Hank & Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars
Summer Research Institute

3rd Year Cohort

Research Papers
Summer 2018
Samuel DuBois Cook
The Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity (Cook Center) was named after Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook, a distinguished political scientist, scholar, educator, author, administrator, civil and human rights activist and public servant. Dr. Cook, a professor in the Duke University political science department became the first African-American to hold a regular and/or tenured faculty appointment at a predominantly white southern college or university. He went on to serve 22-and-a-half years as president of Dillard University in New Orleans.

Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity
The Duke University Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity is an interdisciplinary research center within Trinity School of Arts and Sciences that is comprised of faculty and scholars from across Duke and a diverse international group of affiliated universities, research centers and non-governmental organizations. Its mission is to promote equity, across all domains of human interactions, through interdisciplinary research, teaching, partnerships, policy, and practice. The Cook Center seeks to employ the innovative use of new and existing data, develop human capital, incorporate stakeholder voices through civic engagement, create viable collaborations, and engender equity-driven policy and social transformation at the local, national and international levels.

Hank & Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute
The Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity’s Hank and Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute is a three-week educational enrichment program that provides middle and high-school students enrolled in Durham Public Schools (DPS) in Durham, North Carolina, with training to enhance their writing, research, and presentation skills. The program is sponsored by the Samuel Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University in partnership with Durham Public Schools (DPS). In keeping with the Samuel DuBois Cook Center’s central mission as a community of scholars engaged in the study of the causes and consequences of inequality, participants will explore curriculum related to the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of inequality.

During the Hank and Billy Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute, students receive instruction from distinguished middle and high-school teachers, university professors, and leaders from community organizations. The program’s main focus is on the development of students’ research, writing, presentation, and critical-inquiry skills around issues of social justice. Students design and prepare original research presentations, posters, and papers focused on policy issues that affect inequality. Program material is selected by the teaching faculty in collaboration with Cook-Center scholars, focusing on various inequalities and their intersections. Emphasis is placed throughout the program on mentoring students in research, writing, and presentation skills. During the Hank and Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute, students participate in workshops at Duke University’s Perkins and Rubenstein Libraries and the Nasher Museum of Art.
Oluwatobi Adio
Oluwatobi Adio is a rising senior at the City of Medicine Academy. She likes to read and binge watch Nigerian movies with her mom. Adio wrote her research to raise awareness on the underlying issues of sexual assault on college campuses.

Kollin Brown
Kollin Brown is a rising senior at Hillside High School, where he held a conference about Social Equity for students in Durham Public Schools. Kollin has done research about housing Inequities. Watching Durham and Chicago firsthand, change over the years through gentrification has inspired him to do research about housing at the Young Scholars Institute. Upon graduation, Kollin plans on attending Morehouse College.

Ayden Lawrence
Ayden Lawrence is a participant in the third year cohort of the Aaron Young Scholar Summer Research Institute and is a rising sophomore at J.D Clements Early College. He is interested in the development of food deserts because they are contributing to the rise of health diseases in communities of color.

Akanke Mason-Hogans
Akanke Mason-Hogans is a rising senior at Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School, and is a 3rd year student in the Aaron Young Scholars program. She has a passion for creative expression, social justice, and pepperoni pizza, and hopes to empower others through her research and advocacy. Akanke was inspired to write about the effects of colorism on education after witnessing it firsthand, with hopes that her research will enlighten educators on how to better serve their students in the future.

Sandra Santillan
Sandra Santillan is an Aaron Scholar, Durham native, and rising senior at Hillside High School. Over the course of three summers at the Young Scholars Research Institute, Sandra has researched and worked on issues of gender inequity, mental illness, and incarceration. She has worked alongside her peers, generating research products on issues of inequity. Sandra hopes to continue her research and widen her understanding of social inequities, as well as spreading valuable lessons and finding potential solutions related to her research interests.

Jenny Uba
Jenny Uba is a rising senior at City of Medicine Academy and is a part of the 3rd year cohort in the Aaron Young Scholars Institute Program. Her interest in food disparities was sparked when she learned about the inequities that exist in access to healthy food. Jenny hopes to further her research and expand her knowledge on the food supply chain in order to improve health outcomes in communities of color.
Taking A Look Into The Embedded Trap: Examining The Sexual Assault At Fraternity Parties

By: Oluwatobi Adio

Abstract

Sexual assault is prevalent on college campuses throughout the United States. Sexual assault is more likely to happen on college campuses within fraternities. Fraternities are well known for their excessive alcohol consumption and partying. The party setting and amount of alcohol available at fraternity parties create a dangerous and hostile environment for women. The dangers of these parties are heightened by the lack of sexual education on behalf of both the perpetrator and the victim. This paper analyzes how alcoholism plays an important role on sexual assault at fraternity parties, what impact the controlled party settings have on the unwelcome sexual advances, and how intervention programs can reduce the rate at which sexual assault occurs.

Introduction

Every ninety-eight seconds, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.\(^1\) Of those people, one in three women will experience sexual violence at some point in their lives.\(^2\) Mary Koss, a professor of psychology at the University of Arizona conducted an all-male national survey in 1987 and her results were shocking. According to her research, “7.7 percent of male students volunteered anonymously that they had engaged in or attempted forced sex. Almost none


considered it to be a crime.”³ This statistic proves that sexual exploitation of women has been normalized amongst college men. Approximately thirty-two percent of the rapes on college campuses occur at fraternity houses.⁴ The amount of sexual assault incidents occurring at fraternity parties is alarming. The aspects of fraternity parties place women in a position to be violated. Is this intentional or do the gender norms established by fraternities normalized their behavior?

**Thesis Statement**

The presence of college fraternities contributes to the high rates of sexual assault in college campuses due to the excessive alcoholism at parties, lack of sex education, and hypersexualized party culture hosted by fraternities.

**Research Question**

1. Which components of fraternity culture contribute to sexual assault on college campuses?
2. What is a possible solution to preventing sexual assault on college campuses?

**Terminology**

For the purposes of this paper, it is important to clarify the definition of sexual assault. According to the Department of Justice, the term “sexual assault” refers to any non-consensual sexual act, including when the victim lacks the capacity to consent.⁵ The definition of a fraternity is an organization of male students tied to Greek letters at a university who are united for a specific cause.⁶ Their origins are rooted in charitable activities, but have now become largely

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⁴ Minow, Einolf, Sorority Participation and Sexual Assault Risk, 841


known for their party culture. Their origins are rooted in charitable work and social gatherings, but have now come to be known for their party culture. The definition of consent is the voluntary agreement or acquiescence by a person of age or with appropriate mental capacity and understanding to be able to make that decision and who is not under any duress or coercion. The definition of alcoholism is the excessive or continued use of drinking.

Methodology & Literature Review

All of the information obtained was gathered from the Google Scholar database. The body of literature used for analysis discusses the alcoholism at fraternity parties, the problematic fraternity party environment, lack of sexual education on college campuses, and how masculine roles contribute to sexual assault. Sexual assault has been around for a long time, but one of the first articles that discuss male aggression was released in 1957 by Eugene Kanin. His book “Male Aggression in Dating-Courtship relations” discusses the secrecy and stigma men use to exploit women. Specific articles used for alcoholism are “Sexual Victimization Among Sorority Women: Exploring the Link Between Sexual Violence and Institutional Practices” and “Sorority Participation and Sexual Assault Risk”. Other articles that provided information on fraternity members’ male-dominated party settings are “Sorority Participation and Sexual Assault Risk” and “Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape”. The data collected from “Effects of a Sexual Assault Peer Education Program on Men's Belief in Rape Myths” provided information on how sexual assault intervention programs can help reduce the


rates of sexual assault. The “Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape” and “Alcohol-Related Sexual Assault: A Common Problem among College Students” articles also highlights the lack of education prevalent amongst students on college campuses.

