



# The Coalition of Immokalee Workers Uses Ensemble Storytelling Processes to Overcome Enslavement in Corporate Supply Chains

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## Abstract

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) has successfully combated modern-day slavery by transforming the ways that over a dozen major brands, including Taco Bell, Subway, and Wal-Mart, manage their supply chains. The CIW's efforts over more than 20 years have effectively stopped enslavement practices, including abuses such as wage theft and peonage indebtedness. We conducted a field ethnography, interviews, and archival analyses to understand this success. We find that the CIW employs a decentered, egalitarian, and ensemble approach to their multiplicities of alliances by collectively “animating” themselves and their partners through ensemble leadership. This combination of alliances, along with worker-driven monitoring, brings life to the CIW motto “We are all leaders.” Translating this motto into daily practice is how the CIW virtually eradicates enslavement practices in corporate supply chains.

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The exceptional success of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in combating modern-day slavery deserves our study and emulation. In 2014, the CIW, using its innovative Fair Food Program, was awarded the Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking in Persons.<sup>1</sup> The “Human Trafficking” referenced here involved enslavement practices of the worst sort. These practices included physically chaining workers inside trucks, fraudulently withholding wages, and charging exorbitant prices for food and lodging. In addition, workers were threatened with guns and violence, both to themselves and also extending to their families in their home countries.

To break this long-standing vicious cycle of abuse of vulnerable migrants lured to Florida by false promises, the CIW used four strategies. These strategies included partnering with government to change laws affecting the victims of enslavement, partnering with police to go undercover to document enslavement, and helping the victims of enslavement to become legal workers. Finally, worker-driven monitoring and significant penalties for violations ensured the continuing effectiveness of their workplace reforms.

We observe that a key factor in the success of the CIW is their ensemble approach to leadership, both within their organization and with their external allies. This ensemble approach employs storytelling processes, and it allows the CIW to animate a cross-field range of actors into a collective movement resulting in large-scale change.

The expectation that business be a good corporate citizen in society is expanding (Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2015; Crane, Henriques, Husted, & Mattena, 2015). There is increasing concern over corporate social responsibility and pseudo-corporate responsibility (Wickert et al., 2017). The highly effective approach of the CIW’s Worker-Driven Social Responsibility holds great promise for all these issues.

Despite the success of the CIW, shocking slave-like working conditions, which we call enslavement, are the daily reality even today for as many as 60,000 (with estimates as high as 400,000) in the United States, and an estimated 29 to 46 million persons around the globe who are enslaved.<sup>2</sup> Our focus here will be not on the sources and roots of this terrible problem, which has been done so thoroughly by Byerly (2011), Crane (2013), LeBaron (2014), Bales (2000), Bales and Trodd (2013), and others, but rather on effective responses.

Byerly (2011, p. 124, 126) notes that “Combating modern slavery is a mammoth challenge” and adds “Many human rights violations do entail business involvement, although not all are committed by the business itself but by a third party.” It is this complex web of third-party, transnational, multidisciplinary aspects of this problem, which lead us to employ two perspectives: ensemble leadership theory (ELT), and multiplicities, to explain the exceptional success of the CIW in combating enslavement practices and related labor abuses. Our purpose is to use the above two perspectives to understand how the CIW achieved such broad and lasting success. They gained the support of 14 major brand corporations, and thereby changed the face of agricultural work in South Florida from what several media sources called “ground zero” to a model for all of commercial agriculture. Furthermore, in addition to implementing change for the better, such changes have been successfully maintained and extended. This is especially important because so many other improvement and regulatory strategies (Butkus, 2007) have eroded over time, circumvented by abusers.

We make two theoretical contributions to understand better the social dynamics underlying this persistent problem of enslavement practices within business supply chains. Our first contribution to theory is to offer a living case example of ensemble leadership and ensemble storytelling (ES). The CIW history demonstrates that traditional bureaucratic hierarchical systems may be less effective than flatter, more diverse “heterarchical” systems. We term those dynamic heterarchical systems “Ensemble” (Rosile et al., 2018).

For our second contribution to theory, we demonstrate how the CIW’s broader multiplicity pattern of relationships has inherent practical advantages over the corporate supply chain’s narrower socioeconomic base. The CIW develops extensive multiplicities in the form of alliances with consumer groups, student groups, and faith groups. In addition, the CIW is able to intensively deepen those relations in successfully combating enslavement, wage theft, and sexual abuse of migrant workers in the field. Through their Fair Food Program, the CIW has turned even former adversaries into allies within their expanding ensembles of multiplicities.

The structure of the article is as follows. In “Enslavement Practices in South Florida ‘Tomato-Land’” section, we provide a brief introduction to the enslavement practices as experienced in South Florida among tomato field workers. In “Theories of Ensemble Processes and of Multiplicities” section, we present the above-described two areas of theoretical contributions relating to ensemble processes and to multiplicities. In “Method” section, we explain our methodology for co-creating the story of the CIW, together with current CIW members and archival reports. In “The CIW’s Ensemble Beginnings and the Worker-Driven Fair Food Program” section, we offer the history of

the CIW's success, with a timeline of important events. We focus especially on their cross-field alliances as they develop from a small workers group into a broad-based social movement.

In "Findings" section, we provide the evidence of how the CIW performs ensemble leadership and ES, and how these ensemble processes relate to multiplicities. Finally, in "Discussion and Conclusions" section, we conclude that the CIW's rich environment of multiplicity, along with ensemble leadership through ES, is essential key to the CIW's "worker-driven" programs which have had such durable success against enslavement and other workplace abuses.

## **Enslavement Practices in South Florida "Tomato-Land"**

What are "enslavement" practices? LeBaron (2014, p. 766) defines bonded labor or debt bondage as a situation in which a person uses their labor as collateral for a loan of money, but the lender manipulates the debt, credit, or contract in a way that makes it impossible for the person to repay and so must continue to labor involuntarily. Allain et al. (2013) define forced labor as having two elements, one is "that workers face the menace of a penalty and the second is that they have not offered themselves voluntarily for the work undertaken" (p. 10).

We found evidence of all these three elements of enslavement, debt bondage, menace of a penalty, and involuntary work, in our research. We adopt these three descriptive factors as our definition of enslavement. We see these not as independent factors but as intertwined causal elements, such that one would be enough to warrant use of the term *enslavement*. However, all three of these exist in the environment of the South Florida agricultural fields. As we demonstrate with the following discussion, we have ample evidence for our use of the term *enslavement*.

From interviews as well as published sources (see Estabrook, 2012), we learned that "recruiters" (the unscrupulous ones are called "coyotes") go to Mexico and promise people documents, a job, housing, and weekly pay. These workers are taken across the border (most commonly the U.S.–Mexico border) by the coyote, who charges them a large fee. After arriving in the United States, the migrant workers are then forced to pay for housing, food, and even the alleged travel expenses nominally incurred in bringing them from Mexico, all inflated to an unsurmountable price (debt manipulation). At this point, the migrant workers have little to no money left due to this large debt. They are then considered enslaved (Bowe, 2008; Marosi, 2014; Sellers & Asbed, 2011), because they are kept against their will, usually with the use

of violence. Bales (2012) defines this situation as contract slavery, a common situation where “the contract is used as an enticement to trick an individual into slavery, as well as a way of making the slavery look legitimate” (p. 20).

Estabrook (2012, pp. 85–88; also reported in Bales & Soodalter, 2009) tells the unfortunately too-common story of Antonio Martinez. Martinez came to the United States after his parents became ill. He paid a coyote to get him north to a construction job in Los Angeles. At the border, Martinez was handed off to another coyote, and crossed the desert for 3 days. The coyote named Chino handed Martinez off to yet another coyote named El Chacal, who drove them to South Florida where a labor contractor named Abel Cuello bought Martinez and other slaves for US\$350 each. Altogether, 26 slaves were locked into two trailers that had cockroaches, rats, lizards, snakes, and other animals from the surrounding swamps. The only water available was from a shallow, rank smelling well. The migrant farm workers slept on mattresses on the floor, were locked in at night, and overseen by armed guards.

