

**A Search for Food Sovereignty:
Neoliberalism in Alternative Food Movements in Colorado Springs**

A SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT
Presented to The Department of Anthropology
The Colorado College

By Claire Vernon
2017

Approved: _____  _____

Date: _____ 9 May 2017 _____

Abstract

Access to nutritional foods as well as the limited consumption of such foods are problems that continue to exist in the United States despite many programs dedicated to promoting healthful nutrition and eradicating food insecurity. This paper analyzes contributing factors to these issues and presents ways in which they could be addressed through alternative programs managed by and for the local communities most affected. It advocates for food sovereignty and critiques the neoliberal regime that currently dictates the food system in America through a case study of a community ran grocery program in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Nongovernment domestic food aid fills a niche not met by federal programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. However, the community based food movements can still fall victim to issues that affect the food system at large. Alternatives and potential ways that the programs can avoid these pitfalls are offered.

The Colorado College Honor Code

On my honor, I have neither given, nor received, any unauthorized aid on this project. Honor Code upheld.

Claire Vernon

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	ii
<i>List of Figures & Tables</i>	v
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vi
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Relevant History of Domestic Food Aid in the U.S.</i>	4
<i>Literature Review</i>	8
<i>Methods</i>	14
<i>Results</i>	16
<i>Discussion</i>	17
<i>Conclusion</i>	19
<i>References Cited</i>	22
<i>Appendices</i>	25

List of Figures

Figure 1: *Map of Colorado Springs*..... 4

Figure 2: *Map of neighborhood poverty in Colorado Springs*..... 14

Figure 3: *Map of free and reduced lunch and food access in Colorado Springs*..... 17

Acknowledgements

To Krista Fish: Thank you for your guidance, support and patience over the course of this project and throughout my time as your advisee. I very much appreciate all the help you have given me along the way.

To the Colorado College Anthropology Department: Thank you for all that you have taught me in my time at Colorado College. The education and insight that you have given me has been invaluable and I will carry it with me wherever I go.

To Brain Kates and my community partners at Meadows Park: Thank you for your willingness to work with me on this project and for all that you have shared with me. I would not have been able to do this project without your help.

To all of my friends at Colorado Springs Food Rescue and my housemates at the Eggplant Manor: I cannot express my gratitude and love for you enough. I have never seen such unwavering kindness and genuine care for others from any group of people as I have seen in you all. The world is a better place because you are in it. Thank you for inspiring me every step of the way.

To my family: Thank you for your never-ending support. You keep me going and I love you so much.

Introduction

Food insecurity in the United States is at the highest it has been since the Great Depression, despite the fact that the economy has been growing (Dupont and Thirlwell 2009). The situation could be due to the delocalization of the food system, which creates a separation between producers and consumers (Pelto and Pelto 1983). The separation caused a void for capitalism to fill and has led to an increase in economic influence over the food system and therefore, people's diets. Because of the monetary drive present, food has been unequally distributed in neighborhoods creating what are known as food deserts (Bitler and Haider 2010). A food desert is categorized as a geographic area with low-income residents and low-access to food in the neighborhood (Bitler and Haider 2010). Food deserts are not generally created maliciously but they are typically located in neighborhoods where people who are already systemically oppressed reside: generally minority and/or low-income communities (Slocum 2006). Through the process and creation of food deserts, these populations lose control over their diets and health because they are forced to consume what is available, generally not nutritionally sound foods (Luan et al. 2015). Overconsumption of such foods can lead to higher rates of diet related health problems such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes making food deserts and food access incredibly important phenomena to study (Tarnapol Whitacre et al. 2009).

Along with the rise of capitalism, neoliberalism has also gathered force in the United States. Neoliberalism refers to the process of political and economic decrease of reliance on the state and the increase in the presence of nongovernment businesses and projects to ensure the health and safety of the people (Alkon and Mares 2012). Neoliberalism and the growth of food insecurity have prompted the spread of alternative community-ran food programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide food to those who need it through a participatory structure where

those who do the work are the ones benefitting from it (Colorado Springs Food Rescue). These programs came into existence because individuals felt that their needs were not being met by the government and by the food system at large.

The grassroots creation of community ran food programs falls in line with the principles of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty became prominent with the movement started by La Vía Campesina, an organization made up of farmers in Belgium, in 1993 (La Vía Campesina). They sought to globalize in the name of returning “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (La Vía Campesina). Historically, the food sovereignty movement has been based within agricultural groups but it provided a good model for reform and transformation in the United States as well because of the community engagement involved. Following that archetype, American alternative food movements sprung up to follow suit of La Vía Campesina. While these programs do provide food and promote self-esteem that has been taken away from those living in low-income and food insecure communities, there is still a need to examine and critique the ways that they can promote neoliberal ideals, specifically placing pressure on nongovernment organizations and individuals to care for people’s health and welfare, without meaning to.

The overall purpose of the study is to illustrate power over the body and control over food choices in the United States food system through a case study of an alternative food program in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Through this analysis, my hope is to identify ways in which the alternative food programs can be reformed to be inclusive of all people, to continue to decrease food insecurity and hunger, and to reinstate true food sovereignty to the community.

