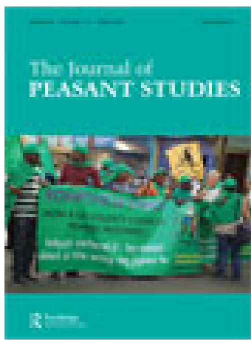

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Scholar-activists in an expanding European food sovereignty movement*

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the roles, relations, and positions of scholar-activists in the European food sovereignty movement. In doing so, we document, make visible and question the political dimensions of researchers' participation in the movement. We argue that scholar-activists are part of the movement, but are distinct from the affected constituencies, put in place to ensure adequate representation of key movement actors. This is because scholar-activists lack a collective identity, have no processes to formulate collective demands, and no mechanisms for inter-researcher and researchers-movement communication. We reflect on whether and how scholar-activists could organize, and discuss possible pathways for a more cohesive and stronger researcher engagement in the movement.

KEYWORDS

Constituencies; food sovereignty; Nyéléni Europe; participation; scholar-activist; social movements; researcher engagement

1. Introduction

In October 2016, more than 500 food sovereignty activists from across Europe and Central Asia met in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, for the second Nyéléni Europe Forum for Food Sovereignty. The objective of this gathering was to follow up on key commitments made at the 2011 Nyéléni Europe Forum (Krems, Austria), the first event organized at the European level to facilitate dialogue and convergence among peasant movements and other constituencies fighting for food sovereignty. Food sovereignty refers broadly to the right of those who produce, distribute, and consume food to access and control the resources, mechanisms, decision-making, and policies that shape the food system (La Via Campesina 2007). Both events were efforts to build on the political processes

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initiated by the global food sovereignty movement[1] in 2007 at the Nyéléni Forum in Mali.

The global food sovereignty movement is organized in different constituency categories to ensure adequate representation of key movement actors. Constituencies here typically designate distinct groups of food producers, such as pastoralists, fishers, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers or small-scale farmers. Research on the global food sovereignty movement has shown that the organization of movement actors into distinct constituencies has effectively supported alliance building (Claeys and Duncan 2018). More specifically, the use of constituencies and related quotas (for gender, regional and constituency balance) in food sovereignty meetings, fora and processes has facilitated the convergence of a diversity of identities, enhanced the distribution of power, guaranteed inclusiveness, and created mechanisms for mutual accountability between various social actors in the movement (Claeys and Duncan 2018).

Constituencies and quotas were used to balance participation in the 2007 Nyéléni Forum, and the 2011 and 2016 Nyéléni Europe Fora. In all three events, the selection of participants followed a complex process designed to include a diversity of representatives from different sectors, organizations and regions, and ensure gender balance. At the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum, the four main constituencies were: food producers, organized consumers and urban-based movements, agricultural and migrant workers, and NGOs. Recognizing that some participants may feel that their identity or experience does not match these four constituencies, the organizers opened a space during the Forum for so-called 'emerging constituencies' to meet and discuss shared concerns. The number of researchers in attendance was high (about 10% of all participants). Recognizing this, some of us proposed a researchers' meeting to discuss the roles of scholar-activists in the European food sovereignty movement. One of the questions participants in that meeting debated was: could or should scholar-activists be considered and recognized as a constituency i.e. an organized group of political actors within Nyéléni Europe?

Efforts by peasants to organize autonomously and speak on their own behalf, notably to challenge the domination of other powerful actors such as NGOs, have been documented in the literature (Desmarais 2007; McKeon and Kalafatic 2009). Scholars have also explored the synergies, tensions and opportunities that may arise in the context of collaborations between agrarian movements and researchers (among others, Edelman 2009; Borras 2016; Brem-Wilson and Nicholson 2017). Yet, the food sovereignty literature has not fully grappled with the complexities associated with researcher(s)-movement interactions.

Building on a growing body of literature on 'scholar-activism', we document, make visible and question the various roles scholar-activists play in the European food sovereignty movement. Departing from the dominant approach which explores the relationships between academics and the movements or communities *with* which they work, we question the political implications of researchers' participation *in* the movement. European food sovereignty scholar-activists are currently not organized as a group. While there is a collaboration amongst some, there are no formal operating mechanisms for inter-

[1] We recognize that there is no single global movement for food sovereignty; instead it is more appropriate to consider this a movement of movements. For more on this, see Claeys and Duncan (2018).

Table 1. Classification of interviewees by primary work-related identity and gender.

	Academic at a university	Peasant	Research NGO	Campaigns-focussed NGO	International coordinating mechanism	Total
Women	2	1	4	2	1	10
Men	2	3	3	2	4	14

Note: The table does not represent the diversity of ways they participate in food sovereignty struggles.

researcher[2] and researchers-movement coordination and communication, and researchers are not accountable to other constituencies, or to other researchers. In addition, researchers are not part of the governance structure of the movement (see below), which makes them 'formally invisible'. This disconnect, we argue, should be addressed with a view to reinforce the contributions that scholar-activists bring or could bring to the struggles for food sovereignty.

This research[3] is informed by semi-structured interviews with 24 key informants purposively selected for the facilitation roles they have historically played in organizing the food sovereignty fora, both at Global and European level (see Table 1). All interviewees consider themselves to be food sovereignty activists. Interviews were conducted by Jessica Duncan and Priscilla Claeys, between February and August 2017, in English and French, in person or by telephone or skype. Four follow-up interviews were conducted. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and sent back to the interviewees for validation. Translation from French to English was done by Priscilla Claeys. This research is also based on participant observation[4] at the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum in Cluj, including the public meeting that some of us organized and facilitated with scholar-activists attending the forum (for details, see below). It is further informed by document analysis and auto-ethnographic reflections derived from our respective involvement as scholar-activists in the European and global food sovereignty movements.

In what follows we define scholar-activism and reflect on some of the challenges scholar-activists face in their attempts to contribute to social change. We then turn our attention to the European food sovereignty movement, with a focus particularly on the processes that informed the formation of national delegations to the 2011 and 2016 Nyéléni Europe Fora. We discuss the presence of researchers in the movement, the roles they play and how they relate to other actors, notably the formally recognized constituencies. We consider three aspects that separate scholar-activists from the affected constituencies in the movement: their lack of a collective identity; the absence of processes in place enabling them to formulate collective demands; and, their lack of coordination to ensure accountability to other actors in the movement. We focus on these three aspects because, in our view, identity, claims and accountability are the essence of what constituencies are and how they operate. This leads us to a discussion of possible

[2]An open listserv was set up after the meeting in Cluj and to which participants subscribed. It has been used (although not regularly) by various scholar-activists to circulate information and once to disseminate a request for specific research emanating from the European Coordination of La Via Campesina.

[3]An earlier version of this paper by Claeys and Duncan was presented at the 7th Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies (ICAS) Colloquium which took place on 24–26 April 2017 in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Basque Country). This Colloquium was attended by four of the authors and offered an opportunity to collectively discuss some of the ideas contained in this paper.

[4]The first six authors participated in the 2016 Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia Forum in Cluj, as part of the Dutch, Belgian, Spanish and Austrian delegations, respectively.

pathways for more structured researcher engagement in the European food sovereignty movement, including proposals to formalize the support roles that researchers may provide.

