INTRODUCTION

Food for us comes from our relatives, whether they have wings or fins or roots. That is how we consider food. Food has a culture. It has a history. It has a story. It has relationships.

—Winona LaDuke (2012)

This is a story of stories about food. It focuses on women's leadership in alternative food networks (AFNs) in two areas of Oceania: Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand. AFNs are systems of producing and distributing local, organic, and fair-trade foods through alternative means, such as farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) schemes, direct-to-consumer sales, farm stands, and u-pick operations (Goodman and Goodman 2009). In contrast, the industrial agro-food system is defined by all the activities and institutions involved in growing, processing, distributing, and consuming food on a large scale, generally via a centralized system. It's a complex network that includes farming, transportation, supermarkets, and even regulatory bodies. This system is usually dominated and controlled by large corporations, which have significant influence over how food is produced and sold. These corporations often prioritize efficiency, profit, and large-scale production (Natural Resources Defense Council 2020). AFNs interrupt power relations to work against the capitalist system's concept of economies of scale as a desirable achievement to increase profits. Instead they work in opposition to the violence against and destruction of ecosystems, polluting practices of industrial agriculture, and firmly against genetic engineering, exploitative labor practices, and large-scale automation of agriculture and other food system components. Although all kinds of people work within and use AFNs, they appeal to women in particular because they provide a deliberative space of engagement and a form of resistance to the industrial agro-food system. They do so by addressing specific situated concerns—intersectional lived experiences—and as such can provide meaningful input for transformative food system projects and policies to support those changes.

The everyday practices of gender roles impact the processes of establishing and maintaining AFNs. Women play a critical role in creating alternative flows of power and material in everyday life, and their resistance motivates community-based

action. AFNs create counterflows of food, knowledge, nourishment, and community and can create intersectional spaces—that is, spaces where experiences, stories, identities, knowledge, and relationships foster potential food system transformation in order to build wealth that is not necessarily based on money or profits, but on a generational wealth of knowledge and understanding of the food system. As island ecosystems in the context of climate change, Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand provide key spaces to research how women belonging to different communities, including but not limited to Indigenous and marginalized communities (which are often one and the same), contribute to these processes of resistance and disrupt the settler colonial project by creating alternative visions in the struggles around land, sovereignty, and self-determination.

This book is based on interviews with woman-identifying farmers, food system professionals, public health advocates, nutritionists, food bank and farmer cooperative managers, community organizers working on agricultural and food-justice issues, educators, farmers' union leaders, food waste diversion experts, self-described "compost nerds," as well as farmers' market organizers and vendors. By weaving together and reflecting on these women's narratives, this book considers how AFNs are shaped by women's political, economic, and social experiences as they are altered by gender, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, and class. Using an intersectional feminist political ecology (FPE) framework, it considers how these elements of identity are co-constituted by ecological systems. Intersectionality can be understood as a process or an analytical tool (Collins and Bilge 2020) that focuses on understanding interlocking systems of oppression like politico-legal institutional frameworks, as Patricia Hill Collins explains in her seminal work (1990) on intersectionality. Moreover, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) asserts that treating identities as a sum of discrete parts cannot, by definition, either reflect the wholeness of a person, nor can it lead to justice when encountering or interacting with institutional systems. Much of the authoritative literature on intersectionality—from its inception with Crenshaw and Hill Collins's work, to more recent treatments of the topic—still tends to focus on race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity not just as intersecting social identity categories, but with more of a focus on structural inequality and systemic oppression. Crenshaw explained in a *Vox* interview that the "point of intersectionality is to make room for 'more advocacy and remedial practices' to create a more egalitarian system" (Coaston 2019). For example, in a more recent definition of intersectionality, Cho et al. (2013) explain that it consists of three different moves: investigating intersectional dynamics, understanding intersectionality in terms of theory and methodology, and using an intersectional lens for political projects through praxis. While they are not

mutually exclusive, this book mostly employs the third perspective. As Cho et al. suggest, intersectionality should be used for what it does, rather than what it is. I expand this definition of intersectionality to include human interaction with nature through food systems and the inclusion of ecosystems as non-human actors as well as Indigenous knowledge systems as told through stories and practiced through actions. This book highlights the voices of Indigenous and marginalized women and their allies through interviews that emphasize Indigenous cosmology, which values knowledge and being as connected. There is a focus on inequality as a through line of intersectionality, rather than only focusing on overlapping social identities to understand multiple modes of subordination that are more than just the sum of their parts. Using qualitative research analysis, I draw out emergent themes within the stories told to me by woman-identifying food system actors in Oceania, examining their perspectives on food system inequality and how those views push them to seek out AFNs to serve not only their shifting and relational identities, but also foster food system transformation.

Some of the narratives in the interviews conducted for this book include essentializing claims about women's "inherent" capacity for food system work. These claims risk adding to women's already overburdened roles—a risk that disproportionately affects women of color or women with fewer material resources. How can an intersectional FPE analysis intervene to answer Juanita Sundberg's (2017) call for "supporting broader feminist political objectives for more equitable and ecologically viable futures" (18)? The book demonstrates these women's potential to shape new models of agricultural communities and provides examples for other geographic and settler colonial contexts. The goal is to create a space through combined stories to build a framework for food system transformation.

In gathering stories of alternative and more environmentally and socially just food systems, this book focuses on the following questions: How does women's leadership in these sites of resistance work in opposition to the settler colonial context? How do Indigenous and marginalized women and their allies shape that resistance? How do Indigenous understandings of ecosystems and Indigenous agricultural and food system practices, both ancient and modern, influence these forms of resistance? A rich literature on AFNs exists, but little of it addresses women's roles from intersectional perspectives. In fact, much of it comes from a deficit perspective, which replicates colonial understandings of Indigenous communities. It invokes the language of resilience, strength, and the capacity to recover from adversity. Access to food should not be considered a concept rooted in adversity; it is a basic need for survival. Nor is it a concept; it is the tangible intake of material substance into the human body, at the very least, and

in the best-case scenario, it should also be good, clean, fair, and pleasurable. Rather than focusing on deficits, we should be asking the following questions: What are a community's capacities? What are its assets? What are the available tools to improve food systems? We should focus on what we have, and how we can make the best use of those assets to serve our communities.

Understanding what works in AFNs can help us find ways to scale up projects to benefit greater numbers of communities. In recent decades, critiques of AFNs as elitist have emerged (Guthman 2008; Allen 2004), highlighting that AFNs tend to reach people who already have the means to avail themselves of their resources. CSAs, farmers' markets, farm stands, and even chain health food stores tend to be more expensive than grocery stores or large retailers like Walmart and Costco. How do we retool AFNs to serve both economically and structurally disadvantaged marginalized communities? How do we reshape some of the food system structures that might already be in place to reflect community needs? The women interviewed for this book describe experiences that are not the same, but they are shared. They tell stories of struggle, but also stories of beauty and joy in thriving communities. As an ally, it is my responsibility to amplify the voices of women, from formerly unknown workers to well-known leaders in the food system, in these settler colonial spaces as reflections of resistance within the food system.

To change the relatively limited narrative of food justice, we must not only change the questions we are asking but contextualize them differently. How does intersectional FPE change our understanding of feminist food justice? How do Indigenous women resist various socioeconomic and sociocultural oppressions and those of the industrial agro-food system? These questions have different answers in different geographic, political, social, and economic contexts, but can nonetheless provide useful models for best practices in other island contexts. This book helps to fill a substantial gap in the agro-food literature and feminist scholarship on areas of structural issues and social change by (1) using Oceania as an example of a settler colonial system that disrupted a working independent Indigenous food system (among the many other things it disrupted); and (2) by examining how women leaders there have responded to that disruption by contributing to their own burgeoning alternative food movements.