**Alcoholism**

The excessive use of alcohol is common at fraternity parties and increases the likelihood of sexual assault. Fraternities are well known for having an abundant amount of alcohol at party scenes and due to a lot of alcohol being present, a lot of alcohol is consumed. The amount of alcohol prevalent at these parties increases the vulnerability of women, by impairing the better judgment of anyone who is intoxicated. Research conducted by Copenhaver and Grauerholz states that “96% of the respondents and offenders had been drinking or taking drugs before at least one of the incidents”.\(^{10}\) Based on this statistic, it can be inferred that there is, in fact, a positive correlation between the amount of alcohol consumed and the rate of sexual assault occurring at these parties. If there was less or no alcohol at the parties, sexual assault incidents would reduce. A study done by Einolf and Minow found that “General level of activity within the sorority, attendance at sisterhood events, and attendance at coed Greek events where no alcohol is served all correlated negatively with the sexual victimization experiences of sorority members.”\(^{11}\) This demonstrates how the rate of sexual victimization decreased when the presence of alcohol was eliminated from the sorority event. Sororities and fraternities are both involved in Greek life so, data from a sorority event is incorporated because it can be used to project how a no-alcohol

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environment can also impact fraternity parties. Fraternity members also use alcohol to intoxicate women to the extent they are unable to refuse sexual coercion. They intoxicate women by encouraging them to drink more than intended. According to Ehrhart and Sandier, "Many fraternities glorify drinking and may deliberately encourage women to overdrink." This statistic illustrates how fraternity members increase the vulnerability of woman by pressuring them to consume more alcohol.

Party Environment

The setting of the fraternity parties creates an unsafe environment for female students. According to Einolf and Minow, “The most common locations in which rapes occurred were off-campus private residences (47%) and fraternity houses (32%), followed by on-campus housing (7%), cars (6%), outdoors (2%), and other locations (6%).” This statistic proves that most rapes occur at fraternity houses besides off-campus residences. It seems likely that the high occurrence of rapes off-campus can be attributed to the lack of faculty supervision and campus police that are present in college dorms. Regardless, it is apparent that rape is likely to happen at a fraternity house and the percentage of rapes occurring at fraternity houses is alarming. Fraternity parties are dangerous because they target women and explicitly place them in positions of powerlessness. According to Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney, “Fraternities control every aspect of parties at their houses: themes, music, transportation, admission, access to alcohol, and movement of guests. Party themes usually require women to wear scant, sexy clothing and place women in subordinate positions to men. Women attended parties such as “Pimps and Hos,”


13 Minow, Einolf, Sorority Participation and Sexual Assault Risk, 841
“Victoria’s Secret,” and “Playboy Mansion”—the last of which required fraternity members to escort two scantily clad dates. Other recent themes included: “CEO/Secretary Ho,” “School Teacher/Sexy Student,” and “Golf Pro/Tennis Ho.”14 These male-dominated themes encourage sexual aggression and unwelcome advances by establishing sexualized gender roles at their parties. The transportation system provided by the fraternities also put women at risk for sexual assault because their ability to move on their own or away from danger is compromised. Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney conducted an interview with a female student on a college campus where she explained that “All those girls would stand out there and just like, no joke, get into these big black Suburbans driven by frat guys, wearing like seriously no clothes, piled on top of each other. This could be some kidnapper taking you all away to the woods and chopping you up and leaving you there.”15 Based off this information, it can be inferred that driving in a vehicle with these men at such a late hour makes the woman more vulnerable to sexual assault because their security is in the hands of the fraternity members and if the women needed to escape, it would be harder for them to leave the situation. Fraternities promote sexual assault by controlling the party setting and creating a dangerous environment for men and female interaction. These incidents occur as a result of irresponsibility and the lack of sexual education. If sexual intervention programs were strongly enforced on college campuses, it could play a key role in reducing sexual assault.


Inadequate Sexual Education

The lack of sexual education is prevalent among college males. The inability to accept no as an answer and having the mindset of entitlement to a woman’s body, demonstrates a lack of effective sexual education on behalf of the perpetrator. In a society that objectifies female bodies and blurs the concept of consent, the lack of education surrounding sexual assault is not surprising, but no less dangerous. Victim blaming also demonstrates there is a deficient amount of sexual education because of the false mentality that anything the victim experienced was their fault. “About two-thirds of college men who acknowledge committing sexual assault report being multiple offenders.”16 It has been suggested that college men report rates lower than college women do because “ Many men view the woman’s no consent as vague, ambiguous or insincere and convince themselves that their forcefulness was normal seduction, not rape.” This statement shows that many male sex offenders are able to justify these acts because of gross misinterpretations of rape and consent. Women also have a lack of education when it comes to sexual assault because some may blame themselves or other victims for getting raped. Others may belittle the victim because they believe the victim could have avoided the situation altogether. One common rape myth believed by men and women, is that rape is a result of a woman’s stupidity or carelessness. For example, after a college student recounted a sympathetic account of a woman raped at knifepoint by a stranger in the bushes, but also considered rape as nothing to worry about “cause I’m not stupid when I’m drunk.” Even a feminist focus group participant explained that her friend who was raped “made every single mistake and almost all of them had to with alcohol. She got ridiculed when she came out and said she was raped.” These women contrast “true

victims” who are deserving of support with “stupid” women who forfeit sympathy. Not only is this response devoid of empathy for other women, but it also leads women to blame themselves when they are victimized. This statement shows that women are picking and choosing who gets sympathy and who does not base off the circumstances of the sexual assault. In order to reduce the amount of sexual assault prevalent on college campuses, there needs to be some sort of intervention program.

Education programs surrounding sexual assault are fairly new, but have proven to be effective. According to Foubert and Marriott, “After having seen the program, 59% of participants reported that they were less likely to do something sexual with a woman that she did not want to have happened.” That is over half the men that participated in the program and it all started with a class. Men attending the sexual assault intervention programs will believe fewer rape myths and are unlikely to attempt non-consensual intercourse. After a study was conducted, the final results stated that “The main goal for the program, to decrease rape myth acceptance among participants, was achieved. As predicted, men who attended the peer education program in the present study reported significantly less belief in rape myths after seeing the program.” Sexual assault intervention programs can significantly reduce the rate of sexual assault if it were strongly enforced on college campuses. It is clear the lack of education prevalent among college men

17 Armstrong., Hamilton., Sweeney., Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape, 493
18 Phillips, "Flirting with Danger"
20 Foubert., Marriott., “Effects of a Sexual Assault Peer Education Program on Men's Belief in Rape Myths”, 265.
demonstrate the importance of educating them on this issue. These programs can help men better understand the concept of consent and reduce sexual assault on campus.

**Conclusion**

College fraternities’ excessive use of alcohol combined with dangerous party environments and lack of sexual education all contribute to the high rates of sexual assault on college campuses. Every one in five women will be sexually assaulted while they are in college. Women should not have to hide in order to prevent their bodies from being violated. The underlying problem of this whole dilemma is the deficient amount of sexual education. Men and women are not properly educated on the concept of consent and sexual assault intervention programs are the key. Having a class that addresses sexual assault and informs individuals about what qualifies them as an offender will change their perspective on sexual assault and rape myths. Many survivors experience victim blaming and ridiculing. The intervention programs will inform students that the victim is never at fault for the incident and should be helped and supported. Education is the key to reducing the amount of sexual assault occurring each year. If people understand the concept of consent, the amount of sexual coercion committed will decrease.
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The African “American Dream”: The Destruction of the Black Wall Street

By: Kollin Brown

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify how and why the government and its policies have continuously destroyed black communities. Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa were self-sufficient communities where blacks had positive economic outcomes. In Tulsa, through racially motivated terrorism, and in Durham, under the guise of “urban renewal”, Black Wall Street was devastated. This destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa resulted in loss of housing, and destruction of businesses throughout the African American community. Because homes in Tulsa and Durham were demolished, families moved farther away from the inner city and their socio economic status has been impacted negatively.

Introduction

In the early 1900’s, former slaves moved to places which promised them a good life. Tulsa and Durham were two great cities that fulfilled their wishes. Tulsa, Oklahoma had an emerging oil industry. Tulsa, the “Oil Capital of the World”, produced $5.28 billion gallons of oil during 1900-1935.21 The Greenwood district, a predominantly black neighborhood in Tulsa, also known as “Little Africa”, thrived on its own resources. Just like in Tulsa, the black community in Durham was self-sufficient and prospering. As a result of the tremendous wealth

and black-owned businesses, these areas were known as Black Wall Street, but all that soon came to an abrupt end.

**Thesis Statement**

The U.S. government aided the destruction of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, through racially motivated terrorism, and in Durham, under the guise of “urban renewal”. This destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa resulted in loss of housing, and destruction of businesses throughout the African American community.

**Research Questions**

1. How did the destruction of Black Wall Street limit African American advancement and change the socio economic status in the Tulsa and Durham communities?
2. Which factors led to the destruction of Black Wall Street?

