Civic Epistemologies and the (Re)Localization of Food Policy

Erica Morrell, University of Michigan

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Abstract

Food (re)localization is a widespread trend aimed at fostering new actors, values, and expertise as relevant to food systems change. Yet while food (re)localization on its surface appears similar between places, I argue that there are in fact differences in how politically-relevant knowledge is understood and enacted between places *('civic epistemology')*. I illustrate this in the context of the development of initial local food policies in Cleveland and Detroit, specifically. In Cleveland, I show that what I term a "stakeholder" civic epistemology shaped policy formation: relevant expertise was based in stakeholders' applied experience, with citizen-gardeners and professionals involved in urban agriculture, land use and planning influential to drafting new food legislation. The public generally trusted these stakeholders alone to collaborate and produce legitimate legislation via a somewhat obscured policymaking process. In contrast, in Detroit there is what I call a "popular" civic epistemology. Pertinent experts and expertise in food policymaking here stemmed largely from the city's majority African-American population and their local knowledge as such. Legitimate legislation was consequently produced with intense citizen participation in a highly visible, publicly constituted policymaking process. These findings suggest that civic epistemologies can and do differ sub-nationally and may include alternative yet meaningful roles for citizens to have influence. Taking these trends seriously is important for generating robust theories on expertise and best understanding contemporary political and social arrangements, more generally.

Key Words

Civic Epistemology, Policy, Local Food, Cleveland, Detroit

Introduction

Food (re)localization is a national—if not international—trend that has emerged as both part of and in response to the "local food movement." Actors frustrated with the dominant food system formed this movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s to (re)instate into food management values around health, environment, and social justice. Originally the movement centered on putting power (back) in the hands of communities through non-governmental initiatives ranging from urban farms and community-supported agriculture to mobile grocers and farm-to-table restaurants (Dupuis and Goodman 2005; Hinrichs 2003). Increasingly, however, the movement has also come to include explicit efforts to institutionalize its objectives through a focus on sub-national decision-making. Indeed, members of the local food movement now often intentionally by-pass national lawmakers and instead place pressure on local officials to legislate food in hopes of fostering new logics of power and participation in governance.

Yet while food (re)localization on its surface appears similar between places, I argue that there are in fact alternative participants, values and forms of knowledge gaining influence in local food policymaking between cities. Civic epistemologies thus can and do differ sub-nationally in addition to between countries, with implications for our understandings of expertise and political engagement. To illuminate this, I compare the initial development of contemporary local food legislation in Cleveland and Detroit. In Cleveland, I illuminate what I term a "stakeholder" civic epistemology. This epistemology defines "experts", for example, based not

on an individual's scientific and technical skills and standing, as is prominent nationally, but rather in one's applied work in areas relevant to that being legislated. In the case of food production, this means that in Cleveland both citizen-gardeners and professionals involved in urban agriculture, land use and planning were influential to policy development. In contrast, in Detroit there is what I call a "popular" civic epistemology. This epistemology considers most pertinent to governance "experts" and "expertise" stemming directly from the community itself. Detroit's African-American population—the city's majority population—and their knowledge as such therefore predominantly guided political deliberations around food, rather than, for instance, qualified technical or applied stakeholder actors and know-how.

It is perhaps not surprising that localities act differently from one another and from the national level, but it is unexpected that cities located just two hours from each other and within the context of an entrenched national civic epistemology would have completely different politically relevant knowledge-ways. Moreover, it is unanticipated that part of Cleveland and Detroit's civic epistemologies would include alternative but very meaningful roles of for citizens and their local knowledge as such. Indeed, research frequently couples the power of technical elites with assumptions about the subsequent subjection of resident actors. The ability for local knowledge in its own right to gain and maintain sway in decision-making is unaccounted for in much of the scholarly literature. By shedding light on these unanticipated dynamics, I offer compelling evidence to rethink and expand our theories about expertise and influence in politics and beyond.

Analytical Perspectives: Understanding Experts and Expertise in Decision-Making

Who is considered an expert in policymaking and the types of knowledge deemed relevant to governance shapes how democracy is understood and enacted, the nature and effects of legislation, and broader social arrangements and activist challenges. In light of these vast implications, considerable research interrogates knowledge in policymaking. And, often, this research centers on national level decision-making. Indeed, even in light of globalization and (re)localization, many studies suggest that national context plays a particularly strong and enduring role in shaping policy—including around genomics (for instance, Arnason and Simpson 2003; Rabinow 1999), climate change (for example, Jasanoff 2011), chemicals (e.g., Harrison and Hoberg 1991; Jasanoff 1986) and nuclear energy (such as, Joppke 1993; Koopmans and Duyvendak 1995). In the American context, for instance, Parthasarathy (2005; 2007) identifies a technocratic decision-making style which has helped foster attention to standardizing laboratory dimensions of BRCA testing; she contrasts this to the U.K., where she illuminates a more communitarian approach that has instead contributed to a primary focus on the tests' clinical dimensions. In examining therapeutic drug policymaking, Daemmrich (2004) too emphasizes national context, characterizing the U.S. regulatory authority as centralized and valuing quantitative analysis and technical expertise (much like Parthasarathy), which he shows stands in contrast to the more balanced, consensus-seeking German approach that favors deliberation among various rational experts. Jasanoff's (2005) comprehensive analysis of biotechnology policy identifies similar influential national U.S., U.K., and German decision-making styles. She leverages her study to help operationalize the powerful and enduring impact of national context through the term "civic epistemology". Civic epistemology connotes the country specific, publicly accepted, and procedurally sanctioned ways in which knowledge claims are tested and accepted to form the basis of decision-making.