Existing Scholarship on Alternative Food Networks

The classic literature on AFNs examines how AFNs resist the industrial agro-food system by encouraging the ethical production and consumption of locally grown, organic, and fair-trade foods (Allen 2004; Goodman and Goodman 2009; Hinrichs 2003).

Venn et al. (2006) identify multiple frameworks for AFNs, but the diversity of AFNs has grown even larger since the publication of their article. AFNs are not without their critics. By definition, their agricultural and value-added products tend to be more expensive due to the higher costs of production (it stands to reason that products made or grown with fairly compensated labor will cost more than those produced with exploited labor) and thus are only available to people who are able to pay higher prices. Critics of AFNs tend to focus on how they exclude people of color, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities (Hinrichs 2003; DeLind 2010; Hinrichs and Kremer 2002; Slocum 2007; Guthman 2011; Allen 2004; Edwards-Jones 2010; Rudolph and McLachlan 2013). Research on AFNs that engages with marginalized communities focuses on the supply side, such as getting more healthy food into underserved communities, rather than the racialized injustices that have produced food insecurity in the first place (Alkon and Norgaard 2009). In this same literature, AFNs in the settler colonial context traditionally focus on food deserts rather than community assets, leading some within marginalized communities to resent researchers wanting to exploit their problems (Meyer 2019) for academic gain. The goal is, instead, to focus on giving support to community so they can receive the help *they* want, rather than enduring unwanted "help" that outsiders believe they need.

Some of the literature on AFNs examines women's roles in agricultural households (Whatmore 1991; Lobao and Meyer 1995; Sachs 1996; Meares 1997; Chiappe and Flora 1998; Trauger 2004; Cairns et al. 2010; Castellano 2016). Allen and Sachs (1992) insist on avoiding essentializing women in agriculture and AFNs due to their roles as mothers. However, Spivak's (Danius, Jonsson, and Spivak 1993) strategic essentialism offers a way out of this theoretical impasse by advancing the pragmatic idea of using essentialism as a *temporary* strategy to achieve certain political goals. This move aligns with the intersectional praxis approach to use gender as one of many social categories and is effective in moving the political project of food system transformation forward. The literature on women in AFNs also focuses on their role as consumers. Women tend to be more likely to shop at farmers' markets, to subscribe to CSAs, and to engage in reflexive consumption (DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Little et al. 2009; Cairns et al. 2010). Chiappe and Flora (1998) demonstrate that women's involvement in sustainable agriculture tends to create communities of practice that increase a sense of place and foster relationships through a commitment to social change based around food and agriculture. However, these practices tend to be available to women with privilege because they require significant material resources. Women who work long hours at low-waged jobs may not have time to shop at

farmers' markets at set times, buy unprocessed whole foods, or prepare meals from scratch for their families. Although they may be inclined to do so, there are only so many hours in the day, and the ease of shopping at the supermarket at any hour or consuming fast food or easily reheated takeaway is a likely reality. In fact, Castellano (2015, 2016) argues that the time required for AFN food provisioning and cooking, let alone growing food, increases the amount of care work women do for their families and can contribute to a triple burden—on top of working outside the home and the mental and physical load of caring for their families. Although encouraging women to grow food at home or in community gardens benefits individuals, their families, and local communities, and is a critical component of the (re)production of AFNs (Castellano 2016), it also places an additional burden on their lives and reduces the amount of time women can spend on other pursuits.

In its focus on women within farm families and women as consumers, the existing research on AFNs posits a direct relationship between farms and consumers. In the last few decades, AFNs have come to involve much more complex networked connections. In addition, much of the AFN literature focuses either on production (Goodman and DuPuis 2002) or consumption (DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Little et al. 2009; Cairns et al. 2010), paying little attention to the systemic factors that contribute to continued inequality in AFNs. This book engages women as leaders; rather than essentializing their gender, it rethinks their roles as care providers in and out of the home. It focuses on women's leadership in creating and maintaining AFNs that work in specific communities and with specific characteristics throughout Oceania. Island ecosystems in the region demonstrate how closed systems work and how human relationships with food systems and the natural world shape AFNs.

Since Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma* hit the mainstream in 2006, terms like "organic," "local," "ethical," and "fair trade," are routinely used by people making food choices based on health concerns and interest in environmental justice, increasing attention to AFNs. Indeed, "consumers who prioritize local foods tend to be concerned with a broader social and environmental mission, expressing concern for farmers, workers, animal welfare, or rebuilding communities" (Adams and Salois 2010; Bean and Sharp 2011, cited in Castellano 2015, 465–466). Participating in AFNs leads to what Nigh and Cabañas (2015) call reflexive consumption: "direct, face-to-face relationships in local markets [that] allows the recognition on both sides of the realities and necessities each party confronts" (322). In some places, governments have encouraged AFNs through policy and legislation. For example, the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC)

in France indicates a particular region's "*terroir*," or "taste of place" (330). While this is generally applied to how the natural environment, soil, geography, and climactic conditions affect the flavor of grapes for winemaking, it has expanded its applicability to many other food products, including cheese, and even vegetables (Bosco and Joassart-Marcelli 2018; Barber 2015). This emphasis on regionality and local production and consumption allows AFNs to thrive with state assistance and enables various actors to create community and solidarity within AFNs. Nigh and Cabañas (2015) show that there is increased interest in environmental concerns and sustainable agricultural practices, as well as social and economic justice for farmers on the part of government. In addition, many non-governmental organizations are pushing for food system changes and food sovereignty. La Via Campesina, a global peasants' rights organization fighting for both of these goals, identifies five specific points:

> (1) ensuring peasant access to agricultural inputs like land and seeds; (2) nurturing diversified, locally appropriate agricultural practices; (3) protecting and promoting local markets for the products of peasant agriculture; (4) ensuring all citizens' rights to have healthy, locally produced food; and (5) promoting peasants' right to full participation in setting agricultural policy. (Aguayo and Latta 2015, 400)

While much of La Via Campesina's work occurs in the global South, these food sovereignty goals based on AFNs are key to achieving food system change. Their lessons are valid for the context of Oceania in systemic support for AFNs.

Political Engagement and Food Sovereignty

The literature on AFNs proposes two alternatives for defining food sovereignty. The first is intentionally vague, so as to enable communities to define what food sovereignty means for them (Park et al. 2015). In this framework, food sovereignty, which focuses on the control of the means of production, stands in bold contrast to "food security," which focuses on availability and access. In fact, food sovereignty "puts the dominant agro-industrial model in question and converts food into a broader site of political engagement" (see, e.g., Wittman et al. 2010; cited in Aguayo and Latta 2015, 400). This view of political engagement as going beyond individual consumer choice is an important nexus of food system change. Wiebe and Wipf assert that "food sovereignty, thus, contrasts strongly with food security and its supply-side emphasis, a construction that, in turn, generally

ignores how power relations determine favoured production, distribution, and consumption patterns within a dominant food system that promotes high-input, intensive production methods" (Wiebe and Wipf [61] as cited in Rudolph and McLachlan 2013, 1080). Food sovereignty holds further implications for Indigenous people that are relevant to this project.

Another definition of food sovereignty is more detailed. Shattuck et al. (2015) rely on the original 2007 La Via Campesina's Declaration of Nyéléni to assert that food sovereignty is "the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (422). They identify inherent tensions within the food sovereignty movement. For example, it is difficult to reconcile the interests of smallholder farmers with those of landless (often migrant or seasonal) rural workers, or the emphasis on providing fair prices for farmers with the needs of poor urban consumers for affordable (but clean and fair) food. As Agarwal (2014) has noted, family farms, especially in the global South, are ripe spaces for imposing and reproducing patriarchal practices due to long-standing cultural traditions. Finally, discussions about food sovereignty in the global South do not always align with those of urban communities in the United States organizing around racial justice. These debates are ongoing and very real—and they represent issues that need to be addressed within this growing movement (Shattuck et al. 2015).