**Methodology and Literature Review**

Data about this topic was generated through secondary sources. The body of literature used for analysis comes from archival documents, from the Duke University Library database, related to Tulsa, Oklahoma and Durham, North Carolina and African American history. This research adds to the literature by making links between two cities that on the surface seem dissimilar but have a lot in common and as a result, we are able to make recommendations for policy changes that can be instructive for other cities.

**Data Analysis**

**Success of Black Wall Street**

Black Wall Street in Durham created a positive economic outcome for the African American community. The Hayti District, an African American neighborhood, in Durham was the first all-black community to be fully self-sufficient. During the height of its success, Black
Wall Street, home to “the world’s largest Negro business”\textsuperscript{22}, was dubbed as the “Capital of the Black Middle Class.”\textsuperscript{23} In 1890 the valuation of black property in Durham was $8,696. By 1920 the valuation of black property significantly increased to $4,298,067.\textsuperscript{24} During this time blacks in Durham had the highest rates of homeownership and per capita income in America.\textsuperscript{25}

Black Wall Street in Tulsa was a symbol of black wealth, pride, and unity.\textsuperscript{26} The neighborhood of Greenwood supported about 10,000 black residents.\textsuperscript{27} According to 1920 city directories, Greenwood had 108 black businesses including 2 newspapers, 41 groceries and meat markets, 30 restaurants and cafes, and 33 offices for professionals, including 15 physicians and attorneys.\textsuperscript{28} This black community was far more advanced than some white communities in Tulsa. Brandon Weber states, “The schools were superior to those of the white areas, and many of the houses had indoor plumbing before those in the white areas did.”\textsuperscript{29} Due to segregation, Greenwood was” self-sufficient and became home to many black multi-millionaire entrepreneurs. With this growth and success came envy from white Tulsans. Many of the businesses in Greenwood (which they referred to as “Little Africa”) were more prosperous than those in the white community.

Destruction of Black Wall Street

The destruction of Black Wall Street in Tulsa was aided by the government and led to terrorism in the black community. This thriving community of Tulsa came to an end in 1921 due to false accusations of a black elevator operator sexually assaulting a white woman. In Tulsa, along with a mob of angry white men, local white officers armed other white rioters who were denied arms and ammunition at the National Guard Armory. The police chief called all available officers to be dispatched during the riot. Hundreds of white civilians were also appointed as “special deputies” to enforce terror in the Greenwood District. Through the threat of the white mobs, black men in the Greenwood district tried their best to protect their families and property. Blacks were outnumbered and their property was destroyed. Even World War I planes were dispatched, firing shots and dropping fire bombs on the black community.

In Durham, the destruction of Black Wall Street was aided by the government under guise of “Urban Renewal.” Throughout the 1950’s Durham’s population was increasing. City officials were afraid that traffic in Durham would be a problem with the upcoming research triangle park project. The “solution” to this problem was to construct Highway (Hwy) 147, the

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31 Ibid


Durham Freeway, to connect I-40 and I-85 through downtown. In 1962, a bond referendum for the construction of Hwy 147 won voter approval because of the heavy support of three predominantly black precincts. The construction of Hwy 147 began in 1967. The black community was tricked by the government that urban renewal would benefit them. Blacks thought that federal money would be used to renovate housing. But in reality Hwy 147 destroyed the homes and businesses and these new homes were not rebuilt.

Impact on the Black Communities

Almost every home in the Greenwood District of Tulsa was burned down which led to 90% of black residents being homeless. Losing homes is one disastrous effect of the destruction of Black Wall Street, but the loss of life was unimaginable. In Tulsa, an estimated 300 blacks were murdered. Several prominent businessmen and doctors were among the dead. A.C. Jackson, recognized as one of the best surgeons of his time, surrendered to the mob of white men to protect his family but he was killed and nobody was found guilty of his murder. Ironically, the police detained and arrested 6,000 blacks. These blacks would only be released if a white person vouched for them, others were jailed. On the other hand, none of the whites

34 Ibid


36 Ibid


38 Ibid

who murdered blacks and destroyed the Greenwood District were arrested. In total, the Greenwood District’s damage was equivalent to $30 million.

Across the Hayti community of Durham, 4,057 homes and 502 businesses were demolished due to Hwy 147. Because of houses being destroyed, families had to find new places to live, which was usually farther away from the inner city and cost significantly more. The effect of the destruction was bad for the smaller black owned businesses because it moved the consumers away. Fortunately, the larger businesses in Black Wall Street like NC Life Mutual and Mechanics & Farmers Bank could sustain itself due to its wealth.

Bouncing Back

After the destruction of Tulsa in 1921, white leaders in Tulsa didn’t want Greenwood to be rebuilt. Ordinances were passed to keep homes from being rebuilt in Greenwood. The white Tulsans’ plan was to push blacks as far away from downtown as possible. But when African American lawyers won an injunction to stop this from happening, the remaining black citizens rebuilt Greenwood by 1942 without any assistance from the state or insurance companies. Greenwood’s rebuilt district was starting to flourish, until, “urban renewal” efforts in the 1950’s

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41 Ibid
which pushed the majority of blacks out the district and further north. In 2002, the Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry Reparations Gift Fund distributed about $200 to each of the 131 riot survivors. Later in 2004 a federal lawsuit seeking reparations from city and state were dismissed due to statute of limitations. Today there are only a few blocks of land in order to preserve some of Greenwood’s History.

In Durham, history is repeating itself. As new businesses spring up across once African soil, the cost of living is increasing in inner city Durham. Higher rent in Black neighborhoods are pushing families out of their homes and farther away from the inner city. New luxury apartments, “The Lofts at Southside” managed by McCormack Baron are adding fuel to the fire of gentrification. The mission of the property management company says, “Transforming places into communities where all people can thrive.” Their mission statement contradicts what they are actually doing. They transformed a place (a black neighborhood) into a community where only some people (white/wealthier people) can thrive. Through the influx of new housing and new businesses, Durham has changed for the better for wealthier people and changed for the worse for the low income families living in the old Hayti District.

Conclusion


All in all, government policies aided the destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham due to “urban renewal”, and in Tulsa through racially motivated terrorism. The destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa negatively affected the socio economic status of the African American community through loss of housing and destruction of businesses. The black communities in Durham and Tulsa were communities that could last forever on its own resources. This black success would soon come to an end due to racism and the government. The effect on the socio economic status of black people is negative because their housing is either destroyed or rent increases and they have to move out of their homes. The destruction of Black Wall street had a large impact in the destruction of Black wealth overall. This destroyed the black economy and essentially blacks had to start to build their wealth from scratch again. Some possible solutions to this problem are reparations through affordable housing in inner city areas for blacks affected by the destruction of Black Wall Street. Also through giving incentives, as in loans or other funding, for black startup businesses. Some further research that can be done on Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa can be about estimating the wealth of these black communities, if they were not destroyed.
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Struggle to Find Food: The Creation of Food Deserts

By: Ayden Lawrence

Abstract

Despite their recent discovery, food deserts were created from years of systemic racism. Residential segregation forced blacks into disenfranchised neighborhoods, which would eventually limit access to affordable healthy foods. This limited access to healthy foods causes increased rates in diseases, particularly obesity. Obesity is a precedent to many other health diseases like heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, and other health problems. The increased rates of health disease in communities of color has now gained the attention of government leaders and policy makers. The new attention has also provided some solutions to food deserts and the effects they have on people. One of the solutions created by the government is to implement more nutritious foods in stores that accept food stamps, to offer healthier options to those leaving in poorer areas.

Introduction

Although research on food deserts is relatively recent, the development of food deserts can be traced back to the residential segregation of the early 20th century. As a result of this segregation, there was an influx of grocery stores in more high income communities and a scarcity of fresh food access in low income communities of color. The lack of access to healthy foods for the people in these communities would be describe as a food desert. The term “food deserts” was originally used in the United Kingdom to characterize a public housing complex secluded from
any feasible grocery store or supermarket. Without the access to healthy foods communities have to defer to less nutritious foods. This leads to increased rates of obesity and other health complications. The concept of food deserts has since been used by policymakers, government administrators, and researchers to describe urban and rural communities of low-income within the United States without easy access to healthy food.

**Thesis Statement**

Although research on food deserts is relatively recent, the development of food deserts can be traced back to the residential segregation of the early 20th century. By examining the residential segregation of the early 20th century, and harsh government policies it is apparent that government interference has contributed to the creation and ongoing existence of food deserts in urban areas.