We contrast these pathways with the recently adopted governance structure for the European food sovereignty movement. In 2018, following the 2016 Forum, the Coordination Committee of Nyéléni Europe decided to change its name to Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia, to account for its expansion to the Central Asia region. It also adopted a new formal governance structure (see below) which: (a) assigns leadership roles to food producer social movements, representing the most affected constituencies; (b) assigns support roles to NGOs and all non-food producers constituencies, now designated as support constituencies; and (c) does not mention researchers as actors, nor the support roles they provide. Hereafter, we refer to the European food sovereignty movement to designate the diverse movements, organizations and individual activists who all have endorsed and work towards the goals of food sovereignty in Europe. We use Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia to designate the recently adopted governance structure of that movement.

In our conclusion, we invite scholar-activists in all regions to engage in debates on the roles of researchers in, and their relations with, the various actors and levels of the European and global food sovereignty movements.

2. Relations between scholar-activists and social movements in the literature

As highlighted by Craig Calhoun (2008), activist scholarship is as old as Aristotle, and the social sciences were partly developed through activist scholarship. Yet, activist scholarship today is marginalized and contested (Calhoun 2008). Despite its vital importance and repeated calls across the social sciences for more engagement with broader publics (e.g. public anthropology or public sociology), activist scholarship is 'inevitably a practice from the margins' (Hale 2008, 3). To the extent that, in an academic context increasingly shaped by neoliberalism, accepting the label of scholar-activist can be considered a form of activism (Maxey 1999).

Definitions of scholar activism vary considerably across fields and disciplines but usually include some of the following elements: (a) a desire to address public issues (Calhoun 2008) and/or contribute to social change; (b) a link, relationship, identification or political alignment with a marginalized group or emancipatory struggle (Hale 2006, 2008; Piven 2010); (c) a commitment to produce emancipatory knowledge – defined as knowledge that is useful to the movement or struggle in question – or to reconfigure how knowledge is produced and controlled (Bickham Mendez 2008; Hale 2008); and (d) research methods that enable the research process and outcome to be shaped by horizontal dialogue with research participants (Bevington and Dixon 2005; Hale 2006; Routledge and Derickson 2015), leading to the co-production of knowledge (Casas-Cortés, Osterweil, and Powell 2008; Autonomous Geographies Collective 2010; Choudry and Kapoor 2010).

Responding to attacks that scholar-activists lack objectivity and rigor, and seek reductive, politically instrumental truths at the expense of conceptual complexity (Hale 2008), a number of authors have highlighted ways in which engaging politically and emotionally with social actors (Derickson and Routledge 2015) makes for better research: it informs

our work, spurs innovation, and is a source of inspiration for our theorizing efforts (Calhoun 2008). Ideally, it enables us to produce 'movement-relevant theory' by dynamically engaging with movements in the formulation, production, refinement and application of the research (Bevington and Dixon 2005) or even to 'co-theorize' (Rappaport 2008). The contributions of scholar-activists to specific movements or struggles are often less obvious, in part because they have not been recognized and documented. Some of these contributions include: facilitating meetings, teaching, documenting local situations, helping with funding (Routledge and Derickson 2015), conducting participatory mapping of community land claims, offering expert testimony in court (Hale 2006), writing bilingual intercultural curricula for primary schools, serving as note-takers, assisting women's organizations (Rappaport 2008), studying and problematizing issues of interest to the movement (Borras 2016), revealing injustices, documenting how powerful institutions work, helping raise awareness of social actors (sometimes with paternalistic consequences), and engaging in mutual learning and agenda setting (Fox 2006).

One of the interesting insights that this list provides is that scholar-activists are as much involved in contributing knowledge and analysis to movements as they are busy with other supportive and logistical tasks. In fact, one of the characterizing features of scholar-activists is a 'back and forth between the practical sphere and the analytic sphere' (Rappaport 2008). For this reason, lines are often blurred between activists – (sometimes) portrayed as doers – and scholars – (sometimes) portrayed as thinkers – even though activists and scholars tend to be located in different institutional spaces, performing different kinds of social action and roles (Edelman 2009). For Calhoun, 'sharing in' the general tasks of struggle may be important for access, credibility, equity or 'simply in itself, for scholars are also individuals and citizens'. Yet, 'if activist scholarship is to contribute all that it really can it has to do so through production and mobilization of knowledge' (Calhoun 2008). This view is shared by Rappaport who argues that the political role researchers can play 'does not necessarily imply activism'. For her, the latter entails a skill set that not all scholars bring to the table, and it is best to think of researchers as 'enhancing activist agendas' (Rappaport 2008).

For Derickson and Routledge (Derickson and Routledge 2015), in contrast, the primary role of scholar-activists is not to provide intellectual critique but to find, generate and channel resources and privileges afforded to academics to advancing the work of non-academic collaborators – what they call a 'politics of resourcefulness'. Among these privileges are time and money, but also social capital, greater access to national or transnational public spheres and, increasingly important in the age of 'information politics', the ability to package information in ways that will impact policy debates. This suggests a growing political role for research and for academics who can put their cultural capital to work for social movements as translators (Bickham Mendez 2008, citing Gaventa 1993; Harper 2001). It also points to serious challenges for scholar-activists who will inevitably find themselves trapped in contradictions because their translation/packaging work is always at risk of obliterating other forms of '(subjugated) knowledge' (Bickham Mendez 2008, citing Collins 2003).

Some literature on scholar-activism has documented the tensions that arise from doing both academic and activist work due to the different time frames, spaces, goals (Routledge and Derickson 2015), and the requirements of each. Scholar-activists inevitably find themselves torn between 'dual political commitments', as they are accountable to two worlds

with distinct principles, practices, modes of knowledge production (Juris and Khasnabish 2013), and modes of evaluation, regulation and measuring impact (Borras 2016). As a result, scholar-activists are often caught in what Hale (2006) has called 'dual loyalties'. Indeed, scholar-activist-research is an inherently 'contradictory affair' insofar as it embodies hierarchies and inequalities that it also purports to oppose (Hale 2008). Scholar-activists should, therefore, pay attention to the historical geometries of power, and notably their location in an elite, dominant institution that is enrolled in the process of reproducing a particular social order. At the same time, while acknowledging the structural distance between themselves and the movements with/in which they work, scholar-activists must avoid becoming paralyzed, which is counterproductive (Routledge and Derickson 2015 citing; Juris and Khasnabish 2013, 371).

Scholar-activism is best analyzed and understood in relational terms: it is about interactions with other scholars and activists, embedded in institutional contexts (Borras 2016). But on which terms should scholar-activists and social movements establish relationships? Some scholars advocate for 'situated solidarities' built on mutual trust, responsibilities (Bevington and Dixon 2005), admiration and benefit (Nagar and Geiger 2007). This idea is also captured in the term 'solidarity research' which designates efforts by academics to integrate movement knowledge and interests into their processes of knowledge production (Brem-Wilson 2014). Other scholars including feminist researchers, prefer to use terms such as synergies alliances, collaborations, coalitions or partnership (Maguire 1986; Naples 1998; Eschle 2001; Rappaport 2008; Edelman 2009; Tuhiwai Smith 2013; Borras 2016), highlighting that the term solidarity does not necessarily convey the idea that both parties are autonomous and have their own interests and agenda (Fox 2006). Reflecting on his research on food sovereignty and agrarian movements, Borras notes that scholar-activists are key peasant allies and argues in favor of an autonomous, two-way, mutually reinforcing interactive approach that recognizes the ability of both peasants and scholar-activists to generate knowledge (Borras 2016). Yet, the food sovereignty literature to date has not addressed the issue of how to foster such alliances or coalitions between scholar-activists and other actors in the movement.

