

**EVERYBODY EATS:
AN ANALYSIS OF CITIZENSHIP, MINORITY FOOD INSECURITY,
AND COMMUNITY GARDENS**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

By

HANNAH ELISABETH KLEIN

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Research Advisor:

Dr. Sarah N. Gatson

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ABSTRACT

Everybody Eats:
A Sociological Analysis of Citizenship, Minority Food Insecurity, and Community Gardens

Hannah Elisabeth Klein
Department of Sociology
Texas A&M University

Research Advisor: Dr. Sarah N. Gatson
Department of Sociology

This study examines the sociological perspectives of community in order to accurately measure the scope of food insecurity in minority populations, and discuss the future of locally grown, organic produce as a potential answer to food insecurity. This thesis includes a sociological/historical examination of citizenship and community, a sufficient exploration of systemic inequalities apparent in the institutions of race and class, and a discussion of these variables' effect on food policy with a critical race theory perspective, as well as an analysis of available census data on the racial breakdown of Bryan/College Station community in order to accurately study the patterns of inequality in food accessibility and affordability in the Bryan/College Station area. By studying the institutions of race and class, in relation to food accessibility and affordability, the goal of this thesis is to suggest preliminary political action that would alleviate the monetary stress imposed upon food insecure populations in Bryan/College Station.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Cathy Crixell Klein.

Thank you for all of the years of beans and rice.

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I would like to thank my research advisor and mentor, Dr. Gatson. I took her class on the institution of marriage and family before I majored in Sociology, and her expertise and passion inspired me to pursue my own sociological imagination. Our communitarian values fit together well, and her guidance allowed me to openly question the construction of community. Working alongside her has been a privilege and a joy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Food transcends race, gender, class, and geography; everybody eats. Yet, there exist patterns of systemic inequities in food accessibility and affordability across racial lines, genders, socioeconomic classes, and geographical boundaries. Past analyses of minority food insecurity have “[resulted] in an understanding that social inequities... are not necessarily the result of one institution’s actions but rather the actions of multiple institutions over time.”¹ This realization necessitates an analysis of the social construction of community and inequality. Throughout American history, race has been a defining characteristic in determining citizenship on the institutional and social level, and has left a trail of latent socioeconomic results on minorities, today. One of these results is an overwhelming number of food insecure minorities.² In studying food insecure minority populations, historical context sheds light on many of the modern inequities these groups face today, especially in cases where inequality is cemented in policy.

The institution of policy has a major impact on the extension of citizenship, which consists of civil rights, political rights, and social rights, and institutionalized policies enacted in the past have a direct result on the social definition of community.³ According to T. H. Marshall, “[c]itizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community,” and “all who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is

¹ Barker, Charlene, Anderson Francois, Rachel Goodman, and Effat Hussain. 2012. “Unshared Bounty: How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts.”

² Mata, Camille Tuason. 2013. *Marginalizing Access to the Sustainable Food System: An Examination of Oakland's Minority Districts*. Maryland: University Press of America.

³ Marshall, T. H. 1963. “Citizenship and Social Class.” In *Sociology at the Crossroads, and Other Essays*, 67-127. London: Heinemann.

endowed.”³ Therefore, if institutional effects impede an individual’s or a group of individuals’ citizenship (their civil, political, or social rights), then a cohesive community cannot be established. Likewise, if a cohesive community is never established, social strains are present between groups and inequities in resources begin to emerge.

This study will examine sociological perspectives of community membership to accurately measure the depth and scope of food insecurity in minority populations, and discuss the future of locally grown, organic produce as a potential answer to food insecurity. This thesis will include a historical examination of citizenship, a sufficient exploration of systemic inequalities apparent in the institutions of race and class, and a discussion of these variables’ effect on food policy. The goal of this thesis is to examine the manifest and latent functions of past, racialized policies by studying the institutions of race and class, in relation to food accessibility, and examine community gardens as a potential solution to reestablishing food equity.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Effects of Citizenship on Community Food Security

