, J. L., Fernández R., J., & Ramírez, N. (2022). Solidaridades de Proximidad. Ayuda mutua y cuidados ante la Covid19. *Grupo Cooperativo Tangente*. https://tangente.coop/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Solidaridades-de-Proximidad_Tangente.pdf. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Ferree, M.M. 2009. Inequality, intersectionality and the politics of discourse. Framing feminist alliances. In *The discursive politics of gender equality: Stretching, bending, and policy-making*, ed. E. Lombardo, P. Meier, and V. Verloo, 84–111. London: Routledge.
- Fisher, A. 2017. *Big hunger: The unholy alliance between corporate America and anti-hunger groups*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Franquesa, J. 2019. The vanishing exception: Republican and reactionary specters of populism in rural Spain. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (3): 537–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1578751>.
- FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. (2023). GRFC 2023. Rome. <https://www.fsinplatform.org/global-report-food-crises-2023>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Galt, R.E. 2013. The moral economy is a double-edged sword: Explaining farmers’ earnings and self-exploitation in community-supported agriculture. *Economic Geography* 89 (4): 341–365. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecge.12015>.
- Gliessman, S. 2007. *Agroecology: The ecology of Sustainable Food System*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Giraldo, O.F., and N. McCune. 2019. Can the state take agroecology to scale? Public policy experiences in agroecological territorialization from Latin America. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 43 (7–8): 785–809. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1585402>.
- Giraldo, O.F., and P.M. Rosset. 2017. Agroecology as a territory in dispute: Between institutionalization and social movements. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45 (3): 545–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1353496>.

- Gómez, L., L. Ríos-Osorio, and M. Eschenhagen. 2012. Agroecology publications and coloniality of knowledge. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* 33: 355–362. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-012-0109-6>.
- González de Molina, M., P.F. Petersen, F.G. Peña, and F.R. Capor. 2019. *Political agroecology: Advancing the transition to sustainable food systems*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Goodman, D., E.M. DuPuis, and M.K. Goodman. 2012. *Alternative food networks: Knowledge, place and politics*. Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Greenwood, R.M. 2008. Intersectional political consciousness: Appreciation for intragroup differences and solidarity in diverse groups. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 32 (1): 36–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00405.x>.
- Guthman, J. 2011. *Weighing In: Obesity, food justice, and the limits of capitalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gutierrez, A.R. 2017. *Horizontes comunitarios-populares: Producción de lo común más allá de las políticas estado-céntricas*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.
- Hancock, A.M. 2016. *Intersectionality: An intellectual history*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haraway, D. 1988. Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.
- Harvey, D. 2007. Neoliberalism and the city. *Studies in Social Justice* 1 (1): 2–13. <https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v1i1.977>.
- HLPE (High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition) (2019). *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. Report #14. High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), Committee on World Food Security. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- HLPE (High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition) (2020). *Food Security and Nutrition: Building A Global Narrative Towards 2030*. Report #15. High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), Committee on World Food Security. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca9731en/ca9731en.pdf>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Holt-Gimenez, E., & Harper, B. (2016). Food—Systems—Racism: From Mistreatment to Transformation. *Food First 1*. <https://archive.foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DR1Final.pdf>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- hooks, b. 1986. Sisterhood: Political solidarity between women. *Feminist Review* 23 (1): 125–138. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.1986.25>.
- Hopkins, P. 2019. Social geography I: Intersectionality. *Progress in Human Geography* 43 (5): 937–947. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517743677>.
- Irvine, J., Lang, S., and Montoya, C., (Eds.) (2019). Gendered mobilizations and intersectional challenges. In *Contemporary social movements in Europe and North America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Izlar, J. 2019. Radical social welfare and anti-authoritarian mutual aid. *Critical and Radical Social Work* 7 (3): 349–366. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204986019X15687131179624>.
- IPES-Food. (2020). COVID-19 and the crisis in food systems: Symptoms, causes, and potential solutions. <http://www.ipes-food.org/pages/covid19>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Kelly S. (2010). Qualitative interviewing techniques and styles. In: Bourgeault I, Dingwall R, de Vries R. (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Methods in Health Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Kennelly, J. 2014. 'It's this pain in my heart that won't let me stop': Gendered affect, webs of relations, and young women's activism. *Feminist Theory* 15 (3): 241–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700114544611>.