While there are both substantial and nuanced differences in civic epistemologies between countries, one thing appears consistent across places (especially Northern democracies): excluded almost wholesale from genuine influence in policymaking are citizens and their "local knowledge" as such. In Jasanoff, Daemmrich and Parthasarathy's abovementioned studies, for instance, local knowledge—that based in and developed through experience, history, tradition and/or culture—is similarly absent from policymaking regardless of the country interrogated. And many others scholars confirm this tendency. Wynne (1996), for example, shows that farmers and their local knowledge and expertise were often deliberately excluded from European decision-making following the Chernobyl disaster, and he finds evidence of this trend in many other instances (Wynne 1998; see, also, Brown 2009; Hilgartner 2000; Keller 2009; Mackenzie 1990; Porter 1995, for instance).

Given the strength of national civic epistemology and the tendency for local knowledge to be a marginalized component of it, we might expect similar dynamics to play-out in sub-national governance, as well. The truth, however, is that we know very little about the nature of expertise in local policymaking. Despite that there is extensive decision-making occurring at the sub-national level, including around issues ranging from food to fracking to climate change, scarce research critically analyzes knowledge and participation in these instances. Instead, understandings of sub-national decision-making are often approximated indirectly by looking at the mechanisms local actors and activists develop to gain influence in policy arenas. Important and growing research in this vein suggests that citizens must leverage some form of scientific or technical know-how to influence decision-making locally and beyond, which corroborates the notion that local residents and their knowledge might lack political clout in their own right (sub-nationally, see, for example, Corburn 2005; Ottinger 2010, 2013; more broadly, see Epstein 1996; Frickel and Moore 2006; Hess 2007; Kinchy 2010; Parthasarathy 2010).

Yet borrowing from research on national civic epistemology and local activism to approximate understandings of knowledge in sub-national decision-making is not an adequate substitute for examining these dynamics head-on. The rise of local level governance and the constantly shifting politics of expertise together merit their own consideration if we are to best understand political knowledge at present and going forward.

The following examination provides a step toward addressing this lacuna. Unlike standing research on civic epistemology might predict, in investigating food (re)localization in Cleveland and Detroit, I find that there are significant differences in politically relevant knowledge-ways between municipalities and against the national level. Moreover, unanticipated in much existing civic epistemology and local activism research, I argue that these differences include meaningful—albeit alternative—roles for citizens and their local knowledge. These differences challenge standing notions about expertise, encouraging us to expand our theoretical and empirical analysis to more seriously consider local level decision-making and the potential for non-elites and qualified knowledge forms to have power and influence in their own right.

Methods and Data: Food Policy in Cleveland and Detroit

Technologies and social norms around food and food management are rapidly changing, highly complex and increasingly controversial yet, at the same time, food is a basic, centuries-old component of the human experience. That all people have a stake in the outcome of increasingly contentious battles around food thus renders this a particularly interesting and fruitful arena to investigate the politics of knowledge in decision-making. Moreover, new arenas

of governance have recently emerged around food at the local level.[1] Examining sub-national decision-making around issues as they first become policy matters is useful for interrogating civic epistemology since it helps reduce the confounding factors of standing decisions and their prior history and politics.

In terms of case selection, Cleveland and Detroit make for a strong comparison because they appear to have different political cultures and knowledge-ways from each other and the federal level (as briefly explained above and further below) yet they share many alike features. For example, both are Rustbelt cities facing similar challenges with economic decline, limited local and state resources, rising food desert and obesity trends, and substantial land vacancy—all of which are deeply tied to their parallel histories of racial tension, white flight, crime, corruption and major changes in manufacturing. In part because of these alike dynamics, Cleveland and Detroit also share many demographic characteristics, including majority African-American citizenries and similar population densities, median household incomes, percentages of their population living under the federal poverty line, educational attainment, and population loss (around a 45%) since the 1960s (US Census Bureau 2010). The similarities between allow many variables to be held constant so that potential differences can be homed in on and explained (for more on logics of comparative design see, for instance, Lijphart 1971; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Paige 1999).

Data for this analysis is qualitative and includes primary-source documents, observation and interviews. Documents include archival records from the official bodies involved in regulating food (including from Cleveland and Detroit City Council, the Cleveland Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition and the Detroit Food Policy Council), along with relevant websites, popular articles, and non-governmental newsletters, fliers, and press releases. Over forty hours of observation occurred in each city at municipal hearings, food policy coalition/council meetings and local food events. Finally, seventy semi-structured interviews with actors involved in Cleveland and Detroit's food systems were also completed, transcribed and coded to inform the following discussion. Interviewees included representatives from municipal agencies and city council, food policy council/coalitions, urban farms, food non-profits, restaurants, farmers' markets, educational institutions, and community groups, for example. Interviews were semi-structured, guided along pertinent themes, and lasted between thirty minutes and two hours.