To consider community, there must first be an examination of citizenship. However, before citizenship, the institution that awards citizenship and the associated rights of citizenship must be addressed: the concept of a “nation” must be scrutinized. Besides arbitrary geographic divisions drawn by political powers in the past, what are nations? Benedict Anderson asserts that nations are “imagined political communit[ies],” which are “...inherently limited.”⁴ He asserts that nations are distinctly imagined “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members,” but there remains a maintained “image of their communion”⁴ called nationalism. As Anderson quotes Gellner, “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* (sic) nations where they do not exist,” in which Anderson uses his own definition of “*invents*” to mean “imagining” or “creation.”⁴ Using this definition, a nation would fall under the category of community because the nation “is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁴ However, within a nation, there exist different communities, and not everyone is considered a citizen of the community in power – at least, not equally – and nationalism protects the interests of the community in power first and foremost and does so institutionally, through law.

⁴ Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York and London: Verso.

It is also vital to note that in Anderson's definition, "the nation is imagined as *limited* (sic) because... [it] has finite, if elastic, boundaries."⁴ These boundary limitations of a political-state can be demonstrated in the geographical drawing of sovereign nations and in the political extension of community membership. However, there have been instances throughout history where geographical boundaries have changed; the seemingly definite concept of national boundaries is, in fact, malleable. In the same regards, so too is the politically awarded community membership, citizenship. The 1790 Naturalization Act granted citizenship to any "free white person, who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for the term of two years."⁵ The concept of citizenship has been contested since then, most notably in the cases of *Ozawa v. U.S.* (1922)⁶ and *U.S. v. Thind* (1923).⁷ However, the purpose of these Supreme Court decisions, and other laws and civil court cases, was to "credibly" define whiteness throughout history by defining and redefining non-whiteness, and subsequently who was granted citizenship and who remained non-citizens. These Supreme Court decisions and other federal and civil laws serve as reminders of the malleable boundaries of whiteness, and reminders of how past American law makers constructed whiteness as the only way to access U.S. citizenship. In order to reaffirm these boundaries, non-whites were not given equitable access to resources; citizenship was dually associated with landownership, which was, and remains to be, heavily racialized.

The malleability of citizenship allowed the flexible social status of minority groups to change; their access to citizenship rights extended and compressed over time. But citizenship is a grant to a community that is politically set, civilly biased, and socially enacted/adapted. As an extension

⁵ Act of Mar.26, 1790, ch.3, 1 Stat.103, repealed by Act of Jan.29, 1795, ch.20, 1 Stat. 414.

⁶ *Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178, 43 S. Ct. 65, 67 L. Ed. 199 (1922).

⁷ *United States v. Thind*, 261 U.S. 204, 43 S. Ct. 338, 67 L. Ed. 616 (1923).

of his own sociological theory, which “postulates that there is a kind of basic human equality associated with the concept of full membership of a community,” T.H. Marshall describes citizenship in modernity as “a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization... a loyalty of free men endowed with rights and protected by a common law.”⁸

Similar to many classical sociological theorists, T.H. Marshall’s assessment of citizenship was solely based in class and status, and did not mention race as a factor that would impact one’s access to basic rights. However, he was wary that the proposed “basic human equality” of community membership was “not consistent with the inequalities which distinguish the various economic levels in the society,”⁸ which suggests that the intersectionality between class, status, and race might be the answer to the questions these arbitrary inequalities raise.

To accurately assess citizenship, Marshall breaks down the main components of citizenship as civil rights, which are “composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom” and “the right to defend and assert all one’s rights on the terms of equality with others and by due process of the law;” political rights, or “the right to participate in the exercise of political power as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body;” and social rights, or “the whole range [of rights], from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.”⁸ Strategic extensions of citizenship to minorities, or any institutionalized amendments that made civil rights and political rights accessible to minorities, happened in small increments over time, and were usually met with adamant (and sometimes violent) opposition. Therefore, these steps were not equitable to the initial grant of citizenship provided to whites in the U.S., and were not enough to

⁸ Marshall, T. H. 1963. “Citizenship and Social Class.”

proliferate into the construction of society. The latent effects of these laws detrimentally impacted minorities' social rights, and subsequently the structure of community. For this reason, in the modern era of American history, citizenship refers predominantly to social rights, which have extended to include civil and political rights. Any infringement of a right defined by Marshall as a civil right or a political right can be considered, today, as a residual effect of past, racialized laws and, as such, are actively socially adapted.

