

The Role Labor Unions and Worker Centers Play in Restaurant Industry Equality

by

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFL	The American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSCME	The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
BOH	Back of the House
BVWU	Burgerville Workers Union
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
FCWA	Food Chain Workers Alliance
FOH	Front of the House
HERE	Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees International Union
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
NFFWU	National Fast Food Workers Union
NLRA	The National Labor Relations Act of 1935
NLRB	The National Labor Relations Board
PVWC	Pioneer Valley Workers Center
RAISE	Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment
ROC	Restaurant Opportunities Center United
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
UFW	The United Farm Workers of America
YWU	Young Workers United

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on both union and worker center labor organizing strategies in the restaurant industry in order to better understand how restaurant workers can seek justice. The restaurant industry has a reputation for being difficult to organize; therefore, the purpose of this research is to uncover the role unions and worker centers play in addressing gender, race, class inequality in the restaurant industry. Restaurant workers are plagued by low wages, low job mobility, lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation. Business practices that encourage inequality is a social problem relevant to social justice and social change in the food system because they exploit workers. This thesis asks what role do unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry? This research is guided by frameworks of inequality and uses critical inquiry, content analysis, and labor organizing strategies as methodologies. The findings of this research show that unions and worker centers have the potential to enhance the labor movement in the restaurant industry due to their different strengths at addressing inequality. This research contributes to social justice in the food system by focusing on the ways unions and worker centers are addressing inequality as labor organizing strategies and by addressing how their efforts complement one another. Future research should look closer at the challenges unions and worker centers face in collaborating.

Keywords: restaurants, labor, unions, worker centers, gender inequality, racial inequality, class inequality.

Chapter One

Introduction

Restaurant workers are plagued by staggeringly low wages, low job mobility, the lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation.

Working in an industry with little hope of moving up the ranks or securing an income that pays adequate wages causes many restaurant workers to struggle to make ends meet. This struggle forces cooks, servers, bussers, bartenders, and dishwashers to compete for wages; a competition that is often purposefully initiated by managers and owners keeping workers divided. While low wages, low job mobility, and the lack of job security impact the industry in its entirety, these issues are compounded for women and people of color due to sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation.

Walk in to any restaurant in the U.S. and it is likely that you will be able to observe how gender and racial segregation is mapped out by noting who works where. As you are greeted, seated, and watered note that the host is most likely a European American woman. The next person you encounter is your server for the meal who is also most likely a European American woman. If you get a chance to see behind the scenes into the kitchen you will notice that most of the cooks, prep-cooks, and dishwashers are all men and most likely men of color. There is a better chance though that you will see the chef of the restaurant who is most likely a European American man. As you are finishing up your meal notice that the busser who clears your plate is most likely a person of color.

Income inequality in the restaurant industry as a whole is unjust and problematic, however, gender and racial segregation, are ways that workers are further exploited based on wage inequality. European American woman segregated to work in front of the house (FOH)

serving positions, people of color working in that back of the house (BOH) and in supportive FOH non-managerial positions, and European American men predominantly working in managerial BOH chef positions is an example of gender and racial segregation. Due to the wages associated with each of the positions that women, people of color, and white men are likely to fulfill, the incomes for women and people of color are less than white men. In an industry where wages are already low, women and people of color face disproportionate income inequality.

The significant number of people that the restaurant industry employs makes industry-wide low wages a critical issue that is complicated further by wages that are disproportionately low for women and people of color. Restaurant workplace gender and racial segregation is a strategy that is used by managers to keep workers divided and also maintains wage stratification for women and people of color. For example, when European American women are primarily hired as servers, they maintain their jobs by encouraging other European American women to apply for these jobs and deter women of color for applying for serving positions. The same is true for lower-ranking BOH positions. Managers often hire men of color for BOH cook, prep cook, and dishwasher positions and workers in these positions favor men of color to fill open positions and deter women and European American men from working in these positions. European American men occupy managerial positions, therefore their chances of occupying higher paid BOH managerial positions is likely due to hiring practices based on gender and race. Restaurant industry structures allow European American men to move-up the ranks and maintains job and wage stagnation for women and people of color.

The significant number of workers that the restaurant industry employs in addition to class inequality that is heightened by gender and race make the restaurant industry a place for

critical examination of the forces that are challenging the structural inequalities that maintain injustice and oppression. In order for workers to challenge low wages, low job mobility, the lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation workers need a formula for organizing. Labor organizing strategies are the formula to empower workers to tackle inequality in the restaurant industry today.

Unions and worker centers are two forms of labor organizing that aim to challenge the enforcement of gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. More well-known of the two, labor unions are groups formed by workers to advance workplace rights, increase wages, define benefits, create better working conditions, and create rules for working hours and scheduling. Labor unions are often formed in one trade/craft or in an entire industry and aim to represent the collective interest of the workers within that trade/craft or industry through the process of contract negotiation. The less known of the two, worker centers are grassroots organizations that provide space and resources for low-wage workers to organize. They are worker organized and worker-led that offer field-specific education, resources for workers to know their rights, and they advocate for better working conditions and higher wages. Worker centers often organize around issues and people that are historically difficult to organize due to undocumented status or laws that regulate union organizing. Unlike how unions organize a specific trade/craft or industry, worker center organizes communities.

In order to understand how workers can become empowered to challenge the structures that maintain low wages, low job mobility, the lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation this thesis asks what role do unions and worker centers play in addressing gender, race, and class inequality and oppression in the restaurant industry? This research focuses on unions and worker centers because I want to learn how they

play a part in reducing inequality in the restaurant industry so that the possibilities of workers organizing to confront low wages, low job mobility, the lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation is better understood. Unions and worker centers are labor organizing strategies that are used in the restaurant industry prompting this research to take a closer look at the role unions and worker centers play at addressing gender, race, and class inequality. Furthermore, unions and worker centers do not operate in isolation from one another inspiring this research to look closer at how unions and worker centers complement one another.

In chapter two, this thesis provides an overview of the conceptual frameworks used to guide and analyze this research, an introduction to both union and worker center forms of labor organizing, a review of the literature that shows evidence of exploitation and powerlessness in the restaurant industry, and the research questions of this thesis. Chapter three provides an overview of the critical inquiry and frameworks of inequality methodologies and the content analysis and labor organizing strategies methods used to approach and analyze the research questions as defined in chapter two. Additionally, chapter three informs the reader of the author's positionality as it relates to this research. Chapter four shows the results of this research by presenting how unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, and class inequality. Additionally, chapter four provides an analysis of the presented results through the frameworks of inequalities lens and finishes with the anticipated contribution of the research. Finally, chapter five re-contextualizes the purpose of this research and summarizes key findings.

Chapter Two

Background and Significance

Social injustice is prominent throughout the food system and the restaurant industry is a sector where inequality is profound and alarmingly commonplace. Restaurant workers are plagued by low wages, low job mobility, lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation. This chapter introduces oppression, structural injustice, intersectionality, and complex inequalities as the conceptual framework titled frameworks of inequality. Frameworks of inequality will be used to analyze the role unions and worker centers play in addressing gender, race, and, class inequality in the restaurant industry in chapter four. Additionally, complex inequalities and strategies that produce powerlessness that are specific to the restaurant industry will be covered in this chapter followed by a brief introduction to the history of unions and worker center labor organizing strategies and how they apply to the restaurant industry. To begin understanding how inequality is created, maintained, and reinforced, an explanation of the frameworks of inequality that it utilized for this research as a conceptual framework is described.

Frameworks of Inequality

Oppression, intersectionalities, and complex inequalities in aggregate are used as a framework of inequality to help explain how gender, race, and class inequality is thriving in the restaurant industry; these concepts also provide a foundation for inquiry on how unions and worker centers are addressing these inequalities. Specifically, this research uses exploitation and powerlessness forms of oppression to demonstrate how oppression is created in the restaurant industry. While there are more forms of oppression that likely exist in the restaurant industry, exploitation and powerlessness are used because I believe unions and worker centers are well

equipped to address these forms of oppression. Additionally, intersectionalities is used as a framework of inequality to acknowledge the complexities of inequality. In other words, overlapping identities allow for oppression and injustice to be experienced differently by individuals. Including intersectionalities in the frameworks of inequality is required when analyzing gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry due to the complexity of inequality. In order to address intersectionalities, complex inequalities is included in the frameworks of inequality do to its analytical ability to unify opposing income inequality arguments into one guiding methodology. To begin, a closer look at how oppression takes shape in the restaurant industry, the relationship between injustice and oppression is explained.

Oppression

In order to understand how inequality is created, maintained, and reinforced it is first important cover how oppression relates to justice by first looking at types of justice. Justice can have different meanings across time and place. Many in a free-market capitalist economy believe the market is the best mediator and distributor of justice. In other words, the transactions that occur through production and consumption relations regulate and determine what is fair. However, the workers within a capitalist economy might have a different interpretation of justice due to how they experience the “fairness” of the market. As Harvey (2004), states, “The obvious discourse with which to confront this market justice is that of the worker’s rights deploying the whole rhetoric of the class struggle against exploitation, profit making, and worker disempowerment” (345). In other words, free-market capitalist might view justice as a function of the market while the working class might view injustice as the main function of the market. This research does not use justice as determined by the market, rather it takes the position that

the market is unjust. In this sense, workers in a capitalist system are experiencing injustice that is built in to the structures of society.

Structure is a subject of justice because justice is built in to the structures of society and therefore structure is the foundation for creating inequalities. Within the structure of society are social, economic, and political systems that together pre-determine individuals' social positions and their access to rights (Rawls 1999, 6-7). Social institutions include education, government, family, economic, media, religion, and political institutions that are perceived by a society as normal and play a part in shaping society. Social institutions are the mediator of relationships, rules, power, privilege, and injustice, and oppression. According to Rawls (1999), "the institutions of society favor certain starting places over others. These [structural inequalities] are especially deep inequalities. Not only are they pervasive, but they affect man's initial chances in life; yet they cannot possibly be justified by an appeal to the notions of merit or desert" (7). In other words, the very structure of how society is created and functions has the power to create inequality. Furthermore, Inequalities that are built within the structures of society cannot simply be equalized by good behavior, rather they are plagued by the injustice of oppression.

Continuing to view structure as subject of justice we can connect how societal interactions create oppression. Oppression is one of the two conditions that are created by structural injustice, the other condition being domination (Young 1990, 55). Therefore, oppression is a form of injustice and similar to how injustice is created by the structures of society, oppression is rooted within the foundation of social, political, and economic interactions that are pre-determined. As Young (1990) states, "Its [oppression] causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and

the collective consequences of following those rules” (56). That is, oppression exists within the composition of how society functions and in societal norms.

Oppression is a structural injustice that can be created in a multitude of ways making it important to have a systematic procedure to evaluate how oppression manifests. In order to clarify the different ways, oppression takes form Young (1990) divides oppression into five different categories; *exploitation*, *marginalization*, *powerlessness*, *cultural imperialism*, and *violence*. *Exploitation* is the extraction of labor from one social group to benefit or enhance the power of another social group (Young 1990, 61). *Marginalization* is the exclusion of a particular group of people (often people of color) from social life and because the labor system is not available to them that often results in material deprivation (Young 1990, 63). Those whose power is extracted during the process of exploitation experience *powerlessness*. In this way, power belongs to the capitalist and those who experience powerlessness are the working class (Young 1990, 65). *Cultural imperialism* is the out casting and othering of a particular social group because it is different than the dominant social group (Young 1990, 66). *Violence* is a type of oppression because it is systematically carried out to purposefully harm someone based on their affiliation or identification with a particular social group (Young 1990, 68). For example, an act of violence towards a transgender woman of color, because the person is transgender, is an act of violence in the form of oppression because violence is specifically carried out to harm the person because of their gender identity.

Exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence all take place in the restaurant industry; however, I do not have the space to go into detail about each one of them. Moreover, exploitation and powerlessness are interconnected to the extent that they both occur in conditions related to labor; a theme central to this research. Exploitation and

powerlessness are relevant to this work because they are the types of oppression that are created through social relations within the division of labor (Young 1990, 66). Before analyzing how exploitation and powerlessness take shape in the restaurant industry, I will explain how these forms of oppression are framed and in particular how they are structural injustices. First, this section will build on the Marxist explanation of exploitation in terms of capitalism's class labor relations in order to uncover how traditional theories of exploitation are applied to contemporary explanations of social group exploitation.

By looking closer at the labor theory of value you will find that the difference in labor power and labor value is the process of exploitation. Surplus labor is labor beyond the time or amount necessary to “reproduce itself” and is what the capitalist appropriates as surplus value to create profit (Braverman 1974, 56). Those whom appropriate surplus value have access to profit and wealth while those who are forced to sell their surplus labor only have access to the income that their labor power is sold for. Is it possible for the worker to refuse to engage in transactions where they are required to sell their surplus labor?

The social institutions that create the structures of society force workers to agree to sell their labor power. In other words, people must have an income so that they are able to meet their basic needs and therefore are required to obtain employment. When a worker starts a new job, a transaction occurs between employee and employer where the amount that the employee will accept to sell their labor power to the employer is agreed on (Braverman 1974, 52). The wage that the worker is given is the amount that they will receive for the sale of their labor power. Selling the power over labor is not a choice, rather it is an essential act of survival in the way today's society is structured.

The employer also agrees to this wage knowing that surplus accumulated beyond the agreed wage is theirs to keep. The amount that the owner receives in return for the worker's labor on top of the worker's wage is the surplus value or what the employer calls profit (Holt-Gimenez 2017, 75). Therefore, the actual wage that the worker receives is less than the amount that the worker produces during the time they spend laboring. Extracting labor from the worker is the process of exploitation because the wage that worker earns is less than what they actually produce. Additionally, the structural situations that force workers to sell their labor power requiring them to settle on a wage that is less than the amount that they produce is also exploitation.

The employer strives to employ the most efficient workers in order to extract more surplus value from them. For example, if an owner can pay the same wage for someone who can shuck 15 oysters a minute to someone who can shuck 1, then the owner is certainly going to pick the 15 oysters a minute laborer because they can sell more oysters and make more surplus value. This is good for the employer yet, regardless of how fast or slow the worker can shuck oysters the worker is making the same wage. In other words, the owner is looking for the most efficient worker so that they can make the most surplus value during the time the worker has agreed to work.

