

## **New Ways of Working and Organization: Alternative Agrifood Movements and Agrifood Researchers\***

*William H. Friedland*

*Department of Community Studies*

*University of California, Santa Cruz*

**ABSTRACT** The remarkable growth of alternative agrifood movements—organics, fair trade, localism, Slow Food, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, food security, food safety, food sovereignty, anti-genetically modified organisms, animal welfare, and others—and their attraction to younger academic scholars offer a unique opportunity to explore ways to strengthen such movements utilizing the structural position and distinctive skills of academic researchers. The various movements constitute the major resource; sympathetic academic researchers are a second resource. Mobilizing these two resources in a new organization, the Alternative Agrifood Researchers without Borders, has the potential to contribute to strengthening the movements and their original progressive orientations and advancing civil society. To be effective, a new organization should parallel existing structures in state and market but focus on progressive goals aimed at reducing inequalities and expanding political and social participation. In building a body of literature usable for comparative analysis, the goal should be more effective alternative agrifood movements providing better services to broader global constituencies while simultaneously improving academic research quality. I draw on three social theories—resource mobilization, strategic intervention, and structural parallelism—to encourage careful revision of established academic paradigms.

### **Introduction**

During April and May 1989, a major qualitative shift began in the way American consumers related to food purchases; for the first time a dramatic increase took place in the demand for organic foods. There had been years-long increases in organic food sales but growth was essentially minuscule, never approaching 1 percent of total food sales.

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Early 1989 marked the breakthrough, the crystallizing moment when organics broke through the 1 percent ceiling and set organics growth on a pattern of an annual increase of approximately 20 percent.

Although there had existed a variety of agriculture and food (“agrifood”) alternative movements prior to 1989, their social and economic significance in U.S. food consumption remained close to inconsequential. It would be inaccurate to credit the growth of organics with the encouragement of the numbers of agrifood movements currently found in the United States; organics simply encapsulates the way in which agrifood movements have burgeoned in the past several decades. These movements include fair trade, Slow Food, localism (and related movements such as farmers’ markets, farm-to-school programs, and community-supported agriculture), food security, food sovereignty, food safety, animal welfare, anti-genetically modified organisms, and others, all of which have grown, albeit highly variably.<sup>1</sup>

Social movements develop when people experience uncertainties over aspects of their lives. If they resonate with many people, movements can become socially significant. They may have existed for some time but their growth marks a change in the way people relate to their messages. For agrifood movements, 1989 marked that transition moment. Three well-publicized national events beginning in March contributed to the explosive growth of organic food demand in the United States and the alternative agrifood movements (AAMs).

The first event, on March 13, occurred when two U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspectors found two table grape berries containing cyanide on a shipload of fresh Chilean grapes that had arrived in the

<sup>1</sup> As is frequently the case with social movements, it is difficult to get reliable quantitative measures of size, growth, and significance; that remains true for the alternative agrifood movements in North America, let alone globally. In the United States, organics leaped into approximately 20 percent annual growth beginning in 1989 (Friedland 2008a: 54–57; Howard and Allen 2010: 245) and the Organic Consumer Association “represents over 850,000 members, subscribers, and volunteers” (<http://www.organicconsumers.org/aboutus.cfm>). There are several measures for localism. The number of farmers’ markets jumped from 1,755 to 5,274 between 1994 and 2009 (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateS&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=WFMFarmersMarketGrowth&description=Farmers%20Market%20Growth&acct=frmrdirpkt>). Community-supported agriculture, which began in the United States with only two projects in 1986, has grown with estimates of one thousand to several thousand producing units supplying an estimated 270,000 households during the growing season (<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/csa.html>). Farm-to-school projects have grown “from a handful in the late 1990’s . . . to 400 in 2004, 1,000 in 2007, and over 2,000 in 2010” (<http://www.farmtoschool.org/aboutus.php>). Food-security issues preoccupy many organizations including the Community Food Security Coalition, an organization of “almost 300 organizations” dedicated to prioritizing food policy at local levels. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals claims 2 million members (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PETA>).

United States. The discovery led to the removal and destruction of all Chilean grapes from supermarket shelves, trucks en route with deliveries, ships bringing grapes from Chile, and back to vineyards in Chile. The second event several days later exposed Alar nationally as a carcinogen and produced a disastrous collapse of fresh apple sales within days. The two food scares were buttressed by a third event on March 25 with the grounding of the *Exxon Valdez* and the spill of 10.8 million gallons of petroleum in waters off Alaska.<sup>2</sup>

The combination of these three events contributed to an accelerated growth of numerous agrifood movements to the point that several agrifood researchers have considered these movements to constitute *the* social movement of our time (Allen 2004; Morgan, Marsden, and Murdoch 2006).<sup>3</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, organics grew in minuscule increments for years, always remaining below 1 percent of national consumption. As the grapes and Alar stories broke, *The Packer*, a fresh-produce trade newspaper, ran a headline on “Organics: Hot Demand, Short Supply” and reported that at California Certified Organic Farmers, an associa-

<sup>2</sup> Compared to other oil spills, Exxon Valdez was relatively minor. Prince William Sound in Alaska was a fertile fishing ground for commercial fishermen and a significant food source for the indigenous population. The spill killed millions of fish and countless numbers of water birds and marine mammals and wrought disastrous effects on the lives of many people. It generated years of litigation between Exxon and others. The spill had only modest effects on the nation’s food supply but was a powerful enhancer of environmental consciousness. The national press covered all three stories: the *New York Times* archive on the events includes 23 articles and one editorial on the cyanide-coated grapes (March 14–May 19) and 31 articles and one editorial on Alar (February 2–November 29). *Times* reports on the Exxon Valdez began on March 27, with publications almost daily, 65 articles to the end of May, in the immediate aftermath of the spill and the beginning of the cleanup. As the litigation began and continued until the end of 1989, a total of 117 articles, letters, and commentary were published during 1989. Reportage continued with trials and appeals from 1990 until January 18, 2010, with an additional 221 articles appearing in the *Times* archive.

