

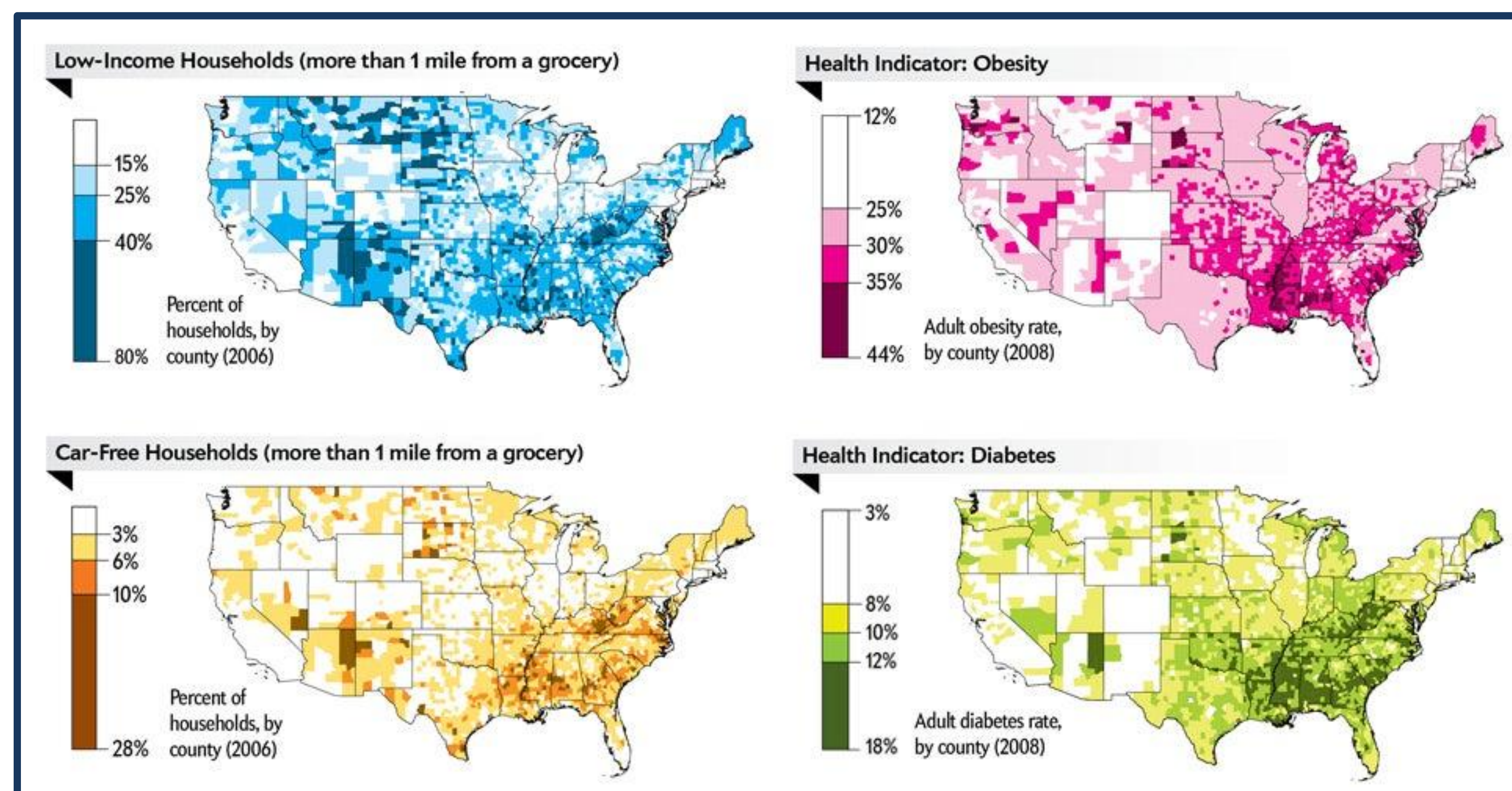
Food Insecurity: Food Deserts, Food Sovereignty and the Global Fight to End Hunger

