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CITIZEN-DRIVEN POLICY MOBILITY FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family for their steadfast support of my research endeavors. I am grateful for dependable parents, J.T. “Pete” & Gale Dills and Vivian Walton & Therrel Martens, and siblings who traveled the graduate school path ahead of me, Shermie Potts, Ph.D. and Darius Dills, J.D. I am grateful in particular for a sister who demonstrated that it is possible to complete a doctorate while working full-time and in her case, also being a great mom. Post-doctorate, I look forward to quality time with my nephews, Reece & Bryce Potts and Ames & Jensen Dills. May this dissertation also honor the memory of my brother Jonathan Anderson, who loved Oklahoma City.

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Abstract

The practice of sharing ideas among cities is almost as old as cities themselves. This relational phenomenon is particularly pronounced when it comes to policies focused on urban development or governance of land use. Often referred to by urban geographers as policy mobility, these practices have sped up over time and space with advances in technology. The practices that urban professionals utilize to diffuse policy ideas are well documented; however, the technologies allowing 'fast policy transfer,' primarily the Internet, also make it possible for citizens and activists to engage in policy mobility practices (Peck and Theodore 2001). Although most urban policy mobility research focuses on the activities of urban planners and the business elite, this study explores how the advocacy efforts of everyday citizens relies on knowledge about policies in cities other than their own. More specifically, through case studies I examine how and why citizens utilize policy mobility to advocate for municipal ordinances that enable urban agriculture, with particular emphasis on ordinances regulating chickens at the household scale.

The case studies in this dissertation rely on qualitative research methods including archival inquiry, discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. To situate the project, I offer a brief history of urban geography, locate my research within the field, and summarize scholarship on urban agriculture. The first phase of the project is a comparative case study of three college towns that passed chicken-keeping ordinances: Columbia, Missouri; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Norman, Oklahoma. The second part is an in-depth case study of Oklahoma City, where city

council representatives denied residents the right to raise backyard chickens on a typical household lot.

In addition to providing evidence of citizen policy mobility, this project contributes to filling a void in urban geography when it comes to exploring food production at the household scale. Focusing on municipal ordinances that allow chickens on standard-sized residential lots, I found that achieving passage of such policy relies on citizens who push for change, knowledgeable city staff, supportive municipal politicians, and advocates who educate the public about urban agriculture. Yet due to the territorial nature of cities and place-based priorities such as a desire to surmount rural origins in suburban-like neighborhoods or rise above practices associated with marginalized populations, the presence of these qualities does not always result in passage of ordinances friendly to backyard chickens. And even when policies are passed, they do not guarantee the right to food production for all segments of society.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Half of the world's population lives in metropolitan areas (United Nations 2014). Major cities strongly affect our culture, economy, and politics. Urban structures often symbolize national identities; consider for example, New York City's Statue of Liberty and Paris' Eiffel Tower (Abrahamson 2004). Despite advances in telecommunications that allow for dispersal of financial activity, central cities remain essential to the global economy (Sassen 2006). Yet even with globalized economic forces, quality of life drastically varies by location. It matters what city you live in, as does the part of the city. This is particularly true in the United States where "[l]ocal officials have extensive authority and fiscal responsibility for land use, revenues, and levels of urban services" (Logan and Molotch 2007, 3).

Many disciplines study and often seek to change urban environments including architects, archeologists, economists, historians, sociologists, and urban planners. As a sub-discipline drawing on many of these fields, urban geography is well equipped to explore the diverse and complex nature of cities. In this dissertation I add to the urban geography conversation by exploring why and how city residents advocate for policies related to urban agriculture. This aim requires grounding in the field of urban geography generally, and within urban agriculture and policy studies specifically. Before considering these subfields; however, I want to offer the brief personal history that led to project presented here.

Like many doctoral students before me, several research ideas piqued my interest before the project at hand took hold. Although the topics varied, each contributed to the environmental or social justice goals of urban sustainability. After

presenting initial research on Chicago's green roofs at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in 2008, I realized that Oklahoma City presented a more feasible study site. Taking what I learned about urban rivers from Chicago, I turned my gaze to the Oklahoma River just south of Oklahoma City's central business district. Inquiry into this river requires an understanding of the urban development projects that significantly transformed the river from one with intermittent flow occasionally needing mowing to the Olympic rowing and water sport venue it is is today.

Oklahoma City's most significant urban development since the 1990s has been a program known as Metropolitan Area Projects, commonly referred to as MAPS. The first group of capital improvements focused on recreational and entertainment sites in or near downtown, including the Oklahoma River. Introductory research on the motivation behind the projects selected for the first round of MAPS brought the concept of urban policy mobility to my attention. Simply stated, urban policy mobility is the movement of ideas between cities. The practices of urban professionals and the business elite enabling policy mobility are well known. Although it is clear that these practices shaped the planning of the original MAPS projects, policy mobility quickly fell to the backburner as I delved into the second MAPS project then in progress at the time: MAPS for Kids. Designed to improve the built environment within the Oklahoma City Public Schools and other districts serving Oklahoma City students, MAPS for Kids focused on building or remodeling schools, supporting transportation, and improving access to technology.

Scrutinizing MAPS for Kids through a geography of education lens, it became clear that I was well positioned to point out the problems and flaws with the project but

ill-equipped to propose solutions. Wanting a richer experience through the dissertation research process I turned to a long side interest that led to the project in question - urban agriculture, a policy area frequently informed by urban policy mobility practices. To introduce the territory of the present research project, I begin this chapter with a brief genealogy of urban geography in the United States, followed by an introduction to the theoretical ideas underpinning my research efforts. Then I outline my research methods, before ending with an overview of the dissertation.

A Selective Genealogy of Urban Geography in the United States

The academic genealogy of a sub-field is similar to a familial genealogy. It traces the history, notable figures, and advances that combined to create the field as it exists today. Here this historical exercise illustrates how urban geography provides the ideal theories and tools for the study of urban agriculture policy. My genealogy briefly considers key arguments of urban geography in the early to mid-20th century before tackling the field's history decade-by-decade starting with the phenomenal growth of urban geography in the 1960s through the millennium.

Early to Mid-20th Century

In counterbalance to the regional and rural focus of cultural geography as espoused by Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School, the University of Chicago dominated urban geography during the early 20th century. Scholars associated with the Chicago School initially focused on the historical geography of a single city until the 1930s and 1940s, when they began working on "empirical quantitative studies classifying cities"

(Harris 1990, 403). The most notable publication from this time was "The Nature of Cities" by Chauncy Harris and Edward Ullman. Published in *The Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* in 1945, "The Nature of Cities" brought theory to the field of urban geography through the introduction of three models that remain "a valuable contribution to the history of concepts in urban geography" (Lichtenberger 1997, 8). Cited widely in both geography and sociology, the three generalized models designed to represent the "internal patterns of cities" are the Concentric Zone Theory, the Sector Theory, and the Multiple Nuclei (Harris 1998, 50).

Harris spent most of his professional career as a faculty and administrator at the University of Chicago. Ullman landed at the University of Washington, where a 'quantitative revolution' based on statistical and mathematical methods took hold representing a "definitional and theoretical change" in urban geography (Berry and Wheeler 2014, xiv). Leading the revolution was Bill Garrison and his graduate students. Many "mainline geographers were suspicious, threatened, and antagonistic" of what they viewed as mathematics instead of geography (Berry 1993, 438). Nonetheless, Garrison's students carried this scientific method for geographic research to the "leading centers of geographic education" across the country, including Chicago (Berry), Northwestern (Morrill), Michigan (Nystuen), Pennsylvania (Marble), and Iowa (Bunge) (Berry 1993, 440). These focal centers for quantitative geography were soon joined by Ohio State, Minnesota, and Penn State (Adams 2001).

The 1960s

The 1959 *Readings in Urban Geography* edited by Harold Mayer (Chicago) and Clyde Kohn (Iowa) provided a path to modern urban geography. The articles in this volume "firmly emphasized process over place" through quantitative and to a lesser extent qualitative empirical analysis (Yeates 2001, 516). American urban geography blossomed during the 1960s, coinciding with a domestic policy focus on U.S. cities. "Serious national and local policy analysis and programmatic action devoted to problems of racial segregation and poverty, urban renewal and public housing, and neighborhood impacts of new highway construction" (Adams 2001, 530) meant that federal agencies frequently funded urban-focused research.

The U.S. Census in 1960 was the first to contain detailed spatial information and increased the amount of data available for quantitative urban research. Federally mandated planning for metropolitan areas also created large datasets available for quantitative inquiry. Simultaneous developments in computer processing capabilities assisted in data analysis, and "graduate geography classes in computer programming became commonplace" (Wheeler 2001, 550). These increased research possibilities coincided with a growing number of undergraduate and graduate students majoring in geography due to college entry of the baby boomer generation. This expansion was mirrored in the Association of American Geographers, which saw its membership triple during the 1960s.

The 1970s

While theoretical consensus regarding the need to situate urban geography within the empirical research methods of the social sciences prevailed through the 1960s, during the 1970s some researchers began calling for consideration of other perspectives (Cadwallader 2002). Most notable is David Harvey, who after publishing the 1969 positivist-focused *Explanation in Geography* turned to Marxist theory of political economy as a means to understand cities. By the end of the 1970s, many scholars recognized that "future research directions for urban geography would have to supplement hypothesis testing and model building with the study of history, politics, economy, and society in order to explain the processes shaping and changing metropolitan areas" (Palm 2002, 405). Coordination with other fields was not new, as scholars in urban geography often borrowed ideas from other disciplines. The Chicago School, for example, was always "methodologically open to ideas and approaches developed in other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, politics, planning, psychology, history, architecture, transport engineering, statistics, operations research, mathematics, environmental studies, real estate, business, and so forth" (Yeates 2001, 524). In a similar vein, Clark notes (2001, 546):

> Studies of social spaces, of neighborhood change and ethnic patterns brought geography into closer contact with colleagues in sociology who were exploring the same issues from a social perspective. Studies of human behavior in shopping and travel brought geographers into contact with transportation planners and marketing professionals, and students of residential mobility and migration provided linkages to economists interested in population change and the outcomes of these flows.

Another approach informing urban inquiry in the 1970s was humanist geography, first introduced by David Ley in his ethnography informed book titled *The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost* (Goheen 2002). In 1976, Yi-Fu Tuan described

humanistic geography as achieving "an understanding of the human world by studying people's relations with nature, their geographical behavior as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place" (266). Humanistic inquiry draws on research techniques often associated with the humanities in the quest to unlock the complex relationships between people and the places they create. These techniques include discourse analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews.

Aiming "to make sense of a complicated urban environment," Marxist and humanistic approaches aid in understanding the particular over the general (Gober 2002, 423). Marxist researchers utilize political economy to identify "the fundamental structural factors and processes" dictating urban life (Pacione 2003, 317). In contrast, the humanistic approach posits cities as socially constructed, which is to say that although the physical location of a city would exist with or without humans, significance and meaning are ascribed to a particular place through cultural and social relations. With such divergent camps, urban geography in the 1970s has been described as "a time of disagreement, controversy, and confusion, but it was also a relatively tolerant and optimistic time" (Ford 2002, 433). In 1979, the Association of American Geographers established specialty groups, and the urban geography group quickly become the largest.

The 1980s

In the 1970s geographers increasingly identified "their discipline as a social science," and in turn generally received a warm welcome from the social science establishment (Johnston 2003, 51). This focus continued through the 1980s with a rise

in critical social theory as the writings of French post-modernists like Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre motivated urban geographers to develop spatial theories explaining social aspects of life. Topics previously approached descriptively (describing what exists) or empirically (validating a hypothesis with quantitative data analysis) were questioned instead in terms of context, identity, and social construction (Knox 2003). Human agency was increasingly recognized in an "urban political economy that was over-determined by structural theory" (Marston and Pratt 2003, 340). Influential in this cause was Ed Soja's *Socio-Spatial Dialectic*, which introduced the notion that space is both created by and affected by society (Soja 1980).

Research on the major cities involved in the expanding global economic system was a particularly strong research thread in the 1980s. Scholars sought to understand the spatial causes and consequences of the increasingly global flows of capital and production that were driving urban restructuring (Bassens and van Meeteren 2015). John Friedmann (2012), who founded the Program on Urban Planning at UCLA, presented a world city hypothesis that the "spatial organization of the new international division of labour" results in cities that are significantly different based on the amount of global capital invested in and managed by the markets in a given city (302). Utilizing a case study of Los Angeles, Soja et al. (1983) illustrated how through "reorganization of capital and labor," transnational corporations were reaping large profits from the selective deindustrialization of U.S. cities as service and professional employment replaced manufacturing jobs (205). As noted in the next section, research on world or global cities continued through the 1990s and remains a steady research topic even today.

The 1990s

Although political economic and humanistic ideologies both recognize the social production of space, they differ in their views on the mechanisms and outcomes of the process. During the 1990s these competing schools of thought were represented in the works of David Harvey and Doreen Massey, respectively. To Harvey (1996), the social construction of cities highlights production of "historical-geographical difference" and the "uneven geographical development of capitalism" (325 and 326). Individuals often define cities in contrast to *other* cities. While humanists such as Massey recognize the social production of geographically uneven development in cities, they resist viewing places as "clearly and unambiguously bounded" (Cresswell 2015, 105). Instead, places are dynamic "networks of social relations" (Massey 1994, 154). Massey is perhaps most well known for her "power-geometry" concept recognizing that "different social groups have distinct relationships" to flows and movement based on power (148). Extending this understanding to globalization, Massey argues that the uniqueness of places is based on social relations that are both global and local. For example, the international price for a barrel of oil certainly affects conditions in Oklahoma City. However, these global economic forces do not completely determine the local dynamics of the metro area.

Economic globalization intensified geographers' interest in urban areas and the ways that the local and global scales interact in cities, somewhat replacing the previous dichotomy of the urban and rural divide of the Chicago and Berkeley schools of thought. Both dichotomies are problematic when they presume a tidy distinction between scales, the spatial unit most commonly used to organize spatial variance in

geography. Scales are "historically contingent; they are produced, exist and may be destroyed or transformed in social and political practice and struggles" (Paasi 2004, 542). Binaries such as scale require contextualization. While global is generally considered to represent the international scale, local may refer to "a city, a region, or even a neighbourhood" (Cox 2005, 176). Many urban geographers equate the local to a metropolitan statistical area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as containing a core urban area with a population of 50,000 or more. Included in most metropolitan areas are counties, municipalities, neighborhoods, and exurban areas just beyond the city that are neither rural nor urban.

An influential research theme during the 1980s, attention to the global connections between cities increased the following decade. Sociologist Saskia Sassen reinvigorated this focus with her 1994 publication of *Cities in a World Economy*. She argued that economic globalization "profoundly altered the social, economic, and political reality" of nations, regions, and most importantly, cities (Sassen 2006, xiii). Understanding that cities had long been affected by conditions outside their boundaries, Sassen emphasized the fundamental changes wrought by transnational economic institutions located in cities that were minimally affected by the governmental regulations of their nation-states. Coupling macroanalysis (whole system analysis) with ethnographies of individual cities, Sassen highlighted global cities with high incidences of transnational economic activity and thus more in common with each other than different cities in their own countries, including among others London, New York, and Tokyo. Building on the work of Sassen, urban geography in the 1990s produced a "rich set of empirical evidence about the global network of cities" (Meyer 2003, 308).

Postmodernism that "retheorizes the relation between culture and economy" also influenced urban geography in the 1990s (Barnes 2003, 484). This epistemology informed Harvey's *The Conditions of Postmodernity* (1989) in which he exposed the commodification of public space in urban areas. The so-called Los Angeles School, or LA School, is credited as the driver behind postmodern urban inquiry. Key tenets in this school hold that cities are no longer "organized around a central core," corporate agency has replaced "individual-centered agency in urban processes," and that urbanism is a "nonlinear, chaotic process" (Dear 2003, 503).

Also informed by post-structuralism and feminist thought, research in the 1990s moved beyond class to focus on "diverse bases of social affiliation" such as ethnicity, gender, nationality, and sexual orientation (Leitner and Sheppard 2003, 513). These expanded focal areas allowed for explorations of the 'everyday lives' of individuals through increased use of discourse analysis, ethnographies, and personal interviews. These humanistic methodologies are helpful for understanding urban areas, "where multiple scales converge in particularly complex ways" (Hanson 2003, 474). Political economists generally disagree with the primary principles of post-structuralism: "no grand claims or overarching narratives are possible," analysis based on culture over the economy, and the "prioritization of discourse and representation over material processes" (Leitner and Sheppard 2003, 518). Yet these two epistemologies need not be mutually exclusive. In his analysis of urban policy and policy makers, Eugene McCann (2011) combines the geographical political economy literature with "poststructuralist arguments about the analytical benefits of close studies of the embodied practices, representations, and expertise through which policy knowledge is mobilized" (107).

More references to McCann's research will follow, as his work provided the scholarly inspiration for this research project.

Urban geography has "evolved to be a highly diverse and integrative sub-discipline, one that deserves recognition for its ability to link the social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental in the search for truth" (Walks 2009, 347). Urban geography is not responsible for creating said links. Rather, each of these human activity manifestations informs and is influenced by the others. Links between these activities expand beyond the local scale as cities are "nowadays intensely embedded in global networks of connectivity, be they economic, cultural or political" (Jacobs 2011, 1). These connections, or relational networks, create "sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow" (Amin 2004, 38). As with most networks though, the connections are not one-way. As Massey (2004) reminds us, "the local and the global are mutually constituted" (11).

Beyond local/global relationality, municipalities are also connected to other cities, their counties, regions, and nations; however, city-to-city connections are the scale de jure for this project. As Sassen and Massey demonstrate, it is prudent to explore relationality (connections between cities) and territoriality (characteristics of the specific geographic area) together as each city has its own history, politics, and identity affecting its connections with other places. The aim of this dissertation is to hone in on the municipality as a space with unique regulations and jurisdictions focused on place marketing, branding, and purchasing power. Of particular interest is how city regulations socially construct space through zoning ordinances.

This selective genealogy of urban geography in the United States provides a brief background to the disciplinary history informing the research project at hand. While broad strokes outline useful introductory material, exploring why and how urban residents advocate for policies supportive of urban agriculture requires a more narrow theoretical grounding. As briefly mentioned in the earlier personal research history, urban policy mobility is the primary concept utilized to explore the research questions posed in this project. The next section offers readers an introduction to this practice pivotal to the formation of modern urban policy.

A Brief Introduction to Urban Policy Mobility

Urban policy mobility is a practice that highlights the relational and territorial nature of cities. Exploring the mechanisms enabling the transfer of policies between municipalities was originally the purview of political science. Rose (1993) called the practice *lesson drawing* and defined it as a "voluntary act of transfer by rational actors working in specific political contexts" (Benson and Jordan 2011, 366). Recognizing that not all lesson drawing is voluntary, Dolwitz and Marsh coined the term *policy transfer* to include coercive forms of transfer. Dolowitz and Marsh's oft cited definition of policy transfer is "a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place" (1996, 344). Research in policy transfer is valuable because it "attends to the way that policies and practices in one context are used to develop policies and practices in other settings" (Hoyt 2006, 223).

While policy transfer may be the domain of political scientists, exploring the diffusion of policy across space and time under a rubric of policy mobility is more suited to geographic inquiry. Policies do not move independently from place to place (McCann 2008). Policy knowledge circulates through relational geographies, and as such this research project adheres to the theoretical framework of urban policy mobility as a relational, spatial, and sociopolitical practice (Cook 2008, McCann 2008, McCann and Ward 2010, 2011, Peck and Theodore 2001, Ward 2006, 2007). As explained by Amin (2007), focusing on the relational (103):

> is no simple displacement of the local by the global, of place by space, of history by simultaneity and flow, of small by big scale, or of the proximate by the remote. Instead, it is a subtle folding together of the distant and the proximate, the virtual and the material, presence and absence, flow and stasis, into a single ontological plane upon which location – a place on the map – has come to be relationally and topologically defined.

Relational geographies evolved from earlier philosophical approaches of absolute space and relative space. Absolute space "exists independently of any object(s) or relations; space is a discrete and autonomous *container*" (Jones 2009, 489, emphasis original). Such fixed thinking does not allow for the ambiguity of reality. To address this weakness, the concept of relative space defines space "in relation to the object(s), and/or processes being considered in space and time" (Jones 2009, 490). Relationships between space and objects are not fixed or defined. Critics of relative space advocated for a relational approach to space that accepts the lack of boundaries between space and the objects and behaviors that previous schools of thought assigned as happening *within* instead of *with* space.

Urban policy mobility is also a spatial and sociopolitical practice because it is a political act that takes place through social means across space and time. Social

practices require interaction between two or more individuals, leading to the connections required for relational practices. Policies are "mobile objects, produced … by various actors, from policy entrepreneurs to bureaucrats, who take them from place to place, translating and implementing as they go" (Prince 2012, 192). The translation necessary for adapting a policy to a particular identified place or territory highlights how policy transfer is both territorial and relational. Policies transferred from other cities must be politically negotiated based on local conditions and situations. Policies that become associated with particular cities also illustrate the territorial nature of urban policy. Examples include Austin for creative culture, Barcelona for urban regeneration, Portland for growth management, and Porto Alegre for participatory budgeting (McCann and Ward 2010).

As Clark (2012) points out "urban policy mobility is not new and cannot simply be confined to particular historical moments" (39). What has changed since the early 1990s is the speed and intensity of urban policy mobility, which Peck and Theodore (2001) call "fast policy transfer" (429). Fast policy transfer is possible due to the conditions that also lead to an increase in geographical research on urban areas: technological advances, increased availability of data, the needs of government, and the local/global connections made possible through globalization. Instead of relying on the telegraphs and railroads of the early 19th century, policy professionals now learn about policies from other places through the Internet and quickly travel by plane to gain new development and governance ideas from other cities. Neoliberal processes also contribute to fast policy transfer through the establishment of "ever more deeply

interconnected, mutually recursive policy relays within an increasingly transnational field of market-orientated regulatory transfer" (Brenner et al. 2010, 185).

Neoliberal economic policies, such as deregulation, free trade, and privation of government services annihilate "space by time to maximize capital accumulation" through the removal of "spatial barriers to capital, commodity, and communication flows," effectively speeding up both policy transfer and the economy (Leitner et al. 2007, 8). In addition to accelerating the pace of policy change, fast policy transfer changes "the very conditions of the policy process so that the paths that policy is on become ever more dependent on new neoliberal solutions – supplied to them by those same 'fast policy' circuits" (Prince 2012, 192). In this manner, fast policy circuits operate as a feedback loop. The relational and territorial aspects of policy transfer also contribute to its feedback nature. Policies are shared through relational networks and then adapted for a particular territory. If the policy adaptations are helpful, the altered policy is often repackaged and shared with the relational network.

Because cities are "the scale at which state policies and practices are particularly sensitive to democratic pressure and local ideals … successful implementation of neoliberal urban policy agendas has been the key to neoliberalization" (Leitner et al. 2007, 2). Prince (2012) points out that market-oriented neoliberal policies are touted as 'best practice' orthodoxy. Best practices are commonly shared through international conferences, journals, meetings, policy tours, reports, seminars, and workshops of the global policy marketplace. An increase in the number of urban policy consultants and "international organizations that encourage or force the adoption of certain policy models" also aid in the quick movement of policies between cities (McCann 2011, 121).

In addition to policy consultants, others including academics, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, politicians, and the staff of non-governmental organizations and think tanks serve as policy transfer agents. These actors share policy ideas through a range of sociomaterial outlets, including "books, reports, documentaries, websites, blogs, press releases, newspaper reports and so on" (Prince 2012, 193). Far from being neutral conduits enabling the transfer of new ideas, policy agents "are sociologically complex actors, located in (shifting) organizational and political fields, whose identities and professional trajectories are often bound up with the policy positions and fixes that they espouse" (Peck and Theodore 2010, 170). How and why citizen advocates act as policy agents are core questions for the case studies presented in this dissertation.

This section began with definitions utilized by political science for exploring the transfer of policy between cities. McCann (2011) criticizes political science for tending to "fall into a literalist trap" of fetishizing the transfer itself (111). Instead, he embraces the more geographically focused idea of policy mobility Attention on mobility places the relational and territorial activities described in this section at the forefront when analyzing the transfer of policy between cities. Geographic thinking "moves beyond political science conceptions by making history and context more central, rather than treating them as background" (Prince 2012, 193). Exploring such complex relations of embodied geographies requires methodological practices that combine and compare "publically accessible materials with the more private stories that make up personal biographies and careers" (Larner and Laurie 2010, 220). Aiming to engage in similar practices, in the next section I review the overarching research methods that guided the policy mobility case studies presented in this dissertation.

Research Methods

In support of cities that are more sustainable than those where we currently live, work, and play, this project is informed by critical urban theory, which "insists that another more democratic, socially just and sustainable form of urbanization is possible, even if such possibilities are currently being suppressed through dominant institutional arrangements, practices and ideologies" (Brenner 2009, 198). Mindful that research can result in reductionism, I strive to be aware of situated knowledges and recognize the limits of objectivity. A concept developed by feminist researchers, situated knowledges are constituted and re-constituted through "social hierarchies, political cultures, economic bases, and cultural understandings" (Wilson 2004, 780). This research project is grounded in a post-structural understanding that methodology and the language employed are "not merely reflective but instead are *constitutive* of social life" (Mansvelt and Berg 2010, 339, emphasis original).