A growing number of scholars have chosen to commit themselves to the goals of food sovereignty and/or agrarian justice (see for example Rosset 2008; Pimbert 2009; Wittman 2011; Holt-Giménez and Altieri 2013; Claeys 2014; Desmarais, Rivera-Ferre, and Gasco 2014; Brent, Schiavoni, and Alonso-Fradejas 2015; Edelman and Borras 2016). As a result, the researcher-food sovereignty movement relationship now increasingly involves not one but several researchers, themselves connected through mostly informal research-activism networks. There may thus be a need to move beyond individually negotiated researcher-movement relationships, to envisage collective processes or mechanisms that can be conducive to horizontal and accountable rather than extractivist and 'dominative' relationships (Martinez 2008, 184 citing; Singer 1994). Before starting to imagine what collectively negotiated researchers-movement interactions could look like, however, it is important to clarify that there is significant diversity among scholar-activists working on food sovereignty. At the same time, it is also fundamental to recognize that interactions between researchers and movement actors are affected by a wide array of issues such as researchers' job stability or precariousness, teaching and other professional obligations, gender, race, class, origin and place of residence, etc.

3. Governing the European food sovereignty movement

The Nyéléni 2007 Forum in Mali 'acted as a catalyst' for efforts to develop the food sovereignty movement in Europe and, according to the Nyéléni Europe website, 'the vision of food sovereignty for Europe is based on the principles defined at the Nyéléni Forum in 2007' (Nyéléni Europe Food Sovereignty Forum 2016). This first Nyéléni was launched largely at the initiative of La Via Campesina and its organization was facilitated by the International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty (Claeys and Duncan 2018). The organizing committee aimed for gender parity amongst delegates who were in turn organized into six sectors: farmers/peasants; fisherfolk; pastoralists; Indigenous Peoples; workers and migrants; and, consumers and urban movements. This list built on the IPC constituencies – small farmers, fisher folk, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural workers – with the addition of consumers and urban movements, as well as migrants. NGOs were not considered a sector but referred to as allies within the final report (Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Forum 2007). Also identified were three interest groups: Women, Youth, and Environment. There was no reference to researchers, although some were present.

At the European level, this global constituency approach was 'replicated', with some adjustments, for forming national delegations to the two Nyéléni Europe Fora for Food Sovereignty. For the 2011 Nyéléni Europe Forum, a quota system was used to ensure that one-third of the delegates would be 'food producers', half of the delegates women, and one-third youth (Nyéléni Europe 2011, iii). In addition, the composition of national delegations had to 'take into account the following constituencies':

(1) Food producers (farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, urban gardeners, community supported agriculture);
(2) Workers (agricultural workers, migrants, trade unions);
(3) Environmental, Health and Development NGOs;
(4) Youth organizations;
(5) Women's organizations;
(6) Consumers (food co-ops, urban poor); and,
(7) Others (artists, teachers, researchers …).

This list of constituencies was taken from the 2007 Nyéléni Forum held in Mali and slightly amended to reflect the European reality. All types of food producers were grouped together under one category, a clear move away from the specification (i.e. peasants, pastoralists, fishers, Indigenous Peoples) that had emerged at the international level. Workers and consumers were maintained as key constituencies. Whereas women, youth and the environmental actors were identified as overarching interest groups at the global meeting, in Europe they were established as constituency categories. A seventh category was created to accommodate 'others' as a potential additional constituency, which included researchers. There was awareness that the original Nyéléni sectors were not immediately applicable to the European context (Interviews 9 and 13) but overall the same logic was applied.

The Steering Committee in charge of organizing the 2011 Nyéléni Europe Forum in Krems was mostly composed of six peasant organization members of European Coordination of Via Campesina (ECVC) and five representatives of NGOs, with the addition of two national food sovereignty platforms, and Urgenci (International Network of

Community Supported Agriculture). Most of these organizations were part of FoodSovCap, the European Network for Food Sovereignty and Another CAP (EU Common Agricultural Policy). The FoodSovCap network gathered together around 100 organizations, both environmental and development NGOs, and small-scale farmers' organizations, jointly campaigning and advocating for European agriculture policy reform.

The group of organizations that launched the 'mobilization call' for the second Nyéléni Europe Forum, which took place in 2016 in Cluj, was roughly the same as in 2011. As someone working for an international development NGO explained, it was, at its core, a group of people who 'work well together' (Interview 9). This time the Coordination Committee was composed of: ECVC and two of its member organizations; other producer constituencies, namely fishers, Indigenous peoples, shepherds and representatives from the organic sector; consumers and CSAs represented by the Urgenci network; and a handful of NGOs. A particularly important role was played by the Transnational Institute (TNI) and FIAN (formerly the FoodFirst Information and Action Network) because of the financial and human resources made available through the EU-funded project Hands on the Land for Food Sovereignty (HotL), conducted jointly by these two organizations and ECVC. Further, the Romanian peasant organization Eco-Ruralis played a key role as host.

The same quotas used in 2011 were again applied in 2016 to ensure adequate 'representation of constituencies': minimum 30% food producers, minimum 30% youth, and 50% women and 50% men. However, it was decided that the size of the national delegations needed to be proportional to the size of the population in each country (e.g. countries with a population between 1 and 5 million people were allowed delegations of 10–16 delegates, whereas countries with a population between 5 and 20 million were allowed 10–25 delegates, with up to a maximum of 30 delegates for larger countries). Further, the list of constituencies was substantially amended between 2011 and 2016. The first six constituencies remained unchanged, except for community-supported agriculture (CSAs) that were now listed as belonging to the 'organized consumers' constituency, while they were originally listed under 'food producers'. A seventh constituency of 'local economic actors for food sovereignty webs' was added, including 'cooperatives, transformers, people-owned distribution, food sovereignty infrastructure, etc.' And the 'others' constituency was expanded to include not only artists, teachers and researchers but also 'community groups involved in local food policy councils' and 'representatives of local authorities'.

The underlying objective of this expansion was to ensure representation of social forces capable of implementing joint actions in the future, while opening to new thematic areas (Interview 9) and facilitating the expansion of the European food sovereignty movement to new actors. Combining constituencies and quotas, the criteria for the forming the national delegations essentially aimed at ensuring: (a) a focus on food producers (i.e. that the delegation is representative enough of their interests/speaks their voice); (b) gender and generational equality; and, (c) a diversity of participants through the inclusion of representatives of the eight identified constituencies.

During the 2016 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty, the four most important constituencies[5] were given a space to share experiences and discuss strategies. They were asked specifically to reflect on the following three questions:

[5]The origin of this list of four 'established' constituencies is unclear. It is partly a reflection of the composition of the Coordination Committee and of the key organizations that mobilized people to attend the Forum, and partly the result of

(1) How will we take forward the campaigns and actions discussed during the Forum?
(2) How do we best organize ourselves as a constituency to achieve this?
(3) What do we need from the Nyéléni organization/coordination committee to bring this forward?

