



THE
SAMUEL DUBOIS COOK
CENTER ON SOCIAL EQUITY

**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 Billye 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



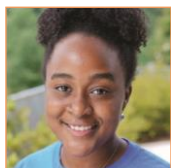
Kollin Brown is a rising senior at Hillside High School, where he held a conference about Social Equity for students in Durham Public Schools. Kollin has done research about housing Inequities. Watching Durham and Chicago firsthand, change over the years through gentrification has inspired him to do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



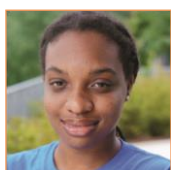
Akanke Mason-Hogans is a rising senior at Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School, and is a 3rd year student in the Aaron Young Scholars program. She has a passion for creative expression, social justice, and pepperoni pizza, and hopes to empower others through her research and advocacy. Akanke 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.

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 living 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.⁵¹ 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?

⁵¹ "How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts." *UNSHARED BOUNTY*, June 2012, 5-31. Accessed July 19, 2018. doi:10.18411/d-2016-154.

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.⁵² During the early 20th century, cities were granted the ability to regulate the

⁵² Investopedia, Staff. "Zoning Ordinance." Investopedia. July 13, 2018. Accessed July 25, 2018. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/z/zoning-ordinance.asp>

height, area, and location of public buildings by state legislatures.⁵³ State legislatures also gave cities the power to control the use of buildings.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.⁵⁵ Zoning laws were used to enforce racial segregation in the South.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.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.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.⁵⁹

⁵³ Christopher Silver, "PDF-Grundlagen," *PDF Bibliothek Der Mediengestaltung*, 2018, , accessed July 19, 2018, doi:10.1007/978-3-662-54615-4_1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ Urofsky, Melvin I. "Jim Crow Law." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. July 19, 2017. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law>.

⁵⁶ Investopedia, Staff. "Zoning Ordinance." *Investopedia*. July 13, 2018. Accessed July 25, 2018. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/z/zoning-ordinance.asp>

⁵⁷ Christopher Silver, "PDF-Grundlagen," *PDF Bibliothek Der Mediengestaltung*, 2018, , accessed July 19, 2018, doi:10.1007/978-3-662-54615-4_1.

⁵⁸ "Expulsive Zoning," *Expulsive Zoning - YIMBYwiki*, June 6, 2017, , accessed July 25, 2018, http://yimby.wiki/wiki/Expulsive_zoning.

⁵⁹ Christopher Silver, "PDF-Grundlagen," *PDF Bibliothek Der Mediengestaltung*, 2018, , accessed July 19, 2018, doi:10.1007/978-3-662-54615-4_1.

Policies implemented during the 1930s continued the system of residential segregation that would one day create food deserts in low-income areas of color. 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.⁶⁰ 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.”⁶¹ 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.⁶² These lending corporations increased home ownership from 44% in 1934 to 66% in 1964 but these benefits were not accessible to those of color.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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

⁶⁰ "How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts." *UNSHARED BOUNTY*, June 2012, 5-31. Accessed July 19, 2018. doi:10.18411/d-2016-154.

⁶¹ "How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts." *UNSHARED BOUNTY*, June 2012, 5-31. Accessed July 19, 2018. doi:10.18411/d-2016-154.

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.⁶⁵ 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 with in cities.⁶⁶ 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”.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸ This makes the chance of building and operating a

⁶⁵ "Redlining," Redevelopment | Article and Real Estate Definition of Redevelopment by Crepedia, , accessed July 26, 2018, <http://www.crepedia.com/dictionary/definitions/redlining/>.

⁶⁶ "How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts." *UNSHARED BOUNTY* , June 2012, 5-31. Accessed July 19, 2018. doi:10.18411/d-2016-154.

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

⁷⁰ "How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts." *UNSHARED BOUNTY*, June 2012, 5-31. Accessed July 19, 2018. doi:10.18411/d-2016-154.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² "The Socio-Economic Significance of Food Deserts." *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, 29 June 2011, www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/the-socio-economic-significance-of-food-deserts.

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

⁷³ "USDA Proposes Policies to Improve Food Access, Healthy Choices for Low-income Americans." Food and Nutrition Service. June 2, 2017. Accessed July 22, 2018. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2016/004516>.

⁷⁴ "USDA Proposes Policies to Improve Food Access, Healthy Choices for Low-income Americans." Food and Nutrition Service. June 2, 2017. Accessed July 22, 2018. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2016/004516>.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ "Getting Rid of Food Deserts." *EfficientGov*, 6 Apr. 2017, efficientgov.com/blog/2015/05/12/getting-rid-of-food-deserts/.

infants up to 5 years old.⁷⁷ These are good efforts but do not do enough 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 covered 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.⁷⁸

Conclusion

Food deserts are one of the factors that contribute 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.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ “Women, Infants and Children (WIC).” *Food and Nutrition Service*, 29 Sept. 2017, www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-eligibility-and-coverage-rates.

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