I've spent the past three years of my life living in Colorado Springs, Colorado and throughout these years I have become increasingly more involved in the alternative food movement. For this reason, I have chosen Colorado Springs to be the site of my research. The city is home to 445,830 residents as of 2014 (City Data). The vast majority of residents live in an urban environment and 12.9% of residents are living in poverty, which is categorized as equal to or less than \$24,300 in yearly income for a family of four (City Data;US Department of Health and Human Services). To my knowledge, there is not specific data available on Colorado Springs but in Colorado 1 in 7 people are considered food insecure (Colorado Springs Food Rescue). Throughout the city there are 57 grocery stores, yet there are a number of areas within Colorado Springs, which fall in line with the classification of a food desert (City Data;US Census Bureau 2008). Because of these low-income and low access neighborhoods, there has been a recent emergence of community food programs in Colorado Springs that seek to restore food sovereignty. These alternative programs range from community gardens and urban farms to food programs that deliver what would be wasted food to pop-up soup kitchens (Pikes Peak Urban Gardens;Colorado Springs Food Rescue;Food Not Bombs).

Although alternative food programs intend to provide food for low-income residents, they are not infallible and analyzing their actions is crucial to understanding how they are impacting the community and if there are better ways that they could be addressing the issue. My research was guided by the question: how do alternative food programs provide nontraditional aid while at the same time falling victim to the same issues that plague the larger food system such as unbalanced power dynamics and neoliberalism? I hypothesize that the alternative food programs will reinforce neoliberal ideals such as individualism that place responsibility and sometimes blame onto those who are already negatively impacted by the food system. To explore these

questions, I conducted a survey with participants at the Colorado Springs Food Rescue grocery program at Meadows Park Community Center in Southeast Colorado Springs. The results from this survey were inconclusive due to lack of participation but they do shed light on the status of food literacy and food deserts in Colorado Springs.



Figure 1: A map of Colorado Springs with Meadows Park Community Center marked

Relevant History of Domestic Food Aid in the United States

Stemming from the Industrial Revolution, agriculture and food production have become increasingly delocalized leaving people to be less and less connected to the foods that they are consuming (Pelto and Pelto 1983). Federal domestic food assistance in the United States began

during the Great Depression with the advent of food kitchens and breadlines (Himmelgreen 2010). These projects were targeted at helping the working and middle class Americans with little regard for the poorest of the poor, something that remains true to this day (Himmelgreen 2010). During this time there was much debate regarding what the appropriate policy would be (Moran 2011). Some advocated for redistributing excess food from production to those who weren't able to purchase it while others argued that the best way to decrease hunger was to create programs that would keep the hungry as economic consumers as to not negatively impact an already struggling economy (Moran 2011). The latter of these two policies was the method that was chosen (Moran 2011). The message sent here is clear: "relief recipient consumers who needed a little extra 'stimulus' effectively undermined the idea that hunger prevention should be a concern of the American state" (Moran 2011, 1004).

The programs during the New Deal did little to address the needs and desires of those who needed these benefits the most. Rather, the programs they created were notably shame-inducing as they forced people to stand in lines outside for long periods of time, letting every passerby know that those who were in line were "needy" and less than because they could not provide for themselves (Moran 2011). Even after the detriment of the shameful process of commodity distribution, hunger was still a prevalent issue because of the types of food that were distributed (Moran 2011). A common tale told about this time was the program's mass distribution of grapefruits and powdered milk, which many were unfamiliar with and did not know how to prepare and consume (Moran 2011). Because of how little food literacy and the nutritional needs of the beneficiaries were taken into consideration, "commodity distribution kept citizens underfed, undermined families, and continuously reminded poor citizens of their reliefer

status” (Moran 2011, 1005). The dark shadow of the New Deal welfare programs still very much lies across our country’s domestic food assistance programs.

In 1939, the food stamp program was created as an attempt to garner potential consumers back into the economic system as a form of stimulus (Himmelgreen 2010). Recipients were able to purchase stamps for \$1 and receive a stamp worth \$1.50, which effectively increased the amount of money available to people to spend on food (Himmelgreen 2010). This plan worked to control what kind of foods could be purchase. For example, international foods and alcohol were not eligible to be purchased with food stamps (Moran 2011). A ban such as that one functioned as a way of separating people from the food that would be considered culturally appropriate and therefore stripping them of their sovereignty over their food.

Beyond that, food stamps controlled where food could be purchased (Moran 2011). They were only accepted at the new, larger supermarkets, leaving mom and pop shops to lose business (Himmelgreen 2010). The effect was compounded with the long history of supermarket redlining, which was the process that systematically excluded low-income and minority neighborhoods from having access to supermarkets (Moran 2011). Due to the industrialization of the marketplace, independent stores were caught in a battle with large supermarkets over lower prices (Eisenhauer 2001). With profit margins as low as one percent, the independent stores could not compete and were forced to close (Eisenhauer 2001). Tangentially to this process, supermarkets were following the white flight to the suburbs leaving a void in low-income and urban neighborhoods leaving. Effectively food stamps became useless to people living in those neighborhoods meaning that only white middle class citizens could access and use food stamps (Moran 2011). However, the purchases they could make were still controlled by the government.