Empirical Analysis:
The Emergence of Cleveland's First Contemporary Local Food Policy: Knowledge and Politics in Creating the Urban Agriculture Zoning District Ordinance

In the late 1990s early 2000s a variety of non-governmental local food initiatives began taking off in Cleveland. Community gardens and other urban agriculture endeavors were a large part of these trends, with many residents as well as local non-profits, foundations, and schools banning together to start (or expand) gardening initiatives to achieve recreational, educational, environmental and/or economic development aims. Meanwhile, agriculture and urban planning researchers from Ohio State University Extension and Oberlin College came together to help start City Fresh, which aimed to address food access in Cleveland by bringing locally-grown produce to "fresh stops" throughout the inner city. Additionally, chefs like Michael Symon and restaurants like Great Lakes Brewing Company were turning the city into a national hotspot for

[1] For instance, local food policy councils, which bridge the work of the grassroots local food movement with formal sub-national policy structures, have increased from a handful only a decade ago to over 200 across North America as of 2014 (Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future 2014).

enjoying local food as an experience in and of itself while also committing to support the ‘triple bottom line’ (social, economic and environmental enhancement) (Basich 2013).

While a diversity of actors and values were present throughout Cleveland’s early local food initiatives, it was a group of resident-gardeners that first decided there was a need for municipal policy intervention in the food system. In the mid-2000s, as local food production was taking off, a major period of American economic decline provided an opportunity for developers in Cleveland to buy up substantial tracts of land. These developers were beginning to build housing and other property to sell for a profit as the economy rebounded, an intent for land that contrasted urban growers’. Subsequently, “little by little” community gardens were being destroyed across the city so that the land could be used for other purposes, often to gardeners’ great dismay (Misak 2015). When resident-gardeners learned a longstanding garden in Cleveland’s Ward 3 would soon be razed so the land could be turned into market-rate housing, they finally decided they had had enough: they banned together with the aim of bringing these problematic dynamics to officials’ attention in hopes of fostering a solution to save the plot.

As is often the case at the national level, Cleveland’s citizen-gardeners did not directly approach officials to address their land use issues but instead sought the help of professional experts as mediators. However, unlike frequently occurs at the national level, they viewed pertinent “experts” as individuals deeply involved in community land use work rather than those with scientific and technical skills and standing. Specifically, resident-gardeners approached Morgan Taggart and Julia Barton, program specialists in agriculture and natural resources at Ohio State University Extension, Kristen Trolio, urban outreach coordinator with the Cleveland Botanical Garden, and Marge Misak, executive director at the Community Land Trust. Rather than a technocrat, they viewed Taggart as an expert, for instance, based in her experience working for farms, food processors, and as an educator at agriculture training centers throughout the U.S., and they saw Misak, who holds a Bachelor of Science of Journalism, as having pertinent knowledge due to her years of land trust outreach and development work. It was due to these types of backgrounds and expertise that citizen-gardeners asked the four to help save Ward 3’s community garden (and others like it). They emphasized to them the benefits of their plots, including that they serve as a healthy space for gathering, recreation, education, and nutrition. The four subsequently agreed to help take up the issue of protecting gardens, having a professional stake in the matter, agreeing with resident-gardeners that urban agriculture offers a variety of benefits, and themselves witnessing the destruction of various plots across the city over their years of career engagement. As the four agreed to take up the issue as presented to them, and resident-gardeners and their local knowledge helped turn urban agriculture into the first local food policy issue pursued in Cleveland.

Next, the four reached out to Councilmember Joe Cimperman to help find a political solution to the issue of community garden destruction. They approached Cimperman for a number of different reasons. First, as often occurs at the national level, the four felt it was important to have an ally in government to increase the likelihood of officials passing any legislation they produced. Additionally, it was in Cimperman’s Ward where the particular community garden was at risk of being razed that had inspired the four to consider developing some kind of urban agriculture policy in the first place. Finally, Cimperman had been integral to the creation and adoption of Cleveland’s Open Space and Recreation Zoning District, an ordinance that protects land used for parks and leisure space. Given his experience in drafting and promoting legislation to protect certain forms of land use, which mirrored some of what the four hoped to achieve with urban gardening, Cimperman seemed a very amenable and

constructive official to partner with. The four thus approached Cimperman, explained that his constituents were facing the destruction of their beloved garden, and presented him with a number of benefits to urban agriculture they felt merited protection. In an interview, Cimperman (2014) recalled many of their claims:

> "[They argued] that neighborhoods that have prominent urban agriculture are safer. They tend to have people who talk to each other, more block clubs, are more vibrant. People vote more, they're more engaged…but at the same time [community gardens] support growth, support jobs, support economic activities …When it comes right down to it, it's one of these situations where you don't intend to have all these positives but…better things are happening."

Cimperman agreed to pursue a political solution to preserving community gardens on the spot. He took the four's statements about the importance of such action as truth without much further evidence because, just as resident-gardeners did, he believed the women to be relevant "experts" based on their years of professional engagement in community land use, agriculture and planning (Cimperman 2014). Additionally, many of the advantages of urban agriculture the four proclaimed resonated with Cimperman, who himself grew up with often uninvolved parents[2] in a Cleveland neighborhood with a high level of immigrants. He relied on the kindness of neighbors to provide him nourishment and community in his parents' absence and watched non-native residents develop economic independence through gardening, for example, thus witnessing first-hand the uplifting aspects of local food production. Moreover, he felt that adopting urban gardening as a member of Council fit with his political platform around economic and community development. The four's emphasis on gardens' potential to beautify areas and make them safer, for example, fit with Cimperman's political commitment to providing "clean, safe, and inviting environments [to] promote business development and attract retailers and customers to Cleveland's neighborhoods" (Cimperman 2015). Cimperman realized protecting urban agriculture could be framed as a contributor to development across the city of Cleveland, and that supporting the issue as such could generate widespread support among his constituents, a top priority for him. As he explained in an interview, "I recognize that a lot of times doing things well and doing them better, means by submitting yourself. I work at the pleasure of my constituents" (Cimperman 2014).