Most participants joined the discussions held within the ambit of these four constituencies: i.e. producers (about 100 participants); consumers and urban-based movements (about 30–40); agricultural and migrant workers (no data); and, NGOs (about 40). Participants who felt they did not identify with any of these constituencies had the opportunity to look for other participants sharing 'identity or common experience' (Nyéléni Europe 2016) and issue an invitation (using flipcharts posted on a wall) to anyone interested in joining an 'emerging constituency'. Five proposals were made by participants: people marginalized by colonialism, coloniality, enslavement and oppression; alternative retailers; 'peasants-to-be'; people interested in education and awareness-raising work; and, researchers. It is interesting that alternative retailers and researchers are already listed in the eight constituencies highlighted by the methodology group, but not the other emerging ones.

The following criteria were set by the Coordination Committee for the initiators of new constituencies to ascertain if there was sufficient interest in their proposal and whether the proposed new constituency was sufficiently diverse and representative: it should include members from at least five different organizations, from at least five different countries, and amount to at least 20 people in total. With more than 50 people, the researchers' list was by far the largest group, accounting for about 10% of the total number of participants to the Forum and surpassing the criteria established by the organizers. In the next section, we explore the outcomes of the researchers' meeting.

The group of people interested in farming or wanting to start or join a farm gathered about 15 people and was encouraged to merge with the established producers' constituency. The group of people interested in awareness and education work was small (five people), as was the group of people engaged in alternative retail (8–10). The group of people marginalized by colonialism, coloniality, enslavement and oppression, initiated by people of color in the UK, was joined by several participants of the Global South and participants committed to the issue. It gathered around 20 people and worked on a joint statement that was shared with all participants at the final plenary. The statement called on Nyéléni Europe to be more inclusive of all those in the margins (mentioning specifically the street sleepers, those with disabilities, the disinherited refugees, the traditional market sellers, etc.), and work towards a reframing of food sovereignty to reflect the full diversity of European society.

Nearly two years after the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum, in June 2018, after much internal debate, the Nyéléni Europe movement adopted a name change and a new governance structure designed to carry forward food sovereignty activities and actions, and hopefully raise funds for a Technical Secretariat enabling more coordination, networking, and internal and external communication. This new governance structure is presented in a document entitled 'Historical background, definition, goal, political response, members and organizational structure' (Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia Food Sovereignty

pragmatic considerations such as the number of venues where people could meet and where interpretation could be provided (Interviews 2, 11 and 15).

Network 2018). In this document, the Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia movement presents itself as 'a political and social alliance of grassroots, community based movements and organizations, representing small-scale food producers: peasants/small farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, small-scale fisher people, agriculture and food workers; and supporting constituencies, such as urban poor; rural and urban women's and youth organisations; consumers, environmental, justice, solidarity, human rights organizations; and community-based food movements', who have politically endorsed the six pillars of the Nyéléni 2007 Declaration.

The document also explicitly states that the 'political leadership' is in the hands of 'affected constituencies' representing 'food producers'. In the current context, this essentially designates the peasants/small-scale farmers organized through the ECVC and a few others. It further states that these key constituencies representing the 'rights holders' are to work in 'collaboration' with 'supporting constituencies' to address political issues and develop strategies, actions and campaigns that involve the whole Nyéléni movement. This structure is interesting in that it consolidates the long emerging trend toward a two-tier approach to constituencies which clearly differentiates between social movements and NGOs. In an earlier contribution, Claeys and Duncan (2018) described such a two-tier approach as one that 'not only distinguishes constituencies from social movements representing affected groups from other secondary, or non-affected constituencies, but also assigns political roles to the former and support roles to the latter'.

At the same time, the new governance structure goes further than creating a social movement-NGO distinction in that it puts a whole range of other food sovereignty actors in this supporting category, including youth, women's and consumers groups, as well as community-based food movements. Based on our interviews, it appears that this decision to put the political control of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia more firmly in the hands of 'social movements constituencies' is partly linked to tensions that emerged at the 2016 Nyéléni Forum, where NGOs played a dominant and contested role in determining the methodology. It can also be interpreted as an attempt by peasant organizations to consolidate the great advances they have made in terms of representation in the last decades and maintain political control to ensure the movement remains true to its core values and principles. Paradoxically, the opening up of the European food sovereignty movement to new actors has led to a concentration of its political leadership, raising challenges in terms of inclusiveness and diversity.

The new structure includes a Facilitation Committee. As noted in the document, this Committee 'is composed of 5 active member organisations of the social movement constituencies, in particular food producers'. This Committee replaces the former Coordination Committee that included representatives from all the different constituencies. This evolution is concurrent with how the reformed IPC is structured and reflects the decision that was made to enable the Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia governance structure to represent the 'European and Central Asian region in the Facilitation Committee of the IPC'.

The Facilitation Committee is tasked with ensuring 'consistent consultation processes and mechanisms with other constituencies that are not represented in the Facilitation Committee'. Further, the composition of the Facilitation Committee should aim to 'have gender, generational and regional balance and take into consideration other forms of exclusion and marginalisation along sexual identity, economic and ethnic lines'. This reference to other forms of exclusion and marginalization is a response to the emergence of

the above-mentioned constituency of 'people marginalized by colonialism, coloniality, enslavement and oppression' at the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum. Rather than recognizing this emerging group as a formal new constituency, the decision was made to pay due attention to ethnic discrimination across all constituencies and in the governing body of the movement. The document further establishes self-organized Working Groups that will be 'led by the social movements' with the support of a 'technical facilitator' coming 'from supporting constituencies'. This two-tier model is similar to the way that the IPC and the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) to the UN's Committee on World Food Security (see below) function, whereby facilitators usually come from NGOs and work in tandem with social movements that are responsible for providing the political orientation (Claeys and Duncan 2018). We come back to this point below.

There are no references to researchers in the document, neither as support constituencies or as playing technical facilitation roles in the movement. From interviews and informal conversations, it appears that researchers were perceived as difficult to formally integrate as the governance structure of the movement recognizes only organizations and not individuals. Most researchers who participate in movement activities do so as individuals or as part of NGOs, activist collectives or consumer groups; they do not represent their research institutions. In what follows we discuss researchers' perceptions about their roles and participation in the movement, and relations to its governance structure.

4. The roles and locations of scholar-activists in the European food sovereignty movement

As researchers committed to the goals of food sovereignty and to supporting food sovereignty struggles, all but one of us attended the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum. We suggested an informal meeting of researchers during the time allotted for the main four constituencies to meet. In proposing this informal meeting, our intention was to open a space for researchers attending the Forum to critically and collectively discuss researchers' roles and relationships with other constituencies in the movement. As was highlighted above, more than 50 researchers were at the Forum and 39 attended the meeting. We met in an open space around the contours of the eating area amidst the country delegation displays. There was no interpretation, no microphones and very little time to prepare. The discussions were mostly held in English with impromptu interpretation between participants when required. We, as facilitators (Priscilla Claeys, Jessica Duncan and Marta Rivera-Ferre), introduced the meeting with a short introduction outlining the impetus for calling the meeting and suggested two questions for discussion:

(1) What are the pros and cons of becoming a constituency?
(2) Regardless of the structure: what do we/could we contribute to the food sovereignty movement?

