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IMPROVEMENT:CITIZEN, ACTIVIST, AND PROFESSIONAL
PERSPECTIVES

presented by

Charlotte Litjens

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VISIONS FOR DETROIT FOOD SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT:
CITIZEN, ACTIVIST, AND PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES
By

Charlotte Litjens

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ABSTRACT

VISIONS FOR DETROIT FOOD SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT: CITIZEN, ACTIVIST, AND PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

By

Charlotte Litjens

Food and agriculture projects are receiving attention as a strategy for urban revitalization and redevelopment through local food system improvement. The localization involved there-in can reveal tensions between visions and perspectives held by citizens, activists, and professionals in the areas of economic development, public health, or environmental stewardship. This paper discusses these often-competing visions present in change initiatives in the urban food system of Detroit, Michigan, where a central urban area is left largely under-served by full-service grocery retail. Factors motivating actors to pursue change in their local food system along with the factors mediating that change were gathered in thirteen interviews and four focus groups. Problems with the urban food system, visions for the future, and desired strategies were explored. Data was analyzed inductively. Overall findings reveal concerns for social equity, parity in food environment, and community vitality; and challenges regarding access to information regarding food quality and production, and opportunity for participation. Food system entrepreneurship and participation in the local economy were interpreted as a form of activism toward racial justice. Tensions were revealed between consumer and activist identities, race and environmental values, education and empowerment, and participation and funding as they relate to social change. Most are united behind the vision of making the city a more sovereign leader in sustainability, equality, and economic productivity.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The impetus for community-based food system change in Detroit takes place in the midst of a broader surge in both popular fascination and grave concern over food, eating, and agriculture. While chef celebrity-hood reaches unprecedented heights, proponents for the environment, human health, and social welfare have joined progressive farmers in a call for reform of the modern American food system. Popular media has gone so far as to elevate the status of alternative food activity such as the White House organic garden to a "revolution" (Martin 2009) Driven primarily by public health and economic crises, there are a number of ways that problems with the food system are framed. People from a variety of perspectives have engaged around the way food is produced, distributed, processed, prepared, and accessed in America. For critics of the commodification and industrialization that characterizes the modern food and agriculture system; effects of environmental degradation, health consequences, and social inequity experienced by both producers and consumers are cited. For environmentalists, distance between producers and consumers is increasingly seen to create an atmosphere of anthropocentric, ecologically reckless consumer behavior, where American shoppers have come to expect variety despite seasonality, and depend on cheap and abundant food at the expense of ecological and farm-level economic viability. This view is emphasized by the growth in popularity of "local" food systems. At the same time, other proponents of food system change might emphasize complacency with poor quality food and resultant health

consequences. Within this growing drive for changing the American food system, the diagnosis of problems and remedies prescribed are various.

Beyond public health, environmental, and economic concerns; concepts of food justice, food sovereignty, and food democracy have been injected into the discussion by both activists and academics to promote the welfare of those who suffer the greatest consequences of the current arrangement. While they are diverse, one common thread of these notions is the ideology opposing corporate power and a globalized food system, promoting a relocation of power to communities to allow and encourage greater citizen participation in the way food is produced and eaten.

Within this movement toward re-localization and democratization, the urban food environment has gained attention. The disparity in access to a healthy, satisfactory diet often afflicting urbanites of economically struggling de-industrialized zones has been legitimated as a major problem by the public health field. In Detroit, such problems with the food system have been accentuated by extreme conditions, leading to an aggrieved populous and increasing resident organization around changing the food system. Stakeholders of local movements such as this often participate for various reasons, coming to the table with various motivations, beliefs, and backgrounds (Wright et al. 2007).

This study concerning how social change is worked toward for Detroit's food system has two main purposes. The first is to understand what problems are being experienced directly, what strategies are being used to improve the food system in Detroit, and what are the implications for intervention? The second purpose is to explore the impetus behind these interventions and desires for change; examining the social

process of the collective framing of problems and solutions by citizens, activists, and professionals in Detroit, exploring which dimensions of change are contested and which dimensions are shared between various actors. In order to elicit both structural and social concerns around the food system, qualitative methods of focus groups with citizens and interviews with professional and activist leaders were used.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

Theory of social movements provides a framework for discussing how this process occurs, as well as the ways in which power, culture, and resources have been shown to mediate social change. The literature is used to develop the two main themes: first, the problems with the food system and approaches to structural change. Second is the dialectical negotiation of how frames are either adopted or opposed in the process of collective action. To do this, the way social resistance to the dominant order takes place is first discussed, followed by the relevant domains from social movement theory. The dominant frames and framers of urban food system problems and solutions are then considered, and finally, introduction of Detroit's historical and structural context as it sets the stage for this research.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AND RESISTANCE

This section introduces theory concerning social resistance and social movements. First, the impact of individuals on social change is discussed, followed by an introductory definition of social movements. Next the resource mobilization social movements theory is discussed relative to considerations of structural change. Finally, consideration of the

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discursive process of framing problems and solutions is explored with reference to the

framing, ideology, and cultural social movements literature.

Individual Resistance

The body of academic work around community-based food systems is paired with a

growth in governmental, private philanthropic, non-profit, and community-based

ventures as well as popular dialogue. While there is a large body of work on hegemony,

resistance, and agency, this study takes resistance to mean a re-gaining of control from

dominant groups and established forms of development, or hegemonic forces. However,

resistance and power are often shown to be more embedded and multi-dimensional than

straightforward opposition to a monolithic and dominant order, and should be examined

in the context of institutional constraints, processes of knowledge and power, and

material affordances (Long 2008; Johnston 2008 a). From this view, power is normalized

both from the top-down and bottom-up, and individuals can participate in community-

based food projects through smaller actions such as purchasing decisions, critical

thinking, and civic participation in community gardens and food banks. Social movement

theorist J.C. Scott illustrated that when people perceive that they have little power for

changing oppressive conditions, deep ideological resistance can be represented by

symbolic or "ordinary," day-to-day actions (Scott 1985).

Though activism in the food system has historically been focused on farmers, a

shift in focus toward consumers has emerged, marked by both a concern for food security

in low income urban populations, and popular adoption of the idea that the food system

can be changed through ethical consumption. Consumers are key actors in the global food

system, and shopping can provide an entry point to political engagement (Johnston 2008a). However, there is debate around the extent to which market opportunities provide opportunities to exercise citizenship. Critics of consumerism challenge the idea that the desires for personal happiness can be met through commodity choice, and the idea of food citizenship, or interacting with food and agriculture in ways beyond purchasing food is being promoted by many advocates.

While there are many different conceptions of social justice, for most it represents a condition where capabilities are distributed evenly and freely. This means not only equity for all in material distribution, but also capability for self-sufficiency, dignity and meaningful existence (Hinrichs and Allen 2008). Johnston (2008 b) explores the ideological enmity between these two ideals: where consumerism is rooted in self-interest, citizenship embodies a responsibility to act in the interest of the social and ecological commons, such that social justice might be worked toward. She contends that in typical contemporary market spaces, it is difficult to achieve a balance between consumerism and citizenship; and in growth-oriented corporate settings such as big-box health-food retail, reconciliation is impossible because when profit and consumer choice is prioritized, goals of citizenship are unattainable (Johnston 2008b). These theories suggest that markets may simply be inappropriate venues for social justice projects. However, localization schemes often emphasize consumers choosing ethically, and the discussion of access to a healthy diet takes place within the market, such that capacity to act is framed by the identity as a consumer. This framing of citizens as shoppers may have an effect on the success of mobilization over issues concerning social justice in the food system, in contrast to civic-ally focused agri-food ventures.

Social movements

Social movements theory is part of the study of social change. While it is obviously important to examine collective resistance for this research, attention to the large expanse of literature in this area is beyond the scope of the project. A brief summary of general social movements theory will provide orientation for the discussion of the theoretical subset areas of urban social movements, resource-mobilization, ideological framing, and cultural power that are specifically relevant to this research.

While concern over food is an exigent topic of popular social conscience and academic discourse, there is disagreement among sociologists and activists about whether it is a true social movement. The direction toward politically motivated spending is at least considered to carry potential to become a powerful social movement, or "social-movement-based" (Bonnano and Constance 2008; Allen 2004). Social movements have many definitions, but common properties include collective challenge, solidarity, and sustained interaction (Tarrow 1994). Social movements can be either oppositional, directly challenging institutions such as government or markets, or alternative, integrating into them. Within this dichotomy, there is tension between ideological vision and feasibility, as well as incremental versus radical change. One view is that alternative projects may not carry enough force to challenge institutionalized inequity. Many smaller community food projects focused on health education and skills provision are seen by some to fall short of making lasting change in structural problems of the food system (Dowler and Caraher 2003). However, there are many actors and collectives that find the greatest potential in working within the system. There is consensus that social

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movements are in reality more complex than this division, as they are in continuous

formation that builds on successes, failures, and changing contexts (Fainstein and

Fainstein 1985).

Urban social movements

While hardship is insufficient to instigate mobilization of social movements,

economic forces can help support new ways of thinking that are essential for founding

social movements (Gramsci 1971). Social movements in the urban American north have

been spurred by dramatic shifts in economic and political structure in the past century. In

the 1950s, capitalization of southern agriculture caused migration of African Americans

to the north, and de-industrialization of the 60s' and 70s left large populations of lower

class racial minorities, catalyzing the rise of urban social movements (Fainstein and

Fainstein 1985). The 1980's saw an economic downturn, with political-economic

restructuring in the interest of profitability relative to social welfare. Although there was

a moment where it was unknown if popular resistance would prevent such restructuring,

the Reagan era was characterized by lowered wages, exported jobs, redistribution of

wealth toward the upper class, and generally tough times for the working class and poor

(Harvey 2005) making it difficult to organize. Disappearance of social services,

affordable housing, institutions, and resources along with population shifts characterized

by "white flight" made for a cycle of urban decline beginning in the 1980's. In both

contrast and concurrence to this ghettoization, the re-development and gentrification of

working-class neighborhoods into upper-class work and retail space instigated a backlash

that was the beginning of modern urban social movements in several American cities (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985).

By definition, urban social movements (USMs) have local political, economic, or any other types of power structure as their target for change, often supported by certain cultural and ideological conditions. An example of such conditions lies behind the black power and civil rights movements, where dimensions of geographical space and ideology helped organize a movement targeting issues of race, class, and ghettoization (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985). Specific urban conditions, and not just broad economic conditions, mediate ability for USMs to rise. This includes the political opportunity, the unity of urban elites, and the presence of oppositional consciousness for a critical mass (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985). The waning of USMs since the 1970s is attributed to the use of economic conditions to reduce political power of oppressed classes by dominant political actors, as well as a lack of a counter-ideology to these powers in control of resources, the political process, and economic restructuring resulting in racial segregation and workforce changes (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985). However, as modern economic conditions spur widening critique of neoliberal economic development in general, the idea of increased democratic participation in urban development processes as posed by Harvey and others in the 1970's has returned. This resurgence is evidenced by, for example, the growing presence of the "Right to the City" coalition in most major US cities, whose mission for urban social justice rests on the idea that the use of physical space is a manifestation of power (Goodman 2009).

Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization theorists focus on how skills, commitment, trust, land, and financial resources are necessary for success of social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977). This theory envisions social movement participants as rational strategists geared toward achieving specific goals and interests, through aggregating and organizing resources.

The question of financial resource importance in social change is a contentious one within the realm of urban grassroots development. As attention to food at both the research and community project level has increased, private and public funding in this area has grown accordingly. In urban settings, the partnership between community groups and their funders is considered by some as a new "regime" which takes up where government leaves off. There is a concern that elite outside funders have professionalized and privatized authentic community development, creating a power hierarchy with little government oversight (Martin 2004). Where including broad community interests requires financial resources, there is the problem that wealth, by definition, accumulates for those benefiting from the status quo; thus it is often not in the interest of private partnerships to undertake projects that seek genuine change (Allen 2004; Silver 1998; Johnston 2008). The general paradoxical relationship between poverty, social problems, and capacity for organization (Silver 1998) is a persistent problem. Most professional leaders come from privileged positions, and do not experience social injustice directly, and those oppressed can face obstacles to participating in movements. Class divisions are reproduced by even the most egalitarian of arrangements between funders and

community members (Silver 1998). There can be problems with tokenism as well, where the input of oppressed populations is used for legitimation but is limited or not meaningful (Allen 2004).

In addition, there is concern that organizations are pressured to re-invent themselves to accommodate funding interests, and that practitioners do not advocate radical changes in the food system to avoid alienating funders (Dowler and Caraher 2003; Martin 2004). The concept of co-optation is often used to represent such a dilution of a potentially energetic force for advocacy by elite power, which is able to bend instead of breaking in the face of protest. Powerful actors and institutions may employ strategies to bring movement leaders and participants into the established system, "taking protest issues as their own but treating them in a superficial way (Silver 1998)." The sustainable agriculture movement has illustrated this process as its political acceptance has meant reducing food system problems to a set of technological and scientific practices, free of the underlying values of the movement (Campbell 2001; Allen 2004).

Private foundations can have a stabilizing effect on activism as resource mobilization theorists assert, but within communities there can be consequences (Silver 1998). One such effect is a professionalization of organizations: while formalized organization is enabled and credibility and capacity are boosted, advocates can become distanced from the constituencies that are actually experiencing the problems targeted. Furthermore, the deep conviction underlying a movement may become buried under organizational and legitimation projects. In addition, outside funding can encourage development of separate organizations leading to competition and diffusion of efforts (Martin 2004). This tension between conviction and credibility is an established

dimension of movement politics, as movements must often negotiate between the possibility of co-optation and radical fervor. In this, a certain reflexivity is required for many leaders whose work involves compromises and politics of the middle that preserves strategic opportunity for legitimacy, alliance and partnership. There is "tension, uncertainty, and creativity between principled ambitions and quest for practical relevance (Campbell 2001)."

Framing, Ideology, and Culture

The study of ideologies and framing emphasizes the cognition behind social movements, while also exploring the process of social meaning-making and situation definition as guided by underlying principles (Snow et al. 1986). Ideology and framing theory is important for understanding construction of collective identity, motives, mobilization, and political culture (Oliver and Johnston 2005). Frames are strategically used for momentum-building in movements through increasing recruitment, promotion, and funding. Consensus in ideology is especially important in particular for movements that don't organize along class lines, and must find common grounds for organization, such as the environmental movement (Silver 1998). Furthermore, some social movements scholars contend that grievances must be analytically constructed and articulated before collective action can take place. This type of "intellectual work" thus forms a pre-textual foundation for social movements (Shurman and Munro 2006).

Frames are dynamic and flexible depending on social context, and there is a difference between the structure of frames, related ideologies, and the process of framing (Oliver and Johnston 2005). Focusing on process instead of structure reveals the socially constructed nature of frames and ideologies as signifying and legitimating processes for

the way meaning is ascribed to events and conditions. Social movements theorists Snow and Benford (1986) devised categories for framing in the various stages of social change. First, diagnostic framing assigns blame to the source of the motivating grievance. Here consensus is typically problematic, in that agreement on the exact cause of the problem is unlikely. Because mobilization does not occur based on merely diagnostic framing, consensus here is not necessary for a prognosis, or devised plan of action. Successful prognostic framing rests on belief that the outcome will be effective and that action is urgent and of moral imperative. However, because cultivating this type of optimism is dependent on how clear and acceptable potential solutions are, prognostic framing is not sufficient for mobilization without motivational framing that makes action seem feasible, effective and worthwhile (Snow et al. 1986). Success in motivating action depends upon the relevance to life-world and alignment with belief systems or frames subscribed to by targeted recruits. In this respect, culture, common sense, and local "folk" meanings come into play, and local historical and cultural factors affect what is seen as feasible (Lyson 2004; Bagdonis, Hinrichs et al. 2009).

Frame analytic approaches can be used to provide understanding of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000). Wright and Reid (forthcoming) explore construction and content of frames used in discourse around biofuels, exploring how frames use larger political and economic context and symbols of mainstream culture to gain power socially. In a study of farm to school initiatives, Bagdonis et. al found the importance of "champions" in framing and agenda-setting, as they bring both personal commitments and organizational agendas to social movements (Bagdonis et al. 2009). Additionally, Wright et. al (2007) showed how professional stakeholders participating in

collaboration on a community-based food system project held various "interpretive frames," or those that align with personal beliefs but represent an outside organizational or collective ideology (Wright et al. 2007).

Construction of public reality can be seen as a battle between ideologies. Social movement actors and members of dominant groups can both create frames, and as framing is a type of knowledge construction, power negotiations are inherent. Dominant actors are those who have authority over the creation of "common sense," through the media, political organization, or other means. Because those in power often have privilege of information and measurement tools for problems and crises, they are able to name the problem, thus creating dominant frames.

Collective action frames often go against hegemonic frames that are seen as most legitimate and make up the common sense (Coles 1998). In an illustration of framing by political power during wartime, Coles (1998) showed how hegemonic ideologies can be brought into question by counter-movements, and must be re-legitimated (Coles 1998).

The process of framing and counter-framing often relies heavily on mainstream cultural norms (Wright and Reid Forthcoming). Ideology is dynamic, nuanced, and embedded in culture, and resistance to hegemony can be seen as a power struggle between actors for cultural leadership (Johnston 2008; Coles 1998). Framers of movements are part of the creation of culture. Culture contributes heavily to the formation and efficacy of social movements in that it shapes how ideas are built upon and how visions for change manifest (Swidler 1995). Knowledge and skills are situated within culture, and thus culture and power are inextricably linked. Therefore, formation of ideology and conception of one's own power takes place depending on one's social

surroundings. The strength of this effect varies based on how deeply ingrained culture is for subjects, and how it is socially communicated (Swidler 1995).

Social movements can seek change through cultural innovation, reconstructing values, personal identities and cultural symbols; contributing to the emergence of alternative life-styles. This is important in that many of the concerns for re-shaping the food system through community-based projects involve a shift in culture and behavior. Cultural codings are one of the most powerful ways to create change. Such cultural change is often prescribed for the problems of the food system, especially at the consumption level. For example, Johnston (2008) argues that we must create positive, pleasurable alternatives to consumer spending to make change in the food system, as the quest for pleasure and beauty is a human desire. We must create a believable and palatable vision for "a way of living that is not primarily tied to identity construction through commodity purchase" (p. 103). Furthermore, some scholars posit that the popular exploration of the pleasures, trends, and consumption of food needn't be diametrically opposed to academic and advocate concern for injustices of the food system, and that a bridging of the pleasure and protest is in order. By broadening the discussion beyond rational and economic considerations of the food system through engagement of the cultural and sensual dimensions of food along with values of social justice and environmental stewardship, a more relevant discourse can be created (Delind 2006; Johnston 2008).

However, none of this is to suggest that mobilizing ideas are first conceived by movement leaders and then simply applied to a blank-slate public. Framing efforts and mobilization are a dialectical process built on the use of pre-existing discourses and

"common sense" of dominant culture (Coles 1998). Building on Marx's work, Gramsci (1971) brought to light the understanding that the consciousness necessary for mobilization of the oppressed could only come from a self-governing, self-educating group. In this view, the way subaltern classes fight oppression is through the rise of organic intellectuals and their transmission of ideas to a new, more self-confident proletarian culture. Similarly, McAdam (1983) introduces the idea of cognitive liberation: when conditions change, individuals can experience a change in mindset that, when aligned with frames that problematize the same conditions, can provide a basis for action. This can de-legitimize the system in power, and develop a sense of efficacy for affecting social change.

ESTABLISHED FRAMES

This section begins by using the symbol of the "local," or community-based food system to bring together the variety of ideologies that underpin the drive toward a more equitable and sustainable food system. After considering the rise of the "local" concept, introductions to each of the major motivating principles, or master frames that comprise it are provided: public health, sustainability, and social justice, as they relate to the urban food system.

<u>Eating "Local"</u>

In 2007, the New Oxford American Dictionary selected the word "Locavore" as its word of the year, meaning "a person who attempts to eat only foods grown locally (Oxford University Press USA 2007)." This highly publicized choice legitimated the widening adoption of campaigns advocating the revitalization of locally based food

economies in order to reduce energy use, invigorate local economies, and decrease distance between producer and consumer. Advocates of "local" are often politically motivated to regain local control and re-connect actors in the food system, thereby enhancing civic values. Arising from political-economic critique of resource distribution, the concept of "reclaiming the commons" calls for re-orienting socio-economic development toward equity and sustainability and away from a solely market-driven doctrine. From this perspective it is contended that in an era of neo-liberal development, equitable and sustainable use of common resources is thwarted by commodification of all goods and services, an over-emphasis on individual responsibility, and over-dependence on the market for life-goods. As part of strategies for development based on self-sufficiency that are on the rise globally, food sovereignty projects challenge this established political and economic power through revitalizing localized production and consumption (McMichael 2003).

