

Abstract

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, concerns with disparities in food access and food consumption have been a growing topic for scholars and activists alike (Reisig and Hobbiss 2000; Whelan et al. 2002). The incorporation of agriculture in urban settings is one possible remedy to sustain population growth and increasingly high demands for food. Green spaces can help high-risk communities gain access to fresh, organic produce and reduce the presence of food deserts. However, within the spectrum of sustainability socioeconomic factors play a critical role in a community's access to healthy organic foods. Although various studies associate an increase in access to food with the implementation of urban agricultural practices (LeClair and Aksan 2014), social exclusion remains a dominant obstacle in the successful integration of Urban Agriculture (henceforth: UA) in communities facing food insecurities (Meenar and Hoover 2012; Tiarachristie 2013). By expanding on the research and data collected by CultivateLA, this study assesses the relationship between clusters of different types of UA practices in LA County based on income levels to determine possible overlaps with food deserts in underserved communities. Using the geospatial analysis methods of Hot Spot Analysis, Buffers, and Directional Distribution to test the bivariate hypotheses, the pattern demonstrated by each of these phenomena, UA sites and food deserts, reveals that there is a significant statistical difference between them based on income levels within LA County. The findings indicate that a higher number of UA sites are located in neighborhoods with low percentages living under poverty, while 85% of neighborhoods with high percentages living below poverty are designed as food deserts. These results provide spatial statistical evidence of how these phenomena overlap, providing a platform for further exploration by city planners and other policy makers to remedy limited access to healthy foods in high-risk areas.