<sup>3</sup> Allen’s first chapter examines public concerns about food safety and related problems in the United States and the formation of movements “to construct alternatives to the conventional practices, discourses, and institutions of the contemporary agrifood system” (1). Allen identifies two major social movements: sustainable agriculture and community food security (1–2). Morgan et al., with a focus on the United Kingdom and Europe (with one chapter on California), examine trends in agrifood such as worries over food safety, the global scale of agrifood production systems, and the pressures for localism, citing the expansion of public concerns about food delivery systems. They note, as a result of the many U.K. food scares (46–52), the creation of the Food Standards Agency, bringing consumers to the fore, and the closure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in 2000 and 2001. These two “radical reforms in the system of food governance” were “long overdue” to protect consumers who retained “suspicions” about the food system (48–49). Eliminating an enormous state bureaucracy is a good indicator of concerned public pressure. Similar food movement restructuring was also taking place in Western Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and elsewhere.

tion of organic growers, telephones were “ringing off the hook” (“Organics”, 1989) from conventional growers seeking information on how to convert to organics. Thus began the organics growth approximating 20 percent annually that followed; over the next decade, it also led to the massive entry of conventional growers into organics. And while each AAM had its own distinct history and trajectory, all began to grow.

The burgeoning of the AAMs, now more than two decades old, has been phenomenal; movements, in a variety of ways, initially sought to distinguish themselves from conventional agriculture and food systems but, as some proved market-successful, several became dominated by relatively small numbers of large-scale transnational corporations.

AAM growth has also been accompanied by the expansion of civil-society protests against globalization. In venue after venue, urban gatherings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) or national leaders of the G-7, -8, -11, and -20 have stimulated protests necessitating the raising of barricades to keep national leaders from hearing the protesters. This article considers how social researchers can support and strengthen organizations in the AAMs and civil society.<sup>4</sup>

The reaction to conventional industrial agrifood systems has been driven by a variety of structural forces, one of which has been a growing awareness of the unreliability of conventional systems in providing safe and healthy food. The sheer number of recent food scares in the United States and elsewhere is phenomenal (Friedland 2008b): millions of pounds of tainted ground beef and peanut butter have been recalled and destroyed, and even California organic vegetables have been recalled. The United Kingdom has required the destruction of hundreds of thousands of cattle with mad cow and foot-and-mouth diseases. In June 2008, massive demonstrations drew hundreds of thousands to the streets in Seoul, Korea, protesting South Korea’s president opening the country to American beef because of the weak U.S. inspection system.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The AAMs and civil-society movement represent separate but vaguely related entities that share similar social goals. The AAMs seek various solutions to the increasing size and economic concentration occurring globally, primarily related to agriculture and food. The progressive civil-society organizations and movements have been reacting against the devolution of decision making to small, secretive technical specialists in, for example, the WTO. The AAMs, as a cluster of social movements, have an ongoing life centered on very specific goals; progressive civil-society organizations function primarily at local levels but mobilize sizable demonstrations at meetings of the WTO and the various Groups of 7, 8, etc. This article focuses on the AAMs rather than civil society; applications of the Alternative Agrifood Researchers without Borders (AARWB) approach to working within civil-society organizations involve a variant strategy that cannot be examined within the compass of the article.

<sup>5</sup> Creekstone, a U.S. meatpacker, anxious to export beef to Asia, was prohibited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture from installing equipment for inspection for bovine

As the AAMs continue to grow they have been characterized by several distinct patterns:

- Separation. Each movement tends to have a sharply defined focus with activists only rarely manifesting observable interest in the other movements.
- Smallness. Individual movements are composed mostly of small numbers of committed activists and/or economic stakeholders. While some include organizations that attract members supporting the movement's focus, their numbers can be very variable, many "members" are rarely active, and committed staff members usually carry the burden of organizational responsibilities. Each movement occasionally, if sporadically, can mobilize sympathizers for public actions.
- Varying degrees of success. Organics proved so successful that it attracted transnational agribusiness corporations, initiating a process of cooptation, transmutation, and subversion (usually referred to as "conventionalization" or "mainstreaming").<sup>6</sup> Others have not been as successful; community-supported agriculture, for example, has shown considerable growth but currently appears to have leveled off in its attraction. Fair trade has been partially successful in the United States—much more so in Europe—but at a cost of allowing "greenwashing" by transnational corporations that have engendered internal disagreements within the fair trade movement.
- Attracting the interest of social researchers. The various movements have attracted social researchers so that the literatures on specific movements have grown significantly. This research reveals several movement deficiencies: a reluctance or failure to be open to other movements and contrib-

spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) to ensure that no animal with mad cow disease would be exported through its plant (McNeil 2004). Creekstone sued to be able to administer the test; a brief notice four years later in the *New York Times* on August 30, 2008, reported that the suit had been rejected ([http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/30/business/30briefs-APPELLATEPAN\\_BRF.html?\\_r=1&sq=Creekstone&st=cse&scp=3&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/30/business/30briefs-APPELLATEPAN_BRF.html?_r=1&sq=Creekstone&st=cse&scp=3&pagewanted=print)). Mad cow is the popular name for the fatal disease known generically as spongiform encephalopathy; when occurring in cattle it is called BSE and in humans Creutzfeld-Jakob disease.

<sup>6</sup> AAM literature has grown significantly for the two most successful movements, organics and fair trade. For organics see Guthman (2004); for fair trade see Reynolds, Murray, and Wilkinson (2007) and Hutchens (2009). Most AAMs began their lives with transformational orientations and ideologies. As some became successful, the tendency toward conventionalization took over. See, for example, Belasco (1989) and Kamp (2006:360–62).

ute to mutual growth and support, and a deficiency of comparative analysis in which the strengths or weaknesses of any individual movement can inform the strategies of other movements.

The growing AAMs have generated a sizable literature mostly by younger social scientists. The literature growth offers opportunities for the development of closer relations between movements and academics in which the latter's traditional subjects of analysis can potentially lead to better academic research as well as research output with greater utility for the movements. Most movements do the research they feel necessary on their own, drawing on academic sympathizers only occasionally rather than sustaining continuing relationships. This article argues that movements and academic researchers can mutually benefit from continuing relationships instead of following the traditional research patterns of "drop in, research, drop out." Can closer relationships be sustained, producing academically legitimate research output while simultaneously producing research output useful to the AAMs?

The article projects a form of organization of knowledge production aimed at strengthening the AAMs (with a possible future orientation toward civil society) because of the disappointments with state and market to resolve, cope, or deal with food problems that millions experience in their everyday lives.<sup>7</sup>

If the numbers of food scares provide a driving force for the rise to the AAMs, yet another crisis of even greater magnitude must be confronted that will probably reshape the lives of hundreds of millions with which nation-states and global and national markets have failed to cope: global warming and the energy crisis.