Despite its limitations, the food sovereignty discourse, especially within Indigenous communities, remains an important site of political resistance to the global industrial agro-food system and its capitalist focus on profits over people and the environment. These neoliberal economic policies are entrenched within a neocolonial context. Colonialism continues to have lasting impacts on Indigenous peoples everywhere, and the industrial agro-food system is itself a colonizing force that has reshaped the control of agricultural production and formation of dependent food system relationships. Indigenous scholars have argued that the notion of the "postcolonial" is inherently false and urge us to instead decolonize our diets (Esquibel and Calvo 2013). The loss of land and the decimation of Indigenous peoples through diseases and health disparities are still very real and ongoing effects of the colonial project. There is nothing over and done with about it. Kari Marie Norgaard (2019) critiques the "sudden" discovery within academia of the Anthropocene as a term that acknowledges humans' deleterious impact on the environment, when "an understanding of this relationship between humans and the natural world is only new to some" (230). Native peoples have known for thousands of years that their role within nature is part of a larger web of connections that work together to co-constitute the natural world. Norgaard also argues

that "just as Indigenous people experience the absence of traditional foods as a mechanism of forced assimilation, the reorganization of the natural world violently restricts potential gender identities, expressions, and arrangements" (2019, 194). Yet, it is within this complicated context that women have become leaders within the food sovereignty movement. Resistance to these systemic structures of colonial oppression takes many forms. For example, in Chile, the feminist values found in certain organizations meant to support farmers exist in contrast with the traditional values and gender relations in many Mapuche communities (Aguayo and Latta 2015). In their study on Māori women leading sustainable food systems in Aotearoa New Zealand, Stein et al. (2018) detail numerous instances of women's leadership in community, culture, family, and health and find that women's leadership is inherent in self-determination through food sovereignty.

Leadership of Indigenous Women

The ancestral land tenure system in many, though not all, Indigenous communities involves stewardship rather than ownership of land. Land stewardship in Native communities often refers to the land as an ancestor and provides a framework for an ethic of care. Seeing the land as a family member supports the view of humans living *within* ecosystems rather than extracting resources from the land. It encourages humans to avoid doing harm to our relatives, because we cannot separate the well-being of land from the well-being of its inhabitants as active participants in the ecosystem. Creation stories in many Indigenous cultures highlight the bonds between Indigenous peoples and their ancestors, which can take the form of geographic features, specific places, as well as fauna and flora. Women's varied roles in these systems provide nourishment and abundance to the people living within them. Kinship to ancestral lands fosters a sense of responsibility to care for natural resources for future generations (Stein et al. 2018). It also focuses on passing down knowledge to young people so as to maintain the legacy of leadership among younger women. The Indigenous Women's Network (2009) articulated the need to transfer knowledge to new generations: "We need to be able to pass on and acquire new skills and knowledge to new leaders—particularly young women—through our traditional ways of sharing orally and demonstrating in a safe and nurturing atmosphere" (365). If the oft-cited evidence that educating women in developing nations is key to reducing global poverty is accurate (Ban 2013), then it stands to reason that sharing knowledge and skills regarding caring for natural resources with younger generations of

women would have a similarly positive effect on protecting lands and soil to grow food sustainably (McIntyre et al. 2009).

The narrative behind the restoration of ancestral abundance is one of plenty and is embodied in the everyday practices of producing and consuming culturally appropriate foods. For example, specific crops are grown as a resistance to colonialism and the global agro-food system. In Hawai‘i, growing and consuming *kalo* (taro) is an act of resistance to the importation of ultra-processed foods from the continent. In Aotearoa New Zealand, *kūmara* (sweet potato) has a long history of cultivation by Māori and acts as a challenge to industrial food. As it does with *criollo maize* (native corn) in Mexico, this work

> presents an indirect but powerful challenge to the state's assumption that integration into a global agricultural economy is inherently desirable…the campesinos of the Amecameca Valley continue to articulate an alternative geopolitical logic; pursuing food security by sowing their fields, feeding their families, and nourishing their local markets with criollo maize. (Mulaney 2014, 424)

Women often carry out the work of growing and finding alternative ways to sell maize and kalo, and they express pride in the Indigenous values and stories behind the crops. Whereas kalo might embody resistance in Hawaiian culture, it is fair to say that *‘āina* is the organizing core social unit. It is inextricably linked to origin stories and an inherent part of any Native Hawaiian genealogy. ‘Āina is often loosely translated as "land" in English, but its true meaning is "that which feeds." While this is not a *kaona*, or hidden meaning of the word, this distinction is significant to understanding the larger interwoven meaning of the word and concept in Native Hawaiian culture, agriculture, sustainability, and the relationality of land, nature, food, and people. One Hawaiian proverb states: *He ali‘i ka ‘āina,* [the land is chief,] *he kauwā ke kanaka*, [man is its servant]. This *‘ōlelo no‘eau* (proverb or poetical saying) is a reminder of the *kuleana* (responsibility, privilege, small parcel of land) we have as people to serve ‘āina, as well as the reassurance that in return ‘āina will care for, feed, and provide for our needs (kaainamomona.org 2025). Unlike the word "*terroir*," "*‘āina* is not a culinary term, but one that reflects Indigenous Hawaiian culture and the land as sustenance" (Costa and Besio 2011, 845, emphasis in original). The meaning of the word "land" in Māori resides in a similar connected relationship between humans and land. Indeed, "the Māori word for land, whenua, also means placenta. All life is seen as being born from the womb of Papatūānuku, under the sea…and tangata whenua—literally, people of the land—are those who have authority in a particular place" (Te Ahukaramū 2007b).

In this framework, women's leadership is crucial in sustainable agriculture practices because it fosters equitable distribution of resources as well as information. People who can do, must do—this is a tenet of people who have been oppressed and who have found hope in educating future generations on the "good life" and passing on knowledge that would otherwise have been lost. That sense of duty may unfairly add yet another responsibility to the many obligations of those who are already oppressed in a variety of ways, but kuleana in Hawaiian culture is ingrained in Kanaka Maoli from a young age—be it duty to family (*'ohana*), community, land, place, or to one's people. The concept of kuleana might end up transforming Hawai'i's food system to benefit all Hawai'i residents.

Similar understandings of the world are found in origin stories from Aotearoa New Zealand, in which the people of the land (*tangata whenua* in Te Reo Māori—the Māori language) were born of Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father), thereby binding the people to nature and its care. This genealogy holds that people are descendants of the natural world and must care for their elders, and to move away from this responsibility is disrespectful and goes against custom. This is clearly a very different understanding of the relationship between nature and humans than the western version(s) with which many readers might be more familiar. In addition, in Aotearoa, women were valued members of their whānau (family). Ani Mikaere states that women "were affirmed and supported throughout their lives. The sharing of work among the whānau (family group) enabled women of child-bearing years to develop their strengths and expertise in a range of areas and to fulfil leadership roles" (2019, 9). The collaborative aspects of their work enabled them to thrive as full-fledged members of their families and within larger tribal associations. The colonizers, however, could not fathom the concept of these women as leaders and, as Tuhiwai Smith (2019) asserts, the Māori internalized the colonizers' perceptions of gender roles, to the long-term detriment of Māori women. Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand present a unique roadmap to resilience and sustainability to draw on as we look for modern solutions through women's stories.

Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality

This book uses a feminist political ecology (FPE) framework to structure its argument that women's leadership in AFNs, especially in the context of Oceania, allows us to meaningfully address the problems facing the global industrial agro-food system. FPE is useful in this context because it can be

placed in conversation with intersectionality and applied to the settler colonial environments of Oceania. Feminist analysis is integrated within a variety of politico-ecological issues, including sustainable agriculture. As Parker et al. argue, feminist food studies engage with intersectionality to open up "opportunities to deepen our understanding about social inequality and injustice within food systems. Moreover, an intersectional approach demands social change, which we know is needed more than ever given growing social inequalities and concerns about food security and food sovereignty" (2019, 5). Unlike ecofeminism, FPE avoids essentialist constructions of women's roles and draws on political economy and agro-ecological worldviews through the feminist practices of partial perspective and situated knowledges (Haraway 1998; Feldman and Welsh 1995). Ecofeminism's reliance on the biological determinism of women as being closer to nature, especially through the "Mother Earth" metaphor, essentializes women (D'Eaubonne 1974; Griffin 1978; Daly 1978; Shiva and Mies 1993). FPE does not rely on this problematic duality, and instead focuses on understanding the resilience of women's experiences with, and in, the natural world. Lemke and Delormier argue that FPE goes beyond previous feminist analyses by including a political economy approach to uncover the root causes of inequality and power relations (2017). Furthermore, FPE's focus on intersectionality, though imperfect due to its limited focus on race (Mollet and Faria 2013) and indigeneity (Parker et al. 2019), helps to address where marginal identities reside and intersect in order to uncover power dynamics in approaches to food sovereignty. This view clearly supports centering food system inequality as a throughline within intersectional discourse. Indeed, Raj Patel argues that the food sovereignty space has the potential to address deep power inequalities based on sexism, racism, patriarchy, and class power (2013). In fact, a respondent in Stein et al.'s (2018) study of Māori women and community gardens asserted that "self-determination is also leadership" (151). This combination of intersectional situated knowledges and environmental issues also enables the analysis of the neocolonial power dynamics prevalent throughout Oceania.

The wide variety of women's daily lives and experiences are a focus of analysis in FPE. Moreover, understanding "political, economic, cultural and ecological processes as intersectional" (Mulaney 2014, 415) enables us to provide a deeper analysis of women's voices and provide solutions to alternative futures (Rochelau and Nirmal 2014). FPE, especially theoretical interpretations of postcolonial voices, shows women as actors in the ecological and political space, complete with agency and self-determination (Agarwal 1994; Shiva 1988), and values heterogeneity in the lived experiences of women in these ecological

spaces (Mohanty 1984), especially in the global South. As Sundberg shows, FPE "demonstrates that political ecological stories are implicated in power relations and researchers risk reproducing gender inequalities if and when women are left out as agents of environmental change" (2017, 8). Indeed, Rochelau et al.'s 1996 edited volume *Feminist Political Ecology* outlines a call for research that analyzes gendered environmental rights and responsibilities, and specifically gendered environmental risks. Following Julier's call to name and practice how we believe we should sustain ourselves and others, we need to do it "loudly and with political power" (2019, 28). I am not simply "adding women and stirring" here to use the often-cited accusation leveled at feminist work. Rather, this book's goal is to ensure that women's voices are front and center.

By paying attention to the ways in which women talk about how gender, race, class, age, and—most importantly—relationships intersect within food systems and the natural world, we make room for their stories to be heard, for their diverse lived experiences of working toward sustainable food systems in various ways to be valued, and for their strength and their work to be celebrated. Turning AFN research on its axis through an intersectional praxis analysis disrupts assumptions about what counts as legitimate food system transformation narratives through epistemological interventions or what Sundberg calls "otherwise neglected dimensions of environmental engagements" (2017, 9). Narratives detailing specific work in community contexts to transform the current food systems that do not serve marginalized peoples help focus our attention on these neglected dimensions. Stories provide the gift of context. So what do these stories tell us about how women are recasting the food system to serve community? How can we apply these lived experiences and concrete actions to a variety of community contexts to improve healthy food access for everyone, not just those with the economic means to purchase healthy foods? How can we value and study Indigenous agricultural systems to rethink our own scientific understanding of sustainable agriculture? How is this work relevant throughout Oceania, yet also applicable in other settler colonial spaces? How does an expansive understanding of intersectional praxis enable us to examine how interlocking systems can work to uplift instead of oppress?

A white western feminist bias would argue that the women in this study are doing the difficult work they are doing because they want to change their respective food systems for their own individual purposes. However, many of the women I talked story with explained that they were involved with these issues because of their roles as mothers, and if the system changed as a result of their work, so much the better. As Leonie Pihama argues in relation to

Māori women, they "live on the cutting edge" (2019, 61). Initially, I thought their gendered responsibilities as mothers would detract from the efficacy and impact of the analysis, but in fact, it seems that my biases got the better of me. In many Indigenous cultures in Oceania, communal responsibility, and responsibility to one's family, broadly defined, is a driving factor for change. Understanding family as community and community as family is part of a larger cultural phenomenon that my own European immigrant background didn't prepare me to recognize as important. *Mana Wāhine Māori*, which exists "irrespective, and often in spite of, the existence of Western feminist networks," helps me address this bias (Pihama 2019, 62). In addition, FPE tries to encompass an intersectional framework that includes an analysis of the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people. It is not my place nor my intention to speak *for* these women, but rather work to amplify their voices in order to show the relationships and connections between their experiences. This bird's-eye view of alternative food system work in Oceania considers these connections to generate food system change. The point is to show how activism around food issues can constitute tangible political achievements and foster a potential political awakening through humility and shared relational experiences and knowledges. It is critical to reflect on the notion of an historic-*ally* honest process—to figure out how to be an ally within a history of dispossession in a settler colonial context, and to actively work to undo centuries of silencing without essentializing Indigenous or marginalized women or communities to deconstruct and unsettle that colonial narrative. In order to support Indigenous women, and all the women doing this important work, this project aims to connect with others to explore stories of successes, challenges, opportunities, difficulties, and joy.

Feminist Food Justice

In neoliberal and neocolonial contexts, feminist food justice has the potential to develop bottom-up approaches to food sovereignty and to reframe what feminist food justice encompasses. Sachs and Patel-Campillo (2014) focus on the scale of agricultural production because, they argue, the smaller the scale, the more likely it is that a woman is making decisions and doing the work, especially those within marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Situating social problems on the micro level (both on the production and the consumption side), however, risks blaming individuals, rather than revealing the "matrix of domination" as

defined by Patricia Hill Collins (1990). When our focus remains on micro-level injustices and/or remedies, larger actors such as government, corporations, and supra-national organizations tend to evade scrutiny. Deutsch (2011) argues that a market-based, consumer model relies on individual consumer behavior satisfaction and/or individual producer behavior as a solution, rather than making the necessary overall changes to the food system. Women end up stuck in the middle. Viewing the food system through this neoliberal lens results in an apolitical understanding of the market in which private enterprise and individual consumer behavior are meant to fix a broken food system, without any assistance from the players in control of the structural barriers. Collective action—through movement building within a feminist food justice framework that privileges intersectional analysis and engages in and with postcolonial resistance—is the way to achieve the goals of food system change.

The constant focus on the individual, especially the individual consumer, within our entrenched capitalist culture, is inherently incongruous with food system transformation. We can "vote with our forks" all day long, but until policy and legislative realities value the kind of agriculture that focuses on regenerative practices that leave land and soil better than before, and on implementing sustainable ways of growing and distributing our food, nothing will change. That said, the critique of this consumerist model of social change implicitly means that it is up to the state to legislate and make policy that will incentivize or mandate industry to change its focus away from the profit motive. In the two contexts discussed in this book, the state has not traditionally been a place to turn to for help. In fact, under colonialism, the state has been the entity committing violence against marginalized and Indigenous groups; "indigenous environmental activists coming from the perspective of colonialism tend to be very clear that the state is not an ally" (Norgaard 2019, 160) because, in their view, turning to the state for solutions can have unintended consequences. It is no wonder then, that many groups take matters into their own hands, starting nonprofit groups, businesses, or cooperatives to challenge the industrial agro-food system. Forming and maintaining communities of practice to solve problems can foster feminist food justice in these settler colonial spaces.