The labor theory of value does an adequate job of demonstrating how class labor relations *privilege* employers by granting them access to surplus labor and exploits workers by forcing them to enter a work agreement where their surplus labor is sold for profit. Yet, as Young (1990) points out this theory is adequate to describe exploitation in terms of class inequality but is missing the role exploitation plays in gender and race dimensions (61). In other words, through the lens of class exploitation, people regardless of their gender or race are exploited

based on their class. In this sense, exploitation does not consider how people are exploited based on gender and race dimensions. Exploitation in terms of class inequality is not sufficient in and of itself and therefore an expansion of how gender and racial inequality is created by exploitation is necessary.

Exploitation as a form of oppression is well understood in terms of class inequality, yet how exploitation occurs on the basis of gender and race needs further examination. In the workplace, gender exploitation occurs often through the assignment of gender-specific jobs that pay less and are often subordinate to jobs that are held by men (Young 1990, 62). Additionally, gender exploitation occurs when women occupy positions and spaces that exhaust their energies to specifically advance to the power of men (Young 1990, 62). When women primarily work jobs that are gendered or work in positions where their purpose is to advance the power and status of men they are being exploited based on their gender. Understanding exploitation based on gender builds on the understanding of exploitation based on class and sets the stage to look at how exploitation based on race occurs.

Exploitation based on race needs to be further examined in order to better understand how oppression based on identity occurs in addition to exploitation based on class. Similar to how gender exploitation occurs as women occupy workspaces for the primary purpose to advance the power of men, people of color have menial labor jobs where their work and recognition of their work is given to people with more power (Young 1990, 61-62). In other words, people of color occupy spaces in the working environment to advance the status, authority, or position of white workers. Therefore, people of color are exploited as they work in positions where their purpose is to advance the status and the careers of their white coworkers.

Finally, an analysis of oppression in the form of powerlessness is also needed before uncovering the ways powerlessness forms of oppression occur in the restaurant industry. Powerlessness is produced through labor relations and is a result of exploitation due to the extraction of labor from one person to enhance the power of another (Young 1990, 65). In other words, in terms of class the capitalist extracts power from the worker, in terms of race, white people extract power from people of color, and in terms of gender, men extract power from women. In all instances, the person whose power is removed experiences powerlessness. The power-powerlessness dichotomy expands the theory of labor relations to not only include the structurally coerced sale of labor power to be exploited but also includes the social conditions that are experienced by the worker. That is, powerlessness is a type of social condition that is experienced by workers who are exploited along the lines of gender, race, or class.

While the power-powerlessness dichotomy occurs in relation to gender, race, and class, it is within restaurant worker labor relations that this form of oppression occurs. With that in mind, the individual with power in the power-powerlessness dichotomy is identified as "professional" and are granted privileges in relation to the powerless "non-professional.". It is the privilege that is associated with professionals that maintain non-professionals' powerlessness (Young 1990, 65). In this way, professionals are privileged relative to the non-professionals where professional privileges include the ability to develop one's own capacities that advance their status, day-to-day work autonomy and decision-making power over others, and the respectability that professionals receive and expect that comes along with professional culture (Young 1990, 65-66). Professionals dictate their own working environment and the working environment of non-professional by creating and enforcing the rules. Non-professionals experience powerlessness because their professional counterpart controls their working life preventing them

from personal agency. Not having agency means a non-professional worker does not have a say in wages, working hours, time-off, or other aspects that determine their working life. The labor relations that create the power-powerless dichotomy are further complicated at the intersection of gender and race especially when examining the division of labor.

Intersectionalities

So far we have covered how oppression is created by the very structures of society and through labor relations is carried out through both exploitation and powerlessness, however, the social groups and identities associated with belonging to social groups has yet to be established. Identity is the image that an individual internalizes based on how the social world surrounding them reflects back what they see based on distinguishable characteristics (Tatum 2000, 7).

While some distinguishable characteristics could be based on exceptional athleticism or musical ability, other distinguishable characteristics are determined by what society portrays as the "other." According to Tatum (2000), there are seven forms of "otherness" that represent identity characteristics that society distinguishes including race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability. In relation to each of the "otherness" groups, there is a dominant group that determines the structures of society that the "other" subordinate group operate within (7). For example, women are the other because men are the dominant group according to the structures of society. Someone could belong to more than one social group and therefore the domination mechanisms that control the structures of society shift depending on the complexity of identity.

Belonging to a social group is not necessarily determined by the individual in the sense that the individual projects social group affiliation, rather society, reflects this identity back towards the individual through societal structures and social structures are a way to create social

order. Through history, politics, and culture, social categories such as gender, race, and class are used to maintain social order and are the basis of structural inequality (Kirk et al. 2013, 12).

Regardless if an individual wants to belong to a social category or not, dominant and subordinate relations are created within the social order of society and therefore pre-determine social group affiliation. Structural inequality is a product of dominant-subordinate relations as determined by the social order of social groups. However, since an individual most likely belongs to more than one social group, their identity as it relates to social order is complex.

In order to better understand the individual within multiple identities, intersectionality is a term used to express the complexity of social identity and structural injustice. Intersectionality acknowledges the complexity of identity by considering how emotionally, culturally, and materially different multiple identity experiences can be compared to the experiences of one identity category (Gibson et al. 2013, 177). In this way, individuals are made up of many identities that place them in various social groups in different spaces or even in multiple social groups at the same time. Intersectionality is a way to discuss and address the complexity of how multiple identities shape lived experiences and how lived experiences create a complex awareness of multiple identities (Gibson et al. 2013, 177). Furthermore, the combined awareness of multiple identities can emotionally, culturally, and materially heighten experiences beyond the experience of each identity in itself (Gibson et al. 2013, 177). That is, there is not one way for someone to experience or to interact with their identities because the complexity of them make them individualized. Intersectionality allows for awareness and recognition of the complexity of lived experiences and inequalities that are derived from the complexity of identities.

Using intersectionality to bring awareness to structural injustice requires a closer examination of how the complexity of identities allows for oppression and privileged to

circumstantially oscillate according to social relations within a particular social environment. Oppression is connected to privilege in the sense that in some social situations, a person might be privileged while in others they are oppressed (Gibson et al. 2013, 177). Furthermore, people often belong to many social groups allowing for multiple forms of oppression to exist at once. Specifically, someone who identifies with or is identified by one social group could experience oppression by belonging to one social group and experience privilege by belonging to another. For example, a white transgender woman experiences oppression similar to other transgender women based on their lived experiences as transgender women and experiences privilege based on their whiteness yet, a black transgender woman who also experiences oppression based on their gender identity does not experience the same privilege as a white transgender woman and in fact experiences additional oppression as a person of color. Therefore, white transgender women experience privilege associated with being white while transgender women of color do not. Based on social group affinity, someone could experience oppression due to their race and gender while someone else could be experiencing oppression based on their sexuality and class. The point is here to not assume one group's oppression is graver than the other, rather the point is to understand that within group affiliated oppression, the intersection of identities are complex and therefore produce inequalities that are also complex.

Complex Inequalities

While intersectionality is a way to *recognize* that oppression-power dynamics vary depending on the individual lived experience, complex inequality is used to *address* oppression-power dynamics. While intersectionality allows for us to think beyond single social group identity in order to incorporate the complexity of identity, complex inequalities provides a framework for addressing the inequalities that are associated with the complexity of identity.

McCall (2014) uses complex inequality as a framework to incorporate two perspectives on economic inequality into one. The purpose of McCall's (2014) complex inequalities research is to create a methodology for analyzing intersectionality as an attempt to converge both "new inequality" and gender and racial inequality economic inequality perspectives (14). McCall (2014) argues that incorporating aspects of both "new inequality" and gender and racial inequality perspectives is essential for addressing income inequality because neither is comprehensive in and of itself due to their specific focus (McCall 2014, 5). Therefore, to move beyond recognition of intersectionalities and address the complexity of inequalities, an understanding of how these opposing perspectives differ is required.

Explaining how "new inequality" and gender and racial inequality differ in their approaches to confronting inequality will show how both are important to this research. While "new inequality" advocates focus on the economic system *foundation* as the way economic inequality is produced, proponents against gender and racial inequality highlight how the *design* of the economy is what creates inequality (McCall 2002, 4-5). To be clear, proponents for "new Inequality" are often identified as social democrats and their focus on the economic *foundation* means that they believe that economic restructuring is key in addressing inequality. Proponents against gender and racial inequality see the *design* of the economy as manifesting discrimination, thus they view discrimination as the most important cause of inequality (McCall 2002, 5). I believe that the distinction between the foundation and the design of the economy is another way of defining the ongoing debate between the class struggle and identity politics. Fighting to change the foundation of the economy means that capitalism needs to be transformed or reformed. Fighting to change the design of the economy recognizes structural inequalities are heightened by the foundation of the economy, however structural inequality i.e., sexism, racism,

and other forms of group identity injustice pre-date capitalism. Even though the foundation of the economy heightens group identity injustice, simply transforming the economic system will not extinguish structural inequality. Both inequality arguments are complementary and are more equipped to address the complexities of inequality when used in tandem than they are standing alone.

I believe that complex inequalities as a framework is an attempt to use intersectionalities to form solidarity among proponents for “new inequality” and proponents against gender and racial inequality by recognizing both of their beliefs have merit in achieving justice. Intersectionality demands social groups move beyond the divisiveness of dominant-subordinate social order to create an emphasis on individuality for the sake of solidarity. According to Crenshaw (1990), “Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in constructing group politics” (1299). In other words, intersectionality challenges the amplification of singular group identity politics to recognize that inequality is far too complex to be categorized based on individual social group affiliation. Challenging the social order based on individual social group affiliation perpetuates inequality by continuously reestablishing differences on the basis of identity instead of uniting in complex inequalities solidarity.

Complex Inequalities in the Restaurant Industry

Identities at the intersection of gender, race, and class in the restaurant industry are challenged by exploitation, income inequality, gender and racial segregation, sexual harassment, and an industry that perpetuates disempowerment by enforcing divisive business practices. This section will begin by discussing how exploitation is further complicated at the intersection of

gender and race by covering how establishment and occupational segregation keep women and people of color the lowest paid. Then this section will look into the role hypermasculinity plays in maintaining class inequality at the intersection of gender by creating environments that normalize sexual harassment. The final segment of this section will cover strategies that produce powerlessness by explaining how managers create intentional business models to keep workers divided. To begin, this section will start by looking closer at how exploitation takes shape in the restaurant industry.

Exploitation in the Restaurant Industry

Based on income stratification, the restaurant industry can be further categorized into different types of industry occupations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics categorizes restaurant workers into fast food cooks, restaurant cooks, and servers (changed by the author from gender specific to a gender-neutral term)¹. Restaurant cooks are the highest earners with an average annual income of \$26,000 and just below them servers make on average \$25,000 (BLS 2018a). The reality behind the average server income is that the federal minimum wage for tipped workers is \$2.13 an hour where servers are expected with the addition of tipped wages to actually make the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 (Jayaraman 2013a, 70). Fast food workers are the lowest earners making an average of \$21,000 per year (BLS 2018a). Food service managers, on the other hand, brought home a median annual income of \$53,000 in 2017, which is slightly

¹ Using gender neutral terms for occupations removes any gendered stereotypes that are associated with the position. Also, using gender neutral terms as occupational titles does not exclude non-binary and transgender people from the occupation. Server is a term that can be used to describe the person who works in the FOH as waitstaff but does not automatically assign a gender to the occupation or the type of work that the occupation entitles.

above the average \$50,000 of all occupations (BLS 2018a). Whether you are a cook, server, or fast food worker the reality is you make about half of the annual average income of restaurant managers and also about half of the annual average income of all workers in all U.S.

occupations. Understanding how income is distributed by establishment and job type in the restaurant industry creates a foundation to analyze who is more likely to work in these sectors. It is important to understand the complexities of income inequality within the restaurant industry as a whole in order to clarify how gender and race inequality within specific types of establishments compounds income inequality.

Who Works Where and Why?

Racial segregation occurs in the restaurant industry by establishment type and the correlation between wages and establishment type exemplifies racial income inequality. Jayaraman (2013b), categorizes the restaurant industry into three categories, fine-dining, casual, and fast food based on racial segregation of who works in these different establishments (116). People of color are more likely to work in fast food and casual dining establishments and white people are more likely to work in fine-dining establishments (Jayaraman 2013b, 116). The job-type and establishment-type segregation are due to intentional hiring discrimination as well as worker's access to jobs at establishments based on the neighborhood they reside in (Jayaraman 2013b, 117). The chances are very likely that workers of color live in poorer neighborhoods where there are lower-paying fast-food and casual-dining jobs and white workers are more likely to reside in neighborhoods where there are fine-dining restaurants that offer wages that are higher than fast-food and casual-dining jobs (Jayaraman 2013b, 117). Racial segregation in the restaurant industry by establishment type is an example of the intersection of race and class inequality because racial discrimination or even simply residing in a neighborhood restricts

people of color access to higher paying jobs. While the type of establishment segregation contributes to income inequality, segregation within the restaurant establishment does as well.

Moving beyond restaurant industry sectors, the restaurant can be additionally categorized and analyzed based on the positions people typically occupy in the “back of the house” (kitchen) or the “front of the house” (dining room) that further illuminate gender and racial inequality. In focus group and in-depth interview restaurant industry research by Sachs and others (2013), industry professionals reported gender and racial divisions between the “front of the house” (FOH) and “back of the house” (BOH) (1). Specifically, white women tend to work as servers in the FOH and men in the FOH (Jayaraman 2013c, 117; Sachs et al. 2013, 1). Moreover, in the BOH, the majority of executive chef positions are occupied by white men while cooks and other subordinated BOH jobs are fulfilled by black or Latino men (Jayaraman 2013c, 117; Sachs et al. 2013, 9). When women do work in the BOH, they are segregated into lower paying baking and pastry positions that offer limited to no opportunity to upward job mobility (Harris et al. 2015, 5; Jayaraman 2013c, 117). The division of labor is gendered and racialized in the restaurant industry prevents women and people of color from working in positions other than the ones that the “typically” are permitted to fulfill. The intersection of gender and race is complicated further at the intersection of class.

The lower wages that women and women of color receive compared to their male and white counterparts is an example of complex inequalities at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Of the near 10 million restaurant workers in the U.S., 55 percent of them are women (BLS 2018b). While women are the majority of restaurant workers, men occupy the highest paying positions of power such as owner, manager, and executive chef (Jayaraman 2013c, 131). Additionally, when women and men hold the same positions, women make less than their male

counterparts (Jayaraman 2013c, 131). Furthermore, women of color make less than their white counterparts and are more likely to work in the lowest paying fast-food establishment type (Jayaraman 2013c, 131). Gender income inequality and gender inequality at the intersection of race in the restaurant industry prevents the majority of workers in the restaurant industry from income equality. Simply being a women restaurant worker means that you will make less than men working in the same position and being a woman of color means that you will be working in the lowest paying jobs and will be making the lowest wages. Income inequality for women in the restaurant industry is complicated even further due to sexual harassment and being forced to navigate toxic hypermasculine environments.

