CRITICAL PRACTICE IN AN AGE OF COMPLEXITY - AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITIQUE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Building Regenerative Agriculture in Existing Landscapes: Networked Community Gardens & Research Extensive Universities

• Format:
Screening

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• University or Company Affiliation:
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• Abstract (300 words):
This short film will introduce the variety of built environments that the “Everybody Eats” project has encountered in its four-year history. As a community-embedded research project centered in service-learning, the collaborative builds residential and third-space food gardens. Located at the flagship land grant institution in Texas, the project serves the entire Brazos Valley, a complex agricultural space that encompasses a seven-county area, its own subsection of Central Texas. While situated in a landscape that has historically served as a hub for the organization and extension of agricultural science and “best practices” – the core mission of a land grant institution – the project has encountered largely conventional ideas of what constitutes a “farmer” while at the same time cataloging a significant proportion engaged with small-scale food production of a variety of types.
• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):


**José Avila**, is a founding member of the “Everybody Eats” project, and a recent graduate of Texas A&M with a B.S. in Sociology. His work with the project focuses on True Cost Accounting, and the ways in a variety of resources and affordances are proxies for one another. His work began with a focus on the truism, “Time is money.” He served as the project manager during the spring of 2017, overseeing the project’s coordination with the Brazos County Master Gardeners Association and B/CS Habitat for Humanity in our residential keyhole garden installations.

**Tiffany Amorette Young**, is a PhD student at Texas A&M University in Sociology. She received her Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Texas at El Paso. With a major in Sociolegal studies and a minor in race, class, and gender, Ms. Young’s research interests focus on how people and institutions navigate food, hunger and resistance in carceral spaces such as prisons and immigration detention centers. Ms. Young has contributed to service learning projects aimed at empowering local residents with access to sustainable food provisioning by offering materials and knowledge to build community and personal gardens for the past four years. Her participation in the ethnographic study “Everybody Eats” has allowed her to not only build fundamental skills in micro food production, but has provided the analytical tools to grasp a firmer historical and
intersectional understanding of food production and sustainability in the local community and beyond.

Marissa Cisneros, is a Sociology Ph.D. student attending Texas A&M University. Her undergraduate studies included a culinary degree as well as research at Texas A&M-San Antonio. This research used mixed methodology in the Latin@ paradox to investigate processed food consumption within dietary assimilation. After completing her undergraduate work, she accepted a fellowship to the Texas A&M doctoral program majoring in food and culture with a minor in race, class, and gender. She has completed a gender studies certificate and is nearing completion of an advanced research methodology certificate. These areas of study have resulted in data analysis outside of the Department and University in qualitative and quantitative areas. While her research interests are varied including culinary, Cajun food culture, Latinx matriarchal narratives, food justice and more; her current work with Woman’s and Infant Care (WIC) offers an avenue to incorporate gender studies and food culture, as well as unique methodological approaches to food justice.

Andrew McNeely, is a Ph.D. student studying sociology at Texas A&M University. He completed his undergraduate and Master’s studies at Texas A&M, and has lived in the Bryan/College Station community for eleven years. Mr. McNeely also serves as the director of the Aggie Research Program (ARP). The ARP facilitates the creation of teams to pursue the research projects of the graduate team leader, who selects and mentors his/her team of undergraduate researchers. Mr. McNeely guides other graduate students in developing their mentoring skills as part of their preparation to assume faculty positions in academia. His dissertation research studies the religiously-affiliated food provision programs in Brazos County, Texas. This service-learning, ethnographic research focuses on the interaction between volunteers’ theological beliefs and community food insecurity, and the meaning-making behind these interactions. His research focuses on the myriad ways in which religion and culture interact, particularly in the United States with Protestant Evangelicalism.

Hannah Elisabeth Klein, has a B.S. in Sociology with a focus on race and gender (Texas A&M University). Her past work focused on community food insecurity in the Brazos Valley, particularly looking at the racial disparities of those living in Limited Supermarket Access areas (LSAs). As part of Dr. Sarah Gatson’s service learning project, her senior thesis research included volunteering with WIC in Brazos Valley. Hannah is currently a sociology PhD student at Brandeis University. Her current research focuses on racialized anti-Semitism and Jewish motherhood.

Heidi Jauregui, is a recent TAMU graduate, with a B.A. in International Studies. Her past work with the project included developing a food security survey instrument, which revealed that 25% of TAMU students experience food insecurity. She completed a senior
thesis on the topic of food insecurity, underrepresented minority status, and international student status.

**Sylvia Emmanuel**, is a Ph.D student in the Department of Sociology at Texas A&M University. She received her undergraduate degree also at Texas A&M and consequently has lived in the Bryan/College Station community for a total of five years—four of which she resided in the residence halls located on-campus. She currently leads a team of undergraduate students interested in investigating the food access and food security of students that live on campus in residence halls at Texas A&M University. A component of their research is to promote food production in and around the dorms as well as encourage a community network centered around food production and security. In addition to educating students about food security, the project will try to reconcile the ideas of public and private space with regard to who can alter it within a University context. This project is referred to as “Container Gardening in Dorm Rooms” and is currently funded by the Aggie Green Fun, an organization funding sustainability projects at Texas A&M University.

**Christa Cardenas**, is an undergraduate research assistant. She is in her final year of study for her Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology. She leads a small team of other undergraduate research assistants. Her team performs service-learning research aimed at investigating childhood food insecurity in the Brazos Valley. Together, they have studied the intersection of economic, health, and race/ethnicity fields with food security and host a gardening club at a local youth organization to promote urban food security. Her interest is in child welfare issues. Her team presented their work at the 2017 Undergraduate Research Expo with the Aggie Research Scholars Program. She networks with graduate students to promote childhood food security. She is a Marine Corps veteran and a Girl Scout troop leader. She is an Alpha Kappa Delta initiate, a certified Aggie Research Leader through the Aggie Research Scholars Program at Texas A&M University, and a former Sociology Research Fellow. She completed an internship at local youth development centers, hosted youth development classes, and has been accepted for the Teach for America program. After she completes the Teach for America program, Cardenas hopes to work in non-profit organizations that benefit children and youth welfare and become a Master Gardener.