The large researchers group then broke into two smaller groups each armed with pens and flip charts, and volunteer note-takers. After the break out discussions, the group came back together and reviewed what had been said. From there, some decisions were made, including the development of a listserv. The meeting also included a short mapping exercise to identify the countries within which participants are working, how their research

Table 2: Overview of self-identification by researchers of relevant thematic axes and policy level.

Thematic axis related to research	#	(Policy) level most reflective of research	#
Production	17	Local	30
Distribution	13	National	19
Natural Resources and the Commons	13	EU	21
Work and Social Conditions	8	Global	16
Policy Convergence	12	Global South	12

Note: Participants selected all relevant categories (39 in total) .

relates to the thematic axes and policy levels of the Forum (see Table 2), the movements or social actors they are engaging with, and what disciplines they are from.

Based on the registration sheet, of the 39 people who attended, 21 countries were represented. Of these participants, 12 were men, 26 women. One person could not be identified. Ten of the 39 had (semi)secure academic positions, meaning they had PhDs and jobs with independent research opportunities at academic institutions or research organizations (beyond post-doc positions). There was a broad range of disciplines represented from the social sciences, and only two from the natural sciences. Twelve researchers worked with or researched cooperatives, CSAs or urban movements. Five engaged with movements addressing food policy and governance issues. Another five stated that they worked with or researched La Via Campesina or other peasant movements. There were researchers who had been collaborating with facets of the movement, although not necessarily in the European context, for years, and others who were relatively new to the movement.

In part because forming a constituency is deeply political, the discussions on a researchers' constituency were far from conclusive. There was some tension, and often unease, as researchers worked through the advantages and drawbacks of what organizing as a constituency would mean. In addition, most researchers were not familiar with the governance structure of the Nyéléni Europe Forum, and some even stated that they were unclear on what 'constituencies' were. As a result, many participants felt ill-equipped to discuss the implications of being recognized as a constituency. Below we present the outcomes of the researchers' meeting, which we structure around three main differences that we feel separate researchers from other actors in the European food sovereignty movement. These differences point to important challenges faced by scholar-activists in their efforts to contribute to the food sovereignty movement.

4.1. Lack of a collective identity as scholar-activists in the movement

That constituencies play such an important organizing role in the global food sovereignty movement reflects that constituency categories serve to identify, protect, foster and guarantee the autonomy of different groups of people with distinct identities and lived realities, including distinct interests, roles and responsibilities, and social positions. The coming together of actors in different constituencies thus shapes (while being grounded in) shared collective identities (Claeys and Duncan 2018). At the heart of most of these collective identities is the shared perception of being a group that is directly affected or marginalized. In fact, one of the main objectives of the use of constituencies and quotas in the governance of the global food sovereignty movement has been to prioritize the voices of those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

Even if aware that they do not belong to the directly affected, many scholar-activists who attended the 2016 Nyéléni Forum found the idea of developing a collective researcher identity appealing. The discussions clarified a shared commitment to the objectives of food sovereignty and to agrarian struggles, and a shared understanding of the political economy of food systems. Furthermore, the researchers expressed feeling isolated in their institutional environments since they face important restrictions on how openly or fully they can reveal their identity as scholar-activists. Being part of a group of researchers who face similar challenges would help them manage these tensions, and lends support to the idea of an agrarian scholar-activist research movement advanced by Borras (Borras 2016). Such a movement would invite researchers to further organize to carry out scholar-activism 'individually and collectively within and through a research and researchers' movement'. Alluding to what such a movement of researchers could have in common, Borras (2016) mentions shared assumptions and visions about the world, a less individualistic and less proprietary way of producing knowledge, being both orchestrated and spontaneous, and democratically shared and dispersed across academia, non-academic research institutions, and movements conducting their own research.

At the same time, researchers who attended the 2016 Nyéléni Forum expressed concerns about the political implications of organizing around a collective identity. At the core of many apprehensions were concerns around relations of power. During the meeting, researchers questioned whether they already had too much influence and if they ran the risk of overshadowing peasants' and other voices if they became more visible or active as a collective. There was a noted risk of domination of Anglo-Saxon and social science researchers. Others warned of the potential of researchers dictating agendas, processes and languages ('academifying' the movement), as well as the risk of influencing the movement to think in 'research' terms. It should be noted here that the organizational culture of European academia is characterized by productivism, individualism, sexism, racism, etc., and scholar-activists should be careful not to transfer and perpetuate the extremely hierarchical relationships of the academic world into the European Food Sovereignty movement or in their relationships with actors within it.

These concerns are remarkably similar to those that have been voiced about the NGO constituency, which also has unequal power relations to other actors in the food sovereignty movement. Researchers, like NGO staff, are often highly educated, multi-lingual, mobile, and are primarily accountable to their own institutions or organizations. This means that researchers may at times pursue different interests and agendas than those of the movement, and because of the position they hold in society, they may exercize undue influence within the movement. Hence, in determining the role of researchers in the European food sovereignty movement, we want to stress that these concerns are valid and should be taken very seriously.

Power relations, it was felt, need to be further explored, not only among researchers themselves but also between researchers and the movement. A key challenge identified in this respect is the lack of collective spaces where such discussions could take place, both internal to researchers and with other movement actors. In creating such spaces, it might be important for scholar activists to cultivate a 'dialogic reflexivity' that entails a practice of reflecting on the structural relationships that mediate their research and positionalities (Routledge and Derickson 2015). However, as Routledge and Derickson (2015) caution, reflexivity is too often turned inwards on an individual researcher's positionality

and identity, and researchers should not become reflexive to the extent that their actual roles and influence become inflated. Hence, reflexivity should be both a catalyst for personal transformation and a tool to support activism (Maxey 1999).

In coalition with other groups, a researchers' constituency may be a space to challenge the narrative and practices of research that fail to consider, for example, how they contribute to the reproduction of racist, colonial, patriarchal structures. This involves taking seriously questions that have been put forward in calls for the decolonization of research (Tuhiwai Smith 2013; de Sousa Santos 2015), about what is considered valid knowledge (and what is not), who is producing it and who benefits from it (and who does not). This also means challenging the idea that Western scientific knowledge is a 'superior' way of knowing and de-silencing the silenced.[6]

During the meeting, participants also raised concerns about isolation. If researchers were to organize as a constituency, there was the possibility of becoming too inward looking, thus not participating as fully in the processes and struggles of the movement. The fear of 'missing out' was expressed as well. One participant noted that while each of the groups was meeting together, an opportunity was lost to listen to farmers. This comment strikes at the core of this paper: how can scholar-activists be part of, yet critically support and study the movement, both individually and collectively? What processes could best foster the construction of a collective identity among a diversity of researchers engaged in different forms of scholar-activism?

4.2. Lack of processes enabling researchers to formulate collective positions or demands

A second aspect that distinguishes researchers from other actors in the European food sovereignty movement is the fact that, unlike affected constituencies, scholar-activists do not have processes in place for formulating collective positions or demands. In certain contexts, researchers may defend political positions or participate in protest. In some arenas, they may demand legal or policy changes, either with regard to food system transformation or with a view to change how research or the academic world is organized. As individuals or through small collectives, they may conduct transdisciplinary research or take action to legitimize different forms of knowledge.[7] Yet they do not represent marginalized or oppressed sectors of the food system. In that sense, researchers also share many similarities to NGOs: they may play support roles and tend to focus on documenting, analyzing, facilitating, critically reflecting upon and supporting the movement in various ways.