Hypermasculine environments perpetuate the intersection of gender and class segregation in the restaurant industry. Masculinity is the fear of being emasculated so to counter this fear men exude attributes that prove their manhood by dressing and acting certain ways to prevent from being perceived as gay, not expressing feelings or emotions, exposing oneself to health-risks and workplace hazards, enduring stress without seeking help, and by acting as sexual predators (Kimmel 2013, 331)². If restaurant environments are hypermasculine than most of the attributes that men express to prove their manhood is being carried out simultaneously. I believe that hypermasculine restaurant environments promote sexual harassment to the extent that it is normalized.

² Sexual harassment allegations were made towards prominent sociologist Michael Kimmel in 2018 (Ratcliffe, 2018). These allegations display the pervasiveness of masculinity in society to the extent that those who are leaders in championing against the injustices it constructs are not immune to its influence.

To understand how hypermasculine environments are created in the restaurant industry, it is necessary to point out that cooking within the home is traditionally a woman's job and therefore that act of cooking is often perceived as feminine women's work. To counter the assumption that cooking is women's work and feminine, in the professional kitchen men try to prove their dominance by asserting their masculinity (Harris et al. 2015, 5). Environments where men are purposefully trying to prove their masculinity become hypermasculine and therefore exclude women in order to preserve the working environment for men (Harris et al. 2015, 10). If masculinity defines a chef there are significant obstacles that women face when trying to move up the restaurant ranks.

Hypermasculine cooking environments pre-determine what types of attributes are required to succeed as a chef. It is difficult for women in the restaurant industry because they have to navigate and survive highly competitive environments that are rife with hypermasculinity that normalize sexual harassment and reinforce occupational segregation. According to Jayaraman (2013c), "Women have to deal with competitive, aggressive restaurant environments dominated by men that often encourage sexual harassment" (142). Due to the normalization of sexual harassment, many women are not even aware of when they are being sexually harassed (Jayaraman 2013c, 142). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claims that purposefully harassing someone based on their sex is illegal where harassment is "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature, offensive remarks about a person's sex" (USEEOC. n.d.). Sexual harassment is supposed to have legal ramifications, but due to normalization from hypermasculine working environments women are either unaware they are being sexually harassed, unaware of how to report sexual harassment, or afraid they will be retaliated against. Women who work in these hypermasculine

environments face incredible obstacles to advance their career in the restaurant industry including pervasive sexual harassments that force them to work in positions in order to maintain their safety. While women might choose to work in positions that can secure a safer working environment, it is all too often that business practices are implemented that intentionally place women in positions that maintain their powerlessness.

Strategies that Produce Powerlessness in the Restaurant Industry

Restaurant industry business owners use strategies to maintain division among their workers so that workers remain powerless. Oliva (2011) refers to these strategies as an approach to management and calls it the dog-eat-dog business model (177). The dog-eat-dog business model consists of four elements that all contribute to restaurant industry inequality including “contingent labor practices”, “informality”, “a culture of legal violations,” and “divide and conquer” (Oliva 2011, 177). Contingent labor business practices prevent workers from having a consistent schedule that results in fluctuating unreliable wages that are out of the workers' control. Not having control over or even a say in wages and work schedules allow for managers to dictate restaurant workers lives and makes restaurant workers experience powerlessness.

Another way that the dog-eat-dog business model keeps restaurant workers powerless is managers' use of non-traditional business practices that avoid formal employment agreements. Informal business practices are practices where workers are paid under the table or are purposefully kept in the dark about their rights through the lack of information (Oliva 2011, 177). When workers are paid under the table they do not go through the formal hiring process. Not going through the formal hiring process prevents workers from knowing their rights within the specific workplace because they do not engage in traditional on-boarding procedures where worker policies are typically explained. By purposefully leaving workers out of the formal

hiring process and preventing them from knowing their rights within the workplace or even their rights as workers at all, workers experience powerlessness because, on paper, they really do not even exist as an employee.

A particularly alarming practice the restaurant managers employ prevents workers from knowing that laws are being broken so that their rights can purposefully be denied. Specifically, the dog-eat-dog business model maintains a culture of legal violations where labor laws are intentionally and regularly broken through systematic denial of rights (Oliva 2011, 177). An example of this type of business practice is not allowing restaurant workers to take breaks and maintaining the façade the breaks are not a part of restaurant industry culture. Another illegal practice that is normalized is requiring a worker clock-in later than they actually started working and clocking out before they are actually finished working. The culture of the restaurant normalizes both working through breaks and time-clock violations to the extent that workers are not aware that they are labor violations. Even if they are aware of labor violations, workers assume that labor laws do not apply to them and therefore seeking counsel would not end in their favor. A culture of legal violations paints the picture that efforts to address labor violations are futile because injustice is inevitable (Oliva 2011, 177). When the very culture of the restaurant industry promotes labor violations that are assumed to either be normal or untouchable, workers are powerless to take formal action on their own behalf.

The divide and conquer strategy of the dog-eat-dog business model is designed in a way that encourages group formation and isolation that creates and perpetuates structural inequality. Divide and conquer business practices purposefully segregate labor by industry occupations based on gender and race (Oliva 2011, 177). For example, managers purposefully hire people of color as BOH workers and hire white FOH workers (Oliva 2011, 177-178). According to Oliva

(2011), managers purposefully use occupational racial segregation to keep workers divided (178). I believe that purposefully keeping workers divided prevents them from recognizing that the manager is to blame for their exploitation and instead keeps them distracted as they fight over the few opportunities for higher wages and job mobility. Not having the awareness that divisive business practices are being enforced on you so that you do not challenge the powers that are exploiting you is a form of powerlessness because workers are unable to see the source of their exploitation.

Restaurant workers experience powerlessness because the dog-eat-dog business model prevents them from having a say in their wages and schedules, by utilizing informal hiring strategies that keep workers outside of workplace policies, by creating a culture where labor violations are normalized, and by purposefully segregating workers to keep them divided. The dog-eat-dog business model is an example of structural injustice in the form of oppression because it is carried out by everyday workplace functions. Managers are privileged to restaurant workers and use their power to determine the fate of the restaurant worker. I suggest that with the privilege and power in the hands of managers, the dog-eat-dog business model allow managers to create an illusion that labor laws do not apply to restaurant workers. Ultimately, this sense of powerlessness prevents workers from challenging the gender, race, and class injustices that are being forced upon them.

The fear of losing your job because you miss a shift is very real for restaurant industry workers, making working while sick the norm. In fact, according to a 2015 survey, over half of restaurant industry workers go to work while they are sick and many do so out of fear of losing their job or because they cannot afford to miss a day of work and do not have paid sick leave (Shallcross 2015). While it is against food safety laws to have employees work while they are

sick, workers feel powerless and work while sick out of fear of getting fired and to ensure that they maintain a steady income.

Powerlessness is heightened for undocumented workers out of fear of deportation for making claims about working conditions. While it is almost impossible to determine the exact number of undocumented employees in the restaurant industry, it is reported that there are at least several million undocumented restaurant workers (Swerdloff 2017). Workers who are afraid to bring attention to the injustices that they encounter are disproportionately impacted by low wages, wage theft, sexual harassment, and discrimination.

The complexities of inequalities in the restaurant industry show that at the intersection of gender, race, and class workers experience structural injustice including oppression, exploitation, and powerlessness. Class exploitation occurs at the intersection of gender and race as women and people of color are segregated by workplace establishment and also by occupation. Gender segregation is maintained by hypermasculine work environments that force women to seek refuge in lower paying positions that have little job mobility. Racial segregation is maintained by management purposefully enforcing the dog-eat-dog business model on employees that in the end impact all workers by keeping them divided and powerless. What type of remedy is applicable to addressing an industry where labor violations, income inequality, gender, and racial segregation, sexual harassment, and worker disempowerment are the norm? Historically and naturally, actions and thoughts sequentially gravitate towards labor organizing's array of strategies to address social injustices of this magnitude.

Labor Organizing Strategies

Unions and worker centers are forms of labor organizing strategies that aim to address social injustices. Workers organize to form a union by trade or industry to make their concerns known to the employer with the goal of changing existing conditions to reflect collective worker interests. Worker centers are grassroots organizations that provide space and resources for workers to organize. Both strategies are currently working to address injustice in the restaurant industry, therefore exploring their historical relevance and distinctive forms of organizing is required in order to grasp how they address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. To begin, this section will cover a brief history of unions in the U.S., then it will cover attributes of union organizing strategies, followed by a brief introduction to unions in the restaurant industry. Following unions, worker center attributes will also be covered and the reasons why this research is focusing on both unions and worker centers labor organizing strategies.

Unions

Early labor organizing in the U.S. occurred when workers transitioned from primarily being self-employed to being employed and managed by bosses. The industrial revolution is the site for the transition from a society of independent workers to workers dependent on industrialized production controlled by corporations (The Library of Congress n.d.,1). Mass production at expedient rates benefited employers and workers bore the brunt especially with their lack of say in their working lives. Working conditions that threatened workers' lives, the use of children in labor, and unregulated working hours contributed to the initiation of labor unions (The Library of Congress n.d., 2). The experiences worker endured while working in

factories were inhumane forcing them to fight for workers interests without the protection of the law.

Early labor organizers fought for workers' interests without formal labor laws and their work paved the way for early labor policy. After a half-century campaign, the Organic Act (1913) was the first major labor policy victory for labor organizers and was the creation of the US Department of Labor (MacLaury n.d.). Early labor policy was initiated by the War Labor Board but lacked enforcement power and relied on handshakes and truces to protect workers' rights and collective bargaining (NLRB 2015, 14). Worker rights and protection increased in 1935 when the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was created with the passing of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), also known as the Wagner Act (NLRB 2015, 18). The NLRA was designed to protect the rights of both employees and employers and does so by ensuring the right to fair elections and collective bargaining between employees and employers. The NLRA also gives employees the right to strike, the right to negotiate in the collective bargaining process, and guarantees recognition, representation, and advocacy.

Workers organize to make their concerns known to the employer with the goal of changing existing conditions to reflect collective worker interests. Specifically, workers organize to increase wages, create firing and hiring policy, increase benefits, increase paid sick leave and vacation and put into language the general policies that both employer and employee are to abide by. In general, workers organize to gain transparency in their working environment by placing policies in agreed upon writing in the form of a contract. Contracts reflect workers' interests by allowing workers to have a say in the conditions of their employment and ultimately allow workers to obtain power over their working lives.

There are different ways unions organize and there are also specific organizing strategies that workers use as leverage in order to achieve certain goals. Unions are generally separated into two different categories, trade/craft unions, and industrial unions. Trade/craft unions organize workers whom all share the same trade or skill such as carpentry where industrial unions organize an entire industry including all of the trades within that industry such as the restaurant industry. Both trade unions and industrial unions utilize collective bargaining, work stoppages, and strikes as strategies to address the interests of workers. Collective bargaining is the process workers and managers engage to negotiate terms of employment including working conditions, hours, benefits, leave, and wages resulting in a contract that is agreed upon. Work stoppages happen when workers collectively agree to cease production; leverage that directly impacts the employer's services, outputs, or profits. Striking is a form of work stoppage that publicly displays workers grievances with employers and is a way to make workers interests known.

Restaurant workers have arguably had the most success organizing in the hospitality industry most likely due to the various types of employment the industry offers, the amount of revenue the industry generates, and corporate control within the industry. The hospitality industry consists of businesses and operations geared towards tourism such as hotels and cruises therefore some workers in the hospitality industry are also work in the restaurant industry. The Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE) was established in 1891 and has since joined forces with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) in 2004 to form UNITE HERE! (UNITE HERE! 2019b). UNITE HERE!'s largest local, The Culinary Workers Union, Local 226 represents 55,000 hospitality workers (UNITE HERE! 2019b). The UNITE HERE! merger and the number of workers that UNITE HERE!

represent in the hospitality industry have most likely played a part in successfully maintaining union presence in the hospitality industry.

While organizing in hospitality has had its successes, workers organizing in the restaurant industry as a whole have faced difficulties. Recent efforts to organize the fast-food establishments have faced significant challenges due to lower voter turnout when voting for union recognition and right-to-work laws discouraging workers from unionizing (Tripp 2015, 2). Additionally, workers in the "bottom rungs" are often immigrants that live in fear of losing their jobs, work for franchises requiring each store to go through the union voting process, or are part-time workers (Shah 2015, 2). Young Workers United (YWU) worker center purposefully connected with UNITE HERE! in 2004 to organize restaurant workers because according to YWU the restaurant industry is difficult for unions to organize due to the few employees that are represented in each work place, high turnover rates, and non-full-time status (Fine 2006, 133). High turn-over rates, immigrants fear of losing their jobs, under employment, and franchise business models make the restaurant industry a difficult environment for workers to organize and form a labor union.

Difficulties to organize further perpetuate restaurant industry inequality, yet restaurant workers have arguably the most to gain from unionizing. Restaurant workers who belonged to unions in 2017 made a weekly average of \$126 more than workers who were non-union (BLS 2018a). The wage gap between non-union and union workers is significant especially in an industry with staggering low wages. Labor unions are not the only labor organizing strategy workers are using to organize. In fact, worker centers are another way that workers are organizing to make their interests known.

Worker Centers

Worker center organizing is generally focused on spaces where African Americans or immigrants are located. Worker centers that are created by African Americans are in response to workplace institutionalized racism, the lack of labor unions, an increase in manufacturing jobs, and the increase in low-paying service industry jobs (Fine 2006, 9). Additionally, worker centers are created "generationally" by a new generation of immigrants who have become established in a geographic area for long enough to recognize a need to organize (Fine 2006, 9). In the 1970s-1980s, contemporary worker centers were organized by black worker activists in North and South Carolina and immigrant activists in New York City's Chinatown, Texas-Mexican border in El Paso, and in San Francisco (Fine 2006, 9). Common themes of these early worker centers were the concern with African Americans making less than their white counterparts and exploitation specifically targeted at ethnic enclaves (Fine 2006, 9). Another flush of generational worker centers came about in the late 1980s due to Latino's fleeing wars in Central America, Guatemala, and El Salvador and also an increase in Southeast Asian immigrants seeking work (Fine 2006, 11). The most recent and present surge in worker centers started in 2000 all over the U.S. particularly in southern states and are specifically organizing Mexican and Central American immigrants in the service industry, meat packing, poultry, and in agriculture (Fine 2006, 11). After, observing the surges of worker centers in the last fifty years it is accurate to assume that worker centers tend to organize in immigrant communities and in communities of color.

