



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 17, 2014

Elitist Left Shocked to Learn Poor People Like Junk Food

It seems that you can take the junk food out of the neighborhood, but you can't take the neighborhood out of the junk-food mentality — or something like that, anyway.

You might have heard about the debacle of Michelle Obama-inspired school lunches, with children throwing away massive amounts of unpalatable fare and high-schoolers left hungry. Now another one of the First Lady's dietary puppeteering schemes may be biting the dust. Writes [NPR](#):



In inner cities and poor rural areas across the country, public health advocates have been working hard to turn around [food deserts](#) — neighborhoods where fresh produce is scarce, and greasy fast food abounds. In many cases, they're converting dingy, cramped corner markets into lighter, brighter venues that offer fresh fruits and vegetables. In some cases, they're building brand [new stores](#).

"The presumption is, if you build a store, people are going to come," says [Stephen Matthews](#), professor in the departments of sociology, anthropology and demography at Penn State University. To check that notion, he and colleagues from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine recently [surveyed](#) residents of one low-income community in Philadelphia before and after the opening of a glistening new supermarket brimming with fresh produce.

What they're finding, Matthews says, is a bit surprising: "We don't find any difference at all... We see no effect of the store on fruit and vegetable consumption."

Surprising? That "if you build a store, people are going to come" is only a presumption among individuals ignorant of market principles. The truth is the opposite: If enough people want to come (sufficient demand), someone will build a store. But liberals would be shocked by the failure of their little scheme because they, as Thomas Lifson [put it](#) at *American Thinker*, "believe in the comprehensive theory of victimology — that all problems afflicting people who fall into ethnic, sexual, or other identities regarded as victims are due to external factors, not to their own choices."

Without a doubt. It's just as how the film *Boys n the Hood* related the notion that the great presence of liquor and gun stores in Los Angeles was part of a conspiracy to destroy the black community. And, of course, it figures that another element in this grand plot would be to deny poor neighborhoods the energy-bestowing foods that would enable one to dodge the bullets. (You know, I used to live in NYC.



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And I can't tell you how many times I'd be in a supermarket's produce section, reach for a head of broccoli and end up with an Uzi in my hand.)

Joking aside, there's a lot of hypocrisy here. On the one hand, the Left would have us believe that corporations are irredeemably greedy; on the other, that they're so bigoted they'll sacrifice money to persecute minorities. Look, business doesn't care if you're black or white or in-between if your money is green. And this is why, as economist Walter Williams has [pointed out](#), it is non-profit entities — such as government — that have historically engaged in the most egregious discrimination. Being cash-oriented correlates with being colorblind.

Moreover, whether or not I've achieved Rudyard Kipling's ideal, "If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, or walk with kings — nor lose the common touch..." I did grow up in the Bronx and also have hobnobbed with the country-club crew. And I can tell you that a factor here is the provincialism of limousine liberals.

First, it's not my impression that produce was ever as hard to find in poor neighborhoods as people who never actually go into poor neighborhoods would suppose. Supermarkets are sometimes present in these areas, corner bodegas carry some produce, and it's also not unheard of for it to be sold by street vendors or out of trucks. In fact, in the recent incident in which a Trader Joe's was rejected by a Portland, Oregon, activist group because it would have [attracted too many white people](#), one of the arguments used by its opponents was that, contrary to the claims of the store's advocates, the area was not a food desert (it was a sanity desert).

Nonetheless, it is true that poor inner-city people gravitate toward junk food. For instance, every White Castle restaurant I ever saw in the Bronx was in, well, let's say, a rough-hewn neighborhood (my father loved White Castle, by the way). Part of the reason for this is, as the NPR article pointed out, habits and a lack of nutritional knowledge. But there's no surprise there: The low-info voters these areas are notorious for are also low-info eaters.

But there's another factor. The preoccupation with longevity is mainly a phenomenon of the upper classes in America; the wealthy also have the luxury of indulging vanity, a major factor in our obsession with diet. The tougher life gets, however, the more it boils down to basics.

Moreover, poorer people can't go to their country club's restaurant and have a shrimp plate; they don't have the [kind of menu](#) you find at the Obama girls' Sidwell Friends School. So fast food is sometimes one of the few small pleasures they can enjoy. And did the limousine liberals ever consider that some people like junk food and don't want others telling them what to eat?

Besides, what's with this obsession with others' weight? Do people who believe that it's okay to end a child's life in the womb — and who now sometimes even advocate euthanasia for children — really care all that much about shortening a child's life with too much fat and sugar? And forget the line about how the obese increase healthcare costs because, as a [study has shown](#), they actually cost the system less because they die younger.

What we're really seeing with these left-wing diet dogmatists is the Cult of the Body, which, I believe, is driven by liberals' notorious lack of faith. After all, if this world is all you perceive, it can create an inordinate fear of death and an obsession with staying in this world as long as possible. And when that is your mentality, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" is not likely to be your rallying cry.



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