- Khadse, A. (2017). *Women, agroecology and gender equality*. New Delhi: Focus on the Global South. https://focusweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/women_agroecology_gender_equality.pdf. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Khorsandi, P. (2020). *WFP Chief Warns of 'Hunger Pandemic' as Global Food Crises Report Launched*. World Food Programme Insight. <https://insight.wfp.org/wfp-chief-warns-of-hunger-pandemic-as-global-food-crises-report-launched-3ee3edb38e47>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Lakner, C., Yonzan, N., Gerszon Mahler, D., Castaneda Aguilar, R.A. & Wu, H. (2021). *Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty: looking back at 2020 and the outlook for 2021*. World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/openata/updated-estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty-looking-back-2020-and-outlook-2021>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Lépinard, É. 2014. Doing intersectionality: Repertoires of feminist practices in France and Canada. *Gender & Society* 28 (6): 877–903. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214542430>.
- Lloro, T.K. 2021. An intersectional feminist food studies praxis: Activism and care in the COVID-19 context. *The Journal of Environmental Education* 52 (5): 303–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2021.1981209>.
- Lofton, S., M. Kersten, S.D. Simonovich, and A. Martin. 2022. Mutual aid organizations and their role in reducing food insecurity in Chicago's urban communities during COVID-19. *Public Health Nutrition* 25 (1): 119–122. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021003736>.
- Loker, A., and C. Francis. 2020. Urban food sovereignty: Urgent need for agroecology and systems thinking in a post-COVID-19 future. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 44 (9): 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2020.1775752>.
- Levidow, L., M. Pimbert, and G. Vanloqueren. 2014. Agroecological research: Conforming—or transforming the dominant agro-food regime? *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 38 (10): 1127–1155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2014.951459>.
- López-García, D. 2020. Who is the subject of agroecological transitions? Local agroecological dynamization and the plural subject of food systems transitions. *Landbauforschung-Journal of Sustainable and Organic Agricultural Systems* 70 (2): 36–42. <https://doi.org/10.3220/LBF160621305000>.
- López-García, D., M. Cuéllar-Padilla, A. de Azevedo Olival, N.P. Laranjeira, V.E. Méndez, S. Peredo y Parada, C.A. Barbosa, C. Barrera Salas, M. Caswell, R. Cohen, et al. 2021. Building agroecology with people. Challenges of participatory methods to deepen on the agroecological transition in different contexts. *Journal of Rural Studied* 83: 257–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.02.003>.
- López-García, D., and M. González de Molina. 2021. An operational approach to agroecology-based local agri-food systems. *Sustainability* 13: 8443. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158443>.
- Maisano, T. (2019). *Without feminism there is no agroecology. Towards healthy, sustainable and just food systems*. Rome: Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism for relations with the UN committee on World Food Security. http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CSM-Agroecology-and-Feminism-September-2019_compressed.pdf. Accessed 5 May 2023.
- Markowitz, A. (2020). *Building intersectional resistance alliances during COVID-19*. Resistance Studies. <https://wagingnonviolence.org/rs/2020/05/building-intersectional-resistance-alliances-during-covid-19/>. Accessed 05 May 2023.
- Marsden, T., P. Hebinck, and E. Mathijs. 2018. Re-building food systems: Embedding assemblages, infrastructures and reflexive governance for food systems transformations in Europe. *Food Security* 10: 1301–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-018-0870-8>.

- Mason, R.E., A. White, G. Bucini, J. Anderzén, V.E. Méndez, and S.C. Merrill. 2021. The evolving landscape of agroecological research. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 45 (4): 551–591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2020.1845275>.
- May, V.M. 2020. What Is Intersectionality? Matrix Thinking in a Single-Axis World. In *Pursuing intersectionality, unsettling dominant imaginaries*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203141991-7>.
- McCall, L. 2005. The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30 (3): 1771–1880. <https://doi.org/10.1086/426800>.
- McMichael, P. 2009. A food regime genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36 (1): 139–169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820354>.
