

6-2021

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Malea Thomas
depaul, mmet944@gmail.com

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The Marginalization Project

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

June 22, 2021

BY

Malea Thomas

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

DePaul University

Chicago, Illinois

Introduction

Black and Brown communities in the U.S. are disproportionately negatively affected by lack of physical space, poor access to quality food, weak environmental conditions, and oppressive state/city laws that do not serve them (Shabazz, 2015, p. 18; Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 34-35; De Maio et al., 2019, p. 7-8). Blacks and other minority groups lag far behind Whites socially and economically (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 2). According to Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014) “Blacks are about three times more likely to be poor than Whites, [and] earn 40 percent less than Whites. They receive an inferior education compared to Whites” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 2). Because of ongoing housing and food disparities exacerbated by various types of racial injustice, there is a lack of economic opportunities given to Black and Brown communities.

In Chicago, economic opportunities are unevenly dispersed, and this affects all aspects of daily life for those in the city; in fact, in African American communities, the resources in various neighborhood schools and communities are seen as inferior compared to predominately White communities and White suburbs (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 34-35). According to the website *Opportunity Atlas* (2016), the median/average income in Englewood, a neighborhood located on the South Side estimates 18,000 dollars annually and the monthly rent is around 935 dollars. In comparison, the median/average income in Forest Glen, a neighborhood located on the North Side is around 121,000 dollars yearly and the monthly rent ranges from 1,100 to 1,500 dollars. In the article, “Death, Violence, Health, and Poverty in Chicago (2018),” Earl Fredrick highlights how the residents that live in Englewood are 46.6% below the poverty line (p. 8). This poverty is compounded by Englewood’s dangerous conditions. An article, “It’s Englewood: 12

hours in one of Chicago's most dangerous neighborhoods (2013)," Chicago News Outlet, WGN9, reported, "Englewood consistently ranks as one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city. In fact, the WGN9 News Crew commented, "we've been in Englewood only a few hours when we saw the all too familiar flashing blue lights" (paras. 9). Meanwhile, *Opportunity Atlas* (2016) reports the residents that live in Forest Glen are 3.1% below the poverty line. In particular, a podcast, entitled "Location! Location! Location!" from NPR's *Code Switch* (2018), discusses that the South and West side neighborhoods of Chicago do not have accessibility to quality housing, food, and safety (NPR's *Code Switch*, 2018, 2:00-12:32). It has been argued that these neighborhoods are segregated by design in order to confine Black and Brown communities (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 32-34; Shabazz, 2015, p. 18-19). For example, NPR's *Code Switch* shares that one of the leading reasons for Chicago's generational economic inequality is differential property taxes that enable racial segregation in the city (NPR's *Code Switch*, 2018, 2:00-12:32).

In addition to poverty and violence, another consequence of racial segregation and economic inequality is food deserts. Food deserts are urban areas where "residents access to affordable, healthy food options (especially fresh fruits and vegetables) is restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient traveling distance" (Durden, 2020, paras. 2). It is evident that food deserts play an active role in minority neighborhoods not having sufficient access to a variety of fresh, nutritious foods. However, community food gardens, which are sections of land that are gardened jointly by the community, are combatting these food disparities by offering community residents healthy food access within these low-income neighborhoods. In "Gardening Boom: 1 in 3

American Households Grow Food (2017),” Marin Lissy reports “35 percent of households in the US grow food either at home or in a community garden. This means that two million more families are involved in gardening, up 200 percent since 2008” (paras. 1). The interests of community food gardens are increasing popularity in different cities around the nation, so that all communities can have access to a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Research Purpose

Broadly, this thesis focuses on how spatial rhetoric and the material development of community food gardens perpetuate the existing spatial realities of space, and how cultural politics define space. Through physical space and cultural politics, spatial rhetoric of community food gardens adversely affects various neighborhoods that Black and Brown bodies reside in throughout Chicago. Black and Brown communities and local school districts are low under funded and lack many resources, while White communities have more accessible resources at their fingertips. In the city, people of color are more susceptible to falling through the cracks of society to ultimately be controlled.

Specifically, I use data from primary research, in which I examine interactive maps of the city, particularly different neighborhoods located on the South Side of Chicago. This thesis reveals how spatial arrangements reflect existing socio-economic disparities affecting people of color, and analyzes this phenomenon within the context of existing research on color-blind racism, spatial rhetoric, and food deserts.

Research Question

How effective is the potential impact of community food gardens on food deserts and spatialized rhetorics in the South Side of Chicago?

Significance & Rationale

My main goal is to bring awareness to the impact that community food gardens have on food deserts and those spatialized conditions that create food deserts. In addition, I want to learn what goals can be set as a community to provide solutions that can break the damaging cycle of oppression and lack of food access. Reclaiming and rebranding freedom is imperative to building power in cities like Chicago. All communities across the city should work together collectively to gain healthy resources that can only benefit them. Studying this topic is important because change is needed in Black and Brown communities throughout the City of Chicago to ensure more accessible resources, beginning with the issue of food deserts and establishment of more community food gardens.

Reflexivity (Researcher Positionality)

As a MALS graduate student at DePaul University, it is important to write a thesis that is multidisciplinary and illustrates the implications of spatial rhetoric, especially how food deserts have intense impacts on Black and Brown bodies. And as an African American woman living in the South Side of Chicago, this thesis is important work to me personally because color was the first thing I noticed when I moved into the city during the summer of 2018. Moving to the Midwest from the East Coast, it was clear that Chicago is a segregated city, and my neighborhood is mostly populated by people of color. Additionally, navigating through the South Side during my commute, it was apparent that the area was struggling. For example, on the block of 47th Street, doors and windows of local businesses that were previously open to the public are now boarded up due to lack of business and store traffic. No new companies have come in to replace the

old ones that have either left or relocated out of the neighborhoods. Neighborhoods have fallen further and further behind the rest of the city in terms of thriving local establishments.

Since moving to Chicago, I work at Whole Foods located in the South Loop, just south of downtown. I constantly commute up and down Lake Shore Drive into the city. Hopping on my regular bus route, the number four Cottage Grove bus, I notice how the bus is filled with Black citizens, with few if any White people in sight. As the bus runs over potholes on the street and slowly creeps towards downtown, Black individuals disappear. Instead, White business workers and professionals who live close to downtown hop on the bus. The atmosphere is completely different. The loud noise softens and the music diminishes. As the bus heads toward South Michigan Ave, I instantly realize I am the only Black person on the bus.