Worker centers are grassroots organizations that provide space and resources for workers to organize. Worker centers do not always take the same form and shape, yet they do have a few modes of organizing in common. One of the most important modes of organizing for worker

centers is that they are rooted and founded by the community they are intending to serve. According to Fine (2006), "Worker centers are community-based mediating institutions that provide support to and organize among communities of low-wage workers" (11). That is, worker centers are rooted in low-income communities in order to address the specific employment needs of that community. Additionally, worker centers are connected to different organizations such as faith-based, unions, social services, and immigrant nongovernmental agencies (Fine 2006, 11). Worker centers also provide a safe space for workers to get to know their rights, problem solves, and build power (Bobo et al. 2016, 4). The focus worker centers have on organizing in communities specifically communities of color and immigrant communities sets them apart from unions that tend to focus on trades/crafts or industries.

Worker centers often organize where unions have either fallen short or where unions have historically been challenged by the political or social climate. When discussing early worker centers Fine (2006) states, "Although "pro-union," they were critical of existing institutions of organized labor" (9). For example, due to the long withstanding connection early African American worker centers had to the union-wide attempts to organize the South in the 1930s and 1940s (Fine 2006, 9 and 284). Specifically, the failure of the post World War II Operation Dixie campaign aimed at organizing workers in the South (Goldfield 1989, 239). According to Goldfield (1989) on top of tremendous obstacles including capitalists, Southern Dixiecrats, and large cotton landlords, Operation Dixie failed in unionizing the South for two reasons. First, the union leading the campaign the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) refused to demand equality for African Americans and the second was CIO's partisan commitment to the Roosevelt Wing of the Democratic Party (Goldfield 1989, 240). Failure to organize the South due to racism has had a lasting impact on the labor movement.

Union and worker centers' historic role in advocating for workers gives this research reason to believe that both unions and worker centers have the capability to address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. Unions organize by trade and industry and utilize collective bargaining and striking as strategies to make workers' interests known. Worker centers are founded in the community and their strategies often focus on immigrant workers and workers of color. Unionized restaurant workers have higher incomes than non-unionized restaurant workers yet unions ability to address racial inequality is perhaps challenged by historic exclusions of Africa Americans. Worker centers have the ability to advocate for workers who due to political and social reasons are difficult to unionize. In summary, unions are equipped to address income-inequality and worker centers are equipped to advocate for workers who are historically under represented. Combined, union and worker centers' historic role in advocating for workers suggest that both unions and worker centers have the capability to address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry.

Research Problem and Research Question

Restaurant workers are subjected to complex and intersecting structural inequalities and oppression including low wages, low job mobility, the lack of job security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation. The restaurant industry creates a culture of powerlessness that limits workers abilities to self-organize so that they can address these inequalities. Labor organizations provide workers a platform the make their interests known, motivating this research to find out how unions and worker centers are addressing structural inequality and intersecting forms of oppression in the restaurant industry.

As one of the largest employment sectors in the U.S., it is important to draw attention to the weight inequalities have on restaurant workers and uncover how unions and workers centers

are relieving the severity of inequalities. This research addresses unions and worker centers because I want to learn how they play a part in reducing inequality in the restaurant industry so that the possibilities of workers organizing to confront inequality is better understood. The overall research question of this paper is what role do unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry? In order to address this research question and to steer the purpose of this research two constitutive questions are used.

- How do unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers recognize inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class?
- In what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers?

The goal of answering the first constitutive research question is to find out more about what unions and worker centers who are currently representing restaurant workers' interests are doing to recognize inequalities in the restaurant industry. In doing so, I want to understand the ways in which unions and worker centers are recognizing exploitation and powerlessness at the intersection of gender, race, and class. The goal of answering the second constitutive research question is to find out the roles unions and worker centers serve and how their distinctive attributes complement one another in attempts to address exploitation and powerlessness at the intersection of gender, race, and class. By focusing this research on two forms of labor organizing strategies in the restaurant industry my aim is to gather information that is useful to workers. Information that offers a pathway to recognize and address intersecting inequalities will benefit workers as they strive to confront exploitation and powerlessness.

The restaurant industry's failure to deliver its workers living wages, job mobility and job security is complicated further at the intersection of gender, race, and class due to gender and

racial establishments and occupational segregation. Unions and workers centers are two of the labor organizing strategies that restaurant workers are using to seek justice, yet exactly how these strategies are addressing inequality is unclear. To further explore how workers can disrupt the status quo and challenge restaurant industry structural inequality, I will explore the labor union strategies restaurant industry workers can employ to seek justice by examining the ways unions and workers centers address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. In order to explore the intersection of gender, race, and class in the restaurant industry, the methodology of this research will be founded in frameworks of inequality.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

The methodologies of this research describe the analytical framework used for explaining how the research questions answer the research problem and also state the position of the author in the context of this research. The analytical frameworks and methods of this paper use content analysis of both union and worker center websites that represent restaurants to find out if and how they are addressing inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Using information from the content analysis and a literature review, labor organizing strategies are used as an analytical framework in order to better understand the ways unions and worker centers reduce inequality.

The methods of this paper will go in to greater detail to answer the questions (1) How do unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers recognize inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class? (2) In what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? This research is driven by my experience working in the restaurant industry shaping my positionality and gives me the first-hand knowledge of feeling powerlessness in an industry and not knowing who or where to turn to. This chapter begins by explaining the methodologies of this research, starting with critical inquiry.

Methodology

This research utilizes critical inquiry as a methodology in order to uncover ways that restaurant workers can go about creating social change in their work environment. Critical inquiry is the process of uncovering social injustices by bringing awareness of the injustices to those who are experiencing them. Critical inquiry recognizes that liberation is possible by acquiring knowledge about one's own social position recognizing society is a human construct

(Comstock 1982, 626-627). Injustice is created by the structures of society and the structures of society consist of social institutions that are created by social groups. Within social groups are individuals that have intersecting complex identities. Individual identities are complex and therefore social positions are also complex. There are common injustices that individuals experience placing them in similar social positions. For example, oppression is a social position that most restaurant workers experience. Critical inquiry therefore asks, how do restaurant workers realize their social position as oppressed people and how can they challenge the social structures that are creating this oppression?

As someone who has worked in the food industry for nearly 20 years, I have experienced gender inequality and witnessed racial inequality. Coming of age in an industry that is inherently oppressive, it is nearly impossible to see how structural injustice is created and maintained by restaurant industry culture. Restaurant workers know that there is something wrong when they cannot scrape by to make ends meet, have to get a second or third job, or if they are privileged enough to seek out other career interests. For those who are not privileged to escape the industry, symptoms of powerlessness and exploitation become normalized to the extent that workers willingly reinforce powerlessness and exploitation through their everyday thoughts and actions. Many restaurant workers do not have the knowledge or vocabulary to internalize or convey their struggle and injustice let alone stamp it worthy of attention. This degree of powerlessness strengthens those who benefit from restaurant worker labor and weakens the pathway to justice and organizing fate of the restaurant industry. I believe it is important to get a better idea of the role unions and workers centers play in restaurant industry equality so that unions and worker centers have a better understanding of their role in addressing gender, race,

and class inequality. Additionally, I believe that discussing labor organizing strategies will potentially empower restaurant workers to seek out labor movement organizing strategies.

Methods

Content analysis was used as an analytical framework to answer research question one in order to look for presence and silences of addressing gender, race, or class inequality on union and worker center websites. In 2012 there were 29 worker centers specifically in the food service sector and the number of local unions in food service were 183 (FCWA 2012, 2). Unions or union locals and worker centers that represent restaurant workers was the initial criteria for selecting the websites that were viewed. Keywords to locate websites included union, worker centers, food industry, food, culinary, and restaurants. Unions organize by trade or industry making their representation of restaurant workers evident on their websites. To determine if a worker center represented restaurant workers, the worker center website was searched for key words including food industry, restaurants, food service, or fast-food to signify their representation. The first five of each union and worker center websites that were located were used as a sample for this research because finding five of each initially was challenging based on the lack of union and worker center website presence. This was especially true for worker centers because there are far fewer worker centers than there are unions that represent restaurant workers. Once these criteria were met, an analysis of the website content was performed based on whether the website addressed gender, race, and class inequality.

Content analysis is the creation of analytical categories to explore text, where data is the text itself. A coding system is used to decipher how the text that is being analyzed relates to the analytical categories (Hardy et al. 2004, 19). Gender, race, and class analytical categories were created in order to find out how unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers

address gender, race, and class inequalities. Three additional analytical categories (1) *Actions* (Projects, campaigns, technology app, committees) (2) *Documents* (Publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter), and (3) *Goals and Values* (Mission statement, vision statement, constitution, bill of rights) were created to represent the different ways that websites addressed (presence) or did not address (silence) gender, race, or class inequality.

The coding system to determine how the text related to the gender, race, and class inequality was created by using a list of pre-determined words and phrases to represent a presence of addressing either gender, race, or class inequality. If the pre-determined words were not present then there was a silent. Predetermined words for analyzing websites for gender included gender, women, sexism, gender discrimination, sexual discrimination, and sexual harassment. Predetermined words for analyzing websites for racial inequality included, racism, people of color, African Americans, Black Lives Matter, racial discrimination, and immigration. Predetermined words for analyzing websites for class inequality included presences or silences of class, wages, wage-theft, income, and rank-and-file. In addition to predetermined words that signify a presence of gender, race, or class inequality, other indications of addressing gender, race, or class inequality emerged during the data collection process that qualified as a presence of addressing gender, race, or class inequality.

Labor organizing strategies were used as an analytical framework for research question two. As discussed in chapter two, strategies typical for labor unions include collective bargaining, work stoppages including strikes, organizing by trade or industry. Additionally, strategies typical for worker centers include organizing historically challenging and underrepresented workforces such as immigrants or African Americans, organizing at the

community level, and organizing where unions have struggled in the past. Additionally, the difference in union and worker center requirements of adhering to laws as defined by the NLRA play a role in their organizing strategies. Therefore, labor policy is also an important component of labor organizing strategies due to the fact that unions are required to follow laws when organizing workers. Worker centers do not follow the same labor organizing strategies because they are not required to follow the same labor laws as unions.

Research Question 1 Methods

Research question one asks, how do unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers recognize inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class? Key concepts used in the methods to address this question include gender inequality, racial inequality, class inequality, exploitation, powerlessness, intersectionalities, and complex inequalities. The analytical framework used is content analysis. The scope of this research is within the United States. The unit of analysis is unions and worker centers that represent restaurant workers. The units of observation are broken up into three categories *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. *Actions* include projects, campaigns, technology app, committees. *Documents* including publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter. *Goals and values* including mission statement, vision statement, constitution, and bill of rights. *Actions* are used to answer research question one by seeing *how* unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, class inequality. *Documents* are used to answer research question one to better understand whether unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, class inequality in the language they use. *Goals and values* are used to answer research question one to see if gender, race, or class inequality is a part of the union or worker center beliefs or objectives.

The data needed to answer this research question include evidence of silences and presences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality by using content analysis of *actions*, *documents*, and *values and goals*. In order to find data, unions and worker centers that represent restaurant workers was the initial criteria for selecting the websites that were viewed. Keywords to locate these websites included union, worker centers, food industry, food, culinary, and restaurants. Then (1) *Actions* (Projects, campaigns, technology app, committees) (2) *Documents* (Publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter), and (3) *Goals and values* (Mission statement, vision statement, constitution, bill of rights) were created to represent the different ways that websites addressed (presence) or did not address (silence) gender, race, or class inequality. Presences were noted by the pre-determined words or phrases previously listed. Data was gathered by performing a deductive content analysis of union websites by creating gender, race, and class inequality categories and placed evidence of silences and presences of addressing these inequalities in the associated category. Data was organized by determining based on the predetermined words or phrases whether or not the data is a silence or a presence of addressing gender, race, or class inequality. Data were analyzed by discussing how the *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* silences and presences address gender, race, and class inequality to determine the role unions and worker centers play at intersectional complex inequalities addressing inequality. Table 1. and table 2. Are used to explain the silences and presences of gender inequality as one category, the silences and presences of racial inequality as another category, and class inequality as the third.

Research Question 2 Methods

Research question two asks, in what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? Key concepts used in the methods to address this question include gender inequality, racial inequality, class inequality, exploitation, powerlessness, intersectionalities, and complex inequalities. The analytical framework for this research question is the organizing strategies of unions and worker centers as introduced in Chapter two. The scope of this research is within the United States.

The units of observation are broken up into three categories *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. *Actions* include projects, campaigns, technology app, committees. *Documents* including publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter. *Goals and values* including mission statement, vision statement, constitution, and bill of rights. *Actions* are used to answer research question two by seeing *how* unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, class inequality. *Documents* are used to answer research question two to better understand whether unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, class inequality in the language they use. *Goals and values* are used to answer research question two to see if gender, race, or class inequality is a part of the union or worker center beliefs or objectives.

Additional units of observation include literature discussing the role women and people of color played in early US labor organizing, union and worker center roles and labor organizing strategies, and relationships between unions and worker centers. *Actions* are used to answer research question two by looking at the role actions play at addressing inequality. *Documents* are used to answer research question two by looking at the role documents play at addressing

inequality. *Goals and values* are used to answer research question two by looking at the role goals and values play at addressing inequality.

Literature is used to answer research question two by exploring the past and the present roles union and worker centers have played in reducing inequality and also by looking at unions and worker centers as parts of the same labor movement. Some of the data needed to answer this research question came from the content analysis performed for research question one including evidence of silences and presences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality by using content analysis of *actions*, *documents*, and *values and goals*. Additionally, data was gathered by performing a literature review on the history of women and people of color in the labor movement, on the different strategies that unions and worker centers use, and on the relationships, complementarities, and collaboration between unions and worker centers. In the case of the literature review, the data needed was the literature itself. Sources needed to answer this research question include research results from research question one including union and worker center websites. Specifically, the (*Actions*): Projects, campaigns, technology app, committees, (*Documents*): Publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter, and (*Goals and Values*): Mission statement, vision statement, constitution, bill of rights. Additional sources included literature found in the literature review.