- Méndez, V.E., M. Caswell, S. Gliessman, and R. Cohen. 2017. Integrating agroecology and participatory action research (PAR): Lessons from Central America. *Sustainability*. 9: 705. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9050705>.
- Mollett, S., and C. Faria. 2018. The spatialities of intersectional thinking: fashioning feminist geographic futures. *Gender, Place and Culture*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1454404>.
- Montenegro de Wit, M. 2021. What grows from a pandemic? *Toward an Abolitionist Agroecology, the Journal of Peasant Studies* 48 (1): 99–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1854741>.
- Moragues-Faus, A., and C.R. Magaña-González. 2022. *Alimentando un futuro sostenible: Estudio sobre la inseguridad alimentaria en hogares españoles antes y durante la COVID-19. Informe del proyecto "Alimentando un futuro sostenible."* Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, financiado por la Fundación Daniel y Nina Carasso.
- Morales, H., Zuluanga-Sánchez, G. P., González Santiago, M. V., Perfecto, I., and Papuccio de Vidal, S (2018) Alianza de Mujeres en Agroecología (AMA-AWA): fortaleciendo vínculos entre académicas para el escalamiento de la agroecología. In: Sánchez, G. P. Z., Catacora-Vargas, G., and Siliprandi, E., (Eds.), *Agroecología en femenino. Reflexiones a partir de nuestras experiencias* (pp. 15–33). Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA), Conselho Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLASCO). <http://bibliotecasibe.ecosur.mx/sibe/book/000034053>
- Motta, R. 2021. Social movements as agents of change: Fighting intersectional food inequalities, building food as webs of life. *The Sociological Review* 69 (3): 603–625. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261211009061>.
- Nel lo, O., and J. Checa. 2022. El binomio imprescindible: Políticas públicas e iniciativas solidarias en España en la pandemia Covid-19. In *El apoyo mutuo en tiempos de crisis La solidaridad ciudadana durante la pandemia Covid-19*, ed. O. Nel lo, I. Blanco, and R. Gomà. Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLASCO).
- Pérez N. D., & Soler M. M. (2013). Agroecología y ecofeminismo para descolonizar y despatriarcalizar la alimentación globalizada. *Revista Internacional de Pensamiento Político*, 8, 95–113. <https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/83729/Art%20para%20descolonizar%20y%20despatriarcalizar%20la%20alimentaci%20globalizada.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Pérez de Armiño, K. 2014. Erosion of rights, uncritical solidarity and food Banks in Spain. In *First world hunger revisited: Food charity or the right to food?*, ed. G. Riches and T. Silvasti, 131–145. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Pérez Orozco, A. 2014. Subversión feminista de la economía. In *Aportes para un debate sobre el conflicto capital-vida*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.
- Pimbert, M. P., & Lemke, S. (2018). *Food Environments: Using Agroecology to Enhance Dietary Diversity*. UNSCN News, 43, 33–42. <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSCN-News43.pdf>. Accessed 5 May 2023.
- Poppendieck, J. 2014. Food assistance, hunger and the end of welfare in the USA. In *First world hunger revisited: food charity or the right to food?*, ed. G. Riches and T. Silvasti, 176–190. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Poppendieck, J. 1998. *Sweet charity*. New York: Viking.
- Ragin, C. 2000. *Fuzzy set social science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rakopoulos, T. 2016. Solidarity: The egalitarian tensions of a bridge-concept. *Social Anthropology* 24: 142–151. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12298>.
- Rakopoulos, T. 2015. Tensions that matter: Informality and sociality in the Greek crisis' solidarity economy. *Social Analysis* 59: 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.3167/sa.2015.590305>.
- RAMUCA (2020). 3er informe de actividad de RAMUCA. <https://library.co/document/q298xpxz-er-informe-de-actividad-de-ramuca.html>. Accessed 5 June 2023.
- Riches, G. 2018. *Food Bank Nations: Poverty, Corporate Charity and the Right to Food*, 1st ed. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315184012>.
- Riches, G., and T. Silvasti, eds. 2014. *First world hunger revisited: Food charity or the right to food?* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rivera-Ferre, M.G. 2018. The resignification process of agroecology: Competing narratives from governments, civil society and intergovernmental organizations. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 42 (6): 666–685. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2018.1437498>.