At the Whole Foods where I currently work, just south of downtown, there is a wealth of fresh, nutritious options for customers - abundant, crisp produce from shining organic Honey Crisp apples to glowing squashes and zucchinis that welcome customers as they enter the store. Fresh meat from thick cuts of Ribeye steaks and premium lean chicken shine through their case lines. Quality seafood ranging from the wild caught salmon and tasty jumbo lump crab meat are neatly on display for shoppers to see. When I compared the food options at this Whole Foods with the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market two blocks from my apartment where I occasionally do some shopping, the contrast is striking. Walking through the produce area of the Wal-Mart, I saw the decaying produce, the green russet potatoes, discolored onions, and brown bananas. Walking through the

meat aisle, I noticed enlarged meat pumped with hormones and preservatives haphazardly on the shelves. According the Organic Consumers Association and Martha Rosenberg:

Sanderson chicken products tested positive for the antibiotic chloramphenicol, banned in food animals, and amoxicillin, not approved for use in poultry production. Sanderson Farms products also tested positive for residues of steroids, hormones, anti-inflammatory drugs—even ketamine, a drug with hallucinogenic effects (OCA and Rosenberg, 2017, paras. 2).

The authors add that, “Tyson Foods, [a chicken brand that Wal-Mart carries] was caught injecting eggs with the dangerous human antibiotic gentamicin” (Organic Consumers Association and Rosenberg, 2017, paras. 15). The Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market is not the ideal place to do grocery shopping, but when people lack convenient options, these stores become a community’s go-to source for groceries.

I argue that community food gardens may bring a sense of light and hope to neighborhoods in South Chicago, but it cannot be ignored that these gardens are operating under “resource dependence” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3) because most of these community food gardens are located within government controlled spaces. The government dictates what the community food gardens can and cannot do. Therefore, the location of community food gardens may affect the agency of the community. In what follows, first I review the literature surrounding colorblind racism, spatial rhetoric, and food deserts. Next, I review my methodology, rhetorical cartographies, and methods, followed by my study’s results and analysis. Finally, I discuss how resource dependence may play a role in the accessibility and proposed benefits of community food gardens.

Literature Review

Colorblind Racism

Colorblindness is the belief that all people, regardless of race, have access to equal social, economic, health, and educational opportunities. This belief accepts the illusion that every race is on an equal playing field, but in reality, that is not the case. Looking at racial discrimination in Chicago, whether it is direct or subtle, this “new racism” called colorblind racism, affects oppressed communities, particularly Black and Brown bodies because color blindness relies on the notion that racial differences are not important, and colorblindness overlooks systemic racism. We know that there is a substantial and perpetual issue of systemic racism in the U.S. which affects Black and Brown communities’ access to a quality life (De Maio et al., 2019, p. 7-8). As Samantha Vincenty (2020) wrote in reference to White communities:

They'll be the first to tell you they don't have a racist bone in their body, and they don't care if you're white, black, purple, or blue, etc. In fact, they say, they're "color blind"—meaning, they don't even see race. And that refusal to see it often goes hand-in-hand with an urgent desire to stop discussing racial disparities as soon as possible (paras. 2).

Additionally, colorblind racism “[denies] the lived experiences of other people,” and these systems of oppression give the illusion of celebrating cultural difference, when in fact it is the opposite (Vincenty, 2020, paras. 9).

Other races outside of the Black community capitalize on people of color’s unique cultural interests, which does not financially benefit the Black community. Rather, it solely serves to monetize their cultural needs. Vincenty writes, “Bonilla-Silva says that

racism instead became embedded in what he calls ‘now you see it, now you don’t-type practices’ that are harder to call out—which, conveniently, makes it tougher to pin them squarely on discrimination” (Vincenty, 2020, paras. 6-7). Systems of oppression like White nationalism, White privilege, and apartheid systems do not celebrate racial difference. However, these systems only give the appearance of supporting diversity; in reality, these ideas privilege Whiteness and White norms of culture dominance that expect all Americans to conform to the same ways of thinking and being, which is a form of discrimination. By adopting these White supremacist principles, racial difference and other cultures often becomes erased. Even if people of color conform to the dominant population, colorblindness creates and justifies these racial injustices. These racial injustices can form structural and residential barriers for people of color that White communities never thought about. Vincenty mentions “as everyone is steered into unofficially-segregated parts of a city or town, it can be easy for those in white-majority communities to never think about the laws, zoning, and social policies that promote gaps in education and wealth equality along racial lines—particularly if they’re only interacting with those who look like them” (Vincenty, 2020, paras. 12). Society may be open to exploring other people’s cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. However, the system would much rather focus on equity rather than equality. While equity and equality may sound similar, both terms can lead to different outcomes for marginalized people. Equality means group of people are given the same opportunities, while “equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources...needed to reach an equal outcome” (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2020, paras. 2). Not focusing on equality increases racial disparity because individuals

are largely self-serving and focus their own circumstances rather than considering the state of others. In addition, when equality is not in focus, people may continue their own discriminatory and racist biases.

In his work, *Racism Without Racists*, Bonilla-Silva (2014) explores the concept of colorblind racism by commenting on how White communities may view these systems of oppression. “Most Whites insist that minorities...are the ones responsible for whatever “race problem” we have in this country... Most Whites believe that if Blacks...would just stop thinking about the past, work hard, and complain less...then Americans of all hues could “all get along” (p. 1). Some White Americans perceive society is based on an equal level playing field and that Black Americans need to ‘move on’ from the past if they want to ‘achieve’ success. In reality, that is not always the case because racism is systemic in this country, and it is embedded in and designed through spatial rhetoric, which is the study of how physical space and societal practices are structured. Spatial rhetoric, or the study of how space can make meaning, sheds light on how people in various communities do not have access to the same opportunities as others do. The racial structures in this country, particularly in the city of Chicago, translate into colorblind racism and color hierarchy, which can be seen as structural violence. Ultimately, the racial inequalities that are caused by colorblind racism manifest within the physical spaces where Black and Brown bodies live, work, and eat everyday.

Spatial Rhetoric

Through racist practices that have taken the form of redlining Black and Brown neighborhoods and allocating certain resources to their neighborhoods in the city, these practices and policies benefit a certain group of people (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 32-34).

In the article, “Rhetoric, Spatial Theory, and the Built Environment (2012),” Dave Tell unpacks spatial rhetoric as, “systematic exploration of how rhetoric mediates the relationships among actual place and cultural politics” (paras.1). Also, rhetorician Samantha Senda-Cook et al. describes spatial rhetoric as “spatial patterns, such as urbanization and gentrification...[which focuses] on the ongoing embodied and emplaced rhetorical performances that (re)make...neighborhoods as living and evolving spaces/places” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 98). In the article, “Rhetorical Cartographies, (Counter) Mapping Urban Spaces” Samantha Senda-Cook, Michael Middleton, and Danielle Endres, unpack how spatial rhetoric plays apart in our complex society. Although Senda-Cook et al. research was conducted in Omaha, Nebraska, it applies to my research about Chicago because both cities suffer from racial segregation. Similar to Chicago, depending on the neighborhood in Omaha, members of different races and backgrounds live in selected neighborhoods around the city. Senda-Cook et al. studies how “North Omaha, in terms of perceptions and discourse, is characterized by its high crime rate, primarily African American population, and economic disenfranchisement. Nationally, headlines like, “Omaha, Nebraska: The Most Dangerous Place In America To Be Black,” emphasize the problems that residents in North Omaha face and what outsiders say about these urban spaces (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 95). In contrast, “West Omaha is known by residents as primarily White and affluent, as marked by high-end shopping areas... and wealthy housing developments” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 96).