Critical Race Analysis of Food Insecurity

There is legal evidence of the racialization⁹ of citizenship. Social meaning for racial groups is not inherent in nature, but a socially prescribed malady that humans transmit to one another.

Racialization is defined as imparting “racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice or group,”⁹ which grows to be indistinguishable from broadly accepted social fact.

It is true that past non-citizens were extended access to civil rights and political rights over time.

However, the perpetuation of former policies' latent functions interfered with the social rights of former non-citizens, which created a society with an unbalanced system of power based off a racial hierarchy, leaving former non-members of the community, the black and brown populations in America, at the bottom of the social totem pole.^{10,11} This was done directly,

⁹ Omi, Michael. 2015. *Racial formation in the United States. 3rd ed.* London: Routledge

¹⁰When regarding race in America, most people commonly refer to a racial binary: black and white. This binary definition served most useful to policy makers from the Civil War to the turn of the twentieth century.⁷ However, the event of the Civil War and Reconstruction after the war “obscured the significant role played by Manifest Destiny and the colonization of northern Mexico in the racial subordination of black Americans.”⁷ While the country and politicians were preoccupied with civil rights and legislation after the emancipation of slaves, the Mexican Cession gave Mexican men “federal citizenship under the peace treaty of 1848,” which cemented Mexican Americans into a “kind of second-class citizenship in which their rights were limited” by Congress.⁷ The limited citizenship granted to Mexican Americans then has created a racial totem pole, which has been perpetuated into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, where the racial binary of black and white still exists, but “Mexican Americans became a wedge racial group between whites and blacks.”

through *de facto* legislation that was discriminatory in nature, and indirectly, through *de jure*¹² enacted and adapted processes of racial segregation, both of which, in turn, limited minorities' access to resources.

Due to this process of racialization, the United State's food system is cemented as a tool in a racial project, or a "political and economic [undertaking] through which racial hierarchies are established and racialized subjectivities are created."¹³ According to Omi and Winant, a racial project does the dirty work of linking structure and signification.¹⁴ Like the process of racialization, a racial project is "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings," but what substantiates racial projects over racialization is that racial projects "organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines."¹⁴ The laws and policies of the United States have historically been racially discriminatory in nature, and remain to be racially discriminatory when extended/compressed without regard to underlying prejudices that fueled old policies and greatly impact new policies,¹⁵ particularly in regards to minority communities' food security.

In order to best represent these racial minority groups, this thesis will use the racial binary of black and white and wedge racial group of brown to best describe the relationship between whites, latinxs (the gender neutral term for people of Latin American descent), and blacks. By removing geographical origin from the titles of these racial groups (i.e., European Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans), this thesis better displays the history of skin color (colorism) as a major dictator of race, and how the both the manifest and latent functions of social politics have impacted the populations within the racial groups differently. This definition will also further extend race to include peoples who do not recognize their family's geographical origin as an indicator of their race(s).

¹¹ Gómez, Laura R. 2007. *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*. New York: New York.

¹² Meade V. Dennistone: The NAACP's Test Case to "...Sue Jim Crow Out of Maryland with The Fourteenth Amendment" *Maryland Law Review* 63, no. 773. 773-810

¹³ Alkon, Alison Hope, and Julian Agyeman. 2011. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press.

¹⁴ Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2015. *Racial formation in the United States*.

¹⁵ Moore, Wendy Leo. 2014. "White Lies: Social Science Research, Judicial Decision Making and the Fallacy of Objectivity" in *Making Law and Courts Research Relevant; The Normative Implications of Empirical Research*. New York: Routledge.