Land use ordinances are the primary control mechanism for the production of urban space. Municipal governments routinely look to policies from other cities to address challenges or create opportunities through zoning. This study answers the call for analysis on *how* and *why* urban policies related to zoning "are transferred and reproduced from place and place and are negotiated politically in various locations" (McCann and Ward 2010, 176). Although most urban policy mobility research focuses on the activities of urban planners and the business elite, this project seeks to explore how the advocacy efforts of everyday citizens relies on knowledge about policies in cities other than their own. To reach this goal, I gathered data on the strategies citizens

utilize to appropriate policy ideas from other urban areas in their efforts to inform local policy change.

To my knowledge, no one has examined the discourse and practices of citizens engaging in policy mobility to influence local policy. In this study I ask why and how citizens look to policies from other cities in their advocacy efforts by focusing on the efforts of individuals and groups concerned with urban agriculture policy. Particular emphasis is placed on ordinances regulating chickens at the household scale. Ordinances allowing hens in residential areas have proliferated in recent years (Bouvier 2012, LaBadie 2008). Demand for food sourced locally, which has risen dramatically over the past decade, helped fuel the desire for urban policies allowing backyard chickens (Alkon 2008). Of interest to this study are individuals who view residential yards as semi-productive rather than merely aesthetic spaces, and who advocate for policies supporting this view.

Understanding how citizens mobilize policy information to advocate for change in land use policy has the potential to contribute to more sustainable cities. This type of inquiry nests within humanistic geography generally and post-structuralism specifically. Cognizant of human agency, geographic research in the humanistic tradition explores "the variations of attachment and meaning" people ascribe to place (DeBres and Sowers 2009, 228). As mentioned in the selective genealogy of urban geography, poststructuralist researchers push back against the idea that theory is separate from reality, favor cultural over economic analysis in trying to understand the complexity of cities, and give priority to discourse analysis over the actions of key actors. Poststructuralist-informed research has allowed explorations of urban "identity,

difference, and representation" over the past 20 to 25 years (Martin et al. 2003, 113). Often of special interest are the social constructions of group identities. While post-structuralism avoids favoring one group over another, Pacione (2003) cautions that a "failure to address the unavoidable real-life question of 'whose is the more important difference among differences' when strategic choices have to be made represents a serious threat to constructing a *practical politics* of difference" (320, emphasis original).

In his urban policy mobility research, Eugene McCann illustrates how a post-structural approach is effective for analyzing the discourses individuals employ to affect urban policy by utilizing an empirical case study. McCann and Ward (2010) argue that "qualitative empirical investigations of case studies are a necessary element in any conceptualization of mobile policy" (176). Case studies help researchers pose how and why questions when the context of contemporary phenomenon does not allow for experimental control. This research method is particularly relevant for understanding the operational connections of complex social phenomena unfolding over time. These processes cannot be teased out by focusing on only frequency or incidence (Yin 1994). Qualitative research, which is "concerned with elucidating human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks," is the methodology of choice for case study research (Winchester and Rofe 2010, 5).

This research project consists of two case studies. The first is a comparative case study of three college towns that passed ordinances allowing backyard chickens. Comparative case studies "tend to share many of the same advantages as longitudinal case studies in that there are opportunities to generate and modify concepts and theory

so that they explain commonalities across cases despite contingencies or context" (Baxter 2010, 92). The second part is an in-depth case study of Oklahoma City, where residents were denied the right to raise backyard chickens on a typical household lot. In each case study, the research process began with archival inquiry based on documents including: community organization reports, advocacy websites, social media, newspaper articles, and official government documents – primarily minutes from city council and advisory committee meetings. I identified individuals through the archival inquiry process who were especially active, vocal, or visible in advocating for ordinances allowing backyard chickens. I invited these individuals to participate in recorded interviews that were subsequently professionally transcribed.

I conducted discourse analysis on archival materials and interview transcripts, which required that I: be thorough in the texts selected, "suspend pre-existing categories," be reflexive, think critically "about the social context" of the texts, code first for organization then again for interpretation, stay alert for signposts of power, notice inconsistencies, and pay attention to silences (Waitt 2010, 220). Coding reveals the themes and patterns in the discursive strategies and sociocultural practices citizens utilize to understand policy from other cities, and how they use this understanding to advocate for urban agriculture through city council meetings and related publicity. Advocacy is a practice that creates and maintains the relational geographies discussed earlier.

I manually coded texts using a grounded theory approach based on emergent themes and patterns discovered while coding. In this type of coding practice, not all the codes are determined in advance. This strategy allows for the addition of new codes as

the need arises. The purpose of coding through a grounded theory lens is "to generate theories from empirical data," while other coding practices are designed to "support a theory or hypothesis" (Cope 2010, 282). Grounded theory calls for engaging in analysis throughout the research process to ensure complete consideration of all possible elements and inform subsequent interviews (Sarantakos 2005).

To ensure validity in determining why and how citizens engage in policy mobility to advocate for ordinances supporting urban agriculture, my research plan must be well designed and conducted with integrity. Careful research design also ensures rigor or work that is trustworthy (Bradshaw and Stratford 2010). The University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board approved the research design for this project (IRB #1731). While this section provided a broad overview of the research methodology employed in the research for this dissertation, additional methodological notes that pertain to the comparative case study and the single-case study are considered in each respective chapter. The subsequent section provides a sketch of the remaining chapters in this dissertation.

Dissertation Overview

In this chapter I offered a selective genealogy of urban geography, introduction to urban policy mobility, and the methodology underpinning this research project. Before presenting the case studies, in Chapter 2 I provide an overview of research in urban agriculture and identify the gap this project aims to fill. A product of and vehicle for citizen engagement, participation in urban agriculture can motivate individuals to engage in community activism and build collective social capital. Studies on these

practices often focus on community gardens and overlook the productive capacity of households.

In Chapter 3 I present the comparative case study of three college towns that passed chicken-keeping ordinances. The towns are Columbia, Missouri; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Norman, Oklahoma. While verifying that citizens and activists engage in policy mobility practices for the purpose of promoting urban agriculture in their towns, through the comparative case study I also confirmed other factors helpful in the quest to advocate for change on the local level. In addition to citizens who push for change, modifications to urban policy are more likely in cities with city employees knowledgeable about a given issue, local politicians supportive of the cause, and advocates who educate a variety of stakeholders on the need for change.

Parts of this research project, particularly Chapter 4, are dependent on the post-structurally informed critical urban theory mentioned earlier in this chapter. Urban perspectives are historically situated and influenced by power relations, which is why research grounded in critical urban theory "emphasizes the politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested and therefore malleable character of urban space" (Brenner 2009, 198). Particular ideologies, both hidden and expressed, informed the individuals who advocated for and against a particular urban agriculture policy change in Oklahoma City. Through the in-depth case study in Chapter 4, I identify and discuss citizen participation and the power relations revealed in the attempt to allow backyard chickens on a typical residential lot. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 5 with the contributions and limitations of this research project and indicate positive developments for the future of urban agriculture in Oklahoma City.

Chapter 2 Urban Agriculture: Where are the Chickens?

Beginning in the 20th century, U.S. farming transitioned from a system based on energy of the sun, people, and animals to a structure dependent upon fossil fuels in the form of machinery, fertilizer, and herbicides. Associated increases in the amount of food grown per farmer resulted in a decrease in the number of farmers needed to provide an adequate amount of food for a growing population. Although fewer people are currently involved in crop production, "the energy it takes to produce, process, distribute, store, and sell food is now far greater than ever before" (De La Salle and Holland 2010, 24). Factors contributing to increased energy use include shipment of foods long distances and the packaging necessary to visually appeal to consumers. One result of this system is municipal waste streams primarily composed of food and beverage packaging. Another negative implication of the current food system is an increase in the number of food contamination incidents (van de Brug et al. 2014). When a single processor handles the majority of a crop grown in a state and the crop is processed in a contaminated facility before distribution across wide distances, situations like the Chipotle Mexican Grill outbreak occur. Almost 50 people in California, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington were infected with *E. coli* O26 after eating at the chain restaurant (CDC 2015b). At least three people in Norman were also infected after eating at the campus area Chipotle.

Urban residents concerned about the safety and sustainability of the current food system are increasingly turning to alternative agriculture to meet their food needs. Alternative agriculture outlets include farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs, food cooperatives, and urban agriculture. In this chapter I offer an

introduction to urban agriculture in North America, followed by a synopsis of the geography of urban agriculture. A thoughtful exploration of livestock as an ingredient in the urban food system is missing from most social science and geographic considerations of urban agriculture. I am particularly interested in the lack of literature pertaining to chickens in the city, which is a gap I aim to contribute in filling with this dissertation.

Food in the City

Urban agriculture was a "pertinent feature of urban support systems" for most of urban history on a global scale (Barthel and Isendahl 2013, 224). Researchers demonstrate evidence of urban farming in unrelated times and cities (pre-Columbian Mayan cities and medieval Constantinople) to illustrate how urban agriculture contributed to resilience, which is the ability to withstand or recover from hardship. The importance of urban agriculture to resilience is not limited to pre-Industrial cities and can still be seen today. An example in close proximity to the U.S. is Cuba. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, so did the Cuban economy. After losing access to the fossil fuel imports necessary to support an agribusiness system based primarily on the production of sugar for export, which provided the money necessary to buy imported food, urban Cubans turned to raised bed organic urban gardening for food production (Ellinger and Braley 2010).

A 1996 United Nations survey identified over 40 types of urban agriculture, including kitchen and market gardens, aquaculture, and livestock operations "as varied as cattle, chickens, snails, and silkworms" (Mougeot 2006, 5). Operations range from

subsistence level to commercial enterprises growing food year-round in greenhouses and specially outfitted warehouses. Urban agriculture is defined as "the growing, processing, and distribution of food and other products through intensive plant cultivation and animal husbandry in and around cities" (Brown et al. 2002, 3). A common perception that urban agriculture supports urban sustainability assisted the current movement in transitioning from the fringe of society to a mainstream phenomenon often covered by conventional media. The next sections consider the growing popularity of urban agriculture, entities supporting urban agriculture, connections to urban planning, and the community aspects of urban agriculture.

Growth of Urban Agriculture

Many individuals chose to participate in alternative food systems, including food production at the household level, in response to the potential crises possible in industrialized agriculture. For example, factory farms that house thousands of livestock in confined spaces not only emit large amounts of greenhouse gases, but also increase the threat of disease and risk polluting the surrounding environment with large volumes of animal waste. Another potential crisis is increased food insecurity created through the economic pitfalls of an "increasingly tenuous market economy" (Wood et al. 2010, 72). As previously mentioned, during the 1990s Cubans unable to participate in the global market economy responded by increasing the production of food in residential spaces (Buchmann 2009).

Some of the individuals interested in personal food production are also motivated by a desire to resist the transgenic crops common in corporate agriculture,

which are encouraged under neoliberalism, a "class-driven project of state restructuring" privileging markets over social needs through deregulation (Potter and Tilzey 2007, 1290). In this environment, the agriculture sector has become increasingly capitalized and dominated by transnational biotechnology corporations focused on creating genetically modified plants capable of resisting pests and tolerant of herbicides (Pechlaner and Otero 2008). In Europe, genetically modified food ingredients must be labeled. The U.S lacks similar requirements, further motivating some individuals concerned about the safety of these crops to produce as much food as possible in their living environment.

In the Global South, where urban agriculture is more ubiquitous than in the Global North, "urban agriculture is anywhere and everywhere that people can find even the smallest space to plant a few seeds" (Mougeot 2006, 5). Yet even in the Global North, urban food production takes place in a variety of spaces including: community gardens, household yards, greenhouses, patio containers, parks, prisons, public squares, railroad right-of-ways, rooftops, schools, street medians, utility easements, vacant lots, window boxes, and even the lawn White House during the Obama administration (Bartling 2012). In addition to individuals who are growing an increasing amount of food for personal consumption, many restaurants are joining the vegetable gardening movement. Currently eight New York City restaurants, six San Francisco restaurants, and ten St. Louis restaurants are growing some of their own food.

Most of these restaurants focus on growing salad and herb crops, similar to two restaurants in one of the case study sites of this dissertation, Oklahoma City. Both Oklahoma City restaurants growing some of their own produce are in the Bricktown

entertainment district near downtown. The Deep Deuce location of The Wedge Pizzeria is in an area where any extra space is typically devoted to parking, yet the restaurant choose to use a fair amount of their open space for a garden with multiple raised beds. The former Nonna's of Bricktown aimed to achieve nearly year-around production of herbs and some vegetables; therefore, their gardening operations were located in a network of greenhouses located a couple of miles away from the restaurant (Jones 2013). For many of the other urban restaurants growing some of their own produce, rooftops are a popular gardening location.

A phenomenon related to the growth of urban agriculture is the local food movement. Individuals who prefer food grown in their region, often defined as a 100- or 150-mile radius, are called *locavores*. Selected as the 2007 Oxford American Dictionary Word of the Year, locavores argue that "fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better" (https://blog.oup.com/2007/11/locavore/). Restaurants that cater to locavores by sourcing food locally are called farm-to-fork or farm-to-table. Chefs from these restaurants shop alongside locavores in the growing number of farmers markets across the U.S. These markets allow farmers to directly market their crops to consumers who appreciate the ability to ask farmers about growing practices. Over the past 40 years in New York City, a farmers market program known as Greenmarket grew "from a single location with seven vendors to 195 vendors selling at fifty-three markets across all five boroughs" (Kornfeld 2014, 345). Lyson (2005) refers to this type of "locally organized system of agriculture and food production characterized by networks of producers who are bound together by place" as civic agriculture (92).

Support for Urban Agriculture

Community organizations, government agencies, and numerous associations promote urban agriculture through a variety of media including popular books, web sites, documentaries, television shows, and print publications. Promotion often focuses on urban agriculture as a component of urban sustainability. The National Science Foundation defines urban sustainability as the improvement of social and economic conditions while maintaining environmental quality (Braun 2005). Urban agriculture contributes to each of these sustainability goals as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Connections between Urban Agriculture & Sustainability

Environmental	Social	Economic
Reduced food transportation	Food sovereignty	Food security
Increased urban biodiversity	Improved health	Income generation
Food packaging reduction	Community resilience	Improved land utilization
Increased composting	Educational benefits	Crisis protection
Energy savings	Connection to nature	Job creation
Resource conservation	Cultural identity support	Adapt to climate change

Note: These connections are illustrative and not exhaustive

Federal support for current forms of urban agriculture began in 1996 with the U.S. Community Food Security Act (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). This act provided "federal funds in several renewals of the Farm Bill through the Community Foods Projects Competitive Grant Program for growing and marketing food in cities, nutrition education, and different forms of linkages between urban and periurban growers and low-income families" (Pothukuchi 2015, 425). The Community Food Security Act was the lobbying outcome of a national group known as the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), which was composed of over 300 organizations fighting against hunger combined with advocates for community development and sustainable

agriculture. The CFSC remained active until 2012, when their operations were turned over to the partner organizations that were members of the coalition (Ciciurkaite 2015).

More recently, food policy councils and coalitions have been particularly effective at promoting and supporting geographically focused food systems, including urban agriculture. The members of these councils generally include community activists and members of the local, regional, or state food system (farmers, processors, and distributers). The two most common advocacy movements involved in food councils are the sustainable agriculture and food justice campaigns, and as such the purpose of most food policy councils is promoting food systems mirroring urban sustainability ideals like those in Table 1: systems that are ecologically sound, economically productive, and help achieve social cohesion or justice (Hodgson 2011). The sustainable agriculture movement promotes urban agriculture for the purpose of self-sufficiency. While this strategy seems to align with the food justice movement's goal of ensuring access to healthy food for underserved populations, scholars often criticize the sustainability food movement for ignoring social justice outcomes (Alkon and Norgaard 2009, Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). Nevertheless, food policy councils ranging in structure from governmental to grassroots have experienced success in ensuring "access to healthy, affordable, sustainable, and culturally acceptable food" (Blay-Palmer et al. 2014, 186).

With generally little funding, instead relying on volunteer human capital, the typical food policy council strives to analyze the existing food system and communicate this information to cultivate partnerships and advocate for policy changes to "address gaps in a community's food system" (Hodgson 2011, 7). The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future maintains a directory of food

policy councils and coalitions in North America (examples listed in Table 2). As of summer 2015, there were 282 such organizations: 215 American (up from 31 in 2005), 61 Canadian, and 6 Tribal Nations (Center for a Livable Future 2015). The first U.S. food policy council, the Knoxville-Knox County Food Policy Council, coincides with one of the sites in comparative case study discussed in Chapter 3.

Table 2: Sample North American Food Policy Councils/Coalitions

Urban (22%)	County, Regional, or State	Both City and County (13%)
Atlanta	Alabama Food Policy Council	Cleveland-Cuyahoga County
Dallas	Northern Colorado	Greater Grand Rapids
Detroit	Orange County	Saint Paul-Ramsey County
Oakland	Puget Sound Regional Council	Santa Fe (city & county)
Toronto	Southern Nevada	Seattle-King County
Vancouver	Utica/Oneida	Tulsa (city & county)

Percentages provided by the Center for a Livable Future

In addition to the promoters of urban agriculture already mentioned, significant support for the field comes from large non-profit organizations and foundations. An example is the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 for the welfare of children and youth. One of the largest philanthropic foundations in the U.S., WKKF has funded the following recent projects aiming to increase access to healthy produce for children and families in low-income neighborhoods (W.K. Kellogg Foundation):

- $5 million over five years to Growing Power in Milwaukee, WI for community food centers in Detroit, New Orleans, Taos, and the Mississippi Delta region of Arkansas and Mississippi
- Multiple grants to Well House in Grand Rapids, MI for "access to healthy food, housing and community engagement for vulnerable populations through a Housing First and community-supported urban farming project"

- La Cosecha, a Community Supported Agriculture organization in the South Valley of Albuquerque, NM

WKKF also funds an annual *Food and Community Gathering* for hundreds of international food movement leaders. In 2014, the conference was held in Detroit with site visits to the city's urban farms and food hubs. According to de la Salle and Howard (2010), food hubs bring together "a wide spectrum of land uses, design strategies, and programs focused on food to increase access, visibility, and the experience of sustainable urban and regional food systems within a city" (150).

While urban agriculture is on the rise again, reasons for the virtual disappearance of agriculture from the urban landscape after the North American victory gardens movement are not well understood. Tornaghi (2014) points out, "we do not know how, in specific historical and geographical contexts, urban farming has been banned from urban settlements," although thoughts on the planning field's role in the situation are mentioned below (555). The arguments of individuals who currently oppose policies reinstating urban agriculture in residential areas are somewhat better known and seem to be similar across the U.S. Opposition to the production of food in yards primarily centers around the American ideal of perfectly manicured lawns and gardening as a leisure activity (Robbins 2007). Going against widely held residential aesthetics is viewed as a threat to property values. When opposing chickens in residential areas, citizens typically cite noise, odor, the spread of disease, and attraction of pests and predators (Pollock et al. 2012, Salkin 2011, LaBadie 2008).

Even though numerous citizens oppose urban agriculture, I cannot find a group organized for the purpose of fighting local food initiatives. On the flip side, associations

participating in and supporting urban agriculture are plentiful. In a 2013 survey conducted in 84 cities in the U.S. and Canada, McClintock and Simpson (2014) found 251 groups "involved in urban agriculture" (1). The groups vary in size, practice, and purpose, yet many face common challenges in access to funding, labor, and space. While many strategies could be employed to address these challenges, increased space for urban agriculture requires the support of urban planning and municipal governing bodies. The next section considers the connections between urban planning and urban agriculture in North America.

Planning for Urban Agriculture

Up until roughly the last decade, agriculture was viewed as a rural subject and not the purview of urban planning. Meanwhile, cities began "moving ahead of academic research" to emerge as "prominent food chain actors" (Sonnino 2009, 428 and 432). In 2007 the American Planning Association sought to overcome the failure of engaging with the food system by publishing a *Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning*, followed by a special issue of the monthly magazine *Planning* titled "The Food Factor" in 2009 (Morgan 2009, 341). While some urban planners are currently among the strongest proponents of urban agriculture, the field of urban planning is also primarily responsible for the decrease in urban agriculture during the early 20th century. The modernist mindset that informed urban planning during the early decades of the 1900s distinctly viewed agriculture "as obsolete in futuristic and normative understanding of the city" (Barthel and Isendahl 2013, 224). This mindset has changed and over the past ten years the number of urban planning programs offering a stand-

alone course on food system planning has increased 300 percent (Greenstein et al. 2015).

Pothukuchi (2015) aptly states that food planning is linked "to place and politics, the continuity of institutional structures and their logics, and the persistence of socioeconomic conditions" (419). In her research, *Five Decades of Community Food Planning in Detroit: City and Grassroots, Growth and Equity*, Pothukuchi calls on food planners to consider the historical context and needs of the city in question. A need in supporting public health for urban residents is access to healthy and fresh food, something lacking in areas known as 'food deserts.' Simply stated, a food desert is a neighborhood "in which healthy food is expensive and/or difficult to find" (Shannon 2014, 248). Food deserts are typically associated with low-income areas that have few or no grocery stores but ample convenience stores and fast food restaurants. Planners have responded to food deserts by issuing permits for street vendors who sell fresh fruits and vegetables, "zoning changes and financial incentives" for supermarkets, and most relevant to urban agriculture, permitting community gardens (Sonnino 2009, 430). Although planners are certainly important to the development of community gardens, a citizen-based, "bottom-up approach stands a greater chance of success because community members are involved in the planning process from the beginning and therefore, have increased interest invested in the garden" (Corrigan 2011, 1239). Additional aspects of community gardens will be considered in the following sections: *Community Aspects* and *Geography of Urban Agriculture*.

Improving food security through urban agriculture requires that city governments and planners play an active role in the process. Increasing the food

security in a community also relies on financial investment, labor inputs, and public commitment (Grewal and Grewal 2012, 1). Once these supports are in place, the practical and physical requirements necessary for urban agriculture include zoning ordinances that are friendly to gardens and suitable soil, space, sunlight, and water. In cities with industrial or other environmentally damaging histories, "not all vacant land is suitable for food production" (Mougeot 2006, 51). Nathan McClintock (2012) documented this challenge in Oakland, California, where clusters of sites in the city's oldest area have lead contamination due to a "historical nexus of industry, warehousing, and transportation" (465). The area, now home to predominately low-income and African American populations, faces a contemporary nexus of economic, environmental, and food justice challenges.

Urban agriculture is not a new phenomenon. Sites such as Machu Picchu in Peru contain evidence that agriculture thrived in ancient cities. What has changed is the scale. There are currently 31 megacities (cities with over 10 million inhabitants) in the world (Glenn 2017). With current technology, it is impossible to feed this many people with the land and resources available in these cities. One answer may be food production from the exterior facades and interior walls of buildings. While this urban agriculture research agenda has lurked on the fringes for the past decade, one project aims to bring it to light. Growing Power, the national urban agriculture non-profit organization and land trust mentioned previously, is currently in the fundraising stages for a vertical farm at their headquarters in Milwaukee (Allen 2014).

In addition to food production, urban agriculture provides other important ecosystem services of interest to urban planners. Among these services are carbon

storage, improved air quality, reduced storm water run-off, and soil enrichment (McLain et al. 2012). Such environmental improvements are not the only benefits provided by urban agriculture. The next section outlines the well-documented social benefits associated with urban agriculture.

Community Aspects

Urban agriculture is "both the product of citizen engagement and the vehicle for citizen engagement" (Ransford 2010, 187). A successful urban agriculture system requires citizen advocacy for policy implementation, public involvement in system governance, and participation in the system as a producer, consumer, or both. System sustainability hinges on widespread participation in opposition to the current arrangement of industrial agriculture production where most of agriculture is invisible because of the impersonal natures of distance and mechanization. In addition to the benefits already mentioned in this chapter, participation in urban agriculture provides opportunities for community building, education, recreation, and therapy. Many of these benefits are amplified when community gardens are allowed in neighborhood and community parks.

Studies show that community gardens are significantly associated with fruit and vegetable consumption (Litt et al. 2011), physical health in older adults (Park et al. 2009), and increased physical and mental health (Wakefield et al. 2007). In addition to these positive personal effects, community gardens also help build social capital (Hancock 2001), enable greater neighborhood attachment (Comstock et al. 2010), empower social transformation (Pudup 2008), and promote community activism

(Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). In a study of 67 gardeners from 29 community gardens in Denver, Teig et al. (2009) found that community gardens enabled the following social processes and activities: civic engagement, community building, collective decision-making, establishment of social norms, leadership possibilities, mutual trust, organized neighborhood activities, reciprocity, social connections, and volunteer opportunities.

One method of accelerating community gardens on vacant urban lots is through guerrilla gardening. Individuals who engage in guerrilla gardening plant gardens without permission on land they do not own. The practice is designed to "reconsider land ownership," especially on neglected or underutilized urban lots (Metcalf and Widener 2011, 1242). In a participatory case study of guerrilla gardening in Ontario, Canada, researchers found that guerrilla gardening encouraged "alternative methods of spatial design, land-use and community-based action" (Crane et al. 2012, 18). These are each important components for increasing urban agriculture in North America, along with a citizenry educated in effective gardening practices.

Many residents of North American cities are only two or three generations removed from living in a place where food is grown, both urban and rural; however, knowledge of food is far from given in today's society. Comprehensive knowledge includes both the full variety of fruits and vegetables and how to grow them. An urban agriculture movement to address this situation is the creation of vegetable gardens on the grounds of schools ranging from preschool to college (Brown et al. 2002). One such example here at the University of Oklahoma is the *Healthy Sooners Garden*. This gardening education program "offers participants an opportunity to learn where their

food comes from and helps them to be better stewards of the environment" (http://www.ou.edu/far/facilities-programs/ouwellness-garden.html). Based on my brief review of pre-college gardening programs, the most successful incorporate gardening knowledge into the curriculum and the vegetables harvested are served in the school cafeteria.