At the 2016 Nyéléni Forum researchers' meeting, participants discussed ways to improve and reinforce the various supportive roles that scholar-activists currently play

[6]Drawing upon Mama and Anderson's (2016) reflections on decolonizing food sovereignty in Europe, one could ask if much of the knowledge that food sovereignty scholar activists in Europe produce today is not built upon knowledges and practices from people in the Global South. Yet, decolonizing food sovereignty research must involve efforts to 'prevent the dying – of people, of culture, of ecosystems' (Tuhiwai Smith 2013, 1). A food sovereignty researchers' constituency could, as part of the struggle to transform knowledge systems built on ongoing processes of colonialization, explore ways to strengthen existing food sovereignty work in solidarity with struggles against racism, poverty and patriarchy.

[7]Examples along these lines include the involvement of researchers in platforms such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Spanish Platform for Extensive Livestock Farming and Pastoralism.

or could play in the European food sovereignty movement. There was a sense that the movement could use research more strategically, if research needs were better identified and conveyed to a collective of researchers. For example, participants suggested the possibility of establishing a two-way knowledge hub at the service of the movement and other researchers (i.e. for researchers to better understand the movement). Yet, to date, we note there remains little clarity on the support roles played by scholar-activists in the movement. The contributions (listed below) that were mentioned during the meeting show that these are varied and not limited to research processes per se.

Researchers noted that through their work they collect data and produce analysis that can respond to the needs and requests of the movement, in particular, to support policy advocacy. Researchers also spoke about how they document practices and life stories and disseminate these, along with alternatives that may otherwise be overlooked by those outside of the movement. In line with this, researchers talked about bringing in participatory methodologies (such as participatory action research tools) and undertaking community-supported research that leads to the co-production of knowledge. This, researchers felt, is particularly vibrant in the field of agroecology. Another supportive function identified by researchers was support with facilitation, reporting and assessment of processes, while also having a role to play in critically observing and raising issues (to varying degrees) with the movements. Researchers spoke about how they play a communication role, either by bridging barriers between constituencies, or by engaging with those outside of the movement, by for example supporting the circulation of information and outreach. This also relates to the role researchers play in providing solidarity and relevant connections (i.e. to policy-makers). Researchers discussed how they could, and indeed should, adapt the dissemination of their research results to different audiences to ensure that the outcomes are useful to movements and the communities where they are working. While the production of movement-relevant theory is an ideal to which many scholar-activists aspire, we note that it is difficult to assess how often this happens in practice, as discussed by Bevington and Dixon (2005).

Finally, researchers discussed the technical support they contribute to various local, national or global policy processes, confirming their involvement in 'translation' processes that have important power implications. Indeed, while this packaging of information may be necessary and welcomed at times, in particular in policy or advocacy processes, the technical intervention of researchers may also obliterate movement knowledges (Bickham Mendez 2008) and risks transforming movement demands (Claeys 2012). This translation role was mentioned explicitly in an interview with a coordinator of a food sovereignty network, while reflecting on the recently reformed structure of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), who noted:

> It is mostly in the Working Groups [where constituencies come together to advance on a particular topic or action] that there is more interaction with the academy, also due to the fact that we move from global policy dialogue to more technical levels. Here researchers are really needed as discussions are quite technical. Here researchers are needed to translate food sovereignty principles into technical discussion. (Interview 12)

In terms of collectively supporting the European food sovereignty movement more effectively, researchers raised a number of concerns with regard to practical constraints, objectivity and extraction of knowledge. First, it was noted that if researchers can in

some instances contribute funding, many of their research methods require time and reflexivity. As noted above, such timelines are not always coherent with the needs and realities of the movement, and in particular, of certain social groups within the movement (e.g. women, disabled, etc.). Second, with respect to objectivity, some researchers asked how they can maintain their legitimacy by engaging so actively in the movement. While many of the researchers reject the possibility of objectivity in research, there is acknowledgement of the professional risks associated with undertaking research that is perceived to be biased. It was highlighted at the meeting that such 'biased' research was also at risk of providing a disservice to the movement in so far as the results are less likely to be taken seriously and therefore less instrumental. Finally, it was felt that researchers face the risk of extracting information, time and trust from people in the movement, while not necessarily feeding back into movement processes. This is not a potential threat but an actual one, as noted by one experienced researcher from a research-focussed NGO reflecting on experiences at the global level:

> There has always been a love hate, but mostly hate relationship I think from the social movement side. Many of us have this experience of being used by academics. You know 'Give us your information. We will publish it and you will have credentials, then you will be credible.' And I have had, over the years, academics come to me and say that you know, no one will believe us [CSOs], but if we give them all of our data, then they will publish it and then we can quote them. You know? And it was so infuriating often. And I have talked to lots of people who have been in that situation. And it's a misunderstanding sometimes of what was being offered as well. (Interview 17)

In addition to supporting the work of food sovereignty activists, participants discussed efforts to change their own research institutions and how research is conducted therein. They felt they played a role promoting multi- and transdisciplinary research to overcome the siloed nature of food and agriculture research (e.g. connecting social and natural sciences) and influencing teaching and education programs. They discussed efforts to decolonize knowledge, bring in different 'knowledges', challenge dominant discourses in academia, and expose discursive myths. Many expressed the need to democratize research and to reshape institutional research agendas, while noting that they are often isolated when trying to undertake these changes in their own institutions.

4.3. Lack of collective organization and lack of accountability to each other and the movement

A third aspect that separates scholar-activists from other actors in the European food sovereignty movement is their lack of collective organization. Researchers meet and exchange regularly at academic conferences and are part of the same informal networks. They do food sovereignty-related research projects, disseminate results about and advocate for food sovereignty, and work together to develop food sovereignty curricula (formal programs, or informal support with lectures and activities, excursions). Some attend the same policy processes at the UN (e.g. Committee on World Food Security, Human Rights Council, Food and Agriculture Organization, Convention on Biological Diversity), EU (e.g. Common Agricultural Policy), national or local level (local food policy councils). Yet, researchers lack a dedicated space where they can be fully present as scholar-activists and dialogue with other actors in the movement.

Scholar-activists who attended the researcher group meeting stated that such a space would be useful, as it would facilitate improved coordination amongst researchers to support one another, share and pool resources, and coordinate to avoid research fatigue across the movement. One of the reasons why more coordination among researchers was perceived as important is that it would improve clarity on what food sovereignty research entails, and how to ensure that such research serves the movement. This would be particularly useful in terms of providing support to young researchers, including relevant political education, and to bring more researchers on board, in response to movement needs.

Researchers alluded to the possibility of jointly elaborating guidelines for doing food sovereignty research, in discussion with the movement. The idea of developing particular guidelines for doing research in, with or for the food sovereignty movement is not new. Such guidelines[8] have been developed in different disciplines and contexts with a view to avoid extractivism and ensure that the communities or people researched are not harmed and if possible benefit from the research process. Over 15 years ago, a few trusted academics close to La Via Campesina, including a co-author of this article (Annette Desmarais), initiated some participatory research to investigate La Via Campesina's experience with research and researchers. This included consideration of a research protocol to help guide La Via Campesina's interactions with academics (Edelman 2009, 259). The objectives of establishing a set of guidelines were geared to help LVC address and direct the many requests it receives from researchers, avoid extraction and establish safeguards to better manage negative experiences, while alerting researchers to the specific challenges of activist research. Even though there was much interest among peasant organizations for the research protocol, its elaboration was not completed (Brem-Wilson and Nicholson 2017), mainly because LVC staff did not believe they had the capacity to implement a set of guidelines at an international level.

