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School meals and the new urban food agenda



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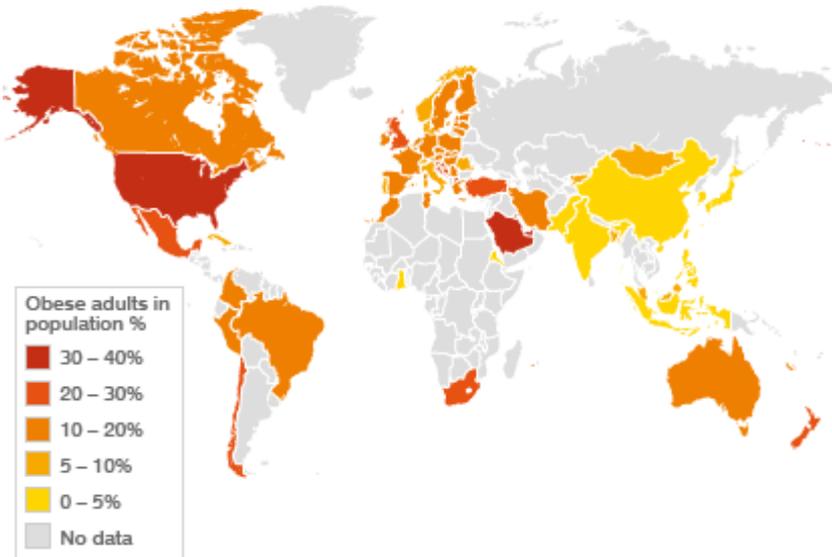
The New Geography of Food Security

- Food insecurity as a bimodal problem of malnutrition
- Access to healthy food as a physical *and* financial issue
 - *When money is tight, the first things that drop out of the diet are usually the healthy foods, like fruits, vegetables, and lean sources of protein, which are nearly always more expensive* (General Director of the WHO, 2008)
- Widening socio-economic inequalities (food riots)
- A range of ecological pressures on the food system are linking security and sustainability

The New Geography of Food Security

- Food insecurity as a structural and “bimodal” crisis of both over- and under- consumption

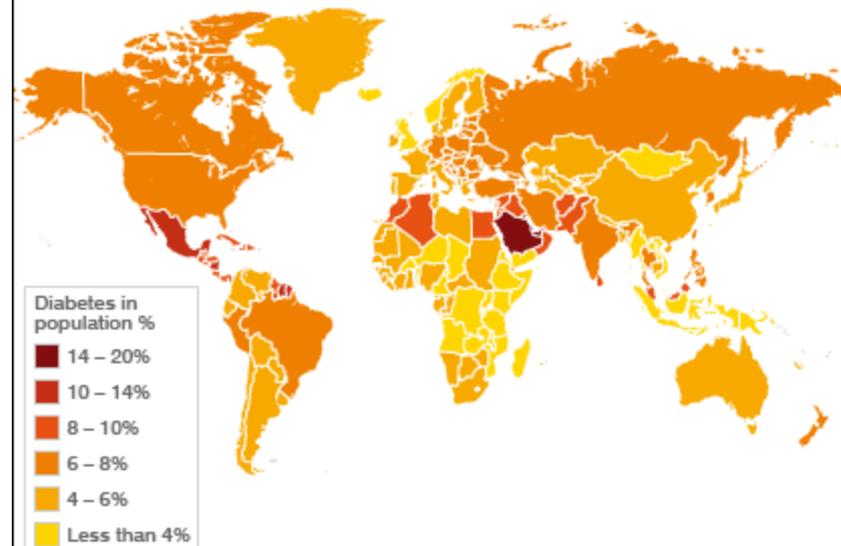
THE GLOBAL OBESITY PROBLEM



An obese adult is classified as having a Body Mass Index equal to or greater than 30