One of the more important community roles of urban agriculture is addressing food security in high poverty areas. Badami and Ramankutty (2015) find that it would take less than two percent of urban land in the U.S. and Canada to meet the vegetable needs of the urban poor in each country. Numerous community organizations such as those funded by the W.K. Kellogg foundation are focused on addressing food security through urban agriculture. One example, Growing Power, "runs five urban farms" in Chicago, in addition to promoting food security through life skills training programs, produce marketing projects, and school gardens (Block et al. 2012, 210).

A primary challenge for urban agriculture in cities with high land costs is the relatively low prices garnered by food crops. Advantages mitigating this challenge include: access to niche markets, generally warmer growing conditions, convenient access to water and organic waste, and numerous opportunities to earn supplemental income through other means (Larder 2010). Beyond the environmental, health, and social benefits of urban agriculture, Larder (2010) finds that the best chances for financial success lie in "the average North American city, where small-plot production with a minimum of labour and equipment can produce the best financial results" (175). As described in this section, continuing to grow small-plot urban agriculture requires

support from the community and urban planning professionals; however, in turn urban agriculture offers a multitude of benefits back to the community.

The Geography of Urban Agriculture

Urban geography was slow to embrace this research area considering the increasing popularity of urban agriculture and the potential it holds to alter the urban landscape and support sustainability. Nonetheless, geographic studies of urban agriculture can be found for both the Global North and the Global South. In many of these studies, the number of non-geography references outweighs those from within the discipline, demonstrating both the interdisciplinary aspect of urban geography mentioned in Chapter 1 and the marginalization of the topic within human geography (Tornaghi 2014). While far from exhaustive, this section offers a review of the urban agriculture research produced by geographers, focusing primarily on the past decade.

Fully summarizing geographic explorations of urban agriculture requires that I expand upon the initial North American focus of this chapter. Several studies take place on the African continent, such as Godfrey Hampwaye's study on the role urban agriculture plays in alleviating poverty. Focusing on four Zambian urban areas, Hampwaye (2013) illustrates the multifunctional nature of urban agriculture and how the practice not only increases household income, but how it also "plays a critical role in household food security" (Hampwaye 2013, 8). Employing a quantitative approach not often seen in the geography of urban agriculture, Chu-xiong et al. (2011) developed an index based on econometric models to evaluate the ecological security of urban

agriculture. Applying the index to Shanghai, China revealed an urban agriculture resource growth rate of over 10% annually from 1999 to 2008 (Chu-xiong et al. 2011).

Geographers often approach urban agriculture related research utilizing a socioeconomic lens. In a project focused on the fast growing creative-food industry in Toronto, Donald and Blay-Palmer (2006) describe how consumer demand for local, fresh, and ethnic food creates local food systems that are economically sound and provide opportunities for "social inclusion in everyday cultural production, distribution, and consumption" (1914). In a similar vein but not limited to one geographic area, McClintock (2010) considers the socioeconomic aspects of urban agriculture globally by employing an expanded metabolic rift framework to understand the interrelated ecological, individual, and social dimensions of farming in the city. The Marxist concept of a metabolic rift is a disruption in the interactions between humans and nature (McMichael 2009). McClintock argues that while the ecological benefits of urban agriculture are frequently recognized, a full appreciation of the practice also requires consideration of the benefits offered to individuals and societies.

Gardens

Much of the initial geographic research related to urban agriculture focused on community gardens. New York City, in particular, was and is a popular research site (Smith and Kurtz 2003, Staeheli et al. 2002, Von Hassell 2005). The current community garden movement in New York City began in the 1970s as a reaction to the city's fiscal crisis. Gardens were established on lots with minimal market value in low income neighborhoods to serve as space for social activities and food production (Schmelzkopf

1995). Officials from both city and federal government initially supported the community garden movement. However, improving economic conditions and the associated increased land values in the 1990s led the city to begin favoring the demands of development over the amenities provided by community gardens (Schmelzkopf 2002). Despite challenges from the city, in 2015 New York City had more than 1,000 community gardens, 80% of which engaged in food production (Reynolds 2015).

Expanding beyond New York City, Knigge (2009) explored the intersections of private and public service through community gardens in Buffalo, New York. Like the gardens in New York City, Buffalo's community gardens are generally located on marginalized sites and "supply fresh food in urban neighborhoods while serving as spaces of community building, engagement, and support" (Knigge 2009, 45). On the support front, several of the community gardening organizations in Buffalo offer social support services historically associated with the state, including after-school care, coat drives, clothing, emergency services, food pantries, holiday gift baskets, job placement, refugee services, soup kitchens, tutoring and other youth services.

The U.S. has a rich history of turning to gardens in times of crisis, exemplified by the victory garden movements of both World Wars. Gardening during these periods was perceived as a patriotic response to war driven food rationing (Naylor 2012). Ghose and Pettygrove (2014) view modern day community gardens as similar "spaces of democratic citizenship," albeit often motivated by contesting rather than supporting the state (1092). In the Harambee neighborhood of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, through the act of "constructing and maintaining place in the form of community gardens, groups may enact place-based collective identities and assert claims to space" (Ghose and

Pettygrove 2014, 1098). These community gardening practices allow resident participation in the collective social capital described in the earlier *Community Aspects* section.

Studying community gardens as a type of urban commons under neoliberalism, Eizenberg (2011) illustrates how gardens in New York City are "part of a wider phenomenon of urban contestation by which space is utilized to voice and fight for alternative socio-political arrangements" (5). The gardens serve as spaces of cultural emancipation for the groups most active in community gardening, Latina/o/x[1] (primarily Puerto Rican) and African Americans. In the Latina/o/x communities, gardens serve as important social spaces for community development while African American community gardens focus more on food production for self-sufficiency. In both types of gardens, produce that is ethnically significant but expensive or difficult to find are the crops of choice.

On the international front, Rosol (2011) describes how community gardens can support rather than contest neoliberal urban policy. Through the promotion of community gardens, Berlin (Germany), is outsourcing "former local state responsibilities for public services and urban public infrastructure" by utilizing volunteer labor to design, create, and maintain public green space (Rosol 2011, 1-2). In Germany, civic engagement is primarily an activity of the middle class; therefore, relying on volunteers results in spaces privileging the desires of this social class. A broader and more problematic outcome is how these subjectivities result in fewer resources for neighborhoods with greater needs but fewer engaged citizens.

[1] Following the example of Monzó (2016), I use the term Latinx to include subgroup individuals from all gender and sexual identities.

Through a political ecological lens, urban vegetable gardens in Barcelona illustrate how "different social groups create different landscapes with different visual and symbolic characteristics" (Domene and Saurí 2007, 297). Vegetable gardening in Barcelona is undertaken by primarily working class retirees in contrast to the lawns and "lavish private gardens of the rich" that enjoy greater social appeal (Domene and Saurí 2007, 288). In contrast, on the west coast of the U.S., some middle- and upper-class homeowners are eschewing lawns in favor of organic vegetable gardens; however, the gardens are planted, harvested, and maintained by private companies in a scheme Naylor (2012) describes as *hired gardens*. These hired gardens redefine yards as spaces of both consumption and production, as opposed to lawns that are merely spaces of consumption, allowing homeowners "to tap into new ways of accessing food using their private property" (490). The key word here is 'new' because the individuals who have hired gardens almost always have other means of accessing fresh and healthy fruits, herbs, and vegetables.

Employing the phrase "organized garden project" in lieu of community garden, Pudup (2008) highlights gardening projects designed to "produce new individual and collective subjectivities" for populations disadvantaged by capitalist restructuring under neoliberalism (1228). Case studies of an organic gardening program for the San Francisco county jail and Alice Water's Edible School Yard project at the Martin Luther King Middle School in Berkeley, California, demonstrate the various outcomes of such projects. While the jail-based project produces citizens capable of resisting neoliberal circumstances and oppressive identities, the school yard project yields citizens disciplined by the cultural ideals of a countercultural elite focused on

"consumer choice in the marketplace" as a right in need of defense under global capitalism (Pudup 2008, 1238). Both organized garden projects are designed to "cultivate specific kinds of citizen-subjects;" however, the non-voluntary (for students) school yard project aims to produce consumer citizens, while the voluntary jail-based garden focus on vocation to provide productive life alternatives for its participants (Pudup 2008, 1238).

Hayes-Conroy (2010) disagrees with Pudup that school garden and cooking programs merely reinforce consumer-based neoliberal outcomes. Focusing on the material agency of school garden participants in Berkeley and Nova Scotia, she highlights how "the force of neoliberalism … is present, but also that it is hybrid and partial" (Hayes-Conroy 2010, 90). With some freedom to (re)make garden and kitchen spaces their own, students were empowered to engage in creativity that led to the formation of both personal and collective subjectivities. Instead of simply becoming responsible consumer citizens, many of the students identified the role of social welfare programs, discussed broader economic structures, and recognized the role of politics in supporting healthy food choices.

Critical Geography of Urban Agriculture

Critical geography is well suited for exploring issues of food security, justice, and race in urban agriculture. Climate change, speculation in food commodity markets, increasing demographic pressures, and energy prices drive global food insecurity (Tornaghi 2014). Urban agriculture is often offered as a promising tool for addressing gaps in food security. To assess the potential of household gardens in supporting food

security, Kortright and Wakefield (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with gardeners in Toronto, Canada. The results of the study confirmed that urban agriculture supports food security, in this case by "encouraging a more nutritious diet" for gardeners regardless of income level (Kortright and Wakefield 2011, 39).

Gottlieb and Fisher (1996) trace food justice in the U.S. to the "civil rights orientation of the anti-hunger groups" of the 1960s and 1970s (196). During this time, Black power organizations such as the Black Panther Party became well known for addressing urban childhood nutrition more effectively than the U.S. government. In fact, the Black Panther's Free Breakfast for Children Program "was both the model and impetus for all federally funded school breakfast programs in existence within the United States today" (Heynen 2009, 411). Rather than focusing on individual needs, food security is a "*community-based* and prevention-oriented framework" (Gottlieb and Fisher 1996, 196, emphasis original).

Food sovereignty is a concept related to food security. Originally a term applied at the state level, Block et al. (2012) describe local food sovereignty as the right of "individuals and communities to define their own food system, to produce food in a safe manner, to regulate production, and to choose their own level of self-reliance" (205). Examining food sovereignty in two Chicago neighborhoods classified as food deserts, Block et al. conducted a case study of two community organizations where organizers tackle food access by utilizing tools different from the typical strategy of bringing in new supermarkets. One organization focused on increasing the amount of produce available in neighborhood markets, while the other addressed the problem of food access through urban agriculture by establishing allotment gardens. Only the latter

solution, which gives control over some of the land in the neighborhood to the residents, addresses the food sovereignty description above (Block et al. 2012).

Arguing that "work on food deserts is a spatialized form of neoliberal paternalism that bounds health problems within low-income communities," Shannon (2014) recommends political ecology and critical GIS for providing "alternative analyses of the urban food landscape" (248). The typical food desert solution of increased supermarket access is a neoliberal response because it focuses on residents as consumers without taking into account broader societal and economic injustices. It is also paternalistic because it assumes that planning and public health professionals know better than the neighborhood what is best for the community. Instead of pathologizing the neighborhoods classified as food deserts, the food justice movement seeks to create sustainable food systems designed to "empower communities of color" and "improve the food sovereignty of low-income communities" (Shannon 2014, 258). To be effective in these efforts, Ramírez (2015) argues that food organizations need to shift their power structures to "de-center the white actor as presumed practitioner of community food work" (2).

Through a two-year study in New York City, Reynolds (2015) found that while urban agriculture may alleviate symptoms of food injustice, it failed to disrupt the "social and political structures" necessary to fully achieve social justice (243). Evidence of this failure includes the race and class based disparities that exist in New York City's urban agriculture system (243). For example, even though a majority of gardeners in the city are African American or Latina/o/x, popular media over-represents the involvement of white residents in urban agriculture. A more troubling finding is that urban

agriculture groups with white leaders were generally able to raise "larger amounts of funding to support their operations" than organizations headed by non-white individuals (Reynolds 2015, 250). Cohen and Reynolds (2015) aptly summarize the situation this way, "significant disparities in access to resources make the urban agriculture system in New York unequal and constrain the efforts of some farms and gardens," reinforcing broad societal disparities (103).

In a study of the gardening practices of migrants in Lisbon and London, Cabannes and Raposo (2013) illustrate how urban agriculture transforms "cities into productive spaces, challenging their conventional role as a space of consumption" under neoliberal urbanism (248). Other scholars more critical of urban agriculture describe it as reinforcing rather than contesting neoliberalization (Guthman 2008, Holt-Giménez and Wang 2011). Urban agriculture shifts the social safety net for food provisioning from the state to non-profit organizations organizing and funding projects in neighborhoods experiencing market failures. While well intentioned, the services these organizations provide are inherently uneven across space and time. McClintock (2014) calls for a more nuanced view that recognizes the benefits of urban agriculture while acknowledging how it supports neoliberalism - "even if urban agriculture programmes fail to affect structural change and ultimately underwrite neoliberalisation, they nevertheless buffer society against market excess and failure; indeed, they would not arise if they did not serve this function" (McClintock 2014, 158).

The number of people (100,000 in 2010) on allotment garden waiting lists in the United Kingdom illustrates the growing popularity of urban agriculture in the Global North (Tornaghi 2014). Perhaps influenced by this level of popularity and the many

positive aspects of the practice, urban agriculture is typically "portrayed as benevolent and unproblematic," leaving "many potentially unjust dynamics" unexplored (Tornaghi 2014, 552). To remedy this situation Tornaghi recommends five possible research agendas: the exclusionary aspects of urban agriculture in the Global North, policy issues affecting urban agriculture, how urban agriculture can address food security, tools necessary to improve the communication between urban agriculture activists and policy makers, and the role of urban agriculture in alternative models for built and social environments. Critical urban geography is well suited to address these gaps, as well as the urban agriculture research gap identified in the next section.

Urban Chicken Social Science Research

As previously mentioned, many geographic considerations of urban agriculture in North America focus on community gardens, with almost no attention paid to urban chickens. A notable geographic study outside the North American context is a case study on "gender-species intersectionality" in Botswana. In this study Hovorka (2012) demonstrates how dominant hierarchies "shape the subjectivities, material realities, relationships, and daily existence of both human and animals" to position women with chickens and men with cattle (875). This positioning is problematic for women's power relations because cattle are privileged in Botswanan space, culture, and economy.

A lack of recent geographic research on food production at the household scale in general is evident in the Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting programs (http://www.aag.org). Searching the 2013 AAG sessions using the keyword "garden" revealed that nine of 16 presentations focused on school, public, or

community gardens, compared to only two centered on residential food production. Of the 10 garden presentations in 2014, four were on community gardens and three focused on household food production. The meetings in 2015 and 2016 both had 26 garden sessions, with 13 and 20 community garden presentations respectively. Each year had only two household food production garden presentations. Searching for the keyword "urban agriculture" added two additional presentations in 2013 and one in 2014 focused on residential level agriculture. In a 2016 presentation abstract titled *Growing Cultures: the cultivation of emergent ecological knowledge by ethnic minority home food gardeners*, Ananth Gopal said it best, "In the Global North, interest in urban agriculture, especially community gardens in thriving. Home food gardening however, as a practice, is almost overlooked" (http://meridian.aag.org/callforpapers/program/AbstractDetail.cfm?AbstractID=72029).

None of the AAG Annual Meeting presentations from 2013 to 2016 focused on residential chickens. Presentation abstracts that mention backyard chickens or poultry for each of the four years in questions are by the same presenter, Jennifer Blecha from San Francisco State University. Her research investigates the regulation of residential livestock slaughter in U.S. cities, which considers other animals in addition to chickens. The next sections present social science research centered on urban chickens from fields other than geography.

Chickens in the City.

Household food production is viewed as increasing urban sustainability. Urban agriculture typically relies less on fossil fuels than the industrialized agriculture system,

which is dependent on oil for fertilization, pest control, and transportation. Chickens consume garden pests and plant-based food waste, in return providing highly effective garden fertilizer (Wood et al. 2010). Moreover, backyard chickens provide fresh, healthy, package-free eggs, in addition to serving educational, entertainment, and companionship needs. It is worth noting; however, that too much companionship with chickens has its drawbacks, as was seen in recent outbreaks of salmonella due to the number of people who coddle and kiss their pet chickens (CDC 2015a).

Recognizing that many city-dwellers "know little or nothing about chickens," Bouvier (2012) summarizes some helpful background information about these social birds (10887). After two years of peak production, hens generally continue to lay eggs for another three to four years. Positively affected by the increased light of longer days, chickens lay more eggs in the spring and summer than the fall and winter. Eggs from chickens who live in small flocks that are allowed to forage for grass and insects are significantly more nutritious than store-bought eggs. The average lifespan for hens is four to eight years, although some chickens may live for 15 to 20 years. Many people are concerned about chicken waste; however, chickens produce three times less waste than dogs, and unlike canine waste, chicken manure is an excellent garden fertilizer. Also, chickens "have a homing instinct to roost and sleep at night," and they go to sleep around sundown (Bouvier 2012, 10894). Chickens require a sturdy coop for predator protection. Coops should be well ventilated and cleaned regularly to prevent odor.

A cross-sectional study conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Animal Health Monitoring System provides examples of backyard chicken flocks in U.S. cities. The study sites were Denver, Los Angeles, and Miami, where

median flock sizes were 5, 11, and 19, respectively (Beam et al. 2013, 1). More than three-fourths of the flocks were comprised of egg-laying breeds of chickens. A common misperception about backyard chickens is that they are likely to spread disease; however, after a comprehensive scientific literature review Pollock et al. (2012) report that the risk of pathogen transmission from backyard chicken flocks "appears to be low and does not present a greater threat" to public health than dogs and cats (741).

Bartling (2012) finds four general categories of reasons that advocates argue for backyard chickens: ecology, education, improved health, and relief from traditional modes of consumption. While interest in urban agriculture is growing, McClintock et al. (2014) recognize a gap in the literature characterizing the ownership and management of urban livestock. To address this gap, the researchers administered a web-based survey completed by "134 urban livestock owners from 48 different U.S. municipalities" (427). While respondents reported a diversity of reasons for owning livestock, the most common motivations were environmental and social benefits. Another commonality evident in the survey results is that "owners often consider their animals more as pets than as livestock in the traditional agriculture sense" (McClintock et al. 2014, 437). The majority of survey participants also favor limited livestock regulation, in contrast to the prescriptive ordinances being developed in most cities.

Chicken Policy

Common barriers to urban agriculture in U.S. cities are ordinances and zoning regulations that prohibit the practice. This obstacle is especially pervasive when it comes to raising livestock in municipal areas. Reviewing Canadian urban agriculture

policies from ten cities in Ontario and British Columbia and interviewing key informants from six of the municipalities, Huang and Drescher (2015) found that community advocacy and city council support are the most important factors in encouraging cities to develop policies allowing urban agriculture and livestock. Although each of the municipalities in the study supports urban agriculture, "they vary significantly in their approach" (Huang and Drescher 2015, 1).

With data from 22 U.S. cities that had recently updated their ordinances and/or zoning to allow urban livestock, Butler (2012) analyzed how municipal codes are used to regulate livestock in the city. To synthesize analysis across municipalities, Butler utilized chickens as the example animal type. Common regulation strategies are prohibiting "certain types of animals" (e.g., rosters), defining the zones where livestock are allowed, setting "site-level restrictions," and defining the requirements for livestock housing and management (193). Similar to the Huang and Drescher study above, Butler noted that even though regulation commonalities can be found, no two cities regulate livestock in an identical manner, even though the overarching motivation of each municipality is to limit livestock.

Focusing specifically on backyard chickens, Bouvier (2012) surveyed chicken keeping ordinances from 100 of America's largest cities. The majority of these cities and almost all of the largest municipalities allow backyard chickens. Based on the norms gleaned and regulations that appear to be effective, Bouvier proposed a model ordinance for adoption or adaptation by cities aiming to allow residential chickens. For proper flock management, four is the minimum number of chickens an ordinance should allow. Because of the noise they make through crowing, rosters, which are

unnecessary for egg production, should be prohibited. Here are the other components of Bouvier's (2012) model ordinance:

- A maximum of six hens
- No lot size restrictions, but a 25-foot required setback from neighbors
- Permits are unnecessary
- No outdoor slaughtering
- Coops (at least 2 square feet per hen) and enclosures (covered) must be kept in clean and sanitary condition, and the chickens must be kept in the coop or enclosure unless supervised by an adult

Considering that policy mobility is a regular urban planning practice, the variation among policies found by the studies cited in this section point to the relational and territorial nature of mobility discussed in Chapter One. Most cities aim to limit the number of chickens allowed and define their living conditions; however, the specifics vary. The backyard chicken keeping ordinances outlined in Chapter Three will further illustrate this point.

Conclusion

More and more people are purchasing food from farmers markets, community supported agriculture ventures, and other local food businesses. Many of these individuals support regionally grown food as protest to the human and environmental costs of the corporatized, transnational food system under economic 'neoliberal globalism' (Pechlaner and Otero 2008). Driven to do more than alter purchasing decisions, some individuals with the necessary resources have moved beyond the

consumption of locally sourced food and entered the world of food production through vegetable gardens and when allowed, small livestock (Schindler 2012). Outdated land use ordinances prohibiting urban agriculture are a serious barrier to these food production activities (Wood et al. 2010).

In the next two chapters I present a comparative and an in-depth case study of citizen advocacy for urban ordinances that allow backyard chickens. Columbia, Missouri; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Norman, Oklahoma are the sites in the comparative case study. The city councils in each of these college towns approved updated ordinances allowing restricted residential chicken-raising. The in-depth case study of Oklahoma City highlights a case where the local governing body was less receptive to backyard chickens, and I identify and discuss the reasons why. The dissertation concludes with a chapter summarizing the case studies and offering the contributions and limitations of this research project.

Chapter 3: Policy Mobility Comparative Case Study

THE HENS
The night was coming very fast;
It reached the gate as I ran past.

The pigeons had gone to the tower of the church
And all the hens were on their perch,

Up in the barn, and I thought I heard
A piece of a little purring word.

I stopped inside, waiting and staying,
To try to hear what the hens were saying.

They were asking something, that was plain,
Asking it over and over again.

One of them moved and turned around,
Her feathers made a ruffled sound,

A ruffled sound, like a bushful of birds,
And she said her little asking words.

She pushed her head close into her wing,
But nothing answered anything. (Roberts 1922, 84-85)

Introduction

The overarching goal behind this dissertation is to contribute to the conversation regarding urban agriculture within the field of urban geography. In Chapter One I offered a brief history of urban geography and in Chapter Two reviewed the geography of urban agriculture. Missing in the latter literature is thorough consideration of the urban policies governing urban agriculture. The goal of this chapter is to present a comparative case study of three college towns that passed chicken-keeping ordinances, a focus of recent urban agriculture policy revision in many U.S. cities.

Following Eugene McCann and Kevin Ward's (2010) argument shared in Chapter One that "qualitative empirical investigations of case studies are a necessary element in any conceptualization of mobile policy," this part of the research project is a comparative or linked multiple-case study (176). I designed the comparative case study to explore how citizens utilize knowledge about urban agriculture policy from other places to affect policy locally. Historically, urban policy mobility literature has focused on the top-down policy advocacy of experts and/or urban developers who attend conferences or travel to other cities primarily for gaining policy knowledge (Temenos and McCann 2012). Yet in an age of nearly ubiquitous access to the Internet in the Global North, policy knowledge is no longer limited to the professional class. Discovering if and how citizens explore policies from other cities to promote urban agriculture can contribute to research on bottom-up policy advocacy for change in municipal ordinances governing other land use policies.

This chapter follows the typical research narrative road map. After a description of the methods utilized, I present the comparative case study sites in order of research chronology. I then discuss the findings through an urban agriculture policy process framework established by Dilys Huang and Michael Drescher (2015). I conclude the chapter by noting the differences in policy mobility motivation between the urban agriculture advocates in this study and the individuals advocating for updated drug policies in Vancouver, British Columbia (McCann 2008).

Methods

I selected the methods for this project to test the theory that citizens engage in policy mobility practices to advocate for urban agriculture policies. Determining such *if* and *who* questions is best achieved through a qualitative research approach that reveals the context and relationships inherent in local politics. To achieve the primary research goal and take analysis beyond if and who questions to include *how* and *why*, I conducted a comparative case study based on archival documents and interviews. A detailed analysis of multiple cases, comparative case studies answer questions of how and why for the purpose of "explanation building" rather than theory formulation (Yin 1994, 110).

After becoming aware of the chicken ordinance process in my city of Norman, Oklahoma, I identified 21 additional American college towns with community characteristics similar to Norman. Blake Gumprecht (2010) defines college towns as (1):

> Similar to one another, they differ in fundamental ways from other cities and the regions in which they are located. They are alike in their youthful and comparatively diverse populations, their highly educated work forces, their relative absence of heavy industry, and the presence in them of cultural amenities more characteristic of big cities.

I then utilized the Municode[2] website to determine that 17 of the 21 college towns had chicken keeping ordinances[3]. The cities selected for the case study sites in Table 3 are as similar as possible. In addition to adhering to the college town definition above, each is within driving distance of the researcher and experienced citizen advocacy driven

[2] Municode is a company providing online access to the municipal codes of over 4,000 cities at http://www.municode.com.

[3] Since then, at least one more of the cities passed a chicken-keeping ordinance (Athens, Georgia).

changes in municipal ordinances related to urban agriculture within four years of the start of this research project.