For both midwestern cities, racial segregation was the goal. Similar to Chicago, Senda-Cook comments that different neighborhoods have access to quality resources and

stores while other neighborhoods are facing violence and danger: Senda Cook et al. explains, “these boundaries appear clear-cut through geographic demarcations, demographic data, and local perceptions, features such as highways, rail lines, and decaying business districts create gaps between some neighborhoods” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 96). Cities may use railroad tracks and interstate highways to separate different areas of the city from each other to keep Black and Brown communities out of more affluent areas. Omaha achieved separating North and the West sides of the city, so different classes would not mixed together. In West Omaha, the city provided several grocery stores, resources and support to public schools, and safe housing for families. However, the city is not investing in North Omaha like West Omaha. This is all arguably intentional in these spaces of oppression, Black and Brown communities are falling further and further behind. Urban spaces in the city where gentrification is taking place result in displacing Black and Brown families from their original communities, and new developments are leaving them with nothing. Local communities are forever affected and their identities are decaying, which can be seen as a form of erasure. Senda-Cook et al. goes into detail about how the organization of urban spaces ultimately affects urban families of color. That racial divide is not by accident because space becomes recoded and society is essentially “remapping space/place with alternative meanings and uses” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 98). The implications of segregation and racial division within particular neighborhoods in the city give space/place another meaning using the Senda-Cook et al. example of Midtown Crossing, Senda-Cook et al. explains how space/place can be remapped through neighborhood gentrification. Throughout the text, the author shows how space, gentrification, and mapping/remapping are in constant

conversation with each other. There are many complex layers regarding space/place and how it negatively affects the Black and Brown community.

One clear example of this negative effect of spatial rhetoric is shown in *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* (2015), written by Rashad Shabazz, that discusses the negative impact of racial segregation and confinement from World War II to present day, from kitchenette living, and the lack of maintenance, and decay of mental clarity, that has led to increased deaths within the Black community. The analysis shows how kitchenettes were a microcosm of the larger systems of oppression for Black families in comparison to White families in Chicago. Shabazz explains “kitchenettes were apartments, sometimes attics, and even basements subdivided into smaller individual living quarters. In these ‘small suites’ entire families lived in tiny rooms sometimes no bigger than a bedroom” (Shabazz, 2015, p. 51). In Shabazz’s work symbolism stands out and physical space becomes a symbol—a negative symbol. For example, these “cramped,” “disease-ridden, rat-infested forms of housing” were words to describe these kitchenettes in undesirable areas of the city (Shabazz, 2015, p. 34). Shabazz highlights the city wanted to “contain crime... as a result, parts of Chicago’s South Side were confronted with daily forms of prison or carceral power that effectively prisonized the landscape. Through these circumstances, these kitchenettes were in harsh conditions and the Black community had to conform to these kinds of living arrangements. Through his work, “he used this analysis not only to meditate on the racial dynamics of American society but also to show how space and place influenced identity formation” (Shabazz, 2015, p. 45). Space and place create and mold people, families, and communities into who they are.

The racial subtleties of American society reflect how society views people of color. Due to these inadequate living arrangements, American society dehumanizes people of color. Living in tight quarters infested with rats and bugs, these living arrangements affect people of color mentally. From living in these poor circumstances, communities of color become desensitized to deprived standards. These inhumane conditions become part of them, which has historically and continues to generate anger, pain, and trauma. Ultimately, where these groups of people come from are apart of them because they internalized these poor living conditions—even if these communities did not desire to be a part of the struggle. Shabazz states, “it is not a coincidence that poor people, people of color, immigrants, the sick, the disabled, prisoners, women, sexual minorities, and other marginalized groups live in bracketed geographies” (Shabazz, 2015, p. 45). All of these groups of communities are labeled, and these labels become their identities, and they become foundational parts of their lives. Space, place, and neighborhoods shape identity formation especially around the south side. In Shabazz’s work, identity symbolizes resistance and constrains. The symbolic meaning of the kitchenette is a reference to these marginalized groups of people being restricted, conditions that are fostered by and played out through practices of redlining, zoning, and moving these communities to concentrated areas of the city. This reading is a critique of how Black bodies were treated and still are treated.

Finally, Shabazz’s work shows how the allocation of power and control is at the hands of the city and not in the hands of the people who live in the city. The reading connects the kitchenette to prison. In prison, inmates are in restricted quarters and treated like animals. Analogously, by putting these Black families in tight spaces, emotions run,

resulting in irritation, rage, and fury. This violence and anger stems from agony, frustration, and the struggle to want better. It is clear who holds the power and who is left powerless. People are channeling the little power they do have and remapping the negative space into community food gardens to help their communities thrive.

Recently, segregated communities of color, like the South and West sides of Chicago, have aimed to remap space, and one way this may be accomplished is through community food gardens, or urban gardens. In “Privilege in a Place Ballet: An Incomplete Argument of Places and Bodies (2020),” Samantha Senda-Cook explains how “community gardens provide rare opportunities for its marginalized Black residents to reshape their neighborhoods, and are alternatives to capitalist modes of land use” (p. 207). The presence of community food gardens may help reshape Black neighborhoods, especially those neighborhoods that are food deserts, and these changes could add positivity and a fresh start to see better outcomes.

Community food gardens rose during World War I and World War II and the gardens were placed on public land to grow food (Milburn et al., 2010, p. 71-89). According to an article, “Wartime Gardens: Grown from the Past: A Short History of Community Gardening in the United States” comments in the mid 1900’s, community food gardens connected with grassroots organizations, such as American Community Gardening Association (ACGA), which help revitalize urban neighborhoods (Smithsonian Gardens Community of Gardens, n.d., paras. 1)

Food Desert Crisis

As mentioned above, Durden points out food deserts are neighborhoods located within the city where people may experience difficulties accessing healthy produce,

quality meat, and other food options because there are no grocery stores present in their communities (Durden, 2020, paras. 2). The city determines where certain communities are places and this can be seen as discriminatory towards people of color, which continues the historical cycle of oppression. In *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* (2011), Eric Holt-Giménez and Yi Wang explore the lack of food justice, meaning that culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse communities do not have access to healthy food. “The prominence of the privileged in the food-movement narrative, along with its “Whiteness,” reflects the uneasy dualism between the trend of “quality food” for higher-income consumers and “other food” consumed by the masses” (Holt-Giménez et al., 2011, p. 86). Depending on ethnicity, status, wealth, and power “the food movement is segmented in ways that reflect social hierarchies of race and class in the food system” (Holt-Giménez et al., 2011, p. 86). Higher tax bracket zip codes have access to an array of resources, while others do not have that same luxury. Every community deserves to have quality resources such as grocery stores, community centers, doctor’s offices, and great public schools in their neighborhoods. Neighborhoods, South and West of downtown, should not be subjected to rotten bananas, outdated meat, and moldy produce. Holt-Giménez et al. elaborates that:

Poverty, hunger, and community demands for healthy food access continually pull [low] income communities of color toward food aid and food-access solutions coming from mainstream food security and anti-hunger groups, as well as toward the cheap industrial food solutions offered by low-end food retail chains such as Wal-Mart, Food 4 Less, and dollar stores (p. 91).