With Cimperman's promise to endorse a local food policy through a "development" frame, the four began drafting what would become known as the Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance in 2006. Cimperman's experience in leveraging zoning to protect land use had encouraged them to turn first to zoning policy for a potential way to save Ward 3's community garden and others like. Yet after researching Cleveland's zoning policies, they quickly found that standing rules offered no protections for community gardens in the city. The four thus began looking for ways to change the zoning code to achieve this. Much unlike at the national level, initially the four area professionals alone then wrote the subsequent legislation largely as an "informal process" amongst themselves. Building on what resident-gardeners and Cimperman expressed to them, they focused on piecing together the ordinance as they "ideally would want it to be" to address land use issues and maximize community and economic development (Misak 2015). Beyond protecting community gardens alone, they hoped for the legislation (if passed) to signal a "shift in thinking" among municipal decision-makers away from viewing local food production as a "temporary" use of resources until something "better comes along" to instead

[2] Due to his mother's ongoing illness and his father accompanying her at the hospital.

seeing this production itself as a "highest and best use" of land (Misak 2015; Cimperman 2014). Reflective of this ideal, they crafted the ordinance's opening clause with a stated purpose:

> "To ensure that urban garden areas are appropriately located and protected to meet needs for local food production, community health, community education, garden-related job environmental enhancement, preservation of green space, and community enjoyment on sites for which urban gardens represent the highest and best use." (Urban Garden Zoning District 2007)

To inform ensuing components of the Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance, the four then drew on information they had been exposed to through throughout their applied engagement in land use issues. This included drawing on the statements of gardener-residents themselves, as driven by their local knowledge and expertise. For example, gardeners often expressed to the four frustration with having little agency in determining whether their plots should be razed or not; subsequently, the four included in the ordinance a requirement for public hearings ahead of any potential redevelopment of land where a garden already existed. Area food producers also mentioned that they wanted to be able to sell produce from their gardens, which motivated the four to make an allowance for the selling of goods from garden market stands a component of the legislation, as well. But in addition to gardener-residents' input, the four also consulted applied urban planning and development studies to inform the ordinance. For instance, the four further supported the aforementioned market garden provision by consulting the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's food availability mapping process, which emphasized that "agriculture [production and sale]…is a way land can be reused to generate an economic return… in the City of Cleveland" (Cleveland Planning Commission 2008).

After creating an initial draft Urban Agriculture Zoning District ordinance, the four then approached Cleveland Planning Director Robert Brown to help strengthen the wording and scope of the legislation to meet standards for inclusion in the city's zoning code. Brown was a senior member of the Planning Department and had substantial career experience in policy and planning, the four consequently viewed him as best knowing the "language" of zoning ordinances and thus important and relevant to provide additional input (Misak 2015). Rather than turn to scientific and technical experts as is common federally, in Cleveland decision-making continued to center on applied stakeholder's expertise. Brown provided suggestions to refine some of the legislation's wording and provisions, such as clarifying the fence heights and structures allowed on plots designated for urban gardening, which the four incorporated to produce what would become the final ordinance draft. The policy as such addresses: (1) definitions, including clarifying what is meant by "community gardens" and "market gardens", (2) the main and accessory uses in "urban agriculture districts", such as sales of crops and the use of hoophouses to extend the growing season, and (3) supplemental regulations, like the maximum allowed height of fencing and any additional structures.

In 2007, the four presented their final draft Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance to Cimperman, who then introduced it to City Council in preparation for a vote. To help persuade Councilmembers to pass the legislation, the four along with Cimperman created and circulated a packet of information supporting the benefits of urban agriculture amongst officials. Knowledge, expertise and evidence informing this packet leveraged research on the community and economic development potential of local food. But rather than scientific and technical elites, as is common at the national level, it was urban planners located at universities, municipal agencies, and in non-governmental development organizations who produced much of this research. For instance, the packet included facts on the determinants of neighborhood revitalization from a study out of

New York University that argued “community gardens increase the value of property 1000 feet around them” and another suggesting “that community gardens reduce crime in neighborhoods by 48 percent, and violent crime by 56 percent” (Brady 2007). Then, in addition to this packet of information, Cimperman himself worked the aisles with other councilmembers, often reiterating the knowledge and experiences of local residents themselves to communicate the benefits of urban gardening across Cleveland. With regards to agriculture’s community development potential, for instance, Cimperman (2014) told a story about “a young man who was born with Down Syndrome” who had a yard full of “beautiful roses, these beautiful vegetables” through which he befriended and “taught [people] about gardening.” Cimperman leveraged this type of anecdote to emphasize that urban agriculture has a “uniting way for people to live and to be in community together. If the City could be supportive of community agriculture, urban agriculture, community gardening, we would actually become a little bit more of a human city, we’d become more kind to each other.” Finally, Cimperman and the four worked to host community meetings around the city, especially with gardeners in and outside of Ward 3, in which they alerted residents of the legislation by providing a brief overview of its provisions and impact and then encouraged attendees to pressure their respected elected officials to pass it.

