

## **THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT: A REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY GARDEN PARTICIPATION IN SALT LAKE VALLEY**

Christianna Johnson (Sarah J. Hinners)  
Department of City & Metropolitan Planning



The local food movement is growing more and more popular in cities across the country. Community gardening and backyard gardening are on the rise, farmer's markets are thriving, CSAs are common, restaurant customers are demanding more local food sources and people are becoming more educated about the larger food system as a whole. Community gardening is seen as one of the best ways to eat local, healthier food, live a more environmentally sustainable life, and empower marginalized groups while also building community connections. Despite the ubiquity of this movement, little research has been done on who is participating in urban gardening and where in the context of the city does community gardening fit best. For community gardening organizations, community nonprofits, planning entities and more, it is crucial to better understand who participates in community gardening and other forms of urban food production.

Salt Lake City is similar to many other metropolitan areas across the country that have experienced rapid growth in local food production. According to Ashley Patterson, Executive Director of Wasatch Community Gardens, there are many observed differences in community garden participation in Salt Lake City. This research explored different demographic and neighborhood factors that determine who participates in a local community garden in Salt Lake Valley.

Our methods of analysis involved ground-truthing and documenting backyard gardens in four garden neighborhoods in Salt Lake: the Avenues, Downtown, Glendale, and Magna . Then, the locations of the gardens were digitized and transferred into locations in the GIS ArcMap program. Then, 2010 Census data (factors such as income, poverty status, race/ethnicity, etc.) for each neighborhood was collected, along with data from Ashley Patterson (Executive Director for Wasatch Community Gardens) for addresses of community garden users. All results were mapped in the ArcMap program and analyzed.

Our results showed that based off the USDA Food Desert Locator, only half of the gardens are actually located inside or border a food desert: the Magna garden and the Glendale garden. Additionally, both of these gardens have the lowest amount of members, the lowest participation rates, but the highest propensity of backyard gardens. The Downtown neighborhood had the lowest median income and the second highest poverty status rate, but one of the highest participation rates. The Avenues garden is one of the most active, yet the surrounding neighborhood has some of the fewest private gardens. It is also the wealthiest neighborhood.

While it seems that income, backyard garden availability, proximity to a garden (by work or home), and age of the garden are the most significant



determinants of community garden participation in Salt Lake, further research will be done. Specifically, we hope to perform an analysis on all Wasatch Community Gardens.

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