SOURCE: World Health Organization, 2005

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF DIABETES IN 2007

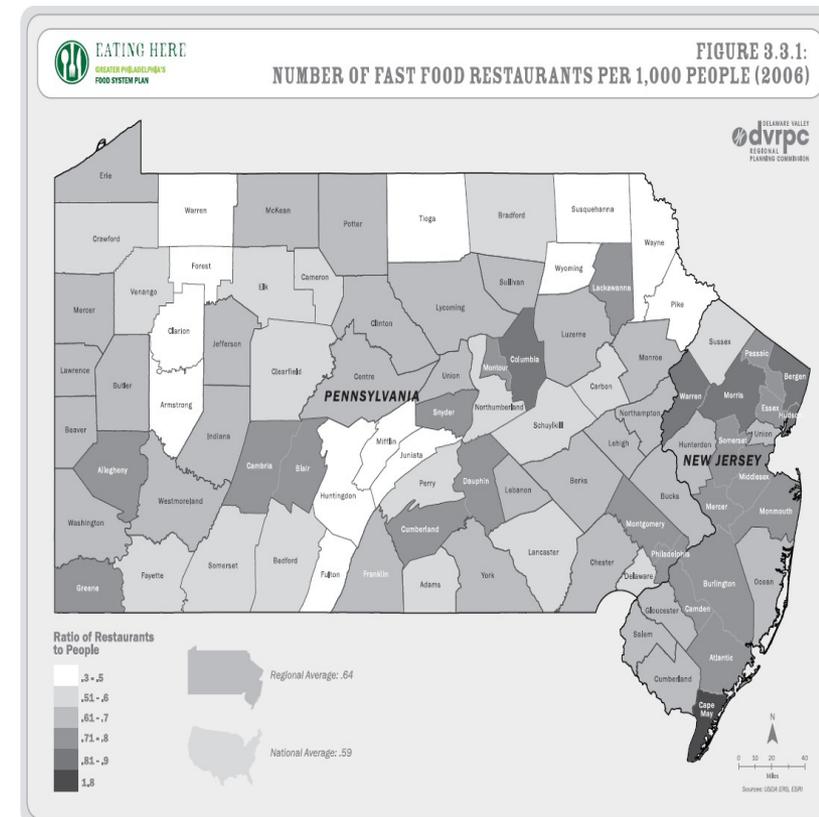
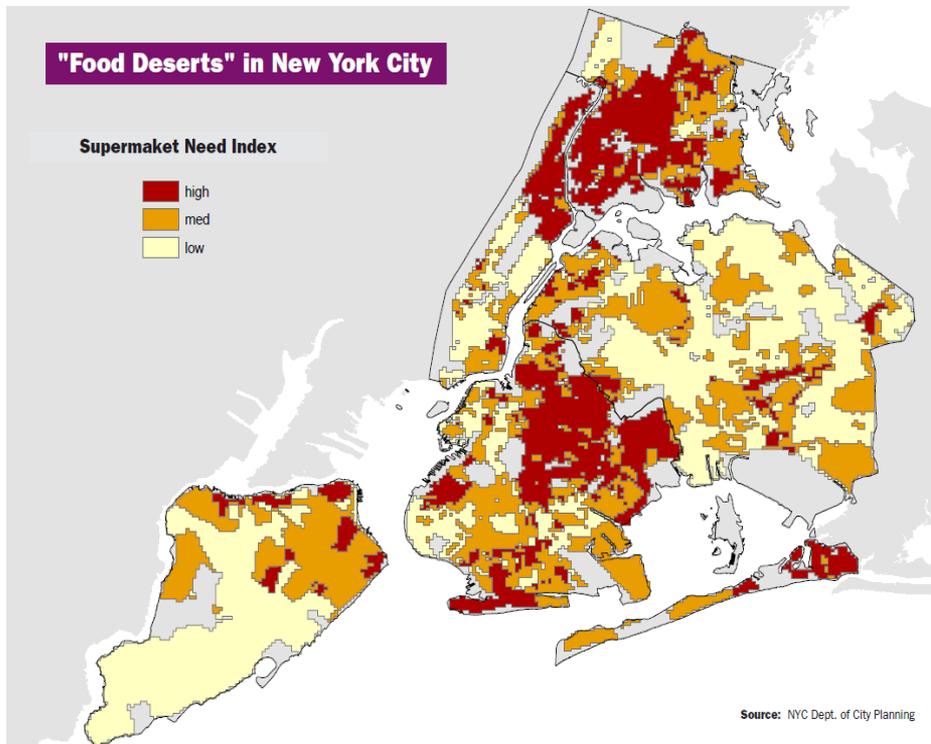