**Research Question**

1. How food deserts are created and why do they primarily affect urban communities of color?

2. How does the lack of government interference contribute to the ongoing existence of food deserts in urban areas?

3. What is the government doing to combat the issue of food desert and the effect they have on communities?

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Methodology

The data used in this paper was collected by analysis of several different scholarly research papers. Works like Christopher Silver’s “The Racial Origins of Zoning in American Cities” and New York Law School Racial Justice Project’s report on “How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts” provide a historical context of food deserts that link the creation of food deserts directly to racial zoning policies. These articles clearly state that the zoning laws used to separate white from blacks and other people of color resulted in the creation of disenfranchised slums and ghettos. Many of the works that were reviewed in the process of writing this paper came from Duke’s library and Google Scholar. Both databases provided a numerous amount of creditable works like Laura Wolf-Powers’ "Food Deserts and Real-Estate-Led Social Policy", which gave a powerful insight to the policies contributing to the ongoing existence of food deserts. The extensive research that occurred before writing this paper provided context around the creation of food deserts and how the government is dealing with them now.

Data Analysis

Residential Segregation

The origins of food deserts are not a phenomenon and can be directly traced back to racist government policies of the early 20th century. The development of zoning laws, which are regulations that specify the purposes of zones and can determine the size, height, and bulk of structures, was used to separate white and minority neighborhoods because of the newly created Jim Crow laws. During the early 20th century, cities were granted the ability to regulate the

height, area, and location of public buildings by state legislatures.\textsuperscript{53} State legislatures also gave cities the power to control the use of buildings.\textsuperscript{54} Through this new power gave many cities ability used zoning laws to impose Jim Crow laws, which were laws that required segregation between blacks and white in public schools, public places, and public transportation.\textsuperscript{55} Zoning laws were used to enforce racial segregation in the South.\textsuperscript{56} Southern states used zoning laws to prevent black neighborhoods and businesses from being in the same communities as whites. Zoning laws were able to blatantly segregate people but in 1917 the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial zoning ordinance unconstitutional after the Buchanan v. Warley case.\textsuperscript{57} Regardless of the Supreme Court ruling, the South began to use expulsive zoning, this “occurs when areas in residential use are zoned to allow industrial or commercial uses to encourage the displacement of the existing residents”, in order to control black residents.\textsuperscript{58} This diminished the worth and quality of the land within black neighborhoods, ruining the stability of them. Racial segregation was primarily used in the South, it was also very prevalent in industrial cities in the North and the West.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid
Policies implemented during the 1930s continued the system of residential segregation that would one day create food deserts in low-income areas. The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established in 1933 to help people buy houses by providing low-interest mortgages to those at risk of foreclosure. To make it hard for people of color to obtain loans, the HOLC implemented race-discriminatory criteria into its loaning requirements and “deemed those living in racially or ethnically mixed neighborhoods to be “too risky” for loans.” Other corporations like the Veterans Administration (VA) and Fair Housing Administration (FHA), that were meant to help those affected by the Great Depression, began to use the same racist lending requirements. These lending corporations increased home ownership from 44% in 1934 to 66% in 1964 but these benefits were not accessible to those of color. The U.S. government continued to influence the living patterns into the 50s with the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954. These acts were the first steps in urban renewal that would be in many cities, displacing primarily black neighborhoods and putting those residents in densely populated ghettos. The discriminatory policies would eventually affect employment opportunities, and, finally, the health of those living within a community.

Supermarket Scarcity

Government policies did not only influence racial living patterns but also the accessibility to healthy food for minority communities. In the 50s there was a surge of middle-income whites

62 Ibid
63 Ibid
64 Ibid
leaving urban cities to more rural areas and with them left many business. Grocery stores and other retailers left urban areas to take advantage of the middle income white market. During this shift from urban to rural areas, grocery stores transitioned from being small stores that specialized in one thing like bakeries and meat markets, to being less specialized and able to hold many types of food in one place. Grocery stores in rural areas also became larger and more prevalent due to the relatively cheap lands and the lesser amount of zoning laws and regulations. In urban cities, building grocery stores and supermarkets near communities of color was harder because of commercial redlining, the refusal of insurance and loans to stores located in minority neighborhoods. Grocery stores and supermarkets in these areas that were able to acquire insurance have to deal with higher rates because of the preconceived notions of crime in minority communities. Grocery stores also have a hard time developing in urban cities because policies relating to land use also play a big part to the cost of building supermarkets within cities. Many of these policies are outdated and were used to discourage supermarkets from building in cities, for example “New York City, has large tracts of land that are currently zoned for industrial usage though few industrial businesses remain in New York”. This land could be used to better the community by adding a supermarket to the area, but it has not been used in such a way. Government regulations also discourage inner cities grocery stores by having higher parking requirements where land is scarce. This makes the chance of building and operating a


67 Ibid

68 Ibid
supermarket unlikely. As a result of the many challenges that accompanied the process of building supermarkets in urban cities, people living within inner city food desert primarily have access to convenience stores and smaller grocery stores.\(^{69}\) These smaller stores struggled to provide fresh produce due to lack of space and equipment, so instead these smaller stores sold less fresh produce and more junk foods.

**Effects of Food Deserts**

Without the access to healthy affordable foods, inner city residents had to look to smaller stores to get less available fresh foods. This would lead to high obesity and other health diseases rates within communities of color. People lacking the access to healthy foods, tend to have high caloric diets but low nutritional value, giving to the rise of obesity. Black and Hispanic communities disproportionately suffer from rates of obesity at 45% and 36.8% comparatively higher than the white rate of obesity at 30%.\(^{70}\) Obesity has been linked to a number of different health disease such as Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, various types of cancer, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol among both adults and children. These rates of diseases were much higher in blacks and Hispanic especially to communities living lower income areas compared to whites.\(^{71}\) The counties with higher amounts of residents in food deserts also had higher rates of adult diabetes compared to places with less food deserts.\(^{72}\) Food deserts disproportionately affected communities of color and are a contributing factor to the obesity epidemic by limiting the amount

\(^{69}\) Ibid


\(^{71}\) Ibid

of healthy foods that can be obtain, but in recent years the U.S government has implemented a few policies to combat the issue of food deserts.

**Policies Combating the Issue**

Policymakers acknowledge that food access issues comparatively affect more minority, low income communities than middle and high income, white communities. This has led to the creation of multiple policies to help resolve the issue. The 2014 Farm Bill required USDA to develop regulations to ensure that stores that accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) offer larger inventory and variety of healthy food options.73 This bill made it mandatory for SNAP retailers to offer seven varieties of qualifying foods in four staple food groups for sale on a continuous basis.74 The four staple food groups include foods like dairy products, grains, meats, and fruits and vegetables.75 These contribute to a balanced diet and are a much better high caloric diet. Another way the government is trying to get rid of food deserts is through federal funding. To help create sustainable food ecosystems, the USDA has made $31.5 million in grants available to programs nationwide in an effort to connect low-income populations to fresh food options through incentive strategies.76 The USDA also manages the Women, Infants and Children Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program also called “WIC”, gives supplemental foods, healthcare referrals and nutrition education for free to low-income pregnant and new mothers, as well as

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75 Ibid

infants up to 5 years old. This are good efforts but do not do enough to solve to solve the issue of food deserts because there are only limited to women and young children not to snap recipients. Roughly 23.5 million people live in food deserts but only 8 million women and infants are cover by WIC, the problem with this is that WIC is not permanent and will eventually end and the recipients will have to return to foods high in sugar and sodium.

**Conclusion**

Food deserts are one of the factors that contributes to the rise of obesity. Presently the government is implementing ineffective solutions such as WIC and the 2014 Farm Bill. These government efforts are not effective because they do not help those being affected by food deserts and they do not address any of the racist policies that have led to the creation and sustainability of food deserts. These racist ideals have influenced the use of zoning laws to segregate people and displace blacks in poorer areas. The only true solution to the problem is to dismantle the structures that have created them.

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77 Ibid
Bibliography


The Achievement Gradient: The Effects of Colorism on Student Achievement in K-12 Education

By: Akanke Mason-Hogans

Abstract

In classrooms in America, dark-skinned students are suffering. Educational institutions act as microcosms of a wider colorist society, and just as darker skinned individuals face everyday inequities, they also face unequal educational experiences. Darker skinned students of color get suspended and expelled at higher rates and perform at a lower level than their lighter complexioned peers. While racism is strongly linked to educational inequalities, colorism additionally affects students’ educational experiences through disparate suspension rates, teacher biases, and academic performances in K-12 schools.79

Introduction

Background

Across centuries, lighter skin functions as an indicator of comparative wealth, high status, and beauty for virtually all communities. For Africans and African Americans, this preference dates to colonialism in Africa as well as the abuse that stems from slavery.80 For Latinos, it stems from the desire to look phenotypically closer to the Spanish conquistadors and further from the slaves brought to Latin America during the African diaspora.81


81 ibid
In many Asian communities, lighter skin was indicative of an individual belonging to the “leisure class”, or being wealthy enough not to have to work long hours in the sun, thereby avoiding a suntan and maintaining relatively pale skin.\(^8^2\) Although there are different causes of skin tone discrimination geographically, a universal condition is individuals with typically European features are viewed as the ideal.