Because racial projects connect “what race means” and the “ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially organized,”¹⁶ an important facet in the systematic othering of minorities was the act of defining community membership. This was/is done in a multitude of political and legal ways: in the language that is used to describe non-persons (such as the word “alien”)¹⁷, in the policies that draw community boundaries (gerrymandering, school-zoning, etc.), and in the laws that exist within and serve to substantiate the basis of the racial hierarchy that now serve as legal precedence.¹⁸ Disadvantaged communities that are historically disproportionately black and brown produce recurring patterns of food insecurity, and more often than not “poor, minority residents reflect high concentrations of food insecurity.”¹⁹ This has led social and economic theorists to conclude, “daily access to sufficient volumes of food is correlated to race and to income.”¹⁹

However, correlation is not enough to describe the relationship between minority persons and food insecurity. These numbers do not show that people of color are more likely to be food insecure. These numbers show that, out of the entirety of the population of the United States, people of color make up the largest portion of the food insecure population, which only serves to reify the assertion that access to food has been constructed as a mechanism in a racial project. Food insecurity has become a way in which minority persons experience structural racism. Recognizing the manifest functions of past, racialized laws and policies that served to separate minority citizens from the dominant community by restricting their ability to access land and

¹⁶ Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2015. *Racial formation in the United States*.

¹⁷ Johnson, Kevin J. 1996. “Aliens” and the U.S. Immigration Laws: The Social and Legal Construction of Nonpersons.’ Florida: The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review. 28:2. 263-292

¹⁸ Moore, Wendy Leo. 2014. “White Lies: Social Science Research, Judicial Decision Making and the Fallacy of Objectivity”

¹⁹ Mata, Camille Tsuason. 2013. *Marginalizing Access to the Sustainable Food System: An Examination of Oakland's Minority District*

resources provides sufficient evidence of the pertinence of legal precedence of minority food insecurity within the broader context of community food insecurity.

Minority Food Insecurity

Food security originated from an ecological standpoint, formally concerned with the Earth's ability to produce food on the global scale and the sustainability of local, organic produce serving communities. During this time, food security advocacy rose across the world as more farmers found ecological benefits to producing organic produce. Later, the focus shifted from an ecological responsibility to a social justice issue due to the high rates of food production having no substantial effect on widespread hunger and malnutrition in food insecure regions of the world, and within the boundaries of the United States. In the 1980s, domestic food insecurity was scrutinized as a systemic issue, and attention was shifted from food security, or the United State's ability to produce enough food for the amount of people in the country, to community food security, or accessibility to the abundance of food the country produces.²⁰ Community food security is defined as "household access to sufficient volumes of healthy, quality foods through a food system built on local food sources and production operations and on organic principles," giving specific attention to two very important facets of acquiring food: firstly, the "affordability for all income levels, but especially for poor households in order to alleviate disproportionate hunger and malnutrition levels among demographics," and secondly, "the spatial proximity to food venues."²⁰ This definition provides evidence for the necessity of a deeper understanding of community membership as it dictates access to and availability of affordable, nutritious produce.

²⁰ Mata, Camille Tuason. 2013. *Marginalizing Access to the Sustainable Food System: An Examination of Oakland's Minority Districts*

Community food security has grown into a social movement that aims to “strike a balance- or right a wrong- in a food system that has historically benefitted whiter and more affluent communities,”²¹ which in this study is considered *Minority Food Security*. As the politicized food security social movement grew, the focus shifted to food rights, which refers to “the government’s responsibility to the poor in securing access to food.”²¹ This ideology is sustained in a two-fold socio-political movement: firstly, recognizing that food security is not ahistorical, that it does not exist in a vacuum, but that it is one example of systemic racism and secondly, suggesting political and legal engagement in and reformation of current food policies that serve the historically underrepresented and underprivileged populations of the United States. This thesis utilizes this socio-political ideology and focuses on food accessibility by analyzing the limitations of programs designed to alleviate the monetary stress of acquiring nutritious, organic produce, and investigating the benefits of the addition of community gardens to these welfare programs.

²¹ Mata, Camille Tuason. 2013. *Marginalizing Access to the Sustainable Food System: An Examination of Oakland's Minority Districts*

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Secondary Data Analysis

According to the USDA, “34,960 Brazos County residents (20%) are food insecure.”²² This research investigates the racial breakdown of food insecure residents in the Brazos County, and compares these populations to the populations of food insecure residents in the state of Texas. Using available aggregate Census data, a Z-test will be administered and the proportions of food insecure individuals by race in the LSA Polygon will be compared to the state. Using all of the methods outlined in the previous chapter, this research will illustrate the depth and scope of food insecurity in the local minority populations and how the construction of community, through manifest functions and latent functions, plays an integral role in food security. The Census data used is entirely public information, and is either completely aggregate (and thus anonymized) or the data was released to the public after the government’s own release date policies, e.g., handwritten Census schedules are released to the public (accessible through such sources as Ancestry.com) 70 years after each Census was taken.