Cynthia Angheven, Sydney Bowers, Shannon Brooks, Heather Kirksey, & Keara Schneider
ESP 450 - Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

INTRODUCTION:

Food security is a core issue in communities around the world, with millions of people going hungry every day. In 2019, the USDA reported more than 35 million people experienced food insecurity in the United States alone. With so many people lacking access to food, it is clear that something must be done to ensure that food access is expanded. Our project aims to explore the ways in which both Seed Sovereignty & Edible Landscapes can help to expand food access and security within food desert areas.

Food Insecurity is the inability to access nutritional food. Children, senior citizens, and low income families make up the majority of people affected by food insecurity. Communities suffering from food insecurity are usually victim to living in food deserts. Food Deserts occur when there is a noticeable lack of grocery stores offering nutrient dense foods and are usually found in lower income communities. Food deserts are concentrated where financial resources are already lacking. Instead of healthy options, residents of these areas are exposed to an abundance of junk food and unhealthy food in an overwhelming presence of convenience stores. By increasing the amount of junk food and decreasing the amount of nutrition available, community members are often forced to settle for over priced food that does not offer them real lasting energy or contribute to their overall health. Over consumption of food found in convenience stores leads to various health conditions and perpetuates the cycle of economic hardship and food insecurity.



Food Environment Atlas, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (Matson, 2012)

Source of Data/Information

Information regarding food insecurity, food deserts, edible landscapes, and seed sovereignty were gathered from sources of data that include news articles, documentaries, and academic journals.

FINDINGS:

Edible Landscapes

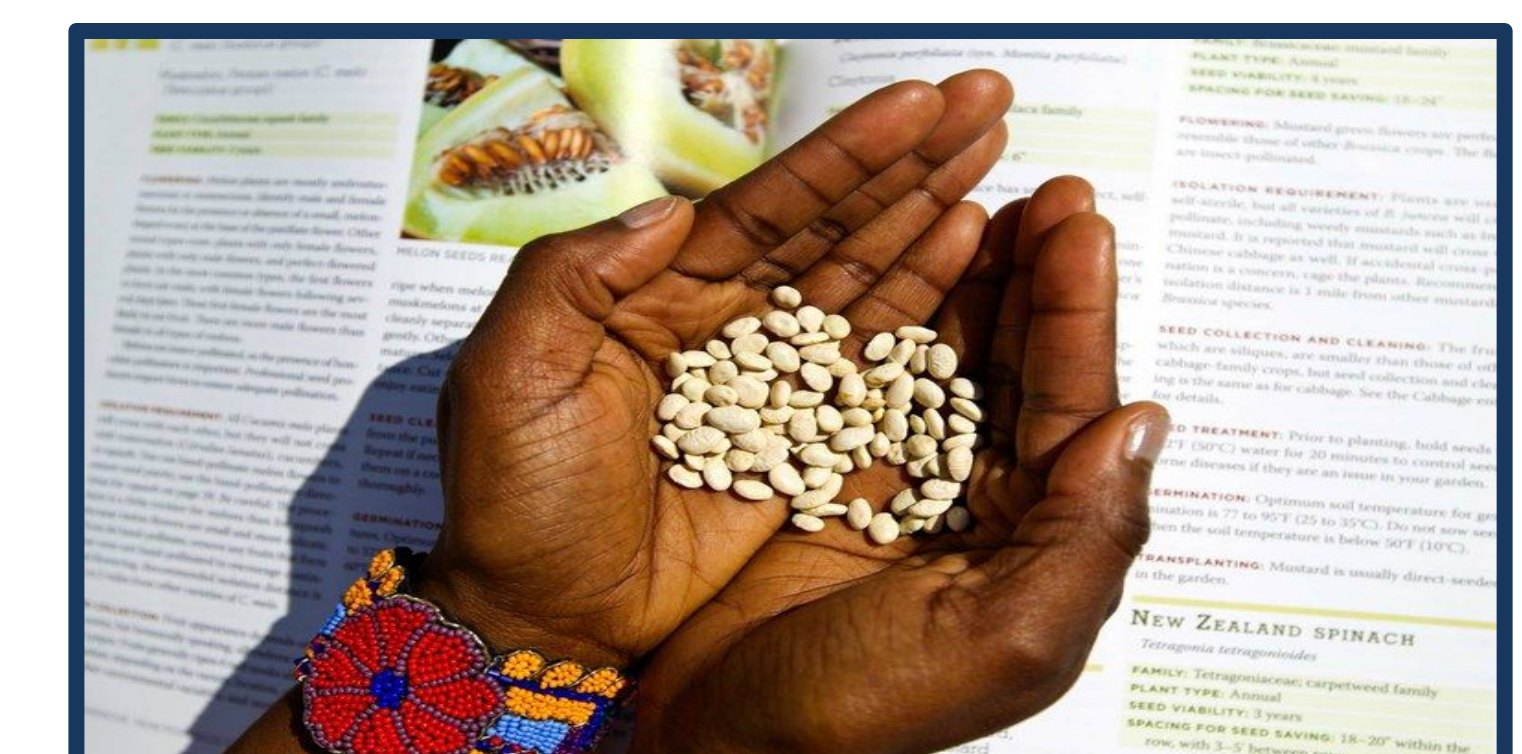
- Edible landscapes, or public food landscapes, can provide food resources to those in need.
- In Atlanta, the city council planted fruit trees on seven acres of the city as part of a project to ensure that 85% of Atlanta residents are within a half-mile of fresh food and in Asheville, you can find the George Washington Carver Edible Park, where “a multi-layered canopy of fruit and nut trees along with edible ground cover like strawberry plants, all free for the picking” (Matchar, 2020).
- In Seattle, the city met its tree canopy goals by offering participants of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods’ Tree Fund program one free fruiting tree to plant in their private yards with great success (McLain et al., 2012).