Domestically, the concept of civic agriculture, as introduced by Tom Lyson (2004), suggests that re-claiming the commons does not necessitate discarding market logic altogether, but re-embedding markets in social structures to ensure better equality and sustainability, while creating an economy of care (Winter, 2003) through democratic control of the food system. This idea converges with the most recent revival of urban agriculture and community gardening, as strategies for increased civic interaction and community improvement. While community gardens in cities have emerged and re-emerged at several points throughout history, the most recent versions arise at a time when changing the food and agriculture system at the local level is receiving increasing academic and popular attention.

However, localization is a contentious issue. The assumption that local food systems are inherently more ecologically friendly and equitable has been challenged, and critical vigilance in these areas called for (Bellows and Hamm 2001; Winter 2003; Hinrichs, 2003; Allen 2004). Furthermore, Lyson's (2004) vision of civic agriculture based on localization does not directly challenge the mainstream food system. It is alternative rather than oppositional, and activist and academic ideologies vary as to the urgency of reforming the fundamentals of the modern conventional economic paradigm. In addition, localization of the food system has been shown to reveal tensions between traditional routes of economic development, public health, environmental stewardship, and the visions and perspectives of citizens. Small communities are not immune to power imbalances, and "geographical proximity does not reduce social and economic distancing (Allen 2004, p 172)." Thus, the emergence of "local" as a frame for action has been a process of social construction built on existing ideologies that by nature of the concept, depends heavily on local context.

Urban Justice and Community Development

Historically, the city has been the focus of many a utopian vision. As concern over environmental impact and population growth mounts, discourse around building more sustainable equitable urban communities takes on greater importance. Globalization has led to a loss of resources in most industrial cities, where governance has deteriorated, leading to grassroots and non-profit organization and provision of services where the city has left off. According to geographer David Harvey (1993), a loss of faith in governance has created a mass adoption of local citizen action as a means for improving conditions in the city.

A conventional economic development frame views food system problems as a lack of capital flow and participation in markets, to be remedied through supporting local development, motivated by the right to a high quality of life. However, mainstream technocratic modes of economic development dominate most visions and the built environment in the city. The power involved in imposing a vision on urban space is discussed by scholars of urban political economy. This tradition of urban analysis focuses on the reproduction of inequality in cities. David Harvey's 1973 foundational work, *Social Justice and the City* called for creating a revolutionary geographical theory to deal with the problem of the ghetto, bridging the study of the built environment with theories of culture and power and providing a foundation for the idea that the built environment reflects power negotiation between dominant and subordinated classes. He uses the relationship between economic process and space to show how development merely shifts racial and class lines outside the boundaries of development (Harvey 1973). Where social justice is equated to democratic opportunity, neoliberal objectives of capital accumulation are manifested through large-scale economic development projects and gentrification that are limiting to socio-economic well-being (Fainstein 1997; Florida 2002).

Though this literature traditionally focuses on land-use and housing, it aligns with community-based food system work in that it advocates for local control and participation of all classes of citizens in decisions over development of land and economy. Authors such as Zukin (1997) have begun considering cultural strategies for the re-development of cities, where development is embedded in non-market, or perhaps post-consumer values, such as the creation of an arts economy in New York. While this

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method is often used as a last resort, when there is little perceived potential for a return of industry (such as is the case in Detroit), these cultural institutions have the power to grow in economic value and thus mainstream legitimation. Cultural forms of economic development, public spaces, and historic preservation are means with which power can be asserted against capitalist control and mainstream economic development, with the power to change community image and thus economic promise. It is worth exploring how these projects democratize and challenge hegemonic urban visions (Zukin 1997), especially through the practice of using vacant land for urban agriculture in cities to target food insecurity.

Another field concerned with strategic urban improvement is the community-building field, which attempts to strengthen structures to provide opportunity and resources through community-level processes. Community-building, community-development, and community-organizing are all modes of empowerment for oppressed urban populations. However, there is contention about how, as community-building gains power and legitimacy as a strategy for promoting equity, it requires professionalization of services and a catering to outside interests in the process. Fraser et. al (2003) offer a political-economic critique of community development, arguing that modern efforts toward community-building are characterized by outside stakeholder initiation and implementation, and produce a set of effects more useful for "professional community builders" than those targeted, i.e., the poor. Specifically, the production of a particular spatial vision of the city most useful for private ventures of real-estate development. This focus of scale, space, and place gives community building power and legitimacy in the economic development world (Fraser et al. 2003). However, in cities where markets for

real-estate and industrial development are slowing, community-based land development

may have a different set of concerns. Where the food system is concerned, the struggle

of legitimation for community groups takes place both around land development as well

as access to other resources such as capital.

<u>Sustainability</u>

An environmental sustainability frame views conventional agriculture as

problematic for ecosystem health and human sustenance, which can be fixed through

reforming methods, motivated by ecological ethics and beliefs about the future. This call

for making agriculture more sustainable is partly driven by environmental consequences

of large scale, resource intense farming including concerns about detrimental effects of

soil erosion, pesticide use, petroleum-based inputs, nitrogen loss, monocultures, and

genetic engineering (Hurt 2002). In addition, problems with scale have arisen where the

smallest and largest producers have best access to markets, through direct marketing and

commercial chains respectively, leaving the mid-sized farms economically vulnerable

despite their comparative advantage of highly differentiated production (Kirschenmann et

al. 2004). Methods of sustainable production, shifting towards smaller organic

production, as well as localization of the food system have been explored as solutions by

both academic researchers and the public, encouraged by a growing consumer desire for

such an embedded quality (sustainability) in food. A focus on production using small

plots in urban settings has also begun to take place in some arenas, forging conceptual

connections with the urban planning and community development fields. It should be

noted that the term sustainability is beginning to encompass the social interactions

between man and nature in addition to the more traditional concern for ecosystem

integrity and natural resources (Lawn 2006), and thus this thesis set out to explore a local construction of the term.

Public Health

The public health frame sees food system problems as rooted in poor nutritional practices due to lack of access, knowledge, or skills. While consolidation in agriculture and food retail has made food more abundant and affordable, diet-related illness has become a core concern in the public health community (Kamphuis and Giskes 2006; Morland, Diez-Roux et al. 2006). This is due to increasingly alarming health disparities between sectors of the population and a growing understanding of the connection with disparity in access to a healthy diet. Urban poverty has been connected to both food access and diet-related illness (Eisenhower 2001; Powell, Slater et al. 2007). A relationship between neighborhoods with high type II diabetes rates and environmental barriers to accessing healthy foods have also been identified (Horowitz, Colson et al. 2004; Gallagher 2007). Finally, supermarket access has been associated with healthier dietary behaviors including fruit and vegetable intake, and rates of obesity (Rose and Richards 2004; Powell, Auld et al. 2007). The public health frame sees improving access and knowledge as the appropriate methods improving the food system, driven by rights-based ethics.

Experts and Construction of Reality

If we wish to examine the challenges and contradictions present in the making of everyday common sense about food production and consumption, it is important to consider the way discourse and visioning is shaped by both hegemonic and progressive actors in American cities. A constructionist framework views agency as the ability to construct "realities" as objective forces (Bonnano and Constance 2008). This "common sense" or objective reality is at once maintained and challenged by the masses. As with the concept of cognitive liberation, "organic" intellectuals can lead to popular uptake of ideas or frames (Gramsci, 1971). In addition, in Western society in general, powerful expert institutions and individuals control production of knowledge and construction of social reality. Overcoming this is an important part of resistance (Long 2008). As discussed by Yankelovich (1991), closing the "expert-public gap" is a major challenge for American society; most experts have become so through collection of technical, objective knowledge, whereas public opinion is more typically structured around values. Thinkers such as Yankelovich assert that this is detrimental to democratic development; Richard Norgaard (1994) discusses how facts and values have been largely kept separate in Western societies through positivism and monism, leading to a technocracy that can cater to powerful interests by limiting democratic decision-making.

However, in the framing process, the presence of values has motivational potential, adding urgency and necessity for action. Wright and Reid (forthcoming) found that in the framing process over biofuels, morality was played on heavily by dominant frames in order to resonate with American mainstream culture, by making claims for the public

good. In the movement toward community-based food systems, master frames of community development, sustainability, and public health contain a mixture of inherent value claims and technical variables. Since academic experts have a significant control over the shaping of social agendas beyond research, this affects how major frames are created.

Sustainability

There is widening global adoption of the goals of "sustainable development," including its use as a dominant frame in the work toward community-based food systems. While the concept arises from environmental concerns, the literature is beginning to include the psychological, social and cultural dimensions for well-being (Lawn 2006). However, for the most part, sustainable development in practice is often reduced to the measurable changes in technology and social capital. It has been argued that since these components are embedded in an ultimately social interaction between nature and humans, it is essential to incorporate the study of social processes and societal change in to the sustainability discussion. According to Tovey (2002), incorporating concepts of social movements into the study of sustainable development can reveal the power relations that determine resource use and overall human and environmental well-being.

Recognizing the discursive power and pluralistic possibility of the term "sustainability," Kloppenburg et. al (2000) explored the meaning-making of "ordinary, competent people" involved in community-based food efforts. They contend that conceptual framings are based on academics and policy analysts, which leaves out the variety of understandings and how they are put into action at the community level. They

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found that participants included social concepts such as participatory, culturally nourishing, and just/ethical along with ecological considerations (Kloppenburg et al. 1996).

Public Health

In addition, the discursive power of nutritional information as presented by consumer culture and politically controlled by industry can be seen as thwarting healthful behavior. The condemnation of certain food components, such as fat, and a pre-occupation with micro-nutrients and their function can obscure a focus on foods as a whole; unravelling food traditions and the social importance and enjoyment of food (Gussow and Akabas 1993; Scrinis 2008).

Social Justice

Individuals can resist mainstream economic ideology, and a consumer society where individual consumer sovereignty and freedom of choice are valued over the collective good, citizenship, and values such as environmental responsibility. This is part of "common sense" where individuals meet needs while serving the greater good through self-interest.

Social justice and sustainability are relativistic terms that derive specific meaning from context and dialectical, discursive processes. These are often expressions of power where definition has been constructed by powerful elites (Harvey 1993).

Many thinkers in the community food security movement have moved beyond ideological conflicts, turning pragmatically instead to the democratic process within the

movement. Hassanein (2003) writes that experts cannot be left to make decisions regarding sustainability because it inherently involves values conflicts. Additionally, solutions progressing the agenda of sustainability must be worked toward iteratively as they concern uncertainty of the future (Hassanein 2003). Sustainability, like other ideologies that guide social change, must be socially defined, so that collective understandings evolve as conditions change. Therefore, a democratic community-based food and agriculture system will involve reflexivity and changing goals as frames are constructed actively.

DETROIT'S LOCAL CONTEXT

As a beacon of de-industrialization, Detroit has a well-established nonprofit sector characterized by community and economic development initiatives. Past work has emphasized how residential racial segregation disproportionately places African Americans in more-impoverished neighborhoods in Detroit and consequently reduces access to supermarkets (Zenk et al. 2005); however, continued redlining since then has made it so that almost no one within Detroit's city limits has immediate access to full-service major-chain grocery retail.

The 1980's and 90's marked a mass exodus of middle class whites from the city's core, and a rise in the percentage of blacks making up the population, 20% of which lived below the poverty level in 1980. The city seems to be a "shadow of itself," (Thompson 1999, p 163) as the decaying urban center is surrounded by wealthy communities. While Detroit followed the national trend of de-industrialization in the 70s and 80s, historians posit that it was hit harder than other cities due to earlier exposure to economic blight and

more acute racial tensions, resulting in a downward spiral of urban decay. The first great migration after WWI and the second after WWII represented a desire to participate more fully in economic and civic life. This challenged established white society, with battles over political power and resources between blacks and whites intensifying after the mid-forties. However, the defining moment was a hard-won mayoral victory for blacks, and whites abandoned the city when they realized their hold over liberal politics had been taken away (Thompson 1999).

Today, racial tension is an explicit element of the public identity of Detroit. Redlining in retail and other services and general dis-investment also characterize the city, continuing to drive out most members of the middle class. This includes a complete lack of major-chain grocery stores, documented in a 2007 report that entitled "Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Detroit (Gallagher 2007)" which sparked attention to this issue among both advocates for access to healthy food and residents of Detroit. Stark lines of division and ingrained struggles for power are evident; evidenced by a tradition of pirating of water and gas as well as a city bus system that doesn't connect to the regional bus system (Vogel in Park, 2005). Where, like many cities, Detroit's fiscal capabilities were reduced by the crumbling manufacturing base decades ago, a new structure of grassroots and professional non-profit as well as private actors have built a social improvement network that is well known for its strength and size. Recently, alternative agrifood projects in Detroit have received an explosion of both social and financial acknowledgment as part of this structure.

While Detroit's alternative agrifood network shares general motivations and characteristics with those already documented, it also has distinct characteristics that

invite empirical analysis. For example, Detroit's extent of de-industrialization and job loss is unmatched, as the former home of the auto industry. This is connected to both a racial narrative unlike any other city, and an abundance of vacant land and declining property value that affect all citizens. Estimations on vacant land range from 40,000 to 100,000 lots, providing a unique amount of urban space for a community gardening tradition that has played a large part in the city's identity historically. The most recent revival began in the mid 1990's, as part of an explicit vision for the city's post-industrial future, and continues to thrive, gaining attention from popular press and warranting attention from none other than Oprah Winfrey, whose April 2007 magazine likened Detroit as the "Emerald City (Owens 2008)."

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

While there has been a growth in non-academic discourse on the best practices and efficacy of community-based food system projects as well as normative academic considerations that bridge the research-activist divide, the bulk of the existing academic work is focused on problems with the industrial food system. There has also been a call for more empirical research that explores the dimensions of projects aiming to improve upon or create an alternative to the existing food system. Analysis of efforts and their effectiveness are seen as important to move the mission of the movements forward, exposing obstacles and opportunities (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson et al. 1996; Allen 2004). In addition, since academia and social theorizing can be criticized for being narrow in purpose, it is important to connect to empirical examples enabling identification of hegemony and empowerment. Furthermore, the process of academic

definition holds a certain discursive power. It has been recognized that conceptual framing of the alternative food system direction of work has been largely produced by academics and specialists, without input from the producers, consumers and those in between, who are "on the ground." Allen, as well as Kloppenburg (Allen 2004); Kloppenburg et. al (2000) found in conversations with "ordinary people" that meanings of sustainability are varied and differ from academic meanings.

Aside from structural constraints, it is important to understand the self-understanding, motivations, and ideologies of actors and collectives. Because the framing process for diagnosing and acting on problems is often embedded in local cultural, social, and structural factors, empirical case studies are essential.

The intent of this research was to elucidate the rich and nuanced meanings around local change, to supplement more concise, standardized and generalized definitions of problems and conditions that prevail within academic and professional communities. For example, the concept of community food security has been defined institutionally and academically as "a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (Hamm and Bellows 2002a). While this frame has indeed been useful, there has also been a call for more locally distinct definitions that rise from the grassroots, to include a diversity of perspectives that creates a more realistic portrayal of community food security (Hamm and Bellows 2002 B). This might provide insight into the experience of food insecurity, and allow for indigenous definition of the vision of what food security achieved would look and feel like in a specific place, to supplement and enrich traditional missions of public health, economic

vitality, and sustainability. While buzz-concepts like food security, sustainability, and community-building abound within national networks, institutions, and local schools, neighborhoods, and churches alike, they can take on specific meaning that is tied to characteristics of place when applied to a local scenario. Detroit's case is unique in that acute economic need, abundant land and labor, and a healthy level of frustrated citizens have given concepts like urban agriculture significance as hope for a new economic, social, and physical urban identity. Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore social construction of problems, solutions, and visions for change, the subjective perspectives of actors, and the structure of practices that work toward a socially just and environmentally sound urban food system. To that end, I will a) serve an applied interest, by identifying and describing the structure of the movement toward community-based food system development in Detroit, through investigating experienced problems, formal activities and initiatives; and b) serve a theoretical interest, by analyzing the process of social change in a way that creates an opportunity for its participants and other community members to define their vision for the food system and the city, definitions of justice, motivating ideologies, and beliefs about effectiveness.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The overarching purpose of this study was to understand experiences of residents, and the motivations and pursuits of those intent on improving Detroit's local food system. Through engaging residents, it explores the dynamics of how meaning is assigned and power negotiated in both day-to-day activities and organized acts of purpose. It was intended for subjects to enrich, refine and potentially redefine frames used in defining food systems problems such as food insecurity through explaining their own direct experiences with the food system while also reacting to and reflecting on strategies for improving conditions. Qualitative methodology was selected as the best way to achieve this goal for several reasons. This section will explain the particular modes of participant selection, data collection, and analysis used in this study.

RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research has gained popularity in recent years due to a growing belief that human-social phenomena requires attention to the meaning and purpose that is attached to behavior. This requires the study of context, richness, and complexity in lieu of the control and generalizability afforded by quantitative research. Qualitative research allows for capturing the complexity of the human condition more closely by examining context (Guba and Lincoln 1994). The exploratory nature of this study necessitated qualitative methodology, in that qualitative methods do not require that a hypothesis be stated before research begins, allowing for open exploration that is not constricted by the researcher's locus of the phenomena within a pre-conceived conceptual framework

(Patton 2002). In addition, qualitative research provides a format that allows for understanding the social construction of concepts (Patton 2002), aligning with the study's goal of gathering perspectives from a wide variety of disciplinary and social orientations around place-specific food system improvement. Exploring the indigenous, local definitions and frames required the use of methods that would allow for exploring complex, place-specific definitions and the way emic, or insider perspectives, contribute to theory (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

Aside from its pragmatic basis, there are also normative motivations in the inclusion of perspectives in constructing visions for sustainability, economic development, and social equality, because constructions of oppressed or "at risk" populations deserve equal attention to those of higher status such as academics (Guba and Lincoln 1994). For these reasons, the purposes of voice inclusion and realistic, place-specific, and collective construction of meaning aligned well with the applications of qualitative research methods.

DESIGN

Several factors impacted the design of this study. The research purposes were first developed based on the researcher's personal motivations and goals, while also fitting the purposes of funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and the Fair Food Foundation. This project will help develop food system activity within WKKF's Food and Fitness Initiative as well as form the basis for a report to the Fair Food Foundation. The detailed research questions were developed in conjunction with an Oakland, California-based NGO (PolicyLink) conducting parallel research in that city.

In order to gather local resident perspectives as well as those of professional leaders involved in food systems change, two types of qualitative data collections were used: focus groups and key-informant interviews. Two pilot focus groups offered an opportunity for the researcher to become oriented with focus group facilitation and a general conception of food system issues from a non-expert perspective. Formal data collections were begun with the "easier" cases; namely those with which the researcher was already acquainted or the parties already had relationships with the university, such that researcher skill could be developed.

An emergent design method was utilized. The research provided an opportunity for a scholarly engagement with issues of voice, empowerment, and the appropriate place for a researcher in activist projects. This made a flexible, emergent design important, where theory was built during and after the research process rather than before. The role of the researcher in this type of process is to maintain empathic neutrality, becoming immersed in the issues presented, attempting to understand each perspective while remaining open to new perspectives and being mindful about situation dynamics and the ever-changing construction of concepts (Patton 2002).

In-depth interviews

The in-depth, open-ended individual interview is designed as a guided conversation between two people for the purpose of qualitative data collection. Assuming that "the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton 2002, p. 341)," this method allowed exploration of professional orientations and individual subjectivity for this study. Interviews enabled the researcher

to gain insight into a variety of perspectives, motivations, and professional activities of leaders in Detroit's movement toward food system change.

In order for the interviews to produce detailed, organized, and clear information, preparation and skilled execution were required. Main questions, follow-up questions, and probes were prepared in advance of the interview, in order to elicit relevant narratives and explanations, and maintain continuous conversation flow (Rubin and Rubin 2005). This script was followed loosely as themes and issues emerge, for the researcher to steer the conversation reflexively and achieve balance between in depth elaboration, clarification, and breadth of topics.

For this research, subject orientation to food system issues varied widely such that the interviews necessitated reflexivity. The interview guide was designed to open with easy questions about the main activities and goals of the subject's organization, transitioning into questions about professional orientations and organizational missions as they relate to sustainability, economic vitality, and social equality. The bulk of the questioning was dedicated to feasible and appropriate strategies for creating a more socially equitable and sustainable food system, as well as the challenges and opportunities respective to community-based food systems. As the dynamics of this improvement work are embedded in political, economic, social, and technical context, the guide was designed to also probe for detail in these arenas. The interview instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher, with assistance from colleagues in a few instances. They took place primarily at the offices or workspaces of the interviewees,

with two conducted in coffee shops, and usually lasted between one and two hours. All interviews were audio-taped and subsequently transcribed.

