

Food Deserts and Racial Segregation

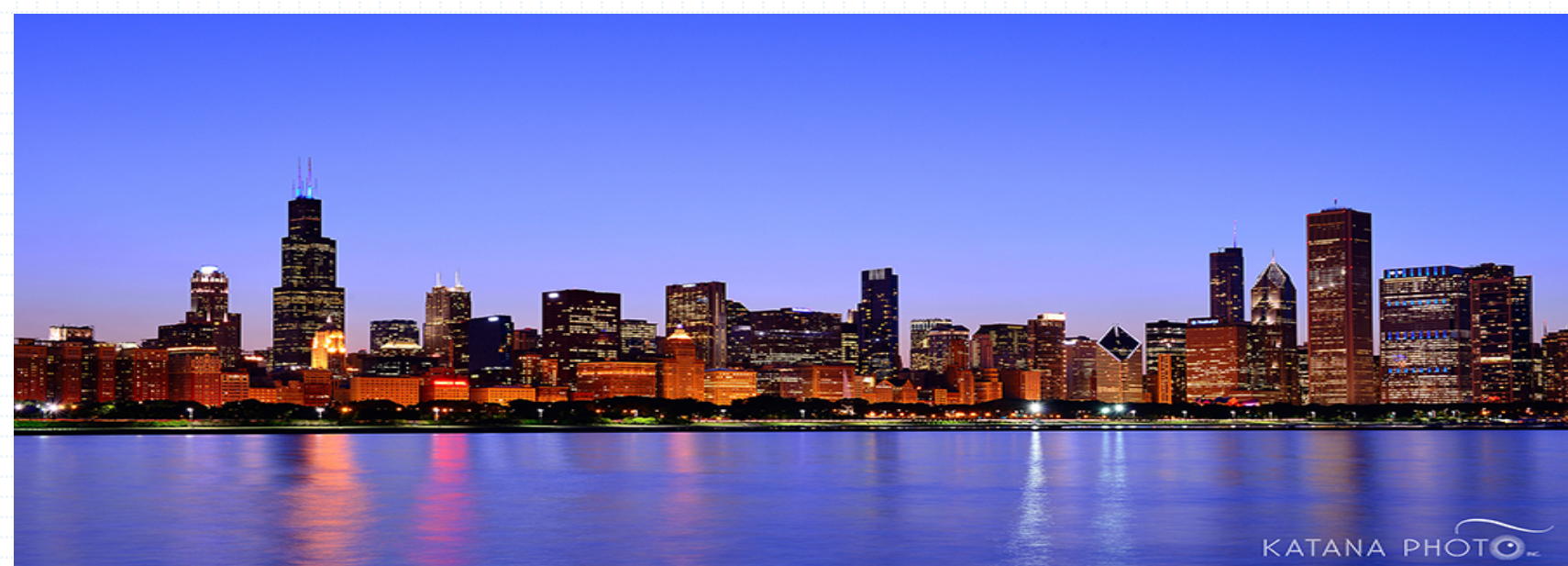
