

Food Mirages & The Other Bodies: Environmental Exclusion in Alternative Food Networks in Portland, Oregon, Michelle Moulton, - ENVS 400

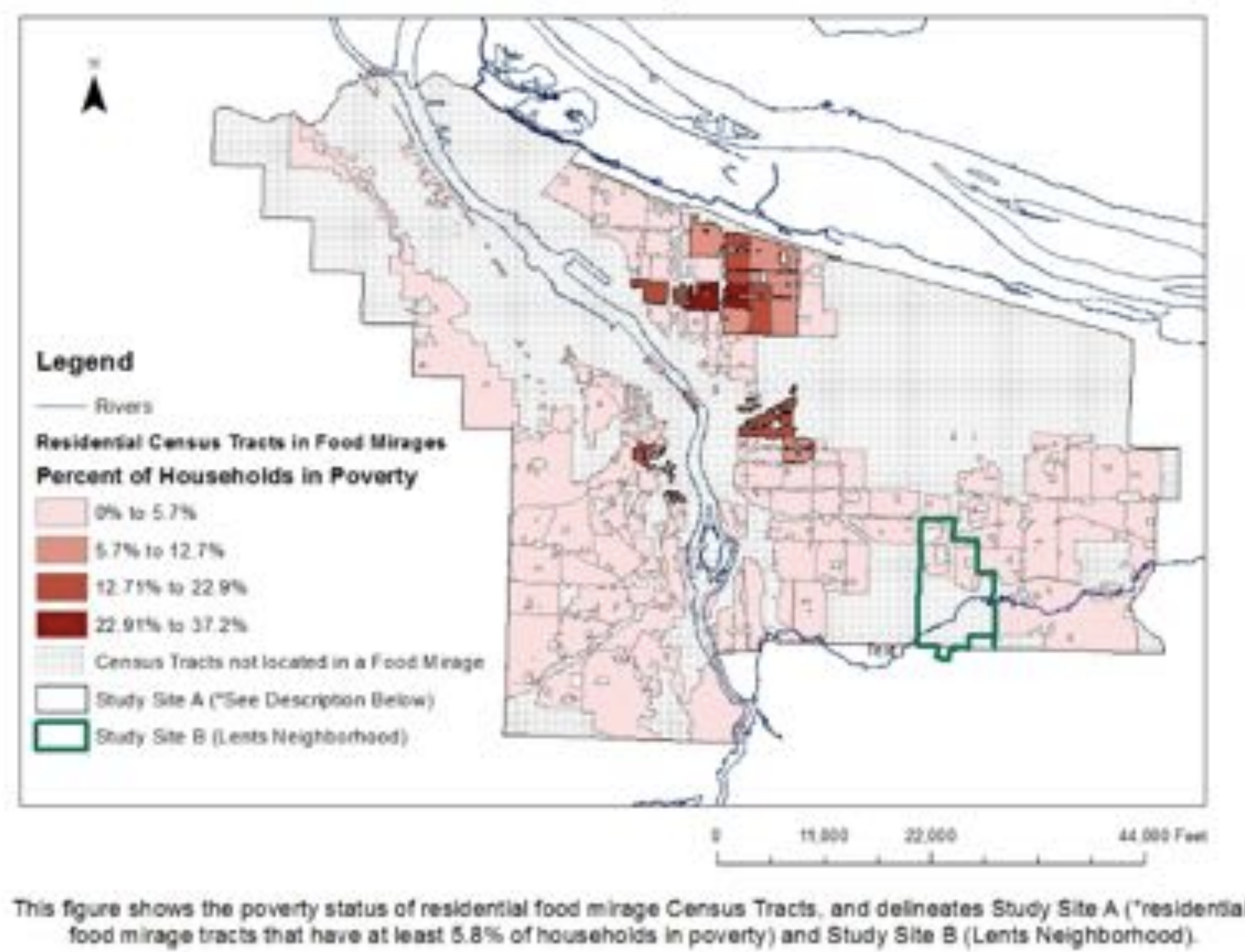
Maps, Interviews & Surveys

In order to determine the funding, outreach programs, demographics of participants, and distribution networks of these nonprofits, I utilized ArcGIS mapping tools, surveys, and interviews. I also used ArcGIS to determine food insecure areas in Portland (Study Sites A and B), and gathered data on perceptions of food accessibility in those regions.

What is a Food Mirage?

Contrary to popular belief, Portland does not have food deserts. There is a fairly even geographical distribution of groceries stores, yet in many places of Portland, these grocery stores are very costly. This gives the illusion of food accessibility in geographic terms, yielding the phrase food mirage (Breyer et. al, 2013). The map below shows the food mirage locations in Portland, or areas that are located at least a mile from a low-cost grocery store. Within these areas, I've created two Study Sites: (A) food mirages in high poverty Census Tracts, and the (B) Lents Neighborhood.