Table 3: Case Study Sites

City	2013 Pop.	Median Age	Median Income	Median House Value	Ordinance Changed or Passed	Archival Documents Collected/ Coded	Interviews
Columbia, Missouri	115,276	27.2	$42,898	$173,200	February 2010	27/12	3
Knoxville, Tennessee	183,270	32.9	$35,254	$121,300	August 2010	31/9	2
Norman, Oklahoma	118,197	29.1	$48,508	$164,600	November 2013	22/11	4

Sources: U.S. Census, Municode, and research records

The next step of the research process consisted of archival inquiry through an examination of primary documents easily accessible by the public, including community organization reports and official government documents such as minutes from city council and advisory committee meetings. I also scrutinized secondary resources such as urban agriculture advocacy websites and social media, in addition to newspaper articles discussing urban agriculture zoning to gather names of potential interview participants and analyze public discourse regarding chickens in residential urban areas. After approaching potential participants through recruitment email messages, I interviewed nine activists and citizens utilizing a conversational approach of adaptive questioning designed to encourage participant ease (Schober and Conrad 1997). After procuring participant consent, I digitally recorded the interviews for accuracy. The recorded portions of the interviews were less than one hour. One interview took place by phone, with the remaining interviews conducted in-person.

Open-ended interview questions included:

1. What sparked your interest in backyard chickens?

2. At what point did you become aware of the zoning regulations related to backyard chickens?
3. Who did you approach regarding the regulations?
4. (If they indicated policy mobility practices) How did you learn about policies from other cities?
5. What other steps did you take to advocate for changes in the regulations?
6. Did anyone oppose the regulations and if so, who and why?
7. What is your opinion of the new regulations?

I preserve the anonymity of the interviewees by not revealing their names in this case study.

To aid in discourse analysis for the purpose of revealing prevailing patterns in the data, I organized the archival texts and interview transcripts through a system of primary and secondary categories, or codes, utilizing TAMS Analyzer software (Saldaña 2009). TAMS (Text Analysis Marking System) Analyzer is an open source program for Macintosh and Linux operating systems. Developed by Matthew Weinstein at the University of Washington, TAMS Analyzer was designed to aid in qualitative coding for discourse and ethnographic research. Themes I identified during archival inquiry determined the initial coding categories. Emergent issues and patterns uncovered during the close readings of the coding process resulted in additional code categories. Once the final code categories were set, each document was coded a second time to ensure reliability. The final primary coding categories for this study were actor motivation, advocacy practices, policy process context, policy mobility activities, ordinance outcome, and factors enabling and constraining policy change.

Utilizing a narrative structure with the context provided by coding helps ensure validity of the explanatory framework (Miles et al. 1994). In a mutually reinforcing manner, the narrative quotes provided in the following sections somewhat off-set the simplification (reduction) of data inherent through coding by providing selective bits of the original data (Stake 1995). Collecting data after the ordinance change process in each of the sites was a limitation in this case study. Unable to directly observe the process, I had to rely on archival documents and participant memory, neither of which provides a complete picture. This limitation was corrected in the stand-alone case study presented in Chapter 4, where I personally observed the ordinance change process, including interactions between the citizen advocates and the city council.

Having defined the research objectives and described the methods utilized to address the research questions, in the following sections I document the findings from each case study site in order of research chronology. A possible explanatory framework is then presented to guide the theory and practice of citizen policy mobility in advocacy for zoning and ordinances friendly to urban agriculture. As previously noted, it is possible that these research findings could also inform advocacy for citizen driven policy in other areas of urban life.

The Case Study Sites

For each case study site, I begin with a brief introduction to the city. As is typical for most college towns, the cities deviate from other municipalities in their states. Dominated by education and a youthful citizenry, each city offers a dynamic and energetic environment for its residents. Following each introduction I summarize the

process leading to passage of the backyard chicken ordinances and present each citizen advocacy group spearheading the ordinance changes.

Norman, Oklahoma

Norman is a suburb in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Statistical Area and home to the University of Oklahoma. Twenty minutes south of the state capital, Norman is the third largest city in Oklahoma and the county seat of Cleveland County. Geographically part of the Great Plains, Norman is comprised of mid-grass prairies and Cross Timber forests. Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy the Canadian River in the south of the city, and to the east, Lake Thunderbird State Park, home of a large human-engineered water reservoir. Severe weather is a regular occurrence, which makes Norman an ideal location for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Storm Prediction Center, the National Severe Storms Laboratory, and several private weather companies. Calling itself the City of Festivals, Norman boasts seven well-established festivals each year celebrating music, art, culture, and chocolate.

Before the ordinance change, chickens were allowed in Norman city limits; however, setback requirements limited chickens to only large lots with ample room between structures. Setbacks are a common tool in land use planning to define distance requirements for the space between structures and property lines, streets, waterways, utilities, and other structures. In typical ordinances allowing backyard chickens, setback allowances are the distance required between chicken coops/runs and houses, fences, and property lines. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, chicken coops are required to safely house chickens. Coops provide a safe place for chickens to roost at night and protect

them from inclement weather and predators. In the original Norman ordinance, the setback requirement for coops and runs was 100 feet from any neighboring structures. Because the typical residential lot in Norman is 60 feet wide, the setback limit essentially limited chickens to lots on the extensive rural fringe of the city.

A couple active in promoting urban agriculture and seeking to change the chicken ordinance in Norman started a Facebook group called Norman Urban Chickens in February 2011 (Figure 1). Their first post referenced ordinance research, a practice related to policy mobility (Facebook Post, February 1, 2011):

> [Name] and I have been culling through the list of Norman's peer cities to see what their ordinance allows for. Good news is that 7 out of 14 allow for chickens in some capacity. By the way, the peer cities list is actually Fayetteville's peer city list, which referenced Norman, OK. So we decided to work backward from there.

In March, the couple sent a letter to the mayor requesting a change in the zoning code to allow chickens on a typical residential lot. Included with the letter were the research outcomes from the peer cities mentioned in the Facebook post above. Both the letter and the ordinance research were also posted on the author's personal blog titled *(Sub)urban Homesteading*, and a link to the blog page was posted in the Norman Urban Chickens Facebook group.

Figure 1: Norman Urban Chickens Facebook Group



Source: https://www.facebook.com/Norman-Urban-Chickens-138499342880024/

In September, the couple initiated an online petition to "allow urban chickens in Norman, OK" (http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/allow-urban-chickens-in-norman-ok/). Two hundred and thirty-four individuals signed the petition, including me before I began this research project. Of the 234 signatures, 120 were deemed legitimate based on the residence of the signer (Norman or Cleveland County). People could add comments to their signatures, and 27 of the 120 took advantage of this opportunity. The majority of the comments (16) focused on the food production and sustainability benefits of chickens, four mentioned that chickens are quieter or more pleasant than dogs, and two cited the increasing number of people who want to raise backyard chickens. The petition closed in March of 2012 so it could be sent to members of the council before introduction of the topic at the monthly City Council Oversight Committee meeting.

At the April meeting of the Oversight Committee, the Director of Planning and Development presented on the topic of backyard chickens. She included ordinances from three other Oklahoma cities (Bixby, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa) and the report by New Mexico State University graduate student KT LaBadie titled, *Residential Urban*

Chicken Keeping: An Examination of 25 Cities. The petition discussed above was also submitted to the official record. Acting on the recommendation by Planning and Development, the chair of the committee requested an ordinance change.

The updated urban chicken ordinance was proposed at a City Council Study Session meeting in May 2012. Council members and a citizen suggested that the City Council Oversight Committee better define chicken coop requirements and include a provision for chicken runs. From Norman Interview 3 on June 28, 2013:

> …when they were initially talking about draft ordinances, they didn't really seem to have the clearest articulation of what a coop was. They talked about space per chicken and they talked about being inside, they didn't really talk about access to runs, for ones that weren't just going free range in yards, which I guess, is technically not legal under the current ordinance.

At the Oversight Committee meeting in September 2012, the Director of Planning and Development addressed the questions and concerns of the mayor and council members regarding backyard chickens. Two citizens raised concerns about the public health risks associated with chickens, and one advocate addressed the tenets of responsible chicken ownership. The mayor suggested forwarding the ordinance to the full council. Upon first reading of the ordinance at the City Council meeting in October, the motion passed unanimously. The ordinance passed eight to one at the second and final reading during the November City Council meeting. The organizers of the Norman Urban Chickens Facebook group provided advance notice of all these meetings and encouraged supporters to contact their council members and attend the meetings. After passage of the ordinance, the group has become primarily a source for tips and advice on raising chickens, with a handful of posts encouraging members to support the updated chicken ordinance case presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

Columbia, Missouri

Home to the University of Missouri, Columbia College, and Stephens College, Columbia is the county seat for Boone County. The principal city of the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area and Missouri's fourth largest city, Columbia is between the Ozark Mountains on the west and the prairies to the east. Comprised of forested rolling hills, Columbia is 29 miles north of Missouri's state capital in Jefferson City and only 100 miles away from Kansas City and St. Louis. In addition to education, other economic drivers include healthcare and insurance. Columbia's independent non-profit movie theatre, Ragtime Cinema, hosts an annual documentary film festival known as the True/False Film Festival. Outdoor recreation is available at the Rock Bridge State Park just south of the city.

Prior to the ordinance change in Columbia, the situation was similar to Norman before their updated ordinance. Chickens were only allowed on larger residential lots. The previous Columbia ordinance passed in 1964 stipulated that one-half acre was required for each chicken. The primary advocacy group, Columbia Urban Hens, began meeting in fall of 2008. Intended as a working group, one of the first activities of the two organizers was to research chicken keeping ordinances in other cities. The organizers and another group member met with a council member about starting the process for an ordinance change and shared with him their research about chicken-friendly ordinances in other cities.

In 2009 the ordinance issue was referred to the Board of Health, which is a joint commission of the City of Columbia and Boone County. A subcommittee studied the topic and considered extensive public input from May to August 2009; however, the full

Board of Health failed to approve the recommendations drafted by the subcommittee. According to a Columbia Urban Hens organizer who attended the Board meetings, some members harbored a "cultural barrier" to chickens, while others were concerned about adjacent property owner approval (Columbia Interview 3, September 9, 2013). Comments in the other Columbia interviews hint that this cultural barrier was primarily class based. Example statements include:

> We live in a really nice neighborhood and they were not used to having chickens. I think the fight was that a lot of people feel, maybe especially, or maybe not, in a rural state like Oklahoma or Missouri that they fight their way out of the country and they're enlightened when they get to town and … they don't want to be dragged back. Our neighbors across the street are affluent, and they're kinda community leaders. He'd go to the country club and people would make fun of him for having chickens next door. On the golf course they were mocking him saying "You've got those chickens and you're the Podunk neighborhood now." (Columbia Interview 1, August 30, 2013)

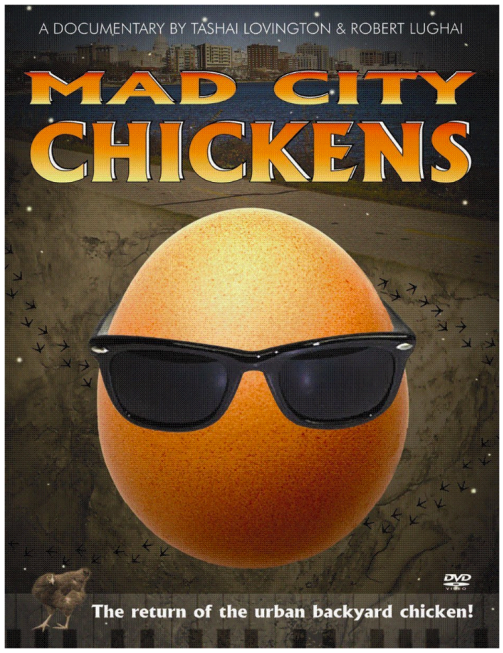
> I think it's probably a good idea to allow neighborhood associations to overrule it, so that people who just feel extremely strong can just band together and have their boring neighborhoods. (Columbia Interview 2, August 30, 2013)

According to Blecha (2015), "many cultural communities and low-income households" maintained backyard livestock even after the practice become illegal in many U.S. cities during the 20th century (33). Only in the last ten years when "predominantly white, predominantly middle-class urban residents" wanted to raise urban livestock did municipal ordinances begin changing in favor of the practice (Blecha 2015, 34). If individuals raising backyard chickens generally hail from the lower- and middle-classes, it stands to reason that wealthy individuals are most likely to oppose backyard chickens, Martha Stewart's instructions on *How to Raise Chickens in Your Own Backyard* notwithstanding (http://www.marthastewart.com/901133/how-raise-chickens-your-own-backyard). A former billionaire who is still worth millions, Ms. Stewart

presented this topic on an April 2012 episode of her television show.

Attempting to address existing cultural barriers, Columbia Urban Hens hosted a showing of the documentary *Mad City Chickens* (Figure 2) at Ragtime Cinema at the end of September 2009. This film highlights the benefits of urban chickens in Madison, Wisconsin and shows example backyard coops that are attractive and well maintained. Columbia Urban Hens also initiated a pro-chicken petition and gathered 450 signatures both online and in person.

Figure 2: Mad City Chickens Documentary



Source: https://www.amazon.com/Mad-City-Chickens-feature-length-documentary/dp/B003DDZTHU

In October 2009, the City Council received the ordinance recommendations from the Board of Health subcommittee. Despite the fact that the full Board failed to approve the recommendations, the council requested the full research gathered by the subcommittee in consideration of changing the ordinance. By December 2009, the Council recommended that an ordinance drafted by the Director of Public Health and

Human Services with input from the Board of Health be considered as a formal agenda item. The first reading of an updated ordinance was submitted in a City Council meeting in January 2010. Columbia Urban Hens provided advance notice of the council meeting and encouraged supporters to contact their council members and attend the meetings to show support.

For the second reading and discussion of the proposed ordinance, 80-90 supporters attended the City Council meeting. Twelve citizens spoke in favor of the ordinance and five spoke against it, three of whom were realtors. Real estate professionals often speak against backyard chickens citing their negative effects on property values; however, no research exists to verify this claim. One of the Columbia Urban Hens organizers presented the petition to the council. After a fair amount of discussion by the council and two amendments were added, the ordinance passed by a vote of four to three.

Knoxville, Tennessee

County seat of Knox County, Knoxville is the third largest city in Tennessee and home to the University of Tennessee, Johnson University, and Knoxville College. It is the principal city of the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area. Initially a manufacturing center, Knoxville serves as headquarters for the Tennessee Valley Authority, which is the largest public power producer in the U.S. Serving as the eastern gateway to the Appalachian region and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Knoxville was host of the 1982 World's Fair. Bisected by the Tennessee River, the

topography of the city is dominated by narrow ridges and broad valleys. The many festivals held annually in Knoxville offer arts, crafts, culture, food and music.

Unlike Columbia and Norman, chickens were not allowed in Knoxville before the ordinance change. What is similar in this case is that a group organized for the purpose of advocating urban chickens drove the process. The stated mission for the Knoxville Urban Hen Coalition was (http://www.knoxvillepermacultureguild.org/):

> A growing number of cities are amending codes to allow people to keep backyard chickens. There are two main reasons – food security and health issues. With the economic downturn (and rising food prices in 2008) there is a surge in interest in backyard food production in general. Also, with health issues such as ecoli and salmonella, people want healthier, safer food. Many cities have recently passed ordinances allowing small number of chickens including Seattle, Portland Oregon, San Francisco, Denver, Fort Collins, Madison, Cedar Falls, Cincinnati, and Portland Maine.

Formed as an online group in February 2009, the group had an independent website, utilized Twitter (Figure 3), and to a lesser extent Facebook (Figure 4). The Urban Hen Coalition worked with Knoxville's Animal Control board for over a year to develop an ordinance modeled on those from other municipalities, which were provided by the Coalition members. The coalition also sponsored a showing of *Mad City Chickens* and hosted a couple of meet and greet discussions in area bars.

After introduction to City Council in June 2010, the ordinance received very little public opposition; however, research participants pointed out that a couple of council members opposed to urban chickens slowed the consideration process. At the second reading of the ordinance in July, it would have passed, but because of the number of changes made to the ordinance, it had to be formally resubmitted to the council. The changes, based on recommendations from Animal Control, included

reducing the number of chickens from twelve to six, an increase in the permit fee from $25 to $50, and the addition of regulations regarding secure storage of chicken feed. After updated first and second readings in August, the ordinance passed by a vote of five to three. One of the primary organizers of the Urban Hen Coalition felt that passage was due to the large membership of the Coalition, which generated anywhere from 50 to 150 supporters for each of the city council meetings.

Figure 3: Knoxville Urban Hen Coalition Twitter



Source: https://twitter.com/UrbanHens

Figure 4: Knoxville Urban Hen Coalition Facebook Group Post



Source: https://www.facebook.com/Urban-Hen-Coalition-75337100813/

Ordinance Comparison

Because policy mobility practices by both activists and city employees bolstered the ordinance processes in all three case study cities, I expected similarities between the ordinances. All three ordinances prohibit roosters and only allow chicken enclosures (coops and runs) in backyards. Each ordinance also includes provisions to ensure that enclosures are sanitary and predator resistant. Chickens must be secured in a coop or henhouse at night in all three locations. A summary and comparison of other ordinance aspects is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Ordinance Summary and Comparison

City	Hens Allowed	Permits & Fees	Restrictions	Enclosure Distance	Other Requirements
Columbia	Six	No	Commercial activity and free ranging	5 ft. from the property line and 25 ft. from neighboring dwellings	No odors beyond the property line, noise levels must remain low, chickens must be in good health
Knoxville	Six	Yes (building and annual)	Commercial activity, free ranging, and slaughter	10 feet from the property line	Chickens allowed in residential zoning only
Norman	Four	No	Outdoor slaughter	5 ft. from the property line and 25 ft. from neighboring dwellings	R1 (residential) zone only, free ranging must be supervised
City	**Coop Size**	**Other Coop Specs**	**Run Size**	**Run Specs**	**Food and Waste**
Columbia	Not specified	Locking doors and uniform materials	Not specified	Covered and secure	Secured food and water at all times, waste storage and removal
Knoxville	2 sq. ft./hen	Locking doors and uniform materials	2 sq. ft./hen	Covered or 42" high with clipped wings	Specified removal and storage requirements for both food and waste
Norman	4 sq. ft./hen	None	8 sq. ft./hen	Adequate fencing	Water available at all times

Now that I introduced each case study site, summarized the chicken ordinance processes, and outlined the specifics of each ordinance, in the next section I present the results of the comparison study. Although the findings are not generalizable, my goal is adding to the body of theory in citizen driven policy mobility. The small number of cases allows for presentation of the idiosyncrasies of each site, in addition to the commonalities that are the expected focus of most research studies.

Discussion

Reviewing urban agriculture policies, zoning regulations, and policy practices in ten Canadian municipalities, Huang and Dresher (2015) found that "community advocacy and municipal council support are the most important drivers in the policy process" (1). Getting a policy issue on the city council agenda requires: citizens who push the cause, municipal employees who understand the topic, supportive politicians, and advocates who are willing to educate both city officials and the public (Huang and Drescher 2015). In this case study, it is clear that knowledge about chicken keeping ordinances from other cities was an important aspect in three of these four components, all except for the supportive politician piece. With as many policy comparisons that were offered to the three city councils by citizens, advocates, and municipal employees, one might assume that politicians are swayed by such information; however, because the focus of this project was citizens and advocates, no city council members or mayors were interviewed to see if this is true.

Citizens Who Push the Cause

Pushing the cause is evident in the interview transcripts, especially among the individuals who served as group organizers. For example, an organizer of the Norman advocacy group stated, "[we said to ourselves] we should just write a letter to the Mayor and do some research, and just don't leave our council people and Mayor alone until they start listening to us" (Norman Interview 1, June 6, 2013). The most common advocacy activity in two of the case study sites and prevalent in the third was speaking before the city council. This result likely reflects the fact that the interview sample

focused on citizens who spoke at council meetings in favor of the chicken ordinances. Each of the advocacy groups called on their members to attend city council meetings, and in the case of Columbia and Norman the group organizers coordinated the messages of citizens willing to speak. The latter highlights the importance placed on speaking before city council as an advocacy activity.

The next most common advocacy practices in Columbia and Knoxville were focused on networking, primarily through the groups organized to support urban chickens. Here is quote illustrating the activities in Knoxville:

> The best ally we had was a large group of citizens. And because you go to our city council meetings, and there is 10 people in the audience. And so it was shocking for them for us to show up with 50, 100, 150, I think, and we had a lot of people in a couple of meetings. And so, to do that, we had regular meetings that we'd post on the Permaculture Guild, but then also neighborhood organizations. We'd send it out to their ListServs, and we met at bars and had a beer and talked about it several times. And then, right before it went to city council, we sponsored a movie. We rented for 50 bucks a public space in the old city and put up flyers everywhere and posted it in the weekly paper here in town. (Knoxville interview 1, November 25, 2013)

In Norman networking was common; however, it was primarily online rather than in person. For example:

> I started a letter writing campaign to a city councilman and I drafted up a model letter about benefits of chickens and the lack of risks associated with them, and sent it to everybody I could find in Norman, using social media and just contacting my friends and giving them this letter, and saying, "Here's your councilperson, send this in. Change the name and send it in." And I got kind of attached to the Facebook Norman Chickens group and used them a little bit to help distribute. And I think that was one of the reasons why that got on the council's radar as something that people were interested in having changed. (Norman interview 3, June 28, 2013)

As indicated in Table 5 at the end of this sub-section, at least one person in each case study site was involved in advocacy online, and in Norman three of the four people interviewed utilized the Internet to push the cause. This phenomenon is not unique to

this case study. Without fetishizing the Internet, Jeroen Van Laer and Peter Van Aelst (2010) document how it "has given social movements new and improved opportunities to engage in social and political action" (1146). Similarly, in a survey of 169 people from 53 advocacy groups, Jonathan Obar et al. (2012) found that all the groups were using social media to communicate because it enables them to reach their advocacy and organizational goals. Giselle Auger (2013) discovered that "advocacy organizations are using social media to ethically persuade people to their point of view" (369). Nowadays, it is difficult to imagine political change without the support of computer-mediated activism.

While some scholars have questioned the ability of social networking sites to motivate action offline, Summer Harlow and Dustin Harp (2012) found that online activism translates to offline action. The number of citizens who attended the city council meetings in each site reflect this point. As previously noted the number of citizens who attended the meetings in Knoxville ranged from 50 to 150. In the Columbia City Council meeting where the final vote took place, 80 to 90 individuals attended in support of the ordinance. I attended the Norman City Council meeting where the ordinance was passed and although not quite as many citizens were in attendance as there were in Knoxville and Columbia, there was still a strong showing (approximately 40 people).

Nearly everyone interviewed recognized the importance of utilizing pro-chicken ordinances from other cities to advocate for change in their towns. One particularly proactive citizen in Norman used his ordinance research to draft a model ordinance, which he submitted to the city's Environmental Control Advisory Board. Interviewees'

motivations for wanting chickens were strong, providing impetus to research ordinances from other cities and/or push the cause of backyard chickens. Here are some of the responses to the opening interview question, "What sparked your interest in backyard chickens?"

> I think they're beautiful and appealing and I like the idea of sustained… well, a more free range of food than we can get at the store in most cases. I had eaten eggs that were from chickens that were not raised in batteries and I preferred those. So I love the eggs and they're fun to watch, a pleasure. (Norman interview 4, July 7, 2013)

> Well, I've been a gardener for a long time, and I was interested pretty early on, I guess, in the movement in local foods. And I've had concerns about issues like peak oil and our dependence on large corporate suppliers for our basic needs. So all those things together made me feel like things that we can do to help people produce their own food, especially high quality food, reduce their waste stream, reduce reliance on petrochemical fertilizers and all that kind of thing, and chickens are just obvious for all of those things. (Columbia interview 2, August 30, 2013)

> A lot of reports on the way that meat is processed, corporate meat processing. And I like to grow, I have a garden. I always have a garden, so it wasn't a big step to go to chickens because they're very… if you do any organic gardening, then chickens come, not hand-in-hand, but you know what I'm saying. They're good fertilizer, they eat insects. And so it was an outcropping from that to eggs. (Knoxville interview 2, November 25, 2013)

The benefits chickens provide most frequently mentioned in interviews across all three case study sites were chickens as pets, eggs, and food production (six times each). Tied for second place were chickens' contribution to local food, fertilizer production, and waste or scrap reduction.

As briefly mentioned earlier, Table 5 (below) is a synopsis of the various advocacy practices organizers and citizens utilized to push the cause of backyard chickens. Most of the individuals interviewed researched policies from other cities, contacted municipal officials, and engaged in other advocacy activities.