Food crises have helped create and shape the AAMs and there is now an opportunity to remedy some of their deficiencies. To accomplish this, those concerned with food crises and the implications of global warming should seek new ways of organizing our research to avoid individuation and isolation so that our research can contribute to the growth and strengthening of the AAMs and civil society.

The analysis begins with an argument for the formation of a new network of progressive agrifood researchers. Modeled on the Harvard Business School, the Alternative Agrifood Researchers without Borders

<sup>7</sup> Food safety is a central issue mobilizing consumption decisions of varying populations in modern industrial societies. There are, of course, many other bases for the involvement of people in movements oriented to social change—injustices to farmworkers, small and middle-sized farmers, rural communities, and environment—each one of them meaningful to different segments of the population. Food safety, in contrast, affects us all.

(AARWB) consists of a network of progressive agrifood researchers willing to exchange doctoral students, drawing on available technology to utilize expertise of network members. This is followed by a section urging the adaptation of network members to a rapidly changing world, which begins with an examination of the Weberian concept of value neutrality while focusing on the utility of defining a new role of researcher-activist, and also examines the resources available to sustain this new way of working. This is followed by a consideration of the way the AARWB will operate before moving to a consideration of the three theoretical bases for the new organizational format: resource mobilization, strategic intervention, and structural parallelism. A concluding section alerts academicians to the care that must be taken in evolving the researcher-activist role within the framework of modern universities.

### **Projecting a Goal for Alternative Agrifood Researchers**

That there are agrifood researchers interested in becoming *activist* researchers suggests moving in a new research direction, toward the Alternative Agrifood Researchers without Borders. Although, as noted, originally modeled on the Harvard Business School, the AARWB is more akin to an (Un)Harvard (Un)Business School.<sup>8</sup> The object is to fit the AARWB appropriately with the AAMs, bringing agrifood researchers with a wide variety of interests, commitments, and expertise in universities and academic disciplines around the world into contact with the AAMs. I argue that academicians should embrace a new role: researcher-activist.

The AARWB requires a different structure and purpose from the Harvard Business School (HBS) (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard\\_Business\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Business_School)). HBS physically aggregates scholar-researchers dedicated to making businesses more efficient and expanding the capacities of managers. Its faculty works in an elite university, researching successes and failures of businesses. Their operating methodology involves generating case studies but their physical aggregation means that they have opportunities to compare and contrast their subject matter in an ongoing fashion; HBS has built an impressive cumulative comparative frame of reference.

Participating in agrifood scholarly meetings over three decades I have encountered hundreds of faculty and graduate students. Many of them are critical of established conventional agrifood arrangements, unsympathetic to the enormous control exercised by transnational corpora-

<sup>8</sup> In exploring the ideas in this article with colleagues the (Un) prefix was originally used. This proved to be humorous but unreflective of the serious purposes of the idea. AARWB emerged as the alternative.

tions, and sympathetic to small and medium-size farms in contrast to large agricultural operations or transnational agribusiness corporations. Many are also opposed to increasing inequality in the distribution of wealth and power nationally and transnationally and can be characterized as progressive. Some also support one or more of the AAMs. Graduate students interested in agrifood issues, in particular, often express interest in “doing something useful” with the AAMs.

Progressive academic agrifood researchers often do research akin to what HBS researchers do for businesses but have not yet developed an effective way of building a comparative body of knowledge oriented to strengthening the AAMs equivalent to what the HBS—and business schools generally—do for conventional businesses.

We live in a period in which state ideology at national and global levels is based on market fundamentalism and the minimization or elimination of state regulation. This has contributed to the growth of new movements as people attempt to protect themselves since neither state nor market adequately provide such protection. The retreat of the state has been such that people have begun to seek individual and collective ways to cope with environmental and food degradation (Szasz 2007). The approach of this article encourages alternativity since that has been the initiating motivation of early AAM formation, most of which began by rejecting the ways in which state and market operate and, at least initially, proposing alternative ways of working. Alternativity emphasizes the idea of not simply seeking to modify or reform state and market practices but to find alternative ways more amenable to peoples’ needs while resisting the co-optive capacities of large-scale corporate organizations.

The AARWB idea represents an application to the agrifood sector of Burawoy’s (2005) argument for public sociology. It insists on the importance of value neutrality in conducting research while acknowledging the value orientations of researchers that cannot be ignored. As occurs in some professional fields such as public health, social welfare, and business administration, it focuses on a specific area, alternative agrifood, and seeks to improve the state of the movements and organizations involved.

Most AAMs are less than three decades old and have already generated much interest by agrifood researchers, some of whom have made them the subject of research. The consequence has been a burgeoning literature, mostly academic in character and aimed at academic audiences. This literature is often AAM-sympathetic, usually including critical analysis of movement deficiencies. Most academic publications are intended for academic audiences or an “invisible college” of scholar-



researchers (Crane 1972). The AARWB should maintain this approach while simultaneously drawing closer to the AAMs to encourage their alternativity through bringing research capacities to bear on their issues.

### **Can Social Scientists Adapt to a Rapidly Changing World?**

The sheer rate of change in our world has become breathtaking. For decades, to take but one example, cheap gasoline encouraged increased commuting and the demand for larger and larger vehicles. It took an event such as U.S. gasoline prices going over \$4 a gallon in 2008 to gain most Americans' attention and bring a halt to vehicular obesity. Even this proved to be "small potatoes" compared to the crisis of global warming that has gained much attention and affects almost every institution and family in much of the globe.

While almost everyone will be negatively affected by such changes, what remains unclear is how profound the changes will be. If we limit the discussion to agrifood alone, a new set of issues has been precipitated; for example:

- We have become accustomed to consuming out-of-season fruits and vegetables available from other parts of the world. Given global warming and increased fuel costs for air and sea transport, can this continue? Will it limit accessibility of some foods because of increased food prices? What will the effects be in developing countries, and what consequences for small growers and workers in Third World food production geared to privileged northern markets?
- Localism recently took off just as organics did in 1989. What will the consequences be for local production of fruits and vegetables? Will corporate agribusinesses seek to incorporate localism through contract farming, reproducing their capture of organics?
- How will fair trade fare in the global regime? Will Starbucks, confronted by the increased costs of a couple of cents for a cup of coffee, increase the cost to customers in the same proportion that a cup costs now? What about bulky perishable commodities such as bananas?

These are issues agrifood researchers will need to systematically think about and to which we can bring our analytic and research skills to bear, on subjects where we have professional competence. This implies new forms of organization; for example, we need better and more effective

venues within which we can bring our collective experience and skills to the analysis of an unfolding world about which we are concerned but have not developed a collective voice.