It is important to avoid overburdening women with additional roles within AFNs. For instance, Kuo and Peters (2017) found that organic-intensive areas tend to have more women at the helm and are more likely to be embedded within community through CSA programs or direct-to-consumer sales, which may mean additional work for women, even if they are successfully navigating AFNs. The focus of this book goes beyond agricultural production to consider

a variety of components that make up AFNs, but likewise relies on women's voices to shape the narrative: community food systems need women to succeed, not only for the women to flourish but for the entire community to reimagine and implement food system change. Kneen (2011) argues that all of these small changes "look innocuous: lots of small initiatives, networked together—in other words, women's work—but [they are] crafting a whole new system, piece by piece" (12). Both the talk story sessions and my engagement with the scholarship demonstrate that these changes alone are not enough and must be coupled with structural change to the food system supported by government and other large players. However, in looking at all of these small actions holistically, we can assess their impact. In fact, the current industrial food system has become so broken that engaging with it through AFNs is not just resistance; it is an act of political engagement. As George McKay writes, "[g]rowing a garden has become—at least potentially—an act of resistance. But it's not simply a gesture of refusal. It's a positive act. It's praxis" (2011, 10). The garden and, on a larger scale, regenerative and sustainable agriculture, are spaces for biodiversity and growth, food system alterity, and justice.

Methods: Talking Story

Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. I conducted initial talk story sessions with several AFN female leaders, and, at the end of each session, I asked them for names of women who might be willing to participate and have a different perspectives to add to the project. In this way, an initial interview pool of five women leaders in AFNs led to an eventual sample of twenty-nine interviewees in Hawai‘i and nineteen interviewees in Aotearoa New Zealand who talked story with me about varying roles in their respective AFNs. The average length of the talk story sessions was about an hour, with one lasting almost three hours and five lasting only thirty minutes. Interviews were recorded using the Voice Memo function on my iPhone, then transcribed using a transcription software service called Trint, checked by me once for accuracy, then provided to each of the respondents to determine whether the transcribed interviews reflected their intent, and finally coded using NVivo 12 software.

In February of 2019, I started casting a wide net for interviewees for this project. I spent some time talking story to twenty-nine women throughout Hawai‘i. Although I did not travel to the neighbor islands, and most of the interviews were on O‘ahu, I did talk story with several women on Maui, Hawai‘i Island,

and Moloka‘i, mostly on the phone or using FaceTime. A connection to Kaua‘i proved elusive, and I was not able to interview anyone there. I have been teaching a class entitled “Politics of Food” since 2007 that focuses heavily on service-learning. Given this long history of working with a variety of community partners, I formed relationships with many of the people who work to bring about change in the Hawai‘i food system. Through this initial access, I was able to ask each interviewee if she could think of anyone else I should speak with in her networks. The women were extremely forthcoming. It is a small, connected community, and each member values her network and what it brings to food system change. The last of these interviews was conducted in February 2020, just prior to my departure for Aotearoa New Zealand. By the time I reached the twentieth or so talk story session, when I asked who else I should interview, quite a few of the names had been mentioned many times and had either already been interviewed or had politely declined. Of the twenty-nine women I interviewed in Hawai‘i, seven were Native Hawaiian, eight were local women of color, and fourteen were white. Geographically, twenty-one were based on O‘ahu where I live as well, two were on Maui, five were on Hawai‘i Island, and one was located on Moloka‘i.

The talk story sessions were conducted wherever the interviewees felt comfortable, or it was convenient for them. Several discussions were held at coffee shops or places of work, others on farms, in restaurants, over the phone, over Zoom, or at the respondents’ homes. As with any qualitative research, there were interruptions, problems with recordings, and extraneous discussions—about children, families, or common acquaintances. Whenever the occasion presented itself, I purchased the coffee, lunch, or other value-added product being sold by the respondents. I also tried to bring my own agricultural products to share with them, depending on the seasonal availability in my yard—avocados, key limes, starfruit, mangoes, lychee, etc. In other cases, I was encouraged to take as much food as I could carry from a recent harvest and was told in no uncertain terms that I would not be allowed to refuse. The gifts I received were not just material—food to take home to my family—but included knowledge, time, conversation, laughter, kindness, and aloha.

In February 2020, I set out from Auckland in a camper van with a couple of contact names from Gary Maunakea-Forth, co-founder of MA‘O Farms on O‘ahu, who was born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. I drove 1,937 kilometers (about 1,203 miles) in just under three weeks, talking story with women along the way while doing a big loop, first heading north of Auckland, and then south to Wellington on the southern tip of the North Island along the West Coast and then back up the center of the island and briefly to the East Coast. I had already

done two video chats with women in Aotearoa New Zealand prior to leaving: one woman was due to deliver a baby very soon and another insisted it would be too far for me to drive to the Far North to interview just her. When I left Hawai‘i, I had three guaranteed talk story sessions scheduled. By the time I left Aotearoa New Zealand, I had spoken with fourteen additional women and had two video chats planned for after my return due to scheduling and geographical conflicts. Of the nineteen women I spoke with in Aotearoa New Zealand, all except for one were located on the North Island, eight were Māori, and eleven were white. The number of women—and more importantly the variety among them and the depth of our conversations—went beyond my wildest expectations, thanks largely to one woman whom I came to think of as my fairy godmother of research in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kate Cherrington arranged interviews with key women in the Hua Parakore system along the way. She kept in touch with me every day, making sure I was all right, finding safe places to sleep, helping me gauge routes and distances throughout my trip, and paying for a night's hotel stay in Wellington that had unlimited hot water, a welcome respite from the coin-operated showers I had been taking at all the campgrounds along the way. Without her assistance, this part of the project would never have included the voices of Māori leaders in AFNs and Indigenous food systems. She is a force to be reckoned with in her own right, creating and facilitating countless educational and other programs by and for Māori folks, and ensuring that Māori values are included in other educational and governmental initiatives. Her connections with leading practitioners in Aoetaroa New Zealand's AFNs are what enabled me to avoid the "drop in" researcher dilemma. She helped me foster relationships with women in her networks, and for that I will be forever grateful. Talking story with the Aotearoa New Zealand respondents was transformative for me. I acknowledge this transformation to note how the power of sharing knowledge and experiences through collaborative methodologies increases the feminist objectives of this project.

Before analyzing the data, I sent the raw transcripts (only slightly edited for clarity and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and Te Reo Māori spelling) to the respondents, asked them if I had correctly transcribed their intent and facts, and if they wanted to provide any edits or make changes. Out of forty-eight respondents, about a quarter took me up on the offer of editing, and eight made significant changes to their narratives. In these cases, I analyzed the updated edited narratives to reflect the ways in which the women wanted to portray their experiences and their work. I considered the interviews separately first, which was useful in its own way, and then compiled them to explore the relationships among the stories. This analysis revealed the major takeaway from this project: although there

was some significant overlap in their narratives and motivations, women in two different geographical contexts, with two different colonial oppressors, came up with two different types of responses toward food system transformation. This project positions women as the knowledge holders, not just as agents of change in the moment. They are repositories of stories and hidden meanings, and their willingness to share their work was a significant gift to me and to the research process. Reflecting on their stories fosters inspiration to create connections, networks, and maintain relationships.