In 2007, City Council passed the Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance with little controversy and it quickly moved into law. Officials viewed the ordinance as valid and beneficial in part because of the collaborative efforts of various applied stakeholders which went into producing it. Jenita McGowan (2013), with the Cleveland Department of Sustainability, emphasized in an interview that, indeed, “nothing in Cleveland gets done without collaboration” and Taggart (2013) continued, “we had a lot of really diverse stakeholders’ input [on the ordinance]…and through this we had the opportunity to connect with all of the different members of Council.” Additionally, Councilmembers’ passed the ordinance because of their constituents’ apparent support of the policy. Planning Director Brown (2013) explained in an interview that “people who were urban farmers were coming to councilpeople” and placing pressure on them to pass the legislation, and there was recognition among decision-makers of, “growing interest in growing local food…among a large percentage of the population in Cleveland.”

The Emergence of Detroit’s First Contemporary Local Food Policy: Knowledge and Politics in Creating the Food Security Policy

Much as in Cleveland, beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were a variety of new, non-governmental local food initiatives taking off in Detroit, fueled by the energy, money, humanpower and other resources of the broader local food movement. And as in Cleveland, community gardens, restaurants and efforts aimed at increasing fresh produce access in the inner-city were all part of these trends. Earthworks Urban Farm, for example, launched in 1997 to help reconnect residents with the land and feed the hungry. Soon after, Dave Mancini opened Supino Pizzeria, featuring artisanal pizzas and local ingredients, to critical acclaim. Meanwhile, a group of University of Michigan students launched Fresh Corner Café to bring healthy prepared meals to Detroit’s often-nutritionally lacking corner stores, for example, while representatives from a number of grocery retailers and development corporations launched their own fresh food access initiative.

Perhaps because of Detroit’s shear size or its particular positioning in the American imaginary as a pillar of economic hardship, there was widespread attention—from media, funders, and academics, for instance—paid to Detroit’s burgeoning local food systems initiatives

(unlike in Cleveland). And, often, this focus was aimed at white, well-resourced, often non-native Detroiters'. An article in *Grist*, for instance, highlighted Ashley Atkinson, a white, 30 year-old with a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in affluent Ann Arbor, who directed an initiative connecting Detroit's urban gardeners to each other and additional resources (Philpot 2010); Atkinson was also profiled in a 2008 *Oprah* article, "Gardening to Save Detroit", along with Patrick Crouch, another young, white, educated individual who moved into the city as an adult to work on an urban farm. Meanwhile, media outlets from CNN to the *Huffington Post* to the *Washington Post* (2007+) all began focusing on Detroit's food system largely following the proposal of Hantz Farm, initiated by white millionaire John Hantz, who aimed to produce one of the largest urban plots in the world there. Similar attention was paid to locally-driven restaurants, as well, with the *New York Times* (2010), for example, arguing that places such as Slows Bar B Q, started by white, non-Detroit native Philip Cooley (son of a prominent real estate developer and city council member in Marysville, Michigan), were fostering "Detroit's Renewal."

While perhaps well-intentioned, this attention crystalized many Detroiters, particularly African-Americans', longstanding sense of alienation from positions of access, power and well-being in the city's various systems. Indeed, many residents of the city were involved in meaningful municipal food systems work, often for several years prior to the 'local food movements'' coined take-off there; yet only now was Detroit's food system, and particular actors' beneficial work in it, gaining attention. T.R. (2013) an African-American Detroiter involved in non-profit food systems work, explained some of this community's frustration with these dynamics in an interview:

> "In an 85% black city…some feelings…of disagreement…are harbored by a section of the community [with regards to] the local food movement. There are people in the city who have been doing urban agriculture for many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many years and when, for some reason, you put it in the hands of young white people it gets a lot more attention from the media…and [from people] gate keeping different funds, in leadership positions…This issue intersects with the food system and power and it intersects with people's ability to access food and with people's ability to access jobs within the food system."

In response to this frustration, in 2006, a number of residents joined together to form the grassroots Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN). DBCFSN aimed to foster a greater voice for Detroit's African-American community in proliferating local food efforts and create, more broadly, "a more just food system…in terms of access but also in terms of ownership and empowerment…with the wealth captured from the local growing and selling of food again distributed within the Detroit community and not concentrated in the hands of gentrifiers" (Yakini 2014a). To achieve this, DBCFSN members sought explicitly to have officials acknowledge and address inequities throughout Detroit's food system through what they termed a "food security policy." While there was a general distrust for government among the community, DBCFSN members nonetheless felt it was important to get such a policy passed to help ensure that the "government [would] behave in a responsible manner…and foster a supportive policy climate…for the type of localized food system [DBCFSN members] aimed to build" (Yakini 2014a). Despite a diversity of actors and values present in early local food initiatives, it was thus residents themselves that first decided official intervention was needed in Detroit's food system—much as occurred in Cleveland. Yet rather than a handful of resident-gardeners, it was the various grassroots actors comprising DBCFSN that led this effort.

Accordingly, while it was illegal to farm in Detroit at the time just as it was in Cleveland, justice instead of zoning was the first issue Detroiters sought to be regulated.