Individuals with lighter skin, small, straight noses, lighter colored eyes, and looser or less coarse hair textures are perceived as superior within their communities in terms of beauty, friendliness, and intellectual aptitude.\(^8^3\) These individuals’ closer proximity to whiteness, while it typically did not grant them full white privilege, allowed them to acquire advantages such as better housing, work, educational opportunity, and in the case of the enslaved, sometimes freedom.\(^8^4\) The idea of a superior/inferior dynamic between lighter and darker skinned individuals within the same racial group has been passed down through generations and, unfortunately, many people still believe that proximity to whiteness indicates a person’s aptitude today.\(^8^5\)

Colorism is a form of racism that produces discrimination within a social group on the basis of skin tone. More often than not, those who face the brunt of colorism are those who bear

\(^{8^2}\) Ibid

\(^{8^3}\) Elmore, Tyhesha Goss. "Colorism in the classroom: An Exploration of Adolescents' Skin Tone, Skin Tone Preferences, Perceptions of Skin Tone Stigma and Identity." (2009).


features that are most distant from Eurocentric standards of attractiveness, like persons with
darker complexions in African American communities and monolids in Asian American
communities. Unfortunately, many of these individuals resort to altering their appearance via
skin lightening creams and other body modification.\textsuperscript{86}

Colorism affects people in almost every aspect of life, particularly via their educational
experiences. Darker skinned people of color often face a disadvantage when it comes to
receiving quality education since educators have biases in the way they see and interact with
their students.\textsuperscript{87} Darker skinned students are penalized both in terms of their academic
performance and in the ways in which they are punished.\textsuperscript{88}

In discussions about inequities in schools, a student’s race, gender, and socioeconomic
class are all factors that are commonly used to measure whatever disparities exist that have an
influence on his or her overall educational experience. However, colorism is frequently
overlooked as a cause of educational inequity. Despite the fact that it receives less attention, the
little research that has been done on colorism shows a stark difference between the educational
outcomes of lighter skinned students and darker skinned students of the same race. For example,
dark-skinned black males are 10.3\% more likely to drop out of high school than light-skinned
black males.\textsuperscript{89} Many dark-skinned students dropout of school because they are pushed out of the

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\textsuperscript{87} Ibid

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid

\textsuperscript{89} The Gray Area: High School Dropout Likelihood among Skin Tone Levels of Black Males.
Steps need to be taken in order to correct the colorist norms in the American education system. In America, every student is supposed to be entitled to an equal and fair education. However, because of colorist systems of oppression, these students are not afforded the same opportunities. Students with darker skin are often traumatized by the abuse they face by their peers, and should not have to endure that same (and likely more traumatizing) abuse from their instructors, who are supposed to help them.

**Thesis Statement:**

Colorism negatively impacts the discipline and achievement outcomes of students of color. While racism has been frequently linked to educational inequalities, colorism also affects students’ educational experiences through disparate suspension rates, teacher biases, and academic performances in K-12 schools.

**Research Questions:**

- How does colorism impact the discipline and achievement outcomes of students of color in K-12 schools?
  - What is the importance of positive teacher-student interactions to student learning outcomes, and how does colorism impact teacher biases?
  - What role do other forms of discrimination, like classism and educational inequity, play in worsening the effects of colorism?
  - What can be done to lessen the impacts of colorism in the classroom?

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90 ibid
Terminology

- Colorism, which has many definitions, can be described as the discrimination of individuals within the same race based on skin tone and other phenotypic features related to ethnic origin.

- Academic achievement is something that is difficult to measure. In this paper, concrete measures like GPA, graduation rates, level of educational attainment, and test scores are factors used to define achievement.

- In this paper, discipline refers to how likely a student is to be sent out of the classroom, suspended, or expelled.

- Phenotypic features technically include all observable expressions of genes, but in this paper, the term will refer to features typically associated with ethnic origin (like nose shape, eye color, hair color/texture, skin tone, etc).

- Educational attainment refers to the highest level of formal education a person has attained.

- The color line was a term popularized by W.E.B. DuBois and referred to the discrimination coming from the differentiation (or “line”) between blacks and whites in the twentieth century. Many scholars claim that the color line is blurring, as a result of the increase in multiracial people and other ethnic minorities. When the color line blurs, colorism becomes a bigger issue.

Methodology/ Literature Review

The conclusions in this essay are drawn from studies of both quantitative and qualitative nature, found from the Duke Library database. The general trends of the psychological effects of
colorism, as well as students’ self-perceived experience with colorism were found by an analysis of the most recent National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Other studies were consulted for background information on the history and concept of colorism like “Race and Colorism in Education”, “Histories of Colorism and Implications for Education”, and “Colorism in the Classroom: An Exploration of Adolescents’ Skin Tone, Skin Tone Preferences, Perception of Skin Tone Stigma and Identity”.

In order to obtain statistics about discipline rates as they affect youth of color, specifically black youth, sources such as “The Gray Area: High School Dropout Likelihood Among Skin Tone Levels of Black Males”, “The Relationship Between Skin Tone And Suspension for African Americans”, and “The Role of Colorism in Explaining African American Females’ Suspension Risk” were utilized. In order to find the effect of teacher biases, negative teacher-student interactions, and colorism coming from educators, sources like “Race and Colorism in Education” “Race, Skin Tone, and Educational Achievement”, and “Colorism as a Salient Space for Understanding in Teacher Preparation” were consulted. “Race and Colorism in Education” also served to make connections and illustrate the impact of teacher biases and students’ interactions with peers on academic performance, as well as overall educational experience.

Many sources were consulted for this essay, but the following is a review of relevant literature that has already been done on the topic. One of the sources that was used to acquire background knowledge was “Colorism and Educational Outcomes of Asian Americans: Evidence From the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.” In this source, Ryabov studied the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, which is a questionnaire made to
record information on developing adolescents. This source gave background in terms of the historical context for colorism, as well as information on the levels of educational attainment among Asian Americans across skin tone. “Race, Skin Tone, and Educational Achievement” is a book that references factors like teachers expectations of students based on their phenotypic characteristics (and introduces something called the pygmalion effect) and emphasizes the importance of positive teacher-student interactions. “The Relationship Between Skin Tone and School Suspension for African Americans” and “The Role of Colorism in Explaining African American Females’ Suspensions Risk” provided concrete evidence that those individuals born with darker skin suffer a lesser educational experience due to the prejudices of those in charge (instructors, administrators, etc).

**Data Analysis**

As aforementioned, colorist attitudes are so deeply ingrained in our society that they influence everyone in almost every aspect of life. Those with darker skin encounter a deficit because most are perceived as less attractive and intelligent and even as sub-human. This creates a potent disadvantage in the school environment. This paper will explore the evidence of an unfair educational experience received by darker skinned students across races, and will also explore possible equitable solutions.

**Instructor Bias:**

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91 Elmore, Tyhesha Goss. "Colorism in the classroom: An Exploration of Adolescents' Skin Tone, Skin Tone Preferences, Perceptions of Skin Tone Stigma and Identity." (2009).
Educators are people, and like virtually everyone else in our global society, have internalized some form of colorism.\(^{92}\) That has an impact on their students. Because of Europeanized standards of beauty, those who have darker skin are typically viewed by others as less attractive, because they do not fit the ideal of what is typically referred by popular society.\(^{93}\) Research shows that teachers also use a student’s perceived attractiveness to determine a their aptitude.\(^{94}\) Teachers expect their “more attractive” students to achieve more academically and be more well behaved than their “unattractive” students, who they see as “less intelligent, loud, ill-mannered, and disagreeable”.\(^{95}\) Students who are perceived in a negative way by their teachers are less likely to succeed in their academic endeavors.\(^{96}\) If instructors have negative perceptions of their students, it shows in their students’ performance.