Martinez eventually escaped. Cuello was convicted on charges of forced labor and served less than 3 years in prison. Upon his release, he was able to renew his labor contracting license and began supplying field workers for Ag-Mart, one of the nation’s largest agricultural produce companies. From these examples, we see a “system that is ‘disembedded’ (Polanyi, 1957 as cited in Elmes et al., 2016) from human values, norms of reciprocity, and the common good, which are the basis for fair and just exchanges in any economic system” (p. 1047). In short, we see enslavement.

We turn now to a brief overview of our theories in “Theories of Ensemble Processes and of Multiplicities” section, followed by a discussion of methodology in “Method” section.

## **Theories of Ensemble Processes and of Multiplicities**

We find two theories most helpful in understanding and analyzing the CIW. First, we use the concept of ensemble leadership to examine the relationships among CIW members, and the relationships between the CIW and its allies. Second, we consider multiplicity, especially as it relates to growth and development within an entity’s social context. Employing both these two theories, we find an unexpected compatibility and mutual reinforcement as each element offers characteristics favorable to the flourishing of the other.

With ELT, we have multiple leaders enacting leadership together. Ensemble leadership is collective, dynamic, decentered, and heterarchical (Rosile et al., 2018). It has an indigenous sense of collectivity, avoiding the dualism of individual group, and the dualism of one-many, in favor of the

concept of “multiplicity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). It is dynamic, avoiding static beginning-middle-end storytelling in favor of living webs of multiple stories. Its webs are decentered as well as multicentered, and non-human-centric, encompassing all plant, animal, and planet life. Its structure is heterarchic, and it is enacted using ES processes.

ELT (Rosile et al., 2018) employs the word *ensemble* as it is used in the world of theatrical performances, as in, for example, an “ensemble cast.” As explained above, this refers to a style of interacting whereby key cast members share the “star” role, and each is a star. An example of an ensemble would be the cast of the 1980’s through 1990’s TV comedy *Cheers*. The various stars in a successful ensemble performance create a synergy whereby they enhance each other’s performances, rather than distracting by competing for the spotlight.

The ELT approach to leadership challenges notions of the inevitability of hierarchy, and it challenges our tendency to project hierarchy onto our perceptions of social situations. Archeologists discovered they had fallen into this perceptual error in studying leadership in centuries-ago Mesoamerica. Earlier studies had projected an assumption of hierarchy onto what was discovered regarding these ancient cultures (Mills, 2000). More recently, there is agreement that those ancient cultures had a social structure which archeologists now identify as “heterarchy.” Heterarchy refers to structures that are dynamic and flexible; they may include hierarchy but are not limited to it (Mills, 2000).

ES (adapted from Rosile, 2017) is the term we use for the practices by which ensemble leadership is implemented. It is the communicative glue holding together individuals in more egalitarian groups. As analyzed by Crane (2013), the systematic individualization of labor facilitates exploitation and enslavement. The processes of ES foster solidarity within the organization and also with external allies.

ES’s seven processes are the following: (a) ES Together-Telling, (b) ES Materiality, (c) ES Economics, (d) ES Worker-to-Worker training, (e) ES Elicitation, (f) ES Authorship, and (g) ES Theatrical Performances. Each of these is discussed in greater detail in “Findings” section, with an explanation of how each process occurs within the CIW context. Please note that these categories are not designed to be exclusive. They are intended only to provide rough categories for descriptive purposes that might help others wishing to engage in ensemble processes.

Other worker movements have also enacted more egalitarian styles of decision-making through simple “consensus and assemblies” (Dobrusin, 2012, p. 176) for decision-making. These too are subject to the “tyranny of consensus.”

In contrast, ELT and ES offer specific ways of implementing more egalitarian processes, thus avoiding the “reproduction of inequality” (Amis et al., 2020) in the deeper structures of the organization’s operations.

The concept of multiplicities has roots in work by Bergson (1960, 1988) and deeply influences Deleuze (1990, 1994; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) in a Deleuzian century (DeLanda, 1999). Linstead and colleagues have applied it to organizations (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; Linstead & Thanem, 2007).

“Multiplicity is arguably Deleuze’s most important concept,” and is the basis of other Deleuzian concepts: rhizome, assemblage, and “concept” itself (Roffe, 2010, p. 181). Any situation is composed of three multiplicities that “form a kind of patchwork or ensemble without becoming a unitary or whole” (Roffe, 2010, p. 181). An extensive multiplicity is spatializing, dividable into a number of parts. Intensive multiplicity is temporalizing, with changes to its nature. The third multiplicity is a virtual multiplicity that is real without necessarily being embodied in the world, but it is not “abstract alternative possibilities.” Instead, it is “something like a real openness to change that inheres in every particular situation” (Roffe, 2010, p. 182).

In overly simple terms, the theories of multiplicities help us move away from too-generalized characterizations of situations. Such generalizing can easily become a problem with, for example, dualizing actors as good versus bad, labor versus management, or other either-or dimensions. However, some may think multiplicities go too far. Perhaps the multiplicities viewpoint becomes so mired in overly complex visions as to create an ambivalence that stifles practical action for change.

Nail (2013) criticizes Deleuze’s multiplicity work on political organization on the basis of political ambivalence, virtual hierarchy, and subjective paralysis. One might see political ambivalence as stifling activism. This stifling could be an outcome of a pure affirmation of difference, possibly resulting in an avoidance of taking sides as a result of the ambivalent state (Žižek, 2004, *Organs without Bodies*). Hallward (2006) adds that multiplicities can be “indifferent to the politics of this world” (p. 162). However, recent work on human trafficking includes consideration of politics (Van Buren et al., 2021) and assumes business has a responsibility to society (Banerjee, 2008; Musto & Boyd, 2014; New, 2015; Pedersen, 2010). These multiplicity-compatible perspectives pay attention to politics and also encourage activism.

Some see multiplicity-related theories as inhibiting activism in general. For Badiou (1999), Deleuze and Guattari’s virtual exists only in hierarchized space where the potential for change is not actual change. Nails (2013) considers the dangers of multiplicities, citing the “Occupy Wall Street” movement as an example of multiplicities gone bad. In brief, the Occupy movement

is said to be leaderless. Here, we would agree that the Occupy efforts did not pull things together in what we would call an ensemble process. However, for the present authors, we do not see leaderlessness as necessarily negative. For us, an ensemble where all are participating as leaders is not the same as being “leaderless.” We discuss this ELT below.

Focusing on the strengths of multiplicities, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) define multiplicity as an “assemblage” (p. 4), and state “multiplicity grows” in many directions in a “unity of totalization” by rhizomatic tubers, by roots shooting out in “lines of flight,” and by “rhizome” imagined cycles of Nietzschean “eternal return” (p. 6). “A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 6).

In other words, a rhizome is like a TV show which spawns “spin-off” shows. The 1970’s U.S. TV comedy *All in the Family* had seven of its characters each star in a subsequent successful series of her or his own. As another example, the barroom comedy *Cheers* (mentioned above) lasted over a decade, until the early 1990s. Then, the *Cheers*’s radio-psychiatrist character was spun off to create his own successful series in *Frasier*.

When a multiplicity grows and develops, as it expands and includes others, it will change. It is not a case of simply more of the same. Instead, when organizations form alliances, the entity created is now different from the original. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call this an assemblage, and define an assemblage as follows:

An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily change in nature as it expands its conditions. (p. 8)

Such change is both the promise and the threat of expanding multiplicities.

To return to the analogy of the TV comedy series, *Cheers* was a show with multiple stars, thus a rich multiplicity. *Cheers* was also a great example of an ensemble performance, where no single person was “the” star. Starting with this multiplicity of stars, each of the various stars is like bulbs or tubers, who each are potentially able to blossom into their own successful spin-off shows. With this analogy, we see that multiplicities are fertile grounds for ensembles. By making this connection, we contribute to theories of multiplicities and ensembles.

## Method

Our research question was, “How has the CIW employed Ensemble Leadership to successfully combat modern-day slavery?” The CIW motto,



boldly emblazoned across the front of their headquarters, is “We are all Leaders.” There were visible indicators that they practiced this motto, such as refusing to identify any individual as leader to inquisitive newspaper reporters. We wanted to know whether and how actual daily behaviors of the CIW reflected this “equalitarian” (Popper, 2008, p. 170) approach to organizational leadership.