Again, the program and the United States federal government under which it ran, failed to meet the needs of its recipients and citizens and there was call for reform.

With the social change and advocacy for civil rights in the 1960s, came the realization that some people's needs were not being addressed. The lack of access to food and proper nutrition were included among these needs. Harkening back to the Great Depression, President Kennedy increased food distribution in 1961 and then piloted another food stamp program in 1964 (Himmelgreen 2010). Kennedy's food stamp program was an entitlement program meaning that anyone who qualified could receive the benefits (Landers 2007). It had specific "prohibitions against discrimination on bases of race, religion, national origin, or political beliefs," (Landers 2007, 1947). On paper, anyone who needed the benefits could receive them but in reality, the food stamp program was only useful to those who had access to supermarkets that accepted them, to those who had access to kitchens, and to those who had enough money upfront to purchase the stamps, which barred many from being able receive assistance (Landers 2007). The latter two qualifications were removed in 1977 and 1976, respectively, but the former qualification is still in effect to this day.

In the meantime through all the changes of federal food assistance programs, many community groups sprung up. The new food stamp program did not effectively meet the needs of all and the Black Panthers began a movement of serving breakfast before school to promote community and a better education for children, as well as to decrease hunger (Pope 2013). The Black Panthers' revolutionary breakfast program paved the way for alternative food movements in the years to come with some groups adopting a similar model.

As the times changed, food stamps were rolled out and replaced with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (US Department of Agriculture). To be eligible for

SNAP, one's gross monthly income must be equal or less than 130% of the poverty standard with a net monthly income of equal or less than 100% of the poverty standard. The average weekly benefit per person in a family of four is less than \$30 (Center on Budget Policies and Priorities);(US Department of Agriculture). This figure translates to around \$4 per person per day, which is frequently not enough considering the higher prices of food in low-income neighborhoods (Tarnapol Whitacre et al. 2009). SNAP is currently the largest domestic food aid program in the country but with such little benefits being provided, pressure is placed on individuals and communities to create their own ways of providing and receiving food aid (US Department of Agriculture).

The lack of success of government programs to meet the needs of the individual show that there is a need for smaller, community focused groups to help fill the gaps. However, by creating structured groups, individuals and non-government entities must become responsible for their own well-being, which enforces neoliberal ideals. Beyond that, grassroots movements still need a leader, which creates a dynamic of power and control meaning that the individual loses personal sovereignty over their diets. These ideas will be further elaborated on in the next section with theories presented as to why this is the case.

Literature Review

The issue of food insecurity and hunger in the United States persists as a problem despite much effort to decrease its impacts. It is easy to dismiss as merely not enough access and not enough domestic food aid but upon second look, the multiplicity of the topic emerges. Structural factors influence the locations of grocery stores and the type of foods and food prices available within them, which in turn affect the levels of food literacy, health, and the diets of many

(Tarnopol Whitacre et al. 2009). Yet, these structural factors work in covert ways. The leading hegemonic dogma in the United States is that poor people are unhealthy because they choose to be so by making conscience decisions in their diet and lifestyles (Gladwell 1998). This idea is incredibly harmful and denies the reality that quality food is simply unavailable to many and despite access people may not have the time to cook these foods or have access to a functioning kitchen. Another issue is the way that the government and food programs approach food insecurity. Culpability and shame are placed on those who need assistance for supposedly not being able to help themselves, which puts them in a subservient position to those providing aid (Moran 2011). The power dynamic at play does little to benefit those who need it most because of the embarrassment and self-doubt that is placed upon low-income households. Addressing this issue requires a complex approach that includes analyzing the masses of systemic oppressions and control involved.

Food Access: Enculturation and Control of the Body

A person's diet, like most cultural things, is determined by the environment that one grows up in. Past generations habits are passed onto the next thereby enculturating individuals. Pierre Bourdieu refers to this process of enculturation as habitus (Bourdieu). Considering food, the dietary habits, cooking knowledge and kitchen skills are learned from the food environment that surrounds an individual. This cultural knowledge is a component in what is called food literacy. However, because culturally appropriate, healthy, and affordable foods are not available to everyone, a disconnect between culture and food can be found in many communities in the United States, particularly those communities in food deserts.

By limiting access to nutritional and affordable foods, the food system subjugates its consumers to lower standards of health, which can lead to premature death and further alienates already marginalized groups from the economy. This form of oppression is what Michel Foucault refers to as biopower (Foucault). He argues that there are ways of disciplining the body to control it, which is evident in how food is addressed in the United States. Food is used as a tactic to continue to oppress those who are already disregarded and it continues the cycle of domination over the body. An example of this is the placement of fast food establishments in low-income neighborhoods. Figure 3 illustrates the locations of unhealthy food retailers and students on free or reduced lunch in the public school system in Colorado Springs. The overlap between the two visually represents the relationship between poorer communities and access to healthy foods. By placing these restaurants in impoverished areas, the residents of those neighborhoods are forced to consume unhealthy foods because in many cases it is the only option. Through this process, the systemic inequalities that residents are already exposed to are compounded to take away even more power from individuals and the community. Without even control over one's own diet, people lose all agencies in their lives: a truly terrifying thought.