Seed Sovereignty

- Seed Sovereignty reclaims seeds and Biodiversity as commons and public good (Hoidal, 2015).
- The right to healthy, sustainably produced food is the cornerstone of food sovereignty (Hoidal, 2015).
- Without access to quality, affordable seeds and the self-determination to save, select and share seeds, no farmer or consumer can fully attain this sovereignty (Hoidal, 2015).



Beacon Food Forest Schematic Site Plan



Seed Sovereignty empowers & fights hunger

CONCLUSIONS:

The lack of food accessibility and seed sovereignty has caused tragic global repercussions. For urban settings, food deserts can be combated by offering tax incentives to grocery stores to open locations in underserved areas in addition to our proposed solution of community run gardens consisting of edible landscapes. Not only does it add a green space to an area more than likely covered in concrete, it also provides fresh fruits and vegetables to communities in need. Overall, our goal is to find a solution in which the community and the environment can mutually benefit. Society will once again be reminded that both the survival of ourselves and our planet are interconnected and inseparable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES:

- Hoidal, N. (2015, October 2). *What's in a seed? The critical role of seed politics in the food sovereignty movement*. Sustainable Food Trust. <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/articles/food-sovereignty-seed/>.
- Matchar, E. (2020, November 16). *Are 'Edible Landscapes' the Future of Public Parks?* Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/are-edible-landscapes-future-public-parks-180976291/>.
- Matson, J. (2012, May 1). *Food Deserts Leave Many Americans High and Dry*. Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/high-and-dry-in-the-food/>.
- McLain, R., Poe, M., Hurley, P. T., Lecompte-Mastenbrook, J., & Emery, M. R. (2012). Producing edible landscapes in Seattle's urban forest. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 11(2), 187–194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2011.12.002>
- USDA. (2019). *Key Statistics & Graphics*. USDA ERS - Key Statistics & Graphics. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx#foodsecure>.