My intentional use of qualitative methods, namely culturally appropriate "talk story" sessions with respondents, brings attention to nuances of race, class, ethnicity, and other sociodemographic factors as they may impact gender roles in AFNs and respondents' perception of the problems inherent within the current food system and their ideas for solutions (Stein et al. 2018). Talking story is different than structured or semi-structured interviews because it is rooted in oral history and storytelling traditions throughout Oceania. It is basically akin to chit-chatting and ensuring that all participants feel they are in a safe space to share their *mana'o* (knowledge). In Native Hawaiian and Māori cultures, information and history are passed down to the next generations orally and through stories (Kodama-Nishimoto et al. 1996). This process identifies anyone speaking as a potential teacher and values ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi as a language laden with knowledge. Similarly, in Aotearoa New Zealand, one interviewee named Hineāmaru Ropati, a teacher in the Hua Parakore system at the Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, explained that she learned through storytelling and through tasting food and physical experiences, which led to her politicization in the food sovereignty space. From a western perspective, Hua Parakore is an Indigenous organic certification program, but from a Māori perspective, it refers to cultural practices that produce food in balance with nature and in turn strengthens Māori cultural practices. Ropati realized that she was looking at the historical journey of Māori in relation to the history and stories of Indigenous peoples everywhere. She asked herself whether Indigenous values existed around the globe. Her answer was that food is the currency with which those values are passed on (Ropati 2020), not only from generation to generation, but are re-learned within the generation that has lost its access to that Indigenous ecological knowledge. This epistemological discovery through storytelling powerfully connects many of the interviewees' narratives. Due to the relatively small sample size, the results of this study are not intended to be generalizable, but they can offer insights into how certain groups of people, in this case women with different racial, class, and geographic identities, may perceive problems, along with their ideas for solutions (Stein et al. 2018). The

data do not necessarily fit a predetermined hypothesis and, by respecting and valuing the messiness of the storytelling process, moments of discovery emerge in the women's narratives.

Talking story with the respondents enabled the stories to emerge as a way of honoring the genealogy of the story content and the respondents' work. The stories provided by the interviewees in this project are specific to the food system and not all are from Indigenous sources. Some are from marginalized communities, while other are from women who work with marginalized communities through large educational or health care institutions. Most did see the problematic influence of the colonial legacies in Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand—and offered both historical perspectives and solutions to work toward successful and sustainable AFNs. The most important piece of the research paradigm is to ensure cross-dissemination of the research findings and the participants' insights on food system change and alterity in various parts of Oceania. The respondents believe they are obligated to future generations of leaders to learn from failed outcomes and wanted to share their experiences and recognize past mistakes to avoid repeating them. To this end, they all agreed to be identified by name and organization (if applicable) in the book. Identifying the challenges and opportunities faced by different groups of women leaders within AFNs and sharing information among them has the potential to foster new networks of relationality and communication.

Positionality and Practice

Feminist methods commonly focus on women's lived experiences and situated knowledges. Following Allen and Sachs's 2007 call for a feminist food studies, this book expands that focus to the lived experiences of women within AFNs. Intersectional FPE and feminist food justice frameworks intentionally include "analytical power with which to link daily livelihood strategies to broad patterns of inequality and food insecurity. Feminist theory thus provides particularly useful tools with which to tackle the preeminent political question of what kind of natures get produced, how, and by whom" (Mulaney 2014, 408–409). Using Mā'awe Pono, an Indigenous methodological approach developed by Kū Kahakalau (2019), this research maintains attention on building *pono* (righteous) and meaningful relationships among the researcher and the participants of the study. As Kari Marie Norgaard explains of her work in Karuk country, also known as the Klamath Basin in California, "to say that there is an uneasy relationship between tribal communities and academics would be an understatement" (2019, 241). That

statement rings just as true for the relationships between Kanaka Maoli, Māori, and academics in Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand respectively. Norgaard (2019) explains that qualitative research in academia tends toward anonymity, but Indigenous peoples *should* be recognized as knowledge holders (instead of research "subjects") and traditional ecological knowledge valued as intellectual property, especially given its potential impact on our future agricultural practices in the face of the climate crisis.

Understanding Mā‘awe Pono's impact on data-collection methods is critical to collaboratively finding solutions to current issues and restoring justice to the food system. Kahakalau's methodological framework encourages

> researchers to allow passion, compassion, and comprehension to mingle, the unity of intellect, emotion, and spirit known as lōkahi, becomes transparent… For Hawaiians, the notion of neutrality is incomprehensible, because Hawaiians believe that we bring our mana, or personal power to every situation and every task. This includes all our strengths: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual…In fact, it is this personal mana, or spiritual power, contributed by the researchers to the research process, that gives Mā‘awe Pono the power to be a change agent, a beacon of hope for indigenous communities to solve our own problems. (2019, 3)

Using Mā‘awe Pono clearly benefits this study and its findings and dovetails with the intersectional praxis perspective of the book. As a (non-Indigenous) researcher, I find it necessary to approach the methodological framework with respect, humility, and grace. In conjunction with feminist methodology, Mā‘awe Pono bridges a divide that tends to remain unacknowledged in mainstream feminist literature. Researchers go into certain communities, extract knowledge through interviews with research "subjects," write them up, and get professional/academic credit for the work. No matter how well-intentioned the research projects might be, in settler colonial contexts, this process reproduces the precise extractive practices the research is trying to avoid. Mā‘awe Pono's focus on a political commitment to the process of decolonization and the support of Indigenous peoples everywhere (Kahakalau 2019) runs through my research process and imbues my own partial perspective.

This book is a result of research conducted in 2019 and the very beginning of 2020—right before the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic in two geographic locations in Oceania. Further research is needed to determine the pandemic's impacts on the respondents' attitudes toward their roles in their respective food

systems. In Hawai‘i, where I spent the initial months of self-quarantine and isolation, societal interest in locally grown food grew exponentially during the pandemic. Farm Link Hawai‘i, a CSA organization on O‘ahu, reported that they provided locally grown produce from around 200 accounts/households per week prior to the pandemic, and grew to 600 accounts per week, with more than 1,500 people on a waiting list that had to be carefully managed so as not to overwhelm their software system (Barreca, personal communication, 2020). Hawai‘i imports over 80% of its food (Lyte 2021), whereas Aotearoa New Zealand imports less than 20% (Olsen 2020), simply because there is physical space to grow more food for local consumption and a long-standing ethic of rural living that values working the land that derives from both the Māori and the largely Scottish, English, and Irish early settlers (*Pākehā*) whose descendants now own and work the land. However, much of the land there is geared toward large mono-cropping corporate farms and growing food, especially intensive dairy production, for export. The political response to COVID-19 was different in both places, with Aotearoa New Zealand's prime minister at the time, Jacinda Ardern, closing the country down early in a severe lockdown. Hawai‘i followed suit shortly after, though not quite as rigorously. Although this book is not about the effects of the pandemic on the food system, it is worth noting that the pandemic may change our food systems in the long- and short-term—and hopefully for the better.

As Adrienne Rich famously said in 1986, "[b]egin with the material." I want to center and uplift the narratives here, the content of the stories the interviewees were gracious enough to share with me, but also with the material bodies in these stories, which require nourishment of both body and soul. We need good, healthy food to feed ourselves, but the work to get that food into our bodies and those of our families and communities is often taxing and difficult for community and for spirit, though also incredibly rewarding. The Slow Food movement calls this "good, clean, and fair food." The women in this study, and thousands of others in their own communities, make access to this food possible on a daily basis. The implications go beyond individual bodies and reflect changing societal priorities: away from fast, cheap food and toward prioritizing the health of people and the environment.

These processes do not occur in a vacuum. The relationships we make and maintain with our food and with each other are mediated by our own locations (both spatial and metaphorical) within sites of struggle and privilege, and by our access (or lack thereof) to healthcare and wellness, justice, and environments free of pollution and degradation. I started writing this book during what we now know to be a lengthy global pandemic, the height of the Black Lives Matter movement

in 2020, and one of the most contentious election years the United States had ever seen. The stakes are high everywhere we look. If we learn anything from these events, it is that without justice, nothing else really matters. Understanding what justice means in different contexts is key: the right not to be killed by police simply for being Black, the rights of Indigenous peoples everywhere to reclaim their ancestral lands and traditions, the rights of people to be free of the various kinds of oppressions they face. I am also writing this as a white, privileged academic woman in Hawai‘i, a settler colonial space, who is trying to navigate what it means to be an ally and to constantly renegotiate relationships to support justice and struggles for marginalized people everywhere. Recognizing my privilege, it is my responsibility to use it toward a beneficial purpose and to amplify the voices of women doing the important work of changing their respective food systems. It is certainly not my place, nor my intention, to "speak for others," as Linda Alcoff (1991) has so aptly named this particular problem, but I can use my position of privilege to move the project of reshaping the food system forward.