Focus groups

Focus groups are discussions between 5-12 people that allow for open-ended, exploratory questioning around a particular subject or set of issues. This provides a variety of perspectives for the researcher to collect in one setting (Patton 2002). In addition, the presence of multiple voices allows for a multiplying effect, where subjects can react to one another's responses, providing opportunity for more concepts and explanations to arise than in a one-on-one interview. When a conversation is stimulated, perceptions, attitudes and in-depth narrative on the subject are brought out by the nature of open discussion (Knodel 1993). In addition, focus groups provide an alternative to the atmosphere of interrogation that might be experienced during the individual interview, and participants might be encouraged to visit sensitive topics if others in the group are doing so.

For these reasons, this method was determined most conducive for exploring and including the various perspectives and nuances surrounding resident attitudes and aspirations as they relate to the Detroit Food System. The initial protocol was designed to explore four main topics that comprise urban food systems improvement:

- Food experiences, activities, and needs
- Problems with the neighborhood food environment
- Motivations around sustainability and social equality
- Visions and desired strategies for the food system

The protocol was tested with two pilot focus groups conducted at a neighborhood center in Lansing, MI: one group of seniors and one group of young mothers. These sessions

allowed for both facilitation practice and informed development of questions for the interview instrument. Within the main topics, personal motivations around health, sustainability, and social equality were included in the protocol. This required a careful approach, as "why" questions can make focus group participants feel interrogated, responding with seemingly rational or politically correct responses instead of explaining their true personal motivations (Kruger 1994). For example, when asked directly about concepts of sustainability and social justice, little response was given, but when specific local scenarios embodying the concepts was used to begin discussion, participants had more to say about how these concepts motivate them, and a conversation was better supported. Thus, specific local examples of food deserts and food production scenarios were introduced by the moderator in order to evoke narratives connecting personal behavior to motivation and ideals.

The progression of questioning suggested in the focus group literature was followed, using opening, introductory, transition, key, and ending questions (Kruger 1994). The conversation began with *opening* questions about shopping habits and household food needs and desires, providing an entry point to ease into more abstract subjects of food quality, equity, sustainability, and community vitality with *introductory* and *transition* questions. The *key* questions asked participants to define the most important changes for the Detroit food system, allowing each participant to answer one at a time. The *ending* questions were about visions for the future and plausible strategies to get there. In each session, a summary was read back to participants so that they could confirm its accuracy and clear up any misconceptions on the part of the researcher. The complete questioning protocol can be found in Appendix B.

As focus group sessions were conducted, opportunities were provided for the researcher to become sensitized to Detroit's specific issues, and to become aware of what concepts were important, interesting, and worthwhile to participants and which were not. Thus, the protocol was an evolving work used reflexively depending on each group, with a protocol changing as the researcher's understanding of community dynamics developed. For example, in the second focus group held with East Side residents, racial tensions between neighborhood grocery store owners and customers emerged as a major theme. Thus, to understand whether this was a problem beyond the East Side of Detroit, probes about race and shopping were included in the protocol for the remainder of the sessions.

All focus groups were conducted by the researcher, with assistance from one colleague in most instances, and lasted an hour on average, with only one going longer than 90 minutes. The sessions took place in as culturally appropriate a community setting as possible, where participants were used to gathering, such as community centers or the high school library. All sessions were audio recorded, and in one instance, video-recorded. However, during one session, the recording device used ran out of batteries unbeknownst to the facilitator, cutting off the last 20 minutes or so of recorded conversation and necessitating reliance on facilitator notes. All focus groups were later transcribed.

Focus groups present data recording and transcribing challenges. In any group discussion setting it is difficult to keep everyone from talking at once, obscuring recordings and making transcription challenging. For this reason, there were a few "holes" in the data; however, many of these could be interpreted with facilitator notes.

Purposeful sampling and participants

The sampling for this research emphasized the use of information-rich cases versus general sampling, where participants were selected for traits instead of as statistical representation of the greater Detroit population. Such a strategy is known as critical case sampling, where cases are chosen based on relevance to the study topic, when a representative sample is not feasible (Patton 2002). The sampling in this study was both convenient and strategic, in that connections between the university and the community were used to locate participants. Stake-holders in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative as well as other known funding projects in the city were contacted about locating participants, and in this way snowball sampling was used. Within this available set, participants were selected based on particular characteristics and availability for interview. A web-based scan of community-based food system activity along with informal discussions with university contacts identified interview subjects and organizations to host focus groups, while providing insight into Detroit's issues and demographics. From the set of contacts provided, focus groups and interview participants were selected in order to provide maximum variety of perspectives allowable by the scope of the project. So while the sample did not achieve racial, geographic, class, or age representation of the Detroit population, we were able to talk with representatives from minority and low-resource groups, higher-resource activist groups, senior citizens, and teens.

For samples of this nature, break and control characteristics can be used to select a variety of cases relevant to the study topic while keeping a common thread of traits between groups so that some conclusions can be drawn about the entire study sample

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(Knodel 1993). The break characteristics were age, race/ethnicity, geographical location, and formal involvement in activist organizations. The intent in this sampling was for some of the groups to have an activist stance on food systems change, and others not. Two groups of participants in the most visible programs for urban agriculture and food system activism were chosen, as well as two groups of those who were not formally involved, as well as one group of students who had not chosen to participate but were exposed through classroom experiences. Different levels of engagement in alternative food practices, different levels of access to resources, and different socioeconomic status were selected to draw on a range of attitudes about changing the food system.

The control characteristic held in common across all of the focus groups was that all participants were residents of Detroit. It was assumed that any group of Detroit residents would be able to give feedback on the lack of full-service grocery stores and land vacancy since they are explicit concerns for most of the city's population. However, one obvious imbalance in the representation is the omission of the Latin American population in Southwest Detroit. While attempts were made to develop such a group, time constraints and inability to identify a local focus group convener made it impossible. This is significant because of the marked difference between greater Detroit and, according to participants, the thriving grocery retail environment of this primarily hispanic area.

For the interviews, participants were selected based on their place within the network of leaders and professionals working toward food systems change in Detroit. Again, an evenly representative sample was not achievable within the scope of this thesis, however, through an exhaustive scan of food systems improvement activities, participants

were selected and a variety of professional orientations were sought. A broad spectrum

was selected, but it was not representative of the entire span of food system sectors. For

example, the distribution and processing sectors were left out, because there were not any

known representatives actively trying to improve the food system in areas of

sustainability, social equity, or economic vitality within these sectors. The purpose of the

sampling strategy was to capture voices of both the leaders of the movement for creating

a more sustainable, socially equitable, and economically viable food system, as well as

those of the greater public. The list of participating individual and group characteristics

can be seen below in *table 1*.

Table 1: Sample Information

Focus Groups (n=80)
Pilot 1, Lansing: Seniors, mixed race
Pilot 2, Lansing: Young Mothers, mixed race
Detroit, various neighborhoods: Urban Gardeners and activists, mixed race
East Side Detroit: Seniors, mostly African American
Ferndale/Detroit: Urban gardeners and activists, African American
Osborn/Detroit: Hmong –American community members
Detroit, various neighborhoods: urban High School agricultural program participants
Interviews (n=15)
Food Bank Director
Food Bank Director
Emergency food provision representative
MSU extension representative
Urban production program representative
Urban production organization representative
Urban production and food security activist
Farmers market representative
Retailer's association representative
Planning professional
Urban public health researchers
Detroit Public Schools representative
High school agriculture program representative
Economic Development professional
Economic Development professional

Informed Consent Process

The project was approved through the University Committee on Research Involving

Human Subjects at Michigan State (UCRIHS). This involved two distinct stages: Phase I,

where Focus group and interview participants were over the age of 18 (IRB #X08-460),

and Phase II, where one set of focus group participants were under age 18 and required

parental and subject consent (IRB#X08-484).

All participants received a consent form including contact information of both the research and the MSU Internal Review Board to which they could direct any further questions or concerns. All three consent forms used can be found in Appendix C.

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

As discussed earlier, qualitative research can produce a complex and holistic picture of social or individual processes, attitudes, knowledge, and behavior, where a phenomenon is greater than the sum of its parts (Patton 2002). This is achieved through abstracting a cohesive thematic framework from voluminous and detailed textual data, and composing an abbreviated summary of the most important motifs and how they relate to one another. For this study, the number and variety of participating subjects made determining which themes should be highlighted and which voices should be heard a complex process, where evolution of purpose took place through using the research questions, results, and theoretical frameworks as a guideline for organizing and articulating conclusions. A systematic summarization procedure helped to organize patterns across participants and research questions so that the strength of themes was clear.

Content Analysis

In addition to audio-recording and transcribing each data collection into text, field notes were recorded and case-summary forms were created by the researcher within 1-2 days in order to organize subjects and main themes, as well as new questions and general considerations for research design that were introduced.

For this research, creating an organizational framework began with an open coding process: transcripts were reviewed and a list of all themes and topics raised by subjects compiled. The codes were applied to pieces of relevant data using ATLAS TI qualitative analysis software. Categories for organization were based on perspectives of subjects. In addition, axial coding was used to arrange codes by corresponding research question. However, during the focus groups and interviews, themes were not always raised in an organized manner; hence multiple coding styles were required to organize data. For this study, thematic codes were developed from both the inductive open coding process and the researcher's conceptual framework and purpose. All codes were defined and organized by research question in a coding guide (see Appendix D).

A concept map was then developed as a hierarchical and heuristic device; linking the pre and post analysis theoretical frameworks. This served as a mid-analysis deductive scheme, where the themes raised by subjects were organized within my classifications, or hypothesis, of how concepts relate. This device visually presented a holistic view of the codes for this researcher as theoretical deduction was underway.

In order to check reliability, a colleague coded the transcript of one interview using the coding scheme. Differences in use of the codes, their definitions, and boundaries were discussed. A few weeks later, the process was repeated with the transcript of a focus group, and the match between codes was 80%, enough to legitimize the coding scheme. In addition, I reviewed each coded transcript at two different points in time to check the original coding and ensure it aligned with the emerging conceptual framework.

To make use of codes and organize data around themes, compilations of data were created for each research question, using the computer analysis software to recall all data

for all corresponding codes. These compilations were then summarized and organized using case displays (Miles and Huberman 1994). A display was created for each research question, with summarized responses listed by corresponding code for each data collection. This was done separately for focus groups and interviews, since coding schemes were overlapping but not identical for the two data collection types. This process was also useful for eliminating superfluous codes. Its primary utility was in viewing patterns across the data so that the most important and recurrent themes could be highlighted in the description and explanation of data. An example of one case display for the focus group respondents is shown in Appendix E.

The final stage of analysis involved moving from describing to explaining, or moving through "a series of analysis episodes that condense more and more data into a more and more coherent understanding of what, how, and why (Miles and Huberman, p 91, 1994)." This involved explaining the information in the displays, highlighting the dominant themes, and illustrating the way they were connected. In explaining these major themes, we sought to delineate which were clear, which were strongly supported, and which were merely suggestive patterns. The volume of data necessitated a determination of the strongest ideas across all perspectives. These themes were listed and ranked for the focus groups and the interviews, and a summary was created. A third heuristic device was created at this point, in order to show the final explanatory framework (included in the findings section). Deductive theoretical propositions were then made around how sustainability, social equity, and economic viability are socially constructed and worked toward within this segment of the population in Detroit.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION I

The findings of this study are presented and discussed in two chapters, in order to explore the data's implications for two distinct research questions. The first purpose of this study was exploring the question, "what are problems experienced and strategies being used to improve the food system in Detroit?" In the following section, the experiences, activities, and desired strategies for Detroit food system improvement are presented based on the major topical areas introduced by participants. Framing and meaning-making will be addressed in the second results section.

FINDINGS

Within this section, responses from both interview and focus group participants are used to illustrate structural food system issues in Detroit. While citizen perspectives solicited in focus groups were most useful in raising issues from the consumer perspective, some of these participants were also engaged in activist and leadership roles around nutrition education, public policy, and urban production activities. For this reason, results from both citizens and leaders are presented together for each research question.

The first group of questions was used in focus groups to explore the dimensions of purchasing, preparing, and eating food. This allowed for discussion about the state of retail, desires for improvement, and whether there is demand for healthy or sustainably produced food.

<u>What are major factors in eating/shopping habits of residents? Are options satisfactory?</u>
<u>What is considered quality food?</u>

Food consumption and preparation

Within the focus groups, eating was discussed as a political, social and cultural activity.

Groups more active in community-based food projects were interested in more alternative

cuisines, specialty diets, and high quality food. Cooking and eating traditions and habits

are embedded within family conditions, and often centered around special occasions such

as Sunday dinners or holidays and social and church life. Cooking, eating, and shopping

are also seen by some as part of entertainment and social life.

> ...I'd say when I'm visiting my mother we probably spend about seventy percent
> of the time in the kitchen cooking together, like that's what we do. We hang out
> and we cook together. My mother pulls out recipes, she's like, "What should we
> make?" And, you know, we go to the store together, go to the farmers market
> together and get stuff. And the first question in my family when you sit down to
> dinner is to ask what do you want for the next meal? "So, what do you want for
> breakfast tomorrow?" [Laughter] So whatever happens food is such an important
> aspect of what my family's about, you know, and we do, we eat foods that - all
> my family's from Arkansas - and we do eat foods that probably traditionally are
> not great for you but, you know, all things in moderation. You know, you don't
> have fried chicken, gravy and mustard greens and black eyed peas every day, you
> know? My mom makes it once a year and it tastes that much more important
> when you have it once a year and it's like you're not this, not just sharing a meal,
> you're sharing your history, so in that regard.

The seniors group discussed traditional American and some specifically southern foods,

with a big preference for meat as the main course. However, health concerns appear to

take precedence over food traditions and acquired tastes.

For Hmong-American participants, the biggest concern around food was a clash

with the American food culture they had experienced. This was most evident in

differences both between conventional production practices and what is seen as an

unhealthy retail environment in the Osborn neighborhood. The youth group stressed the importance of both easy to prepare foods for daily consumption as well as traditional southern fare such as turkey and dressing that is more intensive to prepare.

Preparing (and in some cases preserving) quality food was a priority for most groups, except for some seniors who, living alone, did find it useful to do so. It is evident that cooking is embedded in family situations, special occasions, and social and church life. Traditional recipes are very important for family and cultural identity, but are used in moderation or modified due to health concerns. Youth participants showed a mixture of cooking knowledge and motivation. Some felt it was not feasible to expand their knowledge beyond from-the-box cooking, whereas others took pride in the extent of their cooking skills, learned in a family setting, often by necessity:

> I was like, forced to learn how to cook. Because, my daddy, he's been gone- he would call me in there, like, 'watch me do this,' and I'd have to watch em, and help him, so at the end of the day when he wasn't there, I could cook that for myself. And I knew what to do, because, he was cookin in front of me. And I had to watch because they don't buy a whole lotta out-the-box and out-the-can stuff, they buy like regular stuff, we gotta cut it up, cook it, do this, do that. So, I learned how to cook when I was like 13, that's when he really started getting on my cause I just knew how to cook eggs and grilled cheese. That was it. And, he thought then, I'm old enough to be cookin for myself. So I learned how to cook."

> I love to cook. I've been cookin since I was 12. I know how to cook, like mostly everything. And, I grew up cookin, and I always had my grandma, and I learned from my mom when I stayed with my mom, but I'm 20 years old and I have my own household, and I have 2 kids, I have a family. So I said I want to be a mother one day, I want to be a wife one day, so I started takin notes on these things. And now, my turkey be good, my dressin' be good, cause I learned. I just know.

However, there was concern over a cultural loss of cooking skills, as well as preferences for packaged, processed foods. In educational experiences, participants noted fear of fresh or home-prepared foods. One focus group member reported:

> ...one day I decided to make fresh salsa and I also bought the salsa in the bottle, in the jar, and the kids were like "something is wrong with your salsa!" You know... the jar, I mean, that's what they were accustomed to, and they really didn't want to eat my salsa 'cause it was fresh.

Grocery Retail

Most participants felt it was important to set aside time to obtain quality food, but desired greater ease in doing so. For residents of all status it is felt the food environment in the city is inequitable. Shoppers with limited transportation discussed lower-quality stores, and many seniors spend much time making travel arrangements to obtain quality foods. One participant discussed a time-consuming strategy involving multiple locations:

> I don't drive so like when I do go out to Kroger's or Natural Food Patch or some place like that I'm taking the bus and those places are cheaper than University Foods which is close to me but then there's the tradeoff between like slightly higher prices at University for a twenty minute walk versus cheaper food at Natural Food Patch or Kroger's for, you know, a half hour, forty-five minute bus trip, so it's also a trade off in terms of transportation and it's a tradeoff, like what can I afford this week, what do I really have time for?

Some residents felt that Detroit does offer retail with quality food, though it may take time and money to hunt them down, citing "a few shining stars" whose ownership is responsive to the customer base. The more activist groups wrestled between two major priorities: going the distance for organic/specialty foods and fresh, quality, in-season produce; and supporting local merchants. Many shoppers like to support gardeners in the community through shopping at Eastern Market, and hold the social experience of

shopping and relationships with growers and vendors as an important priority. Desire for close, convenient, one-stop shopping with high variety and quality does not mesh with values for supporting local, small and locally owned stores. Especially for seniors, services along with various physical and social features of a store made a big difference, such as carryout people, baggers, service doors, and perceived safety.

Access

Access to a healthy diet was a unanimous concern for participants. When asked "What is the biggest problem with the Detroit food system?" all interview participants but one replied, "access." Poor quality retail was commonly raised as a concern in the focus groups. Participants cited low quality inventory tied to poor quality presentation, a lack of professionalism and general lack of trust. Poor experiences discussed included moldy purchases and high-prices. Complaints about price gouging, gimmicks and trickery were common, including trying to pass off spoiled meat and hiding defective product under nicer product, lack of cleanliness, presence of cockroaches, and foul odors. For most focus group participants, this lack of access to quality food was situated within racial tensions between retail owners and neighborhood residents. In many African American neighborhoods, stores are owned by Chaldean (or Iraqi American) men who are assumed to live outside the city. One participant stated:

> They use the black people. And they definitely use the ones that have the Bridge Card.... because of all the black people in the neighborhood and there's no place else for us to go but Parkway, because you need food. But you need it, but you don't need what Parkway is putting out. They're cheating you. They're - you not getting the best, and you still gotta watch about the hamburger. You still get ground round and you wind up with that skillet full of grease from the hamburger.

Respect was also seen as an important factor for most respondents. A resident spoke about suburban stores in contrast to neighborhood Chaldean-owned stores:

> The last time I was out there, which was about three days ago, a gentleman came over and said, "How are you doing sir?" Where am I at? Is this the Hilton? "Here's our sales paper" - you know? My son-in-law and I... we were looking at the steaks and actually the butcher came out and said, "May I help you?" you're not going to find that in a neighborhood. They act like they're too busy to push a button... It's the overall attitude of the neighborhood stores, that really and truly makes it bad.

One elderly focus group participant added, "They don't respect African Americans and they don't respect women either."

Racial conflict is also apparent between Hmong residents and African American store owners. Members of the Hmong-American community in Osborn felt that Hmong residents make up a bottom tier of a social urban hierarchy, lacking both culturally-appropriate services and respect from the greater black community. They suggested that they are too much a minority to create significant demand for the improvement upon the inventory of liquor-sales based stores dominating their food environment. This problem is exacerbated by a continued exodus of the population:

> Well the thing is, you know, they used to have a lot of Hmong stores in Detroit here, but as the Hmong people get a little bit more in middle class, a lot of them moved to the white neighborhood and the stores moved to the white neighborhood too. So it's like, you know, so it's kind of like, you know, the people that are stuck that don't have money to move with the generation, is the first generation.

Inner city exodus has resulted in a sparse infrastructure for meeting human needs, making transportation issues more of a problem:

> So, you know, you would have to put that, even if you put that store smack dab in the middle of the neighborhood, some of the residents would have to walk half an hour to get to that store, you know, because there's such large tracks of empty

land, so that store would have to be, well, you know, it would have to have a certain amount of people; it also would have to sell cheap enough stuff...

The limited grocery options for those without transportation are seen as an injustice. Each group mentioned transportation as a concern for either themselves or others in the city. One elder member of the Hmong-American community group stated, "It's a problem. He said it might take an afternoon to get to the store and back." The lack of access to healthy foods also raises concern over exposure and knowledge about foods:

> Every year we get new kids in that have a bunch of questions to ask and one of the questions is where does your food come from, and I always have some of the kids say the gas stations.

> You can't get no produce. And the children, it's just, they don't even know what produce is. I was picking a pea pod this morning and none of the children knew what a pea pod was. Never heard of it.

Summary

Eating and cooking were embedded in family and social conditions, however, the two activist groups more involved in urban agriculture and the high school students were more concerned about fixing unhealthy food culture, and barriers to a healthy diet. Quality of food is related to production practices, freshness, and preparation. There is common concern about pesticides and other chemicals, especially in meat production. While not everyone experienced barriers to healthy food directly, most were concerned about conditions and distribution of grocery retail within the city. Racial barriers were also a concern for all participants except for the student group. Table 2 summarizes themes that emerged in each of the categories of eating/cooking, food quality, and shopping.