The AARWB organizational format will require increased reflexivity about the roles of academicians. Professors will have to learn to relate to faculty and graduate students who are not physically proximate but can be in real-time face-to-face communication. Students and faculty will be working under new self-created conditions involving relationships unencumbered by the "normal" administrative regulations of our individual universities. Academicians will also have to encourage students to think not only about standard academic analyses but about issues raised in the course of research that can be useful to the AAM organization they are researching.

### **The Social Sciences and Value Neutrality**

New times, new issues, new social science approaches: our changing world suggests we should begin exploring a new relationship to social movements. Agrifood academics are often progressive to some degree but most have little or no experience with social movement activism, except perhaps in our research capacities. In the past when academics gravitated toward social movements, some found the pull toward activism compelling and left the academy for full-time activism. Others hovered on the fringe of movements but were unable to handle their organizational demands that contrasted with the "value neutrality" cherished by academic norms. Often this contributed to the phenomenon of "burnout."

In the social sciences, professional training since the 1930s emphasized the idea of value neutrality; recognizing that social science often carried value-laden orientations, universities emphasized Max Weber's conception of value-neutrality as an academic norm: "In the United States, the most striking aspect of Weber's institutionalization . . . has been his status as patron saint of 'value-neutrality,' whose champion he certainly was, albeit under different academic and political conditions" (Roth 1971:36).<sup>9</sup> This overlooked Weber's own political convictions manifested throughout his academic life (Roth 1971). Weber's emphasis

<sup>9</sup> This discussion of value neutrality involves the larger issue of science as objective and determinative. Over the past several decades critical views of scientific objectivity have been raised from within the sciences and social sciences that have included attacks from political Right and Left, feminists, and others. One thing became clear in these discussions: science no longer has the established hegemony it once did. Exploring this issue succinctly is not possible in this article but it is useful to be reminded of the tentativeness of scientific "certainty."

on neutrality was properly focused on the research process where, since he defined sociology as an empirical science, "this did not imply general political nonpartisanship. He tried to commit the [German Sociological Association] to studying 'what is, why something is the way it is, for what historical or social reasons'" (41). In the United States the emphasis on value neutrality tended to focus on neutrality as a generalized orientation toward the world. This remained the case until the radical upsurge of the 1960s (see especially Gouldner 1963).

In defining a distinctive role for academicians sympathetic to a social movement, we must clarify that researchers can do their best research when they hold their values as neutrally as possible while conducting research. This puts researchers in an anomalous position since movements tend to demand full commitment and the suppression of issues activists oppose exposing publicly. A new role has to be defined as supportive of movements while engaging in critical analysis, which movement participants might not consider "loyal."

### **Projecting a New Role of Researcher-Activist for Social Scientists**

One way to think about such a role utilizes the analysis of Gold (1958) in defining the role of participant-observer along a continuum of relationships, as "Participant/Participant-as-Observer/Observer-as-Participant/Observer." A similar continuum can be considered in the relationship between academic researchers and activists: "Activist/Activist-as-Researcher/Researcher-as-Activist/Researcher."

What is not explicitly stated in this continuum is that neither of the two middle locations will be fully academic in a traditional sense. That is, an activist might become somewhat academic by doing some teaching or research. There has probably been more movement of activists into academia than academicians into activism, although some hanker after ways to become more activist.

Graduate students, who probably will mostly occupy the researcher-as-activist role, should continue to define their research in terms of traditional academic requirements but also actively and consciously accomplish some research useful to the AAM they are researching. At least in the formative period until experience has been accumulated, this will require higher levels of reflexivity than have been expected while conducting field research, the delineation and conduct of such a role not having yet been legitimated within the modern academy.

### **Aiming at a New Way of Working**

At present many agrifood researchers are somewhat organized in what Diana Crane (1972) calls an "invisible college," a loose collection of

individuals scattered among dozens of universities, having no specific venue for professionally meeting, instead gathering in ad hoc fashion at various professional societies and publishing in a variety of journals. Bringing AAMs and agrifood researchers into closer relationships offers the opportunity of converting the existing agrifood *invisible college* into a *formal collegium*, the AARWB, composed of physically dispersed researchers functioning as if physically proximate, developing individual and collective research programs, sharing and supervising interested graduate students, working to develop research output aimed at two different audiences, our academic world and the AAMs.

This proposal does not suggest moving directly toward formal inter-university organization; we should begin by keeping things informal, much like the existing invisible college but gradually transforming it into a coherent formal structure aimed at supporting the AAMs, strengthening (where possible) civil society, and continuing and improving our normal research output. Producing some research useful to the AAMs could help break down barriers researchers sometimes find being "outsiders" to movements. This can possibly improve the *verstehen* (getting inside, understanding) that Weber saw as a fundamental methodology in conducting social research.

In our daily academic lives we are primarily oriented to our home departments and universities where the bulk of our interactions takes place and where we are continuously evaluated. While this orientation is perfectly natural, since departments and campuses are heavily engaged with managing curricula, we also do a considerable amount of intellectual work individually, defining our individual research programs, conducting research, and exposing the results through publication.

Some of us also engage in collective activities so that a *conscience collectif*, in the Durkheimian sense, emerges through publication and professional meetings. We participate in international/national/regional professional organizations such as the Research Committee 40 on Agriculture and Food of the International Sociological Association and the International Rural Sociological Association that assemble quadrennially, the Asociación Latinoamericana Sociología Rural, the Australian and New Zealand Agri-Food Research Network, the European Society for Rural Sociology, and the (U.S.) Rural Sociological Society, as well as in ad hoc gatherings on focused agrifood topics.

More conscious, deliberative, reflexive organization could take better advantage of changing circumstances. When monumental changes in agrifood are thrust upon us, we could develop the capacity to mobilize ourselves and resources to find opportunities rather than letting such opportunities pass or be undertaken by groups with more effective orga-

nizational structures. As an example, when the United Kingdom experienced the mad cow horror in 1996, all beef was removed from retail consumption within several days. More coherent organization might have made it possible to research how U.K. consumers reacted. The June 2008 demonstrations in South Korea were initiated by a mad cow threat and produced remarkable protest organization on a daily basis even as the International Rural Sociological Association was meeting in Seoul, an opportunity for social movement research that was bypassed.