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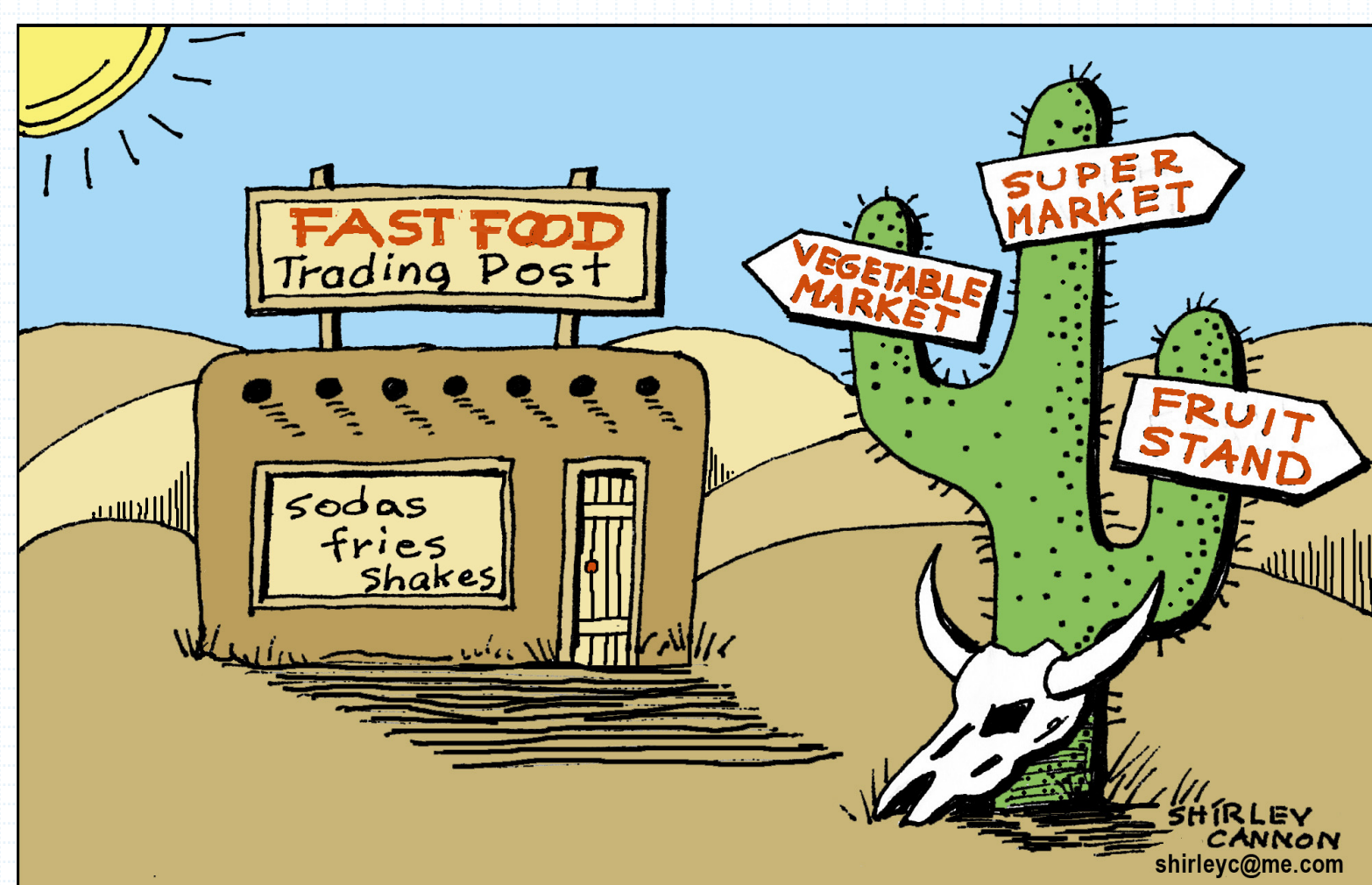
Introduction