Table 2: Focus group themes

	Eating and cooking	Food quality	Shopping
Emergent focus group themes by category: food environment & eating practices			
Seniors	Family, Health concerns	Freshness, production practices, no organic	Racial tension, lack of respect, poor quality, transportation
Urban gardeners/activists	Social- new traditions, health	production practices, yes organic	Racial tension, lack of respect, poor quality
Urban gardeners/activists	social- new traditions, health	production practices, yes organic	Racial tension, poor quality and selection
Hmong-American residents	cultural traditions	production practices, no organic	Racial tension, poor quality, transportation
HS students	social and family traditions, health	mixed on organic	poor quality and selection

<u>What are the current strategies and areas of need and opportunities for improvement?</u>

Food production

Several of the focus group participants were engaged in gardening activities: some were part of grassroots organizations, others did it on their own, and the youth were involved as a part of a high school curriculum. Several interviewees and focus group participants commented on the recent boom in self-provisioning through gardening throughout the city. One practitioner commented that her program was experiencing unprecedented growth:

> I think we hit some sort of tipping point, and I don't know, I don't really know how to predict when that big curve will end, and get back to normal...But it's totally word of mouth, it is not "I heard it on WWJ," and, you know, it's some really, really, very cool community-based organizations who have unbelievable potential to grow the movement and be around for a really long time."

In addition, participants in the high school agribusiness course learned skills in harvesting, marketing, selling, and accounting through selling at Eastern Market, and said that they felt prepared to use those skills. A few had applied to culinary and agricultural programs, and expressed a desire to garden or farm on their own after graduation.

For some focus group participants, gardening activity was connected to fostering a new food culture that encourages healthy eating. Others discussed their exposure to new food cultures, spices, seasonings, and recipes. It was evident that gardening activities increase consumption of fresh produce.

> I definitely cook more; also in the summer, like when I eat stuff out of my own garden or out of neighborhood, our community gardens, I definitely cook more during those times when we're getting, you know, pulling stuff out of the garden.

Other participants linked gardening activities to household-economic needs:

> I have a family with six kids and a limited income and there's no way I can afford Whole Food stores, you know, I couldn't feed my family on that so I go to Aldi and I try to have as big a garden as I can every year and I freeze a lot of my own stuff, which I organically grow. So I feed my family from pretty much the beginning of June to the end of September, I can feed them out of my own garden. And then in the winter, we have maybe two or three meals a week out of the freezer, but for the rest of them it's cheap and it's clean and, you know, they only have one brand, you can scootch through there in fifteen minutes.

One of the organizers interviewed agreed that their programs were instrumental in exposing participants to new tastes:

> We have this great program that welcomes people that are coming from any point of view or any skill level, and helps them grow to where they want to be...And over time, it doesn't happen overnight, but over time they're growing the forty-one fruits and vegetables that we offer in the program as a resource, you know, like maybe one year they'll try kale, and the next year they'll try arugula, and the next year they'll try Jerusalem artichokes, it's like a progression...

Better access to gardening resources was desired by some of the groups not already involved in these organizations, and some were aware of all activities and resources available. There was also some confusion around availability of vacant land in the city.

> 1: I know in my neighborhood we made the discovery a couple years ago, every lot, with the exception of maybe two, belonged to somebody. The city still sends people out to cut. They still cut the lots, they still take care of 'em, but these lots belong to people. And you certainly can't just farm on 'em, you know, you can't grow a garden on 'em. And -

> 2: You can grow a garden on it. If that lot is next to you and they don't cut it, they don't do anything to it, you start having it cut because I'm a witness, I've got a garden on a lot. And a beautiful garden, about nineteen rows. I got a field. I keep the whole thing growing. And I raise my garden.

The Hmong-American group was especially concerned about land and resources, as food production is an important part of their lives. The elders of the Hmong community were particularly interested in assistance with starting food businesses and entrance into markets, along with plowing assistance.

Some of the groups raised issues around the effectiveness and extent of existing garden resource services provided through non-profits, as well as the intent and racial and cultural inclusiveness of these programs. There was a desire to see programs like the now- defunct governmentally administered "Farm-a-Lot" program return.

...There should be an agency that would actually come out there and turn that soil over or would be willing to actually help you with it. You know, you have so many different agencies... but you never hear them talk about actually doing anything.

The economic condition of the city is seen to drive a general sense of strife in the city, seen to create and low morale for residents and to complicate solutions. In the Hmong community, racial tensions stand in the way of the practice of self-provisioning through community gardening:

In the black community people will climb your fence, they will come into your garden and maybe sometimes steal your food or, you know. Because, everybody's having a hard time in this community, it's not just us; the black community's having a hard time working and a hard time - everybody's trying to find food and everybody's trying to survive, you know? And you know, it's hard to survive, living in the ghetto here. So basically, you know, we're trying - everybody's trying to move up and over to the next level to the suburbs. So that's basically what we're trying to explain to you.

A member of the youth group also raised concern about boundaries and harvesting from shared neighborhood space:

I used to think about [gardening] around the vacant lots and stuff like that, but I be seein some farms that people just be pickin. Like my boyfriend's grandma, she just goin to peoples gardens and stuff and just pickin corn and stuff... and just crazy stuff. Take tomatoes out and put em in her dress..."

Other barriers to self-provisioning through urban production were general concerns about neighborhood safety, and whether soil and air quality might affect urban production. Some participants indicated that there may be a cultural heritage of gardening in Detroit. It is believed that older generations carry knowledge from southern agricultural family histories, and there are also those who participated in Detroit's "Victory Garden" days.

Along with those whose purpose is to provide gardening resources, many organizations such as food banks and economic development agencies have moved into supporting roles for both urban production and retail improvement. One group sees the provision and coordination of resources for urban gardeners as a vehicle for community development:

> I think also that for residents currently living in the city, to participate in gardens with their neighborhoods is also, I think it improves the quality of life for those citizens already living in the city 'cause there's a platform for their community involvement and in terms of if other issues come around that come out of knowing your neighbor and the safety in your neighborhood, and there's these social networks that are especially important I think in neighborhoods like ours in Detroit, I think that in terms of people already living here it has that kind of, more resounding qualities, are a lot of what's important."

Several interviewees spoke to the effectiveness of the strategies being used.

> There are organizations in Detroit- I mean, several of them have really raised their capacity to do this work. I think there are some good things going on right now. You know, organizing neighborhoods around urban agriculture, increasing the capacity of households and neighborhood groups I think is a very good strategy

The director of one program chalks their success up to the fact that people are motivated by the idea of growing their own food, and that networks of trust between neighbors and friends are based on word of mouth promotion, allowing for sustainable growth and program strength.

The political environment for policy change is a challenge seen by many in the area of urban agriculture. However, it is noted that political knowledge, awareness, and participation in Detroit is strong, and it is beginning to reach leadership:

> I think some of that is being done, through the local urban agriculture movement- we're pressing the issue, we're putting the issue on the table. It's like last night

we had a session here with one of the council people. And I was pleasantly surprised to hear him mentioning food security. So it's now in the consciousness of some of the leadership. So the ball is beginning to roll. But it's as a result of our group, and other groups, and the Detroit Agriculture Network doing the work that they do, and bringing this to them, and showing that this is a possibility. Because if you don't know it exists, it's not even in your thinking.

Nutrition Education

Several focus group participants as well as interviewees were engaged in educational

efforts. Many spoke to the success of hands-on approaches:

> … before I do the cooking demonstrations, I do a survey to find out how many of them eat vegetables and fruit, and where it comes from. … So by the end of the cooking demonstration, they enjoy that vegetable. Their parents are there- some of the parents are there, and they're like, "I can't believe my child just ate that." Because they never prepared it for them, because that child said, "I don't like it." But if you get that child to eat at cooking demonstrations, because the more of the senses you use, the more they'll like it. If they get the hands on experience with planting the seeds, watching it grow, 90% of the time, they will eat it, regardless of what it is.

Leading by example is seen as an important route through which cultural trends and

norms are passed. It is seen that youth are important, receptive targets for education. One

participant discussed her experiences, stating, "My kids, we planted some seeds at the

beginning of spring, they say, 'Where's my tomato plant at?' They take ownership, of

what is theirs."

It is also believed that for educational efforts, it is important to give subjects

ownership and leadership to keep them engaged. Even the "toughest" kids can be targeted

this way.

> So we established a leadership thing at the same time. It's not just about food... So that they can be prideful. I don't want to overemphasize the pride thing, but it's that kind of thing that makes a difference, and, then establishing the foods they

eat, and how it effects their lives, and for them to become a better person. With a voice.

Production as an educational tool

One interviewee discussed the benefits of using food production as a teaching tool for reaching children of all levels, stating, "And a lot of kids that I can't reach, bookwise, boy do they shine outside."

In addition, female students who have been underprivileged are seen to gain empowering experiences through feats such as beekeeping and heavy equipment use, learning through engaging with the physical world:

> There's another issue that farming is a good lesson for. In agriculture, you can do everything right. You can plow your soil, you can plant your seeds, you can weed and water, everything, and then a hailstorm can come and wipe it out. And so, you don't blame the victim. You pick up, you try again, you get help from other people. And so it's a really good lesson for our students because, ya know, everybody looks at them like they're failures ...but a lot of this stuff is out of their control...And so...this is really good to teach kids, to say, ya know, if you fail, don't get down on yourself- stuff happens, don't worry about it. It wasn't necessarily your fault. Or if it was, can you change it the next time? If you're planting your corn too early and it frosted, well, next time learn, and fix that. And that's what farmers do, they learn and communicate, and they do research and science in an indirect way.

In their focus group, youth participating in this program were thankful for lessons learned about responsibility and self-improvement through caring for the animals and producing food. One student spoke about work and self-reliance:

> I'm not like- I ain't got time for that, or I'm too cute, my hands too perfect- I'm not like that- I'm down with whatever to get my grade. And that's gonna teach me a lot outta life, not to be so needy, and you know what I mean, it don't hurt to get your hands dirty.

The students in this program contended that the program requires patience, and dedication to the animals and plants in their care, stating that " we have way more responsibility..." And, "Yeah, it teaches you a lot of responsibility, because we gotta be out here every day."

Participants also acknowledged exposure to new vegetables: "I [knew], uh, mustards, collards. But curly kale, dinosaur kale, it was like 'what?'"

Improving Retail

There was substantial discussion over neighborhood retail inventory and creating demand for healthy food. By some, the issue of demand or supply was simply seen as a communication problem, where the perception of demand by business owners is not in line with reality. According to one focus group participant:

> I think they'd be able to survive, and they'd flourish and especially since there's so much excess capacity, you know, excess demand for that kind of thing in our local neighborhoods, I think the question is that the, is local residence showing demand, demanding it from those local stores and local stores being educated about how to provide those types of foods in real life and realizing there's all this excess demand...

However, economic development practitioners working with retailers maintain that they struggle to find profitability in supplying a high variety of fresh foods. There are challenges to retail ownership such as crime, low population density, and low levels of financial support for independent retailers. One economic development professional interviewed felt that certain things must be addressed with existing retailers before improvements can be made:

> So if the retail piece can work from like a business perspective like they make payroll and they can pay their taxes and they employ people and it is a nice experience like if the store is clean, well kept, and attractive, they have the

shopping carts, and it is a nice parking lot, all that kind of stuff, then I think that you can figure out how to improve the selection in the store. You can figure out how to get more locally grown stuff in there...

Another interviewee discussed the experience of assisting store owners with improving

inventory:

> Blueberries are probably the healthiest thing for you heart-wise, so we have to sample to them, they were so reluctant and resistant to get it because they thought they were going to have to throw it all away because no one was going to buy it. But we said, 'its an educational process, and what we are trying to do is introduce the consumer to this product and show them a good way to eat it, with like yogurt or a smoothie or something like that.' When you tell the retailer this, he was interested in trying it. But there was no way he was going to put it in his store if it wasn't going to move off the shelves. Introducing the grocer to try new stuff and getting the consumer to try the stuff when the grocer puts it out for them, awareness and education on both ends, from the grocer's standpoint and the consumer's standpoint.

According to this perspective, to improve store inventory, there also needs to be more

communication between the supplier, distributor, and retailer.

> And there is a lot of valuable information that the distributors and wholesalers can provide the retailers and we are constantly bugging the wholesalers and distributors to provide that information to the retailer...

In addition, retailers need information about the assistance for things like facade

improvements and tax benefits that are available. Financing is a challenge. Two

interviewees commented on this:

> Financial assistance, that' s what they need. They are calling me all the time for opportunities. Communication, people don't know about things that are available.... More than a few, quite a bit of people that have said that the financing is a major issue in getting a new business started there. It is really difficult for the African American retailer.

> Nobody focuses on helping grocery stores improve and expand and try to finance an expansion is like a pain because these guys are at one percent margins. They

are mostly family owned businesses, the ones in the city. It is hard to get conventional bank financing without putting up a lot of your own personal collateral, particularly if you don't own your building. If you don't own your building you have nothing because your inventory is worthless for the most part, something with your equipment it is depreciating all the time. If you don't own the actual real estate then you don't have any collateral...

Despite these difficulties, there were some good examples of successful grocery retail operations in the city.

the Market Creek Plaza... they had funding from a family foundation that really jump-started that effort. And a grocery store alone couldn't have done that without that kind of support, that really enabled the community then to mobilize, and they really pushed issues around jobs and economic development...They've done a whole physical development around the store, so there's you know, shops that sell locally made arts and crafts, and cultural music and dance- so it's really become a community gathering place. And in conversations we've had with folks, there's a lot of resonance with that.

In addition, some of the existing stores are seen to be responding to community complaints:

But some of the stores are really doing some innovative things. I think some of the managers at some of the local stores are working very hard to provide jobs for local youth, and to really work on community relations. So I think there are some models for how that could get developed. And extended.

In particular, in Mexicantown in South West Detroit, grocery retail is doing well. Many stores are making improvements, responding to "friendly competition," and many residents from other neighborhoods do their shopping there. One economic development practitioner explained the experience of the Mexicantown grocery owner as different than in the rest of the city:

It's more culturally relevant. I mean, look at Mexico. There are street vendors everywhere. So it is cultural, I think. Some of them come with cash, and they

immigrate for the opportunity. But others of them, I think pool their resources. The other thing is that, I think, since the community is contained, they know that they've got a customer base. And so it's a lot easier to attract your market, because your market doesn't leave.

While promoting local entrepreneurship development is a strategy promoted by many community members, one economic development practitioner suggested that providing training for new grocery entrepreneurs may be more complicated than many advocates realize:

> When we talk to grocers about it they are like that is great but that is going to take years. It is not like we can train them for six months and they are going to be ready to go. If they have never worked in a grocery store you can expect this is going to be a three or four year process and then you have to make sure that they have enough money, capital, to get the store going.

She added that:

> "80% of jobs in America are grown from existing companies. And it is kind of the same theory with the retail piece. If we can try to lift up the grocers who really want to make a difference and have been struggling to figure out how to provide a better selection or whatever, we are going to get, it is a lot less effort and a bigger bang for your buck than all the time attracting something new. But at the same time there is room for new as well. And we can help create a competitive environment that will force others to recognize that they need to make improvements.

Summary

The current strategies of citizens, activists, and professionals as well as the challenges and opportunities they face in building a community based food system for Detroit varied widely. The two focus groups that were organized around urban agriculture activity were more focused on changing what they believed to be an unhealthy and unfair food culture and system infrastructure. Other groups were unsure about the accessibility of land and resources urban production, and were more focused on inequalities both experienced

directly and by others. Racial conflict was acknowledged by each of the groups except

for the high school students, and was most pronounced in regard to Chaldean

neighborhood store owners. Educational efforts by focus group participants were focused

on hands-on activities instilling leadership, responsibility, and self-respect. The youth

engaged in these activities felt that they were effective in these areas as well as in

exposing them to a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. Table 3 organizes the current

strategies, and perceived needs & opportunities of focus group respondents by category.

Table 3: Focus group themes

Emergent focus group themes by category: engagement in food system initiatives			
	Production	Education	Retail Improvement
Seniors	engaged; need more resources, land access; security	-	Consumer/store dialogue
Urban gardeners	engaged; policy support	cooking and production	improve existing
Urban gardeners	engaged; land, capital access	cooking and production	access to capital
Hmong-American residents	engaged; need more resources, safety & security	-	-
HS students	engaged; within and outside of school; security	agribusiness training; Need more on cooking skills, production for youth	-

Professional perspectives most explicitly relevant to the areas of production, education, and retail improvement were from representatives of urban production, economic development, retailing, and educational organizations. All participants recognized that the diet-related health disparities and the retail infrastructure were problematic. As far as production, leaders saw the benefits as many and were engaged in providing opportunities and support. Views on education varied, but all agreed that in order to improve access to a healthy diet, demand should be increased by educating consumers. While some leaders and citizens emphasized the poor state of retail, the economic development practitioners and retailing representatives discussed the challenges retailers face. Table 4 summarizes the current strategies, and needs/opportunities as perceived by interview respondents.

Table 4: Interview themes

	Production	Education	Retail Improvement
Urban production	neighborhood based organizing, resources	Nutrition ed. through exposure	-
Economic development	supportive	-	need resources
Retailers association	Promotes Michigan grown products	necessary to increase demand for healthy food	need resources, communication, eduction
Farmers market	provides resources for growers	future hub for educational activities, demos	provides alternative
Educator	educational tool	experiential, self-esteem	-

Emergent interview themes by category: engagement in food system initiatives

What are major factors for leaders of food system change?

Financial Resources

It was a shared goal for almost all of the interviewees as well as focus group participants to strengthen the economy through re-localization of the food system. One theme was that resources should be allocated to support community-based ventures.

> And what really came through clearly in our stuff, was that we need to strengthen this in a way that provides economic opportunities for people who live in Detroit as well as access to food. And there were a lot of great ideas about ways to do that. Including working with urban gardeners, the urban agriculture initiatives, trying to find outlets for their food and produce within local corner stores, or other markets in the city. There's a lot of enthusiasm for that.

Access to capital was seen as important for all types of agri-food entrepreneurs. One

interviewee involved in providing resources for growers and processors suggested a

move away from grant funding and toward lending:

> Whether it's for a number of schemes from microloans to, you know, zero interest loans to smaller grants. I guess I would argue for the more sustainability of the system that we wean ourselves away from pure grants and probably think more in terms of zero interest loans... That has the potential to self-fund itself.

In addition, several interviewees cited a need for financing that is more flexible to

support beginning grocery retailers:

> So, we have a couple of African American retailers who have had difficulty making the transition. One guy opened up a store, well he has four walls sitting there and no inventory, and a big loan's coming due, and he doesn't have money to get the inventory in to get the people in to keep it moving. We had another retailer who just put in, say, one months worth of inventory and- he was hoping that when that sold he could purchase the next. You can't do that at a store. That stuff has to keep circulating, so you can't wait until the food is gone to order the next. So, that is a financial issue. I think banks should be sensitive to that kind of stuff, like provide low cost financing, don't have a balloon payment so close, these kind of things so these retailers can be successful in the businesses.

Aside from supporting grocery retailers, land use was also discussed as an area needing

attention. A farmers market director interviewed spoke in terms of working through

housing development in order to incentivize and promote urban agriculture:

> I think looking at subdivision review practices and the award of affordable housing finance tools to see if there's ways to instigate more urban agriculture through, again, we're providing tax credits and grants to people that in turn are going to use them to build affordable housing. Why not, in the award of those grants, tie it to true affordability which includes lowering people's cost of food. So, you know, changing some of the rules and regulations of various incentive programs that already exist to add urban gardening as not only an allowable use but a use that actually is encouraged. Most of these major grant programs have

point systems that give you points for meeting need standard, it gives you points for providing handicapped...perhaps a computer room or fitness room - well, why not the same sort of approach to a community garden?

There is also need within the non-profit sector for financial resources. One urban agriculture practitioner described the difficulty of meeting a surge in community interest with resources, seeing a challenge in allowing for slow, sustainable growth in the program:

> We really - we don't follow the funds, and in fact we work to be as productive as possible with as little as possible, and I think in that regard, that will ensure that we're around for a really long time because we don't, you know, we might hurt a little bit if I don't get any more than three thousand dollars that I have in the bank to, you know, get through the rest of the year, but we won't stop.

She added that for capacity building, "I think non-cash support is very important on the onset. And once people develop the capacity and the wherewithal and the direction, then cash support is necessary." Several other interviewees agreed that new efforts should be substantive and community-based, rather than fast and well-funded, suggesting that success in connecting urban production and entrepreneurship in low-resource communities takes time and patience to develop relationships and capacity.

Outside funding

A common theme for interviewees was the effect of outside funding on initiatives in Detroit. Two of the community-based organization leaders mentioned concerns about outside funding.