### **What Are Our Resources?**

Our occupational location within universities provides us with two major resources: the existing alternative agrifood movements and our colleague agrifood researchers, some of whom are themselves, or through their students, connected to the AAMs.

Theoreticians and others often provide crystallizing ideas for the emergence of social movements but movements take on lives of their own. In Seattle, Genoa, and Cancun, for example, the action of large numbers of protestors got the attention of the participating ministers and media, rather than those of intellectuals writing critiques, not that those were unimportant. That attention has been so significant that world leaders can no longer meet in urban settings without erecting barricades and massing state forces to protect themselves or by moving meetings to remote locations such as a dead-end road in Canada's Rocky Mountains or remote Doha in Qatar.<sup>10</sup>

Alternative agrifood researchers are a second resource. I estimate the agrifood "invisible college" consists of between 150 and 250 scholar-researchers scattered over four continents, with participants concentrated in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, Japan, New Zealand, the

<sup>10</sup> Global meetings of the G-7, -8, etc., the WTO, and similar such conclaves have generated significant protests that have required the mobilization of thousands of control forces and a deliberate search for isolation where protestors can be kept at a distance. The *New York Times*, for example, noted that after the 2002 G-8 meeting in Canada, "Prime Minister Jean Chrétien of Canada, the host . . . said the decision to isolate the leaders at a mountain resort, where there was no chance that protestors could come within earshot, led to agreements on everything" (Sanger 2002). According to the Wikipedia entry on this meeting, the town was selected "because of its isolated location" with security augmented by F-18 jet fighters and helicopters and 5,000–7,000 police and military officers, costing Canadian taxpayers \$200 million ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/28th\\_G8\\_summit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/28th_G8_summit)). The Doha meeting was even more remote. Doha is the capital of peninsular Qatar, located in the Persian Gulf, which could control entry through visa requirements. As Vandana Shiva, a critic of WTO meetings, noted: "Doha was chosen as a venue to escape from popular response of citizens mobilizing on a large scale as they did in Seattle, Gothenburg, Genoa" (<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/article/209/43652.html>). The G-20 meeting in 2010 in urban Toronto cost almost \$1 billion for security (Austen 2010).

United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe, with a scattering elsewhere. The "college" is spread over several disciplines and professional societies.<sup>11</sup> Of this invisible college I estimate that at least half can be characterized as probable supporters of AAMs and variably "progressive" in their world views.

Not all these researchers necessarily consider themselves "progressive." This term is defined broadly as meaning: (1) we are dissatisfied with the growing unequal distribution of material resources between those at the bottom and top globally and nationally, a consequence of which is that the poor in every society are suffering increasing burdens; and (2) we see too many resources and power concentrating in large transnational corporations and believe societies should strive toward equalization in political involvement and decision making.

Like other invisible colleges, the agrifood cluster communicates erratically and sporadically. This is an artifact of two conditions: our spatial dispersion and our disciplinary dispersion. Unlike a formal entity such as the HBS, we are dispersed among many universities. Our disciplinary dispersion also affects us profoundly. Since disciplinary departments provide the organizational base for most universities, disciplinary affiliation is the primary basis for individual mobility. Most of us, therefore, attend our professional association's annual meeting, which limits the possibility of meeting in our own "college." A new organizational entity could help overcome our invisibility by breaking through the two barriers of physical and disciplinary dispersion. Making our material lives through employment at our individual universities, we need a different type of organization while surviving and thriving in our universities and disciplines. As we move toward a more formal format, we should cherish our interdisciplinary network essential to our research focus involving agrifood social change.

### **The Alternative Agrifood Researchers without Borders (AARWB)**

The AARWB is conceived of as moving willing participants in the invisible college toward a more formal collegium. Existing departments with

<sup>11</sup> These include anthropology, geography, rural sociology, and sociology, with smaller representation in other disciplines. The professional societies in which we are active include the International Sociological Association and the International Rural Sociological Association; regional/national organizations include the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society; the American Anthropological Association; the Association of American Geographers; the Australia-New Zealand Agri-Food Research Network; the European Society for Rural Sociology; and the (U.S.) Rural Sociological Society. Our research output is mainly published in *Agriculture and Human Values*, the *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* (an electronic journal), *Journal of Rural Studies*, *Rural Sociology*, and *Sociologia Ruralis*, but can also be found in other journals.

graduate programs define and maintain themselves through curriculum specification. This is a creditable objective but would be too formal for the AARWB. The first task of the collegium should be to build a membership of researchers focused on agrifood issues interested in strengthening the AAMs and civil society.

The operational method will be to share graduate students with similar interests so that these students can work with AARWB faculty, drawing on a wide range of research specializations. When educating and socializing new graduate students, we seek to provide them with our personal inventories of theory, methods, and empirical findings. We encourage them to work with other colleagues, mostly within our individual campuses and disciplines. The object of sharing graduate students *across* campuses and universities and disciplines is to broaden their exposure to faculty irrespective of their physical location or disciplinary affiliation, faculty who have expertise in subjects close to the interests of the graduate students. For example, if I am working with a graduate student interested in the economic concentration of expatriate agrifood firms in two developing countries in anglophonic and francophonic Africa, I could recommend that she or he begin independent studies—not necessarily all at the same time—with AARWB experts in economic concentration and francophonic and anglophonic Africa.

Two basic principles should operate in the relations between a doctoral student and an AARWB faculty member: (1) The student should always be the initiator, after taking advice from a local AARWB faculty member, of contact with the external AARWB faculty member having appropriate expertise for the student's research program; and (2) research relationships between the student and the AARWB faculty, while informal, should always generate a written record of all transactions that can be utilized if and when relationships between the two should move to a more formal level. To initiate any relationship, the student would approach an AARWB faculty member via e-mail to seek agreement for an independent study. Using Web-based software such as Skype permitting face-to-face conversation in real time, student and faculty member would meet regularly for a specified period, do readings and research as agreed upon, write reports or term papers, and so on. The external faculty member would write a report/evaluation of the student's work and provide a grade (if necessary). On concluding the introductory experience, the student would assess the experience and, if she or he desired, would initiate an exploration with the AARWB faculty member about possibly continuing the relationship. The faculty member can then decide whether to continue or not. If continuity is

agreed upon, the distant faculty member would join the student's graduate or dissertation committee.

There will obviously be administrative and bureaucratic issues involved in getting such procedures under way; others will almost certainly surface:

- How will the student receive academic credit in her or his university for research done with a faculty member at another university?
- Why should a faculty member at X university undertake to teach a graduate student at Y university? And how will the X faculty member get credit at her or his university for teaching an external student?
- Will the academic and administrative apparatus at X university accept one of their professors training students at Y university?