Map shows type 1 and type 2 diabetes
Obesity and type 2 diabetes are causally linked

SOURCE: Diabetes Atlas, 2006

The New Geography of Food Security

- Lack of direct access to food production and dependence on the market especially a problem in cities



The New Geography of Food Security

- Strong urban dimension of food insecurity
Policies and resources dealing with poverty, exclusion and inequalities in cities remain highly inadequate. As a result, urban diets are affected and malnutrition has become a major concern (FAO, 2011)
- Social unrest (urban food riots) has turned food security into a matter of national security

The New Geography of Food Security

- Interrelation of a range of ecological pressures
 - Water availability
 - Soil degradation and loss
 - Very high levels of food losses and waste
- Urban areas as sites where the different dimensions of food insecurity are most visible
 - Emergence of a new urban (research and policy) agenda

Addressing the New Geography of Food Security

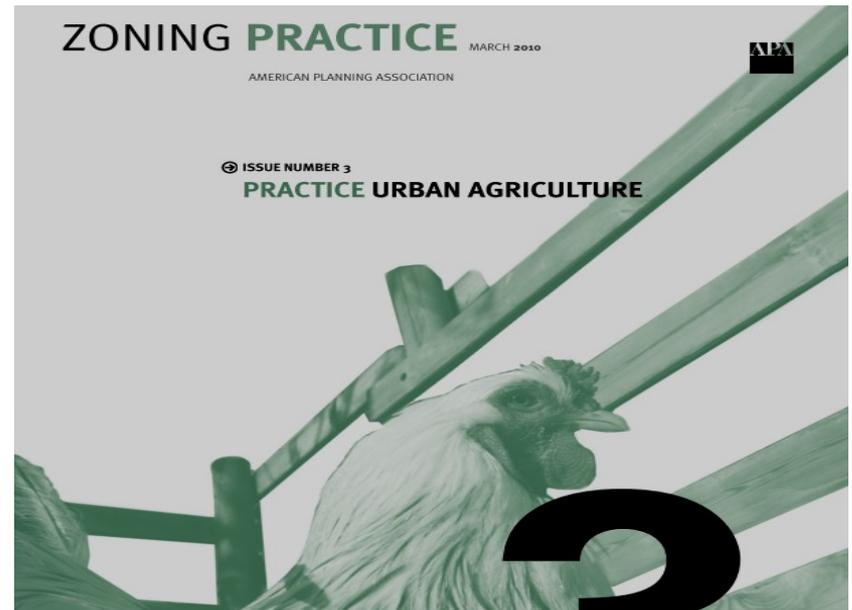
- Need to account for “the deeply inter-locking nature of economic, social and environmental systems to promote more cross-sectoral approaches to decision-making” (Misselhorn et al., 2012)
 - “Whereas the productionist paradigm assumed that the Earth was limitless, the new era’s policies must assume the connections between environment, social justice and health” (Lang, 2010)

Urban and Regional Governments as Food Policy Actors

- Four main innovations embedded in the urban food agenda
 - **Systems thinking** - recognition that “complex issues are linked, there are multiple actors in the system and they are connected, and integrated solutions are required” (MacRae and Donahue, 2013: 5)
 - **New localism** – flexible and inclusive approach to food re-localization
 - **Participatory food governance** – civil society involvement in food system governance
 - **Translocalism** – progressive sense of ‘place’ that transcends conventional scalar categories and state jurisdictions

The New Urban Agenda: The Policy Instruments

- Two main implementation tools extolled for their integrative potential:
 - Supportive land use ordinances
 - Public procurement



The Potential of Public Food Procurement

- Fostering a mutually supportive collaboration between urban and rural communities (Bristol, 2009)
- Capacity to make connections between “all food system stakeholders, ranging from the private sector to the public sector, from local food advocates to hunger relief organizations, from farmland preservation coordinators to economic development agencies” (Philadelphia, 2011)