- Rivera-Ferre, M.G., F. López-i-Gelats, F. Ravera, E. Oteros-Rozas, M. di Masso, R. Binimelis, and H. El Bilali. 2021. The two-way relationship between food systems and the COVID19 pandemic: causes and consequences. *Agricultural Systems*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2021.103134>.
- Rodó-de-Zárate, M., and M. Baylina. 2018. Intersectionality in feminist geographies. *Gender, Place & Culture* 25 (4): 547–553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2018.1453489>.
- Rosset, P.M., and M.A. Altieri. 2017. *Agroecology: Science and politics*. Black Point: Fernwood Publishing.
- Roth, S. 2021. Intersectionality and coalitions in social movement research—A survey and outlook. *Sociology Compass* 15: e12885. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12885>.
- Roth, B. 2017. Intersectionality: Origins, travels, questions, and contributions. In *The Oxford handbook of U.S. women's social movement activism*, ed. H.J. McCammon, V. Taylor, J. Reger, and R. Einwohner, 129–149. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roth, B. 2004. *Separate roads to feminism: Black, Chicana, and white feminist movements in America's second wave*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sachs, C., and A. Patel-Campillo. 2014. Feminist food justice: Crafting a new vision. *Feminist Studies* 40 (2): 396–410. <https://doi.org/10.1353/fem.2014.0008>.
- Sevilla Guzmán, E. 2006. *Perspectivas agroecológicas desde el pensamiento social agrario*. Córdoba: Instituto de sociología y Estudios Campesinos/Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba.
- Sevilla Guzmán, E., and Woodgate, G., (2013). Agroecología: Fundamentos del pensamiento social agrario y teoría sociológica. *Agroecología*, 8(2), 27–34. <https://revistas.um.es/agroecologia/article/view/212161>
- Shepard, B. 2015. *Community projects as social activism*. London: Sage.
- Siliprandi, E. (2015). Mulheres e agroecologia: transformando o campo, as florestas e as pessoas [Women and agroecology:

- transforming the countryside, forests and people]. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. http://www.mda.gov.br/sitemda/sites/sitemda/files/ceazinepdf/MULHERES_E_AGROECOLOGIA_TRANSFORMANDO_O_CAMPO_AS_FLORESTAS_E_AS_PESSOAS_0.pdf
- Simon-Rojo, M. 2019. Agroecology to fight food poverty in Madrid's deprived neighbourhoods. *Urban Design International* 24: 94–107. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-019-00088-4>.
- Slocum, R. 2007. Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum* 38 (3): 520–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.006>.
- Smith, B.J. 2019. Food justice, intersectional agriculture, and the triple food movement. *Agriculture and Human Values* 36: 825–835. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-019-09945-y>.
- Snipstal, B. 2017. Free the land and us too: Agroecology and popular struggle, building an agrarian intersectional movement. *WhyHunger*. <https://whyhunger.org/free-the-land-and-us-too-agroecology-and-popular-struggle-building-an-agrarian-intersectional-movement/blog/>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
- Strolovitch, D.Z. 2007. *Affirmative advocacy. Race, place, and gender in interest group politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Terriquez, V., T. Brenes, and A. Lopez. 2018. Intersectionality as a multipurpose collective action frame: The case of the undocumented youth movement. *Ethnicities* 18 (2): 260–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796817752558>.
- The Care Collective. 2020. *The care manifesto, the politics of interdependence*. London: Verso.
- Tilzey, M. 2018. Political ecology, food regimes, and food sovereignty: Crisis, resistance, and resilience. *Palgrave Macmillan*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64556-8>.
- Tormos, F. 2017. Intersectional solidarity. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (4): 707–720. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2017.1385494>.
- Tornaghi, C., and M. Dehaene. 2020. The prefigurative power of urban political agroecology: Rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 44 (5): 594–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1680593>.
- Townsend-Bell, E. 2021. Breaking hegemony: Coalition as decolonial-intersectional praxis. *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4 (2): 235–253. <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X1614540217115>.
- Townsend-Bell, E. 2011. What is relevance? Defining intersectional praxis in uruguay. *Political Research Quarterly* 64 (1): 187–199. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912910382301>.
- Townsend-Bell, E. (2009). Intersectional praxis, paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Ontario. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1451049>. Accessed 05 May 2023.
