

*Department of Humanities, Northumbria University*

Honours Dissertation

Bridging the Gap One Bite at a Time: A Food History of African American Activism 1955-2015

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BA Hons History

2023

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA (Hons) History.

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## Introduction

Although it is a vastly under researched study, a lot can be learned about how a society is structured by looking at the diets of those within it. This dissertation will focus on American society from 1955 to 2015 to make the case that the food system in this period reflected the wider discrimination African Americans experienced. It will use food as a lens with which to look at the attempts African American activists have made since the Civil Rights Movement to overcome their oppression. In doing so, I will attempt to argue that, whether it is a conscious choice or not, changing the way you eat is inherently political.

It is, firstly, important to note that the food system itself is discriminatory. Historically, African Americans have found it more difficult to access nutritious food than their white counterparts. This was a covert yet pervasive form of oppression which reflected the wider social discrimination African Americans experienced. From the 1950s, Civil Rights groups, most notably the Black Panthers, have worked to overcome this by providing marginalised communities with food. It was the women of these movements who were central to this form of activism, with particular focus being placed on feeding children. In the post-Civil Rights era, African American activism relied on individuals working against the discriminatory food system within their communities. From the 1970s greater emphasis was placed on the importance of providing fresh, nutritious produce to families. Community farming became a common way to achieve this, being completely reliant on individual action. These

programmes could also appear to take a colour-blind approach to activism, providing communities with fresh produce without needing to discuss why this was necessary. Only recently has this phenomenon begun to be understood as a racial issue. In coining the term 'food apartheid' in 2018 activist Karen Washington placed the food discrimination faced by predominantly black communities in the wider context of racism. It became clear that, in having unequal access to food, the discrimination African American communities experienced was exacerbated.

The food system is also unethical. Capitalistic concerns favoured exploitative and violent methods of food production, particularly when it came to animal agriculture. As a result, the non-violent activism of the Civil Rights movement was undermined by the inherent violence in the food system. The encouragement of meat-eating by the American government, therefore, promoted a cognitive dissonance which particularly contradicted the efforts of African American activists. The 1960s saw veganism become popularised by Civil Rights activist Dick Gregory as the optimal diet for African Americans as a result. In following a plant-based diet, African American activists were resisting a wider culture of meat-eating which was ultimately rooted in white masculinity. From the 1990s, it became a way for individuals to live out their values. Animal liberation was increasingly linked to human liberation. Following a plant-based diet, therefore, meant that activists could extend their activism, displaying non-violent ethics in their personal lives. Environmental concerns also featured in this form of activism. A growing number of vegetarian ecofeminists argued that all forms of oppression were ultimately rooted in capitalism. In refusing to contribute to animal agriculture, these wider systems of oppression were also being challenged. As these ideas became popularised in the media, however, the attempts of African American activists to feature vegetarianism in their wider activist action were undermined by white Americans adopting the diet for more superficial reasons.

Beyond the food system, dieting culture promoted caloric restriction as a means to

adhere more closely to the thin ideal. Whiteness was associated with thinness and thinness with moral purity. As a result, from the 1970s, particular pressure was placed on African American women to participate in dieting culture in order to avoid negative stereotyping. A specifically African American dieting industry began to be formed with restrictive diets being developed by and promoted to black women. As a result, rates of disordered eating within African American communities rose. To combat this, a growing *Fat Acceptance* movement was developed from the 1980s. The movement was initially led by white feminists who compared the fat phobia they experienced to other forms of discrimination, particularly racism. As African American women became involved in the movement, however, this discrimination was increasingly understood as being part of a wider system of oppression. In resisting dieting culture these individuals were also resisting the Eurocentric, and ultimately white supremacist, beauty ideals placed onto them. However, as this resistance gained wider reach, it became increasingly commercialised. Conversations around the oppressive beauty standards began to be used as a marketing tool from the 2000s. The concept of 'body confidence' was promoted as being achievable through changing, rather than accepting, your body, the very falsehood *Fat Acceptance* activists were fighting against. In refusing to participate in dieting culture, therefore, African American *Fat Acceptance* activists were also resisting the white supremacist beauty ideals which favoured thinness.