Because of self-fulfilling prophecies, it’s important for instructors to recognize and work against any implicit biases they may have in order to avoid gaps in student achievement. There is a phenomenon called the Pygmalion effect that deals with self-fulfilling prophecies in education.


\(^{95}\) Ibid

\(^{96}\) Ibid
If an instructor holds positive attitudes and high expectations of a student, the student is more likely to perform on a higher level.\textsuperscript{98}

However, if the opposite is true and an instructor has negative attitudes and low expectations of a student, the student will not perform at their highest potential.\textsuperscript{99} That is why it is imperative that educators have strong expectations about their students’ abilities; it is also imperative that they do not allow those expectations to be biased by students with darker skin tones have lower grade point averages, across race.

Educators may believe that darker skin is indicative of lower academic aptitude.\textsuperscript{100} These biases, whether overt or covert, whether conscious or subconscious, must be recognized and addressed on a large level in order to rectify the position that dark skinned students are in now.


\textsuperscript{99} Ibid

\textsuperscript{100} "Race and Colorism in Education." 2016. doi:10.4324/9781315746227.
There are pushes for an incorporation of anti-racism trainings, gender equity trainings, and some trainings to help with LGBTQ students in teacher education.\textsuperscript{101} However, there is not enough discussion about the possible incorporation of anti-colorist training in American schools. Trainings like those proposed in “Colorism in Education” are necessary in rectifying damage done by colorism in schools.\textsuperscript{102}

**Academic Performance:**

The self-perceptions, peer perceptions, and teacher perceptions of darker skinned students of color all ultimately impact a student’s academic performance. There is already research to determine how positive teacher-student interactions have a positive impact on academic performance, how negative teacher-student interactions have a negative impact on academic performance, and how teacher biases against their darker-skinned pupils have a negative impact on their academic performance.\textsuperscript{103} However, how strong is the impact of the social interactions of students on their academic performance (again, in this paper, performance is measured by a student’s GPA, test scores, educational attainment levels, and graduation rates of a population)? The general consensus in the research community is that adolescents with darker complexions often suffer from bullying and teasing from their peers (and sometimes even their parents), and because of the way they are devalued in society, those with darker skin are more likely to suffer from poor self-esteem and a negative self-image.\textsuperscript{104} We know that darker skinned students of

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\textsuperscript{101} Ibid

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid


\textsuperscript{104} Elmore, Tyhesha Goss. “Colorism in the classroom: An Exploration of Adolescents' Skin Tone, Skin Tone Preferences, Perceptions of Skin Tone Stigma and Identity.” (2009).
color suffer from lower self-esteem than their lighter classmates, and we know that students with low self-esteem are more likely to perform at a lower level, so why is there so little research on the impact of colorism on student learning outcomes and overall academic performance?\textsuperscript{105} There must be a correlation. If a student does not feel supported, he/she will not be able to perform at his/her highest potential.

Darker skinned students consistently have lower GPAs and test scores, as well as higher dropout rates.\textsuperscript{106} According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Asian American students with darker skin have higher high school dropout rates than lighter skin Asian Americans, and they also have lower overall levels of educational attainment.\textsuperscript{107} The same trend is true when studying a group of darker Latino American students and lighter (or white) Latino American students, and is also present in the African American community.\textsuperscript{108} Across race, darker skinned students have lower performance levels - lower GPAs, lower test scores, and lower graduation rates.\textsuperscript{109} This could be because the teachers have biases against dark skin, causing students to be evaluated harsher, punished more severely, and more likely to be kicked


out of the classroom and miss instructional time, making them more susceptible to the faults of the educational system.\textsuperscript{110} Additionally, darker skinned people are more likely to have low incomes and be disadvantaged in terms of jobs and housing, so there are a variety of factors that could influence their performance.\textsuperscript{111} If someone is distracted by a tough personal life, they are less likely to make school a priority and perform at their highest potential. The weight of discrimination faced by these students contributes to an even larger gap in achievement.

\textbf{Discipline Outcomes:}

Many educators, especially non-black ones, have a tendency to equate dark skin with aggressiveness, and are harsher with their discipline of their dark-skinned students.\textsuperscript{112} If an instructor holds bias against a group of students because they perceive them to be less intelligent, poorly behaved, and loud, then they will see those students as disruptions, and will be more likely to send them out of the classroom when it is not necessary.\textsuperscript{113} Rather than deal with the behavioral issue and treat the student like a pupil, the teacher would rather treat the student like a nuisance.\textsuperscript{114} When students are sent out of the classroom unnecessarily, it causes them to miss out

\begin{thebibliography}{99}

\bibitem{110} ibid
\bibitem{113} Ibid
\bibitem{114} Ibid
\end{thebibliography}
on instructional time. The same is true for suspension and expulsion rates. Dark skinned black females are three times more likely to be suspended than their light skinned classmates.\textsuperscript{115}

Dark skinned black males are 10.3\% more likely to be suspended than their light skinned classmates (who are actually less likely to get suspended than their white classmates).\textsuperscript{116} If a teacher shows significant is towards one student (or type of student), then those who are not a


part of that population will be at a deficit when it comes to evaluations.\textsuperscript{117} Not only classroom teachers hold colorist biases, but those administrators who decide if someone is suspended or expelled are also affected by this perception that white is the ideal. There is a problem with the disparate discipline of darker skinned students that can only be solved with anti-colorism training for educators.

The skewed perception of dark-skinned students leads educators to suspend and expel them at alarming rates.\textsuperscript{118} There is no evidence that darker skinned students are more badly behaved than lighter skinned students, nor is there any evidence that they are more delinquent in the activities they participate in. The issue does not lie within the students, but it lies within the educators who decide their fate. When a student is suspended, expelled, or sent out of the classroom, they miss valuable instructional time. It’s important to note that, because the majority of teachers are white females, colorism is not just an intra-racial phenomenon. Colorist ideologies are present in all communities, and nonblack educators are equally as susceptible to perpetuate the inequality.\textsuperscript{119}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Because of colorism, darker skinned students incur a deficit in terms of their teacher relationships, academic performance, and discipline outcomes in schools. Darker skinned people, whether they are African American, Latino, or Asian American, face lesser academic outcomes


\textsuperscript{118} Ibid

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid
than their lighter skinned counterparts.\textsuperscript{120} They are consistently punished more harshly and more often, not favored by teachers, and perform lower academically in terms of GPA and graduation rates. Educational inequality is just one of many penalties faced by darker skinned individuals in a colorist society. Since colorism creates obstacles for children obtaining a fair and high quality educational experience, steps should be taken to rectify it. Trainings for anti-colorism should be implemented for all educators, so that instructors can be aware of any implicit biases they may have and work against them to provide an equitable situation for all students.\textsuperscript{121} This solution would be anti-colorism training for educators to become aware of their biases and work against them.

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Today and Tomorrow Beyond Bars: Mental Health within American Prisons and Jails
By: Sandra Santillan

Abstract

Numerous gaps within mental illness studies exist, which prevent the full understanding of mental illness diagnosis associated with incarceration and parental incarceration. This paper aims to bridge key gaps and bring a better understanding of the link between incarceration and mental illness. Findings from numerous scholarly findings alongside data on mental illness within prison population and childhood illness are used to synthesize conclusions on key issues. Conclusions from key findings and those found within the paper highlight the need for comprehensive care within and outside of prisons, and the need for additional analysis on the impact of parental incarceration.

Introduction

At the end of 2017, approximately 1,489,600 inmates made up the population within state and federal prisons. Overall rates of incarceration and mental illness point to a greater problem, “Nearly 15 percent of men and 30 percent of women booked into jails have a serious mental health condition.” Mental illnesses are defined as conditions that, “affect a person’s thinking, feeling, mood or behavior, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.” Mental illnesses may be short or long term, lasting from six months to several

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years. Mental health institutions, where most of the mentally ill population would traditionally reside, have been disappearing for decades. It is important, therefore, to determine if there is a link between the lack of mental health services and the increasing prevalence of mental illness within the criminal population. Many point to deinstitutionalization as a contributing factor to the growing mental health crisis. The concept of deinstitutionalization refers to the closing down of large, state-run mental institutions in order to move severely ill patients out.

Deinstitutionalization began in 1955 with the introduction of antipsychotic drugs, pushed forward ten years later with the enactment of Medicare and Medicaid. The mental health care crisis evolved from an absence of comprehensive, humane care for those afflicted with mental illnesses. In short, the lack of comprehensive mental health care today has pushed thousands behind bars.