> ... I've seen money be a very positive thing and a very negative thing at times...what I have seen is people abandoning that, you know, legacy of self-sufficiency and kind of following the money into some of the craziest notions and ideas that you have ever heard of, that are not based in reality, have no sense of

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timing and planning, that completely disregard capacity and sustainability, and the more and more resources available... there's very few funders who really kind of have their finger on the pulse of something and can really understand when resources are needed and when - I think resources should be earned. If I want to ask for this, I should be wrung through the wringer, you know, I should say - someone should ask me, you know, 'What's your previous capacity? How are you gonna get from your previous capacity to your new capacity, you know, what's your growth plan? I want to see all your gardens, I want to see your records, you know?' It should be a partnership, that kind of rigorous relationship ...

Others were concerned that outside funding can lead to top-down projects or top-heavy processes that do not include community voice and don't create lasting change. This was especially a concern for a leader concerned with racial empowerment.

Many of us have had experience with grants, and grants can undermine the initiative within a group. So we're very concerned about having a group that is self-determined, and is not grant-dependent... we have this real strong sentiment in our group towards, we have to do things ourselves, ya know, stand on our own two feet, and that's part of what we do. Now if we can supplement that with grants, that's fine. Uh, but we're very concerned about independence, about making decisions on our own, and not being manipulated by anybody.

The leader of an organization that is involved in funding also spoke to the effect of funder co-optation:

Well, I think there's a tendency to over-plan stuff, and I think that you have to be careful that grassroots stuff doesn't get co-opted by the agencies that want to fund them. And I think, that includes us- you know, we co-opt and change stuff just by the nature of our funding, and you know, I try to be very careful and sensitive to that and not stifle innovation, but it's hard. Because you've got funders, you've gotta do reports, and da da da. And so, I'm really trying to look at other ways to be creative and look at innovation without stifling it.

The leader of the group concerned with racial empowerment was also concerned about outside funders or funded initiatives engaging with African American community members for the purpose of tokenism, in order to validate their work.

There's an effort that in the publicity materials, they make sure to have black people, black faces are prominent, what have you. So it creates the impression that it's a much more, uh, diverse group than it really is... I don't think the intent is negative, I think it's just the way the system is structured, white people as a whole have more resources than black people as a whole... and so, it creates this power relationship where you still have white people in the black community, calling the shots and doling out the resources- and that's just not acceptable.

Organizing and Community-building

The professionalization and organization of grassroots projects that comes along with funding was also discussed.

It is very, very hard to navigate through the professionalization of community services of, you know, just the kind of non-profit rigmarole that exists, you know? ...There's a lot of people who don't live here, who don't own property here, who don't own a home here, who haven't spent more than two minutes here, coming in saying "This is what's best for the city, and I know best," and that's really disheartening sometimes. And, you know, and then there's the problems that money creates sometimes, which I've talked about. We, our work is so good, as long as I have the time to ask for it, I don't really worry about if funds will be available, because I just, I just believe that what we're doing is the right thing, and that what we need will come to us.

One economic development practitioner described her organization's new way of operating as "getting on the ground."

I mean, we've always been- we're probably at 20,000 feet, with funders and others up here at 40,000 feet, and we've moved into doing this sustainable community development work, and it means that we, in some instances, are gonna have to get closer on the ground, and. So I really want to support some of this stuff that's really grass roots. I mean, there's not really the traditional agency that we would fund, like in the past....

She described geographical focusing at the neighborhood level as the best means in which to do this, so that smaller organizations, "who have been there forever and know

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how to get stuff done" can be partnered with funders and developers. This goes along with a sentiment toward returning to community organizing instead of community development.

> ...Community organizing has gone away. People stopped funding it, institutions- the community development movement grew out of community organizing. Okay, community residents weren't happy with the conditions in their neighborhoods. They organized, they formed civic action groups, and then they formed community development corporations, and then we got sophisticated, and trained real estate professionals, and community organizing has gone by the wayside. And to make any of this work, really, community organizing has to be a key part. And I'm trying to convince people that it's the missing piece that we all got away from. And why people got away from it is because nobody was funding it. 'No we don't have time for you to get people rallied, we need you to build something!' You know, (laughs), or fix something, or eradicate poverty (laughs). And so I think community gardening and all that is only going to be successful with community organizing. You know, it's unsafe if the community's not organized and prepared to defend itself. And I think that that's a critical lesson for all of this work. We've lost the community organizing component. And that's why I'm very intrigued by all this grassroots stuff that is bubbling up, because it's moving towards the way community development was before we got smart and sophisticated. To respond to funders like me... (laughs)

When asked about Detroit's needs for revitalization through food system development, several interviewees responded with similar ideas about community organizing and grassroots development.

> I think, in Detroit's case, we've got to continue to build it, I think, from the ground up. I think most of the organizations that we're talking about partnering with are on the street doing stuff, you know, at the program level. We don't need more layers; I think we need those not-for-profit groups to maintain their entrepreneurial kind of fervor.

Specifically in terms of urban agriculture, one of the practitioners spoke of the need to emphasize community organizing over access to food or the prioritization of a healthy diet.

The national urban agriculture community should look at using urban food production to build community vs. produce food. The successes of this group has been less about meeting physical needs than social needs, and that focusing on the social needs helps meet the physical needs... Using urban food production not as sort of a, exclusively as a hobby or as a means to producing food but really as a way to bring people together. If you don't plan your gardens around bringing people together, they won't. And if you don't plan your garden around really having something to harvest at all times and, you know, and a diversified crop, you're not going to get that. So I think, you know, we're doing, our organization is all about the people. It's not really about the food; the food is a by-product, but as a result of it being about the people, we probably produce more food than anybody that's about the food, if that makes sense.

Those who have engaged in agri-food initiatives emphasized the need for long-range partnership and community involvement. In describing a venture in a low-resource, high-crime neighborhood, one interviewee described the failure of an EBT-accepting farmers market due to the laundering of food stamps in the community.

So all those things remain hidden until you reach a level of trust. So for organizations that want to be effective in communities like [this], they have to budget for that. The first three years, or two years, or five years, are going to really be about relationship building. And anything you do is really just an object lesson, until you reach a level of trust where you can get to the point of doing something effective. It's - I think that's why a lot of work in low-income communities doesn't get funded. A lot of the grants that we see have a one-year timeline or a three-year timeline, and the work I'm doing [here], I've made a life commitment to that project.

Another leader spoke of a project that had to be put on hold because of neighborhood dynamics:

I think that uh, there was some resistance because we did not really consult with them in the beginning, and we just showed up one morning and started plowing up this vacant lot, um, and that wasn't very respectful. I think in some ways we're seen as outsiders coming into the city.

One interviewee felt that based on her experiences the community could be further engaged in large multi-disciplinary initiatives and funding processes. She stated that these

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types of things are more complex than who is at the table, but also how decisions are made.

> what do you mean by 'partnership,' and who are the partners, and how do you focus on issues around equitable relationships? I mean, we've been around a lot of tables where there's supposedly partnerships, but there's 2-3 people doing the facilitating, calling all the shots, you know, making all the decisions, using all the money... Um, and that's a different kind of model than a more participatory, equitable focus on partnerships...I think to deal with these food systems issues, people need to be invested in the process, and that investment's not gonna come unless there's some shared decision-making, and shared access to resources.

The work of one interviewee team included long-range projects around food access, and had seen success in dissemination of information into neighborhoods leading to policy influence. These community-based participatory researchers discussed the success of their program that engages community members, emphasizing the effectiveness of health messages when they come from within the community.

> The village health workers, they came up with the priority of diabetes of a major health issue that affected a lot of people in the neighborhood. And the more we talked about it, ya know, the more they said: look, we all know what we're supposed to eat. It's really hard to get access to those things. If you look at the map, it's actually...compounded on the East Side by the fact that people don't have cars, and so it's very difficult to reach the sources that are outside the city. Um, and they came up with the idea of doing mini-markets, in churches and community-based organizations.

Such work is seen as essential for the purpose of credibility and effectiveness.

> I think it's really critical that leadership for some of this change comes from within the community. It's gotta be identifying people within the community who are credible, and people look to. Because, I mean, i can't waltz into East Side Detroit and say, you've gotta eat more veggies. I mean, it's just like, 'Who are you?' And so, I think the leadership has gotta be built from within the community, and developed, and supported.

Summary

A theme of concern emerged around not only where resources are directed, but also how this is done. Finance is an agreed upon need for strengthening the local economy through a community based food system, especially in the area of retail. Public health in the city is connected to the resource and training needs of grocery retail. Several leaders expressed concern with the effects of outside funding, and a professionalization of community building that has essentially replaced organizing community members with organizing resources and enhancing the built environment. In addition, there was concern about an illusion of empowerment of the urban African American population, where their activist concerns are adopted in a process of tokenism. In general, it is believed that while resources are necessary for economic participation, that citizens should be given leadership in educating and organizing the community.

DISCUSSION

Research participants affirmed the assertions of public health literature in their responses about the affect of supermarket access on no only health and vegetable intake, but also the culture surrounding food knowledge and preparation skills (Rose and Richards 2004; Powell, Auld et al. 2007). Because of Detroit's extreme political history and contemporary segregation around race and class lines. Residents experience power imbalances in everyday interactions with the food system, and some strive to express ideological resistance through symbolic day-to-day actions, as discussed by Scott (1985). Some spoke as victims of injustice, while others acknowledged food system problems but spoke as change-agents. Perception of power and capacity to act varied, and some but not all individuals could be considered participants of social movements.

Participation in community-based food projects prevents bottom up power normalization for many. In addition, resistance to the mainstream food system provides inroads for political participation through decisions such as focusing shopping on attributes such as black-owned, local, or organic. However, the attempt at civic participation through shopping ethically presents tensions, as discussed by Johnston (2008b). Detroiters struggle with the tension between self-interested consumer desires such as price or variety and supporting particular causes, such as downtown retail revitalization.

Participants were also cognizant of racial/political/class history in Detroit, and how it relates to parity in access and the built environment in general. A remaining undercurrent from black power/civil rights movements in Detroit gives community food security efforts in the city strength, and orients them toward racial justice. Just as most urban social movements have been organized around race, class, urban divestment, and disparity in quality of life community food initiatives in Detroit are clearly in response to dire economic conditions (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985).

Contention around resource mobilization and social change is prevalent in Detroit. As discussed by Martin, authentic community development initiatives are seen to have been galvanized into a more professional operation removed from the problems they were created to address (Martin 2004). There is also distrust in funders among activists, who believe that radical change will not be sought by those who will benefit from maintaining the status quo (Allen 2004; Silver 1998; Johnston 2008; Dowler and Caraher 2003; Martin 2004), and who cite racial tokenism. However, the reflexivity of leadership

required to manage the tensions between principals and practical change (Campbell

2001) was discussed by several interviewees.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION II

The responses from citizens, activists, and professional practitioners vary greatly

depending on perspective, experience, and background. This section will attend to the

process in which research participants frame problems, solutions, and strategies for

action, in order to fulfill the second purpose of this study, "what is the social process of

framing problems, solutions, and motivations to act between citizens, activists, and

professionals in Detroit?"

FINDINGS
Diagnostic Frames

Diet and food quality

Within focus groups, a low-fat diet with high vegetable and fruit intake was suggested as

healthy. The activist groups felt that traditional ways of eating in their community were

unhealthy and connected to illness, and family health concerns motivated dietary change:

> I find in my own personal family that tradition is hard to break, because I'm a
> gardener and I try to expose a different way of eating and they're like, you know
> what, save your little salad, put it over there, give me some of the macaroni
> cheese, those ham hocks, you know, my collard greens, and they're the ones that
> have the blood pressure and the sugar and I don't have those things...my dad had a
> stroke, aneurisms, and my brother has high blood pressure and my mother has
> high blood pressure but I changed my eating habits and it's just tradition is hard to
> break.

Ideas about food quality varied, but most agreed on the quality of garden-fresh

provisions. One youth participant proclaimed, "The strawberries are so good...They're

real sweet.. It's good, it's better, this tastes better- like the strawberries off [the school garden] taste better than the store's. They're real sweet."

However, participants have mixed ideas about organic that are situated within social concerns. One senior believes, "They don't give us real organic food, they give us food called organic." One member of the Hmong-American group explained a culturally situated distrust in American production methods in general, stating:

> Cause, you know, in Laos most of the vegetables are naturally grown, and in America we mass-produce vegetables and we use chemicals to kill insects and stuff like that...So, you know, just because the company says, oh, this is organic, they're still gonna have some chemicals.

Participants cited a range of reasons for diet-related health disparities. Some were concerned about economic constraints, some about awareness and knowledge, some about food knowledge as a form of self-reliance, and some about skills for preparation. One professional in emergency food distribution recounted:

> Most people don't know what to do with a zucchini, or most people *we* know don't know what to with one. ...One of my first experiences was with a woman who had boiled grapefruit for hours and it never got it soft enough to feed her children and she was mad. And you know what are you supposed to say?

However, two of the focus groups were more concerned about access than education. The suggestion that public health consequences are resultant of personal choice and can be combated through nutrition education was seen as shortsighted by several participants:

> I think it is very inconsiderate to teach young people that they should eat fruits and vegetables and fresh things and not McDonalds- and then they're in a food

dessert, so where do they go? Even if they want to eat vegetables, or they don't want to eat McDonalds-

At the mention of nutrition education, a few participants of the seniors group seemed to want to steer the conversation back to the topic food access, about which they were outraged:

> I don't think it's a matter of what you supposed to be eating, I don't think that. I mean, they get on TV and they say "you can't eat this, you can't eat that, you can't eat that." It's left up to the individual person, but my thing is buying the fresh food, we shouldn't have to buy something that's not ripe. It's just like they got chicken, that I bought a bag of chicken wings ...when I unfroze them they were full of feathers and they was blue. And I took 'em back.... And so I'm not understanding what you mean because I think that everyone in here knows the quality of food.

One participant suggested the importance of overall satisfaction of the shopping, preparing, and eating experience over nutritional benefits:

> I wouldn't have proper nutrition if I'm sitting there cutting up - maybe it's just me; I'm still pissed about this bell pepper. Okay, because I'm trying to figure out why I need to pay a dollar and forty-nine cent for a bell pepper. And if I know that I'm sitting here cutting up this dollar forty-nine bell pepper to go on my food, guess what, it done already done piss me off...it's not going to do me much good.

This was connected to the belief that quality of food had an equal role to dietary choice in health consequences:

> No, you know what, it's more than obesity. In the urban area, the poorest areas where the least money to spend on food, why are the children so fat? You ever notice that? The children are incredibly big in the urban areas. And most of them, you talk to most of their parents, it's not that they're cooking so bad as it is the food they're eating, and it's not just fast food, 'cause a lot of these kids can't afford fast food. It is something else going on, just like Shirley said about the chicken wings, you go out in the store, chicken wings are that big. That's a turkey wing, that's not a chicken.

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Concerns about food quality as linked to production practices were consistent across all the focus groups. It is believed that the quality production of yesteryear has been lost, and distrust was elucidated particularly around animal production and meat quality, specifically over growth hormones and other methods of industrial production.

Distrust in industrial food system

Groups expressed a holistic view of the food system, including unfair and untrustworthy distribution practices, retail structure, production practices, as well as preparation and processing. There was a general distrust in the industrial mode of production, food corporations, and the way they present information.

> And if you have local farms that are being utilized without all the pesticides, just so much, I mean, when farming went and became a business, when the farmers, when all the little farms were being forced out for the big conglomerate farmers, farming became dangerous because it came about, instead of about quality, it became about quantity.

Organic and other labeling claims are not trusted, as food corporations are seen as only promoting "gimmicks" for marketing purposes.

> Or like the labeling of food, when they first started the labeling of food and they were telling you the serving size and the fat content and all the, you know, the vitamin, nutrient - and a few weeks ago they just told you, well most of those serving sizes were lies. The content wasn't the full content, the caloric factor, they didn't give you the full facts on it; so who do you - you know, it's as if we've suddenly become a country that - who do we trust? Who do we trust? I mean, if you don't have enough money to do your own investigation or your own, pay for your research to make sure it's sure, you're not going to get the truth. You're going to get the lie that's being sold today. And then next week it'll be a new lie. Or when they get caught, it's another lie. You know, oops, we didn't know. So we're doing something else today.

Access to information for making healthy choices was also emphasized both for participants themselves and also those for whom they were advocating, as it can be hard to navigate health information.

> And that's the other reason why they're getting bigger, because of the lies being told. And then it seems like to me if you're using salt, say salt. Don't use words this long, sodium nitrate. You know, and worried when you got to take it to an English teacher and figure out what it is, you know. It's those things where it just makes common sense but the companies will not do that.

These concerns are connected with the idea that problems of diet and health disparities are symptoms of an imbalance of economic power. One participant of the seniors focus group put it this way:

> So it's something more to it than just the owners of the store, it's like everybody's in cahoots against the poor, 'cause it's really not racial, y'all, it really is economical. It's more than racial. They don't care what color your skin is, they just care, you know… the money.

In most of the focus groups, a general distrust in powerful economic actors was related to several areas of the food system. One participant stated, "The big companies right now, they know the ignorance of the public...They want a city of dying people," and another added:

> Large corporations don't want us to be self-sustainable. They don't want us to be able to feed ourselves. Because they realize that you can buy a used car, used clothes, used suit, but you can't buy used food. And so, all of, Monsanto, and all of those big corporations, are now seeking to control the food industry. Because you always have to get something to eat.

Activist leaders agreed with this sentiment, that major grocery chains had abandoned the

city and thus were part of the problem. For this leader, this is tied to a greater problem of

economic dependence:

> It's a very complex problem, and so the solution's gonna be complex and multi-faceted. So, yes having large supermarkets in our community is one aspect of solving this problem, but it's not the solution. So ultimately, we have to empower people, and not just make people dependent on corporate entities to eat. And so we're trying to change the view that people have about food in general, where it comes from, who's responsible for feeding us, you know, because in America, people in many ways give up their power, not just in the aspect of food, but in many areas of human life. You know, people think that the doctor is responsible for their health, and basically [give up] any kind of self-ownership, and feel that, you know it's the doctor's responsibility to keep me healthy. Or in education, because we have state mandating compulsory education, we send our children through a system and we feel like it's the system's responsibility to educate our children. And you can look at many different aspects of life in American society- and this is Americans in general.

Similarly, the elders of the Hmong community expressed concern about the younger

generation losing the cultural characteristic of self-sufficiency through food provision:

> It's about economy, if they {the youth] can get a job and have money, then it seems like they're not interested. That's what the seniors, that's what they know and because of economic reasons they would do that for food.

For one leader interested in promoting racial equality, this is tied to self-sufficiency:

> I think as a people, we are in the process of being a more self-sufficient people. That's what's going down. And for hundreds of years, whether it be welfare, whether it be whatever, we have had to always rely on the majority culture to do things for us. And we no longer want that anymore.... ya know, this isn't colonial Kenya in 1956, where you know, the colonial power comes in and we spend our money and they take it back to Britain. That's not acceptable."

Loss of economic power is seen as both cultural and structural, as the underprivileged are seen as having a "false consciousness" as well as a lack of access to entrepreneurial resources. This is tied to the framing of the diet and public health problems as those of food culture. This was especially salient for the group of Hmong residents, who found the food culture of surrounding African Americans as evidenced by the neighborhood stores to be unhealthy and unsatisfactory. Many of the activist participants described the rest of the city experiencing public health problems are "uneducated," or even "lazy" in one case. This was a contested issue within the groups, as some emphasized the opportunity for a healthy diet as provided by structure whereas others emphasized personal knowledge and choice. However, it was agreed that there was a cultural food trend toward low quality food that extends across class.

> I just wanted to say there's a Trader Joe's grocery store that opened up in Grosse Pointe area, but even, you know, you were talking about not knowing how to prepare foods, even when you walk in there and that's geared towards, I think, more of the middle class, everything's like dinner in a bag there, so that's maybe just something cultural that's happening with time and whatever. Money, and buy, buy the chicken and the pasta and the salsa. It's five ninety-nine in the bag, you know...

Food access and retail

Public health consequences and health disparities were dramatized in most of the groups (except for the youth). One woman commented on urban meat distribution practices by saying, "That borders on genocide." The access problem in general is seen as an issue of both a regional and racial inequality. One participant noted differences in food quality between the suburbs and the city:

> The grapes aren't as big, the cherries aren't as red, and because I work in the suburbs, I work in Pontiac, so I'm driving through a number of suburban neighborhoods, and I live in the city, I see that difference and it's strange to me

that this is the same store, this is Randazzle's though I mean, what do you all do, take all the stuff you don't want in the suburbs and send it to the city? 'Cause that's the way it appears.

Many framed this and other problems within a historical context of white flight.