Using the census data, a Z-Test for proportions was run on the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon, as a test region. This polygon was chosen because of its large population and due to the centrality of the census tracks it touches. A Z-Test for proportions was chosen because this test compares the proportion of one food insecure race to the state-level proportion of the same food insecure race, i.e., the proportion of food insecure whites within an LSA polygon was compared to the

²² *Who’s Hungry in the Brazos County?* USDA Chart. 2010.

proportion of food insecure whites at the state level. This remains constant for each race category. The ultimate goal of this quantitative research is to provide preliminary evidence of systemic inequity. If a statistically significant difference exists, causal effects must be investigated, and preliminary political action must be suggested.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Census Data Analysis

In the 2010 U.S. Census aggregate data released in 2013, there are three Community Profile Reports outlining census block groups with “Limited Supermarket Access (LSA),”²³ that is, the number of full-access grocery stores does not meet the grocery need of the polygon. The estimated grocery retail demand of, the number of supermarkets in, the age distribution of, the types of housing in, and the income levels of the three communities are outlined in these profile reports. Additionally, two out of the three reports outline the racial characteristics of the population of the respective communities. These details are imperative in understanding the shortcomings of available produce in different areas in Brazos County and whom the Limited Supermarket Access ultimately affects. This data also provides a chance to better predict the types of community gardens that could provide supplemental nutrition to these regions.

LSA Brazos County, Texas 1 is the first of three polygons analyzed. This polygon touches the census tracts: 48041000202, 48041001000, 48041002015, and 48041001400. In this community, there is a total of three census data blocks, and the total population of the area is estimated to be around 4,612 people. The total grocery retail demand for this area is estimated to be \$6,000,000, yet there are zero stores that provide groceries in this area. The age distribution of this area shows that 97.63% of the people in this community are of working age, which is defined to be the ages 18-64 years old. The income range of the community is \$7,066 to \$15,850,

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population, Public Law 94-171 Redistricting Data File. Updated every 10 years.

indicating that this area reflects both working students and those living under the poverty line.²⁴

An interesting characteristic of this community is that about 72.4% of the residents live in small apartment buildings, while 16.2% of the community lives in large apartment buildings.²⁴

Because of the housing needs of these residents, community gardens would need to be accessible by apartment complex.

LSA Brazos County, Texas 2 is the next polygon. This community touches the census tracks: 48041002012, 48041001803, 48041001604, 48041001601, 48041001606, and 48041001605. In this community, there is a total of four census data blocks, and the total population of the area is estimated as 6,856 people. The total grocery retail demand for this area is estimated to be \$8,700,000, and like the last group, there are zero stores that provide groceries in this area. The age distribution of this area shows that 81.28% of the people in this community are of working age, and the income range of the community is \$12,446 to \$41,923, indicating that this area reflects a large range of household diversity.²⁵ However, even with the higher incomes, apartment dwelling is still the most inhabited living arrangement at about 58.74% of the residents living in small apartment buildings. Single family detached homes are the distant second most popular housing type with 12.16% of the community living in these homes.²⁵ Because of the mixed dwelling types in this area, a community garden in an accessible, centralized location may serve as the best supplemental gardening program.

²⁴ Community Profile Report by Polygon: LSA Brazos County, Texas 1 for area in Brazos County 10/29/2013. 2013. Copyright © PolicyMap.

²⁵ Community Profile Report by Polygon: LSA Brazos County, Texas 2 for area in Brazos County 10/29/2013. 2013. Copyright © PolicyMap.