Table 5: Citizen Advocacy Practices

ORDINANCE RESEARCH	Interview 1, organizer	Interview 2, organizer	Interview 3, citizen	Interview 4, citizen
Columbia	Online	(*Online)	Popular media sources	No direct research
Knoxville	Online and by phone		Permaculture Guild	
Norman	Municode	Municode	Online and by phone	Online
OFFICIAL CONTACTED	**Interview 1, organizer**	**Interview 2, organizer**	**Interview 3, citizen**	**Interview 4, citizen**
Columbia	None	(*Council member)	Mayor, council member	None contacted
Knoxville	Citizen Oversight Board, council member		Council member	
Norman	Council member, mayor, staff	Council member, mayor, staff	Staff, council member	Every council member
MEETING(S) ATTENDED	**Interview 1, organizer**	**Interview 2, organizer**	**Interview 3, citizen**	**Interview 4, citizen**
Columbia	Board of Health, Council meetings	(*Board of Health, City Council)	Council meetings	Council meetings
Knoxville	Animal Control Board, Council meetings		Council meetings	
Norman	None because works for a firm contracting with the city	Study Session, Council meetings	Study Session, Council meetings	Study Session
OTHER ACTIVITIES	**Interview 1, organizer**	**Interview 2, organizer**	**Interview 3, citizen**	**Interview 4, citizen**
Columbia	Demonstration on the urban farm, appointed to state-wide urban agriculture board	(*Website and petition)	Used status as a physician to testify at council meetings	Fought anti-chicken neighborhood association rules
Knoxville	Advocacy group meetings, blog posts, neighborhood association outreach, movie screening		Television interview	
Norman	Facebook group, petition, and blog post	Facebook group, petition, blog	Asked friends to contact council, letter to the editor, Facebook outreach	Talked to neighbors

Notes: Blank cells indicate no interview. (*In Columbia I was unable to interview one of the organizers; however, without my prompting other interviewees mentioned this individual's activities.)

Municipal Employees/Officials Who Understand the Topic

In two of the case study sites, mayors were particularly helpful in the cause of allowing backyard chickens. In Norman, the mayor stated that she had neighbors with chickens, even though her neighborhood did not have the lot sizes necessary under the original code. After correspondence with the organizing couple and other citizens, the mayor asked the City Manager to put the issue on the City Council Study Session agenda. In Columbia, it was the mayor who requested a draft ordinance after the full Board of Health failed to reach a recommendation.

Each case study site also seemed to have at least one municipal employee who was knowledgeable about urban chickens and the ordinances in other cities. In Norman, it was the Director of Planning and Development, who was charged with the task of exploring the issue. Several of the interviewees mentioned that she had also been helpful when they wanted to communicate with someone in the city and was supportive of the cause. For Columbia the Director of Public Health and Human Services was tasked with drafting a potential backyard chicken ordinance. She admitted to being familiar with the issue, incorporated the research gathered by the advocacy group, and was herself an advocate for the ordinance change.

The case in Knoxville is a bit different. The employee who oversaw drafting of the new ordinance, the Animal Control Officer, was against the proposal. She voted to move the draft ordinance from the Animal Control Board to City Council; however, at the Council meeting she stated that she was against the ordinance. She voted that the draft ordinance be presented City Council because if chickens were allowed in the city, she felt that they needed to be regulated. She was against urban chickens because in the

year the ordinance was considered, Animal Control responded to 26 calls regarding chickens. However, advocates felts that 26 is a minor number compared to the 18,000 animals taken in by Knoxville Animal Control in the previous year.

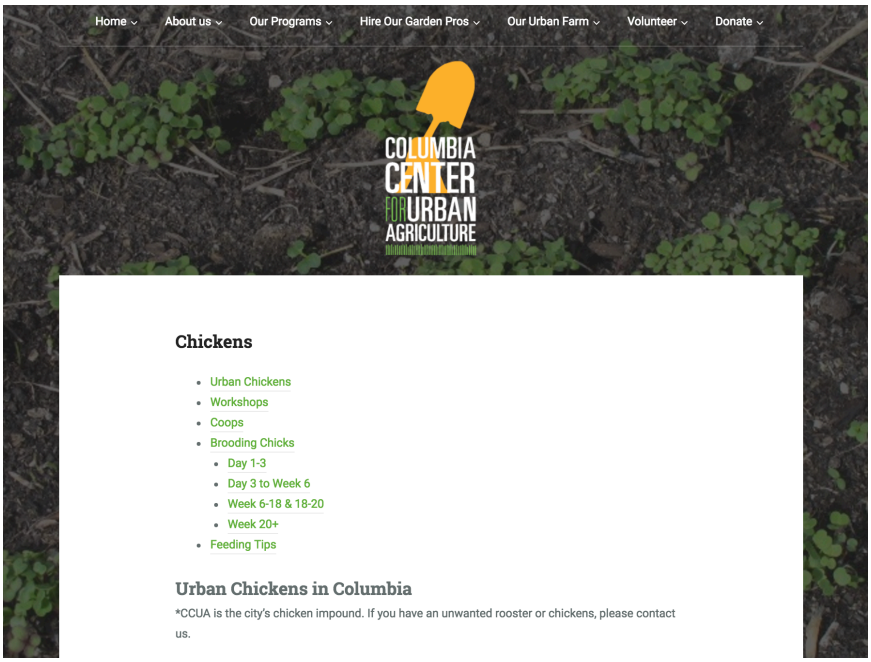
In Columbia and Norman it appears that municipal employees/officials who understood the benefits of urban hens assisted with passage of updated chicken ordinances in each city. In contrast the case of Knoxville illustrates that although municipal employees can help the cause, they can also act as barriers to progress. Nonetheless, obstacles presented by unsupportive employees can be overcome with ample citizen support for backyard chickens; however as discussed next, building adequate citizen support requires advocates willing to engage in public education.

Advocates Willing to Educate

In this case study, the citizens and advocates who researched chicken ordinances in other cities used the information to help educate their elected officials and fellow citizens about what could be possible in their towns. Wanting their communities to experience success in chicken raising, once ordinances were passed the advocates supported efforts to educate citizens about successfully raising chickens to varying degrees. The most proactive site is Columbia, where one of the primary organizers is also a staff member for the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture (CCUA). The mission of this organization is educating the community about food production, and they committed to offering chicken workshops after the updated ordinance passed. For times between workshops, CCUA offers a page about chicken care on their website (Figure 5) and has occasional posts about chickens on their Facebook page (2,641 likes as of writing). The other Columbia organizer maintains an educational blog about urban

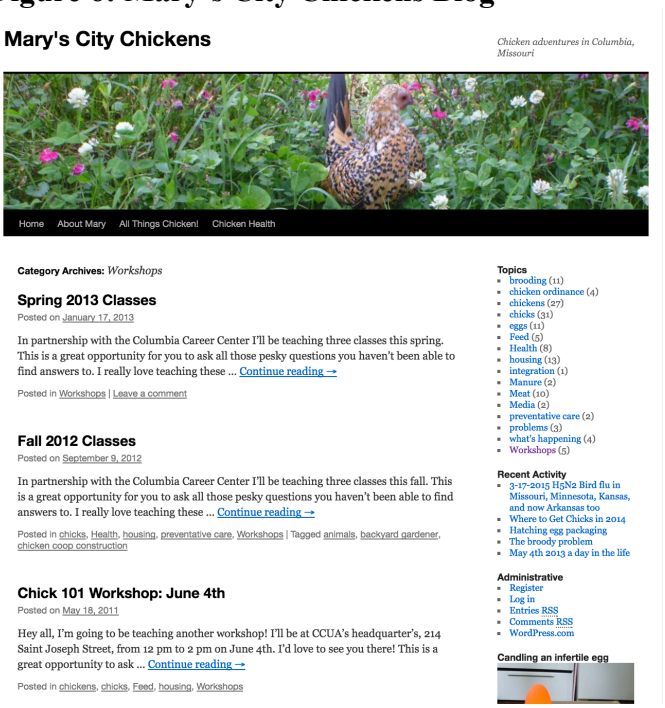
chickens and teaches classes on raising chickens at the local vocational and technical school (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture Website



Source: http://columbiaurbanag.org/resources/chickens

Figure 6: Mary's City Chickens Blog



Source: https://marystilwell.wordpress.com/category/whats-happening/workshops/

In the Norman Urban Chickens Facebook group (352 likes as of writing), organizers post information about chicken workshops offered by the Oklahoma State Extension Office and the Cleveland County Conservation District. The Facebook group also has numerous posts with links to educational backyard chicken websites, blogs, and articles. Although not as active after their ordinance passed, the Knoxville Urban Hen Coalition Facebook page (323 likes as of writing) includes a link to an educational chicken site and information about a 2015 educational event sponsored by the county extension office. Prior to the ordinance change in Knoxville, advocates attended the local farmers market to both advocate for and educate the community about urban chickens.

Critical Analysis

In addition to replicating the research findings of Huang and Drescher (2015) that community advocacy and city council support are essential in the development of urban agriculture policy, I found evidence that corroborates Kristin Reynolds' (2015) observation that urban agriculture fails to disrupt the "social and political structures" necessary to achieve food justice (243). Similar to the class based disparities that Reynolds describes in New York City's urban agriculture system, chicken ordinances in the study sites and the debates surrounding them corroborate the assertion that the sustainability goals (mostly environmental) of the middle class are more important in urban agriculture than the food justice needs of marginalized groups (Alkon and Norgaard 2009, Gottlieb and Fisher 1996). A focus on sustainability was strongest in Norman. As mentioned earlier, the majority of individuals including comments with

their signature on the petition calling for an updated chicken ordinance focused on the sustainability aspects of backyard chickens. Here are two direct examples: “We should promote green and sustainable living in Norman, Ok!!” and “Chickens are very Green. Just like in the past, chickens should be [a part] of the common American lifestyle.” Moreover, the sustainability benefits of chickens were mentioned three times in official municipal meetings, tying with egg production as the benefit most frequently mentioned.

The chicken ordinances in each study site favor residents with ample resources. In Norman, coops must be twice as large per chicken (four square feet per chicken versus two) than the other comparator city specifying coop size - Knoxville - and the required Norman run size is eight square feet per chicken compared to Knoxville’s two square feet per hen. The Knoxville ordinance favors individuals with disposable income by requiring a coop building fee of $50 and an annual permit at $25 per year. At the time of our interview in 2013, one of the Knoxville interviewees active in advocating for the updated ordinance (passed in 2010) had been unable to establish a backyard flock due to the start-up costs. They estimated that a coop adhering to the regulations plus the various fees would be around $500, which is too high for them as a single individual who works full-time in a clerical position. Yet I found through the Knoxville discourse analysis that sustainability benefits were mentioned in online advocacy and interviews only slightly more frequently than food security. It is the potential food production chickens offer for marginalized neighborhoods that also convinced one city councilperson to support the chicken ordinance. From the section of an interview discussing individuals who opposed backyard chickens:

> There was [council member name], too, from south Knoxville. When all this was going on, we opened a community garden in Park Ridge. It's a poor neighborhood. A lot of urban blight and a lot of disadvantaged people. But we had the open house there and he came out to that. And he saw that the same people that were doing the chicken ordinance were the same people that were addressing this food and equity issue. And that changed his mind on it. He said, "Oh, okay. Now, I get it. Chickens are about equity also, not just some hipsters wanting chickens in their backyard". So he really became a key backer of it. It wouldn't have happened without him, he switched the balance of city council. And that wasn't intended, it was just an accident that he showed up for another thing we were doing. (Knoxville interview 1, November 25, 2013)

Even though Knoxville advocates were interested in food justice issues, the final ordinance does little to enable the food production of marginalized households. The families who can afford to raise chickens in a manner adhering to the ordinances are not likely to be households most in need the eggs the chickens could provide.

A class-based aspect of backyard chickens in Columbia (and Oklahoma City, see Chapter 4) was opposition from neighborhood/homeowner associations during the ordinance debate. These organizations are generally associated with neighborhoods with higher property values, and their opposition was based on the assumption that backyard chickens would reduce the values of property near homes raising chickens. Concerns about property values were also evoked to oppose to backyard chickens in Knoxville, although to a lesser extent than Columbia. No research exists showing the effect of urban chickens on property values; however, community gardens (Broadway 2009, Voicu and Been 2008) and agricultural uses (Hodgson et al. 2011) positively influence the value of nearby property.

Conclusion

This comparative case study seems to be original in exploring if ordinary citizens engage in policy mobility activities; however, it is not the first to interrogate the policy mobility practices of political activists. In McCann's (2008) case study of drug policy development in Vancouver, British Columbia, he investigated the urban policy mobility activities by a variety of actors, including policy professionals, politicians, and political activists. In the Vancouver case, activists engaged in policy learning practices to *solve* a social problem. The comparative case study sites presented here illustrate that activists knew the solution they were seeking and used information about policies in other cities to *educate* local stakeholders in the effort to advocate for policy change.

Assuming that an individual has access to the Internet, information about urban chicken ordinances is easy to find, albeit not always accurate or up-to-date. A website used by a participant in this study is backyardchickens.com, which seems to be the most utilized website for chicken ordinance research. At the time of writing, this site contained summaries of 1,065 ordinances in its database. Other similar sites include thecitychicken.com and localchickenlaws.blogspot.com. A disadvantage of these sites is that they provide summaries of chicken ordinances but not the ordinances themselves. Yet, they offer a handy starting point for citizens and activists wanting to know about the different types of ordinances and cities that allow chickens.

In addition to verifying that citizens and activists engage in policy mobility practices for the purpose of promoting urban agriculture in their towns, this study confirmed other advocacy activities that seemed helpful in each of the case study sites. These activities included: establishing a local group focused on the cause at hand either

in person, online, or both; affiliating with local urban agriculture organizations; utilizing online advocacy tools such as social networking sites, blogs, and petitions; hosting film screenings and social meet-up events; contacting municipal officials; cultivating municipal employee allies; and attending and speaking at official municipal meetings. In spite of the policy success demonstrated by this comparative case study, I will show in Chapter 4 that effective policy mobility practices and the other activities mentioned here are no guarantee that a city will allow backyard chickens on a typical residential lot.

Chapter 4: Right to Urban Agriculture in Oklahoma City

In this chapter I present an in-depth case study of the urban agriculture ordinance process in Oklahoma City. The city has rejected an updated backyard chicken code on multiple occasions, including during a recent embrace of urban agriculture. After presenting a theoretical framework, I chronicle the backyard chicken ordinance process in Oklahoma City. I conclude the chapter by identifying and discussing possible reasons why urban chickens continue to be rejected in Oklahoma City.

Theoretical Framework

The concepts of *right to the city*, *social capital, and territoriality* ground this Oklahoma City urban agriculture policy case study. I find that scholars often employ such ideas by relying on assumptions rather than providing clear definitions or descriptions of how they employ the concept. This oversight is problematic because understandings of theoretical concepts vary between and even within disciplines. In this section I provide relevant background information for these concepts and explain how I intend to employ them to better understand the urban agriculture policy process in Oklahoma City.

Right to Urban Agriculture in the City

Most scholars agree that Henri Lefebvre (1991) initially introduced the concept of a 'right to the city.' For Lefebvre, space includes concrete space, the representation of space, and the space of everyday social lives. Producing these inescapably blended spaces "necessarily involves constructing the rhythms of everyday life and producing

and reproducing the social relations" that frame space (Purcell 2003, 577). In other words, as mentioned in Chapter 1, space is socially constructed; its production is based on a society's values, and these values get formulated and transmitted through urban policy decisions regarding the use of space. Mark Purcell (2003) argues that in formulating a right to the city, Lefebvre envisioned a "profound reorganization of current social relations," a utopian redesign that would permit all urban inhabitants (not just formal citizens) to participate in every decision affecting the production of space (576). The right to the city concept proposes production of cities that prioritize the needs of people who use or inhabit space over those who own the space.

Instead of taking the right to the city to the full ideological potential envisioned by Lefebvre, most geographers evoke the concept to identify, discuss, and create openings for alternative uses of space that meet the socioeconomic needs of a wider variety of urbanites than those currently benefiting from the modern governance structures. Eugene McCann (2002) defines right to the city as "the right not to be marginalized in decision-making" (78). In the present political system, municipal decisions are governed by city councils; however, exceptions include when state legislatures intervene in urban matters for cities under financial distress or in cities making decisions that fail to align with state priorities. An example of the latter is when the Oklahoma State Legislature passed a 2015 bill that prevents cities from banning hydraulic fracturing, which is the extraction of oil via injection of high pressure liquid into bedrock. Primary opportunities for public participation in municipal governance are voting for city council members and communicating with elected and city officials

through meetings or private correspondence. For an urban inhabitant with minimal social capital, these outlets for participation are practically meaningless.

A contested concept lacking a single definition, urban geographers generally view social capital as inherited equity and influence that helps reproduce class advantage through enforcement of the local status quo. I understand social capital as "the processes by which individuals and groups gain, lose and maintain advantage in diverse contexts" (Naughton 2014, 17). A citizen with a professional or personal connection to a city council member, or someone from a similar background as the council person, is likely to feel more empowered directly advocating for their interests than someone with less social capital. Broadening the number of people experiencing a right to the city requires promoting social capital across diverse income and cultural groups (Joice and Bavan 2014).

David Harvey (2009) conceptualizes right to the city as a collective right, involving "the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization" (315). Centering the socioeconomic construction of space, Harvey describes urbanization as the process of making and remaking both our cities and ourselves. Uneven access to power and resources results in urban areas that reflect the dominant "social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies, and aesthetic values we desire" (Harvey 2009, 315). Like Lefebvre, Harvey insists that 'we' refers to the populace and collective power as a right commonly held by everyone and not just select individuals.

Several critical geographers apply the collective right to the city to the civil and human rights owed to homeless individuals. Peter Marcuse (2012) states that "[t]he

homeless person in Los Angeles has not won the right to the city when he is allowed to sleep on a park bench in the center of the city. Much more is involved, as the concept refers to a set of rights, not individualistic rights" (42). For Don Mitchell (2003) the collective right to city, or lack thereof, for homeless inhabitants in Berkeley and Santa Ana, California is evident because "homeless people are nearly always in public, they are rarely counted as part of *the* public" (135, emphasis original). In most U.S. cities, homeless people are excluded from the collective rights enjoyed by other citizens, including the right to exist in public space, because they rarely embody the lifestyles and aesthetic values of the majority.

Critical human geographers often employ the concept of a right to the city to highlight urban policy and practices that fail to consider marginalized populations[4]. As Clive Barnett (2011) observes when linking right to the city to notions of justice, "there is the implicit claim that critical analysis starts not so much from a clear-sighted definition of justice but from widely shared institutions of *injustice*" (248, emphasis original). Issues of injustice and denial of residents' right to the city ground studies of how marginalized neighborhoods have established and fought to preserve community gardens on blighted lots in New York City. Neighborhood residents, who "devoted countless hours to transforming" lots filled with junk into community gardens, demanded rights to the community space they created (Staeheli et al. 2002, 201). Conflict arose when the City of New York, which owned the lots, aimed to sell the land to real estate developers in order to raise revenue and increase available housing

[4] Populations generally considered to be marginalized in North American cities are those who are low-income, socially excluded, and politically disenfranchised (Addie 2009).

(Schmelzkopf 2002). Critical geographers' approach to collective right to the city emphasizes how spaces of democracy, empowerment, and mobilization for marginalized residents would be lost in such economic development scenarios. Community gardens in New York City serve as a commons where "underprivileged residents compensate themselves for uneven urban development" (Eizenberg 2011, 19). Residents' fight to preserve community gardens led to land trusts purchasing over 100 gardens lots and a legal settlement preserving 500 of them, with the remaining lots developed into "2000 City-sponsored housing units" (Staeheli et al. 2002, 202). These studies of community gardens in New York City highlight how struggles over the production of space might be resolved by prioritizing use value for existing neighborhood residents instead of market value for investors.

Analyzing urban agriculture in Oakland, McClintock (2014) explains that "community cultivation of the lawn of an abandoned public building or unmaintained park is a call for right to the city and the reclamation of the commons" (162). These practices reclaim already-existing urban space for uses that "re-embed food production" into social networks (154). Urban agriculture restores the visibility of food production and enables the involvement of more people in the process, albeit to varying degrees. Colasanti et al. (2012) argue that a right to the city for urban agriculture in Detroit should provide residents with an opportunity to reclaim place *beyond* spaces underutilized according to market forces. Instead of being relegated to marginalized lots on the fringe of capitalist society, urban agriculture should be embedded into the social and spatial structure of cities.

Examining socioenvironmental orientations of the right to produce urban space by exploring household food production in urban Nicaragua, Shillington (2013) mapped food production and consumption in the poorest neighborhood of Managua. She documented how cultivation of patio fruit trees contributes "partially to household food security" (107). Although the middle and working-class families raising backyard chickens for egg production in urban and suburban Oklahoma City possess far more advantages than Shillington's marginalized urban families growing fruit trees in the barrios of Managua, the underlying premise is similar. Individuals who inhabit a city are assumed to be the legitimate stewards of that space, with the right to engage in practices supporting food sovereignty, even if they do not always own the property they sow and harvest.

A similar right to urban agriculture should apply to food production in backyard spaces of Oklahoma City. Like Larder et al. (2012), who explored backyard food production in urban Australia, I engage the right to backyard spaces as a means to "dismantle the seemingly inexorable consumptive private enclaves that many residential outdoor spaces have come to symbolize" (15). In a city were yard space is often produced by lawn care companies offering the chemical and labor inputs required to achieve strongly embedded aesthetic standards (Robbins 2007), "residential urban agriculture can be implicitly – or at times explicitly – radical in its orientation" (McClintock 2014, 154).

The extent to which urban agriculture is viewed as radical depends on the particular territoriality of a city. Beaumont and Nicholls (2007) clearly define their understanding of a territory by offering this description (2558):

> Territories produce practices and identities that are markedly different from those on the outside. These spaces are embedded in a nested hierarchy of territorial worlds, each with its own peculiar institutional configurations which set them apart from one another. While there is a degree of interdependence between territorial units, they remain distinct entities based on differentiated place-based identities and allegiances.

Humans organize space into territories through the practice of territoriality, which is informed by both the culture and history of place. Agnew (2000) defines human territoriality as "the strategy used by individuals, groups and organizations to exercise power over a portion of space and its contents" (823). He describes how territoriality requires a generally accepted system of classifying space (i.e. boundaries), ways to communicate these classifications, and means of surveilling or controlling space. Delaney (2009) defines territoriality as the behaviors, practices, control, and protection of a territory, which require space, power, and popular agreement on meanings of space. To provide an urban agriculture example, community gardens are territorialized through the cooperation of individuals who have permission to cultivate a space and agree upon the basic organization and standards of the gardens.

Introduction to Oklahoma City

A socially contested place since its formal inception, Oklahoma City has long served as a space of white entitlement. The 1830 Indian Removal Act designated much of current day Oklahoma as Indian Territory for the resettlement of eastern Native American tribes. Only three decades later the Homestead Act of 1862 enabled the Land Run of 1889, opening up the area that is now Oklahoma City to mostly white private ownership. Although the land run is generally celebrated in Oklahoma City, most prominently with larger-than-life statues on the Bricktown Canal, the event is not free

from controversy. To create the so-called 'unassigned lands' that were subject to this first Oklahoma land run, land was taken from American Indians who viewed the space as communally owned, a traditional practice for most tribes. Affected tribes were provided individual allotments in return for the unassigned lands. Tribes were not given a choice in the matter though, and the allotments they received were less area than the land they were forced to concede. Subsequent to this tainted beginning, Oklahoma City was practically born overnight when around 10,000 settlers moved into the area over a matter of hours during the land run on April 22, 1889.

Priding itself as a frontier town with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Oklahoma City is the state's largest city and serves as county seat and state capital. According to 2015 population estimates the total population of Oklahoma City is 631,346, making it the 74th most populous city in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau). The Oklahoma City metropolitan area has double the population of the city proper, and the area has experienced healthy population growth over the past two decades. The majority of the population is White (62.7%), followed by Latina/o/x (17.2%), Black (15.1%), Native American (3.5%), and Asian (4%) (U.S. Census Bureau). Oklahoma City hosts a healthy Latin American immigrant community, composed primarily of individuals from Mexico and Guatemala (Gordon 2009). The largest group of Asian residents is Vietnamese, owing to the fact that Oklahoma City residents sponsored thousands of the refugees created by the fall of Saigon in 1975. City officials and planners officially call the area where some of these Vietnamese immigrants established businesses the Asian District; however, many Oklahoma City residents refer to the area as Little Saigon.

A geographically large city of over 600 square miles, Oklahoma City has relatively low population density – less than 1,000 people per square mile. It is also a city with a fair amount of income inequality. From 1990 to 2000, concentrated poverty increased in the city (Wolch and Sessoms 2010). Oklahoma City is above the state average for median and per capital income, while also possessing a greater percentage of residents below the poverty level than the state as a whole. As Skraastad Jurney (2006) aptly observes, "the city maintains certain affluence while sustaining its low income groups" (8).

Site of the deadliest domestic terrorist attack in the United States, the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, and numerous tornadoes, the Oklahoma City metropolitan area is known for displaying resilience in the face of adversity. Of particular interest to urban geography is Oklahoma City's commitment to urban development despite limited success of the 1960s urban renewal project known as the Pei Plan. Named for I.M. Pei, the internationally-known architect and urban planner who crafted renewal and development plans for downtown Oklahoma City and the nearby health care district, the project included razing of whole city blocks, resulting in the loss of numerous historical buildings and houses in low-income, minority-majority neighborhoods. In return, Oklahoma City gained a new street layout, convention center, large urban park, modern office buildings, retail space, parking garages, and entertainment facilities (Huycke 2015). Unsuccessful in competing for retail business with the shopping malls on Oklahoma City's urban fringe, the project failed to stem the tide of white flight to the suburbs prevalent during this time in the U.S. For several

decades, downtown remained an area where people went to work Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:00. Nights and weekends the area felt like a ghost town.

Oklahoma City's goals for urban renewal during the 1960s were not unique. As Lake (2003) points out, "[u]rban renewal, slum clearance, integration management, and neighborhood redevelopment programs represented last-ditch efforts to stem the tide, to save the city as a place for White residence, employment, investment, and leisure" (353). Focused primarily on economic development, urban renewal projects were not designed to address the basic needs of residents (Cruz 2009). Fortunately desired outcomes for the current phase of the urban development program mentioned in Chapter 1, the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS), are shifting to include some projects aimed at supporting citizen health. These projects are a biking and hiking trail system, senior health and wellness centers, and sidewalks for improving municipal walkability.