Getting healthy food to people everywhere while ensuring environmental justice from an intersectional, feminist food justice perspective is not an easy goal to achieve, and it requires a wholesale shift in our systems of food production, distribution, and consumption. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that re-localizing our food systems should be a first order priority, especially throughout Oceania. Shipping interruptions threaten the ability to import food to Hawai‘i and to export food from Aotearoa New Zealand, with enormous impacts on their respective economies. Hawai‘i's incapacity to grow our own food is ill-advised and risky. If mechanisms to import food fail, it is widely reported that Hawai‘i only has enough fresh food stored to feed its population for about five days. The figure increases to about ten days if we consider shelf-stable foods (Terrell 2021; McGregor 2018). Currently, the centralized food system—owned and operated by industrial-agriculture capitalists through agglomerated multinational corporations—is doing communities everywhere a disservice. This is nothing new, but it is worth noting that during the pandemic, many people had the time to think about where their food comes from and to consider whether they have the capacity to grow and cook it themselves. At the height of quarantine in 2020, I learned from an emergency trip to a chain hardware store that there was no packaged soil available on the island of O‘ahu, and I was told that there would be none for the foreseeable future. So many people were trying to learn to grow their own food that they had bought all of the soil. People took this time to learn about growing food for their own consumption or about supporting their local farmers through home deliveries of CSA boxes. These are huge steps toward lessening

our dependency on imported foods. However, this context of the "new normal" of pandemic living was by definition temporary, and we must figure out how to maintain this interest in the long term. Institutional and government support will be key to sustaining these positive changes through just and equitable means.

Telling someone else's story implies one has some kind of power over it—that of the omniscient researcher, interpreting someone else's tale. However, the point here is power *with*, not power *over*. I have been partially embedded in (some of) these worlds for almost two decades, and through those relationships and associations, I discovered new (to me) spaces wherein women are doing interesting and different work in and around the food system. Meeting in informal settings enabled us to come together to share stories and to exchange experiences and knowledge. I am *in* the research, *in* the narrative, either because our experiences are somewhat familiar or because we discover we have common bonds—children of the same age, similar interests outside of work, curiosity about growing certain crops, or even a shared appreciation for certain kinds of foods. My presence as an interviewer is perceptible in the stories. Although I asked no specific questions and didn't have a structured or even unstructured interview schedule, I did ask all the participants to tell me about their work. In her work on the partition of India, Butalia quotes Roland Barthes and says she is suspicious of what Barthes calls stories that "seem to write themselves" (2000, 15). Likewise, it is not my intention to make it seem like these stories came out of nowhere. They are political statements on the status quo of the current food system as much as they show a commitment to changing it—both on the part of the respondents and myself. I cannot remove myself from the discussion; indeed, I have no plans to do so. Clearly, there is intention behind soliciting these stories, just as there is intention behind asking specific people to share them. The stories themselves are not objective, nor do their tellers purport to be. The point is to center the women telling these stories and their work in food system change. It is not about "giving" them voice—their voices have been there—but about making sure we listen to what they are saying by making space for those voices to be heard. Although I provide interpretation and analysis of the narratives presented, I do so *alongside* the voices of the women talking story. My analysis certainly does not supersede the stories; rather, the goal is to enhance them by highlighting their connections and to enable an intersectional feminist interpretation of the nuanced experiences of women within food systems in Oceania to come to the fore.

Telling someone else's story can also be akin to taking it and making it one's own. It is not my intention to reproduce the colonizing effects of taking what's not mine. Rather, my intent is to amplify the stories and tell them *with* the

interviewees, to disseminate their knowledge to that others may replicate their successes and learn from their challenges. Butalia calls the implications of this work as revealing the "broader political realities" (2000, 71). She is referring to the stories of India's partition from the perspective of "bit players," but her focus on small stories within the context of larger political and social movements is similar to this book's intent. I attempt to weave together stories and the politics of food systems change within neocolonial contexts in Oceania by centering the stories instead of the grand political gestures and frequently meaningless rhetoric around greenwashed local food production. This work asks, how do real people effect real food system change? How can we learn from them and each other? How does this work—which is so often seen as "women's work" because it relates to food until it becomes more public through (mostly male) chefs and/or politicians—affect society at large? Listening to women's voices enables us to focus on the implications of this work on real people, rather than talking about contexts and obstacles so large that they seem insurmountable.

This project is a necessary first step toward creating networks of relationships in food systems across Oceania. What works in one geographic, political, and neocolonial context may not necessarily work in another, but there are lessons to be learned through the stories told. These stories reflect the future food systems we want to see and work toward, not just the current political context of our respective food systems. That future will enable us to create food systems that work for everyone, regardless of gender, race, class, ethnicity, or geographic location. Focusing on women's voices shows that women are among the most dedicated in doing the work of food system change, but also tend to be among the most affected by broken food systems everywhere.

Food Stories as Counterdiscourse

This project advances a new vision of feminist food studies (Allen and Sachs 2007; Avakian and Haber 2006) and responds particularly to Kimura's suggestion that a feminist reading of women's leadership in alternative food networks holds AFNs "accountable for [their] social justice implications and distributive effects" (Kimura 2012, 211). This intersectional approach to food systems stretches the narratives around AFNs to include women's voices and shared wisdom and contributes to tending the soil and the bodies and minds of community. Nancy Fraser refers to the role of "counterpublics…to invent and circulate counterdiscourses…and to help expand discursive spaces" (1990, 67). Paying attention to

the role of intersectionality in the respondents' stories broadens our understanding of the food systems in Hawai'i and Aotearoa and highlights the multiple modes of subordination currently present in the industrialized agro-food system. The path forward depends on increased participation in and leadership by women in community-based food systems. This is made clear by both the similarities and differences between Hawai'i and Aotearoa; thus, the chapters are organized thematically, not geographically, in order to highlight the connections among the stories' perspectives. Both spaces—colonized by the United States and the British empires respectively—indicate that regardless of the trajectory of response, resistance within the food system requires centering not just gender, but race, class, and indigeneity, among other socially constructed realities. It is not enough for food system activists to encourage individuals to make changes in their consumption patterns; rather, it is imperative to contextualize food system transformation through the diverse experiences of women working and living within AFNs. These responses have been shaped by neocolonial processes in different ways, and there are spaces of both oppression and privilege within AFNs. Norgaard (2019) articulated that academia, and the discipline of sociology in particular, does a disservice to Native communities by ignoring their voices and their centuries of experiences with nature and ecological practices, based on Indigenous scientific knowledge passed down through generations. Moreover, she identifies a lack of "the sociological imagination" as one reason for this oversight. In the chapters that follow, I call for the *political imagination* to embrace these voices and uplift these experiences as pragmatic solutions to the problems we face in our food systems and related issues like climate change. Ignoring Native voices does not just do a disservice to Native communities but leaves us less capable of understanding the modern moment, because we exclude voices that already have answers to the questions we are asking—and have likely had these answers for centuries.