In 2006, Yakini, the DBCFSN's executive director, and Mutope A-Alkebu-lan, on its Board, approached the Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee of City Council with DBCFSN's proposed policy idea. Unlike as frequently occurs nationally or did in Cleveland, grassroots citizens therefore went directly to policymakers with their demands. DBCFSN members appointed Yakini and A-Alkebu-lan, specifically, with this task because the two had connections with the Committee's Chair: JoAnn Watson. A-Alkebu-lan, for example, had been on Watson's staff as she transitioned from grassroots social justice work to political office, and Yakini had worked with her in the 1990s in building the Black Agenda, "a document that made recommendations in several areas about how Black activists should move in a way to build greater self reliance and greater political power…in the City of Detroit" (Yakini 2014B). Moreover, they targeted this specific Committee because of Watson, specifically: knowing her history of and commitment to community activism, including in African-American self-determination efforts, they viewed her as a key political ally. While the need for a political partners thus seems to be recognized across places, who constitutes the best ally appears to differ. In Cleveland, Cimperman was viewed as most relevant due to his applied knowledge in zoning development, yet in Detroit Watson was held as a critical partner due to her commitment to and expertise in racial activism.

At the Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee's meeting, Yakini and A-Alkebu-lan provided a short analysis of the problems with food access and food justice in the city of Detroit informed largely by their and other DBCFSN members' local knowledge alone. Drawing on their and their community allies' experiences, histories, and culture, Yakini and A-Alkebu-lan articulated to the Committee many Detroiters, particular African-Americans', struggles in the local food system. They alluded to, for instance, the city's tumultuous history which led many grocers to shut-down and the auto-industry's intentional under-development of the public transportation system that now constrained many low-income, often black residents' ability to access food. Yakini and A-Alkebu-lan also touched on the alienation of African-Americans from land and capital, referencing not only present barriers to citizens' ability to purchase city lots but also the historic treatment of blacks as slaves whose labor was exploited to profit others. They then argued that Detroit "lagged behind other cities" in addressing food systems disparities, citing that Toronto and Chicago, for instance, had already established food security policies, "gently criticized" the City for not having such a policy, and urged for this legislation to be created (Yakini 2014b, 2014c).

Yakini and A-Alkebu-lan's presentation generally compelled members of the Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee: immediately after they concluded, the Committee agreed to consider what would formally become known as the Detroit Food Security Policy. Kathryn Underwood (2013), of the City Planning Commission, explained in an interview that the perspective Yakini provided had a way of making decision-makers' "interest in food security and food as a social and very political issue…heightened." She continued on to explain this was in part because he leveraged a narrative that resonated with many officials' own beliefs and experiences, merging ideas of the black power movement with a description of undeniable present conditions in Detroit—such as unprecedented rates of obesity and extreme limits to accessing quality produce, for instance. Indeed, Committee Chair Watson (2008) reiterated Yakini (and A-Alkebu-lan's) statements when substantiating officials' willingness to consider the Policy. Unlike in Cleveland then, where statistics and research in tandem with

citizens' input compelled decision-makers to consider policy change, in Detroit the statements of residents themselves, as based in their local knowledge, were on their own enough to persuade policymakers to consider new legislation. Moreover, unlike in Cleveland, the Committee then appointed Yakini with spearheading the policy drafting process and establishing an associated taskforce for assistance on the spot. Yakini, who had approached the Committee especially on behalf of DBCFSN's membership, then naturally turned to these members to comprise the force. Citizens themselves were thus chiefly responsible for legislation writing in Detroit.

Initially, taskforce members consulted each other and fellow DBCFSN members to produce a first draft Food Security Policy. While they conducted some research into Toronto and Chicago's food security policies to serve as models for their own legislation, most of what informed this draft was their own local knowledge with regards to present conditions and aims for improvement around seven issue areas: (1) access to quality food in Detroit, (2) hunger and malnutrition, (2) impacts/effects of an inadequate diet, (3) citizen education, (4) economic injustice in the food system, (5) urban agriculture, (6) the role of schools and other public institutions, and (7) emergency response. For instance, concerns about the marginalization of blacks from power and equity in the food system, as informed by their own experiences and motivating DBCFSN members to pursue the legislation in the first place, are clear throughout the policy. For instance, the section on economic injustice states conditions in Detroit's food system from the perspective of Black residents:

> "Aside from cashiers, baggers, stock persons and a few butchers, Detroiters, specifically African-Americans are absent from the food system. Our primary and predominant role is that of consumer. Detroit's majority population must be represented at all levels and in all aspects of the food system... *Actions Needed: Identify and eliminate barriers to African-American participation and ownership in all aspects of the food system.*" (Emphasis original) (Detroit Food Security Policy 2008)

Once the completed a rough Food Security Policy, the taskforce circulated the draft amongst 2007 DBCFSN Harvest Festival attendees for 'public input'. Though the Festival is public, attendees tend to largely and more narrowly include Detroit's black community and especially members of that community who are involved in food and/or justice work (see, for example, **cite** press Release, Sept 13, 2007). It was thus this population that came to provide the majority of policy input outside of DBCFSN's own membership. Indeed, Harvest Festival attendees had a chance to learn in detail about the proposed policy, provide verbal and written comment, and express whether or not they supported it. Those present "recall that the process was very inclusive and respectful of the community representatives who gathered" (River and Cathcart 2015). Yakini and the Policy taskforce worked to incorporate "much of the feedback" from this Harvest Festival to produce a revised draft legislation (DBCFSN 2015).