During our early stages of this research, we used what we call “self-correcting induction” (Boje & Rosile, 2020), rooted in Charles Sanders Peirce (1958) and his triadic of abduction–induction–deduction. Our method included a cycling-through from theory to experience and back to theory, in an iterative and self-correcting process described by Watson (2012): “Theory is thus both ideation for guiding fieldwork and an outcome of the thinking process which is stimulated by the interplay in the researcher’s mind of theory and field experience” (p. 20). With this self-correcting process, we were able to refine our research question to ask more specifically: In what ways, if any, has the CIW employed the seven methods of ES in their enactment of Ensemble Leadership in the CIW organization?

In choosing our research method, we felt the best way to compare espoused ensemble values with daily practice would be through organizational ethnography. We provide a narrative of our research process in Appendix B. This process incorporated seven features of organizational ethnography, as identified by Ybema and colleagues (2009, pp. 6–9):

1. We used combined methods of participant observation, conversational interviewing, and close readings. We were “observant participants” at the 2017 Columbus, Ohio, march and demonstration at the Wendy’s Headquarters, then again for a week at the Immokalee headquarters to observe daily operations. One of our team also worked for a day picking onions. We scheduled most of our conversational interviews over 1- to 2-hr meals. We employed close readings of CIW web pages and worker-to-worker training materials.
2. We were at various locations for firsthand reporting: in Columbus, Ohio; in Immokalee, Florida, and surrounding fields; and in Sarasota, Florida.
3. We addressed hidden issues relating to power. When we observed a weekly “encuentro” meeting, we were asked to stay well outside the circle of the discussion group, so our mostly White academic group’s presence would not inhibit the responses of the mostly non-White workers. It is somewhat embarrassing to admit that the CIW members were much more attuned to, and open about, “hidden issues relating to power” than we privileged researchers.

4. We were both context-centered and actor-centered, featuring both macro observations of remote agricultural fields, as well as personal conversations with agricultural field workers.
5. Interviewees spoke in their own language, framing experiences in their own meaning-making ways, with their own coalition members translating.
6. We sought varying perspectives and interpretations to achieve multi-voice. In addition to workers and staff, we had many conversations with the CIW's faith-based allies as well as student interns.
7. Finally, we incorporated reflexivity and positionality in our own meaning-making processes through our research group's reflection times as we traveled together over multiple days for this field research.

Because we are studying egalitarian “ensemble” leadership processes, we chose the more egalitarian research method of a co-produced ethnography (Down & Hughes, 2009), avoiding the “demarcation between worker and intellectual” (Figiel et al., 2014). We admire the words of Callon (1986) regarding translation and voice: “to speak for others is first to silence those in whose name we speak” (p. 216). Like Schatz (2013), we seek “to let the people being studied ‘speak’” (p. 315). Happily, this egalitarian intent was also a requirement of the CIW: They agreed to interviews on the condition of coauthorship of our findings. However, the review process for most, if not all, reputable academic journals such as this one is somewhat extended in time and esoteric in nature. In the end, our CIW participants chose to review and comment on, but not coauthor, this article. We continue to collaborate with them on other projects related to our shared goals of eliminating enslavement and workplace abuses.

This and similar challenges taught us as researchers a more “equalitarian” (Popper, 2008, p. 170) approach to all aspects of our research, mirroring the CIW's everyone-a-leader beliefs back to us. In this way, our “subjects” helped us avoid the Figiel and colleagues (2014) pitfall of our research methods “reproducing the very social world they were designed to take apart” (p. 314). Such mirroring made our own self-reflexive auto-ethnographic processing of our experiences with the CIW even more relevant and educational for us as co-learners in this process.

Overall, our team engaged in many activities as “observant participants.” We marched with the CIW for hours in the rain in Columbus, Ohio, in March 2017. We ate meals with workers who with their children took buses to participate in these demonstration marches. We sat with students and religious leaders in educational workshops by alliance partners representing a range from church groups to Marxist groups to LGBT (lesbian,

gay, bisexual, transgender) groups. Then, in Florida, in May 2017, we listened, wrote down, and taped conversations. One coauthor, Rosile, set out in predawn hours to observe field trainings in actual, remote fields. We observed and interviewed people doing their daily work at the Immokalee headquarters, as well as observing a weekly meeting open to all workers. In addition, another coauthor, Mabel Sanchez, got hired for a day in the fields, in the hot sun, doing real “picking” to experience the material conditions of agricultural field work (also see Appendix C for Sanchez’s experience in onion fields).

The above experiences were shared and discussed among research team members and with CIW members and allies both “on the spot” and also via follow-up emails and phone calls. Our team continues contact with the CIW. We anticipate further collaborations with them to promote their accounts and their vision of transforming agriculture. Finally, we share with Clarke (2010) the aim of “documenting efforts that not only have explanatory power but connect that power to praxis” (p. 301). We hope our methods offer insights to reduce and eliminate enslavement and abuse of power in the workplace and beyond.

Next, we present our case history of the CIW.

## **The CIW’s Ensemble Beginnings and the Worker-Driven Fair Food Program**

We begin our brief history with an overview of the CIW’s beginnings. As much as possible, we use the words of the members themselves, based on our research team’s interviews with them in Immokalee, Florida, in May of 2017.

Please note that the following history is abstracted in Table 1, Timeline for CIW Collaborative and Worker-Driven Actions. This table is drawn from our research team’s personal interviews with the CIW and their archival data on their web sites and elsewhere (including Solomon, 2015). Some portions of the table are presented in greater detail in Appendix A, Summary of Phases.

Lucas Benitez tells us the history of the CIW. Lucas was one of the original members of the CIW. He has been identified by outside sources as one of the “founders” of the CIW.

In 1993, Lucas Benitez was a young man from Mexico who was picking tomatoes in South Florida. Experiencing unfair treatment in the fields, he began meeting with a small group of coworkers in the local church basement. They called themselves the “Southwest Florida Farmworkers Project.” As Lucas tells it, in our research team’s interview in May 2017 in Immokalee,

**Table 1.** Timeline for CIW Collaborative and Worker-Driven Actions.

Timeline partners	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
CIW Workers mostly from Mexico, Guatemala, & Haiti, PARTNER with Faith-based, Campus-based, Consumer groups	1993 CIW began as Southwest Florida Farmworkers Project	1997 CIW adopted name Coalition of Immokalee Workers 1997 CIW partners with DOJ against enslavers Flores and Gomez 1998 CIW partners with DOJ against enslaver Cuello 1998 allies with National Campaign for Fair Food 1998 allies with Interfaith Action of S.W. Florida	2000 Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA) formed; 2001 CIW partners with DOJ against enslaver Tecum 2003 CIW partners with DOJ against enslavers Evans family 2004 Just Harvest USA faith-based ally	2008–2010 Letters and protests continue against fast food brands not yet joining Fair Food	2010 CIW & Florida Growers agreement expands to over 90% of Florida Tomato industry 2012 Fair Foods Standards Council 2012 Worker-Driven Social Responsibility 2014 CIW gets Global Citizen award from USA	2015 “Food Chains” Doc. Film Award 2016 Beard Leadership Award 2018 group + SumOfUs supports Wendy’s boycott
Legal Decisions assisted by CIW	1997 Flores 1999 Cuello	2001 Tecum 2004 Ramos	2007 Evans 2008 Navarette			

(continue)

Table I. (continue)

Timeline partners	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Key Collective Social Actions		1998 month-long hunger strike by six members, failed; Bishop Ramirez intervenes to end strike	2000 March for Dignity 234 miles 2001 Taco Bell Boycott 2004 McDonald's Boycott	2006 Chipotle Mexican Grill Boycott 2007 Burger King Boycott	2010 Wendy's Boycott	2015-2018 Nationwide boycott of Wendy's
Corporations joining Fair Food Program: members agree to not purchase tomatoes from Fair Food standards violators				2005 Taco Bell 2007 Yum! KFC, Pizza Hut, Long John Silver's, A&W McDonald's 2008 Burger King, Subway, Whole Foods 2009 Bon Appetit, Compass, Aramark Sodexo	2012 Chipotle Mexican Grill 2012 Trader Joe's 2014 Wal-Mart	2015 USA Hold (Giant, Stop & Shop) 2015 Fresh Market 2017 Ben & Jerry's

Note. CIW = Coalition of Immokalee Workers; DOJ = Department of Justice.