Holt-Giménez et al. explains how the community is advocating for healthier foods instead of these cheap industrial food solutions that ultimately do not help the community.

While these stores are affordable in price, the quality of the food is not full of nutrients. Due to the poor quality of the food found in large food corporations like Wal-Mart, Food 4 Less, and other low-end grocery stores, community health suffers. These cheap food options can “produce poor health outcomes and drain precious local, [industrial] food dollars from underserved communities, and low-income people of color could...[see this as] an insidious form of racism... [These] structural causes of food insecurity and diet-related disease is making their community sick” (Holt-Giménez et al., 2011, p. 91). Eating low-quality food, over time people of color can develop heart disease, high blood pressure, hypertension, and other major health concerns. The study “Heart Disease In Black Women: The Big Issue You Might Not Know About (2021),” showed that heart disease is the number one killer in America and Black women are more susceptible to dying from heart disease in comparison to White woman (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 1). According to the Black Women’s Health Imperative, “1 in every 2 Black women in the U.S. has heart disease” (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 3). Black women are more likely to get heart disease than any social group.

Also, they mention, “diabetes, high cholesterol, and obesity increase a person’s risk of developing heart disease. And these are all issues that tend to be more common in African-Americans... [One] can also get [heart disease] from picking up unhealthy habits from [one’s] parents” (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 8-9).

Influences from fast food chains and lack of grocery store access can impact a community's health. In addition, many communities of color have and may favor going to fast food chains in their neighborhoods rather than grocery stores, where they could access healthier options. A report by Block, Scribner, and DeSalvo (2004), shows that:

Predominantly Black neighborhoods have 2.4 fast-food restaurants per square mile compared to 1.5 restaurants in predominantly White neighborhoods... The link between fast food restaurants and Black and low-income neighborhoods may contribute to the understanding of environmental causes of the obesity epidemic in these populations (p. 214).

This is an injustice. Fast food restaurants seem to be planted in Black and Brown communities intentionally, which leaves Black and Brown people few healthy options to choose from. If communities of color only have access to fast food options, then that will slowly become apart of their everyday diet. Black and Brown people's health will decline and get worse over time. Everybody deserves lean quality chicken and beef, vibrant produce, and a nice selection of grocery items to buy. Top-tier grocery stores need to be in every neighborhood because having access to an array of fresh, quality foods is a basic need.

Food deserts are a form of systematic oppression. Involuntary migration of Black and Brown bodies relocating to South suburbs as a result of gentrification has led to South suburbs experiencing similar food deserts and a lack of resources. In "Urban Foodscape Trends: Disparities in healthy food access in Chicago (2007-2014)" Marynia Kolak et al. adds that "systematic differences in the built environment that affect urban neighborhoods' access to healthy foods may also perpetuate health disparities" (Kolak et

al., 2007-2014, p. 231). Other communities in Chicago such as the downtown area, North Side, and North and West Suburbs have access to a variety of different grocery stores, fresh local markets, and community food gardens. The American Community Garden Association (2007) defines a community food garden as “a single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people (paras.1). Community gardens use their private or public land to produce lively fruit, leafy vegetables, and/or grow plants to add a nice aesthetic to the garden. The benefits of community food gardens “improve the quality of life for people in the garden, produces nutritious food, reduces crime, beautifies neighborhoods, and creates income opportunities, and economic development” (American Community Garden Association, 2007, paras. 2-3).

Senda-Cook argues that community food gardens are particularly beneficial to Black and Brown neighborhoods because “urban agriculture produced by physical bodies interacting with and within a specific bodies...can be conceptualized as a place ballet, because it is their work together that make them more powerful” (Senda-Cook, 2020, p. 208). The food gardens and the community are creating something that is bigger than themselves and the physical land. Community food gardens a means of spatial rhetoric to shift the meanings of neighborhoods because gardens are fostering unity around the community—that is the mission.

One strong example of the positive impact of community food gardens is seen in Detroit, Michigan, which has a big Black population. The organization, Keep Growing Detroit established by a Black family, The Andrew’s, has made a huge influence on the city by advocating for the expansion of community food gardens. On their website, *Keep Growing Detroit* (2020) shares that “fruit, vegetables, flowers, and herbs are grown in

urban gardens and farms throughout Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park. Growers produce food in healthy soil without harmful chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers or genetically modified products. Growers receive 100% of the profits from produce sold” (paras. 1). In addition, in 2020 collectively all of Detroit grew 484,250 pounds of fresh produce and together, Detroiters reached a profit over one million dollars (Keep Growing Detroit, 2020, paras. 1). Detroit is a clear example of the positive impact of community gardens in urban areas.

There are significant benefits of community food gardens for low-income neighborhoods. In a study conducted by Growing Healthy Kids: A Community Garden-Based Obesity Prevention Program (2013), Dina Castro, Margaret Samuels, and Ann Harman states that thirteen percent of obese children reached a lower body mass index, and twenty three percent of overweight children attained a typical body mass index (p. 193). While there are a lot of advantages to having access to community gardens within neighborhoods, community food gardens are often governed by policies at the city level. Zoning laws can impact community gardens because land developers want to use the available lots for their own interests. In “Incommensurability, Land Use, and the Right to Space: Community Gardens in New York City (2002),” Karen Schmelzkopf states “that [the] removal of the gardens would lead to an increase in affordable and market rate housing, and an expansion in the city tax base through the sale of the properties and housing” (p. 364-381). However, the community food garden argues that they may not bring in a high profit, but the food gardens offer healthy benefits to cities that have available open land (Schmelzkopf, 2002, p. 364-381). Due to competing interests, the city does not see the value in community food gardens as it is only looking for financial

gain to make a profit. More affluent communities of the city fail to see the food disparities because they are not immersed in them. People, who reside in neighborhoods with an abundance of are privileged. The lack of resources that other thriving communities face does not affect them. Other communities are struggling. Kolak et al. (2007-2014) comments, “the complex underlying mechanisms of health disparities involve differences in education, employment, health literacy, health insurance, financial status, and access to high-quality medical care, and the medical consequences of stress bias, and racism (p. 231). This is an effect of colorblind racism because it may give the illusion that everybody, every family has access to the same benefits and the same equalities when that is far from the case. The emphasis is put on equity, not equality.