Beyond the physical affects on the body, mental health is also subjected to the food system. People are made to believe that they are not doing enough to become healthy and are required to trust that if they work hard enough or do the right things that they will become so. In reality, this may never be the case for some people because it is not in the best interest of the corporations who determine where food is available. The psyche of the oppressed continues to undergo the subjugation of the oppressors.

Capitalism and consumer culture are two other ways that people are manipulated and controlled in the food system. Through advertising and trends, people are worked to desire

certain foods such as junk food. Advertisements highlight junk food as luxury items making them more desirable to people. Those with lower socioeconomic statuses may not be able to afford a vacation but they usually can afford a fast food cheeseburger, which for a moment may take away some of the stress of everyday life. This phenomenon is not singular however. Trends also influence the ways that people view health foods. Information from the media leads people to believe that higher priced foods like organic products are better for them. The spread of such information can affect people's perceptions of health and lead people to believe that they will never be able to eat healthy foods because they cannot afford to, further manipulating the population.

Food Sovereignty: Neoliberalism Reinforced and Dismantled

While both food sovereignty and food security movements are working towards making sure that everyone has enough to eat, there are very fundamental differences between the two theoretically. The concept of food security specifically means, "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life" (US Department of Agriculture). Food security is thought to be most effective from a top-down approach where government-run programs help people gain affordable access to foods through programs such as SNAP (Hospes 2014). These programs seek to reform the capitalist food system but are placed in stark contrast with food sovereignty groups, which are attempting to transform the food system on a larger and more drastic scale (Holt-Ginéénez, et al. 2011). Interestingly, food security rejects neoliberalism by placing pressure on the government while food sovereignty works within a neoliberal framework to address the issue of hunger.

Most notably, food sovereignty represents the creation of a new human right. According

to anthropologist Priscilla Claeys, human rights are invented in a social constructionist manner (Claeys 2012). The process of invention of such rights sheds light onto what is valued in the socio-political environment, as well as who the important actors involved are (Claeys 2012). Applying this framework to food sovereignty, the cultural sense surrounding food is shifting away from being focused simply on access to adequate food towards a focus on people's rights over the quality of food available and the guaranteed safety of such foods. The shift in our cultural views is significant because it highlights the ways in which those that are oppressed are working to take back power that they were striped of. In addition, it embodies a movement towards securing the rights of a community rather than rights of an individual, which is certainly seen in food sovereignty movements in the United States (Claeys 2012). These movements have the potential to radically change people's relationships to food whereas food security movements are working within an already flawed system to create more accessible foodways.

Otto Hospes agrees with Claeys' idea that food sovereignty is about the rights of a community instead of an individual but there are some differences in their beliefs. Hospes' stance differs in that he believes and argues that, "food sovereignty is not about sovereignty of food. It is about sovereignty of people and values assigned to food" (Hospes 2014, 121). In this way, he is implying that the food sovereignty movement is taking the form of a state, which is something that food sovereignty activists are separating themselves from through their work and dogmas. A paradox emerges here, if food sovereignty movements are promoting people's agency over their food then why are they creating an organization of power? Neoliberalism is being enforced through the nongovernment programs addressing hunger and food sovereignty while at the same time being undermined by the creation of new state-like organizations within the movement.

Alternative Food Programs: Power to or over the people?

As outlined in the two previous sections, it is clear there is a need for food system reform. Reform has the potential to take place in one of two ways: traditional food programming such as food pantries, SNAP benefits, and soup kitchens or in nontraditional ways like community gardens or grocery programs run by and for the community. Traditional food programs do help to provide food but they are a bandage that does not address the larger systemic issues of why food access is limited to certain groups (Roncarolo et al. 2016). Food pantries help alleviate some of the struggle but they come with a slough of other issues, the most glaring of which being that they create a structure that places people who receive aid morally below those who are giving the aid. Really, it creates a hierarchy of the oppressed and the oppressor where the oppressed will always be beneath the oppressor. Not only does this relationship inhibit the oppressed, it also works to dehumanize them (Freire 1970).

To avoid the creation of this hierarchy, work must be done within the community, as it is in participatory food sovereignty programs. In this way, work is done with and by the oppressed rather than for or to them as it is in more traditional food programs. According to Paulo Freire, this is the most effective way to eliminate oppression and reestablish the oppressed's humanity (Freire 1970). Not only do nontraditional food programs provide healthy foods to people with limited access to them, they also provide education and restore sovereignty over the local food system. By reestablishing power to the people, authority is returned and they can regain control over their diets and health.