In the absence of such guidelines, relations with researchers currently develop on a case by case, personal basis, in which mutual trust plays a central role.[9] This organic way of building trustworthy relationships is similar to what has happened around movement-NGOs interactions and may not necessarily be problematic. However, by being outside of the governance arrangements of the European food sovereignty movement (i.e. Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia), researchers as a group are not accountable to the others in the movement.

A number of obstacles to collective organization were raised at the researchers' meeting. First, scholar-activists would require steady and reliable resources (notably, time and money) to better coordinate, and would need to have a clear incentive to do so. While most scholar-activists enjoy engaging in collaborations with others, they tend to work in individualistic environments, they must meet high institutional expectations and they may be intellectually driven by specific/personal research agendas, all of which may hinder collective organization. Second, organizing would also require

[8]Several examples of such guidelines exist. For instance, the Botanical Society of America (1997) has Guidelines for Professional Ethics. Also, TRUST is a pluralistic project which aims to foster adherence to high ethical standards in research globally and to counteract the practice of 'Ethics dumping' or the application of double standards in research, by co-developing with vulnerable populations tools and mechanisms for the improvement of research governance structure. They have recently supported the San people to draft a code of ethics for researchers (Institute 2017; Nordling 2017).

[9]For example, personal invitations for academics to attend the 2018 international conference of LVC were issued on the basis of shared ongoing work, with quotas per region.

addressing questions of categorization: what defines food sovereignty researchers? Or in simple terms: who would be in and who would be out? Would there be a need to distinguish researchers according to their organizational affiliations? Distinguish academics from NGO-based researchers? Would the latter count as researchers or NGOs when it comes to quotas for attending food sovereignty events? If they counted as researchers, would that mean their NGO was effectively given an additional delegate or representative at the Forum? How to account for multiple identities (e.g. Indigenous scholars, or researchers who farm and teach at a university)? If scholar-activists were to respect the quotas established for other constituencies, to ensure balanced representation of different actors in the movement, it would also most certainly negatively impact researchers in terms of their capacity to attend food sovereignty events in large numbers. Like other constituencies, researchers would need to identify ways to select who attends and to ensure there is a good balance between experienced and younger researchers.

Third, if scholar-activists were to formally organize as a constituency, they would need to address issues of representation. Researchers are not representing anyone: they act as independent scholars. While they are sympathetic to the struggles for food sovereignty, they cannot speak on behalf of their institutions (although some of them belong to politically aligned research centers). This distinguishes them from most actors in the European food sovereignty movement, who bring the weight or voice of their organizations when they attend meetings or events. If food sovereignty researchers were to formally become part of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia, how would they structure their constituency in terms of representation and participation in the governance structures of the movement (like steering committees for the organization of fora or activities)? Which processes would they set up to decide on which researchers should attend food sovereignty fora and events? This illustrates a wider problem that affects other non-formally recognized constituencies that do not have a formal organizational structure (e.g. radical activists). The issue of how these actors can formalize their participation in the political structures of the movement given that these structures all rely on organizational representation is at the heart of movement discussions, but no concrete answer has been found to date. As pointed out by one of our interviewees who is a peasant active in the global food sovereignty movement:

> In Europe, one of the debates, when we speak about alliances, are we speaking about alliances between organized movements and non-organized movements? Such as young people. They are very active but have difficulties organizing themselves as movement. That makes it difficult to concretize alliances. It makes strategic alliance building complicated. I am personally inclined to think that it is basically between organized movements that you can make alliances and you can integrate non-organized people into it. (Interview 24)

These examples give a sense of the current lack of structures, processes or spaces for researchers to come together and formally interact with and as part of the European food sovereignty movement.

5. Do scholar-activists need to organize?

In the aftermath of the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum, several people we interviewed started to think more concretely about whether or not, and how, to formally structure interactions with researchers in the movement. One idea, explained to us by an independent

researcher working with various NGOs, was to distinguish between key 'political lobbies' e.g. peasants and other constituencies, and support groups, including NGOs and researchers (Interview 10). This two-tier approach echoes the way La Via Campesina is structured – with peasants in the driving seat, and a number of support staff who, in theory, have no political decision-making power and no right to speak publicly as representatives of the movement. The recently reformed IPC is organized around a similar structure: it gives primary governance roles to organizations of food producers and recognizes support functions for NGOs. Similarly, in the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) to the UN's Committee on World Food Security, NGOs have accepted taking a back seat to social movements in political discussions (in Policy Working Groups), despite being a full-fledged constituency (and sitting on the Coordination Committee) (Claeys and Duncan 2018). This idea was described to us by interviewees as having three main advantages.

First, it would ensure that the agenda and priorities are set up by the organizations representing the most affected, although researchers (and NGOs) could participate to some extent (Interviews 12 and 16). This would address an imbalance that is perceived as a key problem by a number of actors, academic and non-academic. One interviewee expressed the fear that if organized as a constituency, researchers may start 'to talk on behalf of the others' (i.e. non-researchers) or 'define positions before others have time to think about it' (Interview 16). Another worried that the movement would turn too much to research for legitimizing its demands (Interview 9). Clearly assigning support roles to researchers would start to address these concerns. However, as highlighted by one peasant:

> We need that support. We need some kind of agreement on how to interact. The complication of course is that researchers are activists also. … I guess in a movement which is very organized, that can generate tensions with the power structures. (Interview 24)

A second advantage of the proposed two-tier approach would be to keep the focus on building alliances among organizations of the directly affected. Clearly, the priority for the European food sovereignty movement is not to develop collaborations with researchers, but for various sectors/social movements to organize, develop strong links and work together. In the words of one interviewee who coordinates an international network working on food sovereignty: 'Of course researchers can provide support, but it is more urgent for the social movements to organise. Otherwise it remains just ECVC and supporters' (Interview 12). Similarly, another interviewee who works as an independent researcher with various NGOs insisted that more attention needs to be put on strengthening the capacities of political lobbies, some of them weak or barely organized. In his view, any coordination for the food sovereignty movement in Europe that would include researchers and NGOs must account for the fact that 'social movements' representatives need more resources and time in order to fulfil their roles more effectively (Interview 10).

Third, a two-tier system would better reflect the fact that, like NGOs, researchers do not hold the same stakes as other groups in the movement, and do not represent the most affected. As one university professor with experience working with food movements explained:

> And that is what is troubling me in this talk about constituencies. It is suggesting a kind of equality, as if operating on the same level and evidently, that is not the case or should not be the case. When it comes to the peasant movement, to La Via Campesina, it evidently is

> the peasants, the women, the fisherman, the Indigenous People, they are the different constituencies. It should be crystal clear that there might be considerable involvement of intellectuals, of researchers, but that is in a supportive role. (Interview 16)

This relates back to discussions that happened at the level of the global food sovereignty movement around the struggle to ensure that the voices of those marginalized and most affected by food and nutrition insecurity are given priority in global governance, and the implementation of specific mechanisms (mostly quotas) to ensure that this happens (Claeys and Duncan 2018). As we saw earlier, the new governance structure of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia clearly established a two-tier system but distinguishes food producer constituencies from all other actors in the movement rather than assigning support roles to NGOs and researchers.