In order to find data, unions and worker centers that represent restaurant workers was the initial criteria for selecting the websites that were viewed. Keywords to locate these websites included union, worker centers, food industry, food, culinary, and restaurants. Then (1) *Actions* (Projects, campaigns, technology app, committees) (2) *Documents* (Publications, reports, resources, general website information, blog, newsletter), and (3) *Goals and values* (Mission statement, vision statement, constitution, bill of rights) were created to represent the different

ways that websites addressed (presence) or did not address (silence) gender, race, or class inequality. Presences were noted by the pre-determined words or phrases previously listed. Additionally, the literature was found using the internet to locate books and newspaper articles and online EBSCO research platform for academic journals using women, unions, labor, worker centers, African American, labor movement, labor movement history, and organizing as keywords. Data was analyzed by looking for the roles women and people of color played in early labor organizing, roles and strategies specific to unions, roles and strategies specific to worker centers, and by noting relationships between unions and worker centers.

Conclusion

The influence structural inequality has on restaurant industry wages, job mobility, security, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and gender and racial segregation prompt this research to look at the different ways unions and worker centers are addressing gender, race, and class inequality. Content analysis was used to explore union and worker center websites for *actions, documents, and goals and mission* for evidence of silences or presences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality in order to answer how do unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers recognize inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class? Labor organizing strategies as an analytical framework was used to explore the roles, complementarities, and collaborations of union and worker centers in order to answer in what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? The following chapter presents and analyzes the results from content analysis and literature review and suggests how the results contribute to social justice and social change.

Chapter Four

Results, Analysis, and Contribution

In order to take a closer look at how unions and workers centers address inequality at the intersection of race, class, and gender, data was collected from unions and worker center websites. This chapter begins by displaying the data collected from a content analysis of both unions and worker centers that represent the interests of restaurant workers. Following data presentation, analysis of how unions and workers are addressing gender, race, and class inequality is done with the guidance of frameworks of inequality. Then, this chapter will examine how unions and worker centers are collaborating and shed light on some of the challenges they face in collaborating and organizing. Finally, the end of this chapter discusses how this research contributes to social change in the food system and makes suggestions for unions and worker centers in their attempts to address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry and also for workers seeking restaurant workplace justice.

The topic of this research is inequality in the restaurant industry due to the lack of job mobility, job security, low wages, limited benefits, and gender and racial discrimination and segregation. Inequalities at the intersection of gender, race, and class are maintained by exploitation and powerlessness forms of oppression. Restaurant industry culture prevents workers from challenging these inequalities within the workplace. Unions and worker center labor organizing strategies challenge exploitation and empower workers by advocating for their interests. Therefore, the central research question of this thesis examines the role unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry.

In order to answer this question, research question one asks how unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class.

Research question two considers the ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? These questions further explore the role unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry by showing how *actions*, language in *documents*, and the beliefs and objectives expressed in *goals and values* are addressing complex inequalities. Additionally, how unions and worker centers are complementary to one another is analyzed by looking at the different roles unions and worker centers serve and at how their *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* address gender, race, and class inequality in totality. This research addresses the maintenance of inequality in the restaurant industry by exploring the role labor organizing strategies have in addressing gender, race, and class inequality. If inequalities at the intersection of gender, race, and class are maintained by exploitation and powerlessness and labor organizing strategies are able to address inequality and powerlessness then the role unions and worker centers play in addressing gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry will aid in understanding how to overcome inequality and powerlessness.

Results and Analysis for Research Question 1

The central research question of this thesis asks, what role do unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry? Research question one asks, how do unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers recognize inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class? This question relates to the central research question by categorizing inequality into gender, race, and class categories. By placing inequality into different categories, the role unions and worker centers play at addressing inequality can be understood in more specific terms.

To answer research question one, unions and worker centers that represent restaurant workers' websites were examined focusing on website material that either denotes *actions*, *documents*, or *goals and values*. Websites were chosen by performing an internet search using union, worker centers, food industry, food, culinary, and restaurants as keywords. The first five websites that were found for both unions and worker centers were used as the representative sample of restaurant industry unions and worker centers for this research. Actions consist of projects, campaigns, technology applications, and committees. Documents consist of publications, reports, resources, general website information, blogs, and newsletters. Goals and values consist of mission statements, vision statements, constitutions, and bills of rights. These actions, documents, and goals/values were examined for presences and silences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality. Presences were noted when one of the pre-determined words were present in the *action*, *documents*, or *goal and value* website material. If the pre-determined words were not present a silence was noted.

To begin, a brief introduction to the five unions and the five worker centers that were selected for this research is given. UNITE HERE! is a union that in general represents the hospitality industry and has a special focus on the food industry. One of UNITE HERE!'s signature campaigns Real Food Real Jobs is its partnership with students in food service on college campuses. Real Food Real Jobs goes beyond workers' rights and aims to bring more nutritious food to college campuses and k-12 schools (UNITE HERE! 2019c). One of the largest UNITE HERE! locals is the Culinary Union Local 226 out of Las Vegas, Nevada. Chartered in 1935, the Culinary Union has a large presence in the restaurants, hotels, and casinos of Las Vegas, representing 753,000 workers (Culinary union local 226 2019). Both UNITE HERE!'s website and the Culinary Union Local 226's website were used to collect data.

The next union covered in this research is Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and their Fight for \$15 campaign. Founded in 1921 in Chicago by immigrant janitors, SEIU has since grown to 2 million members over 25 percent of which identify as immigrants (SEIU 2019). While SEIU has not historically focused on organizing restaurant workers, their ties to the Fight for \$15 campaign in fast food marks their venture into unionizing restaurant workers. In fact, in October of 2018 with the backing of SEIU, there was a multi-state organized strike in the fast food industry. The strike happened in seven different states including fast-food workers from McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King (Telford 2018). The coordinated efforts between Fight for \$15 and SEIU prompt this research to take a closer look at the two groups combined strategies. It is important to note here that the Fight for \$15 campaign is not only restricted to the restaurant industry, in fact, but it is also a much larger movement that SEIU is partnering with to raise wages for service workers across all sectors.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) have made efforts to organize restaurant industry workers most recently unionizing the Burgerville Workers Union (BVWU). Founded in 1905, the IWW is a union that organizes by industry as opposed to trade and is committed to solidarity unionism as opposed to business unionism and refuses to affiliate with political parties or anti-political sects (IWW n.d.). The IWW's organizing efforts have been in the fast food and casual dining sector of the restaurant industry including establishments such as Starbucks, Jimmy John's, Pizza Hut, and Pacific Northwest Burgerville chain. Jimmy John's, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, and Burgerville organizing is done within the IWW Food and Retail Chain Workers campaign in addition to the Restaurant, Hotel, and Catering Workers Industrial Union campaign (IWW 2018). Founded in 2018, the Burgerville Workers Union (BVWU) is the first Federally recognized fast-food union in the U.S. (Frane 2018a). Burgerville is a fast-food chain and since the spring of

2018, three of the Burgerville locations have voted to be recognized as the BVWU (Frane 2018b). Next, the five worker centers that were analyzed will be introduced.

A coalition representing food workers in all aspects of food production including the restaurant industry, the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) connects many workers centers and worker-centered organizations including unions. The FCWA acts as an umbrella worker center representing the interests of food workers by connecting many worker centers and unions that are invested in justice for restaurant workers together. Founded in 2009, the main focus of the FCWA is to increase wages for food workers and to create better working conditions. In fact, the FCWA has 31 members in its coalition that in total are representing 340,000 food workers in North America (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2019). With the FCWA connecting many of the worker centers that are representing restaurant workers interests, they are a hub for both worker centers and unions.

Likely the most well-known worker center, ROC United has multiple campaigns working to address restaurant worker injustice. Founded in 2001 in New York City, ROC United's mission "Is to improve wages and working conditions for the nation's low wage restaurant workforce" (ROC United 2018). Since 2001, ROC United has established several chapters across the U.S. including ROC-PA, ROC-DC, ROC-Seattle, and ROC-the Bay in Oakland (ROC United 2019). Members of ROC United and affiliated chapters include restaurant workers and restaurant owners who are committed to implanting "high road business" practices. Restaurants committed to high road business practices pledge to implement policies that fall into three categories including, "(1) Providing livable wages (2) Maintaining a healthy workplace through paid sick days, vacation, or health insurance; and (3) Creating career ladders for employees through training and internal promotions policies" (ROC United 2019). Additionally, ROC

United's' Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment (RAISE) program provides opportunities for "high road" employers to learn how to implement equitable business practices (ROC United 2019). ROC United works on several campaigns that advocate for fair wages for tipped employees at the national level, focus on setting a new industry labor standard at the business level, unveil inequalities to consumers, train industry professional to adopt practices at their cooperative incubator, and research in order to provide adequate information on restaurant industry labor (ROC United n.d.). Both FCWA and ROC United worker centers are large in scale compared to the following worker centers.

Compared to FCWA and ROC United, Young Workers United (YWU) is a much smaller worker center that represents the interests of restaurant workers operating primarily in San Francisco. Founded in 2002, YWU organizes students and other low-wage service industry workers in order to "improve the quality of jobs" (Young Workers United, n.d.). Employing many worker center organization strategies, YWU is a membership organization that offers training, public education, leadership development, and grass-roots advocacy.

Another worker center that represents workers' interest in restaurants at a more localized level is the Pioneer Valley Workers Center PVWC. Located in Northampton, Massachusetts, PVWC works primarily with low-income immigrant workers including but not limited to restaurant workers. PVWC takes actions that include organizing, leadership development, coalition building, political power, education, research, and provides services to get workers in touch with legal services (Pioneer Valley Workers Center 2017). The next worker center introduced is also small compared to FCWA and ROC United

Founded in 2007, Brandworkers International focuses its organizing efforts on workers in food production in New York City. While their work is more focused on food production, their

attempts to represent worker' interests in the food industry is worth mentioning. Brandworkers campaigns have primarily been focused on bakers in commercial and retail kitchens. While commercial bakeries are arguably not restaurants, retail bakeries are similar to restaurants due to their customer interface that is oriented in customer service. Now that the unions and worker centers that are used in this research have been introduced, how they are addressing gender, race, and class inequality can be presented and analyzed.

Below, table 1. offers a visual representation of the data collected from unions UNITE HERE!, Culinary Union Local 226, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Burgerville Workers Union (BVWU). Additionally, table 2. displays data collected from worker centers including the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), ROC United, Young Workers United (YWU), Pioneer Valley Workers Center (PVWC), and Brandworkers. Table 1. and table 2. present the data that was found on the ten websites in the form of *actions*, *documents*, or *goals and values* by noting presence if evidence of silences or presences of addressing gender, race, or class inequality. Table 1. and table 2. are referenced in order to show the “silence” or “presence” of addressing gender, race, and class inequality by each of the unions and worker centers. Starting with UNITE HERE! an analysis of the way each union and worker center are addressing complex inequalities will be done based on if and how each of these websites used or did not use the selected set of words that represent gender, race, or class inequality. Additionally, presences are documented based on gender, race, or class inequality data that emerged during the data collection process that qualified as a presence. For example, the presence of addressing transgender inequality was not something that was addressed in the pre-determined words. Therefore, a presence of addressing transgender inequality was marked as a presence of addressing gender inequality.

Table 1 Union Website Presences of Addressing Gender, Race, and Class Inequality

Union	Website:	Gender	Race	Class
UNITE HERE!	Actions			
	Documents			
	Goals & Values	X	X	X
Culinary Union Local 226	Actions		X	
	Documents	X	X	
	Goals & Values			
SEIU	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents	X	X	X
	Goals & Values	X	X	X
IWW	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents	X	X	X
	Goals & Values	X	X	X
BVWU	Actions			
	Documents		X	X
	Goals & Values			

Table 2 Worker Center Website Presences of Addressing Gender, Race, and Class Inequality

Worker Center	Website:	Gender	Race	Class
FCWA	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents		X	X
	Goals & Values			
ROC United	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents	X	X	X
	Goals & Values			X
YWU	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents			X
	Goals & Values			
PVWC	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents	X	X	X
	Goals & Values		X	X
Brandworkers	Actions	X	X	X
	Documents			X
	Goals & Values			

UNITE HERE! address gender, race, and class inequality comprehensively in their *goals and values* websites material. The foreword of UNITE HERE!'s constitution states, "We have the opportunity to significantly advance the struggles for equality for women, immigrants and African Americans. Women, immigrants, and African Americans have built our union and our industries, but remain overrepresented among the unorganized. There can be no freedom for workers in general until those specific battles are won" (UNITE HERE! i, 2014). In making this statement, UNITE HERE! is recognizing that women, African Americans, and immigrants have the most to gain from unionizing because they are disproportionately impacted by labor inequalities. By mentioning that women and people of color have the most to gain from labor organizing, UNITE HERE! is placing an emphasis on intersectionality in their union goals and beliefs. In their constitution, UNITE HERE! go on to discuss the importance of working people capturing the power from corporations and the rich (UNITE HERE! ii, 2014). In other words, through unionizing working people who are experiencing powerlessness can reclaim the power that has been taken away from them by the elite.

Additionally, UNITE HERE! *goals and value* website material address inequality at the intersection of gender and class. UNITE HERE!'s acknowledgment of gender and class in their global vision by mentioning their commitment to fighting sexual harassment and wage theft (UNITE HERE! 2019a). UNITE HERE!'s objective to end sexual harassment is significant due to the hypermasculine environment that encourages sexual harassment in the restaurant industry. Furthermore, their intention to combat wage theft is also significant because people working in low wage labor and also people who are not protected by laws due to undocumented status are subject to wage theft due to powerlessness that prevents them from seeking unpaid wages.

While UNITE HERE!'s *goals* and *values* address gender, race, and, class inequality, their *actions* and *documents* do not. The silences of addressing gender, race, or class inequality on UNITE HERE!'s documents are noteworthy especially when the language that is being used could be interpreted as sexist. For example, when talking about industry positions UNITE HERE! refers to servers as waiters and waitresses (UNITE HERE! 2019a). These gendered terms are exclusionary of trans and non-binary workers and additionally create further bias as to what a server should be. The non-gender specific waitstaff term server should be used by anyone working in or with the restaurant industry.

Culinary Union Local 226 addresses gender, race, and class inequality collectively in their *documents*. In their *documents*, they address racial inequality by showcasing a black lives matter sign at the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. day parade on their website bulletin board (Culinary Union Local 226 2019). Additionally, there is a presence in addressing gender and class inequality in their documents by providing a place where union members can make sexual harassment and discrimination claims. Within this section of the website there is a list of eight ways union members are protected from sexual harassment and discrimination with the most noteworthy mentioning "Men and women in union positions are paid the same (while across the United States, women are paid \$.79 cents for every dollar a man earns)" (Culinary Union Local 226 2019). This position is significant because it is acknowledging that women are paid less than men and that in order to counter this the union purposefully ensures women and men get paid the same for the same type of work. In an industry where wages are already staggering low, women experiencing income inequality are subject to receiving wages that are disproportionately low. Culinary Union Local 226 is setting an important income standard for the restaurant

industry by ensuring women get paid the same amount as men when working in the same position.