Lucas: So we began the Wednesdays reunions (meetings). . . .and . . . no one had experience in managing reunions at that time so it was more like group discussions . . . at that time we had a poetic name: The Southwest Florida Farmworkers' Project.

Lucas explained that every one of the members was a leader. During local protests, reporters would ask who the leader was, and the response would be "we all are." Lucas explained that there was not a Gandhi figure to come out of their movement because there was no one individual responsible for the coalition, they were all equally leading it. Via community meetings and education on workers' rights, every member was given a voice in a safe space to bring out the conversation of abuse. The awakening of the CIW's members power came when Pacific Tomato Growers made the announcement that the minimum wage for farmworkers would be decreased. Below is Lucas's account of it:

Lucas: . . . we began . . . creating more awareness in the community. And in 1995, when it came out that one of the companies was reducing the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$3.85 per hour, plus 10 cents per bucket . . . We are in a bind, we are like then starting more intensive series of reunions with the community. Um, we asked what are we going to do? People were angry. And a series of reunions came about day after day after day at the church until. . . the 11th of November at night we had reunion outside the church because at that time all the reunions were at the catholic church, in a small room that the Guadalupe Social Service lent us.

Yeah, we were 600 that arrived. So we said, what will we do? Well then, let's do a strike tomorrow. If then each of us here brings someone else tomorrow, that will not go to work, we will double our numbers. And we focused the strike on the company that had decreased the minimum wage. When we arrived at the parking lot . . . You would see dozens and dozens of buses in the morning. When people saw that we were there, we got there yelling and everything, the people in the other buses began getting off and explaining that "it was not just that one company, it was all the companies and here, this happens, and where I work this other thing happens." So the people got off the buses and of the 600 (or) 800 of us began the march, we became 3,000. (May 2017).

After a 5-day strike, Pacific Tomato Growers succumbed to the pressure and reversed the wage cut, eventually increasing wages to US\$5.25 an hour.<sup>3</sup>

In 1997, the CIW was trying to establish an agreement on human rights for agricultural workers but the growers refused to recognize the CIW. To make the growers' denial public, six CIW members went on a month-long hunger strike. The growers not only did not budge but also had established a

US\$100,000 fine to any grower who would accept the CIW's terms. Bishop John Nevins joined the CIW's cause and called on growers and corporations to dialogue with the CIW and join the Fair Food agreements.<sup>4</sup>

The hunger strikers' health was deteriorating seriously, with no end in sight. Bishop Nevins helped break the month-long fast by holding a mass in Naples, Florida. The involvement of the Bishop made the strike notable and symbolic, and allowed the strikers to withdraw from their fasting with honor. However, it was clear that the lives of the CIW members and farmworkers did not matter to the growers, who were under pressure themselves from other growers and from corporate buyers to keep down prices. Other measures had to be taken.

Through the late 1990s, two shifts had occurred. First, the CIW's years of partnering with law enforcement, including risky undercover work among other efforts, was paying off in convictions (see Table 1 and Appendix A for details regarding 1997, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2008 convictions). Second, public pressure led by the CIW with their Fair Food alliance groups hit a high point with the 234-mile March for Dignity in 2000. The important shift that changed everything was when the CIW initiated a boycott, not against the tomato growers, but against those who would buy from tomato growers who tolerated abusive practices. With the support of their growing network of alliance partners, the CIW initiated a boycott of Taco Bell in 2001, and then McDonald's in 2004 (see Table 2).

The turning point came in 2005 when Taco Bell signed on to the Fair Food Program, followed in the next decade with 13 more major corporations, including all of Yum! Brands and major grocery chains, including Wal-Mart in 2014. Signing these corporations was a great success (Drainville, 2008). Still a problem remained: How could the CIW be sure that the signees were living up to their promises? The CIW asked themselves, what would it look like if the workers designed a program to ensure fair labor practices?

In 2011, the CIW created the Fair Foods Standards Council (FFSC) to do this monitoring. The CIW has coined the phrase "Worker-Driven Social Responsibility" to convey the equal partnership the workers have in monitoring workplace standards. In our interviews with Judge Laura and her staff, they expressed it as follows (cited in Rosile, 2017):

Formerly, when authorities discovered forced labor (slavery), officers swept in and arrested everyone. Now, the enslaved workers are treated differently:

(Before CIW and FFSC) ICE (Homeland Security) would have taken everyone to jail.

**Table 2.** CIW Alliance Chronology With Corporate Supply Chains.

Start date	Corporate agreement with CIW
2005	Yum! Brands (Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC)
2007	McDonald
2008	Burger King
2008	Whole Foods Market
2008	Subway
2009	Bon Appétit Management Co.
2009	Compass Group
2009	Aramark
2009	Sodexo
2012	Trader Joe's
2012	Chipotle Mexican Grill
2014	Wal-Mart
2015	The Fresh Market
2015	USA Hold (Giant, Stop & Shop)
2017	Ben & Jerry's

Note. CIW = Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

Now, trafficking victims and witnesses can get work authorization. (Judge Laura)

And until the authorization came through for these enslaved victims to work legally in the United States, the FFSC put these victims in hotel rooms and personally stayed with them until the special work permits arrived. There were other ways the CIW's "Worker-Driven" approach was more effective:

With one of the first calls to a grower complaint line (an "independent" auditor, not affiliated with the CIW), the worker's name was given to the grower. The grower grabbed the worker and FIRED him. Then (other workers) called OUR complaint line and in a few short weeks the grower had to apologize—apologize to ALL of us, to us and to the WORKERS (in public). (Judge Laura)

Judge Laura emphasizes the difference between traditional corporate monitoring processes and the FFSC's worker-driven processes, by telling the story of "the Homestead case":

Judge Laura:

There was one forced labor case that happened in the Fair Food program. It is a textbook case of how (well) this system works.



First, the supervisor involved was already listed on our web site as “Do not hire,” on the “No Hire” list. In 2 weeks a worker called in a complaint. In 1.5 days we had an investigation going on there. In 2.5 weeks we met with the US attorney and served (documents) on the Homestead case.

So, Feb 14 the call came in, Mar 3 arrests were being made, AND, the victims were NOT taken into custody (as had been the practice), but put in hotel rooms with us (Victor and others).

Mar 17 an indictment was filed, and sentencing was just this past January.

(This was VERY SPEEDY.)

We met them at the laundromat, there was a lot of FEAR because they LIVED with the perpetrator. We passed out cards (and explained their rights).

A woman stood and said, “I don’t want to wait—I will speak now, and (the rest of you) can speak too!”

Formerly, ICE would have taken EVERYONE to jail.

NOW, trafficking victims and witnesses can get WORK AUTHORIZATION (in conjunction with VIDA, a non-profit for survivors of sexual violence and forced labor).

Crossing state lines added further complications. Victor remembers:

It used to be workers could complain in Florida but could be threatened (by the bosses) “you just wait until we cross the border into the next state!” But now we have 6 states. Then we got one crew leader fired. (Victor, interview, May 11, 2017)

We do a comprehensive assessment of performance in every area of the Code of Conduct, and this report ONLY goes to the participating grower and to the CIW. They must have BINDING plans (for corrections) and we must see a change by the next visit. Otherwise, they are WARNED, then DROPPED. (Matt W)

And yes, there have been cases of growers dropped from the program.

Most standards are not upheld without consequences. But we are like consultants. . .

We can give them a BLUEPRINT of how they can fix (their problems), do risk prevention, and fix illegal situations. (Judge Laura)

Furthermore, there are not just punishments; there are also incentives to abide by the Fair Food Codes of Conduct:

Growers get purchasing preference [with the Fair Food certification].