The statistics behind the mental health crisis paint a grisly picture. According to a study done by the University of Chicago, half of the population within state and federal prison and 60 percent of jail inmates reported a mental illness. Inmates diagnosed with a mental illness are often exposed to increasing violence, cruelty, and victimization. Mental illness jeopardizes the well-being, future and family of those afflicted.


**Thesis Statement**

The lack of mental health care has influenced the surge in mental illness within the U.S. criminal justice system. The link between mental health and incarceration contributes to an ongoing cycle that results in trauma and recidivism.

**Research Questions**

How does incarceration alter mental health and what results from subsequent mental illness?

What are the impacts of parental incarceration on children and how does it contribute to the cycle of incarceration?

**Methodology and Literature Review**

Current information about mental illness within the U.S. criminal justice system was gathered through numerous scholarly articles. Secondary source data was generated through the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Vera Institute of Justice, among others. Researchers within the field argue that comprehensive treatment for mental illnesses must be widely available in order to counteract the effects of the mental health crisis. Researchers, such as James Wilson and Peter Woods in the Journal of Criminal Justice, mention a disconnect within prisons in terms of accurate diagnosis, reporting, and treatment. In some instances, mental illness was under or over reported within the criminal populations. Although many dispute the accuracy or scope of data on mental illness, the data available can be used to come to a reasonable conclusion on the impact of mental illness.

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Data Analysis

Understanding the origins of the mental health care crisis is key to alleviating the substance abuse, violence and illness Americans face today. Mental illness, to a certain degree, has impacted millions throughout history. In alleviating crises caused by mental illness, issues of medical and humane treatment have been widely scrutinized. Prior to the development of mental institutions people with mental illnesses were treated by family members, but in extreme cases they were sent to jail. In the mid 1700s, Quakers began creating institutions where people with mental illnesses could be treated and by 1890, every state had at least one publicly supported institution. Deinstitutionalization launched a new era of mental health care with the development of new psychotic drugs and government-sponsored health care. Expansions of Medicare and Medicaid were unsuccessful due to lack of appropriate funds, reducing coverage for those troubled by mental illness. Deinstitutionalization ultimately led to the dismissal of mental illness within the public consciousness and a growing stigma around it. Understanding the encompassing crisis within prisons as a result of deinstitutionalization and lack of mental health services is the key to creating comprehensive systems of diagnosis and treatment. The mental health crisis is a manifestation of deinstitutionalization dating back to the 1950’s. A lack of mental health inpatient services and the stigma around mental health treatment has resulted in a modern day mental health crisis. According to research from 2012, “there were estimated to be 5


356,268 inmates with severe mental illness in prisons and jails. There were also approximately 35,000 patients with severe mental illness in state psychiatric hospitals.”

Elevated risk and deterioration of mental illness within prisons and jails

Incarceration results in exacerbation of pre-existing mental illness in inmates. Inmates with mental illnesses are often subjected to harsh treatment within prison settings. Prisoners with pre-existing conditions are “at increased risk of all-cause mortality, suicide, self-harm, violence, and victimization.” Imprisonment is associated with emotional reaction, such as anxiety, and multiple incarceration elicit stronger emotional reaction, putting the afflicted at elevated risks of major injury or death. Mental illness impact inmates as they develop throughout their time in prison and after release. Inmates have, “disproportionately high levels of various mental health issues such as depression and antisocial personality disorders and post-release many inmates have a high rate of psychiatric disorders that may have gone undiagnosed.” Inmates afflicted with mental illnesses inadvertently feed into the vicious cycle of mass incarceration.

Inmates without pre-diagnosed conditions have an elevated risk of mental disorder development due to the way inmates are subjected to a wide array of harsh treatment, isolation, violence, and substance abuse within prisons. As a result of the brutal environment of prisons, inmates without pre-existing conditions are often mentally compromised. Often treated and


regarded as animals, inmates are subject to a barrage of mental traumas. As a result of degrading punishment, inhuman treatment, and routines of isolation within prisons research shows that prisoners have higher rates of mental disorders and, in some countries, there are higher concentrations of the mentally ill within prisons than in psychiatric hospitals.137

Mental illness within the criminal system and recidivism

Recidivism is defined as the tendency of a previously convicted criminal to be reintroduced to the criminal justice system.138 Mental illness is a contributing factor towards recidivism and the criminality of mental illnesses. Studies show that those with pre-existing mental illnesses are more likely to be previous offenders, and within the criminal justice system people with mental illnesses are more vulnerable than those without.139 Increased run-ins with the law for those already afflicted by mental illness means a growing deterioration of mental health overall. The cycle of criminal mental illness continues to snowball well into modern society. Understanding the development of mental illnesses is an important target in avoiding the introduction of people with pre-existing conditions into prisons and jails. Comprehensive diagnosis and treatment are key elements missing within the criminal justice system in order to dent increasing rates of mental illness among inmates and recidivism.

Prisons are meant to serve as areas of confinement or rehabilitation for the most dangerous within society. Instead, they are holding grounds for our most vulnerable,


disadvantaged populations. Recent reports by the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicate that half, at least 1 million, of the prison population have suffered from at least one mental illness.\textsuperscript{140} Studies show there is an, “intersection between childhood conditions, criminal offending, and psychiatric disorders” resulting in a relationship between incarceration and mental illness. A relationship that stems from childhood traumas, relationships, and early substance abuse.\textsuperscript{141} Early instances of mental illness increase the likelihood of incarceration and recidivism among those afflicted. A detrimental link between mental illness and re-offense continues the incarceration cycle of violence, substance abuse, and declining mental health.

**Parental incarceration, mental impact, and the cycle of incarceration**

The impact of incarceration goes beyond the bars of prison. The relationships of those incarcerated are hit by various traumas that feed into the cycle of the mental health and incarceration crises. In the United States there are approximately 1.9 million children with parents in prison. A more comprehensive analysis needs to be available to assess the impact of incarceration on parental relationships.\textsuperscript{142} Current studies suggest, “underlying mechanisms that link parental incarceration history to poor outcomes in offspring may include the lack of safe, stable, nurturing relationships and exposure to violence.”\textsuperscript{143} Exposure to violence, substance abuse, and an absence of parental figures often results in lasting mental or behavioral issues.


Parental incarceration creates a rift within the building block of human interaction, intensifying the effects of mental illness and an increased likelihood of incarceration. “Results indicate that adolescents with incarcerated parents are at elevated risk for mental health problems, and strong parent-child relationships partially buffer children from risk.”144 Children who suffered from paternal incarceration were at increased odds of suffering from depression, PTSD, asthma, anxiety, among other illnesses. Children suffering from maternal incarceration reported higher rates of depression.145 Children, the most vulnerable and unpredictable, suffer greatly from the emotional trauma of having an incarcerated parent. Parents are incarcerated, children suffer through some of the many consequences, and the children potentially find themselves in the cycle of incarceration.

**Conclusion**

The American criminal justice system has seen a dramatic rise in mental illness rates within prisons due to the widespread lack of mental health care services. The early relationship between mental illness and incarceration, time in prison elevating the risk of mental illness and worsening pre-existing conditions, and a multi-generational impact within give conditions fuels recidivism and the criminality of mental illnesses. America manufactures its own downfalls; mass incarceration and mental health crises which contribute to a cycle of continued crime and recidivism. The mental health crisis is a symptom of the poor American system. Children and adults alike are being introduced into a system that crushes mental wellness. Mental health care should move away from systems of mass holdings and widespread approaches. Systems of


diagnosis and treatment within prisons and jails which allow for effective change should be implemented. Reducing the proportions of the mentally ill within prisons and jails, increasing intervention practices, and increasing research on the complexity and impact of mental illness and incarceration are key steps in understanding and minimizing subsequent impact arising from mental illness.
Bibliography


Examining the Fast Food Industry and its Effects on Food Swamps

By: Jenny Uba

Abstract

Even though restaurants in the fast food industry are transforming their menus and culture to appeal to different diets, this solution has proven to be ineffective in countering the negative health effects of foods swamps. As fast food restaurants are changing their menus to selections that they state are healthier like salads, grilled chicken wraps or burrito bowls, this method of providing alternative healthier choices does not resolve the issue of people’s unhealthy eating habits due to the fact that some of the foods that appear healthier have the same or more calories as the unhealthy foods. Most food options like salads, which are considered healthy actually contain more calories than the standard Big Mac from McDonald's. A different solution to the problem could be implementing gardens or farmers markets in communities that are considered food swamps.