Culinary Union Local 226's blog *document* shows many instances of presences of addressing racial inequality. One of the most noteworthy attempts to address racial inequality is the blog itself. Every blog post is published in both English and Spanish. The blog is published in both English and Spanish is significant because many restaurant industry workers speak Spanish. Therefore, communicating information in Spanish addresses the powerlessness in the restaurant industry because workers are able to access information that impacts their working lives. In other words, if the information is only available in English, Spanish speaking restaurant workers are unable to understand how union organizing impacts them. If workers are unable to access union information they remain powerless.

The *actions* taken by Culinary Local Union 226 show that they are addressing racial inequality in the restaurant industry. The Culinary Union Local 226's citizen project was created to give free services to union members who not US citizens to become citizens. The project is partnering with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) by offering a license plate that people can buy and proceeds will go towards the project. According to the Culinary Union Local 226, website over 16,000 families have become US citizens since 2001 with the help of the citizenship project (Culinary Union Local 226 2019). With undocumented workers experiencing labor challenges differently than documented workers it is significant that Culinary Union Local 226 is addressing the needs of undocumented workers.

SEIU addresses gender, race, and class inequality in their *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values*. *Documents* address class inequality by covering topics such as back pay and \$15 an hour minimum wage. Additionally, *documents* on SEIU's blog express solidarity for

dreamers and people with temporary protected status. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was signed into legislation in 2012 and offers people who were brought to the U.S. as children the ability to stay in the U.S. temporarily but does not offer a pathway to citizenship (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. n.d). The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (2017), also known as the Dream Act is an act that has been introduced but not passed that would offer a pathway for DACA recipients or other people with temporary protected status to receive U.S. citizenship (NILC 2017). DACA recipients are often referred to as dreamers due to the connection between DACA and the Dream Act. SEIU's *documents* expressing solidarity for dreamers is significant because there are perhaps several million undocumented restaurant workers who disproportionately experience gender, race, and class inequalities.

Additional SEIU *documents* address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. A blog posting titled “Ready to Put Our Boots on the Ground” addresses racial inequality by discussing how black women SEIU members who attended the 7th Annual Black Women’s Roundtable Women of Power National Summit felt about the importance of tackling racial issues in their union. Furthermore, the blog post goes into detail about how a union can help black workers achieve higher wages and to fight so that future generation is no longer experiencing structural racism (SEIU n.d.). This blog post is addressing the intersection of gender, race, and class by discussing the importance of unions in achieving higher wages for women of color. SEIU has many blog posts that similarly address complex inequalities.

All *actions, documents, and goals and values* on the IWW’s website addressed gender, race, and class inequality. One of the most significant ways that the IWW address gender, race, and class inequality are in their *goals and values*. The IWW constitution resolutions address

complex inequalities by declaring their beliefs on certain issues. In the constitution resolution titled, Resolution Regarding Anti-Fascism and Revolutionary Unionism, the IWW declare their ultimate goal to “abolish a class society” and their commitment to opposing racially oppressive groups and any groups that discriminate and oppress groups specifically for being grouped as “others” (IWW 2018, 42). By taking this stance, the IWW is expressing their opposition to groups who want to promote racism and any other form of discrimination based on identity and is condemning these groups affiliation to the ruling class. I believe that by making this claim the IWW is eluding to the manifestation of structural racial and gender inequality within class inequality by overtly denouncing the affiliation of racist groups with the ruling class.

Additionally, the IWW takes stands on gender inequality and does so by taking stands on gender and sexual identity. Further examination of the constitution shows the IWW's recognition of the manifestation of sexism, racism, and transphobia through societal norms and forbids any of these acts of discrimination in its spaces (IWW 2018, 40). Furthermore, in their resolution section titled "Resolution on Biology and Gender" the IWW make statements declaring gender is not linked to biology rather it is a cultural construct and that the safety of all IWW members regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation should be safe and included in all IWW space. To further emphasize this, the IWW states, "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that any and all spaces within the IWW (including, but not limited to, gender-based committees, caucuses, and events) should respect the right of individual members to self identify and participate in all union activities according to that self-identification” (IWW 2018, 43). In making this statement, the IWW is claiming that all spaces within the IWW should be safe for people regardless of their gender identity. I believe this statement is first and foremost taking a stance on transphobia within the IWW. The constitution also describes the procedure members

can take to report discrimination. The stances the IWW make on complex inequalities is echoed in their *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. A closer look at one of the IWW's newest restaurant industry members the BVWU is necessary to see how their affiliated members are expressing the same commitment to addressing complex inequalities.

The BVWU's website is not as elaborate as the IWW website most likely because they are a new union as of 2018. The BVWU's *documents* show presences of addressing class inequality by discussing their demands for \$5/hour raises. Additionally, the *documents* show presences of addressing racial and class inequality in the website section titled "8 Reasons Why We're Boycotting Burgerville." Reason two suggests poverty wages as a reason to boycott Burgerville and reason seven for immigrant power. Addressing wages and immigrants are a significant component of addressing inequality in the restaurant industry because low wages and exploitation of immigrant labor is prevalent in the restaurant industry.

A common theme that emerges the FCWA *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* are their effort to addresses racial and class inequality. For example, their *goals and values* place an emphasis on improving wages and bringing racial justice to workers across the food chain (FCWA 2019). The FCWA have many *documents* that enhance their ability to address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry especially because the *documents* are made accessible to a wide audience.

The most noteworthy FCWA *document* is the *Food Chain Avengers: A Food Justice and Worker Justice Comic Book*. The comic book tells the story of five young people working in different aspects of the food chain including a woman server who makes \$2.13 an hour (Dye et al. 2014). The comic tells the story of the challenges all of the workers are facing in their workplaces including low wages, undocumented workers not knowing their rights, racism,

sexism, the gender wage gap, fear, and powerlessness. In the end, all of the workers across the food chain unite to demand that the owners provide better working conditions and better wages. Indeed, this publication brings gender, race, and class inequality in all aspects of the food system and shines a light on the difficulties restaurant servers who are making \$2.13 an hour face. This *document* shows that the inequalities restaurant workers face are endemic to all sectors of the food system. In this way, the comic book is showing the power of uniting in solidarity in order to confront divide and conquer managerial approaches that keep workers powerless and afraid. For the FCWA, uniting across food system sectors is a key component to their organizing and alliance building.

ROC United also has several *documents* that go into great detail about gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. ROC United has over fifty *documents* available on their website the majority of them being formal publications. Five *documents* were selected for this research and are represented in table 2. To begin, an analysis of one of ROC United's *document*, *The Racial Equity Toolkit* will be done to gain a better understanding of the specific ways ROC United is addressing complex inequalities in the restaurant industry.

The *Racial Equity Toolkit* is a publication that is meant to be used as a resource for restaurant industry employers who are looking to address racial inequity in their workplace including strategies employers can implement to combat structural inequality. The toolkit recognizes how racial segregation in FOH and BOH prevents workers of colors from accessing higher paying jobs. To address this, the toolkit offers strategies for employers to evaluate how racial segregation is manifesting in their workplace (ROC United 2018, 1). I believe this type of toolkit is eye-opening to employers who are unaware that they are implementing and reinforcing racial segregation in the workplace.

Additionally, the *Racial Equity Toolkit* suggests tactics employers can use to challenge structural inequality in the workplace by countering implicit bias. According to ROC United (2018), implicit bias is “The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” (ROC United 2018, 24). In this way, implicit bias suggests that people are discriminating other groups of people without even realizing that they are doing so. According to ROC United implicit bias becomes normalized and a part of how restaurants operate making it a difficult barrier for addressing racial equity in the workplace (ROC United 2018, 24). By suggesting a strategy to counter implicit bias ROC United is acknowledging that racism is structural and therefore embedded in the everyday interactions of restaurant culture. Tactics ROC United suggests to intervene with implicit bias include everyday awareness of implementing racial equity by re-training conversations and implementing cultural shifts, hiring practices that eliminate opportunities for stereotype bias by creating specific protocols that avoid implicit bias, and a racially intentional recruitment process that also follow specific protocols and allow decisions to be made with racial equity in mind. (ROC United 2018, 24). Implicit bias is subconscious therefore awareness that implicit bias exists allows for employers to create policies that will work to avoid falling into implicit bias traps.

ROC United's Diner's Guide app offers a list of restaurants in a particular area that ROC United has determined are addressing gender, race, and class inequality in their establishment. According to the app, "The Diner's Guide showcases food establishments who take the high road to profitability, providing livable wages, paid time off, racial equity, an environment free of sexual harassment, and opportunity for advancement high road restaurant" (ROC United 2012). The Diner's guide allows customers to see how the restaurants are doing at addressing wages for tipped and non-tipped workers, paid time off, address racial equity, are implementing anti-sexual

harassment policies or training, or are members of ROC United's' Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment (RAISE) program.

The transparency that the Diner's Guide gives to consumer allows them to make decisions about where they decide to patronize. Furthermore, the Diner's Guide gives customers the awareness of inequality in the restaurant industry and challenges them to take a stand on whether they want to patronize restaurants that are not making attempts to address gender, race, or class inequality. For example, how the 1965-1970 grape boycott utilized consumer solidarity to refrain from buying grapes until employers met the UFW's demands (UFW chronology 2019). The Diner's Guide is only available in 10 major cities and "high road" employers are still few and far between. If the Diner's Guide expands, it has the potential to gain consumer solidarity similar to what worked to grant farm workers' demands in the grape boycott. Perhaps documents like the *Racial Equity Toolkit* will encourage employers to take the "high road" so *Actions* like the Diner's Guide will expand so that consumers demanding gender, race, and class inequality in their favorite restaurant becomes the new industry standard. ROC United is making strides in restaurant worker justice, yet they are not the only worker center that is solely focused on representing restaurant industry workers' interests.

Young Workers United (YWU) are a much smaller and localized worker center compared to FCWA and ROC United. YWU's *documents* claim the worker center's primary focus is to improve wages and advance job mobility for immigrant workers in the San Francisco Bay area (YWU n.d.). Additionally, two noteworthy YWU *actions* address inequality at the intersections of gender, race, and class by challenging wage theft and advocating for paid sick leave especially for working mothers and parents that lack job security when taking time off to provide for sick children. The attention YWU give to paid sick leave for workers, mothers, and

parents is significant due to the reality that many workers in the restaurant industry work while sick. Additionally, YWU is addressing exploitation in the restaurant industry by working to improve wages and also is addressing powerlessness by drawing attention to inequalities restaurant workers face when they are forced to work sick and are unable to take time off when their children are sick.

PVWC *actions* and *documents* address gender, race, and class inequality. Additionally, their *goals and values* address inequality at the intersection of race and class by stating in their mission, “The Pioneer Valley Workers’ Center builds power with low-wage and immigrant workers throughout Western Massachusetts” (PVWC 2017). By stating this in their *goals and values* they believe that low-wage and immigrant workers need to gain power in order to address the inequalities that they face. By making this statement, PVWC is recognizing the powerlessness workers face in the restaurant industry and other service industry jobs due to exploitation.

Brandworkers is also a smaller worker center compared to the FCWA and ROC United. Brandworker’s *documents* and *goals and values* address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Common ways that Brandworker’s *documents* address gender, race, and class inequality include their mentioning of gender exploitation, wage exploitation, immigrant exploitation, business models built on exploitation, and the importance of building movements that are worker-led (Brandworkers n.d.). Additionally, Brandworkers recognizes employers’ roles in creating businesses that rely on segregation tactics to keep workers divided. By making a point to address the role that employers play in enforcing inequality in the restaurant industry Brandworkers are aware of the connection between business practices, exploitation, and powerlessness.

The unions that were evaluated had varying degrees of addressing inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class in their *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values*. UNITE HERE! comprehensively address gender, race, and class inequality in their *goals and values*, yet their *documents* have the potential to be viewed as sexist due to the gendered terminology used for servers. Culinary Union Local 226 address racial inequality in their *documents* and *actions* by publishing their blog in English and Spanish and by offering a citizenship program for union members. Both SEIU and IWW address gender, race, and class inequality in their *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values*. The newer BVWU addresses inequality at the intersection of class and race in their *documents*.

The worker centers that were evaluated also had varying degrees of addressing inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class in their *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values* as seen in the *Food Chain Avengers: A Food Justice and Worker Justice Comic Book*. The FCWA have a common theme of addressing inequality at the intersection of race in class as was evident in their *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. ROC United had several documents in the form of publications that comprehensively address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Specifically, ROC United's *Racial Equity Toolkit* goes into detail about the inequalities that restaurant workers face at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Smaller in scale, YWU, PVWC, and Brandworkers addressed gender, race, and class inequality at varying degrees in their *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values*.

This section looked at how unions and worker centers that include restaurant workers address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class by exploring union and worker centers *actions*, *documents*, and in their *goals and values* on their websites. The next section will look at the ways unions and worker centers are addressing inequality at the intersection of

gender, race, and class. Additionally, there will be a review of the history of gender, race, and class in labor organizing, followed by union and worker center attributes and strategies.

Additionally, the next section will cover how unions and worker center complement and collaborate with one another, and will also look at how the worker centers and unions that were analyzed in research question 1 are collaborating.

Results and Analysis for Research Question 2

Research question two asks, in what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? This question relates to the overall research question, the role unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry because it is further analyzing the ways unions and worker centers address inequality by looking at their organizing strategies in the past and the present. In order to answer this question, the analytical framework of labor organizing strategies as described in chapter two is used in addition to a literature review was conducted to uncover the role women and people of color have played in union and worker center organizing history and the obstacles they have faced from organized labor. Additionally, a literature review was used to uncover the difficulties workers face in organizing will be examined by explaining the advantages and challenges of both union and worker center organizing strategies. A literature review was also used to uncover how unions and worker centers are complementary of one another, how they are collaborating today, and how pressure from anti-labor groups undermine labor organizing. Finally, this section referred to data collected from the content analysis in research question one in order to analyze how unions and worker centers are represented in the restaurant industry today.

Union membership's steady decline over the last thirty years is forcing unions to make considerable efforts in organizing low-wage workers and those who are typically considered

challenging for unions to organize. Outsourcing labor to other countries and technology together have influenced the decline in manufacturing jobs and given rise to the service economy (Richmon 2017). Labor organizing was built on industrial jobs such as manufacturing, and with the decline in manufacturing jobs there has been a decline in union membership.