These (Fair Food) growers are now the “employers of choice.” Fair Food growers have LESS labor shortage. (Judge Laura)

The system is still designed and spearheaded by workers. . . Workers can make a complaint without fear of retaliation. We take complaints but NOT anonymous ones. We are the megaphone (for their voices), and also the protective barrier for complaints. (Matt W, interview, May 11, 2017)

Paying attention to the voices of the workers is crucial. As Judge Laura explained,

Workers know their own industry, (so we interview them), and then we have worker-to-worker education at least one time each harvest. (This way) informed and active workers are the front lines (of this process). . . The CIW did try using the outside auditing firm of “Verite” but they did NOT have the model of partnership that the CIW had in mind, nor the depth of monitoring. For our audits at least 50% of the workers are interviewed, not a small sample. This is not done anywhere else. (Also) we have a 24-7 complaint line staffed by our field monitors (who rotate through this job). (Judge Laura, interview, May 2017)

And finally,

CONSEQUENCES are what make this work. After 6 seasons, we have resolved over 1700 complaints. (Judge Laura)

Did it help that I was a judge (in dealing with complaints)? Yes. The process is more like “treatment court” where former adversaries are getting together on the same side of the table . . . Half of the fight is letting people be heard. (Judge Laura)

Parallel to Judge Laura’s belief in letting people be heard, the CIW listens to its members, many of whom identify as female and have experienced sexual violence in the field. Therefore, the CIW recently launched the Fair Food Sisters Campaign, where Lupe Gonzalo, a founding member of the CIW, was invited to the stage by Olympic gold-medalist Abby Wambach for the “Together Live Tour!” to share her story:<sup>5</sup>

Abby: My goodness, where do I begin. Lupe, what is your story?

Lupe: My name is Lupe Gonzalo, and I am an immigrant. But I am also a woman, I am a mother, I am a farmworker. And more than anything, I am a human being. Like 80% of women working in the fields, I have experienced the sexual violence. When I would come home from work, I carried the weight of my anger. I did not have space in my heart to embrace my children, and much less to love them in the way they so desperately wanted.

Abby: What did you do to change those circumstances?

Lupe: We decided to put an end to the abuses that oppressed us day after day. We decided to no longer be victims, and instead demand the right as women to work free of sexual harassment and violence.

The CIW educates about and performs gender equality in and out of the agricultural fields. The CIW recognizes that the fight for women's rights is the fight for human rights. As shown in the accounts provided above, the CIW's ensemble processes recognize the ways the interests of women are the interests of all. Anyone working in the agricultural fields of Immokalee, Florida, has a right to dignified work.

Having provided this brief history, we turn to "Findings" section. We offer evidence of how the CIW's actions demonstrate ensemble processes. These processes shaped and enhanced the multiplicities of alliances through which the CIW achieved its success in the face of huge corporations and complex supply chains.

## **Findings**

We present first our findings related to the CIW's Ensemble Leadership practices, as constituted in the seven ES processes (mentioned briefly in "Theories of Ensemble Processes and of Multiplicities" section). Each process is explained, with examples of how it was observed in our study. Following that, we discuss the CIW's multiplicity characteristics which we observed. We conclude with Table 3, which links extensive, intensive, and virtual multiplicities with ES behavior. We begin with our observations of how the CIW enacted the seven ES behaviors:

1. ES "together-telling": This process prefers that people speak in their own voices, and that multiple voices can be heard together. This process avoids summarizing and speaking on the behalf of others or purporting to represent the voice of others. This was demonstrated when our research team might ask a question and be told to consult the workers directly. Also, to accommodate different languages, when people

**Table 3. Extensive, Intensive, and Virtual Multiplicities of CIW ES Behaviors.**

ES aspect	ES behaviors	CIW examples	Multiplicity
ES Together-Telling	Speaking in own voices; Avoiding summarizing; Multi-lingual; Back-and-forth conversational	Speakers have translators; Workers speak, not "leaders"; Stages are shared with alliance groups; We researchers are told "ask the workers"; "Encuentros" emphasize "you are not alone." "Actors" carry and assemble the "set"; Women have equal time at the mikes; Men serve the lunch; Lucas sweeps up; Victor: "Then we got one crew leader fired."	Ext
ES Materiality	Share physical tasks; Many voices heard; Equal speaking time reflects sociomateriality		Ext & Vir
ES Economics	Pay equality/equity reflects socioeconomics	Boycotts and Unified action; Judge Laura: "Consequences are what make this work." Partner corporations will not buy from farms in violation of the Fair Food Code of Conduct; All CIW staff are paid the same salary. Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC); FFSC field reps answer the phone hotline and conduct audits; Worker-Driven Social Responsibility (WSR); Lucas Benitez: early meetings sought "ways to help each other" across cultural lines; Matt (FFSC) "is designed and spear-headed by workers;" and "we are the megaphone for their voices"; Lupe: "mutual support is how we lead."	Ext
ES Worker-To-Worker	Workers are trainers; Trainers are bilingual; Workers monitor abuses		Int
ES Elicitation	Asking, inviting, and sharing; Asking more people rather than extrapolating	"What do you see?" (in drawings and in theater performances); FFSC Field monitors' interview at least 50%; Lupe: "I never thought a woman would be able to be in front of a group to speak" and "Friends to help me and others supporting me taught me to be a leader."	Int
ES Author-ship	Collaborative writing, scripting and drawing	Art work in drawings, and scripts in theatrical performances, reports like this article, all are reviewed and modified by staff as a group.	Vir
ES Theatrical Performances	Involving audiences as "spectators"	Performances invite spectators on stage; audience is asked for their experiences; Radio program is principally in Spanish, with some programming in different indigenous languages.	Ext

Note. ES = ensemble storytelling; CIW = Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

spoke in front of a group, someone accompanied them to translate, sentence by sentence. This category also includes the firsthand personal account of the “testimonio,” unfiltered by others such as journalists.

2. **ES Materiality:** The material “props” that accompanied speaking reflected broad-based egalitarian participation. For example, during the demonstration at Wendy’s Headquarters in Ohio in March 2017, equal numbers of men and women had equal time at the microphones. Those who acted in skits also worked at carrying pieces of the sets to the stages and back to the trucks afterward. In addition, there were men (rather than women) in charge of making lunch for the group of over a hundred participants in Columbus, Ohio. Finally, handing out tamales in the lunch line was Lucas Benitez himself, one of the founding members of the CIW. We also saw Lucas sweeping the floor.
3. **ES Economics:** The CIW’s Fair Foods Standards come with economic “teeth” such that purchasers in the program will not buy from those found in violation of standards. If one grower violates Fair Food standards, none of the dozen or so major buyers will purchase the violator’s tomatoes. The numbers also tell a story. In the case of the CIW’s monitoring group the FFSC, more than 1,700 complaints were handled within 3 years, with about one third of the decisions not in favor of the worker.
4. **ES Worker-to-Worker Training:** Those who instruct the workers in the fields regarding their rights have also worked in the fields themselves. Also, peer training means trainers need to be bilingual. This emphasis on peer relationships is apparent when Lucas Benitez tells how they recovered over US\$100,000 in wage theft in the 1996–1997 growing season:

Lucas: Y como lo hacíamos, no era porque teníamos como eh con abogados, con este policia. No, no, no, lo hacemos como comunidad.

Translator: How did we do that? It wasn’t that we had an army of lawyers, and we didn’t use the police to be able to do it. We did it just as a community.

5. **ES Elicitation:** Instead of telling an audience what a picture or skit is supposed to convey, trainers instead ask very open-ended questions. Most often, we heard the question, “What do you see?” regarding a drawing or a skit or film clip. When conducting workplace monitoring, the FFSC interviews 50% or more of the workers at each location (not a “sample”). Instead of “storytelling,” behaviors of monitors were more often “story eliciting.” Such eliciting also had the material

aspect that interviewers in the fields would go down on their knees in the dirt so as not to slow down the worker.

6. ES Authorship: When skits are developed, or training drawings created, worker-artists collaborate, asking for feedback and modifying accordingly. For example, Rosile observed a colorfully drawn training banner depicting a man in a tomato field with a bucket of tomatoes on his shoulder. The man is walking past a woman crouched down picking tomatoes. In a cartoon bubble, the man asks the woman what she is doing on the weekend, referring to her as “mamacita.” Rosile is told that the term “mamacita” (which to Rosile translated literally as “little mother”) is considered a sexually inappropriate form of address, perhaps more like “hot mama.” In developing this drawing, the two CIW artists who collaborated in its creation would have also shown it to the entire staff, received feedback, and made changes until the group was satisfied. Perhaps the man’s eyebrows were raised more suggestively, perhaps the woman’s eyes were squinted with worry. In these practical ways, even art and authorship become ensemble.
7. ES Theatrical Performances Theater for social change is inclusive and highly visual. It involves audience discussion, and it may involve spectators becoming actors (“spectactors” according to Boal, 1979). Its material, visual, and active and engaging nature allows it to overcome language and status barriers. These ensemble performances also allow participants to exchange roles, where actor becomes author or audience becomes actor.