The Potential of Public Food Procurement

- The transformation of the food system requires not simply a collection but a **coordination** of reforms across many sectors and at many levels
- The power of the State:
 - Regulatory
 - Immense budget
 - Mandate to act in the public interest – has unique authority over both food supply and food demand
- Need to shift from a value-as-lowest-cost mindset to a **values-for-cost** approach that realizes the enormous economic, environmental and social benefits of sustainable public food procurement

- *If we are what we eat, then public sector food purchasers help shape the lives of millions of people. In hospitals, schools, prisons, and canteens [...], good food helps maintain good health, promote healing rates and improve concentration and behaviour. But sustainable food procurement isn't just about better nutrition. It's about where the food comes from, how it's produced and transported, and where it ends up. It's about food quality, safety and choice. Most of all, it's about defining best value in its broadest sense (DEFRA, 2008).*

The Role of Healthy and Sustainable School Meals

- Nutritious school food can
 - Address food security (obesity and hunger)
 - Create new generations of knowledgeable consumers
 - Support markets for quality food producers
 - Provide environmental benefits (e.g., short supply chains)

School Meals in Rome: The Numbers



- 150,000 meals supplied every day (27,000,000 meals/year)
- 92% of the meals cooked in the schools
- Service entrusted to 6 catering companies but strictly monitored by the centre:
 - 3,500 inspections by dieticians/year
 - 1,100 inspections performed by a specialized firm in 2005
 - Involvement of Local Health Authorities
 - Canteen Commissions



Sustainable School Meals in Rome: The Process

- 2002-2004 tender: 100-point award system
 - Price of the meal (51 points)
 - Organizational characteristics of the service (30 points)
 - Projects, interventions and services offered to improve the eating environment and promote food education (15 points)
 - Additional organic, PDO and PGI products offered (4 points)

Sustainable and Healthy School Meals in Rome: The Process

- In the 2004-2007 tender, Rome increased the number of both basic quality criteria and award criteria
 - New requirements to prevent childhood obesity
 - Renewed emphasis on seasonality, variety, tradition and nutritional health
 - Increased number of organic products



	2004-2007 AWARD CRITERIA	Points
A	Price	51
B	Improving and restoring canteens, kitchens and furniture	17
C	PDO and PGI products (meat and cured meats) offered in addition to those required by the tender	9
D	Organization of training courses and informational campaigns	8
E	Organizational features of the service	4
F	Use exclusively of products from "bio-dedicated" food chains	4
G	Organic products offered in addition to those required by the tender	4
H	Fair Trade products	2

Sustainable School Food in Rome: The Process



- **2007-2012 tender**
 - School meals and social inclusion
 - Ethnic menus
 - Leftovers to charity associations and animal shelters
 - Incentives to source products from social cooperatives
 - School meals and environmental sustainability
 - Recycling, low-impact detergents, bio-degradable plates
 - “Guaranteed freshness” and food miles

School Food and Social Justice

There is no real development without social quality [...] No single action can meet its objectives unless it takes place within a context in which the priority is [...] a strong sense of community, a type of development that becomes real because the level of social inclusion increases -- Walter Veltroni, former Mayor of Rome, 2006



The Roman Model

- 3 main features of Rome's school food reform:
 - It is *inclusive* – producers and consumers are both actively involved in the qualification process
 - It is *progressive* and *dynamic* – the notion of quality is constantly re-negotiated and progressively revised
 - It is *integrated* – different, when not conflicting, quality conventions are reconciled

Sustainable School Meals in Rome: The Threats (2007-2012)

- But....
 - New (right-wing) administration came into power in 2008
 - Ethnic menus abolished (waste?!)
 - Fair trade products eliminated
 - Inspections lifted
- How can we embed the gains of sustainable development strategies?

School Meals and the Urban Food Agenda: Looking at the Future

- Rethinking public food services as health and well being services
 - Public meals as part of a wider sustainable development strategy that integrates production, consumption, health and education
- Investing resources
- Disseminating good practice from one area to another
- Long-term vision

School Meals and the Urban Food Agenda: Looking at the Future

- Involving all actors in the food chain
 - Supporting and connecting local actors who are working to engender sustainable transformations
 - None of these actors, left alone in their own local context, can change the world; but all together, they can create a collective commitment to the values of environmental integrity, economic equity and social justice