The decline in unions in the US is changing whom unions are looking to organize, yet unions are challenged by their exclusionary past. Specifically, union cultural has traditionally been dominated by white men (Fletcher et al. 2000). Women and people of color occupy lower-wage positions in service industry causing unions to focus their organizing efforts on industries like the restaurant. The disproportionate inequalities women and people of color face mean that they arguably have the most to gain from union representation. The decline of union membership has made unions look closer at their organizing strategies within union culture to find ways to unionize women and people of color. If union culture has been dominated primarily by white men it leaves us to wonder what role did unions historically play in addressing gender and racial inequality?

In early US labor organizing, women played an important role in solidarity, organizing, and added to the organizing agenda, yet the differences in support for women's rights in general varied depending on union ideology. Schofield's (1983) "Rebel girls and union maids: The woman question in the journals of the AFL and IWW, 1905-1920" discusses two unions in opposing radical (IWW) and conservative (American Federation of Labor (AFL)) ideologies addressed gender in their journals (335). In the early 20th century, women worked in the margins of industrial work and were generally not included in union organizing. As women entered more positions in the textile, garment, and cigar industries the IWW and AFL saw more opportunities to organize women yet women's experiences with unions were always problematic (Schofield's

1983, 336). Both women of the IWW "rebel girls" and women of the AFL "union maids" were typecast as occupying domestic roles (Schofield's 1983, 337). Radical and conservative differences between the IWW and the AFL were set aside as both took similar overarching positions on issues of gender equality.

The IWW and AFL's opposing ideologies were evident based on their support for or against the women's suffrage movement. While the IWW is known for its radical ideologies in terms of class, they have not always aligned these ideologies at the intersection of gender. The IWW's saw feminist issues in terms of class inequality, failing to acknowledge the different injustices women face outside of the class struggle thus taking stances in opposition to women's suffrage (Schofield's 1983, 338). In other words, the IWW believed that the only way women could be liberated was by dismantling capitalism and that unity across class among women only got in the way of this liberation. This ideological foundation prevented the IWW from supporting women's suffrage along with other unions in the early 1900s (Schofield's 1983, 338-340). While the IWW opposed women's suffrage, the AFL supported it due to their tradition in progressive reform (339). The radical transformative ideologies prevented the IWW from supporting women's suffrage alongside the AFL with their reformist ideologies. Both founding ideologies also supported the IWW's and the AFL's stance on birth control.

The IWW also viewed birth control through the lens of class whereas the AFL ignored the topic completely. The IWW's stance on birth control was with class in mind as they believed that women having access to birth control would allow workers to have a say in how many workers could enter the workforce. Viewing birth control as a way to reduce the workforce, the IWW saw this as an opportunity to increase wages (Schofield's 1983, 340). Additionally, the IWW believed that access to birth control should not only be available to the bourgeoisie and

also that addressing the wellbeing of people precedes topics on birth control (Schofield's 1983, 340). The IWW's position on birth control was far from being founded in feminist ideologies due to their unwillingness to acknowledge how intersecting inequalities have the potential to compound the experiences of class inequality.

Regardless of the AFL and IWW's opposing positions on women's suffrage or birth control, their belief in the nature of womanhood is what united them. The ideal woman in the eyes of the early IWW and the AFL in the 1900s was pure, moral, and chaste, and her main objective is to nurture the future human race (Schofield's 1983, 342). Therefore, women organizers were not judged based on their political views or ability to organize, rather they were judged based on their ability to align with the social expectations of what it meant to be a woman. Both IWW's and AFL's shared vision of womanhood prevented them from addressing gender inequality from the patriarchal root of its cause.

The different roles that the radical IWW and the conservative AFL had at the beginning of the 20th century was complementary in addressing gender inequality. The IWW's pro-birth control position and the AFL's support in women's suffrage gave women a platform to address issues that directly impacted them. Although ideologically opposing, the roles that the IWW and the AFL played in the women's suffrage and positions on birth control has shaped the rights and lived experiences of women today. Today, it is not uncommon to see maternity leave, equal pay, and sexual harassment in contracts during the collective bargaining process and a part of union contracts (Gould et al. 2017). Focusing on the challenges women have historically faced in labor organizing will aid in the understanding of how unions are addressing gender inequality today. Likewise, looking at the role people of color have historically played in the labor movement will also aid in the understanding of how unions are addressing complex inequalities.

African Americans have also been left out of unions due to the historically white male-dominated culture of US labor organizing. Early US labor organizing was dominated by white men who purposefully tried to keep African Americans from becoming members of unions that primarily consisted of white workers (African-American's Rights n.d). In the early 19th and early 20th centuries, low skilled labor was abundant due to immigration influx creating competition over jobs that often ended in violence towards African Americans (Olzak 1989, 1303). Additionally, black and immigrant workers were often used as strikebreakers allowing employers to undercut the wages of workers on strike (Olzak 1989, 1307). African American's were legally allowed to join the same workers unions as whites in 1866, yet due to the supposed threats that African American imposed on workers' jobs, white workers purposefully excluded workers from unions (African-American's Rights n.d). The competition over waged labor that often ended in violence towards African-Americans kept African-Americans from joining the same unions as white workers. The control white workers had over unions meant that unions were a place that perpetuated racial inequality.

While unions perpetuated racial inequality by inflicting violence towards African-Americans to prevent them from joining unions, black workers created unions to specifically support black workers. To counter the exclusion of black workers that was enforced by unions dominated by white workers, in 1869 the Colored National Labor Union met in Washington, D.C. (Cassedy 1997). The Colored National Labor Union petitioned Congress in attempts to address issues such as land distribution to black farmers in the South, yet their attempts were continuously not addressed and by the late 1800s it was evident that Congress would not address their petitions with the creation of the Jim Crow South and the "separate but equal" doctrine that strengthened segregation in labor union organizing (Cassedy 1997). With the political landscape

supporting white workers exclusion African Americans from unions, black workers continued to face racial inequality imposed by union culture.

In the early 20th century, an increase in African American workers in the North allowed for far more African Americans to work in trades and industries than before. From 1913-1930 over one million African Americans left politically backed racism in the South to work in the north where many jobs were available due to labor shortages from the First World War (Cassedy 1997). Yet, persistent racism in union leadership throughout the 1930s prevented unions from overcoming racialized division in union culture. In fact, the passing of the NLRA in 1935 reinforced racism in union culture as the act failed to prohibit racial discrimination by unions as a part of the law (Cassedy 1997). Although African Americans were working in more industries than they had in the past, they faced significant challenges in becoming union members due to ongoing racism in union culture.

Intentional non-discriminatory labor organizing and efforts to end racial income inequality increased the number of unionized African Americans. It was not until 1935 that African American union membership increased when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) specifically set out to organize black trade workers lifting the long-standing enforcement of racial inequality in trade unions (Cassedy 1997). Additionally, World War II created a demand for workers and in order to meet that demand African American's filled positions. After facing wages lower than those of their white counterparts, in 1941 African American workers were threatening President Roosevelt to march on Washington unless he made an executive order to end wage discrimination (Cassedy 1997). The Civil Rights Movement put the most pressure to end intentional racial inequality within union culture by making racial discrimination in the workplace illegal with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Cassedy 1997). Unions

intentionally working to organize African American workers, black workers demanding equal pay for equal work, and the passage of the Civil Rights Act has transitioned unions that were once a sight for racial discrimination to a site to organize around issues of inequality.

While unions were once known for their exclusionary racial inequality practices, over the last hundred years labor organizing has begun to provide opportunities for black workers to challenge inequality. While African American union exclusion was rampant throughout most labor organizing history, today African Americans make up the majority of unionized labor (Dunn et al. 2015, 10). People of color have a tumultuous history in labor organizing, one that is often upheld by discriminatory laws and regulations. Yet, the once exclusive unions that purposefully tried to keep African Americans from joining now predominantly represent African American workers.

Exclusionary policies have made labor organizing difficult for people of color. The passing of the NLRA was done so in a way to exclude people of color by purposefully disregarding certain sectors of employment (Perea 2011, 118). Specifically, agriculture and domestic workers were excluded from the NLRA, occupations that were and are mostly fulfilled by people of color. The several amending acts that followed the NLRA also found ways to withhold collective bargaining powers from people of color especially in the South (Perea 2011, 118). Farmworkers were excluded due to farmers advocating for farmworkers to be left out of legislation out of fear that their already low incomes would be even lower if farm workers were allowed to unionize (Perea 2011, 119). Exclusionary tactics upheld by the NLRA did not go unchallenged, in fact, labor organizing in agriculture has made strides without the protection of the NLRA. The United Farm Workers Union (UFW) challenged their lack of recognition by the NLRA by organizing Latino farm workers and using direct action strategies. The UFW was not

only challenged by labor policy exclusion, but other labor organizers also competed with the UFW to unionize the farm fields. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters tried to prevent the UFW from organizing by colluding with growers (UFW chronology 2019). The opposition farmworkers faced from both labor policy and other unions is an example of how racial inequality was within the structures of labor organizing and prevented workers of color from accessing the benefits associated with union representation.

The intersection of gender, race, and class in labor organizing history have perpetuated inequality for women and people of color. Labor organizing's recognition that women and people of color are the most challenged by income inequality is forcing unions to look inward. Since labor organizing has historically been more focused on class than on gender and race, today, women and people of color have arguably the most to gain from union organizing. According to Thomason et al. (2018), "While union coverage does not eliminate race, gender, and immigrant gaps in wages, it does reduce them." Collective bargaining agreements often standardize wages for all workers so that women are paid the same amount as men when working in the same position (Thomason et al. 2018). Additionally, unions often provide a place for workers to file a formal grievance for members who have been discriminated in their workplace (Thomason et al. 2018). Unions having the ability to standardize wages and provide a platform for workers to file grievances are both ways that inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class are being addressed by unions.

As labor organizing strategies, both unions, and worker centers have different roles that inhibit or permit their abilities to advocate for workers interests. Unions are legally bound by the NLRA before, during, and after the collective bargaining process that dictates how they can bargain and what forms of leverage in and outside of the bargaining process are permissible.

The goal of collective bargaining is for employer and employee to come to an agreement on a contract that is essentially the law of the workplace. There are certain laws on what can be bargained on and signed into union contracts. There are topics that are mandatory, permissive, and illegal that are bargained on. Mandatory include topics such as wages and health care, permissible refer to topics related to the bargaining process such as time and place of bargaining meetings and illegal such as bargaining over something that violates the NLRA (Johansson 2017). Specific violations of the NLRA include bargaining over whether or not a union has the right to a closed shop in a right-to-work state (Johansson 2017). In a right-to-work state, closed shops are not allowed to be bargained over because closed shops require that employees only hire union workers. Right-to-work states have passed laws that prohibit closed shops meaning not all employees have to be a part of a union even if there is a union at a workplace. Worker centers, on the other hand, do not engage in collective bargaining and therefore are not subject to following the same rules that are required by the NLRA.

Unions are required to follow laws as defined by the NLRA, however, worker centers work outside of the restrictions of the NLRA. Worker centers are not restricted to the NLRA allowing them a wider range of direct-action strategies (Sen 2006, 90). According to Sen (2006), worker centers engage in direct-action protests often to draw attention to racism in the restaurant industry (90). While unions do use direct-action tactics such as striking they only do so in order to initiate or gain leverage in the collective bargaining process. In other words, unions focus on contract negotiations that will dictate the working environment. Since worker centers do not engage in collective bargaining their reasons and goals for direct-action can and are focused on the inequalities that workers are facing in day-to-day operations such as racism. The range of

tactics that unions and worker centers can utilize encourages partnership between the two labor organizing strategies.

Worker centers and unions can benefit from one another due to the experience unions have in labor organizing and the position worker centers have in the community. Unions are interested in collaborating with worker centers because they are connected with workers, creative and courageous, have young and diverse people in leadership positions, founded in the community, lead campaigns focused on worker justice (Bobo et al 2016, 133). Worker centers are interested in collaborating with unions because unions have experience organizing workers, are connected with elected officials, have extensive labor law knowledge, are generous, and have volunteer and donor sources (Bobo 2016, 133-134). Unions and worker centers often complement one another due to their different strengths in labor organizing.

Worker centers' engagement at the community level is attractive to unions because it allows worker centers to have awareness of the problem's workers face. Unions are interested in partnering with worker centers because of their connection with the community and their willingness to take on campaigns that are addressing problems such as wage theft and minimum wage (Bobo et al 2016, 133). Additionally, unions often look to worker centers for up and coming labor organizing leaders especially young labor organizers of color to increase workers of color in union leadership positions (Bobo et al 2016, 133). Worker centers grassroots organizing strategies are a way for problems that workers face to be heard by labor organizing. In other words, worker centers draw attention to issues that workers face that might be overlooked by unions because of worker centers' foundation in the problems of the community.

The different ways that worker centers and unions organize also creates challenges in collaboration. Unions have long had control in many aspects of labor organizing and can be

reluctant to partner with worker centers (Bobo et al. 2016, 134). Additionally, unions might not want to risk their relationships with employers because worker centers are more comfortable attacking employers and pushing politicians compared to unions (Bobo et al. 2016, 134). Challenges that unions and workers centers face in collaboration are rooted in the different strategies that they employ. Worker centers do not hesitate to use direct-action strategies that target employers and politicians while unions are more reserved out of concern that relationships will be weakened. The relationships that worker centers have with the community and the relationship that unions have with employers are attributes that are mutually beneficial to the labor movement.

The challenges worker centers and unions face in collaborating are worth confronting due to the benefits workers can receive from union and worker center combined efforts. Challenges that worker center and union collaboration face are often exploited by the media and can then be used to weaken the labor movement. For example, the media will try to get worker centers to say negative things about unions during interviews that threaten the relationships between a union and a worker centers (Bobo et al. 2016, 135). Media's attempts to pit unions against worker centers threatens the benefits of union and worker center partnerships and has the potential to weaken the labor movement.

Worker center and union partnerships are attacked by anti-labor groups because anti-labor groups see union and worker center partnership as a way to strengthen labor. In fact, some worker center critics view worker centers as illegal because they do not follow labor laws, are operating illegally as 501c3, or are even front groups for unions (Bobo et al. 2016, 152-155). Worker centers are 501c3 non-profits meaning they are restricted to follow certain laws to maintain their non-profit status. Additionally, worker centers operate outside of the restrictions

of the NLRA making union affiliation with workers centers viewed at by anti-labor groups as illegal because they believe worker centers when connected to unions should have to follow labor law.