2010 Census Tracts with Low to High Poverty Rates within Potential Food Mirages



What do low income communities and communities of color in Portland perceive to be accessible food sources, and are non-profits with missions of food accessibility providing adequate service to this demographic? *Should* these organizations attempt to expand their outreach, or would a community-driven

References:
Breyer, Betsy, and Adriana Voss-Andreae. "Food Mirages: Geographic and Economic Barriers to Healthful Food Access in Portland Oregon." *Health*
Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color (2010). *Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile*. Portland, OR: Portland State University
& Place 24 (2013): 131-139.
Neighborhood Food Network Report – Coalition for a Livable Future
Zengerfarm.org

Portland Fruit Tree Project

Portland Fruit Tree Project reduces economic barriers by gleaning fruit off of abundant fruit trees and distributing the harvest to local food pantries and low-income volunteers. Although the distribution network is prolific and **48%** of volunteers identify as low income, **80%** of volunteers are Caucasian. Only 3% of respondents living in Lents (where PFTP is trying to conduct outreach) had heard of the organization. .

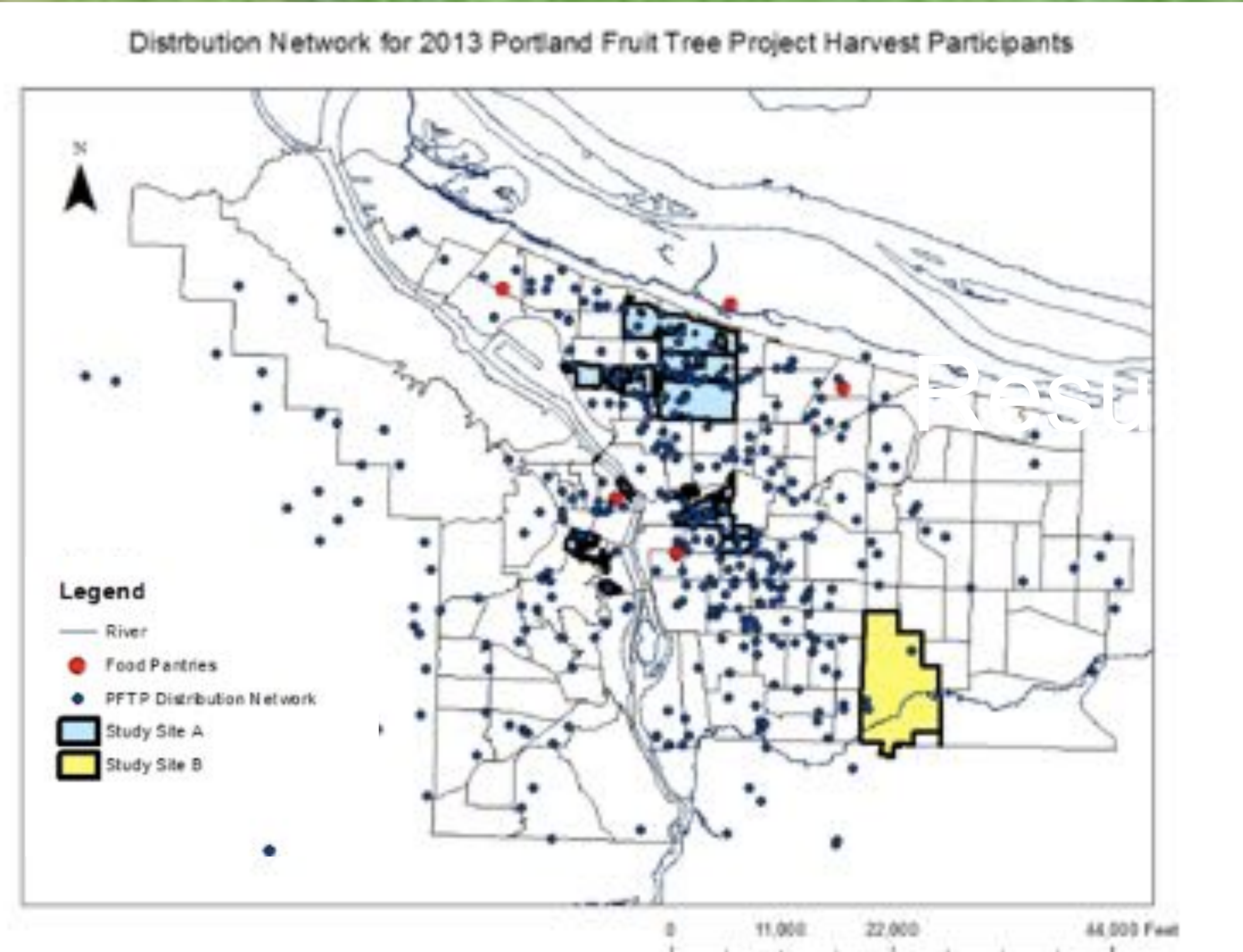


Fig. 4: This figure shows the distribution network of Harvest Party resources via the location of participant households (n=648) and partner food pantry locations (n=5).

Zenger Farm

Zenger Farm, located in the heart of Lents Neighborhood, reduces economic barriers through a SNAP match program at their Farmers Market and a CSA that accepts SNAP benefits. The distribution network is more concentrated in Southeast Portland. These programs attract many SNAP dependent individuals who live in the area – **80%** of whom are Caucasian. Yet, only **6%** of respondents living in Lents had heard of Zenger Farm.