I do not propose to confront such problems here. Although considerable thought and discussion have already taken place in meetings with colleagues, I believe we should begin with informal procedures and, if successful, seek formal acceptance. With careful documentation of the learning process, and with the energy of the participants, it should be possible to win approval for the student and faculty member to get formal credit for the work accomplished.

Most important, the possibility of drawing on expertise on specific topics and issues and geophysical and social areas should considerably enrich the research of graduate students, producing high-quality dissertations and publications, as well as providing research contributions to the AAMs being studied. With the 41 founding faculty of the AARWB, approximately 140 areas of specialization have been identified and will be available to graduate students. The AARWB website is open for viewing at <http://alternativeagrifoodswb.ning.com/>.

### **The Theoretical Bases for the AARWB**

Three social theories—resource mobilization, strategic intervention, and structural parallelism—provided the theoretical basis for the AARWB, of which only resource mobilization has developed an extensive literature. Strategic intervention represents the kind of thinking found with social-movement participants that has not, to my knowledge, generated an academic social science literature. Structural parallelism is a theoretical formulation put forward in 1950s Berkeley lectures by



Seymour Martin Lipset who, to my knowledge (despite his remarkable research output), never set it out in writing.<sup>12</sup>

### **Resource Mobilization**

Resource-mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977) emerged in the late 1970s reflecting the growth of the new-social-movements and rational-choice theories. While this is not the place to discuss issues with those theoretical positions, I would note that there is much we do not understand as to why some organizations that have labored for years suddenly begin to grow.

The possibilities of bringing the two resources together suggest several direct and collateral advantages of such an alliance. The AAMs could benefit from stable access to research findings geared toward their problems, and researchers could benefit by improving their *verstehen* of movements by becoming closer to them while also satisfying personal interests in “doing something useful” through research. In addition, the presence of a critical yet sympathetic researcher who understands the responsibility of not only producing a convincing academic analysis but also a specific research contribution to the AAM could potentially engender interest by AAM activists in engaging in their own reflexivity about their movement and its work.

In their early formulation of resource mobilization theory, McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1216) wrote:

Several emphases are central to the perspective. First, study of the aggregation of resources (money and labor) is crucial to an understanding of social movement activity . . . [and] they must be aggregated for collective purposes. Second, resource aggregation requires some minimal form of organization. . . . Third . . . there is an implicit recognition of the crucial importance of involvement on the part of individuals and organiza-

<sup>12</sup> I should note that I am not enamored of theory-for-theory's-sake. The three theories are background to a recognition that the AAMs have grown remarkably over the past several decades but two developments have been observed that have accompanied their growth and success. First, each movement tends to become narrowly focused in its approach and rarely becomes involved with the other movements; there is little sense of movement-as-aggregate. The successes or failures of one do not become the subject of analysis by the others, nor do those movements study those of the past, or how current movement activists might benefit from such knowledge. Second, the relationship between movement activists, movement intellectuals, and sympathetic academic critics remains problematic today, as it has always been. These issues, plus the role of theory, could become the focus of AARWB research and debate. Critical comparative analysis could be useful for learning from experience and facilitating the success of the AAMs and possibly minimizing failures.

tions from outside the collectivity which a social movement represents. Fourth, an explicit, if crude, supply and demand model is sometimes applied to the flow of resources toward and away from specific social movements. Finally, there is a sensitivity to the importance of costs and rewards in explaining individual and organizational involvement in social movement activity.

Focused on delineating a new theory of social movements, McCarthy and Zald stimulated an impressive literature. Using the concept of resource mobilization, researchers were less concerned with testing the AAMs against resource-mobilization theory than with applying the concepts; this required recognizing the variations found among the AAMs. The AAMs do not represent the integrated cluster found in the classical social movements of the working class (1870s–1940s) but is closer though not identical to the “new social movements” of the 1960s–70s. Figure 1 summarizes three stages of social-movement experience.

Through the 1930s, the classical working class movements (except in the United States) constituted an integrated complex of organizations centered on a basic political conception of socialism/communism. This consisted of the political party aiming at political power, the trade unions organizing workers in their productive capacities, the cooperatives organizing the proletariat as consumers, and an enormous range of cultural organizations from language federations to stamp and coin collectors, youth organizations, professional associations, and those representing other cultural interests.

The “new social movements” of the 1960s–70s were significantly different: the classical Left political movements were “McCarthyed” out of existence in the United States and became institutionalized as vaguely leftist parties in western Europe. The new movements focused on narrow separate constituencies: single-identity race/ethnicity/gender groups; antiwar/peace groups; and narrow political groups such as Students for a Democratic Society. Individual movements had little or no coordination or integration with others. Movements had sizable memberships as well as clearly defined formal organizations and a less defined but larger set of sympathizers.

The AAMs, beginning in the late 1980s, have emerged as even more narrowly defined. Each has a narrow specific focus with little or no integration with other movements. Individual movement leaders might be sympathetic to related movements but few joint actions take place. Most movements are composed of a small dedicated activist leadership with varying formal memberships; significant followerships—people willing to support a specific and limited action—can be variably mobi-

Movement	Movement and organizational manifestations	Relationships between movement, organizations, and participants
"Classical" working class 1880–1939	Close/intimate relations Hegemonic control with political party	Close integrated relations: multiplicity of organizations with coherent integration Single political party Single central union federation Consumer cooperatives Multiplicity of occupational, cultural, and lifestyle organizations Individual memberships in many
"New" social movements 1964–80	Separate, independent organizations with some shared sympathies  Emphasis on "specific identities" race/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, etc.	Recognition of similarity of interests but strictly autonomous action  Individual memberships
Alternative agrifood movements 1989–	Separate organizations: nonrecognition of affinity between organizations other than being alternative	Noncognizance of "movement"  Marked distinction between organizational "activists" and "participants"  "Participants" are mostly <i>not</i> organizational "members" but participate through individual actions (buying organic or fair trade), e.g., exercise "consumer sovereignty," weak individuated participation  Occasional financial support and mobilization, support is manifested weakly rather than as a coherent whole (e.g., consumer response to USDA's original organic standards)

Figure 1. Three types of social movements: organizational formats and relationships

lized on occasion. Assessing potential resources to develop an organizational format to bring together the AAMs with research-oriented sympathizers required evaluating the two major resources. This led, in turn, to a consideration of how and where such a conjunction might be developed, where and how to seek an intervention.