- Tramel, S. 2018. Convergence as political strategy: Social justice movements, natural resources and climate change. *Third World Quarterly* 39 (7): 1290–1307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1460196>.
- Valentine, G. 2007. Theorising and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer* 59 (1): 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2007.00587.x>.
- Van der Ploeg, J.D. 2020. From biomedical to politico-economic crisis: The food system in times of Covid-19. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 47 (5): 944–972. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2020.1794843>.
- Van der Ploeg, J.D. (2008). *The New Peasantries. Struggles for autonomy and sustainability in an era of Empire and globalisation*. Earthscan, London.
- Van Dyke, N., and H.J. McCammon, eds. 2010. *Strategic alliances: Coalition building and social movements*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Verloo, M. 2013. Intersectional and cross-movement politics and policies: Reflections on current practices and debates. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38 (4): 893–915. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669572>.
- Viladrich, A., M.A. Carbonero, and M. Gómez Garrido. 2018. “No one should go hungry”: The challenges of hunger relief efforts in contemporary Spain. *European Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*. 2 (1): 27–46. <https://doi.org/10.32777/r.2018.1.2.9>.
- Villamayor-Tomas, S., and G.A. García-López. 2021. Commons Movements: Old and New Trends in Rural and Urban Contexts. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 2021 46 (1): 511–543. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-102307>.
- von Wahl, A. 2021. Lessons on opportunity hoarding and gender binarism: Building an alliance of women's, trans and intersex movements. *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4 (2): 255–271. <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X16128070868431>.
- Wezel, A., S. Bellon, T. Doré, C. Francis, D. Vallo, and C. David. 2009. Agroecology as a science, a movement and a practice. *A Review. Agronomy for Sustainable Development*. 29: 503–515. <https://doi.org/10.1051/agro/2009004>.
- Whatmore, S., and L. Thorne. 1997. Nourishing networks: Alternative geographies of food. In *Globalising food: Agrarian questions and global restructuring*, ed. D. Goodman and M. Watts, 287–304. London: Routledge.
- Williams-Forsen, P. 2014. “I haven't eaten If I don't have my soup and Fufu”: Cultural preservation through food and foodways among Ghanaian migrants in the United States. *Africa Today*. 61 (1): 68–87.
- Zaremba, H., M. Elias, A. Rietveld, and N. Bergamini. 2021. Toward a feminist agroecology. *Sustainability* 13: 11244. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011244>.
- Zitcer, A. 2015. Food co-ops and the paradox of exclusivity. *Antipode* 47 (3): 812–828. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12129>.
- Zuluaga Sánchez, G.P., Catacora-Vargas, G., and Siliprandi, E., (Coords.). (2018). *Agroecología en femenino. Reflexiones a partir de nuestras experiencias*. SOCLA: La Paz, Bolivia

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Francesco Facchini holds a MSc in Agricultural Development and a Degree in International Studies. He is now working at his PhD in Environmental Science and Technology at the Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The PhD is inspired by Political Agroecology perspectives and based on the two cases of alliances between mutual-aid groups and agroecological initiatives in Barcelona and Seville. His previous research interests encompassed social movements theory, agency-oriented approaches to development, rural vulnerability and agroecology.

Daniel López-García holds a PhD in Agroecology and Rural Sociology, Degree in Biology. Daniel is tenured researcher at the Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography at the Spanish National Research Council. Working mainly through Participatory Action-Research, his research is focused in Local Agroecological Dynamization, Agroecological Transitions, Sustainable Food Systems, Local Food Policies and Alternative Food Networks.

Sergio Villamayor-Tomas holds A PhD in Public Policy and Analysis and is a Ramon y Cajal researcher at the Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. His research mainly focuses on natural resource management, climate change adaptation and the role of social movements in these processes adopting institutional economics approaches, among others.

Esteve Corbera holds a PhD in Development Studies and is ICREA Research Professor at the Institut de Ciència i Tecnologia Ambientals (ICTA), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. His research focuses on human-nature relationships and the impact of social, policy and

environmental change on the governance of natural resources. He draws on data from multi-actor views gathered ethnographically to secondary information collected for quantitative assessments.