But originally when they started Randazzle's, see, Detroit was still a mixed community, there were still many whites who lived in that particular area of Detroit and the food was always fresher, always better. It was better to go to Randazzle's for your fruits and vegetables than it was your grocery store. But now, it's a toss up. And they may change your food there more often, maybe, but not in the city. You know, I don't get that view, that feel from it in the city."

The issue of de-population was discussed in most of the focus groups and interviews, related to economic struggle as well as a remaining paradigm for economic growth that is seen as unrealistic. One economic development professional quipped, "people don't like to hear this, but we are a shrinking city." This is seen to lead to political inertia:

You know, as we talk about land use planning and zoning and urban agriculture there's still a hell of a lot of inertia to overcome from people who think that that's sort of somehow beneath the city to be considering those kinds of things... that there's a higher, better use than growing chickens and sheep.

Prognostic Frames

Education

The topic of education was a common but contested theme. Many defined it as a need for general information, others as exposure and experience, and others as a cultural shift. The outcomes for education varied as well, as some saw it as a driver for demand for sustainably produced food, and others for health benefit, and yet others for equity through quality of life. Most assumed that exposure to food production would be productive in this area. One professional put the need this way:

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...I think doing the education part at the Market where we sort of have a captive audience, and people, you know, people can actually combine their - they're coming to buy food anyway, and take advantage of that to introduce them to the idea of growing more of their own, or further the idea that perhaps those six Cokes that they have a week might affect their blood level, of sugar.

A younger participant of one of the activist groups laid it out this way:

Well people aren't going to go from junk food to organic overnight, so it'll have to be... if we could just get fresh produce- accessibility to fresh produce to the residents of the city of Detroit, and then we can take it up a notch to organic, but they gotta get used to fresh, because it's like canned everything, and it's like fast food haven here in Detroit. So, we get them back in the kitchen, that's right there, making the first step.

Another more seasoned veteran of community outreach efforts emphasized a more active exchange between educator and educated:

So I think we have to have creative ways of integrating- it may not be because they said, "Oh, I want to learn this,"- but you have to have creative ways to infuse this into the community. And it takes people who really want to help...a lot of expenses should be directed toward education and communication, different kinds of communication. ...But each one of us here has a network of people. And that network of people is like that web... And that makes a difference, especially in the black community. Because people receive it, if you put it to them in a way that they can accept it. And so you are able to reach people, but you do want to use the communications that they will receive or understand, or want to. And then when you show them, you give it to them in their hands- let them touch it, let them see it, and eat it, and then it works. But that's- we're talking about something that's not here this minute- it does take time to do this. And that's what we're building here. All of us together are building that, to make it possible for people in our community to be able to receive it.

Others in focus groups emphasized the importance of leadership, setting examples, and exposure, stating "All people see in the supermarket, is junk food and packaged food, but

when they begin to see other examples that changes their consciousness." For some,

cultural change through these "educational" efforts is seen as an exercise in

empowerment, through teaching self-sufficiency.

> And so part of what we're trying to do, is give people the sense that ya know, we do have, we have power, that we have to exercise, we have control over our own lives. There's no entity, no governmental entity, no corporate entity, that can just, you know, [suck] out the power of our own lives. And so that's, for me, that's like a key and essential concept to the food security movement, um, because if we can plant that seed in people, then they'll begin to look at their lives in general, in terms of taking control of their lives, taking back control of their lives from this kind of apparatus that's taken control."

Improving retail and access

The problem of access to a healthy diet seems to be popularly framed as an issue of

equity in distribution-- many focus group participants and professional advocates alike

framed the solution as providing the same quality and service to African Americans and

urbanites as whites and suburbanites-- i.e., major chain grocery stores. The seniors group

agreed on this:

> 1: I'd like to see a major grocery supplier come into the city and supply good, healthy food... And I think we all agree on that.

> 2: And I agree too, one hundred percent. That's what we're looking for. That's what we're talking about.

The economic development practitioners interviewed were both involved in a formal

collaboration of partners concerned with solving the access problem through retail

attraction and improvement, and explained that both major chain groceries and support

for new and existing independent retailers came out of this process as recommendations.

However, the loss of chain retailers is not mourned by everyone. Opinions of professional

leaders varied, with an overall consensus that no one solution would solve the access problem. However, several activist citizens and leaders expressed conviction in this area:

> I think one of the things that really frustrates me is when folks, you know, we're lamenting the loss of some large multi-national big box stores as though it were a great loss for the city, and in my opinion what we should have been lamenting was the loss of the local butcher and the green grocer and the small local businesses. From a community organizer's standpoint, the difference of trying to get support from a small local business to give back to the community versus a multi-national corporation is huge. You know, you can walk into Mike's Butcher Shop and say, "Hey, do you want to sponsor my kid's baseball team?" "What, you come here every week? Yeah, okay, I would be interested." If you went into Kroger, they're like, "Oh, we have to talk with our, you know, coordinator for this, this, this" - it's like these people are just sucking the money out of this community. So, I mean, good riddance. And I don't want to see them return, frankly.

> And so you ask yourself the question, why aren't they [major retailers] here? And what will bring them here. I think this whole thing's about food systems. And we're talkin about the same doggone people who've got this mess the way it is right now. I think that, you know, it's gonna be something new created. It has to be created by the residents who live in the city, who's under-served...

The researchers engaged in community-based participatory projects suggested that the feeling is mutual amidst their participants:

> 1: I don't think folks would say we don't need supermarkets- it's not an either/or. But I think it's, we don't need these big-box stores that come in and run everyone else out of business, don't provide jobs, bring people in from the suburbs to work in them, you know, that's what's not...

> 2: Well, I think part of the issue with the big box stores- and I don't think anybody's said this to me directly- there's a huge turnover in those stores. So they come in, they're here for a year or two, and then they go away. And I think part of the concern is that if in the couple years that they're there they drive the local mom and pop stores out of business, then when they leave, there is no diversity in the food environment, so they've sort of wiped out what could have been there. And I will say, very strongly in our community planning process, people really

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wanted to strengthen the local economic base, at the same time that they're diversifying the food environment and bringing in local products.

Thus, the prognostic framing for improving retail is both in terms of equity and economic power, along with the technical lens used by economic development practitioners.

Economic development and participation

The difference between professional, activist, and citizen perspectives were the most disparate around this subject. One of the economic development practitioners proclaimed that

> All economic development is social justice... you are trying to increase the tax base and improve the quality of life for people....so that you can offer them more resources and have better neighborhoods, so that everybody has a good quality of life

However, several leaders saw a need to shift from this traditional view of economic development. This "pre-occupation with the tax-base" was seen as part of the "problem thinking" that dominates economic development by others:

> We need to change the vision, or the lack of vision of the political leadership so that they don't perceive development in terms of concrete and bricks, but they see development in terms of people, and quality of life.

For several of the activists and citizens, economic development is connected to racial and class empowerment, and accessibility of food projects creates an opportunity for a reclamation of economic power and a new economic paradigm fostering quality of life.

But, you know, if people are really serious, it's going to have to be an economic shift. And it's going to have to be given to people who are altruistically involved, who have a mission to save themselves. Otherwise, it's going to be the same thing over and over. We're going to have the same CEOs and everybody else just doling out the money, and the same situation is going to take place. And let's not fool ourselves. You know, these people who run Whole Foods and Trader Joes and all these folks, they know what's going on. They know what's going on with food systems. And they know what the population is, and they've done the science.

Everybody thinks about economics, but if you think about the ground level, agriculture and manufacturing is at the ground level. So if you were provide people with something to eat as well as a way to get a job also, you are making the community itself sufficient.

Many focus group participants agreed that something new needed to be created for and by the community. In these groups, entrance into the food economy is seen as both urgent and anti-hegemonic action:

We gotta get back to raising something- and canning it, and freezing it, and drying, so they have something to eat, cause they're fixin to really put the hurtin on America. First of all, we don't even know what's goin on, because China got more food than []. And how far is that gonna put us behind? And so we really gotta take a serious thing in America about food, or somebody's gonna starve.

One youth explained the benefit of independence and self-reliance received from her urban-agricultural curriculum:

because what they have in the grocery store, they grow it in the dirt too, but it's just more high priced and you can just... they taught us something that we can grow our own vegetables and then cook it ourselves instead of just wasting, basically, wasting money.

However, a variety of perspectives showed that these types of agrifood ventures are imagined at various scales, and can work at various levels and loci with respect to dominant economic development paradigms. For example, many imagine urban agriculture as a temporary use for vacant land that could eventually benefit the city financially and attract residents leading to real-estate development, whereas others see

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Detroit's vacant land as an opportunity to create a new paradigm of development. For

example:

> ...the former grid really doesn't make much sense if there's only one house per
> block. And right now I'm just, I walk around in these neighborhoods in
> amazement about how much grass there is just to mow and it would strike me that
> we're much better grazing it than mowing it, so we're trying to actually introduce
> grazing into this neighborhood, and actually do land use planning that maybe
> abandons the grid instead of, if you look at the last page, there's a whole host of
> small, traditional subdivisions of which all of them on that page, I think there's
> maybe one that's going forward right now. And if we look over the course of
> thirty years, that dream list of potential subdivisions ain't likely to happen. so
> what could we do from a land use standpoint, could actually get some of that
> converted to more of a conservation-style subdivision design which basically is
> founded on a principle that sixty percent of the people living in golf course
> communities don't play golf, they simply want green outside their door. So it
> could be golf course, it could be pasture, it could be crop land, it could be park
> land. As long as we lay it out, if the economy recovers and it becomes really a
> swank neighborhood, then it becomes park land, but in the meantime maybe we
> just graze sheep on it and leave it be at that.

This reveals a tension between what some activists titled "band-aid solutions" and radical

change. Those advocating for radical change see an accessible, hands-on way to create a

new economy, however, this does not necessarily fit within an economic development

practitioner's conceptual framework of realistic development. One practitioner spoke to

the idea of urban agriculture as an economic driver for Detroit:

> I think it depends on the neighborhood I don't know if anyone has done enough
> analysis of where it makes sense from a long-term master plan development
> perspective. A big part of our problem is that vacant land is not contiguous and it
> is all over... and so, I think there are a couple things. One is it would be great to
> know what the right size farm is beyond single lot neighborhood, feel good,
> community gardens, how do you create a farm or a system of farms that are
> sustainable and economically viable and maybe there are like two lots at a time
> and there are 100 of them. You know, 100 of these things and is there a way to
> do that where titration and those kind of costs work out and you get enough
> production? I don't know enough about farming to know how much land you
> need for how much production, how much of it need to be contiguous that kind of

thing. I think there is a real need, people want to talk about it, but nobody really knows. Are you making things up? I don't know who I would actually trust on this, maybe [] because he has actually done it and maybe [] knows and I just have not asked her. I feel like a lot of people talk about it and it would be great to know yes, you can have, the best thing to do is ten, ten acre sites because that is like the sweet spot in terms of production and cost and all that kind of stuff...Whatever that is I just don't have any information on it. I think that would really help the decision makers at the city planning development department better understand how to take in the request that they are getting around urban agriculture, if they had a framework around which to evaluate those requests. This is again just my opinion... they are reacting a little bit ambiguously to requests, that they don't want to say no to people because of all the ancillary benefits and I don't necessarily know that the people proposing things are doing it in a way that makes sense from just a pure on farming perspective depending on what the goal is. If the goal of farming is to have a little plow land and to go through the exercise of growing food hoping something survives, then that is one thing. But if the goal is to actually produce enough to populate the store down the street and then there is a whole science to that, what you grow and when you grow it, how much land you need all that kind of stuff...I feel like we need more help that get that so that you can then say yeah in Northwest Detroit these are the 12 sites and on the East side these are the sites that we don't want for commercial development, they are not going to be residential, they are good to, let's do it.

Thus, the prognosis for economic development is contested around issues of access to resources, power, and "realistic" solutions.

Motivational Frames

In general, motivational framing used by interviewees was dependent upon their organizational and professional roles, missions, and goals as well as the resources available. Many of these constructed frames were backed by moral imperative around the right to a healthy diet. For example one participant stated, "And so we really gotta take a serious thing in America about food, or somebody's gonna starve." Along with this, racial and class equity were used to justify and call for action, as well as environmental urgency.

Calls for action took place during several of the focus groups, based on a variety of motivational frames. One mode of doing this was through emphasizing the responsibility of community members to act, in that it is the most effective route to changing culture and shifting power:

> I think it's gonna take a group like [ours], because we're representative of those who live inside of the city. What we're doing, is trying to create a new paradigm with food in urban areas. So I think it's gonna take, you know, this group, setting up models, and this group being replicated...We're gonna have to be able to grow it, you know, pack it, sell it, we're gonna have to do the whole 9 yards, that's what's gonna have to happen. You know, it's gonna take the people who are most affected by the problem to solve the problem.

> You gonna have to have authentic organizations who authentically organize. And I'm talking about in a city like the city of Detroit...You got groups in here right now: this city is 90% African American. The people who control the money for all of these green projects and whatnot, they're all Caucasians for the most part. I would venture to say, probably, 3/4s of them live outside the city. They're not going to do anything but the same-old, same-old, and gonna have some black folk, probably, fronting for them. You gonna have to have authentic organizations who have some type of altruism involved in their agenda to change this thing, otherwise, you gonna have a city full of dying people... You gotta model, you gotta set up a whole new paradigm, inside the city, and it's gonna be word-of-mouth, hands-on.

> So it's coming upon the people at this table, to go out and be ambassadors, for people to think better, to live better- because the food is killing us....And so, we're gonna have to create these new systems, right here at this table.

In addition, focus group participants emphasized the urgency required in fighting economic and political power:

> We're just not thinking straight- we're not thinking right. We've gotta come together like this more, with more regular people. Because the big companies, they've got plans. And what their plans are is not good.

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The drug companies are buying up the seed companies to control food. And people have got to get together.

And I think also, we need to look at the big picture. And I came from a meeting of people from Chrysler, and they're all looking at the city, and how they can improve the city, but they're not looking at the city in terms of what you already have. They're looking into wiping all that slate, which is people that look like us, because we're the problem, and they want to create what they want Detroit to look like, they're creating it as we speak. So, you know, and it really does take, and I agree that we, on the bottom, have to create that whole process, from the seed, to production, to distribution of food. So that's gotta come from small models, and inside of that is the economic piece. All that we're saying and that's what we're to be creating here- a model of [our organization], and a model over here. And we all just pool together, 'cause it's a bigger force together. You got that spot over there, and that spot over there, and we need to come together and draw up a plan for how we're really gonna distribute this food, inside whatever partnership that we have. Because it's not gonna work if you're over here and I'm over there, but you, know, while we're over there individually we're looking at how we're gonna come together collectively. Because that's where the power comes from. Because on the other hand, it's already been created, and we're not in that picture."

Both individual and collective resistance to the mainstream economic development paradigm are connected to self-empowerment, including actions such as growing, processing, preserving, preparing, etc. A shift in consciousness is seen as important to convince people of what is possible in order to mobilize. This requires a rejection of the mainstream economic development paradigm and a new visioning:

You know, the economy's real bad, so why not create your own economy. So that's what I see as the solution."

One of my favorite sayings is, 'why let a little thing like reality get in your way.' So, I'm not limited by what I see. And so, reality, it's created. So, you know, consciousness can re-shape reality. SO, it has to start with ideas, and a vision- and the bible, you know I'm not a christian, but the bible says, without a vision, the people parish. And so, you know, you start with things in your mind, and it manifests into the physical realm. And so, we need people who are idealists. But we need people who are idealists who know how take take things from the vision to the reality.

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This visioning also involves a consideration of both personal and collective power to make change. After a series of complaints about life in the city, the leader of the Hmong group stated, "But we're going to stay, though. [Laughter] And fight."

However, the two economic development practitioners interviewed both discussed a difficulty in bringing community voices to the table. Speaking about a grocery attraction strategy, one stated:

> One thing that we did not have was really grass roots kinds of folks. Part of the difficulty was that when you are trying to get the grocers to talk honestly about what is going on in their stores and want to partner with you, it is hard to have...you know I got a lot of flack from Acorn about "why aren't we at the table?" And they came to the table too late, you know it is difficult to involved the folks who are picketing from the store and expect the grocers to feel like they can really talk about what is going on in their stores and if it is a safe environment - so it was kind of a conscious decision.

In one of the focus groups, there was discussion about cultural power to change consciousness regarding food consumption. In regards to the power of the media, this participant contended that African Americans in particular have the power to change culture by and for themselves:

> Ok, I heard somebody say "media," "advertising," and "television." If you have enough money, you can probably do that...But I look at phenomenons like, baggy pants, turned-around baseball caps: they do it on the East coast, they do it on the West coast. I never saw a television advertisement. When they was carrying the big boom boxes, it happened all over. It happened everywhere... And plus, our culture, the African people have always found a way to make a way and get by. You know, so, we just do whatever we gotta do to get by. If we gotta buy from a cheaper store, then we buy from the cheaper store... Black people have always, people of African descent have always figured out a way to survive. But if they were educated on making themselves survive and be self-sustained on their own, it's not even African American, but the city in general, that would be a lot more, allow us to be a lot more stronger as a community. When you stand on your own, people have a lot of respect for you, and you can have some pull at the table. But

when you're standing on everybody else, they just move out of the way and you fall down.

Some of the groups mobilized for specific action within focus group sessions based on the idea of consumer power. While some feel forced into buying cheap food, these participants felt they could advocate for these community members by flexing their consumer power. One group mobilized to set up a meeting to open up a dialogue with store owners.

> I really believe that this group right here, this focus group, and it's great that we're having this discussion this morning. Perhaps we need to meet with some of the owners with some of the stores we patronize to see what kind of improvements they might be willing to make. .. We can't just throw our hands up and say, you know, we can't make a difference. Because one leverage, the leverage that you have, is that you have money to shop around. And they gotta sell it. They got a product and they gotta sell it... And they have something we want. And the only way that we can, I think, really change or at least have a voice is to have some kind of opinion or have that ear, is to get them to the table just like we are this morning. Maybe they don't know that there are some issues and concerns in the community that they can not address.

> Get that group of people in here and let them know that, you know what, the people who are spending the money in the stores where you're selling your goods are saying that they're gonna cease to spend their money and they're gonna get vans and busses and believe it or not, I think if we talked to enough churches we probably could get enough of them together to get, maybe not all of the people, but enough of them to put a dent in their profit because, see, I learned business here is one thing and one thing only: that's money. Money talks. The rest of it is gobblety-gook in their ear, they don't hear you.

Another group was explicitly against this idea:

> I'm not really, too much of a negotiator to tell you the truth. I'm more power politics, and my whole frame of reference, I'm kind of from left of left. .. we're just understanding the dynamics that people in power don't concede power just because you ask them to. They concede power because they see some threat to their interest. And so, if you ask me what I think needs to be done, I think we need to deal with store owners from a position of power, so that when we speak to

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them, they can't just blow us off. And there's other groups too, there's nicer groups too that go out and have picnics with them, and meet with the head of the Chaldean merchants' association, there's people, NAACP and groups like that that like to sit down with them and have tea, have lunch, and all that kind of stuff. I'm not part of that group, and most people I know are not part of that. And so, there's another group of people who do those kind of things.

Motivating around what works

Across the focus groups, another mode of mobilization was around the resources and groups that were accessible. One group member asked,

> Would it behoove maybe the Center or a church to have a van where they take X amount of people to a specific store so that they way that they can get the quality food, other than letting you get that on your own? …why not just have a signup sheet and have six or seven individuals go to the store at a time, and this way this would not only provide them the transportation, it would provide them the safety as well as the opportunity of getting good food.

This conception of accessibility to resources and power to make change was important for mobilizing around urban agriculture:

> We can help solve this problem. Because we have access to grow. And so it's a matter of how many people can be educated to understand what's happening in their areas, and a matter of giving people the opportunity to become a part of it, and business plans and surveys- things like that are valuable tools.

Agrifood ventures are seen as a tangible, accessible part of the economy. The leader of the youth urban agriculture program stated,

> I teach this agribusiness … and a lot of it is like, this agriculture, this business- so much of our business now is such a scam, where we're sellin' nickels for dimes, but agriculture is like, you gotta have a product! You gotta have the apple- you can't buy and sell futures, you gotta have the product. And so it's kind of really a good lesson for that class, and for other classes.

An economic development practitioner spoke of other resources:

So Detroit has this huge opportunity with six thousand vacant acres and all sorts
of underutilized workforce and I think it has, as you'll hear from other folk, I
think it has some of the best not-for-profit infrastructure people that can actually
train people in how to grow things or raise animals....you got the technology at
Michigan State, you got the people who can train at the not-for-profits, you got
the land, and we got the people that are underutilized, people in terms of work
force, so.

Specifically, Detroit's land is a good resource because of it's length of time in vacancy,

making things seem more feasible:

Many of the parcels have been vacant for twenty or more years. So the natural
progress, process of succession and soil building and plant diversity has taken
hold, in much of the city, so that's really good. We have a culture, a farming
culture in the city, much of the population that remained are from down south and
the seniors in the city who are aging but they're here, [50:00] and they're staying
here, have a lot of history and skills in terms of food production. We have some
of the greatest community connections, I think just because we needed to survive
through all that's happened to us, and continues to happen to us; we survive
through our connections and through our community, and that community can be,
can be leveraged, you know, and I think that's happening.