We see the CIW as an ensemble of multiplicities of three kinds. First, it is extensive multiplicity, expanding alliances. The CIW’s extensive multiplicity is its spatializing movement from Florida agricultural spaces to other states up and down the eastern United States, and into other countries. Second, it is intensive multiplicity, temporalizing a reflexive understanding of socially responsible capitalism in its Fair Food Program across generations. Also, CIW’s intensive multiplicity is its temporalizing changes, as it moved from migrant farm worker demonstrations to forming programs that cross institutional field alliances with faith-based people, students, consumers, and a dozen corporate supply chains (from Taco Bell to Wal-Mart).

Finally, CIW is virtual multiplicity, transforming corporate social responsibility supply chains of some of the major brand corporations into accountable monitored relationships. CIW’s virtual multiplicity affects changes in actual situations of production and consumption. This includes the CIW’s radio station broadcast in indigenous languages, its extensive virtual archive

of CIW's organizing events, its use of a cell phone app to record migrant farmworker's hours and compute pay, and its large collection of YouTube recordings of demonstrations, rallies, marches, and acts of theater.

The CIW is a multiplicity of "together-telling" and "together-leading." By "flattening all the multiplicities on one single plane" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), the CIW creates "worker-driven corporate social responsibility (WSR)." It does this with "lines of deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9). It is these lines that make the coyote-subcontractor exploiters of migrant workers flee to other states, other multiplicities, that are not yet part of the Fair Food Program. The CIW also is driven by "potential multiplicity" (Deleuze, 1994, Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 50) by preparing in advance the overlapping alliances of student groups and faith groups with consumer groups (Caruana & Crane, 2008).

To highlight the connections we see between multiplicities, ES, and examples of CIW Ensemble behaviors, we offer Table 3: Extensive, Intensive, and Virtual Multiplicities of ES Behavior.

The three kinds of multiplicities are entangling. For example, CIW is both actors and actants (software, apps, techniques of monitoring). These are entangled in the extensive (spatializing) multiplicities and, with each movement, gain the intensive multiplicity (temporalizing), actualizing virtual changes in the game of power relations and negotiations, and by technical solutions to collecting hours by scanning workers' ID cards with a cell phone. The cell phone use is simultaneously an extensive multiplicity, drawing on another technology unrelated to agriculture. The linking of the cell phone to a payroll app is a virtual multiplicity that expands beyond Florida to other states, beyond tomatoes to other kinds of agricultural produce.

The CIW itself constitutes an intensive multiplicity by bringing the grower/employers into direct, accountable contact with the workers, circumventing unscrupulous supervisors, middle-men, and coyotes. As workers perceive these improved conditions, which are reliably verified by the CIW and the FFSC, these improved working conditions in turn lead to lower turnover and easier recruitment for grower/employers. This ensemble of multiplicity actually allows growers, corporate brands, and consumers to save money that had been siphoned off due to dysfunctional, unethical, and illegal activities.

Following is an example of ES methods, using both the Together-Telling and the ES Worker-to-Worker training, using one of the CIW's many hand-drawn pictures. On this particular drawing, on the left side of the page, the year is noted as 1980. There is man holding two bags of groceries, and also standing with the man is a woman holding two more bags and a child holding one bag. The caption says that the pay for a bucket of tomatoes in 1980 is 40

cents, and notes that in 1980, one could buy five bags of groceries (as pictured) for US\$50.

On the right side of the page, labeled 2000, there is a man holding two bags of groceries. The caption says the pay for a bucket of tomatoes through the 1990s is 45 cents, and that a person can only buy two bags of groceries for US\$50 in 2000. By looking at this picture, it is clear that a worker cannot afford to feed a wife and child, like they could in 1980.

This is one of the older training pictures, probably, from the date, used in the early 2000s. Observers of the picture would be asked, What do you see? Even without being able to read, a person can understand the message. Without understanding math and fractions, they understand the impact of wages on their ability to feed themselves and their families. They understand inflation as measured in bags of groceries rather than decimal points. This is worker-to-worker training; this is speaking in the language of the other; this is ES.

The CIW espouses their “three C’s” method of creating change: consciousness, commitment, and change. The CIW would say that their ensemble educational process yields understanding (consciousness), which brings commitment to improve, which brings change. In the view of these authors, it is the CIW’s ensemble processes that foster egalitarianism and inclusiveness, which in turn builds the necessary solidarity for creating a social movement that ultimately can bring about institutional change.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Increasing awareness of workplace abuses covered up in tangled supply chains have led to recent legal efforts. Several key laws have been adopted to extend responsibility for subcontractor’s workplace behaviors up the supply chain. California instituted its “Transparency in Supply Chains” act in 2012, Great Britain’s “Modern Slavery Act” was in 2015, and France’s “duty of vigilance” law was initiated in 2017. As most of the CIW successes described here occurred years ago, and the recognition of their Presidential award was in 2014, can we assume the problem is solved?

Unfortunately, despite these advances, the offense of enslavement is still very much with us (Burke, 2018). The Academy of Management gave this topic “Showcase” status in August 2019, and the *Journal of the British Academy* published a 2019 Special Issue on modern-day slavery. Researchers Shantz (2015) and Blitz and Simic (2019) report that anti-abuse legislation still relies upon “transparency and voluntary disclosure” (Blitz & Simic, p. 1), with disappointing results. “Moreover, the quality, scope, depth, and regularity of reports are frequently compromised,



especially since there are no meaningful sanctions for non-compliance” (Blitz & Simic, 2019, p. 6).

We agree completely with the above critique, and we offer evidence of the CIW’s performance on each dimension. This article has documented the CIW’s Fair Food Program’s quality: It is headed by a former judge with field staff who also man the telephone complaint lines. Its scope has now expanded to seven states, to crops other than tomatoes, and to related abuses such as sexual harassment. For depth, they interview 50% or more of workers for a given grower. For regularity, they require worker trainings twice each season. Their sanctions have real teeth: The Fair Food Program buyer members pledge to not buy from growers who are Fair Food violators, providing a serious financial impact.

While the bad news is that enslavement is still a huge problem, the good news is that the CIW’s worker-driven corporate social responsibility (CSR) methods of ensemble and multiplicities have effectively addressed such atrocious practices. The CIW’s Fair Food Program provides transparent and effective monitoring that adjudicates disputes from both the worker and corporate/grower sides. Their approach is now time-tested and the number of corporate participants continues to expand. Since their 2014 Presidential recognition for combating modern-day slavery, the CIW has not only held the line against enslavement, they have increased the regions covered by the Fair Food Program, now up to seven states. Furthermore, recent efforts have focused particularly on sexual harassment. This history shows that the CIW’s worker-driven methods can provide effective remediation and improvement to many geographic areas, many industries, and many forms of workplace human rights abuses, with enslavement being perhaps the most egregious.

The CIW success story is due to two main factors. The first factor is its empowering ensemble processes of Ensemble Leadership through ES. The second factor is its expansion of its power base of ensembles of multiplicities both internally and externally, transforming potential adversaries into alliance members through the Fair Food Program.

By empowering themselves through alliances with church, student, and consumer groups, as well as Fair Food Program partners, the CIW can engage in equal power negotiations with major corporations. This increases the chances for truly win-win outcomes (Rosile et al., 2017) that successfully influence the practices of major corporations.

Through the Fair Foods Program, the CIW increases its multiplicity of alliances and thus its base of influence. The huge corporate buyers, the Taco Bells and the grocery chains, become multiplicity-allies with the CIW when they pledge to not buy tomatoes from non-Fair Foods growers. The Fair Foods Program, according to Judge Laura, acts virtually as consultants to

violators, providing detailed guidelines to help violators move into compliance. This reflects more of the “assemblage” relationship of a multiplicity, with more of a power-with ensemble process rather than an adversarial relationship.

Where do we authors, as academics involved in this research, fit into this multiplicity of alliances? We each consider ourselves as allies in seeking humane working conditions. For our own self-reflexivity, we are concerned with critical performativity (Esper et al., 2017). Is the CIW’s “penny a pound” slogan letting off corporations too cheaply? We know from the concept of hegemony that even participative processes can be exploitive, and that we as researchers run the risk of maintaining a system of oppression even as we critique it (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016; Gond et al., 2016).