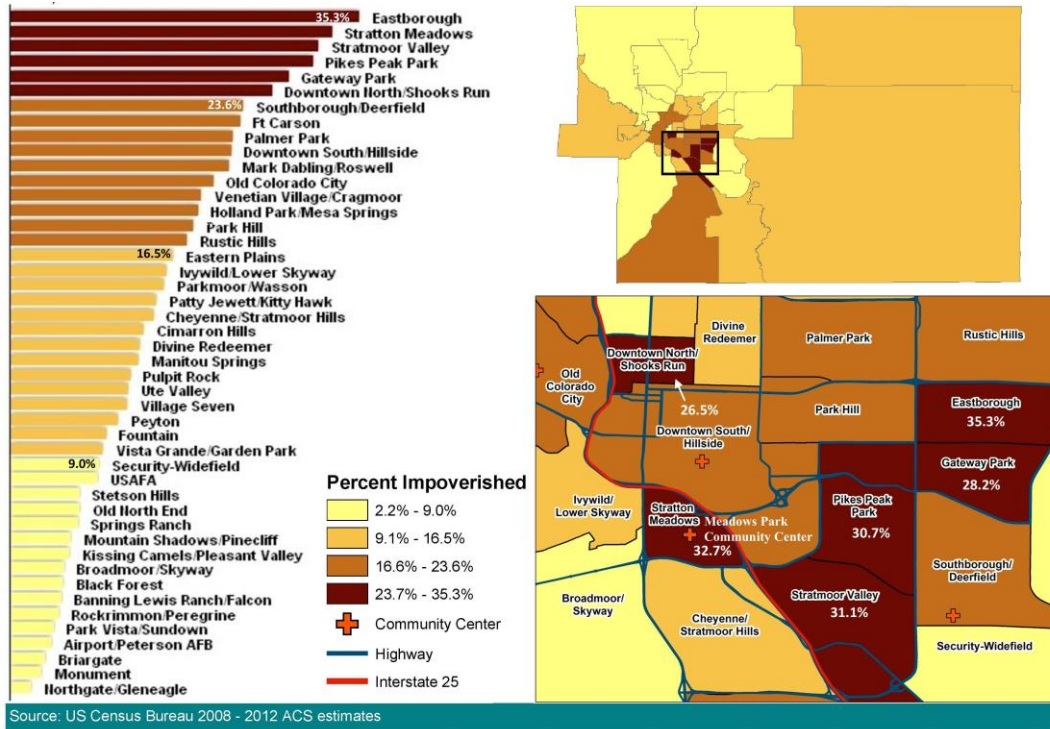


Figure 2 Neighborhood poverty in Colorado Springs with study site marked

Methods:

Data was attempted to be collected at the Food Rescue Grocery Program at Meadows Park Community Center from January 2017 through February 2017. Meadows Park Community Center is located in Southeast Colorado Springs in a neighborhood where 32.7% of the population is impoverished (US Census Bureau 2008). Over half of the surrounding neighborhood’s students receive free or reduced lunch (US Census Bureau 2008). Meadows Park was chosen as a study site because of the low-income, high rate of poverty, and high percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunches in the surrounding neighborhoods (US Census Bureau 2008). To combat the lack of resources to acquire healthy foods, Colorado Springs Food Rescue along with the community members implemented a grocery program where anyone in the surrounding areas can receive fruits, vegetables, and packaged products such as bread at no cost (Colorado Springs Food Rescue). The participant model of this particular food program was another deciding factor in study site location.

To collect my data, I interviewed one participant at the grocery program. This interview was done orally based on a survey I had previously written. These interview questions are listed in Appendix A. The survey was designed to take less than five minutes. I received permission from the Institutional Review Board at Colorado College in 2016. The participant was over 18 years of age. In a preliminary meeting with the director at the community center, he expressed that I should not approach people but should wait for them to approach me. Participants attend the grocery program for a service and neither the director nor I wanted to disrupt the participant's access to the service. To be sure that I would not interfere, I waited for people to approach me. Many people approached me but did not want to be interviewed for various reasons. Language was a barrier in some cases and time availability was another issue for some as the program takes place during the workday. The participant I interviewed was the only one willing to talk to me. I would have liked to have conducted more interviews but it was not possible for me to do so without breaching the agreement that I had made with the director, which would not have been ethical or right. Because of the limited sample size, it was not possible to gather conclusive evidence to support or reject my hypothesis.

Anthropology provides the ideal framework through which to study this topic because it allows for a researcher to hear the real lived experiences of those who are food insecure and working towards food sovereignty in their communities. However, bias is inherent in the field. For myself, I approached this topic as a supporter of alternative food movements because of my relationship with those working towards food justice in Colorado Springs as well as my own participation in these movements. Additionally, I came to the topic with a critical eye towards government's food aid programs such as SNAP. My whole life I have seen firsthand that SNAP

did not seem to be providing an adequate benefits for its participants. This lens may have skewed my results.

Results:

Over the course of the two months of data collection, I gathered one survey response from a participant at the Food Rescue Grocery Program at Meadows Park Community Center. The participant indicated that this grocery program was the only food assistance program that they benefitted from. They were extremely satisfied with the program but expressed that there were not enough programs like it. The participant travels 15 to 20 minutes each way to reach the program by car but if using public transportation it would take much longer and may not be possible. When asked who they felt was most responsible for maintaining their own and their neighborhood's access to healthy foods, the participant stated that they felt that they were responsible for maintaining their own access but that the government was responsible for the neighborhood's access. Following that same trend, they believed that it should be the government's responsibility to maintain access to healthy foods for everyone. The participant also believed that the government currently determines where grocery stores are located. Due to the limitations of sample size, it is not possible to draw any strong conclusions from my data but the results are still important to consider because it may open up areas for further study.