Another resource is Detroit's self-sufficient population:

We are as self-sufficient as possible and that really is a very Detroit characteristic.
The people who have stayed know that basically we cannot rely on corporate
entities to even sell a seed in the city, we have to go to the suburbs to buy seed;
we don't have hardware stores that carry compost, we have to go to the suburbs to
buy compost, you know, much of corporate America has abandoned us and so
Detroiters are very much wanting to grow our own.

It seems that people also motivated to engage in resistant behaviors due to ancillary,

personal benefits. As discussed in the first section of findings, participants find benefits

ranging from the political, and aesthetic, social to the personal and economic from

gardening.

I think that something else that happens in our garden community here is this wonderful thing that like a lot of us do have, you know, the family, traditional family food that we've been given, our higher-fat things and you found out you don't wanna be eating, but I think it's a wonderful thing that we have that we're starting to pass around or cooking, you know, like instead of, I got a lot of recipes that are not being passed down, instead of being passed down they're being passed around our garden community. That's one of the really great things that happens in our community gardens.

For Hmong-American residents, motivation to participate in production is linked to cultural beliefs. One community member emphasized, "they're serious farmers, they're farmers." This is related to beliefs about health and aging:

1: he think that if they sit around, most old people will have stroke, so they are ready to do a job outside. [Laughter] Sit around, have stroke. They don't want to do that.

2: They don't like to sit still, you know, they like to move around twenty-four hours a day, they don't sit down.

Use of master frames

Public health

Among participants engaged in activist or professional work, ideas about diet and food access appeared to have been influenced by the public health perspective, emphasizing personal choice and knowledge, along with physical access to a healthy diet. However, several perspectives expanded on the idea that nutrition education assistance from outsiders can help inform personal choice, by emphasizing the importance of food culture, networking, modeling and exposure based within the community. In addition, many felt it was important to look beyond simply meeting the need for fresh healthy foods through major grocery retail, and look at the implications of such a strategy for

community well-being on the whole. However, most took the view that a variety of strategies are in order for the complex set of threats to public health and diet in Detroit.

Economic development, community-building, and equality

This was a contested issue within the group sampled. Several focus group participants took on a powerful stance, asking, "why not create your own economy." This was encouraged by both a diagnostic frame of lost self-reliance on the part of underprivileged Detroiters, as well as the accessible, "on-the-ground" nature of food and agriculture projects. This is related to issues of racial and regional equality and social justice. Racial representation is desired by some of the focus group participants.

> I wanna see black people represented in every aspect of the food system in proportion to our percentage of the population. So we need to be... if we're 80-90% of the population, we need to be 80-90% of the growers, 80-90% of the distributors, 80-90% of the retailers to reap the economic benefits of the dollars that we spend on food, so that we can recycle it and be self sufficient.

However, the fact that traditional modes of economics still hold power over development came through in several ways. A few of the professional leaders took this as a call for changing mindsets about meeting human needs through economic development, to instead focus on land use that encourages quality of life. However, those connected to economic development resources and political decision-making are still operating under the mode of proof of economic productivity to validate land use or any other development such as grocery retail. This means that projects must make economic sense before they make social sense, which is the opposite of what many activists and leaders are calling for. Urban agriculture is discussed both as a radical oppositional strategy and a

strategy that beholds economic value and can thus be legitimated. As a cultural form of economic development urban agriculture is assigned the power to change community image and thus economic promise. However, in policy negotiation, advocates for using vacant land for sustainable agriculture still but up against hegemonic ideas for development: "development trumps gardens." While land in de-industrialized regions such as Detroit is not highly desired, the cultivation of urban land by oppressed residents reflects a level of resistance and the realization of an alternative or perhaps oppositional vision for the city(Zukin 1997).

Ideas about equality, justice and fairness were explored in several ways. Some saw a need for parity with the suburbs or equal access to resources, and others saw it as providing opportunities for dignity, capacity, and building life skills. When asked about fairness, one focus group respondent said:

> There's no fairness in this world.... What is fairness, I mean, explain to me what you mean about fairness. We know about Kroger and all that, but what do we do to get that?

Environmental sustainability

This frame was used by a few interviewees, but raised in only one of the more activist focus groups groups, around the issue of food miles. In interviews, the concept of urban sustainability is implicit in the expansion of urban agriculture. One interviewee suggested that urban agriculture is central to the sustainability movements in Detroit. In addition, it has become part of Detroit's identity, or vision, due to opportunities with green space provided by vacant land. When paired with Detroit's other needs, this has created a more locally situated definition of sustainability-- One focus group participant said, "I don't know why everyone is talking about sustainability-- what about thrive-ability?"

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indicating the desire to create something new in Detroit. When asked about sustainability, an interviewee stated:

> I believe that Detroit could be one of the most realistic cities in the world, you know, like we don't necessarily choose to be green or sustainable, we're dealing with what we have, you know? So we have got to be creative in how we buy things and how we produce things and how we, you know, look at change because it's not really, there's not a lot of resources flowing through here and there's not a lot of outside interest and wealth, which is actually why I'm here, you know, it's a very self-sufficient city and it has a lot of potential to use that self-sufficiency in a really progressive way to become one of the most sustainable cities in the world, if we really [35:00] worked hard and kept up the momentum that we currently have."

This is related to the ancillary benefits enjoyed by participants in gardening activities.

Part of Detroit's brand for self-sufficient sustainability means a low-capital, community-based, localized approach:

> I think there's amongst the corporate leaders there's still this notion that Detroit, it's all about new age, new economy jobs all focused on technology and I think there's this belief that high technology's gonna bail us out of the energy crisis, that one corporate guy said an energy problem is just a technology problem. I think he may be right, I just think he's betting that the secret algae gets here in the nick of time, and if it misses by a few centuries or decades we're kind of screwed in the meantime, so all I know is that there's a reliance of technology to bail us out of our energy problem, will deter us from rolling up our sleeves to attack in a more grunt, you know, low-tech way, via growing the food ourselves.

This idea of self-wrought, equitable and efficient use of resources stands in contrast to traditional modes of economic development, where technical expertise is relied upon and technical solutions invested in heavily. This is related to the framing of economic development, where citizens and activists call for less profitable and more socially equitable, participatory ventures within the food system.

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Summary

There was a variety of ways that citizens, activists, and professionals framed problems and solutions and were motivated to act. The citizen groups saw problems with diet to be related to equality, culture, and empowerment. This was related to distrust in the industrial food system and perceived racially unbalanced economic power. Most interviewees saw these problems in technical terms, but agreed with focus group participants about inequality, education, and empowerment. Within the shared goals for food system localization, tensions between traditional routes of economic development and citizen perspectives are present, aligning with concerns within the literature about food system localization. Professionals did not explicate the "call to arms or rationale for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action" as much as the focus groups did, discussing the "how" more than the "why" concerned with motivations. However, visions for the making the city a leader in urban agriculture were shared.

DISCUSSION

The collective vision for change in Detroit is driven by the common diagnostic frame of problems with healthy food access, and the availability of vacant land. Within this collective vision lie several contentions. While many discussed social justice, some desire equality in material resources, while others believe social justice revolves around more ideological concerns such as dignity (Hinrichs and Allen 2008). Routes to affecting lasting, genuine change in the structural problems of the food system and quality of life in general vary, and there are concerns about how and by whom existing initiatives are administered. Though there is this contention around power and access to resources within agri-food initiatives, motivational framing that makes acting appear prudent and

necessary (Snow et al. 1986) has been successful, through creating a new food culture and common sense (Lyson 2004; Bagdonis, Hinrichs et al. 2009). Detroiters are motivated by what works, through models forged by leaders and organic intellectuals (Gramsci 1971). Cultural leadership and spreading of ideology and motivation for action is seen as a power struggle by some activists (Johnston 2008; Coles 1998), while those engaged on a professional or expert basis see things more pragmatically. Either way, as framers of movements, both pragmatic and radical leaders are consciously creating a new culture around food and development in Detroit, united by a common vision of what is feasible.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This section brings together the two sections of findings, taking into account their convergences and disparities. The first section is concerned with resources and structural concerns, showing what problems are being experienced, what is being done, and what resources are necessary for making changes. These responses are difficult to remove from the context of subjectivity as explored in the second section, in that each perspective is essentially a different frame.

Concerns about resources are embedded in ideas of how community and economic development does or does not promote social equality. For some citizens, concerns about retail are evidentiary of ideas about racial justice for some. For others, equality was considered parity with suburban life. In all cases, the experiences with structural constraints and opportunities shared in the first section shaped the way problems and solutions are framed, and the way people are motivated to act.

Food has become important for political, economic, social, cultural and health reasons. Citizen ideas of this importance of food intersect with dominant frames in some respects: the activist groups adopted environmental, social, and health frames, whereas other citizen groups did not. Gardening activities have raised the importance of food and allowed for social connection around cooking and eating, trading of skills. Rising popularity. Motivations ranged, but an important factor for participation was accessibility and personal benefits (enhanced quality of life) received from self-provisioning or community gardening. People are also motivated by feasibility, the presence of models, and the availability of resources.

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Cooking skills were discussed as important for women respective to familial role, but others made food a priority for health, aesthetic, and ideological reasons. Self-reliance is both a practical and ideological matter, and this concept was used both in the personal and city-wide sense.

The need for getting Detroit's population to eat differently is agreed upon, as health is seen as a matter of equality and self-respect. Most ascribe to the Western belief that a low-fat diet is best, but citizens and some interviewees stressed that this should be less about personal responsibility and more about structural concerns- both in physical access and in the structures of inequality that lead to the "false consciousness" about food and diet. Some contended that it is inconsiderate to emphasize nutrition education where subjects of such education do not have the power to make healthy choices. People are motivated in this area by ethical concerns. However, there is a certain amount of consensus that behavior change in this area would best be accomplished by word of mouth, with leadership from within the community. It is believed by citizens that African Americans have the cultural power to bring about a "change of consciousness." It is also agreed that food and agriculture provides a good point of engagement for not only health but self esteem and empowerment.

Food quality and health were related to agricultural production practices and, by some citizens, disingenuousness of industrial powers within the food system. Localization of and economic participation in the food system as well as self-provisioning through gardening are seen as acts of self reliance and resistance to economic power.

There is contention around whether or not major chain grocery retail should be invited back into the city. Diversification of retail is generally agreed upon by interviewees, however, some citizens desire parity with what is offered in the suburbs and in other cities, and view this as equality. However, others have a different idea of what a thriving community should be like, with small, locally owned businesses.

Many citizens felt that there was sufficient demand for fresh, healthy food, and there was also willingness of entrepreneurs, but that development of new locally owned neighborhood stores is thwarted by a lack of access to resources. Some saw this as racial. However, economic development practitioners saw this as more of a logistical issue of training and feasibility. They stressed that shop owners may have more immediate problems taking precedence over putting locally produced food on the shelves, as well as the fact that it is difficult to get grocers to take risk in introducing healthier products if they do not perceive high demand for them. It was agreed upon that grocers need assistance, and flexible financing should be made available.

Profitability of land use for agriculture was questioned. It was suggested that citizens and activists touting community-based urban agriculture were not speaking the same language as public officials and economic development authorities. Several leaders talked about a new vision for development that goes beyond simply increasing the tax base, attracting large companies and building infrastructure, with an increased focus on social development. Economic development professionals were partly on board with this, but emphasized a need for realistic thinking and fitting into the city's format for land-use and economic development. Advocates for using vacant land for sustainable agriculture percieve hegemonic ideas about development: "development trumps gardens."

Nonprofit urban ag organizations emphasized that a lot could be done without outside funding, through sheer enthusiasm and zeal. These groups raised concern about outside funders and other interests, contending that self-sufficiency and independence was one of Detroit's greatest strengths. Several interviewees called for a return to community organizing, trust-building, and sustainable growth; and less reliance on financial inputs and built development.

Urban agriculture was discussed both as a radical oppositional strategy and a strategy that beholds economic value and can thus be legitimated. As a cultural form of economic development urban agriculture is assigned the power to change community image and thus economic promise. There was a shared vision around localization and an economy that is embedded in social, cultural, and environmental concern. However, some of the leaders expressed a visions going beyond simple environmental sustainability and equability in resources, but combining the two in a more effective model for urban development. This would require the acceptance of urban agriculture as a permanent land use, instead of an interim use while real estate markets are inactive, so that housing and agricultural production remain interspersed, and a re-conception of economic development, where untraditional and perhaps unprofitable ventures are prioritized for the sake of economic participation.

In conclusion, although all participants in this research cannot be considered social movement participants, there is broad social momentum behind a unified vision for the future of the Detroit food system, driven by local economic conditions and a significant presence of vacant land. This is similar to other urban social movements; however, actors come into participation not only as concerned resistors to the status quo,

but as consumers, professionals, social leaders, educators, neighbors, and eaters. In addition, many of the individuals beholding this common vision are at both ideological and practical odds when it many of the details of local agri-food projects, especially around scale, ownership, and inclusion. Within those included in this research, there are both those who view themselves as victims and those who see themselves as change-agents; thus, problems are framed in a variety of ways that is discordant at times, and only some are motivated to act in a capacity outside of consumer decision-making. Frames diagnosing and prescribing solutions for food system problems vary, creating a pluralistic vision for a new Detroit food system that is socially constructed through participation in various new initiatives, and the inclusion of improving the food system in existing initiatives. Behind this are motivations around improving public health, environmental well-being, community vitality, and racial justice. If the overarching goal of re-structuring the food system is to make improvements in these areas through increasing participation and re-distributing power, then to be truly democratic toward that end we must recognize the pluralistic nature of such a collective vision, maintaining reflexivity as we diagnose problems, prescribe actions, and participate in changing our local food systems.

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**Community Voices on Detroit, MI and Oakland, CA food systems Phase II :
Interview Protocol**

Introduction

- Thank them for taking the time to meet with us.
- Introduce ourselves
- Explain the research
    - Purpose is to understand the challenges and opportunities to creating a sustainable, just food system in Oakland
    - Includes a scan of local organizations and activities, interviews with local groups, and focus groups with residents.
    - We are partnering with researchers at Michigan State University who are doing the same research in Detroit.
    - This joint research project is being supported by the Fair Food Foundation, a newly-formed foundation that seeks to work with local leaders to design a food system that provides healthy, fresh, and sustainably-grown food to historically excluded urban communities.
- Explain the order and general categories of the questions we will ask:
    - General questions about your organization
    - Collaborations with other groups and lessons learned
    - The broader food system
    - Sustaining your activities
- Explain that this will be tape recorded (if doing) for accuracy.
- Explain informed consent form and secure signature, leaving copy of form with individual

Their Work

1. What is the primary goal of your organization with respect to the food system?

2. What are your specific approaches and activities?

3. What have been your major accomplishments? How do you measure success/gauge progress?

Their Network and Lessons Learned

What are other key organizations that you work with in Oakland/Detroit on food system issues? Are there other organizations of whom you are aware that you don't interact with very much?

4. *Do you feel that organizations working on food issues in Oakland/Detroit are well enough linked to one another?*
   a. Why or why not?
   b. *Can you provide an example of how it worked well and where there are gaps?*
   c. Do you want to work with any of the other organizations, agencies, or people that you are not yet working with?
   d. What would be needed to improve these linkages?

5. *How do food issues intersect with other issues (e.g. economic development, housing, health care, education, etc.) in Oakland? Are there key groups working in these areas of whom you are aware that don't have any focus on food?*
   a. How have groups from these areas collaborated with one another?
   b. Do you think there should be more collaboration?
   c. What would be needed to foster this kind of collaboration?

6. What lessons can be learned from efforts—your own or others'—that have succeeded?

7. What lessons can be learned from efforts—your own or others'—that have not succeeded?

The Food System

8. *What do you think are the most pressing problems in the current food system in Oakland/Detroit? What is working well?*

9. *What do you think are the best strategies for addressing these problems? Are there strategies you or others have employed that you think didn't or won't work?*

10. Do you see a difference between ideal and realistic solutions?

11. If you could construct a food system for the region that would be fair and sustainable, what would that look like?

12. What would be needed to ensure that: farmworkers are paid a living wage and work in a health-promoting environment; farmers are being paid fairly for their costs of production and livelihood; distributors and retailers have enough profit to pay employees and invest in the maintenance of their operation; and the cost of the food is low enough that consumers will purchase it?

13. What are the biggest challenges or barriers to making these changes?

14. What types of organizations, activities/strategies, and organizational and/or public policies would be needed to make these changes happen locally?
      a. Which are present in your region, and which are not present but needed?

15. Do terms such as 'food desert', 'food security', 'food system', 'food justice' resonate with your work and how you describe your work to others? Are there better terms to describe the work?

16. Does your organization work to increase demand for healthy food, such as through nutrition education, cooking classes, or other efforts?
      a. Are other organizations working on these issues?
      b. Do you collaborate with them?
      c. What do you think makes groups more or less successful at increasing demand?

Sustainability

17. What are the biggest challenges to sustaining your activities? What type of support could move you towards sustainability?

18. What kind of 'start-up' support is most critical for local food system efforts?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Research questions:

1) What are the most important factors in the food environments of residents in Detroit and Oakland?

> What are current ways of procuring food?
> What are the major factors in how they access food?
> Are there barriers to satisfactory food access?

2) What changes would residents like to see for a more equitable food system?

> a) How do they define equitable food access

> b) Are there changes that are necessary to obtain healthy, affordable, accessible diet?

> c) Are they or could they be interested in sustainably grown food? What does this mean to participants?

Protocol:

The following will be present at each of six focus group sessions in Detroit/Oakland:

Schedule:

Moderator and assistant: Greet participants at the door and answer any questions participants have prior to beginning the focus group.

Begin the group by:

> Introducing themselves
> thanking participants for their time
> Noting that this will take 1 and 1/2 hours, and that moderators intend to respect participants' time.

Moderator: Briefly re-introduce the research study topic:

> *We would like to thank all of you for sharing your time and knowledge with us today. Your first-hand experience is very valuable to us, and in participating in today's focus group you will be contributing to Detroit's community development. The reason for this study is to identify what is important to you as residents of Detroit/Oakland for obtaining a healthy, satisfactory diet, and what changes you would like to see in your communities around the issue of food. Your input will inform strategies for change in the Detroit Food System.*

Are there any questions before we begin?

(If asked, reveal purpose for the Fair Food Foundation- to better understand citizen points of view in Detroit/Oakland.)

Moderator: Explain that compensation of $25.00 ($30.00 for Oakland) will take place before participants leave. The only thing required is that they provide their name and address.

Moderator: Distribute and explain consent form.

7. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to share your knowledge and experiences about food access in Detroit/Oakland, in a group discussion.
8. You are free to refuse to answer any questions at any time.
9. The focus group session will be audio-recorded, transcribed into text, and analyzed for the research project.
10.   There are no direct benefits or risks to your participation today.
11.   Every effort will be made to respect your privacy.

Moderator: Ask participants to take a moment to read over the form, and then obtain informed consent.

Moderator: Read the rules:

> *Confidentiality responsibility- please don't let information leave the room.*
>
> *Please speak clearly and one at a time for the sake of the recording- some questions we'll go one-by-one and some we'll all speak at once.*
>
> *Disagreements allowed- but please be respectful and allow everyone time to talk.*

Request that participants limit discussion to relevant information:

> *We will be asking questions to keep our discussion on track-please know we are very interested in your perspectives. What we're most interested in today is hearing what you have to say on the topic of food access in your community, while respecting your time.*

Assistant: Start tape

Moderator: Begins Ice-breaker:

> *Please go around the room and after you introduce yourself, name favorite food.*

Moderator:

Begins questions.

1. Please think about how you decide where you decide to do your grocery shopping. Going around the table one at a time, what are the 2-3 major places that you get most of your food from?

Probes: Do you make other, smaller trips? How often and how far do you go? What determines this?

2. Does anyone have anywhere else that they get their foods, like from a backyard garden, community garden, or outdoor market?

- *Are you satisfied with this?*
    How easy is it to get the food you need?

    What are some of the important things that determine how you obtain your food?

    - *Is transportation or distance from your home a factor? How far is reasonable walking distance?*
    - *How about Price?*
    - *Condition of the store/market?*
    - *What kind of food variety and selection is important to you?*
    - *How about quality?*

4. What are things about the food that make up quality?

    Probe: how do you define freshness?

5. How often do you cook your own meals? Go out and get prepared food?
    Are you satisfied with this?
    Are you interested in preparing/cooking food but face obstacles in doing so?

    If so, is it a factor of
        time
        access to cooking facilities
        cooking skills
        other factors?