LSA Brazos County, Texas 3 is another polygon of the three. This area touches the census tracks: 48041000202, 48041000300, 48041001900, 48041000603, 48041000500, 48041000400, 48041000604, 48041000800, 48041000201, 48041000900, and 48041000700. In this community, there is a total of nineteen census data blocks, and the total population of the area is estimated as 27,717 people. The total grocery retail demand for this area is estimated to be \$32,900,000, but in this large of an area, there are three stores that provide minimal groceries. However, this community is still considered to be in Limited Supermarket Access because the stores in the area do not provide enough nutritious produce to be considered supermarkets. The age distribution of this area shows that 65.42% of the people in this community are of working age, and the income range of the community is \$20,636 to \$41,042, indicating that this area reflects the largest range of household diversity.²⁶ In this area, single family detached homes are the most popular housing type with 48.82% of the community living in these homes. Only about 27.04% of the population lives in small apartment buildings in this area.²⁶

The racial characteristics of *LSA Brazos County, Texas 2* and *LSA Brazos County, Texas 3* also show the disparity in these areas. In *LSA Brazos County, Texas 2* about 22.71% of the population identifies as African American and 16.83% identifies as Hispanic, which totals to about 39.54% of the total population.²⁷ In *LSA Brazos County, Texas 3*, 23.58% of the population listed their race as African American and 49.70% said identified as Hispanic.²⁸ Seeing a minority race listed as the majority or one of the majorities of a food insecure population provides sufficient

²⁶ Community Profile Report by Polygon: *LSA Brazos County, Texas 3* for area in Brazos County 10/29/2013. 2013. Copyright © PolicyMap

²⁷ Community Profile Report by Polygon: *LSA Brazos County, Texas 2* for area in Brazos County 10/29/2013. 2013. Copyright © PolicyMap

²⁸ Community Profile Report by Polygon: *LSA Brazos County, Texas 3* for area in Brazos County 10/29/2013. 2013. Copyright © PolicyMap

evidence of systemic inequality. This hypothesis will be tested in the Analysis of Existing Data section.

Hypothesis

[H₁] = There is a statistically significant difference between the number of food insecure individuals, by race group, in the Limited Supermarket Access polygon within the limits of Bryan and the number of food insecure individuals of the same race group in the state of Texas.

Null Hypothesis

[H₀] = There is no statistical significance between the number of food insecure individuals by race in the polygon within the limits of Bryan and number of food insecure individuals by race in the state of Texas.

Findings for LSA Brazos County Policy Map 3

A Z-Test for proportions for this LSA Policy Map Polygon was run on three racial categories: White, African American, and Hispanic. These racial and ethnic self-identifiers were the closest means of measurement to this thesis's outlined measure of race: white, black, and brown will be used, respectively. These findings are outlined in *Table 1*.

Table 1

LSA Policy Map 3

Race	2007-2011	% Total Population Bryan	% Total Population Texas
White	14374	0.5717	0.7303
African American	5927	0.2358	0.1177
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0008
American Indian/Alaskan Native	84	0.0033	0.005
Some Other Race	3693	0.1469	0.087
Two or More Races	721	0.0287	0.0212
Hispanic†	12495	0.497	0.372
	n= 25123		

† Hispanic, in this chart, was not counted as an individual race identifier. In the original aggregate data, Hispanic was an ethnic identifier that could or could not be checked *in addition to* the race identifier. For this reason, the population of the Hispanic category does not impact the overall population total for the LSA Policy Map Polygon.

A Z(obtained) for the proportion of food insecure whites in Bryan to food insecure whites in the state of Texas was calculated to be -56.64, which is well outside the critical region of +/-1.96.

With a 95% confidence level, this study rejects the null hypothesis. There is a statistically significant difference in the proportion of food insecure whites in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure whites in the state of Texas. The interpretation of the calculated negative Z (obtained) leads this study to conclude that there is a statistically significant smaller proportion of food insecure whites in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure whites in the state of Texas.

A Z (obtained) for the proportion of food insecure blacks in Bryan to food insecure blacks in the state of Texas was calculated to be +58.09, which is well outside the critical region of +/-1.96.

With a 95% confidence level, this study rejects the null hypothesis. There is a statistically significant difference in the proportion of food insecure blacks in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon

within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure blacks in the state of Texas. The interpretation of the calculated positive Z (obtained) leads this study to conclude that there is a statistically significant larger proportion of food insecure blacks in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure blacks in the state of Texas.