As expected, areas near downtown Oklahoma City boast the greatest amount of land use diversity (Comer and Greene 2015). They are also areas with significant gentrification. Tierney and Petty (2015) demonstrate the gentrification wrought in and near Bricktown as a result of MAPS. Evidence of gentrification includes higher education levels, lower household sizes, and increased housing values. While business outcomes increased with growth in the number of fast food restaurants serving low-income residents and significant increases in the full-service restaurants serving upper-income residents, negative outcomes include a smaller percentage of the Black residents who were the original tenants for the majority of the areas in and around pre-MAPS Bricktown. Speaking generally about gentrification, Reid and Smith (1993) could have easily been summarizing the situation in Bricktown when they stated (193):

> Realtors, developers and gentrifiers portrayed as "urban cowboys" – rugged individualists, driven in pursuit of civic betterment – tame and reclaim the dilapidated communities of the downtown urban frontier. At their hands, city neighborhoods are transformed as residences are rehabilitated and new luxury apartment complexes are constructed for incoming middle- and upper-class residents. New boutique landscapes of consumption emerge catering to their gastronomic, fashion and entertainment demands, and new landscapes of production are created with the construction of new office buildings: the workspace of the residents of the "new" city.

Even though some residents have failed to benefit from MAPS, on the whole the campaign is viewed as a tremendous success. Tourist and entertainment options in Oklahoma City were significantly enhanced. Joining previous entertainment options of an amusement park, horse racing track, minor league baseball park, museums, water park, and zoo, most of which are average at best, are now world-class sports venues that raise the visibility of athletics in Oklahoma City. In particular, an arena in downtown helped facilitate the coup of a National Basketball Association (NBA) team. The former Seattle SuperSonics is now known as the Oklahoma Thunder. The team has experienced strong popularity and success in Oklahoma City.

My observations about Oklahoma City tend to dwell on the ways that the intersections between economic interests and urban policy produce the metropolitan region. Municipal decision makers seek continual development and growth. Focusing on the *exchange-value* of space rather than *use-value*, Oklahoma City's municipal government continually invests considerable resources in the creation of entertainment and commercial districts, while ignoring public housing and transportation needs. These Marxian notions of value pit the market valuation (the exchange) of space against the utility of space for the everyday lives of urban inhabitants (the use). This emphasis on exchange values results in cities "being produced *for* us rather than *by* us" (Mitchell

2003, 18, emphasis original). Current policy in Oklahoma City certainly has been designed to fit consumer and tourist needs. As an alternative to this market-obsessed approach, a right to the city framework argues that space should be produced to meet the needs of urban inhabitants rather than developers, who may or may not live in the neighborhood or city (Purcell 2006).

Methods

Reviewing urban geography research from the 1990s, Susan Hanson (2003) found a lack of methodological variety as researchers relied on the positivist epistemologies long dominating the field. Yet use of "personal interviews, ethnographies, and discourse analysis" did make some headway for their ability to add meaning to the patterns and trends revealed through secondary sources (473). Utilizing interviews focused on the individual scale combined with the urban scale of discourse analysis allowed me to engage in the cross-scale investigations that Hanson recommends for research aimed at understanding urban processes. Mimicking the comparative case studies, data analysis for the Oklahoma City study is based on information collected through archival inquiry that helped me identify ideal research participants for personal interviews. I interviewed seven individuals including members of citizen advocacy groups, municipal employees, and other individuals purposively identified during the formal archival inquiry process, supplemented with snowball sampling. All of the interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Unlike the comparative case study sites, I was able to observe a majority of the official municipal meetings where the chicken ordinance was under consideration.

Specifically, I attended one Planning Commission meeting and five City Council meetings. As noted by Hanson (2003), "urban geographers have always been parochial, and perhaps understandably so, in that they have long shown a proclivity to study the places where they live" (297). As previously mentioned, I grew up in Oklahoma City and now live in Norman, one of the sites in the comparative case study and part of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Not only is Oklahoma City a convenient research site, it is personally significant to me and has long held my academic attention.

Oklahoma City Case Study

I begin this section with a brief introduction to urban agriculture in Oklahoma City, including a summary of the previous attempt to update the backyard chicken ordinance. The most recent effort for changes allowing backyard chickens on standard residential lots was initially tied to a broad urban agriculture ordinance. I summarize the urban agriculture and backyard chicken ordinance process, before identifying and discussing possible reasons why the backyard chicken issue continues to fail in Oklahoma City.

Urban Agriculture in Oklahoma City

Interest in urban agriculture has been on the rise for more than a decade in Oklahoma City. In January 2007, a one million dollar donation from local philanthropist John E. Kirkpatrick helped pay for construction of an Agriculture Resource Center at Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City (OSU-OKC), a public two-year college. The donation was the largest private gift ever received by the campus. OSU-OKC

credited need for the new facility to increasing demand for urban agriculture classes. Acting as local food hubs, both this center and the Farmers Market District between downtown and the Oklahoma River serve as material space for the promotion of alternative, local, and urban agriculture in Oklahoma City. OSU-OKC hosts a popular farmers market, houses demonstration gardens, and offers a degree in horticulture technologies with tracks that include nursery and greenhouse production and sustainable crops production (OSU-OKC). The Farmers Market District is anchored by the historic Oklahoma City Farmers Public Market building. From 1928 until the 1980s, this building served as the largest farmers market in the state (Farmers Public Market 2017). After decades of underutilization, the farmers market has returned and the building serves as a local food hub, antique mall, and popular entertainment venue.

Despite its popularity, urban agriculture in Oklahoma City can be a challenge. Growers must contend with an extreme and at times unpredictable climate. Moreover, akin to the Oakland, California soil issues mentioned in Chapter 2, parts of Oklahoma City contain soil unsuitable for food cultivation. The urban agriculture organization CommonWealth Urban Farms seeks to grow food on vacant lots, particularly residential lots in disadvantaged neighborhoods; however, the soil on some of these lots is contaminated with lead. The source of the lead was most likely paint from the houses that once occupied the lots and fossil fuel derivatives used to heat the former home and fuel any associated automobiles. To combat this problem CommonWealth is experimenting with mushrooms crops that absorb lead in a process known as bioremediation, which is the use of microorganisms to biodegrade organic contaminants (Erickson et al. 1992).

Cities act as nutrient sinks, "continually absorbing food to feed the ever-growing urban population" (Mougeot 2006, 35). Sadly, a fair amount of this food is wasted or spoils during transportation and storage. The most efficient urban agriculture systems include processes for composting, which is an area where CommonWealth Urban Farm further aids Oklahoma through urban agriculture. They turn large amounts of produce from area grocery stores that would otherwise be sent to the landfill into compost that forms the base of the urban farm. CommonWealth also provides education and classes on gardening, including compost related classes (Figure 7).

Figure 7: CommonWealth Urban Farms Website

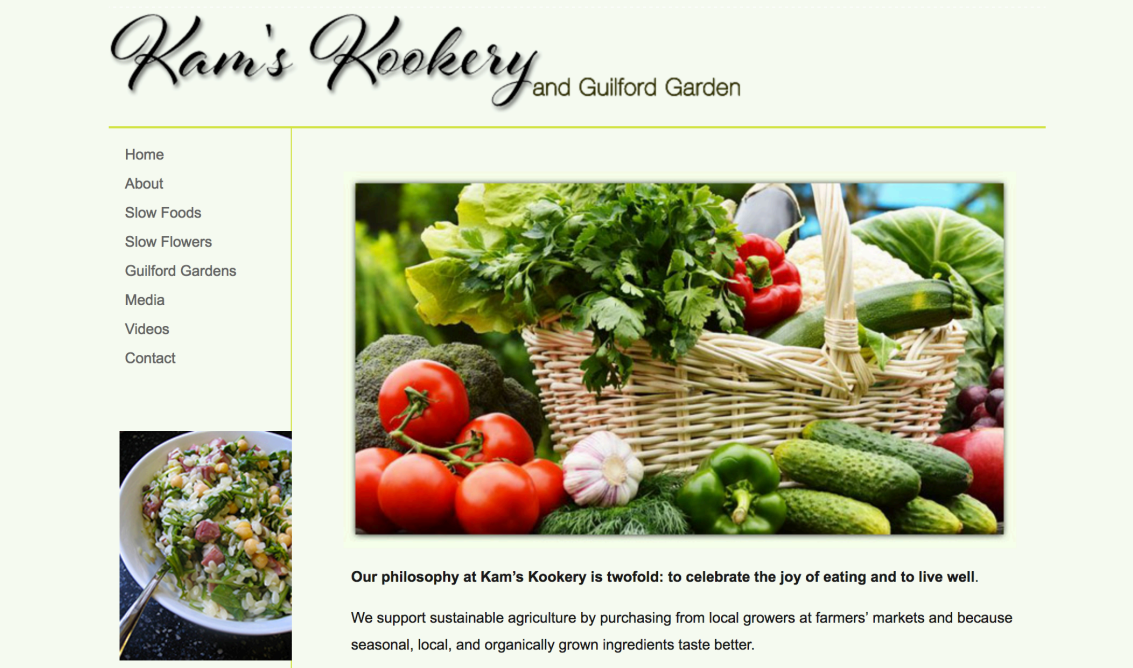


Source: http://commonwealthurbanfarms.com/garden-school/

Another popular urban agriculture organization is Kam's Kookery and Guildford Gardens (Figure 8). Offering community supported agriculture subscriptions

from their two-acre urban farm for over 10 years, Guildford Gardens operates in three growing seasons (spring, summer, and fall). Kam's Cookery presents cooking classes and special events focused on local food, in addition to supporting the slow food movement in Oklahoma City. A member group of Slow Food International, Slow Food Oklahoma City's purpose is "to promote food traditions that are part our cultural identity, be cautious caretakers of our land, and offer respect and support for local artisans who grow, produce, market, prepare, and serve wholesome foods" (http://www.slowfoodokc.com/missionpurpose.html).

Figure 8: Kam's Kookery and Guildford Gardens Website



Source: http://kamskookery.com/

Other local organizations advocate for urban agriculture through the lens of sustainability. Encouraging sustainable agriculture in Oklahoma City is a large focus of Sustainable OKC, which is a chapter of the Oklahoma Sustainability Network (OSN).

Started in 1999 by OU student Emma McCauley as a local sustainability listserv, in 2002 OSN became a statewide 501c3 non-profit organization with a growing membership and annual conference (OSN 2006). Although the last annual conference was held in 2010, the organization now hosts eight local chapters. Sustainability OKC is also affiliated with Transition OKC, a group founded in 2009 to organize, support, and collaborate on events serving as "catalysts for Oklahoma City's transition to resilience, health and sustainability" (http://www.transitionokc.org/about/). On a Transition OKC webpage titled *DYI Transitioning*, 16 of the 32 books recommended by the organization focus on growing, cooking, and preserving food. The current and past chair of Transition OKC are also on the steering committee for the Urban Ag Coalition of Oklahoma City, "a coalition dedicated to helping urban agriculture grow and thrive in Oklahoma City" (https://urbanagokc.org/about/).

Backyard Chickens in Oklahoma City

The Oklahoma City Council enacted zoning regulations in 1996 that limited chickens to residential lots that were at least one acre and required coop setbacks of 400 feet. Despite these restrictions, one city employee estimated that "there's a thousand chickens within a half mile radius" of downtown (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014). In an act of counter-territorial resistance, citizens raising chickens on smaller lots challenge the legitimacy of City Council to control backyard activities through zoning. Chicken-raising households also materially rebel against the discourse of the power wielded by the controlling class, the majority of whom in Oklahoma City subscribe to what Robbins (2007) describes as *lawn people* values. These values adhere to a strict

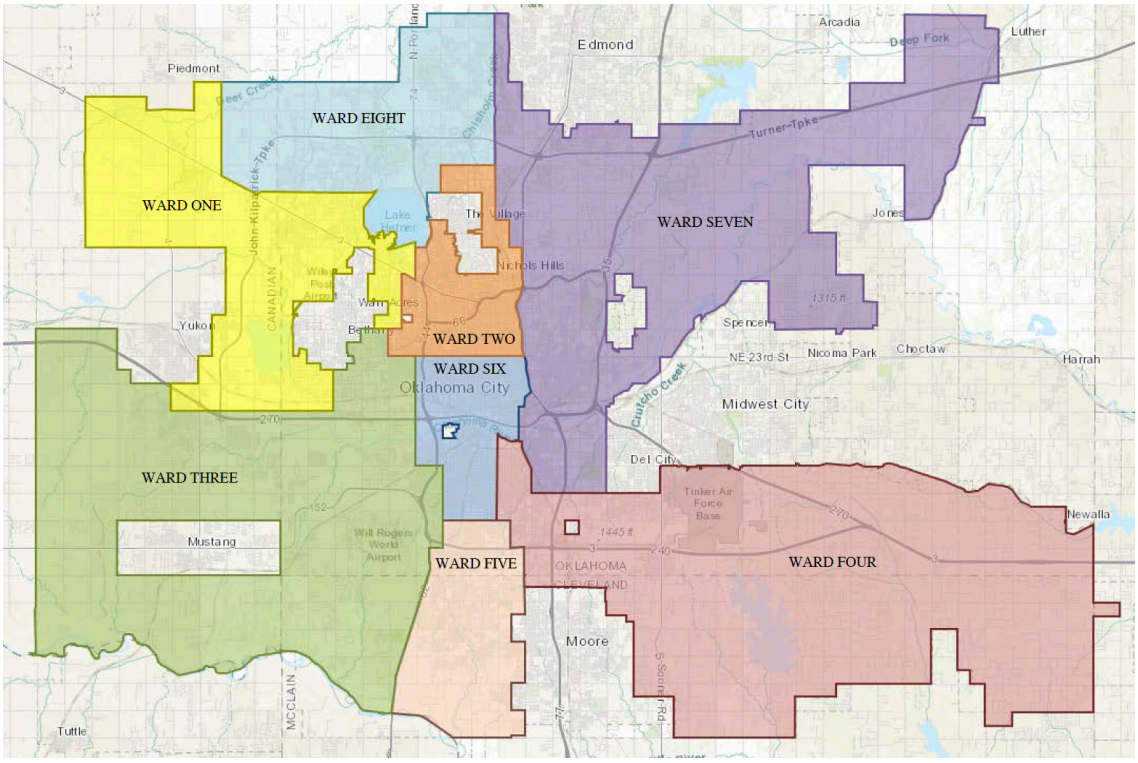
landscape aesthetic favoring well-maintained lawn turf and are supported by city ordinances and homeowner association rules. Despite the estimated number of chickens conflicting with the common aesthetic, in 2011 the director of Development Services for Oklahoma City stated that "code enforcers typically get less than half a dozen complaints per year about people raising chickens in unauthorized areas" (Kimball 2011, para. 6). Even lower numbers of complaints were reported in subsequent years, with most of the calls due to roosters.

In October 2009, a citizen presented City Council with a petition signed by 341 residents supporting the reconfiguration of zoning regulations so that more people might legally raise backyard chickens. By May 2010, discussion about changing the backyard chicken ordinance was on a City Council meeting agenda. To encourage support for the change, a pro-chicken organizer sent this statement to the Oklahoma Sustainability Network list serve:

> Permitting backyard hens would enhance Oklahoma City's reputation as a go-to city when it comes to local food. Oklahoma City has thriving farmers markets, an ever-expanding list of restaurants and caterers using local foods and retail stores selling local foods, a Buy Fresh Buy Local Central Oklahoma Chapter, and the state's largest food coop – the always amazing Oklahoma Food Cooperative was established here in OKC. Robust local food systems are particularly important for a city that wants to position itself as a leading 21st century city and a city hospitable to the "creative class". For example, in Texas, the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Laredo, and Round Rock all allow chickens. Tulsa allows backyard chickens. The cities of Topeka, Kan. and Denver, Colo., also permit their residents to keep chickens. Looking further away, even the residents of New York City are allowed to keep chickens, as are the residents of Boston, Chicago, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Baltimore, and Los Angeles. The former home of our OKC Thunder – Seattle has allowed backyard chickens since 1982! Are we going to let Seattle "steal our thunder" when it comes to chickens? (May 2010)

Following these urban policy comparisons, the author pointed out the benefits of chickens on multiple scales. The household scale benefits of chickens offered were low noise levels compared to other pets, ability to consume garden pests, and the fertilizer they provide. Community scale benefits summarized were the ways that chickens support sustainability and food security. In the same message another organizer, the one presenting the petition to the council, requested that individuals on the list serve contact their city council members and attend the city council meeting in support of the issue.

Figure 9: Oklahoma City Council Ward Map



Source:
http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=ed7aa75a5f124d588dd27dfbf567244f

At the May 18, 2010 Council Meeting, the City Manager reported results of a November 2009 peer study conducted by city staff. All but one of the comparable cities – Austin, El Paso, Fort Worth, Kansas City, Nashville, Tulsa, St. Louis, and Wichita –

allow backyard chickens. At the request of the city, the non-profit organization Neighborhood Alliance of Central Oklahoma conducted a March survey (n=1,174) to gauge resident sentiment on the issue, reporting that "results were generally favorable, with 37 percent responding yes to the allowance, 33 percent responding yes but with restrictions, and 31 percent opposed to chickens" (Brus 2010, para. 7). Those opposed seemed to be most concerned about noise and odor. Ward Three (green on Figure 9) council member, Larry McAtee, said that chickens are overwhelmingly opposed in his ward. The council members from Ward Four (red) and Ward Five (pink), Pete White and Brian Walters, were supportive of the initiative. Ward Two (orange) council member, Sam Bowman, recommended allowing chickens on a "neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis," and Ward Six (medium blue) council member, Meg Salyer, pointed out "there are plenty of 1-acre lots in the metro" where chickens are already allowed (Peterson 2010, para. 9 and 7). Requiring one acre to raise hens could indicate that chickens are seen as an animal that belongs in rural areas or on the urban/rural fringe, but not in the city proper - especially in a city aiming for 'big league' status.

At the council meeting in August, city staff followed Sam Bowman's recommendation and proposed allowing backyard chickens in neighborhoods where at least half of the residents support the issue. Citing constituent opposition to chickens, the recommendation failed to receive a majority of councilor votes. In April 2011 a new council member, Ed Shadid, was elected for Ward Two. At the City Council Meeting on June 14th, Dr. Shadid announced his support for urban chickens and invited citizens to a town hall meeting to discuss the issue. Despite Shadid's efforts, City Council as a whole did not reconsider the chicken ordinance until the urban agriculture push of 2013.

Oklahoma City's Urban Agriculture and Chicken Ordinances

Urban agriculture came to the attention of City of Oklahoma City staff in 2011 when they partnered with the Oklahoma County Health Department on a successful proposal for a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transformation Grant (CDC Division of Community Health). One focus of the grant proposal was increasing urban access to healthy food. Aiming to "understand how the local food supply chain works," city staff reached out to individuals active in Oklahoma City's local food movement (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014). City staff learned from these food movement activists about the barriers faced by urban farmers and gardeners in Oklahoma City, mostly due to outdated or unclear city code. Planning Department staff then conducted peer city and best practice research (professional policy mobility activity) for urban agriculture practices, concluding that only simple modifications to the OKC zoning code were necessary. The changes centered on defining activities associated with urban agriculture, which McClintock et. al. (2012) recommend as an important first policy step: "Zoning *use definitions* are important because they govern what activities are legally allowed in specific zoning districts. Without a zoning definition, a use is considered to be *de facto* illegal" (19, emphasis original).

In Oklahoma City, a Planning Commission recommends zoning and ordinance changes to City Council. The mayor appoints a Planning Commission member from each of the eight city wards, plus one at-large member. The city's Planning Director serves as secretary of the commission. Eleven sub-groups report to the Planning Commission: Arts Commission, Bricktown Urban Design Committee, Citizens Committee for Community Development, City Council Neighborhood Conservation

Committee, City Council Social Services Committee, Downtown Design Review Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, planOKC Citizens Advisory Team, Riverfront Design Committee, Urban Design Committee (planning and development of the Stockyards City Development District), and Urban Design Commission (building permits and design applications). When the commission was considering an urban agriculture ordinance in 2013, the Planning Department recommended leaving out backyard chickens due to failed attempts to pass an updated chicken ordinance in 2010 and 2011. Planning staff felt that support for urban agriculture in Oklahoma City was strong enough to ensure passage of the clarified code; however, they did not want to risk failure because of association with a political topic, namely chickens, which had been proven to be controversial in Oklahoma City.

The Planning Department crafted an urban agriculture ordinance amendment establishing a framework for urban agriculture in Oklahoma City. The ordinance included provisions for community gardens, composting, greenhouses, home gardens, hoop houses, rainwater harvesting, roof gardens, urban farms, and up to 6 hens per household. Updated regulations regarding backyard chickens were added at the request of Ward Two council member, Ed Shadid. The Planning Department drafted the ordinance based on urban agriculture practices allowed in Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Fort Worth, Kansas City, Louisville, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Portland, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, and St. Louis. After the draft ordinance was presented to and approved by the Urban Development Committee on October 10, 2013, the ordinance was set for a hearing of the full Planning Commission on October 24, 2013. At the

October meeting, Planning Department staff reported that 22 of the other 27 (81%) cities hosting NBA teams allow backyard chickens. After asking staff questions about composting and rainwater harvesting, the commission unanimously recommended the urban agriculture ordinance for approval by the City Council.

The urban agriculture ordinance was scheduled for introduction to the City Council on December 3, 2013. At the meeting, council motioned and passed that the amendment for backyard chickens be separated into a stand-alone item. The chicken proposal allowed for 6 hens but no roosters or outdoor slaughter. Hens were to be housed in coops with at least four square feet per hen that could only be located in side yards or backyards and with a 10-foot setback. Outdoor access of at least eight feet per hen was also necessary, which was later amended clarifying that fencing must enclose the space. The separate ordinances for urban agriculture and chickens were introduced at the City Council Meeting on December 17th. Eleven residents spoke in favor of backyard chickens with only one person speaking in opposition to the measure. Nine individuals voiced support for the urban agriculture ordinance, and all but one of them were also among the eleven supporting urban chickens. No resident spoke against urban agriculture. Council members engaged in conversation with staff confirming that neighborhood association restrictions against backyard chickens or urban agriculture would not be overridden by either ordinance, but that neighborhood associations would be responsible for enforcing their own regulations. The council members from Wards Three and Five (Larry McAtee and David Greenwell) reported that a majority of the constituents who contacted them about this issue were against backyard chickens; yet,

the vote to move both ordinances forward for final adoption consideration on December 31st passed unanimously.

At the City Council meeting on December 31st, two residents spoke in favor of backyard chickens and no one spoke against the issue. Several council members hinted that they would prefer an ordinance requiring a permitting process for chickens. The measure for chickens then failed by a vote of two to seven. The council members voting yes were Ed Shadid (Ward Two) and Pete White (Ward Four). The remaining council members and the mayor voted against the ordinance. With very little discussion and no speakers for or against the motion, the urban agriculture ordinance subsequently passed nine to zero. After the December meeting three council members, including the two who voted for passage of the chicken ordinance and Meg Salyer (Ward Six), requested that city staff "develop a proposal to allow backyard hens on lots smaller than one acre that would provide the ability for citizens to gain approval through an open public process" (Staff Report to the Planning Commission on February 13, 2014, para. 3). Council considered said code amendment during their meeting on January 21, 2014. Members voted eight to one to refer consideration of the revised ordinance back to the Planning Commission. The council member who voted no was Larry McAtee, Ward Three.

In February, Planning Department staff worked with the Urban Development Committee on a special exception use process for backyard chickens. Special exception use requires approval from the Board of Adjustment. To apply for approval, residents must pay a $25 application fee. Neighbors within 300 feet of the resident seeking approval are notified of the application. Anyone protesting the application can write a

letter to the Board of Adjustment or attend the hearing meeting where the applicant is also welcome to defend their plans. At the Planning Commission meeting on March 27, 2014, two of the chicken advocates spoke – one neutral and one for the application process. After some discussion of the process by commission members, the chicken ordinance, amended to include the special exception use requirement, was referred back to City Council with recommendation to approve. As is standard council procedure and timing, the revised ordinance was introduced to council on April 15, 2014, set for public hearing on April 29th, with final adoption consideration on May 13th.

During the City Council meeting on April 29th, seven Oklahoma City residents spoke in favor of the ordinance and one spoke against it. After brief discussion by council, the ordinance was unanimously moved forward. At the May 13th meeting, two residents spoke in favor of the ordinance. No one openly opposed the measure; however, the council members who intended to vote against the ordinance stated that they had heard from more constituents against than for the issue. On final vote, the ordinance failed by a vote of four to five. Voting yes were Mick Cornett (mayor), Ed Shadid (Ward Two), Pete White (Ward Four), and Meg Salyer (Ward Six). Councilors voting no were James Greiner (Ward One), Larry McAtee (Ward Three), David Greenwell (Ward Five), John Pettis, Jr. (Ward Seven), and Patrick Ryan (Ward Eight).

Discussion

Urban Policy Advocacy

As with the comparative case study sites, advocates for urban agriculture and backyard hens utilized online advocacy, participated in public outreach, encouraged

residents to communicate with council, and managed the message presented at City Council meetings. Figure 10 is an example of advocacy through social media. The OKC Chickens Facebook group had 1,401 members at the time of writing, while the OKC Urban Ag Coalition group had only 778, despite more recent postings (Figure 11). The most recent post in the OKC Chickens group was May 2014.