To sum up, colorblindness gives the illusion that people from different ethnicities and backgrounds obtain equal social, economic, health, and educational opportunities. In reality, not every race or background is equal because racism is still everywhere in this country. Colorblindness ideas are implanted and entrenched through spatial rhetoric, because even though some people may overlook race, it still affects how physical space and societal practices are arranged. Chicago and Omaha are prime examples that clearly show the racial division between the Black and Brown community and the White community. Through racial segregation, the quality of resources are allocated to different communities and ultimately neighborhoods of color suffer in the end. Spatial rhetoric is shown through food deserts because different neighborhoods in Chicago have barely any access to quality food. By not having access to quality food, the residents are subjected to eating from fast food chains and convenience stores, which causes the Black and Brown communities to not have a well balanced diet. One solution to solving the problem of

food deserts is building community food gardens in low-income areas. Community food gardens can bring fresh produce and healthy outlets to struggling communities.

Methodology

Because I am looking at the complex problem of segregation within certain low-income neighborhoods, my methodology is informed by theories from spatial rhetoric. Rhetorical Cartographies is a methodology that works to “rhetorical[ly] [theorize]... space/place...by uncovering the rhetorical tactics community members utilize to materially and symbolically remap their community” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p.103). Senda-Cook et al. argues that Rhetorical Cartographies is useful to understand how society restructures different neighborhoods through mapping/remapping space/place. In addition, Ronald Walter Greene and Kevin Douglas Kuswa (2012) highlight that “Rhetorical Cartographies [describe] the dynamic processes of making space/place where in people challenge and support the normative articulations of space/place by reconstructing them through material changes, engaging in practices that establish vernacular boundaries and establishing (new) patterns of movement” (Greene et al., 2012, paras. 1). By using a critical rhetorical lens, Rhetorical Cartographies can help me see how mapping and remapping of different communities can ultimately affect space/place and the material lives of those within these communities. Rhetorical Cartographies is best suited for my thesis because it helps me understand how people on the South Side of Chicago remap space/place to access quality food. In addition, this framework can help me critique how remapping physical space in these communities affects Black and Brown people, in particular.

Methods

To collect data for this thesis, I used three websites *Google Maps*, *Opportunity Atlas*, and *Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project* in order to determine the access of food, transportation, and community garden resources within Englewood and Chatham communities on the South Side of Chicago. I had to be creative when collecting my data for my thesis because the country was in the middle of a pandemic, therefore a lot of businesses/community food gardens were closed or had shorter hours. In light of the limitations, I was able to collect data by using different mapping website, which added an interesting layer to my thesis. As I was compiling research, I chose to focus on the neighborhoods, Englewood and Chatham because they frequently appeared in articles, books, and sources. They stated that these two neighborhoods in particular did not have access to food, crime rates are high, and there is a large percentage of poverty.

Google Maps (n.d.) is a “web-mapping product developed by Google. It offers satellite imagery, aerial photography, street maps, 360 degree interactive panoramic views of streets (street view), real time traffic conditions, and route planning for traveling by foot, car, air, and public transportation” (Google Maps Metrics and Infographics, n.d.). I used *Google Maps* (n.d.) to locate the different resources regarding food access to calibrate the number of grocery stores, fast food chains, and community food gardens within the neighborhoods of Englewood and Chatham. Also, I used *Google Maps* (n.d.) to track the distance in miles from various location points within the two neighborhoods and the type of transportation that runs within the two areas.

Opportunity Atlas (2016) is a website used to calculate the median/average income, median/average rent, incarceration rate, job growth rate, poverty rate, statistics on one to two parent household, population density, and other socioeconomic factors for

any city, area, location, and neighborhood within the United States. The website allows users to calculate this data by entering a specific zip code of a neighborhood or exact address. I wanted to explore infrastructure issues such as transportation, development, structural issues, and socioeconomic disparities within these two specific neighborhoods.

I also used *Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project (2015)* to locate and map access to community food gardens within the Englewood and Chatham area. I was able to search for gardens by location by putting in an exact address or community area/neighborhood. Also, for additional information the website can locate gardens based on the Ward, Cook County District, or by entering the name of a particular garden. Once the website pulls up the community gardens found in the area, it provides the address, distance from the location entered, shares whether the garden is food producing or not, lists the garden's features, indicates if the community food garden is grown by a school, church, or if it is a private garden, and communicates the type of community garden. I wanted to discover how many community gardens were in both neighborhoods, and I wanted to see how accessible they are to the local residents.

Using these three websites, I first looked for the amount and ease of access to grocery stores, fast food chains, corner stores/markets, shopping centers, community food gardens, and public transportation. I narrowed my search of these locations to a five mile radius within main blocks of both Chatham and Englewood neighborhoods. Next, I searched to see if there were any structural impediments and or detours within the areas that would make access to food more or less convenient or inaccessible. These three websites were the best tools to use for my thesis because *Google Maps* gives accurate locations, *Opportunity Atlas* compiles reliable statistics, and *Chicago Urban Agriculture*

Mapping Project provides access to all the existing community food gardens within Chicago. *Google Maps* offers relatively up-to-date information and statistics. *Opportunity Atlas*' statistics and data were compiled in 2016. *Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project* launched their mapping website in 2015, but the community is slowly adding new community food gardens to their website once the person, organization, church, or school registers. These three website helped me compiled accurate results in the two neighborhoods Chatham and Englewood. These three mapping websites helped me gather data for my result section.

Results

Figure I: Total Number of Grocery Stores, Fast Food Businesses, Community Gardens, and Type of Transportation in Chatham and Englewood Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods:	Number of Grocery Stores:	Number of Fast Food Businesses:	Number of Community Gardens:	Type of Transportation:
Chatham (87 th Street and S. Indiana)	3	34	8	Bus – 4, 79 th , 83 rd , 87 th , and 91 st Train – Red Line: 79 th and 87 th Street
Englewood (63 rd Street and S. Halsted)	2	17	23	Bus – 8, 44 th , 62 nd , 63 rd , 69 th , 71 st , and 75 th Train – Red Line: 63 rd Street and Green Line: 63 rd Street

In the neighborhoods of Chatham and Englewood located on the South Side of Chicago, it is clear that both neighborhoods do not have access to a diverse number of

grocery stores. The number of fast food chains, corner stores, and small convenience markets surpasses the number of grocery stores in both areas. However, there are community food gardens present in both neighborhoods. According to *Google Maps* (n.d.), a majority of the community food gardens are located behind public schools, community churches, and in backyards of neighborhood residents' homes. In Chatham, five out of eight gardens in the neighborhood are food producing. From 87th Street & S. Indiana to one of the community food gardens located on 85th Street and S. Michigan is only a five minute walk away. In addition, in Englewood, twelve out of twenty-three gardens in the neighborhood are food producing. From 63rd Street & S. Halsted to one of the community food garden in the area located on 900 W. 63rd Parkway is only a four minute walk away. Lastly, the table shows all the buses and train lines that run throughout Chatham and Englewood. It is more convenient to hop on one of the buses rather than the train if residents are commuting within their neighborhoods. However, the train is more useful if residents want to access downtown or other areas in Chicago.

