What is the Problem With Food Accessibility in Bedford-Stuyvesant?

Unpacking the Ambiguities Surrounding Food Accessibility

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Abstract

The United States suffers from a disparity in food accessibility, where food is inequitably distributed depending on geographic location, class, economic status, and more, and not all individuals have an equal opportunity to access healthy and affordable food products. In this paper, I will look at food accessibility via the scope of the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York. I will first describe Bedford-Stuyvesant and the factors within the community that result in food insecurity. I will then discuss the existing definitions of the terms ‘food security’ and ‘food desert.’ Next, I will address why those existing definitions do not encompass the myriad of food accessibility issues the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant faces. Next, I will critique these definitions as they apply to Bedford-Stuyvesant in three separate ways: 1. Current definitions of ‘food insecurity’ and ‘food desert’ do not take into account many of the food accessibility problems the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant faces. 2. Generally speaking, it may not be beneficial to define ‘food insecurity’ and ‘food desert’ in a way that generalizes communities facing food accessibility issues. These communities may not face the exact same problems and may not require the same solutions. 3. Current food accessibility policy can be improved by utilizing both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ solutions to supplement one another in order to implement solidified and tangible programs that are both effective and democratically chosen from within the community.