### Strategic Intervention

*Give me the place to stand, and I shall move the earth.*

—Archimedes

Strategic intervention is a concept developed by social-change practitioners. It is based on the idea that, at any time, given assessable social,

economic, and political conditions, locating a strategic entry point and developing an appropriate action program it can potentially resonate with people who agree with the analysis and will be motivated to support it.

Three practitioner-theorists are exemplary: Leon Trotsky, seeking strategic intervention to generate revolution through what he called "The Transitional Program," and Walter Reuther and Saul Alinsky, operating at more modest levels. None ever used the terminology of strategic intervention to my knowledge. Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto*, foreshadowed the concept, arguing for a graduated income tax, state ownership of the means of transportation and communication (until recently, a standard feature of many nations except the United States), and free education for all children in public schools (Marx and Engels [1848] 1976:505.)<sup>13</sup>

Trotsky formulated the theoretical argument after being a key participant in and historian of the Russian revolution, being expelled from the Soviet Communist Party, and being exiled. Creating, with his followers, the Fourth International but recognizing the uphill battle for support from the proletariat, which, for historical reasons, remained with Stalin's Third International, Trotsky ([1938] 1974) set out his *Transitional Program*. He contended that Trotskyists should not approach "the masses" with a traditional revolutionary program aimed at state power; rather, they should develop more specific programs fitted to the conditions of various proletariats so that workers would understand the program and be willing to engage with it.

Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) union in the mid-1940s, came up with a similar approach in the postwar bargaining of the UAW. The pioneers who had built the UAW in the 1930s were aging, the U.S. Social Security program had been established but was already showing signs of producing limited retirement benefits, and

<sup>13</sup> For Marx and Engels's version of a transitional program see *The Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1976), widely published in many languages. For their transitional program, see 505. Trotsky, who explicitly articulated the idea of a transitional program, was a brilliant revolutionary organizer who regularly generated ideas that could engage masses of people with revolutionary action. For Trotsky's overall life and work, see Deutscher (2003) and Howe (1978). Walter Reuther had similar capabilities but worked at the level of national trade unions, especially the United Automobile Workers. There are many biographies of Reuther; see, for example Carew (1993) and Lichtenstein (1995). Reuther developed an impressive example of strategic intervention immediately after the Second World War in negotiations with General Motors (see Carew 1993: 44–45 and Howe and Widick 1949: 132–36). Alinsky innovated a new form of union organizing that evolved into what is now referred to as community organizing. For Alinsky's life and activities, see Finks (1984) and Horwitt (1989); for his organizing strategies, which often applied the concept of strategic intervention, see Boyte (1980), especially chapter 2.

the automobile companies were returning to civilian production after the Second World War. Autoworker wages had not kept up with company profits during the war. Reuther proposed “[w]age increases without price increases” to give autoworkers solidarity with car buyers. In bargaining with General Motors, the company responded negatively to the union’s wage demands. Reuther responded with “[o]pen the books,” in other words, prove your argument. The auto companies would not agree to publicly exposing the relationship between costs of production and prices charged for their products. Ultimately, this bargaining led to a series of benefits that put autoworkers into the middle-income stratum of American society.

Alinsky innovated a new form of organizing in Chicago during the late 1930s when standard union organizing failed to bring packinghouse workers in the Chicago stockyards into the union. This involved organizing in the community where workers lived back of the stockyards rather than at the plant gate. Organization at the point of consumption rather than the classical locus of worker organization at the point of production represented a very different approach to organizing workers. Alinsky’s success in “Back of the Yards” evolved into what has come to be known as community organizing. Cesar Chavez was a successful practitioner with the United Farm Workers. Alinsky’s approach called for the organizer to live in the community to be organized, listening to community residents talk about daily problems. Out of this would come a list of grievances and a handful of issues that would resonate with residents.

Strategic intervention in agrifood issues assesses the overall character of a problem (the growing food crisis), the approaches that might be taken after analyzing available resources, and realistic strategies and tactics that might come to grips with the problem, operating with an explicit set of assumptions; in Alinsky’s case this meant decreasing the gap between rich and poor, and expanding democratic participation.

For many agrifood invisible college participants, interest in the AAMs derives from their alterity (“otherness”).<sup>14</sup> In the initial phases of AAM development they reflected progressive orientations, mostly as opposition to conventional agriculture and food. Organic activists, for example, argued for small-scale units of production operating with holistic orientations, rejecting chemicals and corporate agribusiness companies and the traditional support by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of agribusiness. Community-supported agriculture urged reduction of food miles (the distance food is transported) by committing to small

<sup>14</sup> *Alterity* was originally formulated by Lévinas ([1970] 1993) around the concept of otherness. It has also been utilized by some anthropologists; see the “stub” on alterity in Wikipedia and Taussig (1993). The term remains somewhat esoteric and I use *alternativity*.

local agricultural producers rather than transnational food producers and retailers. Fair trade sought to get a larger share of consumer prices back to original small-scale producers.

As some AAMs became successful they began to become more conventional even against the wishes of many pioneers: Was there a way to encourage a return to the original progressive outlooks of individual movements? And if agrifood researchers held progressive orientations, what structure might be developed to bring AAM progressives together with agrifood researchers? These questions led to the exploration of models that might be utilized and, therefore, to the approach of structural parallelism.

### **Structural Parallelism**

Seymour Martin Lipset saw structural parallelism manifested in the interaction of organizations or groups: A weaker organization develops structures paralleling a stronger one. Lipset noted that the UAW, for example, created union divisions for purposes of collective bargaining with General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler and other corporations or subsectors of the industry. Lipset's formulation developed out of observing automobile unionism in the 1940s. Decades later this analysis was used by Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union at the union's annual convention in June 2008. "Mr. Stern has repeatedly argued that as employers grow larger and operate at a national and even international level, unions must do the same. To help deal with these ever-larger employers, he persuaded the delegates to create nationwide industry bargaining councils" (Greenhouse 2008).