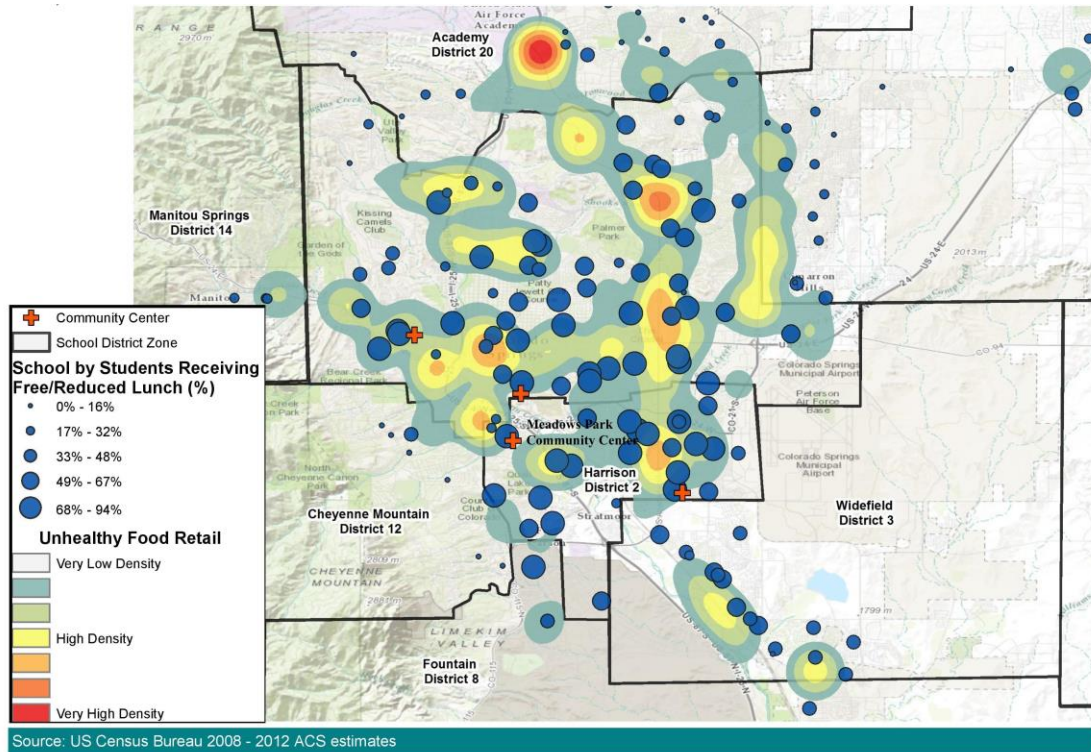


Figure 3 Percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch and food access

Discussion:

A larger pool of participants would be necessary to fully understand the impact of the alternative food movements in Colorado Springs. Nonetheless, my participant's answers to my survey shed light on some of the main issues involving food insecurity and neoliberalism's influences on the food system. Regarding participation in food programs, my participant was only a beneficiary of one food program, which was not government ran. There are many possibilities as to why this is the case. It could be indicative of the participant's ineligibility for SNAP benefits or their disinterest in the program. Either way, it shows that there is a disconnect between federal domestic food aid and people in need of its help. The disconnect is revealing of neoliberalism's grasp on the food system because at least one person is relying on nongovernment aid to supplement their diet and maintain their wellbeing. The participant

specified that they were responsible for maintaining their own access to healthy foods meaning that they felt it was their individual responsibility despite the fact that the program is community ran. The participant also answered that the government should be responsible for maintaining its citizens access to healthy foods, though they did not feel that they currently were. My participant's responses reflect the larger issues affecting the food system and federal domestic food aid.

Food literacy was another topic brought up in my participant's survey response. They were under the impression that the government decides where grocery stores are placed, which is not the case but rather it is the corporations that run the grocery stores that make these decisions. Not only does this show that the private sector is responsible for where food can be accessed, it also shows that there is a lack of transparency in the food system. When people do not know who is responsible, it makes it hard to make changes. In this way, misinformation can assist in continuing the oppression and control placed on those who are experiencing food insecurity. It is critical that communities are well informed so that it does not fall to the individuals to inform themselves. Community ran food programs such as the one at Meadows Park can help by providing the right tools and knowledge to restore power to those who are currently powerless. They can aid in an increase of food literacy in the community by teaching participants about how to cook healthy foods and by giving nutrition lessons. The program at Meadows Park does both of these things. Following in line with food sovereignty's principles, it should never be the responsibility of the individual to see that their needs are met but the government should seek to help meet the needs of every individual and every community. Food is necessary for life and should not be so difficult for people to access.