The difference in the types of organizations that unions and worker centers file taxes play a role in defining what type of an organization they are and whom they represent. Unions are a 501c5 organization meaning they are a "mutual benefit" organization that is required to serve the interests of workers in a specific group (Bobo et al. 2016, 308). Worker centers, on the other hand, are a 501c3 organization meaning they are a "public benefit" organization and are required to serve all people in a specific community (Bobo et al. 2016, 308). The difference in mutual benefit and public benefit mean that worker centers and unions use specific language to define whom they serve. In other words, where unions claim to serve a specific trade or industry, worker centers serve the community.

Worker centers are being attacked due to anti-labor groups calling them illegal union front groups and attempts to discredit worker centers at the site of their relationships with unions. Anti-labor groups including the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the Center for Union Facts work to expose worker centers as unions and therefore believe they should not be allowed 501c3 tax exemption status (Bobo et al. 2016, 307). Founded in 1912, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the largest business interest group in the United States whose mission is “To strengthen the competitiveness of the U.S. economy” (U.S. Chamber of Commerce n.d.). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce published a report titled *Worker Centers: Union Front Groups and the Law* claiming many worker centers including ROC United are by definition a labor union so should be required to follow the same laws and regulations as unions (U.S. Chamber of Commerce 2018, 13). The Center for Union Facts is a group that claims that it “fights for transparency and accountability in

America's labor movement" by claiming that worker centers are front groups for big unions (The Center for Union Facts 2019). If a worker center does not follow the laws exactly as assigned by their tax filing status, anti-labor groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or the Center for Union Facts will attempt to discredit and dismantle their work.

Worker centers specialize in research and publications and are direct with their positions on gender, race, and class inequality. In fact, the wealth of worker center publications and reports that directly confront the intersection of, gender, race, and class in the restaurant industry are their flagship contribution to confronting the complexities of inequality in the restaurant industry. Worker center publications are the only communication tools that comprehensively posit complex inequalities within the boundaries of the restaurant industry. The worker centers that addressed gender, race, and class inequality within the limits of the restaurant industry are the larger worker centers that notably is connected with the smaller worker centers who presumably have access to the wealth of publications offered by the larger worker centers. Indeed, collaborations between worker centers are noteworthy and collaborations among all worker centers and unions are evident.

Research question two asks, in what ways do union and worker center attributes and strategies address inequality for restaurant workers? Unions and worker centers operate differently yet their chances to collaborate have the potential to increase their reach in the labor movement. Unions offer worker centers their experience organizing workers, are connections with elected officials, and labor law knowledge. Worker centers offer unions their connections with workers in the community, courageousness, young and diverse people in leadership positions, and their campaigns that are founded in worker justice. Already existing collaborations between worker centers and unions in the restaurant industry play a role in

addressing the injustices workers face on a community level with the help of workers centers. Relationships among the unions and worker centers that were analyzed in this research include the IWW and Brandworkers, FCWA and YWU, Brandworkers, ROC United, and PVWC, and UNITE HERE and YWU. Moreover, SEIU's connection to the Fight for \$15 campaign in the fast food industry has perhaps formed a new union called the National Fast Food Workers Union (NFFWU). The collaboration between unions and worker centers and the connections among worker centers are significant in restaurant labor organizing because of the different ways that unions and worker centers can address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class.

However, worker center opposition is challenging worker center-union collaboration due to labor critics claiming worker centers are unlawfully operating as union front groups. Despite the criticism from anti-labor organizations, unions and worker centers are collaborating in the restaurant industry. These collaborations are crucial especially with the challenges unions face in organizing the restaurant industry. Finding out how to strengthen union and worker center relationships is critical to address the restaurant worker exploitation and powerlessness. Indeed, job mobility, job security, staggering low wages, and limited benefits are amplified by gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry.

The challenges unions face organizing in the restaurant industry are rooted in complex inequalities. In September of 2018 Burgerville workers were sent home for wearing buttons that made statements of solidarity. Specifically, Black Lives Matter, Abolish ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), and No One Is illegal buttons were worn by BVWU members and due to a policy restricting employees from wearing anything political the workers wearing the buttons were sent home from work (Jackson-Glidden 2018). BVWU is working on crafting language around button wearing into their contract but Burgerville management is not

cooperating at this time (Jackson-Glidden 2018). BVWU members are facing challenges imposed by management to ensure that they are abiding by the IWW constitution that requires work spaces to be safe for all union members. The challenges restaurants face in unionizing are imbedded in the challenges of structural gender, race, and class inequality as seen in the case of BVWU members attempting to show solidarity to people of color and undocumented workers.

Larger worker centers collaborating with smaller worker centers allows smaller worker centers to benefit from some of the work that larger worker centers can achieve. The PVWC No Somos Máquinas /We Are Not Machines *action* was an art exhibit to amplify the voices and experience of low-wage restaurant workers. The exhibit was open to the public for one week in July of 2016 and included activities and speakers from different aspects of the food system. The activists from the FCWA and ROC United joined the PVWC during this week-long event to bring awareness to the challenge's restaurant workers face (PVWC 2017). The collaboration between the larger worker centers and the more localized worker centers allow for worker centers to address gender, race, and class inequality more comprehensively.

The results and analysis for research questions were presented in order to uncover the role unions and worker centers play in addressing inequality in the restaurant industry. Research question one analyzed the role unions and worker centers play at recognizing gender, race, and class inequality. Union and worker centers were analyzed based on whether their *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* addressed intersectional inequalities. All unions and worker centers addressed these complex inequalities at some capacity. The worker centers and unions that are smaller in scale did not address as many inequalities compared to larger unions and worker centers.

To further explore the role unions and workers centers play at addressing the intersection of gender, race, and class inequality, the ways unions and worker centers work to reduce inequality for restaurant workers was explored by looking at the challenges women and people color have faced in labor organizing history, the differences in worker center and union labor organizing strategies, and union and worker center challenges and successes in collaboration. Worker centers and unions utilize different strategies to organize workers that combined attempt to further organize the restaurant industry and bring justice to restaurant industry workers. The examples of union and worker center collaboration show that the strengths of both organizing strategies are beneficial to restaurant industry workers.

Even though union and worker center collaboration are challenged by anti-labor groups, unions and worker centers are connecting in the restaurant industry. Collaboration between worker centers and restaurants is imperative for restaurant industry equality because unions and worker centers are arguably the only ways that workers interests will be heard. The following section of this research will go into greater detail about ways that worker centers and unions can further collaborate in restaurant industry organizing and will also go into greater detail about how this research contributes to social change in the food system and makes suggestions for workers seeking restaurant workplace justice.

Contribution

This research addresses gender, racial, and class inequality in the restaurant industry because I want to learn where and how unions and worker centers advance equality in the restaurant industry so that workers have a better understanding of how to make their workplace more equitable. This research contributes to the understanding of social justice in the food system because it examines two different forms of labor organizing, unions and workers centers,

in the restaurant industry and shows their abilities to address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Gaining insight of the ways both unions and workers centers are organizing around complex inequalities issues in the restaurant industry will further our understanding of how exploitation and powerlessness is being addressed by labor organizations because both of these forms of organizing are founded in addressing workplace injustices and offer an avenue for those experiencing powerlessness to gain agency over their working lives. This research has the potential to bring about social change in the food system because it shows that unions and worker centers are avenues for restaurant workers who are experiencing gender, race, and/or class inequality can take to seek justice in their workplace. Additionally, this research has the potential to bring about social change by showing that union and worker center collaboration increases the capacity to organize workers and overall advances the types of strategies that can be used to address gender, race, and class inequality.

This chapter analyzed how unions and worker centers address gender and racial inequality in the restaurant industry and uncovered how their *actions, documents, and goals and values* advocate for reducing inequality for restaurant workers. After examining the ways unions and worker centers address gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry it is evident that unions and worker centers are making significant efforts to address complex inequalities. Additionally, this chapter analyzed the role of women and people of color in union and worker center organizing history, the advantages and challenges of both union and worker center organizing strategies, how unions and worker centers are complementary to one another, how they are collaborating today, and how pressure from anti-labor groups undermine labor organizing. Through this analysis, it is shown that the combined efforts of unions and worker centers have a greater potential to address the injustices in the restaurant industry due to their

complementary labor organizing strengths. Furthermore, labor union's history in perpetuating gender and race inequality is a challenge as they work to organize women and people of color today. Worker centers are rooted in the injustices of the community and therefore offer unions insight on how inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class is experienced working people especially working people who are disproportionately impacted by exploitation and powerlessness.

This research also discusses worker centers as a mode for labor organizing, something that in my experience is not common when discussing labor issues in the restaurant industry. By placing an emphasis on worker centers as a category for labor organizing I believe that there is potential for worker centers to gain awareness as a labor organizing strategy in the restaurant industry. I especially believe that worker center awareness is an essential component of addressing inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class in the restaurant industry because of how challenging it is to organize restaurant workers. Worker centers' have experience in advocating for workers who often do not challenge injustices due to their powerlessness.

Worker centers' ability to advocate for low-wage workers that have been historically challenging to organize complements union abilities to organize in the fast-food and hospitality restaurant industry establishments. None of the unions analyzed in this research were organizing in fine dining establishments. I suggest that the lack of data presented on union labor organizing in fine dining is due to the level of difficulty to organize fine dining establishments. Many fine-dining restaurants are run by small-business owners that are challenged by the narrow profit margins. In my experience, the costs of engaging in the collective bargaining process seem unattainable to restaurant owners and restaurant workers that work in fine dining

restaurants that are run by small business owners. I believe that fine-dining restaurant workers need other opportunities to address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Due to worker centers' ability to advocate for workers' interests who have been historically difficult to organize, I see significant potential in worker centers addressing inequality in fine dining establishments.

To this end, it will be important to explore the obstacles unions and worker centers face and discuss where further research should be done to determine the pathways for workers to confront the restaurant industry injustice. Specifically, future research should measure the effectiveness of programs like ROC United Diner's Guide to see the extent to which it is an effective tactic for reducing worker inequality. Additionally, a closer examination of the collaboration efforts past and present between unions and workers centers that represent restaurant workers would be insightful especially knowing that their combined efforts are often necessary due to the obstacles labor organizers face in the restaurant industry.

This chapter analyzed how unions and workers centers address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class by presenting actions, documents, and goals and values collected from union and worker center websites. The collaboration among unions and worker centers that represent restaurant workers suggests that union and worker centers play a dual and mutually supportive role in the restaurant industry labor movement. The anticipated contribution from this finding is that worker centers and unions representing restaurant workers in the future will continue to engage in collaborative efforts in order to address inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. Furthermore, this research hopes to add to the literature on worker centers in order to make their presence and importance in today's labor movement better known especially for fine dining restaurant workers. The next chapter will draw on conclusions from

these findings and go into further detail about the social justice implications of this research and will suggest what future union and worker center research in the restaurant industry should focus on.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Unions and worker centers are labor organizing strategies that play important roles in addressing intersectional inequalities and powerlessness in the restaurant industry. The purpose of this research is to uncover the role unions and worker centers play in addressing gender, race, class inequality in the restaurant industry. Research question one looked at how unions and workers centers are recognizing inequality at the intersection of gender, race, and class. All of the union and worker center *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* addressed gender, race, and class inequality. Some unions and worker centers addressed gender, race, and class inequality in all of their center *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* while others addressed gender, race and, class inequality at varying degrees in their center *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. Complete silences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality in one or more *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* were present, however, it was more common for union and worker center websites to have presences of addressing gender, race, and class inequality to some extent.

Key findings from the analysis of research question one suggests that unions and worker centers recognize intersectional inequalities in their center *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values*. The differences in center *actions*, *documents*, and *goals and values* clarify the extent of the presence of recognizing gender, race, and class inequality. *Actions* showed how unions and worker centers are recognizing gender, race, class inequality. *Documents* showed the type of language that worker centers and unions use to recognize intersectional inequalities. *Goals and values* showed how intersectional inequalities are a part of union or worker center beliefs or objectives. Furthermore, the size of the union or worker center determined the extent to which

their *actions, documents, and goals and values* recognized inequalities at the intersection of gender, race, and class.

The second research question looked at the challenges women and people of color have faced in labor organizing history, the differences in worker center and union labor organizing strategies, and union and worker center challenges and successes in collaboration. Key findings from the analysis of research question two suggest the importance of union and worker center collaboration in the restaurant industry due to the fact that their differences in organizing strengths that are complementary. Specifically, unions have significant organizing experience, have connections with elected officials, are well-versed in labor law, and have sources for volunteers and donors. Worker centers are connected with workers at the community level, willing to take risks, support diversity in leadership, and lead worker justice campaigns. Therefore, unions and worker centers aimed at addressing gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry can only benefit from joining forces more than they already are.

Nearly 10 million workers in the restaurant industry are experiencing inequalities encouraging this research to take a closer look at how unions and worker centers are combating gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. Powerlessness prevents workers from challenging the injustices they face by normalizing gender, race, and class inequality in the restaurant industry. If workers are unable to recognize and challenge the inequality through the structures of their workplace because the inequalities are normalized, then workers need a somewhere to turn to seek justice. The extent to which workers in fast-food, casual dining, and fine dining establishments are experiencing inequality is a difficult injustice to combat due to exploitation and the powerlessness workers endure. Therefore, the collaboration between unions and worker centers is essential in order to tackle exploitation and powerlessness in the restaurant

industry. Staggering low wages, the lack of job mobility and security, sexual harassment, gender and racial discrimination and segregation that are enforced by managers and owners create a sense of powerlessness for restaurant workers preventing them from organizing. Unions and workers centers are the exceptions to organization prevention making it essential to find ways for unions and worker centers to grow and gain momentum in the restaurant industry.

This research contributes to the comprehension of social justice in the food system by focusing on the ways unions and worker centers are addressing inequality as individual labor organizing categories and by addressing how their collaborative efforts are essential for tackling the complexities of inequalities that are tormenting restaurant industry workers. Additionally, by placing an emphasis on worker centers as a category for labor organizing and strategizing, this research is recognizing the significance of worker centers as a category for organizing in the restaurant industry, something that future research should build on. Furthermore, by discussing both unions and worker centers it is important to recognize how these groups collaborate and what potential challenges they face in their collaboration efforts. With anti-labor groups attempting to undermine union and worker center partnership, I suggest future research focuses on the obstacles unions and worker centers face in collaboration. Future research should also focus on how the obstacles unions and worker centers face in collaborating impacts restaurant workers seeking worker center help and union representation. Uncovering the obstacles restaurant workers face in organizing is imperative to transform powerlessness into power. It will take powerful workers to join unions and seek worker center advocacy in order to fight for the millions of restaurant workers who are experiencing injustice in the restaurant industry today.

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