A Z (obtained) for the proportion of food insecure brown people in Bryan to food insecure brown people in the state of Texas was calculated to be +40.99, which is well outside the critical region of ± 1.96 . With a 95% confidence level, this study rejects the null hypothesis. There is a statistically significant difference in the proportion of food insecure brown people in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure brown people in the state of Texas. The interpretation of the calculated positive Z (obtained) leads this study to conclude that there is a statistically significant larger proportion of food insecure brown people in the LSA Policy Map 3 polygon within the city limits of Bryan than the proportion of food insecure brown people in the state of Texas.

Limitations

This study does not have an accurate measure of Non-Hispanic whites and Non-Hispanic blacks in the LSA Policy Map polygons. Because the category, Hispanic, was used as an ethnic identifier, used in addition to race, this limited the study's capacity to fully understand the depth and scope of food insecurity by racial category.

Additionally, this thesis did not investigate the depth and scope of food insecurity for the racial category, Two or More Races. This race identifier may hold more information about the

implications of food insecurity in these LSA polygons and of the state of Texas as a whole because many brown and black persons exist within this category.

Discussion

Due to the statistical significance of the results, this study finds that there is empirical evidence of a racially unbalanced food insecure population in the Brazos County region. Compared to the state of Texas, Brazos County has disproportionately more food insecure minorities than is expected. This unbalanced level of food insecurity across racial groups could be evident of systemic inequity that exists in the Brazos County.

With the empirical evidence supporting the idea that the food system in the Brazos County could be considered a racial project, it is expected that the observable patterns of associated with food procuring would reflect the racial distribution present in the empirical data. However, this is not the case. In different ethnographic participant observation sessions²⁹ completed during the course of this research, observations were recorded about the racial breakdown of women at using the WIC facilities of the Brazos County, which also lies within the LSA Policy Map 3 region. At one event in particular, there were twenty-one total women in attendance. Of the twenty-one women, fourteen were Hispanic, while there was only one African American attendee. Though these were WIC staff, the outreach programs of the Brazos County should reflect the proportions of food insecurity by race that is present, but we do necessarily not see the same patterns at outreach events.

²⁹ This thesis is written in collaboration with an ongoing research project studying food insecurity and food policy. The work done in this thesis is an initial theoretical and quantitative exploration of a much bigger community food security project.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Social Policy

Given the empirical results and the socio-historical understanding of food policy in the United States, policy that supports the efforts of pursuing food security for minority residents should be institutionally funded, and facilities that aim to do this work should be legislatively supported. This kind of legislative support would be considered “targeted antipoverty policies.”³⁰ However, when determining the extent to which socio-political legislation can address inherent structural inequity, many sociological theorists remain skeptical in the scope and depth these policies can reach, especially in regards to racial inequity. One such critic of this legislation is William Julius Wilson. He asserts that, especially in a time of economic fragility, “the more the public programs are perceived by members of the wider society as benefitting only certain groups, the less support those programs receive.”³¹ He, instead, suggests universal policies are the best way to alleviate poverty.

However, universal programs provide little assistance or relief to the most needy populations. Universal policies aim to “ameliorate poverty through broader social programs that include whites along with people of color, and middle-class citizens along with economically disadvantaged Americans,”³² which can be complicated for a number of reasons. Firstly, larger

³⁰ Skocpol, Theda. 1989. “Targeting Within Universalism: Politically Viable Policies to Combat Poverty in the United States.” Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University.

³¹ Wilson, William J. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³² Skocpol, Theda. 1989. “Targeting Within Universalism”

programs that covers a greater variety of people are much more expensive.³² Secondly, universal policies are often criticized for disproportionately benefitting populations that need the least amount of resources.³²

Though there are negatives to both targeted and universal policies, it seems as though the political viability of universal programs beat out targeted policies. In order to create a politically sustainable piece of legislation and explicitly bring aid to the disadvantaged populations of the state, utilizing Theda Skocpol's "targeting within universalism"³³ may lead to more progressive legislation. Skocpol defines targeting within universalism as universal programs that "[deliver] extra benefits and special services to certain poor people."³³ The theoretical basis of the policy would use the momentum of current tax systems, which "[demonstrate] that Americans will accept taxes that they perceive as contributions toward public programs in which there is a direct stake for themselves."³³ Creating universal programs that have dedicated allocations of funding to provide extra measures to the most vulnerable populations in the state will ensure the political viability of the legislation that could stand strong against conservative values of fiscal responsibility.