Figure 10: Post in the OKC Chickens Facebook Group



Source: https://www.facebook.com/okcchickens/

Figure 11: OKC Urban Ag Coalition Facebook Group



Source: https://www.facebook.com/UrbanAgOKC/

Numerous chicken supporters, many more than spoke, attended the Planning Commission and City Council meetings. Individuals indicated their support by wearing a paper egg with a hand drawn chicken. In addition Wellness Now, a coalition of metro area organizations committed to improving community health, and 18 other organizations publicly endorsed both the urban agriculture and backyard chicken ordinances. The handout in Figure 12 was provided to city council and anyone else interested in the issue at the city council meeting where the final vote for the chicken ordinance (amended to include the special exception use requirement) took place on May 13, 2014.

Figure 12: Oklahoma City Organizations in Support of Urban Agriculture
(two-sided document)



Endorsement: urban agriculture and hens

Grow our Health OKC

Nutrition & Fitness

Issues:

- Oklahoma's obesity rate is 32.2%.[1]
- Oklahoma ranks last in fruit and vegetable consumption.[2]
- Oklahoma ranks last in fitness levels.[3]

Position:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables taste better and are more likely to be consumed.
- Research indicates free-range chickens that eat a more varied diet produce more nutritious eggs.[4]
- Research indicates gardening may increase fruit and vegetable consumption.[5]
- Gardening activities provide moderate exercise.
- A healthy diet is linked to better health outcomes (lower mortality rates).[6]

[1] America's Health Rankings, 2013
[2] Oklahoma Dept. of Health
[3] American Fitness Index
[4] Mother Earth News
[5] Centers for Disease Control

Food security

Issues:

- Oklahoma City has acres of food deserts where healthy food choices are scarce.[7]
- Oklahoma City has a 17.1% poverty rate (higher than both national and state averages).[8]
- One in four children in Oklahoma struggle with hunger.[9]

Position:

- Urban agriculture and hens offer an opportunity for low-income households to increase nutritional adequacy and decrease food insecurity.

[6] Oxford: International Journal, Epidemiology
[7] Oklahoma Health Equity Campaign
[8] United States Census
[9] Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

Environmental Responsibility

Issues:

- Oklahoma City has recently instituted water conservation measures due to drought conditions.
- Typically, neighborhoods prefer to avoid construction of new landfills.

Position:

- Rainwater harvesting encourages water conservation and may decrease use of municipal water for gardening.
- Composting converts vegetable and yard "waste" into a garden fertilizer and decreases overall solid waste volume sent to landfills.

Contact: Grow our Health OKC
Christine Patton (405) 208-2779
info@goinglocalokc.com

WELLNESS NOW

OSN

BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL Oklahoma

Farm & Food Alliance OKLAHOMA

FARMERS MARKET DISTRICT

SIERRA CLUB FOUNDED 1892

TRANSITION OKLAHOMA CITY

Slow Food OKLAHOMA CITY

CommonWealth URBAN FARMS of OKC

CLOSER TO EARTH ACTIONS TO STOP CLIMATE CHANGE

URBANAGRARIAN

sustainableokc

FERTILE GROUND

612 sixtwelve

verbode

NATIONAL WOMEN IN AG. ASSOCIATION

tlc Garden Centers The Plant Professionals

Through a reflective case study of the urban agriculture zoning development process in Oakland, McClintock et al. (2012), who were participant observers, offer "lessons to communities working to adopt [urban agriculture] regulations as well as those tackling local food policy more broadly" (30). The lessons are presented in Table 6, along with notes of how each lesson relates to the process in Oklahoma City. The Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC) was responsible for most of the urban agriculture advocacy in Oakland. Before launching into advocacy efforts, OFPC first prioritized their food system goals. A food system considers the "production, distribution, processing, consumption, and waste" of food for an area (Unger and Wooten 2006, para. 3). The Oakland food system plan focuses on equity, health, and sustainability.

Table 6: Urban Agriculture Policy Advocacy Recommendations and Outcomes

Oakland Recommendations	**Oklahoma City Outcomes**
Create an advocacy structure that can weather a lengthy policymaking process	Advocates demonstrated a willingness to stick with the process for the long haul, advocating in particular for backyard chickens from 2010 through the ordinance vote in 2014
Identify the appropriate advocacy role early in the process	Advocates displayed understanding in this area by developing positive working relationships with Planning Department staff
Emergencies or immediate problems may both postpone and expedite action	No corollary in the OKC case
Successful advocacy benefits from both inside (staff) and outside (political leaders) "champions"	Advocates developed champions among city staff and city council
Urban agriculture change benefits when it is part of a larger food system plan	*Without a local food policy council or framework for a local food system, the OKC case is weak in this area*
Policy without people is boring	Advocates did a good job of explaining the constraints faced by urban agriculture practitioners under the earlier zoning ordinance to city staff, Planning Commission, City Council, and the public

Recommendations quoted from McClintock et al. 2012, pages 30-31, clarification in parenthesis mine

The ingredient lacking in Oklahoma City, a local food system plan, may be part of the reason that the backyard chicken ordinance failed. The two cities in Oklahoma that do have food policy councils, Tulsa and Tahlequah, allow backyard chickens.

In Oakland, the Food Policy Council benefits from members who are representatives of the Alameda County Community Food Bank (McClintock et al. 2012). Would it have made a difference if the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank (ORFB) supported urban chickens in Oklahoma City? The ORFB supported the urban agriculture ordinance and has a program called *Urban Harvest* that is described as a sustainable gardening program with four central goals: "agriculture education, fresh food production, community outreach and ecological conversation" (https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/programs/urban-harvest). However, it could be that officials of the organization were hesitant to support a political issue (the chicken ordinance) that could affect their donations. If true, this phenomenon is not unique to the food bank in Oklahoma. The "long, slow erosion of public assistance benefits" in the U.S. since the 1970s has created a system of private food organizations dependent on donations to feed an increasing number of people (Poppendieck 1999, 82). To function as the social safety net we expect them to be, food banks cannot risk alienating any current or potential donors.

During the urban agriculture ordinance process in Oakland, city officials noted appreciation for the policy research shared by advocates for urban agriculture. A City of Oklahoma City employee I interviewed expressed similar appreciation for the policy research shared by Oklahoma City's advocates for urban agriculture and backyard chickens (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014):

> [Advocate name] is off the chart. No one's ever done that [thorough of a job on policy research] and I don't expect that will ever happen ever again. But to cause change, the citizen side needs a couple people like [names], to give a face to this issue and go and do some of the legwork. It gets the councils much more responsive. ... Elected officials generally are more responsive when citizens are sitting in front of them and then staff can come back it up. We don't really initiate policy change; it's great to have really active citizens. And like I said, I don't imagine anyone's ever gonna go do another 32 city survey of what they do about chickens.

Even when the outcomes sought by citizen activists fail to be fully realized, they can still affect the policy mobility practices of city government. In a 2013 meeting between City Council and the former planning director about upcoming urban agriculture research, a council member requested that staff "include the thing about those big league cities," referring to the policy research chicken advocates presented at a 2010 city council meeting about cities with NBA teams that allow backyard chickens (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014). Prior to this request, the Planning Department intended to utilize a standard comparator list of medium-sized cities similar to Oklahoma City. In their presentation about urban agriculture to City Council on December 3, 2013, the Planning Department utilized both policy comparison lists. The standard list was used for research into policy governing urban agriculture (Figure 13); however, a presentation with other cities hosting NBA teams and whether or not they allow chickens was also included (Figure 14).

Figure 13: Slide 4 from Urban Agriculture in Oklahoma City Presentation



Source: City of Oklahoma City Planning Department

Figure 14: Slide 6 from Urban Agriculture in Oklahoma City Presentation



Source: City of Oklahoma City Planning Department

Although an updated chicken ordinance for Oklahoma City did not pass, the advocates pushing for backyard chickens swayed the opinion of two members of City Council who were initially against an updated measure. The first was Meg Sayler, whose support for backyard chickens may have helped her fend off a challenge from Bob Waldrop in the 2015 Ward Six election. Bob is the founder of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative and Oklahoma City's Catholic Worker House. The latter organization delivers food to hundreds of hungry families in Oklahoma City who lack transportation. The other council member who changed his tune on urban chickens was the mayor, Mick Cornett. It could be that Mayor Cornett was swayed by the health benefits of backyard chickens. The Mayor received wide publicity for putting Oklahoma City on a diet to deal with rising obesity and troubling health indicators in the city (http://www.thiscityisgoingonadiet.com/). Bloomberg News, the Daily Mail U.K., Huffington Post, Men's Fitness, NBC News, NPR, Politico, and numerous other news outlets covered the mayor's diet initiative.

Social Capital in Oklahoma City

Examining "food justice movements as a valuable site for countering the identity of the person only as a consumer, and as a place for learning active democratic citizenship," Levoke (2006) found that citizens who participate in these movements develop "strong civic virtues and perspectives" (90). Affiliation with food justice organizations allowed participants to raise awareness of food issues, "put pressure on government," and create alternative systems (92). In Oklahoma City food justice was touted as a benefit rather than the purpose of urban agriculture and backyard chickens;

however, like the subjects in Levoke's study, local organizations and activists learned how to participate in the process of municipal governance. For some of the residents interviewed in this case study, the ordinance change process provided an introduction to the political process at the local level and helped them build social capital (OKC Interview 7, March 13, 2014):

> It was my first time to be involved with, really, policy-making. The first time for me to start to really see how things happen in a city. And it's amazing. On a city level, even though Oklahoma City is not a tiny city, even on this level, one or two or three people can make a big difference. It was actually an astounding experience for me. I had no idea. I barely even knew what city council was and what they did. I started going to city council meetings and to meet with people within the city and to have conversations back and forth. It was a huge eye-opener for me. And I think we made a big difference [in the urban agriculture ordinance].

This individual had a positive experience with the ordinance change process and felt empowered by the experience. Yet they were able to build social capital because of a flexible job that allows them to attend city council meetings. City council meetings are held every other Tuesday at 8:30 a.m., which causes an attendance barrier for residents who work during this time. In comparison, bi-monthly city council meetings are at 6:00 p.m. in Knoxville, 6:30 p.m. in Norman, and 1:00 in Columbia. The effects of the meeting timing are evident in type of citizens who were active in the chicken ordinance change process for each city. In Oklahoma City and Columbia, only a third of the citizens and activists I interviewed had full-time jobs, compared to half in Norman and all of the interviewees in Knoxville. In cities with city council meetings in the evenings, more residents with full-times jobs are able to actively participate in the municipal ordinance process.

Scholars debate the concept of social capital, yet the results of this case study demonstrate that when it comes to local politics, some citizens and organizations clearly possess more social capital and have greater rights to the city than others. A type of organization mentioned in the Oklahoma City council debates over the updated chicken ordinance that appears to possess strong social capital is the city's neighborhood and homeowner associations. Larry McAtee (Ward Three), the council member most consistently against urban chickens, mentioned homeowner/neighborhood associations on multiple occasions. At the City Council meeting on December 3, 2013, Mr. McAtee stated, "I've conducted surveys in Ward Three now for a number of years at neighborhood meetings and in those meetings, every neighborhood association where I have asked, the majority of the people have been against chickens in the backyard."

One of the chicken advocates interviewed in this case study shared her experience with a Ward Three neighborhood association (OKC Interview 1, January 24, 2014):

> I called a lot of the [neighborhood and homeowners associations] to say, "May I come to one of your neighborhood association meetings and give a presentation on backyard chickens and answer any questions?" Probably 99% of the ones I called said, "Oh, we never have meetings," or stated that they're just a homeowners watch association or something similar. There was only one group acting as a traditional neighborhood association that has meetings and allows outside presentations. They agreed to let me come to a meeting but then [the association president] said, "Well, Larry McAtee, who's our city councilman, comes to all of our meetings and he reminded me that you're not allowed. In the Homeowners Neighborhood Association bylaws, it says that we're not allowed to have anyone come and talk about political issues." I was disinvited. Their city councilman comes to all of the meetings and seems to know their bylaws, and I'm assuming that he talks about political issues at the meetings. I was sitting in the city council meetings thinking, "Well, I'm not allowed to come to neighborhood association meetings and talk about political issues like the chicken ordinance," which I guess is political because it's being voted on at city council, yet Larry McAtee is allowed to attend. The situation was a bit frustrating.

Why was Mr. McAtee against a chicken advocate attending the neighborhood association meeting to educate the group about backyard chickens? Was he afraid that the advocate's arguments would be compelling enough to change the minds of the association's members?

Larry McAtee's connections to neighborhood associations were emphasized during his re-election campaign in 2013. His campaign website offers the following statement (http://www.mcateeforcouncil.org/your-city-councilman.html):

> He is tirelessly championing a pro-growth, business-friendly philosophy and **the need for strong neighborhood associations**. He is always mindful of family and the important responsibility our community has to continue a faith-centered legacy for future generations.

The *Meet Larry* page of his campaign website highlights Mr. McAtee's political connections, stating that he co-teaches adult Sunday school with Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb at Quail Springs Baptist Church. Campaign endorsements on Mr. McAtee's website include Lt. Governor Lamb, U.S. Congressman Steve Russell, and Oklahoma County Commissioner Brian Maughan. The other two endorsements on his website are from individuals associated with neighborhood associations, Patti Koch and Linda Palmer (http://www.mcateeforcouncil.org/endorsements.html):

> We in Ward 3 have been blessed to have Larry McAtee as our city councilman. They say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" It ain't broke! I urge everyone in Ward 3 to vote for Councilman McAtee on February 14th – Patti Koch, Vice President of the Windsor Forest Neighborhood Association

> Larry McAtee is one of the most loyal, honest, Christian men I know. He has been my councilman since I moved into Ward 3. He attends our neighborhood association meetings and listens to all our concerns, wants and needs. – Linda Palmer, President of the Hilldale Neighborhood Association.

The only individual speaking against chickens at the April 29, 2014 City Council meeting was then president of the Windsor Forest Neighborhood Association, Patti

Koch. Here are Ms. Koch's comments to the council (Oklahoma City Council Meeting transcript, April 29, 2014):

> I guess I'm a minority today. I'm also President of Windsor Forest Neighborhood Association [located in Ward 3]. I'm with WAND [Windsor Areas Neighborhood Development] and I'm with WABG [Windsor Area Business Group], and I have moral support with Linda Palmer here, she is the President of Hilldale Neighborhood Association [also in Ward 3]. I know some of you like statistics and I just heard I can only talk three minutes, so you're not gonna get any statistics from me today. I think it's very admirable that a lot of people wanna go back to raising chickens. I'm all for it. What I don't like and what I have heard is I think it should be kept like it is now, at an acre.
>
> I sent out an email to over 1,000 people in Oklahoma City, and it wasn't just to old retired people like me. It was people from all walks of life. I sent out to people as young as my children and grandchildren. I sent out to people, attorneys, doctors. I sent out to a lot of the people that are in county, city, and state government. Sent out to people that work in barbershops and floral, so all walks of life. I had 578 replies... Well I had two more this morning, so really 580. Of those, 537 definitely do not want chickens in their neighbor's yards, 43 said "yes, that would be okay," and of those 43, 40 said "if," and that seems to be a big word that we hear around here, "if." And the "ifs" were "if they follow the ordinance, if they're clean," because I heard from a lot... I don't know anything about farming, I'm not a farmer, but I heard from a lot of people that farm, yes, chickens are messy, yes, they are smelly. Well, they're not if people keep it clean, just like with dogs. But okay, who's gonna enforce that? My understanding is Charles Locke [Code Enforcement Manager] has 30 to 35 inspectors for 661 square miles. I'm thinking he's got more than he can say grace over right now.
>
> Also, the inspectors cannot go in the backyard, so does that mean that if somebody next door has chickens and you have a problem with them, are you gonna have to file a complaint and go to court? Those are just things that I think people need to think about. There's property values. I talked to realtors, and I want you to answer this to yourself honestly. You don't have to answer to me, but answer to yourself honestly: Do you want chickens next door to you? If you went out to buy a home and you had two homes that were comparable price-wise and everything else, one was next door to chickens and one wasn't, which one would you choose?
>
> And I'm serious about that. I talked to a lady that was very upset when they tried to sell their home, there were chickens next door. They took a loss on their property. So property value... I talked to some real estate agents, because I was just curious. Real estate goes down and it does. A lot of times, your real estate

> goes down because people do not want to live next door to somebody that raises chickens. I was gonna ask about fencing, but I think Meg answered that. We were concerned about the chickens and what kind of containment there would be. I didn't know, and you'll probably laugh at this, I didn't know chickens could fly. So, if the coops don't have chicken wire I guess, over the top, they can fly out, unless their wings are clipped. You may have already known that.
>
> An acre of land is only 43,560 square feet, which isn't all that much. But you start putting chickens in a little confined area, and I know people say, "Well, I'd rather live next door to chickens than barking dogs." Well, you're talking apples and oranges. Dogs are domesticated, they bark, they smell, and I understand that. But we already have dogs, and we need something else to add to this. I guess I am gonna lie; there are some statistics. I did look up in Ponca City, Oklahoma. Chickens must be kept 100 feet from the neighbor's house. In Stillwater, they must be 150 feet from any house, and the minimum square feet for poultry is 900. So, I really don't understand why this has been brought up again when once it was decided that we weren't gonna do it. And I feel like my daddy always said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." If the majority of people are against this, and my understanding is this establishment is run by the majority, most of you that are sitting up there were elected by a majority, then I thought the majority ruled. So... And I think my three minutes are up.

Ms. Koch's comments are interesting on several levels. She began her statement by referencing herself as a representative of several Windsor area organizations. She then offered the results of an informal survey she conducted without indicating if the survey participants were all within the Windsor district. The remainder of Ms. Koch's statement seems to be primarily based on anecdotal information and personal opinion. Some of the social capital she possesses with Larry McAtee is undoubtedly due to the fact that he has lived in the Windsor Forest neighborhood since 1969 and his house is 0.2 miles from Ms. Koch's home.

Ron Cheung and Rachel Meltzer (2014) found that the census tracks most likely to have homeowner associations were predominately white, higher income, and further away from the city center. Oklahoma City Ward Three only loosely adheres to this description (see Table 7). It is not the whitest or richest ward, and parts of it are not far

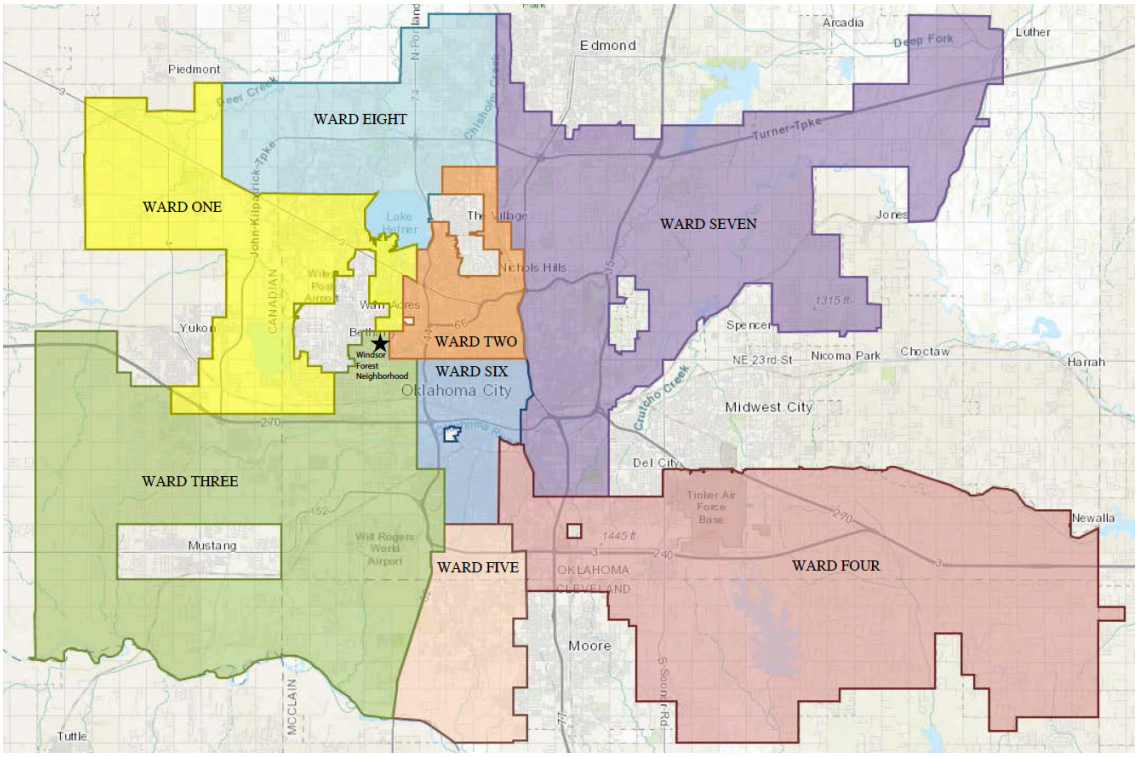
from the city center (see Figure 15); however, it is a large ward that includes a fair amount of extensive rural fringe. Home values in McAtee's and Koch's Windsor Forest neighborhood, which is closer to the city center, are high for Oklahoma City. Houses range from just under 2000 square feet to over 3000 square feet, and homes currently for sale range from $116,500 to $218,900. More research is necessary to fully flesh out whether neighborhood associations in Ward Three are wholesale against urban chickens, or if it is just the associations with more social capital than others.

Consider the statement that Ward Three resident Johanna West made in support of chickens at the city council meeting on December 17, 2013:

> I just wanted to say very briefly that I appreciate you all considering this and I'm excited about the possibility of caring for chickens again, maybe, as well as the other urban agricultural things that have been mentioned. And I'm also here with the support of my neighbors in Ward 3. I went around the neighbors in my area and just didn't have time to collect all the signatures. Not everybody wants to have chickens, but they're all very supportive.

Ms. West lives in a neighborhood (Boeking Acres) without an active homeowner's association that is closer to the rural fringe of Ward Three. There are no houses currently for sale in this neighborhood, but the three sold in 2016 ranged from 1,000 to 1,400 square feet and sold for $42,500, $83,000, and $97,500. On average, the Boeking Acres neighborhood appears to have less economic and therefore social capital when compared to Windsor Forest.

Figure 15: Oklahoma City Ward Map, Windsor Forest Neighborhood Marked



Source:
http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=ed7aa75a5f124d588dd27dfbf567244f

Table 7: Oklahoma City Ward Demographics and Final Chicken Ordinance Vote

	Median Income	People/ Sq. Mile	Below Poverty	College Grads	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Ward 1	$41,338	1,901	9%	20%	51%	37%	12%
Ward 2	$32,823	3,394	17%	22%	38%	50%	12%
Ward 3	$33,512	446	16%	11%	40%	45%	16%
Ward 4	$35,576	424	13%	8%	37%	48%	16%
Ward 5	$41,671	2,145	9%	14%	38%	47%	15%
Ward 6	$23,647	3,472	28%	7%	30%	51%	19%
Ward 7	$25,969	475	23%	11%	25%	64%	11%
Ward 8	$49,536	772	6%	31%	58%	31%	11%

	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Other	Multi-race	Chicken ord. vote
Ward 1	79%	9%	3%	4%	2%	4%	No
Ward 2	64%	20%	3%	5%	3%	4%	Yes
Ward 3	73%	10%	4%	5%	5%	4%	No
Ward 4	72%	12%	4%	3%	4%	5%	Yes
Ward 5	80%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%	No
Ward 6	59%	9%	6%	2%	19%	5%	Yes
Ward 7	39%	50%	3%	1%	5%	4%	No
Ward 8	82%	9%	2%	4%	1%	3%	No

Sources: *The Oklahoman 2006, http://newsok.com/article/2952435* and City Council meeting minutes, May 13, 2014

In a survey of 345 San Francisco Bay Area residents regarding the backyard slaughter of chickens and rabbits, Blecha and Davis (2014) identified three perspectives toward the practice. Respondents supporting the backyard slaughter either "value proximity to their food sources" or "value individuals' freedom to choose" (68). Individuals against the practice expressed a "sense of 'the city' as a place where animal slaughter – at least in the intimate household or neighborhood settings – absolutely does not belong" reflecting a "particular industrial or post-industrial middle-class sensibility" (73). In the Oklahoma City metropolitan area this equates to a suburban sensibility wherein residences dominate the landscape. Respondents in the Blecha and Davis study holding this sensibility were most likely to be over 45 years old and obtain their food from national chain retail stores.

It could be that the Oklahoma City neighborhood associations opposing household chicken-raising hold a similar sense of the city as the participants in the above study who are against backyard slaughter. If so, this sensibility goes against the frontier-like 'freedom to choose' that the city generally espouses. Here are two examples of freedom to choose discourse in Oklahoma City. Covering the opening of a high-end women's clothing store, local newspaper reporter Heather Warlick (2012) played on both the name of the store and local sentiment when she titled her article "Liberte boutique expands freedom to choose fashion in Oklahoma City." This example aligns with the neoliberal idea that consumer choice is a right of citizenship. In a more recent example, Lt. Governor Todd Lamb told the crowd at a Oklahoma State Capitol school choice rally that "[e]very child should have the opportunity, freedom and liberty to pursue the educational institution they want to go to" (Brandes 2017, para. 9).