Soliciting input from DBCFSN members and residents attending the Harvest Festival was an intentional move to include community members and particularly those who the taskforce felt were most marginalized in the local food system. Gloria Rivera (2013), whose organization co-sponsored the Festival and who also provided feedback on the Policy, emphasized that it seemed essential those actors most affected by disparities in the food system were also most involved in legislation addressing these inequities: "we want[ed] the people most affected to have access to the conversation and the decision-making." Kathryn Underwood (2013), an official with the City Planning Commission, supported this further in an interview, explaining that it was a common sentiment in Detroit that legitimate decision-making includes residents' direct input: "there's a lot of knowledge and expertise already in the community, and we need to be intentional about

bringing it together." Much unlike occurs federally, citizens themselves and their local knowledge were therefore explicitly sought out and privileged in Detroit's policymaking. And, unlike in Cleveland, residents and input considered most relevant was not based in applied gardening work but in socio-cultural food systems experience, more broadly.

After including DBCFSN members and Detroit residents' input, the Food Security Policy taskforce sent their draft legislation to Dr. Kami Pothukuchi for her "review and critique" as a last step before returning to City Council for a vote (DBCFSN 2015). Pothukuchi is an associate professor in urban studies and planning at Wayne State University in Detroit. She is participatory urban planning researcher, who "consults with urban agriculture organizations and community groups around the city…[and then] puts her ideas into practice" (Lewis 2013). Based in this participatory approach—rather than technical training or professional zoning experience, for instance—the taskforce viewed Pothukuchi as a "food policy expert" relevant to providing input on their legislation (DBCFSN 2015). Not surprisingly, then, Pothukuchi's recommendations centered on strengthening the legislation's inclusion of residents' unique know-how and maximizing its potential to engage communities in local food system improvements. For example, in the policy's section on 'Access to Quality Food in Detroit', Pothukuchi suggested adding in an overview of issues related to freshness of produce, noting that many community members expressed to her a lack of "choice of individual fruits or vegetables" in addition to high costs (Pothukuchi 2007). Pothukuchi also offered editing changes to achieve her aims, including minor ones such as changing the sentence "promote the benefits of breastfeeding" to "educate the community and families about the benefits of breastfeeding", to more extensive changes, such as adding entire actions. For example, in the section on 'Economic Injustice', she added that actions to address any perceived food systems problems "should be developed in collaboration with community organizations and residents." The taskforce accepted most of Pothukuchi's edits verbatum.

With DBCFSN members, Harvest Festival attendees, and Pothukuchi's input, the final draft of the Detroit Food Security Policy, "affirm[s] the City of Detroit's commitment to nurturing the development of a food secure city in which all of its citizens are hunger-free, healthy and benefit from the food systems that impact their lives." Local knowledge, stemming especially from African-American residents' unique socio-cultural identity and history, inform all parts of the ensuing document. For example, the Policy's section on 'Access to Quality Food in Detroit' explains that, "although most neighborhoods may have a grocery store within a 'reasonable' distance, the quality and selection of food items is exceedingly lacking" (Detroit Food Security Policy 2008). This was based on common sentiments about food quality and availability based on residents' experience, as mentioned in Pothukuchi's above comment and as summarized by another Detroiter:

> "For 20 years I was raising my kids and being in this community…But when it came to trying to buy fruits and vegetables for my kids I couldn't do it. I could not put on my table [the poor quality of food] that was in the stores in our neighborhoods or in the immediate area…I had the luxury of owning a vehicle, so I could drive out to the suburbs and go to the supermarkets there that have higher quality produce, but my neighbors couldn't." (L.J. 2013)

Another resident involved in food-systems work, Devita Davidson (2013), articulated another account common to the City's majority community and informed by their local knowledge: "my mother and father were part of that great migration of African-Americans who migrated from the South to the North…and my father used to tell me that…what they ate came from the land." The

legislation's clause on 'Urban Agriculture' reflects this widespread narrative, stating, for instance: "Detroit has a history of gardening and farming that goes back decades. African-Americans, who left southern states to provide for their families through factory jobs in the Detroit area, brought with them their connection to the land and their knowledge of how to grow vegetables and flowers" (Detroit Food Security Policy 2008).

In 2008, Yakini returned to present this final draft Food Security Policy to the Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee for a vote. He briefly explained the taskforce's drafting process and requested the City pass the policy. Decision-makers recognized that "people feel disenfranchised from government…if you want to see something passed, you want to do the [community engagement] work on the frontend" (Underwood 2013). The intense community engagement process informing the legislation thus appealed to Councilmembers and suggested the public would widely support the policy—and the officials backing it—once passed. Additionally, the conditions outlined in the policy resonated with many Committee members' own experiences as Detroit residents themselves, who made comments on the record about their own neighborhoods' issues with food access, for instance. Committee members consequently unanimously and "enthusiastically" passed the legislation, and soon after full City Council approved it to become law (Watson 2008).

Discussion: The Comparative Logics of Political Knowledge—Trends and Consequences

While the U.S. is characterized by a very entrenched, technocratic civic epistemology that, like many countries, includes little emphasis on local knowledge in decision-making, the above analysis provides evidence that politically relevant knowledge-ways in Cleveland and Detroit differ from both the national level and one another (see Table 1).