- Multiple studies have shown the ongoing racial injustice associated with African American populations and the distribution of affordable and healthy food in urban areas (Walker et al. 2010).
- In these areas affordable and quality fresh foods are scarce (food desert) due to lack of accessible supermarkets, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food (USDA, 2009).
- Chicago is a diverse, yet very segregated city likely due to historically race-based laws and past discrimination.
- This study examines the relationship between racial segregation and food access in Chicago neighborhoods.



Methods

- Using available on-line datasets and ArcMap 10.4, census population and racial demographic by neighborhood, well-known historic racial events data are plotted on a base map of Chicago.
- Grocery store data (which includes liquor stores) is added to the dataset and compared with population distributions.



Results

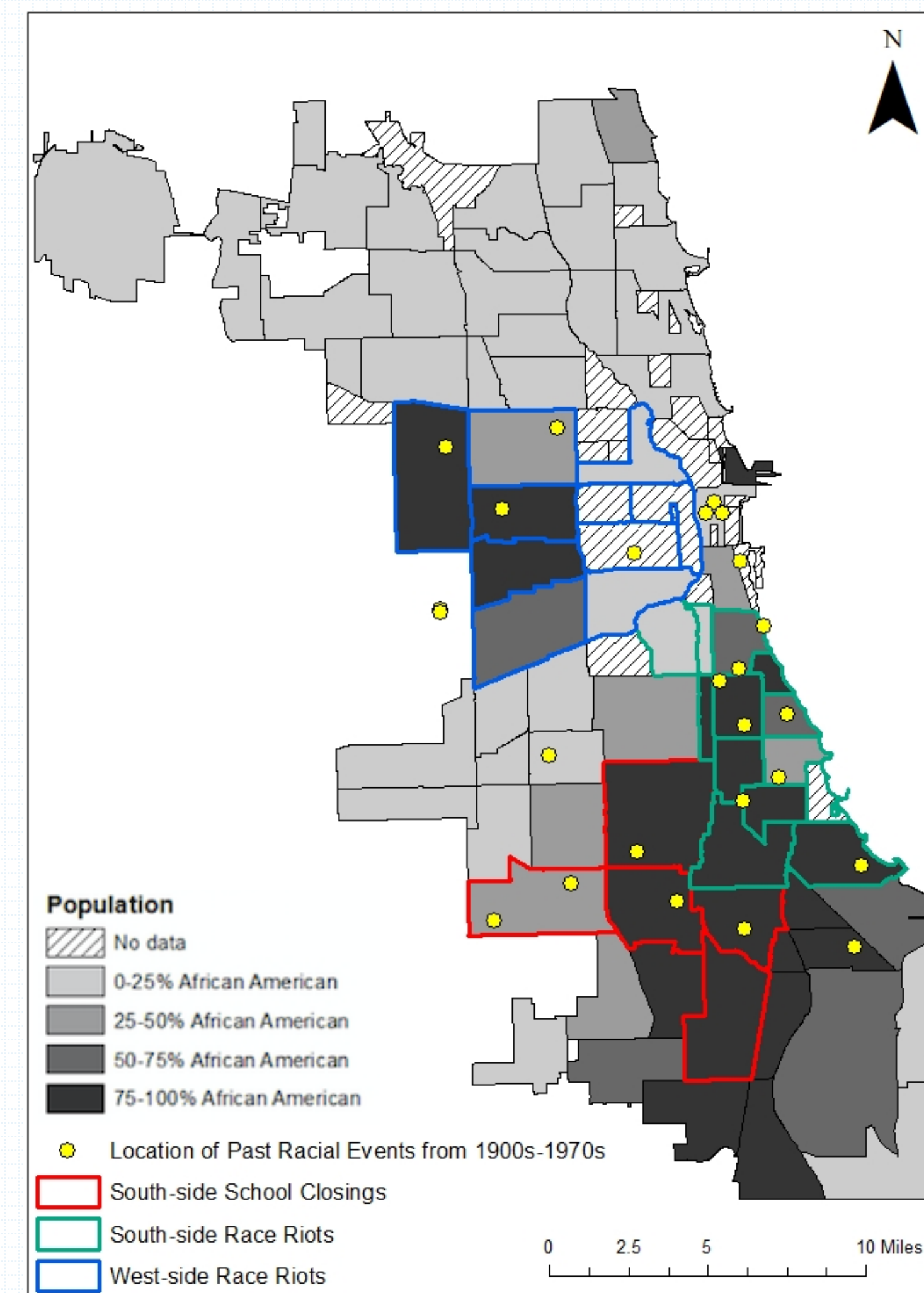


Figure 1: Racially driven events in the early to late 20th century occurred in areas that are now predominantly African American.