Providing legislators with community building options that both benefit the wider population and aim to target disproportionately disadvantaged individuals and families could jumpstart a socio-political movement that focuses on food security at its core and racial equity in its effects.

Already established, welfare funded, programs could shepherd in targeted programs. The WIC of the Brazos County, for example, could serve as a facility for these targeted policies within the

³³ Skocpol, Theda. 1989. "Targeting Within Universalism"

universal program. WIC is an extension of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and already serves to target young families. However, a greater allocation of funds to the facility may impact the effectiveness, number, and variety of services that could be offered to the targeted group, food insecure minorities. Combatting minority food insecurity under the blanket funds of social security could potentially lead to institutional growing spaces and resources. These gardens, fastened in the grassroots foundation of the surrounding community, would serve many people within the Brazos County, but the security of state-allocated funds offers a greater assurance that the most vulnerable populations in the community would also receive these benefits.

Community Gardens

The institutionalization of community gardens in underserved and disproportionately disadvantaged minority communities provides numerous benefits to the population at large, which begins with autonomy. As Erika Allen mentions in her interview during the Food Growing Summit of 2014, access to land has historically been the first step to sovereignty because of the way in which it provided its owners with autonomy and “long-term stability.”³⁴ However, with her further understanding of the implications of land-based sovereignty, she does not advocate for the personal ownership of land, but instead advocates for food production as the ultimate resource, and land access as a contributor to the overall mechanism.³³ This highlights the necessity of institutional support for grassroots projects in food security. When land is guaranteed, food production can take place with certainty. However, the access to the land is only the first battle in achieving food secure autonomy.

³⁴ Allen, Erika. 2014. Transcript of interview. *The Food Growing Summit 2014*.

Community gardens are fundamentally based in a communitarian ideology that relies upon members' engagement and involvement in the upkeep and continued success of the mechanism. Instating a garden inside the boundaries of a community does not a community garden make. The transformative properties of what a community garden provides are not only the "opportunities for folks to have food access where there wasn't any before,"³³ but also the ways in which the community culture is maintained and relationships are bolstered in the support of a system that serves the community. This reifies the importance of continued support for grassroots movements that aim to solidify community culture and members' relationships in the existing culture; not change the way in which a community operates.

Striking a balance between grassroots movements and institutional support could be done in a supplemental institutional program, which can be added onto existing food policy. Theoretically, budget funds could be allocated to the community garden facilitators, who would have both the know how to sustain the project, and the state-allocated resources to continue providing for the community in which the garden is based.

Future Research

In order to measure the way in which systemic racism affects the lives and experiences of black and brown persons in the Brazos County, this study will employ methods of ethnographic study, compiled mostly of active participant observations and interviews. Active participant observation includes any observations made at the planting locations in the community, specifically the Women, Infants, and Children facility (WIC), as well as any public spaces (grocery stores,

farmers markets, Texas A&M University campus, etc.) where food provisioning occurs.³⁵ A field notebook will be kept and all observations will be transcribed and coded into Atlas.ti. These methods are outlined in *Practicing Sociology in the Community: A Student's Guide*.³⁶ All methods are in accordance with IRB rules and regulations regarding human subjects (Study number IRB2013-0764D). Preliminary research (the literature review) will also be used as a framework in order to analyze minority food insecurity in Bryan/College Station. The goal of the future research will be to test the viability of a community garden based at WIC, and to explore whether the narratives of people of color who patronize the WIC substantiate the quantitative data found in this study.

³⁵ DeVault, Marjorie L. 1991. *Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

³⁶ Langton, Phyllis Ann, and Diane Anderson Kammerer. 2005. *Practicing Sociology in the Community: A Student's Guide*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

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