Whilst there is a wealth of literature looking at African American activism, the history of the body and food studies, little has been written at the intersection of all three. Histories of African American activism have been widely published. Author Sean Dennis Cashman's 1992 text *African-Americans and the Quest for Civil Rights* provides an overview of the movement throughout the twentieth century. Whilst Cashman fails to feature food in his analysis, he provides helpful context to the evolving state of Civil Rights activism. For this study, Cashman's work is particularly useful in arguing for the increasing fragmentation of the Civil Rights movement from the 1970s.

Food history, in contrast, is a far more marginal field although it has become a more prominent study in more recent years. Journalists Karen and Michael Jacobo discuss the history of vegetarianism in their 2004 work *Vegetarian America*. They argue for vegetarianism as being 'planted in the nineteenth century by Christians', however, fail to place this in its racial context. The racial origins of fatphobia are discussed at length, however, in historian Janell Hobson's 2005 work *Venus in the Dark*. In her study of the representation of black women's bodies, Hobson outlines the role of 'whiteness in defining the body beautiful'. Using sexualised enslaved woman Sara Baartman as a point of comparison, Hobson argues that the black female body has historically been objectified. She does not, however, discuss this in relation to food politics.

In this dissertation, I hope to expand upon and bridge the gap between these studies to discuss how food has featured in African American activism from the Civil Rights movement and beyond. In doing so, a wealth of primary source material will be drawn upon including magazines, newspapers, interviews and books written by prominent activists. Whilst this study is not extensive, it aims to begin to argue that the food choices we make are political in nature. It is an attempt to explore how diets influence and, in turn, are influenced by the wider society we live in. Ultimately this dissertation argues that the unequal food system in America from 1955 to 2015 reflected the discrimination African Americans experienced in all other areas of life at this time.

## Chapter 1

### African American Food Activism 1955-2015

For those living in disadvantaged areas, the lack of access to fresh, nutritious produce has been a key political issue over the last century, one which many have attempted, but ultimately failed, to resolve. It became increasingly considered to be the responsibility of individual Americans to provide nutritious food for their families, rather than the government. A political stance which impacted marginalised social groups to a greater extent.

From the 1950s, women involved in African American activist movements used food in a gendered way to support wider campaign action. School cook Georgia Gilmore fuelled the Montgomery bus boycotts from 1955 by selling food to individuals across race and class bounds. The women of the Black Panther Party also created a *Free Breakfast Programme* in 1969 to feed children in underprivileged neighbourhoods before school. Through these measures, women were able to participate in activist action from the sidelines, facilitating the more visible actions of men.

The 1970s, however, saw activism becoming increasingly individualised with greater pressure being placed on members of marginalised communities to liberate

themselves from their own oppression. While individuals were made responsible for feeding themselves, there were cases of regional efforts to overcome food poverty. Activist Fannie Lou Harmer, for example, founded a community farm in 1969 to provide those in her local community in Mississippi with access to nutritious food. On a more national level, *Hunger Awareness Days*, which became an annual event from 1997, aimed to draw attention to the often invisible issue of food poverty within the US. Whilst the campaign did little to enact actual change, it proved that those struggling to feed themselves were mostly left to face hunger alone.

A resurgence of community-based food activism can be seen from the 2000s with farms being set up in marginalised areas to provide those within them access to fresh produce. Activist Karen Washington opened a farmers market in her New York neighbourhood in 2003 to ensure that residents had access to affordable and fresh produce. On a national scale, former first lady Michelle Obama encouraged community gardening as part of her *Let's Move* campaign which primarily aimed to improve children's health. Whilst both of these projects were reliant on individual support, they acknowledged the inequalities in the food system, and worked to make a real difference in underserved communities.