Finally, the last issue brought up in the participant's response was the issue of location and access to transportation. My study was not focused on food deserts necessarily but it is important to note that the nearest food aid program was at least fifteen minutes away from their home by car. Without access to this mode of transportation, it would have taken much longer or may have not even been possible to reach. Because programs such as this are not available everywhere especially in more rural communities, it becomes the individual's responsibility to access them. Individualism runs counter to the food sovereignty movement. Food sovereignty must be achieved by bringing the whole community up instead of just certain individuals. If only some can access healthy and affordable foods, it recreates the very same power structures that food sovereignty groups are trying to dismantle.

Conclusion:

Although my study at Meadows Park Community Center did not yield enough results to show such, it still highlighted that there is a problem with the food system in the United States. Not only are there some people who do not have enough to eat but there are many whose needs are not being met by the food programs available. The paradox of almost half of the food produced in the United States being wasted and people starving is one that needs to be addressed in the oncoming years if there is to be any sort of progress to meet the goal of a well-fed and healthy nation (Colorado Springs Food Rescue). However, this is not the only paradox. Neoliberalism is rejected socially because it has not shown to create ideal living environments for all but at the same time; food sovereignty groups have embraced neoliberal ideals as a way to give more power to the people most affected. If a neoliberal regime has failed to care for people,

the government must be willing to. Food sovereignty groups can help to put pressure on them to do so.

It is clear that the United States government is not doing an adequate job in providing aid or education surrounding food. Alternative food movements have sprung up to fill in the gaps that the federal government has left. These food movements are crucial right now because they can help to restore food sovereignty to people therefore empowering them. Alternative food movements also have a lot of potential to decrease food insecurity and hunger in the United States and globally. Through true food sovereignty people can overthrow the power structures and regain control over their bodies and health. I believe that hunger can be best addressed by grassroots movements founded by those who have fallen through the cracks of the systems because these groups have the unique ability to advocate for their own best interests, needs, and desires in ways that outsiders cannot. Movements such as these can promote community healing and empowerment, rather than individualism, which can work to disassemble power structures working to control them.

Community ran alternative food movements must also be willing to place pressure on the government to see that culturally appropriate and wholesome foods are a human right so that the need will be addressed at a federal level. By doing so, they can reject neoliberalism and work towards the sovereignty of people over their food. Given the current political environment in the United States, action and change are more important now than ever. Empathy and solidarity are crucial in alleviating the epidemic of hunger and inequality of access to nutritional foods in the United States. Food is a basic human right and it should be treated as such. It cannot be said enough.

The food system is subjected to and intertwined with a multitude of other factors, which are too numerous to be discussed here but are very deserving of further study. Research could be done into the intersections of race and food insecurity, specifically how urban disinvestment has affected people of color's access to supermarkets and healthy foods. Approaching the topic from this lens could be useful in examining to see if whiteness is a factor that deters people of color from joining alternative food movements. In this way, results could help illuminate ways to make food more accessible to everyone, especially those who are already disenfranchised by other systems of oppression and control.

References Cited

- Alkon, Alison Hope, Teresa Marie Mares. 2012. Food sovereignty in US food movements: radical visions and neoliberal constraints. *Agric Hum Values*. (29):347-359.
- Anon. How it Works . Colorado Springs Food Rescue [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.coloradospringsfoodrescue.org/>
- Anon. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). United States Department of Agriculture. Available from: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>.
- Anon. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). United States Department of Agriculture. Available from: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
- Anon. A Quick Guide to SNAP Eligibility and Benefits. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available from: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/a-quick-guide-to-snap-eligibility-and-benefits>
- Anon. SNAP Fiscal Year 2017 Cost of Living Adjustments. United States Department of Agriculture. Available from: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP-Fiscal-Year-2017-Cost-of-Living-Adjustments.pdf>
- Anon. Colorado Springs, Colorado. City Data [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Colorado-Springs-Colorado.html>
- Anon. The International Peasant's Voice. La Vía Campesina [Internet]. Available from: <https://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44>
- Anon. U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines Used to Determine Financial Eligibility for Certain Federal Programs. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [Internet]. Available from: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>
- Anon. About Pikes Peak Urban Gardens. Pikes Peak Urban Gardens [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.ppugardens.org/about.html>
- Anon. All Known Groups in Colorado. Food Not Bombs [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.foodnotbombs.net/colorado.html>.
- Bitler, Marianne, Steven J. Haider. 2010. An economic view of food deserts in the United States. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (30):153-176.
- Block, Daniel, Noel Chaves, Erika Allen, Dinah Ramirez. 2012. Food sovereignty, urban food access, and food activism: contemplating the connections through examples from Chicago. *Agric Hum Values* (29):203-215.
- Bourdieu, P. 1998. *Acts of resistance against the tyranny of the market*. Nice, R. trans. New York: New Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 2008. *Political interventions: social science and political action*. New York: Verso.
- Bourdieu, P. 1998 [1977]. Structures and the Habitus. *In Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Pp. 72-95. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.
- Brent, Zoe, Christina M. Schiavoni, Alberto Alonso-Fradejas. 2015. Contextualizing food sovereignty: the politics of convergence among movements in the USA. *Third World Quarterly* (36):618-635.
- Claeys, Priscilla. 2012. The creation of new rights by the food sovereignty movement: the challenge of institutionalizing subversion. *Sociology* (46):844-860.
- Detel, W. 1998. *Foucault and classical antiquity: power, ethics, knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dupont, Alan. Mark Thirlwell. 2009. A new era of food insecurity? *Survival* (51):71-98.