Figure II. Grocery Stores & Fast Food Chains in Chatham

Locations In Chatham:	Jewel Osco	Food 4 Less	Wal-Mart Supercenter	McDonalds	Red Snapper Fish & Chicken	Burger King	ALDI
87 th Street and S. Indiana	Walking: 10 Mins 87 Bus: 7 Mins	Walking: 10 Mins 87 Bus: 7 Mins	Walking: 21-25 Mins 87 Bus: 16 Mins	Walking: 3 Mins No Bus	Walking: 15 Mins 3 Bus: 9 Mins	Walking: 3 Mins No Bus	Walking: 18 Mins 87 Bus: 10-15 Mins

87 th Street and S. Cottage Grove	Walking: 25 Mins 87 Bus: 10 Mins	Walking: 25 Mins 87 Bus: 10 Mins	Walking: 36-42 Mins 87 Bus: 19-21 Mins	Walking: 19 Mins 87 Bus: 7 Mins	Walking: 20 Mins 3,4, or 87 Bus: 14 Mins	Walking: 19 Mins 87 Bus: 7 Mins	Walking: 34 Mins 87 Bus: 15 Mins
80 th and S. Maryland	Walking: 44 Mins 4 & 87 Bus: 20 Mins	Walking: 44 Mins 4 & 87 Bus: 20 Mins	Walking: 41 Mins 79 & 24 Bus: 31 Mins	Walking: 38 Mins 4 & 87 Bus: 21 Mins	Walking: 19 Mins 4 Bus: 13 Mins	Walking: 38 Mins 4 & 87 Bus: 21 Mins	Walking: 44 Mins 4 & 87 Bus: 29 Mins

In the Chatham neighborhood, on 87rd Street and Indiana, there are several businesses about seven minutes by bus, such as Jewel Osco, and Food 4 Less. That is the only major shopping center located in the neighborhood. Before entering the shopping center, passers-by are able to easily access a Burger King and McDonalds. There is a Supercenter Wal-Mart about 20 minutes away by bus if the local residents in the neighborhood live on 87th Street. There are a couple of businesses which include Chase Bank, Bank of America, Nike Community Store, Liquor Stores, Dollar Tree, and various fast food chains which include Garrett Popcorn Shop, Red Snapper Fish and Chicken, and Pepe's Mexican. Across different communities in the city that have high and low access to food resources, residential segregation and food disparities put minorities at a disadvantage. Chatham does not have a lot of healthy options to choose from, which is a health hindrance to the community. Due to low quality food options such as McDonald's and Burger King, local residents often times choose convenience rather than travel on the bus to a grocery store. Consequently, the people in the neighborhood feel the affects of a lacking of food access, and this creates significant obstacles for many families of color.

Figure III. Grocery Stores & Fast Food Chains in Englewood:

Locations In Englewood:	Jewel Osco	Whole Foods - Englewood	ALDI	Dollar General	White Castle	Dunkin Donuts	Harold's Chicken
63 rd Street and S. Halsted	Walking: 42-47 Mins 63 Bus: 20-22 Mins	Walking: 5 Mins No Bus	Walking: 2 Mins No Bus	Walking: 41 Mins 63 &44 Bus: 16 Mins	Walking: 12 Mins 8 Bus: 6 Mins	Walking: 1 Min No Bus	Walking: 19 Mins 8 Bus: 5 Mins
71 st Street and S. Halsted	Walking: 1Hour & 3 Mins 8 &59 Bus: 36 Mins	Walking: 23 Mins 8 Bus: 9 Mins	Walking: 25 Mins 8 Bus: 12 Mins	Walking: 18 Mins 8 or 75 Bus: 10-12 Mins	Walking: 11 Mins 8 Bus: 4 Mins	Walking: 23 Mins 8 Bus: 10 Mins	Walking: 19 Mins 8 Bus: 5 Mins
57 th Street and S. Union	Walking: 47 Mins 59 Bus: 24 Mins	Walking: 18 Mins 8 Bus: 9 Mins	Walking: 16 Mins 8 Bus: 12 Mins	Walking: 55 Mins 8 & 75 Bus: 24 Mins	Walking: 27 Mins 8 Bus: 10 Mins	Walking: 15 Mins 8 Bus: 10 Mins	Walking: 37 Mins 8 Bus: 11 Mins

Next, in the Englewood neighborhood, on 63rd Street and Halsted, there are no Jewel Osco grocery stores, and the closest one is 22 minutes on the bus without traffic. However, they have two grocery stores within the area, ALDI and Whole Foods Market. From 63rd Street, ALDI is four minutes by bus, and Whole Foods is three minutes walking in an unsafe neighborhood (Chicago News Outlet, WGN9, 2013). Englewood has a community food center, and that is a eight minute bus ride. Unfortunately, the neighborhood does not have any big shopping areas, however they do have a couple of

businesses scattered throughout that include Dunkin Donuts, Shell, Dollar General, and White Castle.

In general, on the South Side, there are two Wal-Mart Neighborhood Markets located on 47th Street & Cottage Grove Ave and 75th Street & Ashland Ave. Also, there are three Save-A-Lot grocery stores on East 63rd Street, 72nd and Stony Island Ave, and East 83rd Street. However, there are only two Marianos grocery stores, but they are only in the Bronzeville community, which is the just south of downtown. One is on 38th and King Drive, and the other is located on 31st and Ashland Ave. There are two Marianos grocery stores located in the South Suburbs, however that is only for selected customers who have a car to get there. In total, there are thirteen Marianos dispersed throughout the downtown area and on the North Side, ranging from Clark Street to North Sheridan Road. Next, there are seven Jewel Osco's located on the South Side in comparison to ten Jewel Osco's in the heart of downtown and on the North Side. Whereas the North Side has nine Whole Foods locations, on the South Side they only have two locations in the neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Englewood. Both Whole Foods stores on the South Side are very small stores compared to downtown and North Side locations such as Lincoln Park and Streeterville locations. Lastly, there are collectively fourteen Targets downtown and on the North Side, but heading South, there are only two Targets located in the neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Archer Heights.

As far as transportation, the North Side has more train lines rather than the South Side. The North Side lines consist of Red, Purple, Blue, and Brown. However, the two big lines that run through the South Side are only Red and Green. The Red Line runs the direction of North to South. The North Stops are close together, in particular from the

beginning of the Red Line which is the Howard stop to the Addison train stop. In contrast, on the South Side, the stops are spread out especially from the Garfield stop to the end of the Red Line on 95th Street.