In Cleveland, I identify what I term a "stakeholder" civic epistemology (see Table 1). This epistemology defines "experts" based not on an individual's technical skills and standing, as is often preferred nationally, but rather in one's applied work in areas relevant to that being legislated. In the case of food, this means that in Cleveland both citizens and professional stakeholders involved in urban agriculture, land use and planning were considered stakeholder experts relevant to informing policy development. And, as such, a variety of knowledge, including citizen-gardeners' own local knowledge, was integral to informing policy development. For example, it was citizen-gardeners' experience and frustration with the destruction of their garden plots that set the terms of Cleveland's food policy agenda, putting in motion the process which led the Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance to be the first food policy ever considered and passed in that city. Additionally, because applied stakeholders and their respective knowledge are trusted as relevant to informing policy in Cleveland, rational deliberation among such experts is often sufficient to ensuring objectivity in decision-making. Indeed, four area stakeholder professionals alone were responsible for the bulk of the city's Urban Garden Zoning District ordinance drafting, with their writing process an informal and off-record collaboration amongst themselves. Only Cleveland's Director of Planning and Councilmember Joe Cimperman also saw and commented on the legislation prior to its introduction to City Council. Yet despite this lacking visibility (which tends not to hold up nationally), the public valued the policy as it emerged out of this process: elected officials unanimously voted in favor of the ordinance citing their constituents' support of it, in part.

In contrast, in Detroit I underscore what I term a "popular" civic epistemology (see Table 1). This epistemology favors the city's majority population as most pertinent to governance and defines "experts" and "expertise" as stemming directly from the community. Detroit's African-

American population (the city's majority population) and their knowledge as such therefore predominantly guided political deliberations around food, rather than technical (like tends to occur nationally) or applied stakeholder (as in Cleveland). For example, it was the grassroots Detroit Black Community Food Security Network's (DBCFSN) members' experiences and frustrations with the lack of equity for African-Americans in the food system that set the terms of Detroit's food policy agenda. The Food Security Policy consequently became the first food legislation considered and passed in that city. Moreover, DBCFSN members themselves spearheaded the legislation's drafting process, heavily relying on their and their communities' local knowledge to inform the policy. Kami Pothukuchi, the one outside qualified expert consulted, was included as a relevant decision-maker not because of her advanced degree (as might be preferred nationally) or record of applied urban planning work (as would likely be important in Cleveland), but instead due to the fact that she was engaged in participatory research in the Detroit community. Additionally, unlike at the national level or in Cleveland, it was a highly visible, publicly inclusive policymaking process that helped ensure objectivity in the resulting legislation and motivate elected officials to unanimously vote in favor of it.

Table 1: *Civic Epistemology in America*[3]	**National—"Contentious"**	**Cleveland—"Stakeholder"**	**Detroit—"Popular"**
Relevant Participants	Interested Parties	Stakeholders	Majority Population
Accepted Basis of Expertise	Scientific and Technical Skills and Standing	Applied Experience, Skills and Standing	Identity and Socio-Cultural History
Means of Ensuring Objectivity	Quantitative Data	Collaboration/ Deliberative Rationality	Public Participation
Visibility of Decision-Making	Publicly Visible	Less Publicly Visible	Publicly Visible and Constituted
Means of Holding Decision-makers Accountable	Legal	Electoral	Social

Conclusion: Understanding Expertise

Cleveland and Detroit—as they are nested in the broader American context—have similar histories, geographies, and contemporary social and economic dynamics, yet, as the above analysis emphasizes, they nonetheless have very different civic epistemologies. Taking seriously the variability of civic epistemology across places is critical for a number of reasons. How politically relevant knowledge is understood and enacted implicates alternative arrangements as to who participates in decision-making and how, what is considered a policy 'problem', and the solutions sought as a result. Indeed, because of the different conceptions of experts and expertise between Cleveland and Detroit, the initial food policy "problem" in each place was variously defined as an urban agriculture and justice issue, respectfully; ensuing

[3] This operationalization of civic epistemology is adapted from Jasanoff's (2005) extended research on the subject. As Jasanoff (2005: 259+) herself emphasizes, however, tabulations like this offer conceptual clarity but risk being reductionist. As with any aspect of political culture, civic epistemology is a living thing, subject to change and transformation. The trends extrapolated here represent, at best, entrenched patterns of decision-making societies may stray from but often return to due to enduring cultural, political, institutional and historic dynamics.

legislative “solutions” reflected a response to these different interpretations alone. Our understandings about knowledge, democracy and policy change cannot be fully developed without considering these dynamics.

Scholars are beginning to pay more sustained attention to how political dynamics vary sub-nationally, especially in recent years as local decision-making has proved itself to be a growing and ever consequential trend. DeLeon and Naff (2004: 690), for instance, argue that “place matters,” and using the Social Capital Benchmark Survey they show that political culture varies at the national and local levels, including across thirty urban communities (see also Lieske 2009). Moreover, a number of studies provide evidence that local level differences can alternatively constrain and enable regional policymaking. Research ties sub-national culture, politics and history, for example, to different area groups’ political pursuits (see, for example, Bailey 1999; Bockmeyer 2000; Huckfeldt 1986; Sharp 1999), and it also links these types of pursuits back to local culture and institutional structures (see, for instance, Borris 1999; Ferman 1996; Ramsay 1996).

It will be beneficial to add to this growing research direct analysis of expertise in subnational policymaking. As the above analysis suggests, civic epistemologies can differ within nations as well as between them. Yet only the municipal level is addressed above; there are important political debates playing out at the state and regional levels of governance, as well, which also merit attention head-on. Additionally, only two cities have been examined in this study. Given the growing role of cities in policymaking in the U.S. and beyond, they require much further attention. Finally, that qualified elites tend to have significant power in decision-making should not be coupled with assumptions about the role of local actors and their input. Local knowledge can (and often does) constitute pertinent political expertise in its own right. Shedding these preconceptions in future research can be an important step toward developing more authentic understandings about knowledge and expertise in a range of socio-political transformations occurring at this very moment.

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