Introduction

Food insecurity is an issue many face in America, and living in a food swamp can be part of the problem. Food swamps are areas with an abundance of fast food, relative to healthier food options. Many people living in food swamps are minorities and those with low-income. People are also consuming a lot of fast food, since that is what generally surrounds them. The problem with Americans consuming fast food is that too much of it can cause obesity, diabetes, and even heart disease. Many areas in the U.S. are designated as food deserts because they lack supermarkets filled with affordable and nutritious food, as well as food swamps which have an
abundance of fast food. While food swamps have access to healthy food retail, they also contain unhealthy foods and an abundance of fast food restaurants. Studies and research show that the presence of food swamps are stronger predictors of obesity rates than the absence of full-service grocery stores. Due to the bad health effects of food swamps which include, obesity, diabetes and heart disease, Americans are seeking alternative food options. People are advocating for healthier meals in school, healthier food selections in restaurants, as well as more food choices for vegans and vegetarians to choose from. If these solutions are proven effective then a decline in the rates of obesity and diabetes among people living in these communities should be evident.

Low-income areas or communities are usually found in these circumstances, where close neighborhood stores containing healthy food are absent. Not only do people have unhealthy food and find it problematic to access supermarkets, but the food that is available can also be costly. Due to these high prices people have to leave the area just to shop for cheaper prices. In addition, some low-income residents lack the necessary transportation to access supermarkets where they can purchase affordable, fresh groceries. According to the article ‘Access to Affordable, Nutritious Food is Limited in “Food Deserts”’ by Michelle Ver Ploeg, “Just over half of all people in low-income neighborhoods have incomes that are below 200 percent of the

147 Ibid.
5 Ibid. 6, Ibid.  Ibid.
Federal poverty level. Thus, 11.5 million people, or 4.1 percent of the U.S. population, have low incomes and live in low-income neighborhoods that are more than a mile from a supermarket.\(^\text{149}\)

**Thesis Statement**

Although restaurants in the fast food industry are transforming their menus and culture to appeal to different diets, this solution has proven to be ineffective in countering the negative health effects of foods swamps.

**Research Question**

Has the transformation of the fast food industry positively affected health outcomes of people living in food swamps?

**Terminology**

- Food Desert: Geographic areas that have limited access to healthy food. \(^\text{150}\)
- Food Swamp: A geographical area with adequate access to healthy food retail, but that also features an overabundance of exposure to less healthy food and beverages. \(^\text{151}\)

**Methodology and Literature Review**

The data gathered in this paper was generated through secondary sources. The bodies of literature used for analysis in this paper are related to health and food industrial/organizational structure. This paper fills a gap in the literature by shedding new light on the ineffectiveness of


\(^\text{151}\) Ibid.
the fast food industry and food swamps, as well as introducing new solutions that are more adequate in addressing the needs of people living in these areas.

Limitations of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine caloric intake as a measurement for investigating unhealthy diets. The author recognizes there are other negative outcomes to an unhealthy diet such as high sodium or increased amounts of starches that correlate to high blood pressure, heart attacks and other health problems. These additional areas can be examined in future research.

Data Analysis

Do Healthier Menus Make a Difference?

Lacking healthy food options can lead to health problems such as obesity and diabetes. Americans used to cook more meals at home, whereas now they purchase half of their meals already made. Not only is that an issue but Americans are overeating or eating too much of the same foods which causes numerous health concerns including heart disease. Fast food restaurants are altering their menus to selections that they state are healthier like salads, grilled chicken wraps or burrito bowls. Nonetheless, this method of providing alternative healthier choices is not effective because some of the foods that appear healthier have the same caloric intake as the unhealthy foods, if not more. For example the Red Robin Crispy Chicken Tender Salad contains 1,348 calories per serving whereas a Big Mac from McDonalds usually contains around 530 calories according to the information provided by the Graphiq and healthgrove.com.

In addition, people tend to indulge in foods they believe are healthy thus overeating and not exercising portion control which is part of a healthy weight management lifestyle.

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People are now purchasing healthier fast food options however there is no decline in the rate of obesity and diabetes. It is easy to blame Americans for their unhealthy eating habits, such as indulging in fast food for example, however that is all they have to eat if it is the only thing around. As stated in “Fast Food Industry Analysis 2018 - Cost & Trends”, “There are over 200,000 fast food restaurants in the United States and it is estimated that 50 million Americans eat at one of them every single day”. And the fast food industry is also expected to grow by 2.5% in years to come. Since those living in food swamps are encompassed by fast food restaurants, and do not have healthier food options to choose from, many advocate to altering the menus to healthier options as a solution to the problem. Healthier food options include foods that have more nutritional value than caloric intake. Instead of eliminating all the bad fast food options, they could be replaced with healthier ones. Although, information in nutrition labels from healthgrove.com shows that the healthy food choices like salads that are being replaced with burgers still contain the same or higher amounts of calories even though it has greater nutritional value. Overall, healthy food options that are being replaced with unhealthy ones still have the same or a greater caloric intake.

Companies are adding healthier food options due to health issues linked to eating fast food

It is no secret that the consumption of unhealthy meals, comparable to fast foods, has adverse effects linked to health concerns such as obesity and diabetes. Companies are improving

154 Ibid

their menus due to various reasons, one being the decline of consumers consumption of eating fast food due to the health issues linked to them.155 As stated in the article “5 Fast-Food Trends Transforming 2016 (#3 May Raise Concerns)” published in the ‘Alternative Daily’, “Many fast-food restaurants made a commitment to begin using cage-free eggs in five to 10 years; some became GMO-free, and a few pledged to use antibiotic-free poultry products. Taco Bell vowed to go “all-natural,” and McDonald’s recently opened a new concept restaurant in Hong Kong called McDonald’s Next, offering quinoa side salads and asparagus burger toppings, according to news reports.”16 Companies are making an effort to resolve the issue in order to prevent the decline in sales. Not only is the fast food industry improving their menus but restaurants are also improving their marketing and technology too. A new tech-savvy trend allows customers to order food using a mobile system. (Which also allows companies to access more customer information).17 Mobile apps are transforming the fast food industry. In general unhealthy food consumption leads to dietary health problems and tech-savvy trends allows customers to order food using mobile systems.

Also, fast food restaurants have added diversity to their food including Chinese, or Hawaiian to their menus, taking vegans and vegetarians into consideration as well. As mentioned in the article “The Radical Evolution of the Fast Food Industry”, “Fast foods have broadened their menus to include Chinese, Mexican, traditional, American, and Hawaiian foods. Also, this diversity has been expanded to include the type of foods served... These levels of diversity have been replicated across the board to ensure that the food joints are inclusive for everybody, vegetarians and non-vegans alike.”18

Potential Solutions

Part of the reason for people’s unhealthy dietary choices is due to the fact that people uneducated about the outcomes certain foods have on their health. It is important for people to know the downsides of consuming certain foods in order for them to make their own decisions on whether or not they should be eating these food. People should always keep in mind of the calories they are consuming whether or not they are dining at a healthy restaurant, because some healthy food choices can contain many calories. The government should play a role in establishing gardens and farmers markets in these communities instead of approving the installment of new fast food restaurants. Small steps like these are important in bettering and advancing these communities for the better.

Conclusion

The misconception that altering fast food menus to seemingly healthier options improves the health outcomes of people is common. The method of seeking healthier food choices in order to be less prone to health problems is not effective because the foods that are considered healthy often have more or the same caloric intake as the unhealthy foods. Americans suffer from poor nutrition because they have limited access to good food. Encountered with unhealthy diet choices, such as fast food and convenience food in corner stores, and with minimal markets
offering fresh fruit and vegetables, the poor end up eating a less healthy diet. People living in communities of low income continuously experience higher rates of obesity due to the availability and affordability of calorically dense and nutritionally deficient foods resulting from the food deserts and food swamps that affect these neighborhoods. Research shows the presence of food swamps are stronger predictors of obesity rates than the absence of full-service grocery stores. The lack of good supermarkets around neighborhoods leads to poor overall health and various health issues including obesity, diabetes, and even heart disease. Especially to minorities and families living in low-income because that certain community is generally affected by food swamps. This is an important matter because people should not feel vulnerable because of the circumstances they are in, such as living in a food swamp. Those living in food swamps are surrounded by fast food restaurants and are limited to nearby grocery stores that supply relative food options such as fresh produce. For future research, additional explorations of these topics should be necessary in order to resolve the problem, such as educating people on the foods they eat and implementing gardens and farmers markets in communities.
Bibliography