On the Green Line, the train runs from West to South. There are a lot more stops on the West Side, specifically from Harlem/Lake stop to the California stop rather than on the South Side, which runs from 35th Bronzeville—IIT to Ashland Ave & 63rd Street. The last train stop is in the Englewood neighborhood on 63rd and Ashland Ave.

Analysis

While community food gardens may bring a sense of light and hope to neighborhoods in South Chicago, it cannot be ignored that these community food gardens are operating under “resource dependence,” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3) which means the majority need government’s support to function, ultimately disempowering the community. I argue that community food gardens are “enacting material change within particular places,” which is essentially reconstructing neighborhoods to reshape them to produce “new meanings” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p.104). By using the methodology, rhetorical cartographies methodology, Senda-Cook et al. explores how mapping/remapping space/place can invite “new ways of thinking about and doing community” (Senda-Cook et al., 2015, p. 105). Therefore, remapping space/place through building community food gardens may bring positive change and uplift the community.

The Hope:

Even though these neighborhoods face significant levels of crime and health problems, community food gardens have the potential to usher in hope, peace, and prosperity. Englewood, West Englewood, Chatham, and Roseland are not desirable areas on the South Side of Chicago. Along with increasing rates of crime, these neighborhoods are lacking in basic resources. According to an article, “The 10 Most Dangerous Neighborhoods in Chicago,” published by Housely (n.d), “the worst neighborhood in Chicago is West Englewood which has a population of 35,000, a median income of \$29,000 [annually] and the 3rd worst crime index in the city” (paras. 12) There has been a steep decrease in job opportunities, local businesses, property value, and food access. “Almost 100% of the 45,282 person population in West Englewood was African American and living below the poverty line... On average, crime in West Englewood is 262% higher than the rest of the country” (Housely, n.d. paras. 12). Due to increases in poverty, high crime rates, and few resources, the community faces hardships, making it difficult to overcome adversity. Due to “segregation [it] makes it unlikely that poor Blacks will be able to escape poverty. For instance, 72 percent of Black Americans born into the lowest economic quartile... compared with only 40 percent of Whites” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 33). As Scott Jenkins argues that, “a park or community garden may reduce crime in the area immediately surrounding the lot. The research showed that the number of crimes reported to police may have been reduced after the lots were planted with vegetation and that residents living near the lots overwhelmingly reported feeling safer” (Jenkins, 2018, paras. 9). Even though poverty and violence affects the African American population on the South Side of Chicago far more than any other area in the city, the community is providing resources to educate families about a healthy and

peaceful lifestyle. From my research, these community food gardens are used to grow fresh fruits, vegetables, and green plants in the neighborhood to brighten up the community. An article posted from Grow Greater Englewood entitled, “Our Work Flow (2017),” shares that “the early work of the Grow Greater Englewood coalition resulted in Whole Foods giving over \$20,000 supporting over 40 Englewood based community organizations, schools, faith-based institutions and park districts. This includes school community gardens, health and wellness initiatives, and cultural events” (paras. 4). Raising the money to build these local businesses, community food gardens, and food markets within the neighborhood can really help benefit people of color. According to Greenleaf Communities, Katie DeMuro (2013) discusses how community gardens can “help improve air and soil quality, reduce food miles that are required to transport nutritious foods, can reduce neighborhood waste, improve food security, and increase physical activity through garden maintenance” (DeMuro, 2013, paras. 4-6). These small and positive changes within the community food gardens can encourage, uplift, and inspire the Englewood community, Chatham community, and other communities on the South Side to start to develop healthy practices and better eating habits.

Under Government Operation:

While there is potential for community food gardens to help remap the space of Chatham and Englewood neighborhoods, most of the community food gardens I studied are on government property, which means they have to operate under their laws and rules, which may be confining. For example, in “Urban community gardens can improve city life – but we have to help them” Becker et al. (2018) discusses how community food gardens do not have a large amount of money or ample of resources, so the community

food gardens depends on other resources to help financially. “This...[is] called resource dependence – that generally means “you need me so I have control over you” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3). Resource dependence is an extension of colorblind racism because it is not based on what specific needs the community needs, but simply based on what the government wants. The government is looking at the community gardens from aerial view instead of ground level view. Therefore, city governments and bigger administrations have input in what community food gardens can and can not do (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3). Local governments know that community food gardens need their help and support to keep the gardens in the neighborhoods running, however, community food gardens do not generate revenue. Later, Becker et al. (2018) mentions the community food gardens may request for grant opportunities, so the gardens can receive money from the government under certain conditions (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3). They could “dictate that the garden has to have 10 members before it can apply for funding... This can take the garden away from its original goals – maybe the garden wanted to stay small with only 5 members” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 3).

The government uses their power to control the community food gardens by having them apply for grant money and making them follow guidelines on how many people can operate the garden. If the community garden does not follow their stipulations, then they might not receive grant funding from the government. Becker et al. adds community food gardens are on the search for permanent space to open their garden up to the neighborhood, and the hope is the city provides the food garden with the space or lot (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 4). Becker et al. contends, “the gardens often had to move several times and...under threat of having to move again. This led to urban

community gardens not investing in their space” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 4). Due to lack of control, the local government can move the gardens to a different location wherever they see fit to do so.

According to my results, all of the community food gardens were behind schools, local churches, and on private property in Chatham and Englewood. Public schools and churches may make community food gardens easier to get to, but places like public schools are government funded, so it is still in their hands and under their control. Becker et al. (2018) shares “urban community gardens also had to compete with developers for the limited number of undeveloped spaces within the city... Other undeveloped sites are frequently given to developers instead of community gardens” (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 5). Sometimes community food gardens are given a location, but oftentimes the government gives it to the developers (Becker et al., 2018, paras. 5). From my research, the *Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project* (2015) shows that in Englewood roughly forty-eight percent of community food gardens are located behind local public schools, which are government regulated spaces. Also, the mapping website shares that five out of the twenty-three community food gardens are located behind local churches in the neighborhood. Public schools and churches may make community food gardens more accessible to the public, however if residents are no longer in the traditional public school system or they are not a part of a congregation that has access to community food gardens, then some of the community may be excluded.

Decline In Health & Wellness:

Unfortunately, due to the lack of food resources and a decline in Black and Brown health, resulting diet and fitness imbalances can lead race-based perceptions and discrimination reflected in biased treatment. In the United States, racial, health, and food inequalities put minority groups at a disadvantage, and this ultimately has a negative impact on health (De Maio, 2019 et al., p. 192). From my research, in Chatham, before entering the shopping center located on 87th Street, there are two fast food chains present – McDonald’s and Burger King. However, Jewel Osco and Food 4 Less are the only two grocery store options within the neighborhood, and the nature of both grocery stores is that they are always crowded. Because of the grocery store congestion, fast food chains are more desirable for easy convenience and accessing unhealthy food quickly. Families on the go would rather save time and get a couple of burgers with fries than wait in a long line with a cart full of groceries.