- Foucault, M. 1972. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. M. Ramos, trans. New York: Continuum International Publishing.
- Fowler, B. 1997. *Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory: critical investigations*. London: SAGE.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. The Pima Paradox. Gladwell.com. Available from: <http://gladwell.com/the-pima-paradox/>
- Himmelgreen, David A. and Nancy Romero-Daza. 2010. Eliminating “hunger” in the U.S.: changes in policy regarding the measurement of food security. *Food and Foodways* (18):96-113.
- Hindess, B. 1996. *Discourses of power: from Hobbes to Foucault*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Holt-Giménez, Eric, Yi Wang. 2011. Reform or transformation? The pivotal role of food justice in the U.S. food movement. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* (5):83-102.
- Hospes, Otto. 2014. Food sovereignty: the debate, the deadlock, and a suggested detour. *Agric Hum Values* (31):119-130.
- Landers, Patti. 2007. The food stamp program: history, nutrition, education, and impact. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* (107):1945-1950.
- Llorente, Jacqueline. 2011. The politics of food: did you really choose what’s on your plate? *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* (3):129-136.
- Luan, Hui, Jane Law, Matthew Quick. 2015. Identifying food deserts and swamps based on relative healthy food access: a spatio-temporal Bayesian approach. *International Journal of Health Geographics* (14):1-11.
- Mammen, S, Bauer, J, Richards, L. 2009. Understanding persistent food insecurity: a paradox of place and circumstance. *Social Indicators Research*. 92:151-168.
- Markus, Gregory B. 2015. Organizing in Detroit soup kitchens for power and justice. *DePaul Journal for Social Justice* (9):1-37.
- Moran, Rachel Louise. 2011. Consuming Relief: food stamps and the new welfare of the new deal. *The Journal of American History* (97):1001-1022.
- Naranjo, Sofia. 2012. Enabling food sovereignty and a prosperous future for peasants by understanding the factors that marginalize peasants and lead to poverty and hunger. *Agric Hum Values* (29):231-246.
- Nealon, J. 2008. *Foucault beyond Foucault: power and its intensifications since 1984*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Patel, Rajeev. 2012. Food sovereignty: power, gender, and the right to food. *PLoS Medicine* (9):1-5.
- Pelto, Gretel H., Pertti J. Pelto. 1983. Diet and delocalization: dietary changes since 1750. *The MIT Press* (14):507-528.
- Pope, Ricky J., Shawn T. Flanigan. 2013. Revolution for breakfast: intersections of activism, service, and violence in the black panther party’s community service programs. *Soc Just Res* (26):445-470.
- Roncarolo, F, Bisset, S, Potvin, L. 2016. Short-term effects of traditional and alternative community interventions to address food insecurity. Public Library of Science. 1-14.
- Slocum, Rachel. 2006. Anti-racist practice and the work of community food organizations. *Antipode* (38):327-349.
- Slocum, Rachel. 2010. Race in the study of food. *Progress in Human Geography* (35):303-320.

- Sonnino, Roberta. 2013. Local foodscapes: place and power in the agri-food system. *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica* (63):2-7.
- Swartz, D. 1997. *Culture & power: the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tarnapol Whitacre, Paula, Peggy Tsai, Janet Mulligan. 2009. *The public health effects of food deserts: workshop summary*. Washington: National Research Council.
- Turje, Mik. 2012. Social workers, farmers, and food commodification: governmentality and neoliberalism in the alternative food movement. *Canadian Social Work Review* (29):121-138.
- US Census Bureau. 2008. CS GIS Maps. City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services. 1-8.
- Walsh-Dilley, Marygold, Wendy Wolford, James McCarthy. 2016. Rights for resilience: food sovereignty, power, and resilience in development practice. *Ecology and Society* (21):1-9.

Appendix A

1) Do you participate in any food programs (ex. SNAP, Colorado Springs Food Rescue, food pantries, meal programs, community gardens, etc.)? If so, please list here and your involvement.

2) On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being extremely satisfied and 1 being very dissatisfied, how happy are you with the programs that you participate in? Please circle and write the program's name or type.

Program: _____ **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

Program: _____ **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

Program: _____ **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

Program: _____ **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

Program: _____ **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

3) If you marked a difference in satisfaction between programs please explain why you like or dislike one program over the other.

4) Who is most responsible for maintaining your and your neighborhood's access to healthy foods? Check all that apply.

- Yourself
- Another family member. Provide relationship to you (e.g. parents, spouse, sibling)

- Your community
- The government, local or federal
- A nongovernment organization
- Other _____

5) Who do you think *should* be responsible maintaining your and your neighborhood's access to healthy foods? Check all that apply.

- Yourself
- Another family member. Provide relationship to you (e.g. parents, spouse, sibling)

- Your community
- The government, local or federal
- A nongovernment organization
- Other _____

If you have any other opinions on food programs you may write them below or if you'd like to be interviewed for this thesis please leave a way for me to contact you.