Overall, we find that the CIW uses ELT’s and ES’s multivocal processes to foster self-empowerment, solidarity, and egalitarianism. Without these features, the CIW might implicitly reproduce the same sort of inequality they oppose (Amis et al., 2020). In addition, we address the CSR literature’s “not our job” argument (Musto & boyd, 2014; New, 2015; Pedersen, 2010) by taking an expanded “multiplicity” view of CSR which includes politics and social allies (Feasley, 2016; Van Buren et al., 2021). We have demonstrated that the standard-issue, corporate-dominated “accountability regimes” have been ineffective (Feasley, 2016) against enslavement. In contrast, the CIW’s worker-driven processes have been award-winningly-effective in identifying, monitoring, and remediating enslavement and abusive labor practices. Enforcement is ensured through the CIW’s multiplicity-style assemblage of alliance partners.

We agree with Banerjee (2014) that the corporation’s ability to act with social responsibility while embedded in current political and economic systems is limited. We suggest that the CIW has successfully addressed some of these limitations with their multiplicity of alliances. Their Fair Food Program provides an example of this type of societal (rather than state) regulation of corporate governance.

Bakhtin’s (1981) multiplicity applies to how CIW balances the two forces of social heteroglossia that are relevant to organizational theory. First, CIW organizes alliances, bringing worker voices and consumers into decentralized dialogic participation. Second, working with existing centralized corporate supply chains, CIW seamlessly adds worker-driven participation, usually conspicuously absent. Furthermore, we have seen that the CIW’s ensemble processes have advanced efforts toward egalitarianism in worker movements far beyond mere consensus (Dobrusin, 2012).

In summary, we suggest the outstanding successes of the CIW’s worker-driven and ensemble processes gives us a truly effective model for a

worker-driven corporate social responsibility that could apply equally well to a broad range of labor abuses in almost any business context we can imagine.

The CIW's most unique and distinguishing characteristic may well be its egalitarian slogan written boldly on the front of its modest headquarters building in Immokalee, Florida: "We are all leaders." The U.S. Presidential recognition they received in 2014 states:

For its extraordinary efforts to combat human trafficking by pioneering the Fair Food Program, empowering agricultural workers, and leveraging market forces and consumer awareness to promote supply chain transparency and eradicate modern slavery on participating farms, we award this Presidential Medal. (<https://ciw-online.org/blog/2015/01/presidential-medal-combatting-slavery/>)

To this outstanding ensemble performance, we say "Bravo!"

## Appendix A

### *Summary of Phases*

*1993* Pre-formation of Movement: El Proyecto de Trabajadores Agrícolas del Sur Oeste de Florida (The Southwest Florida Farmworkers Project)

- A group of workers united to protest wage theft in front of the contractor's home, successfully reclaiming owed wages
- Enslaved workers contacted Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) for help; investigation of Miguel Flores and Sebastian Gomez began

*1995* Dialectical Protest Action to Redress Wages

- Workers read in newspaper that the minimum wage was going to be reduced from US\$4.25 to US\$3.85 per hour, plus 10 cents per bucket
- 3,000 workers united to protest the minimum wage reduction

*1997* Southwest Florida Farmworkers Project renames CIW and they took action against enslavement contractors with Department of Justice (DOJ)

- Miguel Flores and Sebastian Gomez were sentenced to 15 years each in federal prison on charges ranging from enslavement, wage theft, and assault

*1998* Movement expands to include National Campaign for Fair Food initiative and adds Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida to its movement alliance

- Unprecedented month-long hunger strike by six members
- Formed Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida
- 1999 CIW continues work with DOJ
- CIW aided DOJ in getting testimony resulting the sentencing of Abel Cuello to 33 months in federal prison on slavery charges.

*2000* Dialectical action plus Student/Farmworker Alliance forms and joins the movement

- 234-mile March for Dignity, Dialogue, and a Fair Wage, Fort Myers to Orlando, Florida
- Formed and joined Student/Farmworker Alliance

*2001* Dialectical action taken against fast food brand corporation, Taco Bell

- Taco Bell Boycott Began
- CIW and the DOJ successfully got Jose Tecum sentenced to 9 years in federal prison on slavery and kidnapping charges

*2002* More CIW assistance to DOJ

- Runaway enslaved workers contacted CIW and investigation began, in collaboration with DOJ, against Ramiro and Juan Ramos

*2003* CIW works with Miami-based homeless outreach organization

- CIW in collaboration with a Miami-based homeless outreach organization began investigating the Evans.' Allegations of homeless as indentured slaves as they repaid the Evans' for food, rent, crack cocaine, and alcohol from their workers' pay

*2004* Just Harvest USA formed and joins CIW alliance movement plus more help with DOJ

- Just Harvest USA formed
- Ramiro and Juan Ramos were sentenced to 15 years each in federal prison on slavery and firearms charges, and forfeiture of over US\$3 million in assets

- 2005 Taco Bell protests bring Taco Bell into negotiation and they agree to sign agreement for Fair Food Program; McDonald's boycott protest starts
- Taco Bell agreed to join the Fair Food Program
- Start of McDonald's boycott in March

*2006* Start of the 6-year Chipotle Mexican Grill campaign

*2007* Yum! Brands extends the Taco Bell agreement to KFC, Pizza Hut, Long John Silver's, and A&W Restaurants, and the movement expands its multiplicity of alliances

- McDonald's joins the Fair Food Program in April
- Start of Burger King boycott in April
- CIW in collaboration with a Miami-based homeless outreach organization helped get Ron Evans sentenced to 30 years, Jequita Evans to 20 years, and Ron Evans Jr. to 10 years in federal prison on drug conspiracy, financial re-structuring, and witness tampering charges
- CIW was contacted to help uncover the Navarrete brothers who were beating, restraining, and keeping in trucks a dozen tomato pickers in Florida and South Carolina, paying them minimum wage, until they were able to repay the Navarrete family

*2008* is an expansion of corporate agreement as Burger King decides to join the Fair Food Program in May, and Subway, Whole Foods follow.

- Subway, the largest fast food purchaser of Florida tomatoes, joined by the end of the year
- Whole Foods Market was the first grocer to join the Fair Food Program
- Cesar and Geovanni Navarrete were sentenced to 12 years each in federal prison on charges of conspiracy, holding workers in involuntary servitude, and peonage

*2009* Protests continue against fast food brands not yet joining Fair Food Program, and several join including Amark and Sodexo, and others

- Letter to Chipotle CEO Steve Ells
- Bon Appetit Management Co. joined FFP
- Compass Group joined FFP
- Amark joined FFP
- Sodexo joined FFP

2010 Agreement between CIW and Florida growers to expand CIW's Fair Food code of conduct to over 90% of the Florida Tomato industry; protest against Wendy's start because they decided to stop buying tomatoes from Florida and purchase them from Mexico dealing with even worse labor exploitation

2012 Chipotle Mexican Grill was the 11th company to join the Fair Food Program and beginning of awards for CIW's worker-driven social responsibility initiatives

- Trader Joes' became the second grocer to join the Fair Food Program

2014 Wal-Mart Joined the Fair Food Program (FFP)

2015 to 2017 Nationwide Boycott Wendy's; boycott continues.

## Appendix B

### *Narrative of the Research Process*

Our research builds on Herder's (2012) account of how the CIW has used traditional Chicana/Latino theater performances and other storytelling practices to critique corporate policies, disclose human trafficking, and open spaces where farm workers and corporate leaders could work together to reform working conditions in commercial agriculture. The choice of the CIW as the focus a joint project began in Spring 2014 at a research conference. Some of us (coauthors Boje, Rosile, and Sanchez) discovered that coauthor Herder's dissertation research subjects, the CIW, provided an ideal exemplar of Rosile et al.'s (2018) work on egalitarian leadership theory. Four of us (Boje, Herder, Rosile, and Sanchez) agreed to work together to combine these two streams of research, communication/storytelling along with ensemble processes that enhance social responsibility. Our team of four researchers includes one native Spanish speaker (Mabel Sanchez) and two members (Rosile and Herder) with some informal-conversational Spanish. This was important because Spanish was the preferred language of most of the people with whom we met.