In a large city like Chicago, people of color face significant limited food resources only heighten these health disparities. Wendy Troxel, Karen Matthews, Joyce Bromberger, and Kim Sutton-Tyrrell (2003) explore the world of chronic stress, discrimination, and hypertension in African American and Caucasian women. Their study reveals that African American women suffer with chronic stress and higher carotid intima-media thickness, thickness of the innermost two layers of the wall of an artery, as compared to White woman. They suggest that African American women are vulnerable and suffer with ongoing discrimination—which ultimately leads to higher stress levels, hypertension and other chronic diseases (Troxel et al., 2003, paras. 1). When large amounts of stress are stored daily, it becomes chronic. Race, health, and diet plays an

essential role in health gaps. These health gaps can lead to more health problems and other chronic illness that can be damaging, if not deadly.

Due to the lack of convenient and healthy food options individuals can experience health effects such as weight gain. In an article published in *Huff Post*, “Judging People By Their Appearance is Not Ok (2017),” Jessica Gerlock gave a personal testimony:

I have seen the difference in the way others look at me now that I am skinny compared to when I was overweight. I wish I could say that it is the same but there is a noticeable difference. I felt like I was looked down upon and not taken seriously because of my weight. To make it worse, I believe women are judged on their appearance more than men (paras. 3)

The discomfort of feeling overweight and judged by appearance can cause people, especially women feel subconscious about themselves. Due to an array of experiences from lack of security, safety, and health opportunities a large number of people of color are leaving the city and moving elsewhere. From my research, both charts, Figure II and Figure III show the close proximity of fast food chains to main blocks walking or taking the bus. The data reveals that the fast food restaurants are easier to get to rather than the grocery stores in the areas.

To decrease health disparities, community food gardens could significantly contribute to improving eating habits and poor diets. Figure I shows how many community gardens Chatham and Englewood have access to. It is imperative that struggling communities establish community food gardens to support local businesses within their neighborhoods, but most importantly consume nutritious foods like locally

grown fruits and vegetables to reduce these chronic deadly diseases. Also, these locally grown produce may not have harsh chemicals on them, and the community may have an array of options to choose from. From my research, community food gardens are right in the neighborhood, so they can be easy to access whenever residents need to go shopping for produce. By implementing new habits, a person will start to see changes in health, lifestyle, and outlook on life. Overall, community food gardens are a great addition to any community and will help offset the health disparity.

Discussion

Conclusion – Negativity Into Positivity:

Community Health Equity—A Chicago Reader focuses on similar concepts relating to health concerns and health equity in urban cities. Due to the lack of quality foods in food deserts, chronic stress can occur and lead to major health concerns. In particular, De Maio et al. (2019) provide extensive research on issues regarding health equity in the city of Chicago. The authors expressed “currency exchanges, storefront churches, auto parts shops, liquor stores and taverns, hot dog stands, and a beauty shop or two are the only businesses left on Ogden, [a neighborhood on the South Side], which used to be one of the city’s major commercial streets...the neighborhood was already in rapid decline” (p. 73). De Maio et al. touches on how equity is important, but racial inequalities and class structure play a pivotal role in health gaps as well. When people of color are left with liquor stores, hot dog stands, and corner stores to resort to for food access, over time, consuming a poor, unbalanced diet will lead to health problems and illnesses. An unhealthy, processed diet can cause high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and other serious health concerns. As people of color increasingly experience

hardships, obstacles to daily life, limited food access, and violence within their communities, chronic stress can start to become a serious issue. The American Heart Association (2021) reports that “Black women are nearly twice as likely to have a stroke compared with White woman...[Also] when it comes to high blood pressure, African Americans...are diagnosed more often than any other group in the world” (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 6). Black women’s blood pressure is 46.3% compared to Black men’s blood pressure which is 45%” (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 6). Due to these alarming statistics, it is important for the African American community to, “[make] sure [their] diet includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and fiber, [aim] for a diet low in sodium, sugar, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol, [stay] active with 150 minutes of activity every week (walking, bike riding, etc.), not smoking or using other tobacco products, [and lastly limit] the amount of alcohol” (BWHI Staff, 2021, paras. 14-15).

Making healthy dietary and lifestyle changes, which includes exercising regularly and eating a well balanced diet is key to decreasing health diseases and illnesses. Investing and shopping from community food gardens and other local produce markets may be a step in the right direction. A future step in my research could possibly interview a particular population that live in diverse communities that shop from community food gardens. In my future research, I would propose questions like if they have noticed positive changes in their health such as weight loss, lower cholesterol levels, and blood pressure levels decreasing from eating healthy foods from community food gardens. Next, I would create a chart or graph that include participant’s answers to my various questions and record their results within the chart. The data will reveal if community food gardens decrease people’s health overall.

A place where community food gardens are thriving and healthy living is exceeding is Detroit. For example, in Detroit, Michigan their communities in and around the city are very invested in building up their community food gardens. In “In Detroit, A New Type of Agricultural Neighborhood Has Emerged (2019),” Biba Adams states that “Detroit, [is] home to nearly 1,400 community gardens and farms...center[ing] agriculture in neighborhoods.” The young generation mostly Black people that resides in Detroit desires to live around fresh produce and they take quality food accessibility into buying property (Adams, 2019, paras. 5). In contrast to Chicago, Detroit centers their communities around healthy living. In addition, Adams shares “housing communities [are] working [with] farms as their focus... They have large swaths of green space, orchards... greenhouses... outdoor community kitchens, and environmentally sustainable homes decked with solar panels” (Adams, 2019, paras. 2). These neighborhoods are incorporating environmentally friendly houses and using green spaces to implement healthy resources for their communities. However, Chicago may not be fully invested in expanding the accessibility to community food gardens to all their neighborhoods. According to my research, the location of community food gardens are in government owned spaces, such as public schools and churches, which can make it challenging for community food gardens to survive.

It is evident that food deserts and community food gardens play a part in color hierarchy. It is clear what resources White communities are given and what resources Black and Brown neighborhoods are lacking. It is intentional where the placements of community food gardens, fast food restaurants, grocery stores, and housing are made in Black and Brown neighborhoods. Due to the violent environment particularly on the

South and West sides of the city of Chicago, physical space and structural barriers that surround the areas that people of color live in, ultimately adds distress to these communities, physically, mentally, and emotionally. The displacement of Black and Brown people that reside in unfunded neighborhoods who face physical obstacles, the damages show the negative consequences of spatial rhetoric. However, community food gardens are fighting against these negative implications that the cities are putting in front of them. Throughout all the obstacles, community food gardens are slowly starting to make positive change through out the world.

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