An additional clash of values in Oklahoma City is evident when comparing support for urban agriculture with the opposition to backyard chickens. As noted by one of the municipal employees interviewed for this study, "it seems interesting that people in Oklahoma City supported urban agriculture because of the agricultural nature of the state because I feel a lot of people who opposed the chickens was for the same reason; they were wanting to get away from a rural perception" (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014). At the city council meeting on December 17, 2013, one individual spoke against chickens, stating that they belong on a farm:

> We have no chickens, no gardens in our backyard. And I think if those that wanna have chickens, need to move out to the farm. And the simple solution is if... What is the name of that rich area across the street from us? Oh, I can't think of it. Do you know what it is? I can't think of it right now. I had it on my mind. The Village area, but it's not the Village, it's next to the Village. And I think that once they've approved to have chickens in the yards then maybe you should consider having chickens. I bought a home because there were no chickens out there back in 1991, and I don't expect any chickens to be there. At my age, I cannot afford to move. I don't wanna smell chickens, I don't wanna hear the chickens, and I'm sure my neighbors in my area of Bel Air Addition don't wanna hear it. Oh, Nichols Hills is the area. I love what Nichols Hills does. And my solution is, if Nichols Hills approve chickens in their yards, then maybe that would be a good solution for us. But I know Nichols Hills is never gonna do that. And thank you very much.

This mention of Nichols Hills, a location I will return to again later, leads nicely to the next sub-section on territorial aspects of Oklahoma City that may have contributed to the failure of an updated chicken ordinance.

The Territoriality of Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City possessed the ingredients recommended by Huang and Dresher (2015) that help get urban agriculture on city council agendas: residents pushing the cause, city employees who understand its applications, and advocates willing to educate

individuals both inside and outside city hall about the practice. Most of the advocacy recommendations from McClintock et al. (2012), were also present. Although Oklahoma City lacks a food policy council or food system plan, it had advocates committed for the long-haul who: identified their role in the ordinance change process, developed champions among city staff and in the city council, and engaged the public in the cause. Yet while backyard chickens successfully made it to multiple city council agendas, the territoriality of Oklahoma City prevented passage of an updated chicken keeping ordinance.

When discussing food policy councils, an interviewee mentioned territorial differences between Oklahoma City and the other significant metropolitan area in the state, Tulsa (OKC Interview 2, January 24, 2014):

> I worked with Tulsa as well on food security issues; they have a Food Security Council that does promote some of those endeavors, especially for under-resourced communities working with local non-profit partners for community gardening. That's a really big thing to do in Tulsa. ... There is a state Food Policy Council, which is under the Department of Agriculture, but [it has not been successful] to the extent that Tulsa has in really trying to engage in at the individual community level.
>
> (Additional question, Do you think that Tulsa had a [chicken] ordinance earlier than Oklahoma City because of that work?)
>
> Maybe. It's hard for me to say. I think in Tulsa, they tend to have a stronger individual community identity. That's what I feel like in working in food policy issues. Those individual communities feel a little less fractured in their efforts than Oklahoma City does. So, it's possible that the Food Security Council contributed, in some ways, in terms of information sharing and getting people together. But I don't know. The culture of communities in Tulsa, it does seem in that area, to be a little bit stronger. This is from my experience, which is not too extensive, but from several years of experience working with both communities.

Territorial differences between Oklahoma City and Tulsa would be interesting to explore further, but were not within the scope of this project. A fruitful line of inquiry might be to investigate whether or not Tulsa has the same urban/rural insecurities that seem to exist in Oklahoma City's quest to be seen as a big league city. In a discussion regarding opposition to urban chickens, an Oklahoma City advocate stated, "One of the barriers was the misunderstanding, misinformation, and then the other one was just purely an image problem, purely just that 'Chickens like, no, that's agriculture and we don't like agriculture'" (OKC Interview 3, January 24, 2014). An interviewee in Columbia, Missouri mentioned a related sentiment indicating that some people there opposed urban chickens because they belong in imaginaries of rural or marginalized areas and not in the urban imaginary (see page 77).

Another difference between the chicken ordinance change process in Oklahoma City and the comparative case study sites is gender. Of the nine individuals advocating for urban chickens that I interviewed as part of the comparative case study, five were female and four were male. In Oklahoma City, all of the advocates I interviewed and most of the individuals promoting backyard chickens, including speaking before city council, were female. As noted by researchers, women generally have weaker levels of social capital than men (Norris and Englehart 2013, Eagly and Carli 2007). In Oklahoma City, where the majority of those in power are male, it is probable that an issue promoted by females could receive less support. It is also possible that the residents of Oklahoma City are similar to the residents of Botswana mentioned in Chapter 2 (see page 59), who associate cattle with men and chickens with women (Hovorka 2012). In Oklahoma City, cattle are welcomed into and celebrated in the

historic Stockyards District, where the mission is "to educate the public about our western heritage by creating a welcoming and active tourist destination and promoting economic vitality and business success" (http://www.stockyardscity.org/). The Stockyards also provide concrete illustration of how the needs of the tourist and business classes receive more attention than many of the residents who call Oklahoma City home, including the women who mobilized the push to legalize backyard chickens.

The quote ending the previous sub-section provides a glimpse into Oklahoma City's class-based perceptions of chicken-raising. The individual speaking against the updated chicken ordinance in Oklahoma City would change her mind if chickens were allowed in Nichols Hills. A small incorporated area in the middle of Oklahoma City, Nichols Hills has less than 4,000 residents in its two square miles, and it is the city in Oklahoma with the highest education levels (32.5% graduate or professional degrees), median housing value ($681,600), and mean income ($231,468) (U.S. Census Bureau 2015). Most of Oklahoma City's neighborhoods that are similar in characteristics to Nichols Hills are located in northern half of the city. In the geographic imaginary of the city, addresses in the northwest are highly valued. The northeast side of the city has the highest population of Black residents (see Table 7, Ward Seven), while south-central Oklahoma City is associated with the Latina/o/x population.

The favoring of northwest Oklahoma City is evident on Larry McAtee's previously mentioned campaign website. Even though Ward three encompasses the southwestern quarter of Oklahoma City, Mr. McAtee states: "I am proud to call **Ward 3 in northwest Oklahoma City** my home and the community which I truly love" (http://www.mcateeforcouncil.org/). I do not believe that this mis-statement is a typo

because Mr. McAtee aligns with northwest Oklahoma City in other documents, and it is the area where he worked and now attends church. While it is true that Mr. McAtee lives in the northwestern section of Ward Three, which does include area as far north as N.W. 36th Street, the northern extent of Oklahoma City reaches to N.W. 192th. The historically more desirable addresses in Oklahoma City are north of N.W. 50th Street, and in more recent decades – thanks to urban sprawl – north of 122nd Street.

The overall distain many of Oklahoma City's residents feel toward Latina/o/x communities, especially those from immigrant backgrounds, is evident in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. I have already provided one such example. Did you notice that the ethnicities provided in Table 7: Oklahoma City Ward Demographics do not include Latina/o/x? I intentionally utilized this data from *The Oklahoman*, Oklahoma City's largest newspaper, even though more recent data is available to highlight attitudes in the area. Although the Latina/o/x population has grown since, in 2006 the population was certainly strong enough to warrant a stand-alone column rather than being included as "Other." In Table 7 the Oklahoma City ward with the highest percentage of "other" ethnicity is Ward Six, which is represented by Meg Salyer. The southern half of this ward has a large number of Latina/o/x-owned businesses, including the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (http://www.okchispanicchamber.org).

Connecting chickens with Oklahoma City's Latina/o/x neighborhoods was overt during the Oklahoma City Council Meeting on December 17, 2013, as demonstrated by this exchange between two council members:

> Ed Shadid: Just checking in on your ward, because you have the highest Latino population, it's about 40% in your ward, and you've got so many chickens already in your ward. As you've spent time in the Latino community, **south of the river** and those neighborhoods, what has the feedback been from those

> neighborhoods that have so many chickens? ... When you're meeting with Latino neighborhoods, what are those constituents telling you?
>
> Meg Salyer: I have not had folks talk to me about this issue from South Oklahoma City.
>
> Ed Shadid: Okay. Alright, thanks.

This conversation summarizes both territorial and social capital aspects of Oklahoma City. Chickens in Oklahoma City are associated with and are understood to be plentiful in Oklahoma City's Latina/o/x communities. If these neighborhoods are where the most chickens are located, why did none of the residents contact their council members – Meg Salyer and Larry McAtee – or speak before council? It seems to me that these communities lack the social capital necessary in Oklahoma City to advocate for a right to the city. They are allowed to inhabit areas of the city abandoned during white flight, but are not treated as legitimate stewards of theses spaces where they live and play.

Connecting chickens with Latina/o/x neighborhoods is not unique to Oklahoma City. An example is this title of a 2012 article from *LA Weekly*, "Backyard Chickens, Once Scourge of Latino Ghettos, Hip in Upscale Neighborhoods" (Romero). During the research process, I realized that even I have internalized this connection. When one of the Oklahoma City employees said during our interview that "there's a thousand chickens within a half mile radius" of where we were in downtown, I instinctively assumed that they were referring to the nearby Latina/o/x neighborhoods (OKC Interview 2, December 9, 2014).

Conclusion

As is often the case in the center of the country compared to the coasts, Oklahoma City is behind the curve but trying to catch up in the right to produce food locally. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the community garden movement in New York City began in 1970, and ten years ago the City Council in Oakland, California "embraced a goal of sourcing 30 percent of its food locally" (McClintock and Cooper 2010, 4). Nevertheless Oklahoma City is not alone in experiencing a lag between the popularity of urban agriculture and the adoption of municipal zoning to support and regulate the practice. Despite Oakland's strong culture of urban agriculture, the Planning Department did not start updating code related to the practice until 2011 (McClintock et al. 2012).

Drawing on post-structuralist work concerned with symbolism and meaning, the fight over urban hens reflects the symbolic meaning of chickens for different groups in Oklahoma City. The young professional class desired by many municipalities may associate chickens with an attractive hipster lifestyle that values farmers markets, local food, and farmhouse décor. See Oklahoma City's hottest furniture store, Urban Farmhouse Designs, as an example of this lifestyle (http://www.urbanfarmhouse.com/). Meanwhile the older and generally more conservative populations holding power in Oklahoma City associate chickens with rural or immigrant communities. Chickens do not adhere to the 'lawn people' values favored by the homeowner associations where these residents live.

Resistance to urban chickens in Oklahoma City is seemingly connected to the white entitlement that has existed since the city began and a desire for Oklahoma City

to move beyond images of rural struggle such as those portrayed in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Backyard chickens might be allowed in Oklahoma City once they are associated with upscale areas possessing strong social capital such a Nichols Hills, where hens are more likely to be pets than in immigrant communities where chickens may support food provisioning. The case for urban chickens could also be strengthened by development of a municipal food system plan with a commitment to food justice and sovereignty. Until then, chickens are likely to remain a part of the urban landscape, with or without approval from City Council.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Taken as a whole, this dissertation illustrates how place-based contingencies shape outcomes in urban agriculture (Guthman 2008). In Chapter 1, I offered a brief history of urban geography and situated my research within that field. This research project falls with the broad subfield of human geography, which aims to unlock the complex relationships between people and the places they create. Many urban geographers utilize humanistic approaches to explore how cities are socially constructed. Urban areas are created through cultural and social processes that differ from city to city.

Urban agriculture is both enabled by and constrained by municipal ordinances that are frequently informed by policy mobility practices, or the transfer of policy ideas between cities by policy professionals. I was inspired to explore policy mobility practices by the work of Eugene McCann (2011), who employed "poststructuralist arguments about the analytical benefits of close studies of the embodied practices, representations, and expertise through which policy knowledge is mobilized" (107). I aimed to add to the literature on urban policy mobility by demonstrating that policy mobility practices are not limited to urban professionals. Ordinary citizens engage in policy mobility to advocate for urban agriculture, and through this research project I reveal *how* and *why*. I began with a comparative case study of three college towns, followed by an in-depth case study of Oklahoma City.

Qualitative research methods are ideal for answering *how* and *why* questions. In this research I utilized qualitative techniques including discourse analysis, interviews, and participant observation. These humanistic methods are helpful for understanding

urban areas "where multiple scales converge in particularly complex ways" (Hanson 2003, 474). Exploring the complex relations of embodied geographies in urban policy mobility requires research practices that combine and compare "publically accessible materials with the more private stories that make up personal biographies and careers" (Larner and Laurie 2010, 220).

Urban agriculture policy served as the research lens for investigating policy mobility practices, with a particular emphasis on municipal ordinances allowing chickens on standard-sized residential lots. To situate the focus of this dissertation, in Chapter 2 I summarized scholarship on urban agriculture. My review of the geographic research in this area exposed a research gap when it comes to understanding chickens in urban spaces. While geographers have investigated the role of community gardens in urban agriculture thoroughly, little attention has been paid to food production at the household scale. Eggs from backyard chickens offer an excellent protein source. Chickens can also boost vegetable production by providing household gardens with fertilizer and pest control services.

Chapter 3 presents a comparative case study of three cities: Columbia, Missouri, Knoxville, Tennessee, and Norman, Oklahoma. When I started this project in 2013, each of these cities had passed backyard chicken friendly ordinances within the previous four years. In all three case study sites, citizens and activists relied on the Internet to engage in policy mobility practices. Citizens used policy information that they found online to promote municipal regulations allowing urban chickens in their own towns. Archival inquiry and interviews with citizens and advocates revealed two primary factors necessary for the passage of municipal ordinance friendly to urban

chickens, namely community activists and the support of city council. These results corroborate those found by Huang and Dresher (2015), who studied urban agriculture policy in Canada.

In Chapter 4 I explored why municipal code changes allowing backyard chickens on standard residential lots in Oklahoma City failed on multiple occasions. Local advocates calling for change in the existing chicken-keeping ordinance were just as passionate and organized as the citizens who advocated successfully for urban chickens in Columbia, Knoxville, and Norman. I argue that the territoriality of Oklahoma City resulting in who possesses social capital and who does not possess social capital conspired to prevent progress in this area. Viewing territoriality as the struggle for space, Cox (2001) describes how "territorial struggles play out both materially and discursively" (757). In Oklahoma City, the struggle over urban chickens was evident in the discussions during city council meetings. Despite these discursive discussions, the proposed ordinances were rejected.

City council meetings provide a useful venue for witnessing the struggle over space. During these meetings, citizens employ social capital in attempts to reshape urban areas. Urban agriculture requires citizen engagement to ensure that city ordinances accommodate the activities required to produce food in the city. Achieving passage of policy that supports urban agriculture relies on citizens who push for change, knowledgeable city staff, supportive municipal politicians, and advocates who educate the public about urban agriculture (Huang and Drescher 2015). Each of these components was present in the three cities where chicken-friendly ordinances passed. Yet due to the nature of territoriality, these ingredients did not guarantee success in

Oklahoma City. Specifically, white privilege and individuals who prefer the status quo dominate the territoriality in Oklahoma City. Only change that contributes to economic development is favored. The in-depth case study demonstrates that successful advocacy practices were not enough to overcome the particular neoliberal ideology in Oklahoma City that favors individuals as consumers rather than producers of food. As Purcell (2006) warns, "[w]e cannot assume that localization of decision-making will necessarily result in democratization." (1929).

Contributions

McCann and Ward (2010) assert that as sociopolitical practice, policy mobility both is both relational and territorial. Policies are shared between cities through networks (relational) and then customized to suit the area (territorial) seeking to utilize the policy. As demonstrated by the results of the comparative and in-depth case studies, policy mobility practices are not limited to urban professionals. Ordinary citizens with varying levels of social capital utilize their knowledge of policies from other municipalities to advocate for the right to raise backyard chickens in their cities. These policies are then adapted by the governing board in each respective urban area to meet the preferences of citizens with the strongest social capital. However, requirements including coop requirements and set-back distances that are included within the ordinances can make the costs associated with chicken raising less accessible to marginalized residents, hampering their right to the city.

Pacione (2003) cautions that "failure to address the unavoidable real-life question of 'whose is the more important difference among differences' when strategic

choices have to be made represents a serious threat to constructing a *practical politics* of difference" (320, emphasis original). Drawing on the results of the in-depth case study, I argue that citizens and groups in Oklahoma City with the strongest social capital possess a greater right to the city than do other individuals who have less social capital and wish to raise backyard chickens. Groups with strong social capital reported to be against urban chickens were neighborhood and homeowner associations. The actions of the individuals associated with these organizations are difficult to discern because they were able to communicate with their council members outside of the public city council meeting setting. The council members who voted against the updated chicken ordinances identified these individuals as the reason for their no votes. These unknown individuals possess the social capital necessary for a greater right to Oklahoma City than do all the advocates and citizens who attended city council meetings in support of backyard chickens.

For a more broad view of the contributions made through this research, I return to Tornaghi (2014) who argues that urban agriculture is typically "portrayed as benevolent and unproblematic," leaving "many potentially unjust dynamics" unexplored (552). To remedy this situation Tornaghi recommends five possible research agendas: the exclusionary aspects of urban agriculture in the Global North; policy issues affecting urban agriculture; how urban agriculture can address food security; the tools necessary for improving communication between urban agriculture activists and policy makers; and the role of urban agriculture in alternative models for built and social environments. At the start of this research project I anticipated only addressing the second recommended research agenda - policy issues affecting urban agriculture.

However, the research results also yielded information about who is excluded from urban agriculture and the resources activists need to communicate with policy makers. These tools include information about urban agriculture policies in other cities, networks of individuals or groups who support food production practices, and the social capital necessary to capture the attention of elected officials. Individuals without social capital are unable to influence urban agriculture policy, and a lack of adequate resources hampers participation in urban agriculture governed by policy with requirements that are expensive to meet.

Limitations

This study focused on individuals who advocated ordinances permitting backyard chickens. Because the study paid particular attention to why and how citizens engage in policy mobility practices to promote urban agriculture policy, I did not interview persons who were opposed to these ordinances—in other words, people who supported maintaining the status quo. Once I interviewed ordinance advocates and discovered the importance of social capital, time did not allow for an additional slate of interviews. Hopefully, future researchers will explore more fully the opposition to backyard livestock in relation to social capital and the right to the city.

It would also be valuable to interview individuals from Oklahoma City's south-side Latina/o/x communities who were accused through innuendo of raising chickens illegally. Doing so could have provided residents of these communities some voice in a city where they possess limited rights and social capital. This task, however, might be difficult in the current political climate favoring citizens with strong social capital over

immigrants with little perceived rights to space in the U.S. These immigrant communities may be concerned about harassment from government officials regardless of immigration status.

Looking Forward in Oklahoma City

Generally critical of Oklahoma City's commitment, or lack thereof, to a local food system during the urban agriculture ordinance process, I would be remiss if I failed to outline positive movements toward urban agriculture over the past three years. In July 2015, the City Council adopted *plan**okc***, the first comprehensive plan for Oklahoma City since 1977. The plan was "developed through years of analysis and input from Oklahoma City residents, business professionals, community stakeholders and local government officials" (https://www.okc.gov/departments/planning/comprehensive-plan). The plan is organized around eight elements:

- connect**okc** – transportation
- enrich**okc** – preservation, appearance, and culture
- green**okc** – environmental and natural resources
- live**okc** – communities
- play**okc** – parks and recreation
- serve**okc** – public services
- strengthen**okc** – economic development
- sustain**okc** - future land use

One of the ten goals under green**okc** is "Oklahoma City protects and supports the ability of residents and businesses to produce, process, distribute, and sell food products" (http://planokc.org/greenokc/goals/). An initiative related to this goal is increasing the availability of locally grown food, which includes these commitments:

- We will establish an awareness of agriculture in and around the city as important to both food security and open space preservation.
- We will maintain the ability of agriculture operations to exist and thrive at different scales, from large farms to small urban gardens.
- We will maximize health food options for all neighborhoods and citizens.

The latter commitment includes a healthy food awareness campaign.

One of the plan**okc** policies related to the green**okc** agriculture and food goal is to "strengthen the local food system and increase access to healthy food options." Associated strategies include supporting community gardens with a focus on underserved neighborhoods, participation in a local or regional food policy council, incentivizing convenience stores to offer fresh produce, and establishing a land bank. While noble, these goals, commitments, and strategies will need to lean heavily on community awareness activities to educate the broader populace about the suitability of well-regulated urban agriculture practices such as raising chickens that are typically associated with rural areas, such as chicken raising.

Is it only a matter of time before backyard chickens are allowed on standard-sized residential lots in Oklahoma City? Only time and future research will tell. I am optimistic about the prospects. The popularity of urban agriculture in Oklahoma City continues to grow, as demonstrated by this recent cover of the *Oklahoma Gazette*

(Figure 16). As I noted in the gendered aspects of the Oklahoma City case study, the use of a male to represent urban farmers on the cover may strengthen public and municipal support for urban food production in the city, as males seem to be taken more seriously in the fight for the right to raise urban chickens.

Figure 16: Cover from the February 15, 2017 edition of the *Oklahoma Gazette*



The image in Figure 16 highlights the shifting symbolism of urban agriculture in Oklahoma City. The individual pictured is Paul Mays, who is the director of

permaculture for a community garden in the hipster[5] Paseo Arts District in north-central Oklahoma City. A neighborhood composed of Spanish revival architecture built in 1929, the Paseo hosts monthly art gallery walks, a long-running arts festival, and restaurants sprinkled among art galleries and studios. Also featured in the cover article is the CommonWealth Urban Farm mentioned in Chapter 4 and Urban Neighbors, a community garden chaired by a mortgage broker in the popular midtown neighborhood. None of these individuals or gardens adhere to the suburban place-based imaginaries enforced by Oklahoma City's homeowners associations that reject chickens. Although the article does not mention chickens, they must be part of the Paseo garden because Mays is quoted as saying, "We share eggs with members, and whenever we have produce, they get some." (Elwell 2017).

The growing urban agriculture movement is promising, but it will never be widely relevant until it tackles the larger capitalist structures creating food insecurity. As stated by Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011):

> No amount of fresh produce will fix urban America's food and health gap unless it is accompanied by changes in the structure of ownership and immigration laws and a reversal of the diminished political and economic power of the poor and lower working-class (133).

Restrictive immigration laws restrict social capital for immigrants, or those who look like immigrants (i.e. Mexican-Americans who are U.S. citizens). In the current political environment, these individuals may find it difficult to participate in the urban agriculture movement.

[5] Described by Greif (2010) as individuals who wear skinny jeans and big eyeglasses, gather "in tiny enclaves in big cities," and look down on mainstream fashion and tourists.

When implementing municipal ordinances friendly to urban agriculture and backyard chickens, city officials must ensure the right to produce food for all residents, not just those with ample resources and large yards. Addressing the injustice in our food system requires that those privileged in both urban agriculture and society as a whole fight for cities that favor use exchange over value exchange. As demonstrated through my comparative case study and in-depth case study, when this happens the ordinances produced will undoubtedly be shared between cities by urban professionals, activists, and everyday citizen/residents, securing greater rights to the city for individuals in urban areas beyond their own.

Future Research

This project offered a glimpse into the policy mobility activities of citizens and advocates by focusing on urban agriculture, which is not the only area where citizens are engaging in the practices discussed in this dissertation. The only individual interviewed in the comparative case study who did not engage in policy research for the purpose of promoting urban agriculture noted that she has explored ordinances from other cities for another area of political interest, namely discrimination protections. In addition to exploring citizen-driven policy mobility for a wider range of subjects, it would also be helpful for future researchers to examine if individuals against an issue also utilize the practice. In the urban agriculture cases here, individuals who favor the status quo did not appear to utilize urban policy mobility. All signs suggest they did not have to.

Because urban agriculture is dependent upon access to land, a subsequent step in the exploration of residential food production might be interrogating the structure of property ownership. This research focus could address the property rights issue not included in this dissertation. Many scholars claim that neoliberalism favors private property rights; however, as illustrated through the Oklahoma City case study, food production practices in backyard spaces are highly restricted in some cities. There is certainly a right to property ownership, but not free rein when it comes to use of that property. While the need for some land use regulation is evident by the condition of property in some areas lacking zoning, the rights of "lawn people" currently receive preference over food sovereignty in most cities.

Individuals concerned about property values believe that backyard chickens would reduce the economic value of nearby residential property. Studies exploring if this assumption is accurate might be helpful in food sovereignty debates. These studies could follow the example of recent projects examining if charter schools (Brehm et al. 2017), communication antennas (Locke and Blomquist 2016), open space (Sims et al. 2016), pavement condition (Seo et al. 2017), public conservation areas (Chen et al. 2017), and sports facilities (Feng and Humphreys 2016) influence residential property values. The impact of urban chickens on residential property values could also inform other urban livestock movements such as bee-keeping or small animals such as goats, rabbits, and pigs.

This dissertation highlights advocacy practices helpful in supporting policy change that allows urban agriculture. Exploring whether or not these results are generalizable to other areas of urban governance could be useful to local activists in

other areas of urban progress. I suspect that place-based contingencies affect all areas of urban sustainability, yet evidence is needed to verify this assumption. An example might be opposition to xeriscaping, which is a useful practice for areas with water shortages. Like urban agriculture, xeriscaping is contrary to the prevailing lawn aesthetic in the U.S.

Feminist researchers highlight the individual and household scales as worthy topics of geographic inquiry. Yet, no scale is independent of other scales. Household activities are most often governed and affected by the municipal scale. Through this research project I illustrated how individuals affect urban policy and how city ordinances can enable or limit household food production, contributing qualitative research to the canon of multiscale literature in geography. This research project adds to the post-structural literature emphasizing culture over the economy by placing priority on discourse and symbolism over material processes. Doing so revealed unexpected understanding of social capital at the urban scale and how power differentials affect controversial issues.

Urban agriculture can contribute to more sustainable cities. The practice is generally more environmentally friendly than the current agriculture system. Food grown locally can also contribute to the other aspects of the sustainability triad, social and economic needs. In addition to the resources necessary to raise food in the city, urban agriculture relies on permissive municipal ordinances. To ensure food justice, these ordinances should focus on public health without being restrictive to marginalized residents lacking the social capital necessary to fight for the right to raise food in residential spaces.

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