- *Would anyone like to list their favorite recipe that is easy and affordable to prepare?*

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- *Do you have any food habits that have been passed down through family or friends?*

- *What about cultural foods- is it easy for you to obtain culturally appropriate foods where you live?*

9. What do you think of as a "healthy" food?

    Do you think that you and your household currently eat a healthy diet? Why or why not?

    Probe: where do you get your health information?

10. Let's go around the table and list one thing that would make it easier to get the food you need.

11. Do you think that all neighborhoods in Detroit face the same challenges that you do here in your neighborhood? Are there imbalances within the city?

12. Have you ever thought about the way you get your food in terms of fairness or equity?

    Definition: Some say that access to healthy, fresh and sustainably-grown food is a fundamental right that everyone should have.

    What do you think of this? What does this mean to you?

13. Is how your food is grown or raised important to you? Are pesticides or growth hormones a factor in how you make your purchases?

Have you heard the term sustainably grown food? What does this mean to you?

    Definition: We can think about sustainability in terms of the way we get our food by asking, how long can we continue getting our food this way? For example, how long can California continue producing fruits and vegetables for the rest of the US, in the face of a water shortage?

    What do you think of this? What does this mean to you?

14. Have you heard of any efforts going on in your community around healthy, fresh, sustainably grown food?

Probe: (Fill in here with specific efforts in community and/or these general examples:)

Garden resource programs

Community co-ops

Healthy food in corner stores

Community garden- here and elsewhere

WIC/Project Fresh/fd stamps at farmer's market

nutrition education (extension)

Grocery buses

Community Kitchens

Food enterprise mentoring

What do you think of these efforts? What do they mean to you?

15. If there is vacant land in your neighborhood, do you think using this land for farms and gardens would be desirable for yourself and other residents? How so?

How possible do you think growing food on vacant land in the city would be?

16. If there was better access to healthy, fresh, sustainably-grown food in your community, do you think community residents would purchase and eat the food?

- from neighborhood grocery stores

-from neighborhood farmers/gardeners

Moderator: Gives a short oral summary statement of what was covered in the session, listing the key questions and big ideas that emerged.

Is this an accurate summary? Is there anything important I forgot to include?

Let's go around the room one more time and each list the most important thing that was said about changing to the opportunities your community has to get good food. What needs to change to make it easier for you, or more fair?

Moderator: Restates the purpose of the study, leaving 5-10 minutes prior to adjournment time for final discussion.

The reason for this study is to discover what is most important for you as residents of Detroit/Oakland for obtaining a healthy, satisfying diet from appropriate sources. The second part of the study will review work underway in the community to improve the food system and food access. Our primary goal was to capture what the most important changes in Detroit's/Oakland's food system are for you as residents. Have we missed anything in covering these areas?

Moderator: Thank participants.

We would like to thank you on behalf of MSU, PolicyLink and FFF for offering us your time and expertise today. Your discussion will greatly inform this study about improving the food system in your community. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have now or in the future about your participation in this study, how this information will be used, and your rights to confidentiality.

Assistant Moderator and Moderator: Thank participants one last time. Make sure to answer any last minute questions. Hand each participant $25.00 upon receipt of their completed receipt.

Consent form for adult interview participants:

Research Participant Information and Consent Form:

Community Voices on Detroit, MI Food System

You are being asked to participate in a discussion about food in your community, as part of a research project. This consent form is to help you understand more about the study, the possible risks and benefits to participating, and that participation is voluntary.

This research is being done to find out more about access to food in Detroit, MI. We hope to learn about what changes professionals in Detroit would like to see in the local food system. If you choose to participate, you will be one of about 20 people participating in interview discussions about food in Detroit. It is intended that this information will help inform work leading to better food access in the City.

This discussion will last about 60-90 minutes and you will be asked to share your knowledge and experiences about food and your life in Detroit. We don't think there is any risk to you by participating in this discussion. However, during the time of the discussion, if you feel threatened in any way by the questions, you are free to either not answer any further questions or withdraw from the discussion. Your participation at all times is completely voluntary. It will be tape recorded (voice only).

No information that you provide will be identified as coming from you in any discussions outside this room or in any written reports.

| If you have any questions or complaints about the study you may contact:

 Charlotte Litjens, 309 Natural Resources Building, Michigan State University

 East Lansing, MI 48824

 Phone: (517) 432-0307   e-mail: litjensc@msu.edu | If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish:

 the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. |

Your signature below indicates you agree to voluntarily participate in this study and to be audio-taped.

_____ _____   _____ _____

Participant Signature Date   Principal Investigator Signature   Date

Consent form for adult focus group participants:

<u>Research Participant Information and Consent Form</u>: Community Voices on Detroit, MI Food System

You are being asked to participate in a discussion about food in your community, as part of a research project. This consent form is to help you understand more about the study, the possible risks and benefits to participating, and that participation is voluntary.

This research is being done to find out more about access to food in Detroit, MI. We hope to learn about what changes residents of Detroit would like to see in their food environments. You have been selected to participate as a resident of Detroit. If you choose to participate, you will be one of about 100 people participating in focus group discussions about food in Detroit. It is intended that this information will help inform work leading to better food access in the City.

This discussion will last about 60-90 minutes and you will be asked to share your knowledge and experiences about food and your life in Detroit. We don't think there is any risk to you by participating in this discussion. However, during the time of the discussion, if you feel threatened in any way by the questions, you are free to either not answer any further questions or withdraw from the discussion. Your participation at all times is completely voluntary. It will be tape recorded (voice only). We ask for students to please not share information learned in the room with anyone else.

No information that you provide will be identified as coming from you in any discussions outside this room or in any written reports. You will receive a compensation of cash in the amount of $25.00 for participation in this discussion. You must provide your name and address to receive this compensation.

| If you or your daughter have any questions or complaints about the study you may contact: Charlotte Litjens, 309 Natural Resources Building, Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824

Phone: (517) 432-0307 e-mail: litjensc@msu.edu | If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish:

the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. |

Your signature below indicates you agree to voluntarily participate in this study and to be audio-taped.

_____ _____   _____ _____

Participant Signature   Date   Principal Investigator Signature   Date

Assent form for student focus group participants under 18:

<u>Research Participant Information and Consent Form</u>: Community Voices on Detroit, MI Food System

You are being asked to participate in a discussion about food in your community, as part of a research project. This consent form is to help you understand more about the study, the possible risks and benefits to participating, and that participation is voluntary.

This research is being done to find out more about access to food in Detroit, MI. We hope to learn about what changes residents of Detroit would like to see in their food environments. You have been selected to participate as a resident of Detroit. If you choose to participate, you will be one of about 100 people participating in focus group discussions about food in Detroit. It is intended that this information will help inform work leading to better food access in the City.

This discussion will last about 60-90 minutes and you will be asked to share your knowledge and experiences about food and your life in Detroit. We don't think there is any risk to you by participating in this discussion. However, during the time of the discussion, if you feel threatened in any way by the questions, you are free to either not answer any further questions or withdraw from the discussion. Your participation at all times is completely voluntary. It will be tape recorded (voice only). We ask for students to please not share information learned in the room with anyone else.

No information that you provide will be identified as coming from you in any discussions outside this room or in any written reports. You will receive a compensation of cash in the amount of $25.00 for participation in this discussion. You must provide your name and address to receive this compensation.

| If you or your daughter have any questions or complaints about the study you may contact:

 Charlotte Litjens, 309 Natural Resources Building, Michigan State University

 East Lansing, MI 48824

 Phone: (517) 432-0307   e-mail: litjensc@msu.edu | If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish:

 the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. |

Your signature below indicates you agree to voluntarily participate in this study and to be audio-taped.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date   Principal Investigator Signature   Date

Consent form for parents of students under 18:

<u>Research Participant Information and Consent Form</u>: Community Voices on Detroit, MI Food System

Your student at Catherine Ferguson Academy is being asked to participate in a discussion about food in her community, as part of a research project. This consent form is to help you understand: the study, that participation is voluntary, and the possible risks and benefits to her participation.

This research is being done to find out more about access to food in Detroit, MI. We hope to learn about what changes residents of Detroit would like to see in their food environments. Your daughter has been selected to participate as a resident of Detroit. If you choose to allow her to participate, she will be one of about 100 people participating in focus group discussions about food in Detroit. It is intended that this information will help inform work leading to better food access in the City.

This discussion will last about 60-90 minutes and your daughter will be asked to share her knowledge and experiences about food and her life in Detroit. We don't think there is any risk to her by participating in this discussion. However, during the time of the discussion, if she feels threatened in any way by the questions, she is free to either not answer any further questions or withdraw from the discussion. Her participation at all times is completely voluntary. It will be tape recorded (voice only). We ask that students not share information learned in the room with anyone else.

No information that she provides will be identified as coming from your daughter in any discussions outside this room or in any written reports. Your daughter will receive a compensation of cash in the amount of $25.00 for participation in this discussion. She

If you or your daughter have any questions or complaints about the study you may contact: Charlotte Litjens, 309 Natural Resources Building, Michigan State University East Lansing, MI 48824 Phone: (517) 432-0307 e-mail: litjensc@msu.edu	If you or your daughter have questions or concerns about her role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

must provide her name and address to receive this compensation.

Your signature below indicates you will allow your daughter to voluntarily participate in this study and to be audio-taped.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Signature   Date   Principal Investigator Signature Date

APPENDIX D: CODING GUIDE

Theme	Code	Definition	Rule	Example
What are major factors in eating/shopping habits of residents? Are options satisfactory?	Q1	Marks question 1	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We don't go to the corner stores because they are bad."
	Farmer's markets	Discussion around opinion and usage of farmer's markets, viability.	Use for any mention of farmers markets; not to be confused with price.	"I go to the farmers market on the north side."
	R: Store Quality	Physical characteristics- Carts aisles, actual services, freshness, variety	The selection within a store; the ability to fulfill needs from a certain store: the idea that shoppers should be able to get many necessary items in one stop	"There were cockroaches in the store."
	R: social	Social issues, including respect/trust and race Relationship to store owners and staff; language barriers; race; level of dedication to community by store owners; The importance of social reasons in making shopping decisions; social experience of shopping; social justice Quality of customer service	Apply to general discussion about store presentation and attractiveness	"They don't care about us."

	R : price gouging	Lack of competition and/or forced loyalty; local monopoly; lack of choice	Apply where lack of choice and lack of effort to obtain customer loyalty are mentioned; Do not use where food quality, or variety are discussed.	"They use bridge-card carriers because we have to go there."
	R: price	The importance of price in making shopping decisions; the fairness of price; affordability; factors affecting price	Also applies to restaurants. Don't use for price of organic.	"It was 2 dollars for some celery."
	Transportation	The importance of transportation in accessing healthy foods; the conditions of public transportation; methods of transportation	Use where transportation is discussed explicitly; Do not use for location of stores in relation to homes	"The bus system is not sufficient."
	convenience	the location of a store, other physical characteristics making it an easy place to shop.	Use where need for a close store with necessities is mentioned; not for what the store actually carries	"I don't like the prices there, but It's close-by."
	Food culture	Emergent and existing culture around food prep; food traditions; food knowledge	Use when social situations around food are mentioned; do not use for other determinants like economic or health reasons	"Certain recipes play a big part of family holidays."
	Household economy	Budgetary, time, and resource constraints and prioritization thereof; food as a budgetary priority; preparation habits dominated by time; cooking or preserving food for economic reasons; methods of economizing	Apply to discussion of eating/preparation decisions based on time and financial constraints, methods of economizing, or prioritization; Do not apply to mention of affordability, convenience, or retail prices Don't use for price of organic or price at a certain store.	"I can tomatoes and feed my family all winter long." Not: "Price is more important than how it's grown."

What is considered quality food?	Q2	Marks question 2	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"If the meat doesn't smell or look all purple."
	Food quality	Food quality factors at the level of production (antibiotics, growth hormones, pesticides, and other production factors); processing (ingredients); and preparation.	Use when specific qualities are discussed; Do not use when discussing distrust in industrial food system	"chickens grown that fast can't be good for us"
	Trust in FS	Ideas and beliefs about the food system; hegemony of industrial FS	Use for discussing the system as a whole; Do not use for specific food qualities	"They don't want us to be healthy."
	organic	Beliefs, perceptions, and opinions about organic production and the "organic" label; importance of "organic" in shopping decisions	Use when organic is mentioned explicitly; Do not use for more general env. concerns.	"Organic doesn't mean anything."
What are nutritional beliefs? Where does nutritional information come from?	Q3	Marks question 5	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"I don't need someone to tell me what is or isn't healthy."
	Nutritional beliefs	Nutritional beliefs	Beliefs about food; Interest in scientific nutritional information; intuitive/folk wisdom about food	Apply when nutrition is discussed; Do not apply for health consequences of diet, or food quality.
	Health	Concerns about health as related to diet; health inequity/racial health inequity; health education	Apply when health consequences for diet are discussed; Do not used for beliefs about food qualities.	"My father has diabetes so I watch what I eat."

	Access to information	Availability and accessibility of health and nutrition information; purposeful deceit or unavailability of information	Use when access to information is cited as determinant of eating habits; Do not use for other determinants.	"We can't understand the names of ingredients without a science degree."
What is current level of activity outside the mainstream FS?	*Q4*	*Marks question 4*	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We can tomatoes for the winter, because they taste better than store bought."
	Resistance	Citizens organizing for change; from perspective of citizen-base of organized activity; activities within Purposeful culture change	Use where capacity for change discussed; Do not use for specific strategies.	"Change starts at the neighborhood level."
	Org role	Motivation and role of org, relevant projects (like activism but at org level)	Use for specific projects only, not to be confused with Mission	"We are a food distribution warehouse."
	Partnerships	Network of change agents in Food Systems work; the importance thereof	Use when networking is mentioned; Do not use for specific strategies	"We are working with __ on this project."
	Consumer Identity	The leverage the customer has in where they decide to spend their food dollar; the ability to boycott; identity as a player in the food system primarily through purchase	Use when dollar power as a consumer is specifically mentioned; not to be confused with activism	"I won't be treated that way because I have money to spend and I can take it somewhere else."
What are major factors for professionals in FS?	Q 5	Marks Q5	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We ended up doing food stuff because we realized we could help people become more self-sufficient."

	Lessons learned	Lessons learned by organizations to be heeded, examples to be highlited.	Use only for specific examples, can be either in FG or interview.	"We learned that if you give the youth some control over the activity and responsibility then you will have their attention."
	FS Problems	What is the biggest problem in the Detroit FS?	Use for specific motivators for organizational action.	"We realized that they could use food entrepreneurship in a therapeutic way."
	Link to FS	Other areas that have relevance on food system, and how they are connected to Food systems work	Use only for discussion of areas outside of FS	" We have five over-riding sustainable community goals that we try to apply to all of our work. So food fits into that."
What is the vision for the city?	Q6	Marks question 6	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"Detroit could be an agricultural powerhouse."
	Vision	The positive vision that is held for the future of Detroit; the mission of an individual or member of an org as it relates.	Use for broad positive visioning; Do not use for specific strategies or remedies; not for professional goals	"We need to think about how our city can thrive and be a leader of sustainability."
	Mission	The official mission of an org, the reasons behind activities	Use for the formal mission only, not for personal motivations or activities.	"The purpose of extension is to offer technical advice to the public."
What are motivations concerning social justice?	Q7	Marks question7	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We want to promote a more fair food system."
	Fairness	The general concept of justice and fairness as a driver for action; fundamental rights	Use wherever fairness, and justice are mentioned as motivators for civic action- do not use for fairness of price or other individualistic/consumer complaints	"We want all people to have access to good food."

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	Race	Race as it affects food system improvement.	Use when racial conflict or racial discrimination is cited as a determinant of FS Change/ eating habits; Do not use for racial conflict in other FS sectors.	"They don't respect Black people."
	Regional equality	Geographical distribution of resources and quality of retail; geographical differences in crime and safety, general economy, and physical attributes	Use when discussing geographical differences; not race or class issues	"Prices are higher and qty is lower inside the city."
What are motivations concerning sustainability?	Q7	Marks question 7	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We can't keep depending on fossil fuels to transport our food."
	Env.	Beliefs and perceptions about Detroit and sustainability; Concern for sustainability, environmental change; the concept of the city as a model for green development and urban sustainability	Use when environmental values are explicitly stated; Do not use for interest in gardening for other reasons.	"It's important to think about how the land was affected in raising our food."
What are motivations concerning economic vitality?	Q8	Marks question 8	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We need to strengthen the local economy."

	Local economy	Economic vitality; The economic atmosphere of Detroit and suburbs in general- food environment; changing local economic conditions in relation to affordability and accessibility, as well as opportunity and for urban/local production	Use for discussing local economy and business atmosphere; Do not use for discussing population issues or demand or other challenges	"The local economy won't support a co-op."
	Demand	Demand for produce and other healthy foods; demand for sustainably produced foods	Use for discussions of mass economic demand; Do not use for individual demand	"There are a lot of people who eat like us that would shop at a downtown co-op."
	Access to capital	Ability to become an entrepreneur; importance of financing, training, and other resources to becoming a business owner	Use when specifically discussing trying to start a business	"There aren't the resources for people from our community to start businesses."
What strategies are needed to improve the food environment of Detroit?	Q10	Marks question 10	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"We need more farmers markets with EBT access."
	Urban production	Production of food in the city of Detroit; viability thereof, resources for	Use for any discussion of gardening or urban farming; Must be urban	"I don't trust food produced here in the city."
	Education	The importance of education (nutrition education) in creating and empowering informed consumers, and creating demand for healthy food	Use when education is discussed as a need and strategy; Do not use for access to information	"Education is the most important thing."

	Exposure	The importance of introducing new foods; openness to trying new foods	Use when exposure is mentioned as a strategy; Do not use for education.	"That's because he didn't grow up with healthy food."
	Government role	Responsibility of government to regulate stores for cleanliness and quality; Inspection standards; Grading and labeling requirements; efficacy of FDA and USDA regulation; Local policy; consumer protection/advocacy	Use for discussion of governmental role only; not for organizing otherwise	"There should be a local commission on consumer safety"
	Local ownership	Business ownership by locals and/or owners that are racially representative of the surrounding neighborhoods, containing capital flow locally	Use when talking about both the social and economic sides of this issue, but not when speaking about racism in general	"We need to start a local store that is by and for the people."
	Discourse	Importance of negotiations, mediation, or public participation in making change	Use when discourse is explicitly mentioned; Do not use for networking.	"We need to sit down and talk with the store owners."
What are the major challenges to creating a more equitable, sustainable food system in Detroit?	Q11	Marks question 11	Use wherever this question is being answered.	"It's told cold to grow year round."
	Challenges	Use for any specific feature of the city that provides a hurdle for reaching vision.	Use only for specific, negative features of Detroit only	"People are afraid of food grown in the city."
	Org Problems	Challenges for moving ahead to reach org mission.	Use for any challenges at the organizational level	"Food just isn't on the priority list"

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What are the major strengths for creating a more equitable, sustainable food system in Detroit?	Strengths (should garden heritage go here?)	Use for any specific feature of the city, such as agricultural heritage or vacant land, that provides an opportunity for reaching vision.	Use only for specific, positive features of Detroit only Don't confuse with vision for city	"The Hmong people are farmers... give them land and they will farm."
Non-substantive Codes:				
	Comment on org	Statement about another organization or initiative (to compile and give to orgs later)	Must use program/org name	"Farm-a-lot was a good program."
	Us vs. them	Focus group participants speaking as leaders, referring to "the rest of the city"	Use only when speaking as leaders and mentioning other community members as participants	"They people don't care about what they eat."

APPENDIX E: CASE DISPLAY EXAMPLE

Question 4: What are motivations around local economy?		
Themes	Local economy	Demand
FG 1: Seniors	Social problems are result of economic conditions in the city. Used the term economic racism	Some residents feel that there is sufficient demand to provide for markets to thrive, and that the lack of retail is racial
FG 2:Urban gardeners	Some make it a point to support local stores. There are some good examples within the cmty, however, Seeing stores in city that did have quality produce losing money and depreciating quality. The Quality stores have high prices. Don't believe neighborhood stores can survive against big box stores	On creating demand to support businesses, see it as education of store owners as well as shoppers. However, examples of failures in the past were blamed on lack of demand in the community. This is related to education and creating demand.
FG 3: FS network members	Competitive nature of the market preys on people being stuck with only a few options, complicating demand.	Education is necessary to raise demand. Talking about the type of stores desired by activists not being supportable by the rest of the community. Education vs. economics is debated. Demand for higher quality production is evident amidst the region in general.
FG 4: Hmong community members	Creation of new markets is thwarted by lack of demand, crime, and competition with asian wholesaler in the area.	See themselves as too small a faction of the population to raise sufficient demand, and competitive nature of market. Depopulation is exacerbating this issue.
FG 5: Teens		have seen high demand for food from the Catherine Ferguson Farm, and locally grown/organic produce in general. Family members and others support and thus learn about different vegetables and production through this.

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