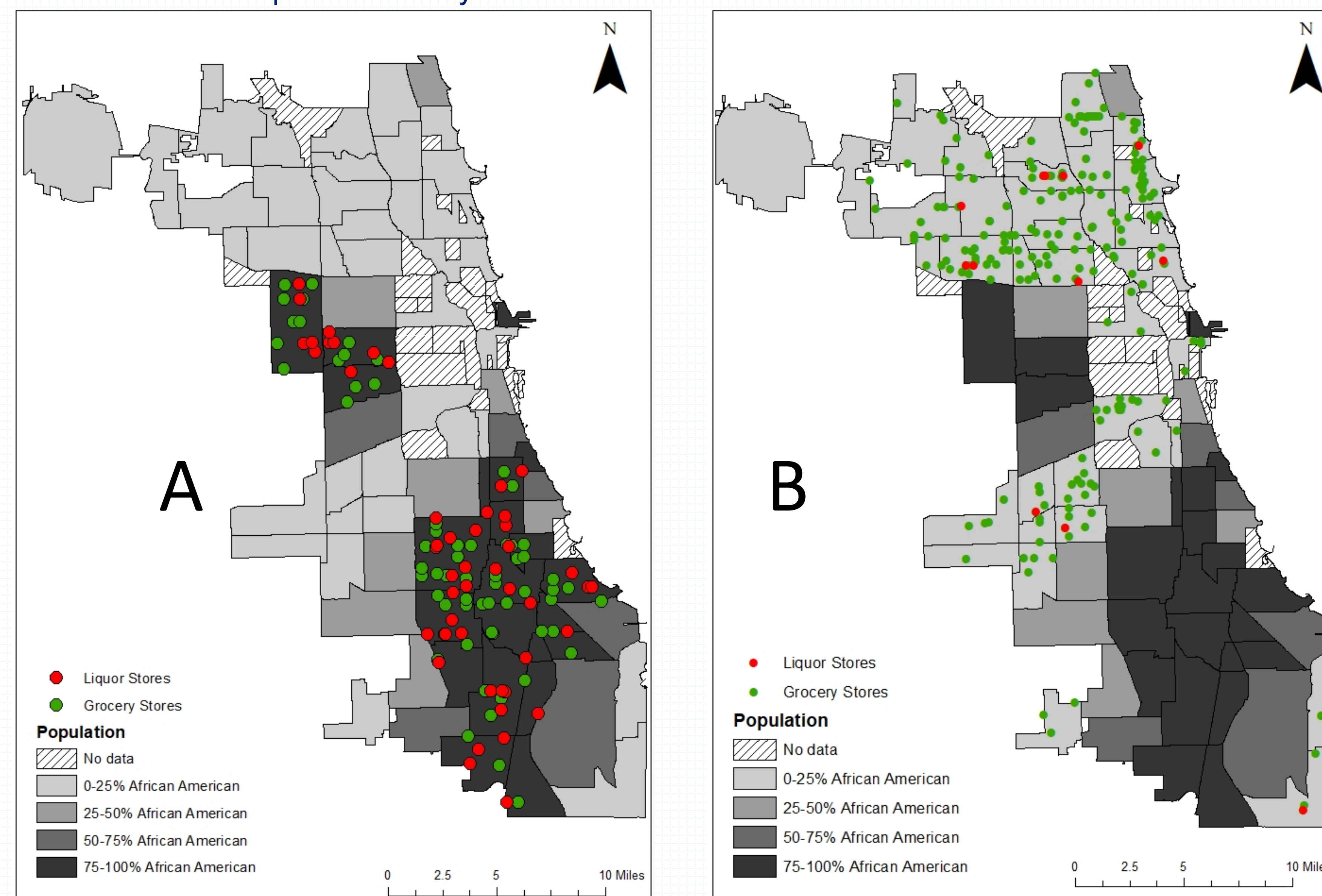


Figure 2 (A and B): A - 22% of grocery stores are in majority African American neighborhoods, and of that, 43% are liquor stores. B- less African American populated neighborhoods have 45% of grocery stores are in those area with only 6% being liquor stores.

Discussion

- Past racially driven events have left a mark on Chicago that may impact the current population in a number of ways. These areas typically have failing infrastructure, high rate of school closings, high crime rates, and abandoned buildings in addition to lack of quality food access.
- Access to quality food is disproportionate in Chicago. African American dominated neighborhoods have much less access to quality food as compared to other regions.

Conclusion

- This study shows the importance of understanding the possible linkage between racial segregation and food accessibility. In order to maintain a healthy population, universal access to quality foods is paramount.
- In the future, additional studies incorporating transportation routes and tracking the implementation of farmers markets in these areas should be considered.



Acknowledgement

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References

Walker, Renee, Christopher Keane and Jessica Burke. 2010. Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: A review of food deserts literature. Health and Place Volume 16, Issue 5, p. 876-884.