In a very different context, Theda Skocpol (2003), examining civic life in the United States, used a parallel structural approach: "A new associational model crystallized in the early 1800s. . . . Associations began to organize along the lines of 'the Federal political system, with local units linked together in state branches and these in turn sending representatives to a national body.'" <sup>15</sup>

Organizers found two potential models for the AARWB: one of knowledge production and another of academic activism. There are of course

<sup>15</sup> Skocpol draws the quotation from Schlesinger (1944:24). In a section of her book titled "The Federal Representative State as a Civil Model" (40–43), Skocpol writes: "There was a final way in which governing institutions influenced association building: the structure of government served as an organizational model" (40). Skocpol further observes that the federal governing model was utilized in civic life rather than "the myth of apolitical localism [because] civic volunteerism in the United States was the creation of citizen-organizers with national ambitions as well as an understanding that the organizations they built needed to put down strong local roots" (72–73).

many models of knowledge production from liberal arts to professional schools. The former appeared inappropriate but some possibilities could be found with professional schools.

Models of academic activism presented more of a problem. There are, in fact, many such models; the problem is to consider the various forms academic activism takes. The distinctive ways that scientists develop outlets for their activism contrast sharply with social science activism, a subject I have long noted and puzzled over but never made a focus of my research. To generalize, when scientists become socially or politically activated they frequently create *adjunct* scientific organizations to embody their activism. Social scientists, surprisingly, do not; they usually manifest their activism through broader movement organizations rather than by forming organizations maintaining some relationship to social science professional associations.

When scientists, coming from a broad range of the physical sciences and mathematics, organized themselves following the creation of the atomic bomb, they created an organization of atomic scientists focused on a journal, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, aimed at both scientists and a concerned public ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulletin\\_of\\_the\\_Atomic\\_Scientists#The\\_Bulletin\\_today](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulletin_of_the_Atomic_Scientists#The_Bulletin_today)). In contrast, students in the 1960s organized as students but, when they dealt with issues such as peace or opposition to the Vietnam War, they often expressed their activism in movements broader than those of students.

Several recent studies offer exemplary examinations of how scientists create their own activist organizations related to their original science. Scott Frickell's (2004) analysis of the discovery of environmental (chemical) mutagens, a field within biology that involved chemists, physicists, and other scientists, led to the delineation of a new research field, genetic toxicology, that after a brief invisible college period was transformed into a new formal visible professional association, the Environmental Mutagen Society (EMS), as the dangers of chemical mutagens became clear. EMS participants recognized their need to inform society at large about what was occurring environmentally. EMS was not only a professional organization of scientists but also a coherent and active social movement organization. Research by Kelly Moore (2008) shows earlier proclivities of activist scientists to organize close to related science bodies between 1945 and 1975. Moore studied three science groups that formed during that period; all were created as formal organizations concerned with scientific developments affecting society; each also reached out to broader nonscience populations. The organizations were the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, the Greater St. Louis Citizens' Committee for Nuclear Information, and Scientists and

Engineers for Social and Political Action, which later became known as Science for the People.

Social scientists experienced high levels of activism during the period 1964–72, yet patterns varied significantly from those of scientists; advocacy often occurred *within* professional associations rather than in parallel but separate organizations as scientists had done. Sociologists, for example, manifested their activism by creating a Radical Sociologist caucus within the American Sociological Association. No parallel activist organization was created; social scientists interested in broader involvement turned to other external protest organizations in which their professional identity was submerged. What is striking in contrast was the close association scientists maintained with their scientific networks in contrast to the social scientists. This suggested the possibility that a model following the scientist pattern might orient a proposed organization to remain close to social science professional organizations.<sup>16</sup>

When we put the three theories together, several additional potentialities became possible. The AARWB could contribute to improving academic research and strengthening progressive social movements, reflecting the utilization of social science research to address complex issues. Successful AAMs have moved toward conventionalization rather than hewing to their original transformational ideologies. In this process, they have become narrowly focused, tending their “limited business” and avoiding relationships with accompanying movements for social change. The integration of sociological theories suggests the possibility of broadening perspectives within the leadership of the various AAMs that might, in turn, create an exploratory process of working with other movements.

The AARWB, an organizational experiment, might join the issues by:

- Being openly progressive but minimally defined.
- Being explicitly sympathetic to and involved with AAMs while retaining traditional academic norms of value neutrality during the research process.

<sup>16</sup> I have a speculative hypothesis on the differences between activist scientists and social scientists: scientists seek activist scientist organization because this keeps them close to the channels of academic mobility and, with notable exceptions, they find it easier to talk their technical talk with colleagues rather than with broader publics. In contrast, social scientists are more oriented toward participating with broader publics since much of their activism develops from normative rather than technical issues. Because anthropologists, geographers, and sociologists usually have limited travel support to professional society meetings, their mobility channels are tied to their disciplines rather than interdisciplinary issues-centered organizations.



- Being built by progressive established agrifood researchers but centered initially on doctoral students. After some organizational experience has been accumulated, the venture could be extended to other graduate students as well as promising undergraduates.
- Minimizing traditional academic field research orientations—"jump in, jump out." Research by participants should seek to produce some research results useful to the AAMs being studied as well as traditional academic research results—there should be a research "payback" to the organization being researched.

This led to conceptualizing the AARWB after the Harvard Business School model, but with a very different orientation, hence the original (Un)Harvard (Un)Business School name.

### **Conclusion**

This article presents an argument based on social theorization for progressive agrifood researchers to seek a new form of organization to bring an activist component to our academic activity that will be close to our scientific research focus. It involved considerable research in relevant literatures, meetings, colloquia presentations, and interactions with numerous agrifood researchers before a refined idea could be presented informally within the invisible college. It recognizes that we live in academic settings and must conform to the basic standards of our institutions. This is not a call for academics to become movement activists as such.

Some may think that only by becoming activists can we make significant contributions to the movements. There are perfectly good reasons for such a stance. However, historical experience indicates that intellectuals and researchers only rarely make good activists. Activism usually requires intense activity; however, our skills and experiences are as analytic researchers, and it would be preferable that we operate from our strengths rather than our weaknesses. This reemphasizes the importance of doing first-class academic work so that we do not make ourselves vulnerable to the punitive norms of our institution.

One of our distinct capacities is extremely important: our critical abilities. All too often movement activists become so engaged that they become uncritical supporters of their movements. This may be useful for them because it supports their dedication and commitment. For activist researchers, however, the ability to retain a degree of separation from

movement activism is equally important. While we can do research that can support the work of movements, our ability to critique the movements is also vital. This article suggests the need for a more conscious reflexivity by progressive agrifood researchers. Agrifood researchers have been doing reasonably well in response to the creation of the AAMs; this has been manifested in the burgeoning literature that has been produced. What I suggest is a new organizational format, the AARWB, that will stimulate more regularized intellectual interactions between the AAMs, ourselves, and our students.

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