Through our interviews, two main objections were raised to such a two-tier system. First, some actors we interviewed insisted that NGOs and researchers have access to specific leverages to push for social change and should not be limited to support roles. In the view of one interviewee (14), who expressed total disagreement with the two-tier system, NGOs often represent grassroots organizations that have their own governance structure and processes for defining shared advocacy positions. As suggested by the previously mentioned professor, food sovereignty researchers could:

> … be involved in their own struggles, but then they are struggling in their own working place. In the university and research institutes, trying to redefine the agenda (…) we need universities where critique is possible, is allowed. Where there is diversity in approaches. Where students are offered a wide range of views on these matters. And we are fighting for that. (Interview 16)

Not discarding the possibility of researchers becoming a constituency, this scholar-activist continued:

> I would argue that in a way you have to deserve to become a constituency. You cannot have a constituency simply because you share the same category (…). If you can specify, we, as researchers, are very much tied to the issue of food sovereignty, it cross-cuts our work, it represents a challenge for us (…) and it is to be translated to the agenda of our work, to the conditions of our work, and we should like to do this but given the current power relations we are constrained to do that. So, in our own working place, we are fighting for this and that and that, and we consider this to be an important part, one integrative part of a movement for the struggle for food sovereignty. (Interview 16)

A related fear associated with the two-tier system concerned the 'control that would be exercised' by movements over researchers, who need their own space to ensure 'independent minds' and guarantee their legitimacy (Interview 14). As one researcher working at a research-focused NGO noted:

> It's also tough for me, by saying that I am a bit sceptical about researchers being perhaps a constituency, I mean I also wouldn't want researchers to be only part of the movement, and only be able to attend something like the Nyéléni Forum as observers, where they can't have a voice and they can only observe from the side-lines. I mean I think that would also be equally a mistake to make. (Interview 2)

The second objection to the two-tier system was raised by an interviewee who remarked that 'dividing the movement in two circles does not correspond to the social transformation dynamics that exist' (Interview 9). Indeed, as this food sovereignty activist

working at an international development NGO further explained, the various roles people play in alliances and networks become increasingly blurry. In addition, the movement is more and more 'structured around shared strategies than specific groups and large organizations, which is a good thing. This structure may work at IPC level and not be the best way for the European region' (Interview 9). The European food sovereignty movement is facing important challenges, including linking with urban movements and other processes, notably in the social and public health sectors. As this food sovereignty activist noted, hopefully 'this can be done within one circle', to avoid the risk that constituencies become closed, self-limited clubs.

As was highlighted above, Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia has adopted a governance structure that pushes the two-tier system to new levels, assigning support functions not only to NGOs but to all non-food producer constituencies. How this new governance mechanism will operate in practice and facilitate or constrain mobilization efforts towards food sovereignty in Europe is difficult to anticipate. This structure is silent on the researchers' issue, and this may be for the best. Several authors have warned researchers of the dangers of institutionalization. The World Anthropology Network, in its founding statement (2003), called for the creation of a fluid network of 'non-hegemonic' scholars while avoiding 'anything that could even faintly resemble an alternative structure with its own ideologies, practices and forms of governance' (Hale 2008). However, there have also been recent efforts in the US to organize scholar-activists in support of agroecology in an Agroecology Research-Action Collective (ARC),[10] indicating that there is potential in harnessing researchers' energy and resources to support food sovereignty struggles. As the example of ARC shows, organizing can take place independently of existing movement structures and nevertheless enhance accountability. At the level of the global food sovereignty movement and agrarian movements more broadly, efforts have also been made to develop networks by bringing together activists and researchers in dialogues.[11]

6. Conclusion

We showed how the constituency approach adopted at the global level was replicated at the European level, with minor adjustments, to organize the 2011 and 2016 Nyéléni Europe Food Sovereignty Fora. Building on this, we discussed the participation of researchers at the 2016 Nyéléni Europe Forum in Cluj, and the implications of their presence in such high numbers. The three main ways in which researchers differ from the affected constituencies in the movement are related to issues of: not having a collective identity; the inability to articulate collective demands; and, a lack of accountability to others in the movement. We showed that scholar-activists tend to play supportive roles in the

[10]The Collective strives to leverage 'institutional and personal resources to prioritize movement-relevant and partnership-based research, elevate the scientific validity and worth of knowledge created outside the academy, provide asked-for social movement support, and pursue advocacy to effect positive change.' See: https://agroecologyresearchaction.org/home/.

[11]Other efforts have been undertaken to organize dialogues between activist-scholars and agrarian movements, for example by the Initiatives in Critical Agrarian Studies (ICAS). Another example is LVC's close links with GRAIN, an international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. The results have been used by LVC in its struggles for access to and control over land and seeds.

movement, much like NGOs. Yet, unlike NGOs, they are not formally recognized as a support constituency. Scholar-activists are currently not organized as a group, and there is no operating mechanism for inter-researcher and researchers-movement coordination and communication. They are also absent from the governance structure of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia. We demonstrated that this situation benefits scholar-activists in a number of ways (e.g. no limits to their participation, ability to act independently, individually negotiated relationships with specific actors in the movement) but also limits the contributions they could make to advance food sovereignty in Europe. We ended with a discussion of distinct proposals for formalizing and reinforcing the contributions of scholar-activists in the European food sovereignty movement.

We placed the discussion on the roles of researchers in the European food sovereignty movement in the context of broader changes and challenges that the movement is facing as it is organizing its expansion to non-food producers – urban-based movements, progressive retailers, and local governments. We analysed the new governance structure of Nyéléni Europe and Central Asia and pointed to a tension between two conflicting understandings of constituencies: as social movements representing marginalized and affected groups, in this case food producers, or as actors who have different identities and positions in the food system (such as researchers) but nevertheless have a transformative role to play.

We do not wish to point to ways of addressing this tension, in part because we see this tension as a productive one if the goal is to build and strengthen a strong diverse food sovereignty movement. Rather, we hope this article will encourage scholar-activists to further identify, exchange and support each other in fighting their own battles within their research institutions, including against the privatization and commodification of knowledge and education.[12] We are also inspired by the possibility of scholar-activists coordinating and self-organizing, although it will likely be challenging for food sovereignty researchers to form a cohesive group capable of thinking, acting, and functioning as a collective. Yet, we think that increased coordination would help reinforce the contributions that researchers make to the movement while also ensuring that they do no harm.

Finally, we hope this article will generate discussions with all sectors of the European and global food sovereignty movements with a view to acknowledge and critically examine the contributions, roles and complex relations between researchers and other food sovereignty actors. As scholar-activists committed to the goals of food sovereignty, we feel that this is a discussion that we ought to have, 'not because we have to be there, but because we are there' (Interview 1).

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[12]In response to such trends we have seen proposals for 'slow research' (Adams, Burke, and Whitmarsh 2014) as well as a number of manifestos including the *Reclaiming Our University!* manifesto originating at the University of Aberdeen and *The Academic Manifesto: From an Occupied to a Public University* (Halffman and Radder 2015).

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