Intersectional praxis within FPE enables an understanding of varied settler colonial contexts and the ways different groups negotiate and respond to the ongoing violence of the colonial project that continues to separate agriculture from community. The grounded theory emerging from the narratives demonstrates the application of themes and concepts through relational intersectional perspectives, which Collins and Bilge (2020) indicate as a desirable outcome for burgeoning social justice movements. Anti-colonialism actively resists the neocolonial project and its sustained marginalization of certain groups of people. The anti-colonial project is not *just* about reclaiming land in a larger Land Back

movement as outlined by Indigenous peoples everywhere seeking not only to secure land, but also pushing for self-determination, environmental sustainability, and economic viability to build "collective power and collective liberation" (Belfi and Sandiford 2021). The Red Nation's *Red New Deal* states that "having control over our ancestral territories is vital to our ability to care for them and is a generations-long pathway to true sustainability. Only when land is restored and returned, can we begin to rebuild our economies and our nations with true sovereignty" (2021). This project aims to center that work in both Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand, as it also requires forming, strengthening, and maintaining community relationships and increasing the focus on acknowledging and resisting the colonial processes embedded within our everyday lives.

Land is a part of Indigenous communities' connections with their ancestors, and responsibility for and kinship to land form a crucial set of networked relationships that create community in the first place. The potential for food system change occurs when agency expresses resistance. The question is, which acts of resistance best benefit the larger community? Reinvigorating Indigenous values about the importance of land as it relates to genealogy is one of these very powerful measures. This esteem is typically community held, and its attrition in the neocolonial context weakens a community's bond to the land and, by extension, its community members. Communities that focus on renewing these Indigenous values have begun to reestablish community-led food sovereignty, as in the case of MA'O Farms on the Leeward Coast of O'ahu, for example, or the different Hua Parakore spaces in Aotearoa. Counterdiscourses to unequal access to good, clean, and fair food rise up within these spaces to challenge the global industrialized agro-food system in order to serve marginalized communities. Although Daniel Immerwahr argues that "empire is held not by taking over land, but by the market" (2019, 315), the capitalist system has cemented itself in place by taking over both land and market and creating neocolonial spaces everywhere. Given my argument for centering gender and other socially constructed realities, it is not surprising that ensuring forward momentum appears to fall on the backs of women. However, adding yet another load to women's work is not the goal of this project. I argue that it is instead imperative to understand how these spaces have created openings for resistance and opportunities to disrupt a monolithic capitalist system intent on crushing any opposition to its intrinsic goals of domination. This is key to changing the current state of the global industrial agro-food system.

Themes and Chapter Overviews

This book is organized thematically to showcase the stories of women working toward food system transformation in Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand. Instead of using a comparative geographic perspective to organize the book, I chose to weave distinct themes I identified in the stories within each chapter, going back and forth between Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand depending on where the stories led me. Chapters 1 and 2 establish how land-use policy affects the food system in each context. Then, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 each focus in on a distinct theme. In Chapter 6, I take a step back and undertake a comparative analysis of community engagement within food systems at work in each place. Each chapter moves between narratives from Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand, such that connections and differences between these two contexts emerge.

More specifically, Chapter 1 addresses environmental components of sustainable agriculture through the lens of decolonizing agriculture and food systems in Oceania. Land-use zoning and the pressures of the housing development industry in Hawai‘i have set up a battle for the future of land and the potential for sustainable regional community food systems. In Aotearoa New Zealand, conventional farming constitutes a large majority of the agricultural sector, both for local consumption and for export. There are, of course, plenty of organic farmers, as well as people focused on regenerative and agroecological practices to feed their families and communities. Indeed, they co-constitute the AFN movement in Aotearoa New Zealand. If there is any chance for food sovereignty in the context of the climate crisis in the island environments of Hawai‘i or Aotearoa New Zealand, regenerative and sustainable agriculture must become priorities. Policy and legislative practice’s continued focus on the settler colonial model of large plantation agriculture is a detriment to food system transformation. Although the land scarcity model is less pronounced in Aotearoa than it is in Hawai‘i, the fact that many Kanaka Maoli and Māori people still do not have access to land reinforces the neocolonial relationship that Indigenous peoples have with their respective settler colonial states. In both cases, the genealogy of Indigenous people is tied to the land, and acknowledging the violence done to their ancestors—including the theft of the land itself, appropriation, commodification, and industrialized agriculture—would allow everyone to take a step back and listen to the stories and voices of women working in this space to implement change.

Chapter 2 uses the lens of traditional ecological knowledge and Indigenous agricultural systems to narrow the focus on the relationship between land and

environment. I highlight a particular emphasis on stewardship and natural resource management and consider how an intersectional approach supports the argument for combining Indigenous and traditional farming practices. The soils of Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand have been depleted by decades of intensive industrial mono-cropping. Nourishing the soil means nourishing people and reconceptualizing our understanding of the importance of regenerating soils to foster sustainable agriculture and what it means to environmental health and justice is key.

Chapter 3 examines the relationship between education and social justice within the food system in Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand. Hawai‘i’s focus on educating children through farm-to-school programs is not unique, and there are many similar efforts underway on the continent through the Department of Education and a multitude of nonprofit organizations. The farm-to-school emphasis is not nearly as pronounced in Aotearoa New Zealand, and nonprofit organizations are essentially missing from the conversation surrounding food systems transformation there. Instead, for example, the Hua Parakore organization’s focus is on education, especially of Māori women, to take information and skills about culturally appropriate gardening and cooking home to their families and communities—that is, to use Māori culture as a way to address food system injustices and access. Māori knowledge passed down from generations about sustainable agriculture is being woven into a variety of programs to disseminate information about the value of traditional ecological knowledge and its importance in combating climate change. Through hard work based on exhaustive qualitative research by educators there, Māori culture is being included in the educational system to the extent that a system of culturally-based educational centers has been created to focus on regenerating the Māori food system in service to both Māori communities and society at large. The idea is that the more people know how to grow their own culturally appropriate food, the less dependent they will be on take-out shops and fast food options for their nutritional intake. Even non-Māori descendants of European settler Pākehā women who work in this field take the Māori worldview of sustainable agriculture and connectedness with nature into account in their programs and narratives.

Chapter 4 focuses on public and community nutrition and health by examining culturally appropriate foods as a way to pursue food sovereignty and the public health impacts of decolonizing our diets. There are clearly connections between good nutrition and sustainable environmental practices. This chapter views these connections through the lens of cultural identity, which identifies food as culture. I examine school lunch programs in several ways: as educational

spaces for children to understand the importance of healthy local foods in their diets; as examples of gendered attitudes toward cooking and its relationship to public, community, and family health; and as spaces where the state, through its administration of programs, can promote food system transformation. To supplement the analysis of school lunch, this chapter examines the connection between nutrition, environmental sustainability, and food as a crucial component of cultural identity.

Chapter 5 raises questions about sustainable meat- and fish-derived protein production and consumption through an intersectional lens, interrogating how gender, race, and class, among other analytic categories, interact to create spaces for women to engage with what has traditionally been considered masculine work, such as dairying, fishing, ranching, and butchering. These alternative (rather than industrial) efforts to produce and consume protein (meat, fish, and dairy) in Hawai‘i and Aotearoa New Zealand are exemplary in that they occur in closed ecosystems and use innovative models to address environmental issues such as invasive species like axis deer, overfishing, and sustainable dairy production. This chapter considers these components of diets in relation to the gendered (and raced, and classed) aspects of other diet options, such as vegan or vegetarian diets, which are themselves often part of AFNs.

Chapter 6 shows the relationships and emergent themes in stories from the two separate geographic contexts and examines how they can enhance and support each other. Although there are clear differences and variations, likely due to the different colonial contexts as well as the political and societal values in each space, the similarities are striking and worthy of attention. This chapter identifies policy implications for each location, and highlights women’s leadership roles in pushing for food system transformation through community engagement.

A running theme throughout the narratives challenges the standard definition of “success” within the global capitalist system. The respondents offer alternatives and explain how to foster food system resilience in the face of the climate crisis. The takeaways from this project have the potential to help us change our food systems for the benefit of all.