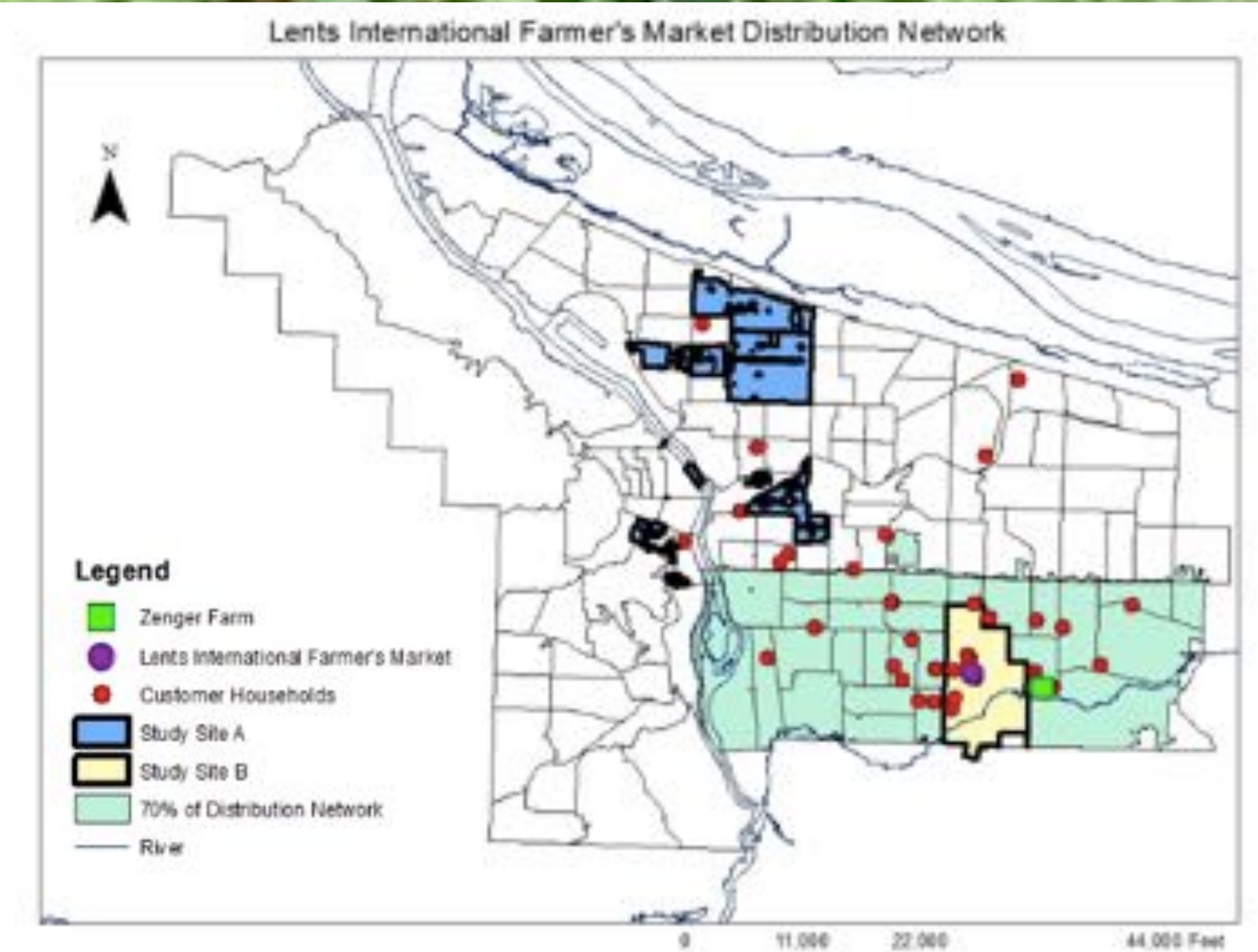


Fig. 5: This figure shows the distribution network of Lents International Farmer's Market by (a) survey sample of participants conducted on October 31, 2013 (n=40) and (b) 70% of the distribution network by Census Tract according to an annual survey conducted by Zenger Farms. The data for this annual survey was obtained through an interview with Sarah Cogan, the Market Manager.

Results

It was found that these non-profits are successful at reaching low-income Caucasian populations across the metropolitan area, but less successful at reaching minority populations, whom face the greatest socioeconomic disparities in Portland (Curry-Stevens et. al, 2010). People living in Outer East Portland and North / Northeast Portland are more likely to experience food insecurity (Sokpin et. al, 2013) and prefer to shop at one-stop supermarkets regardless of distance because of variety and food costs. Most had not heard of Portland Fruit Tree Project or Zenger Farm, and expressed little interest in learning more.

Conclusion

In short, the distribution networks are not reaching those that "need" these services most, and those that "need" these services prefer to shop at conventional & convenient sources as Fred Meyer, Winco & Safeway. The food justice movement in Portland is an elite-lead movement that proposes foreign, culturally distant solutions. Integrative community development strategies could be employed to ask people the change they'd like to see.