The prereseach phase began in Fall 2016. Initially, the team began consulting both faith-based and student-based allies of the CIW with whom coauthor Herder was familiar. These initial contacts recommended both archival materials and a contact person within the CIW. After 12 months of preparation (i.e., getting Institutional Review Board [IRB] approval from two universities, researching archives, and contacting members of the CIW), the research team was able to take part in a CIW boycott in Columbus, Ohio, described next.

In Spring 2017, our CIW contact explained that the CIW organization was extremely busy planning their biggest demonstration in 10 years. Their multicity tour would culminate in Columbus, home of Wendy's corporate headquarters. Wendy's Corporation had been (and still is) a major hold-out, refusing to sign with the CIW's Fair Food Program (FFP). It was strongly recommended that we researchers observe the CIW in action in Columbus, where the activity would cover Friday evening through Sunday evening. Our team, along with two students, attended all the events over the 3 days.

On the Saturday of the 2017 Columbus, Ohio, action at Wendy's Corporate Headquarters, our team gathered with the demonstrators in a local church to have lunch. One of the first things we saw was the man who had been identified as a "founder" of the CIW, Lucas Benitez, pushing a broom to clean up something spilled on the floor. Soon after, as we went through the cafeteria-style food line, Lucas handed us our burritos from his position working on the lunch line. When the theatrical skits began later in the morning, we realized the worker-actors were the same people who had carried in parts of the scenery and had set up the stage. Overall, we saw countless examples of egalitarian behaviors such as these, and as a result, developed a more nuanced understanding of the CIW motto, "We are all leaders."

After that trip, our team received an invitation in May 2017 to visit the CIW's headquarters in Immokalee, Florida, to observe their day-to-day activities. One member arrived early and was able to observe an actual training in the fields with the agricultural workers. Departing in the 4:30 a.m. darkness and traveling 2 hr to the remote rural location for this worker training, this researcher realized how easy it would be in such locations for abuse to go unnoticed and unreported. There had been no signs of habitation for many miles, likely discouraging any thoughts of running away.

This was the second of two mandated trainings per season. CIW trainers noted that the CIW paid the workers for their time spent in such training, and that the training helped them to know their rights and be sure they were respected. Trainers used ensemble "eliciting" rather than "telling" methods of training, building their stories on the comments of the workers themselves. They showed large banners with hand-painted depictions of workers in fields, and asked "What do you see?" Collaborative discussions began about working conditions, including workers' experiences of inappropriate sexually oriented comments.

A hand-painted banner depicted cartoon-style characters with conversation bubbles over their heads. A male worker is carrying his full bucket of tomatoes past a female who is crouched down filling her own bucket. The male's wide eyes are directed at the female, and the conversation bubble indicates he is calling to the female, using the word "mamacita."

The researcher's basic Spanish suggested a literal interpretation of "mamacita" as "little mother." However, the trainers seemed to be eliciting some embarrassed laughter, and the discussion concerned inappropriate sexual innuendo. Later, one of the trainers explained to the researcher that "mamacita" was not merely a diminutive term, but rather a colloquialism with heavy offensive sexual overtones.

The trainer had concluded the session with a review of the procedures for reporting any such offensive or abusive behaviors. Options included a telephone hotline regularly advertised on the CIW's own radio station, in addition to other points of contact for complaints. Trainers emphasized that conditions in the past were not so good as currently experienced, due to their own fellow workers' complaints and the CIW's efforts following up on such complaints.

During this time in May of 2017 in Immokalee, all members of the research team were able to spend 3 days together, observing and interviewing CIW members. While the whole team was together, we were fortunate to be able to travel north from Immokalee to Sarasota. There, the team spent 3 hr over dinner with a former federal judge who was now the head of the CIW's monitoring arm, the FFSC. Four of the Judge's FFSC team members were present as well, and contributed to a flowing patchwork of observations about the nature and operations of the FFSC. As her parting remark, the Judge summarized their work by saying, "You have to CARE."

While at the Immokalee headquarters, the team was able to observe participative staff meetings where everyone sat in a circle of rocking chairs. Each had access to the flip chart and pens at one spot in the circle. The team also observed a community meeting, with film clips and whole-group discussions. The team had interviews with a male and a female founding member, and with other CIW members acting as translators (from Spanish to English). In addition, the team interviewed key office workers, Alliance for Fair Food student interns, and interfaith alliance members.

Our team noticed one room of the headquarters which housed the store where workers were buying by rice, beans, and other staples at reduced prices. All around the headquarters, in the great room and on every wall and hallway, our team observed and photographed huge painted murals, emancipatory sayings, and media clippings about the CIW. Finally, there were also casual conversations with others at the headquarters, both in Spanish and in English, discussing the work of the CIW and their individual roles. This research is based on all these above-described previous story trajectories brought to bear on our "observant participant" activities and conversations with CIW members, to whom we are greatly indebted for sharing their valuable time and important stories.



## Appendix C

### *Excerpt From Field Excursion by Mabel Sanchez*

I chose this excerpt from my ethnographic field notes that best represents a day in the field. This excerpt is page 9 of 13 total pages, and it is toward the end of the experience.

Notes written on Friday June 9, 2017 at 7:48pm.

Location of field: Mesquite, New Mexico.

Date of Participant Observation: Friday June 9, 2017.

Time during the field: 6:00am to 12:30pm.

Activity: Harvesting onions.

All of the sudden the contractor tells us, the pickers, that we need to hurry, because the Juan (the grower's right-hand man) and his crew were expecting us to have finished sooner and now they need to pick up the sacks. Now all of us are rushing, everyone is yelling "hurry hurry!" (Comments: apurense apurense que ahi viene Juan!). I run to count my first sacks because I had lost count, and in the meantime, the contractor was still going around asking everyone how many sacks they had filled. I run around counting my sacks. (Comments: for some reason, it was hard for me to keep track of my sacks, I would try and memorize my number of sacks so that I could then keep adding to that number but I could not memorize it. I had already been in the field for more than 5 hr with no water break. Also, the fact that the contractor would keep coming up to me and asking for my number of sacks and then the contractor being doubtful about my number, asking me to show her where my previous sacks were, made it extra hard to keep track because I was already doubting myself. I saw the contractor argue with most of the pickers but mostly with the women and the kids about how many sacks everyone had truly done. Also, those who she did not argue with were the men who started at one end of the field and went straight through to the opposite end of the field. She moved the women and children around to different grooves each time we were done with a section. For example, the children were working on some grooves; in the morning, the contractor placed me further up from them but in the same groove. When the kids caught up from where I started, she moved them up ahead of me; then, when I was done, she moved me to a random stop in the field. My informant mentioned that she should have left us in one groove and allowed us to work our way through. In my opinion, I felt that the contractor confuses people on purpose as every sack that goes unclaimed will be money in her pocket. I really wonder how much she makes for every sack? My informant mentioned

about the contractor having a contract with Juan, the growers right-hand man, but did not know how much the contractor makes. I also wonder if the contractor makes the burritos she brought for lunch and sells them for US\$3.50. Hace negocio redondo con los trabajadores ya que les revende los burritos y soda.) My informant and I made a comment on how the contractor made it hard for us to keep track. The kids were also running around showing the contractor where their sacks were (Comments: The contractor would be jotting down stuff on her clipboard and yet she kept doubting most of us regarding the number of sacks of onions we had each filled).

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### Notes

1. Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) receives Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts in Combatting Modern-Day Slavery at White House Forum! See <http://ciw-online.org/blog/2015/01/presidential-medal-combatting-slavery/>
2. Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery index.
3. <https://ampglobalyouth.org/students/coming-together-for-farmworkers-rights/>
4. <http://www.ciw-online.org/blog/2014/09/bishop-nevins/>
5. CIW's Lupe Gonzalo "Only together were we able to break our silence. . ." Interview from the Together Live. See <http://www.ciw-online.org>.

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**Mabel Sanchez** (PhD, New Mexico State University) will begin her assistant professor position at California State University, Los Angeles, in Fall 2020. Her research focuses on what constitutes dignified work for farmworkers in the Southwest of the United States, extending her prior work on modern-day slavery conducted with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) of Florida. She was awarded the Michel Peron Memorial Scholarship and the Glen Yoquelet Scholarship, and she has presented her work in the United States and France. She has coauthored journal articles, chapters, and coedited two handbooks.