Food is a unifying force. In featuring food in their campaigns, African American activists have been able to attract more widespread, bipartisan support. Although the food system furthers the inequality experienced by African Americans, individuals within marginalised communities have been able to begin to overcome their oppression through collective, albeit largely fragmented efforts.

### **How food featured in activist movements 1950-70**

For both the Civil Rights movement and Black Panther Party, food featured as an aspect of their campaigns which has often been overlooked. In striving for racial equality, the women of these movements fuelled the more visible actions of men, using food as a way to support



them whilst maintaining traditional gender roles. By providing food to predominantly black neighbourhoods, the women were uplifting the most marginalised members of their communities.

School cook Georgia Gilmore used her culinary abilities to raise money for the Montgomery bus boycott, founding the *Club From Nowhere* in 1955 to organise bake sales across the region. Her activism was gendered, supporting the movement from the less visible realm of the kitchen. Although the Civil Rights movement was a subversive one, many of the women involved were reluctant to subvert the gender norms of the time, being 'expected to adhere to the adage that they should be seen not heard'. Despite remaining on the margins, the work of the men of the Civil Rights movement would not have been possible without the funds raised by Gilmore and her *Club From Nowhere*. Civil Rights protesters recognised that the cost of a bus boycott would be great. In raising funds, Gilmore and her *Club From Nowhere* enabled the wider activist action to continue. Her contributions both literally and figuratively fuelled the campaign. Gilmore was also able to attract support for the bus boycott across a wider section of society than would have been possible from the boycott alone. Food is a unifying force. In selling food to anyone, regardless of race or political affiliation, the *Club From Nowhere* were able to encourage more financial, if not ideological, support for the movement. Food, therefore, fuelled the protest in that it allowed activists to continue the boycott for longer, eventually leading to desegregation.

Leaders of the Black Panther Party Bobby Seale and Huey Newton used food to fuel their activism in a more literal sense. Women of the party were encouraged to participate in their *Free Breakfast Programme*, founded in 1969 to feed children before school.

While male Black Panther Party members were praised for their commitment to patrolling police officers in the fight against police brutality, it was 'sisters and mothers' who were encouraged to help in cooking for and looking after children. It was believed that in providing children in deprived neighbourhoods with access to food, they would become better educated and, thus, eventually, better activists. Providing nutritious food to the children of these families directly fought against their economic oppression and gave the children involved greater physical and mental strength to continue this challenge to systemic injustice in the future. The programme provided much needed relief for struggling families, rapidly expanding to twenty-three locations around Oakland within the first year. Eventually, it became mandatory for all chapters of the Party to provide free breakfast.

To Newton and Seale, it was 'community-based organisation' which would form the basis of their activism, with a great deal of importance placed on educating children to become future Party members. Rather than just providing free food to the children who needed it most, the Black Panthers also fed their minds, using the opportunity to teach children in these underprivileged neighbourhoods about the systemic oppression they faced as a result of their race and how to come together as a community to oppose it. It gave children in economically disadvantaged areas the ability for their struggles to be understood and to better understand how to overcome them. These children were also educated on Black Panther policy. By placing the education of children at the centre of their activism in this area, the Black Panthers were ensuring the future of their mission to actively oppose systemic racism. In making the programme inclusive to all children regardless of racial, economic, or religious background, the Panthers were able to garner bipartisan support for the programme.

Food, therefore, played a central, yet less visible, role in the African American activist movements of the 1950s and 60s. It was women who used food in order to sustain the wider activities of men. The responsibility for fuelling these movements was placed on

women who failed to subvert gender norms despite being involved in subversive activist movements.

### **The individualisation of food politics 1970-90**

From the 1970s, African American activism became far more reliant on individuals working to make changes within their local communities. In the post civil-rights era, greater emphasis was placed on encouraging reform through the 'conventional channels' rather than mass demonstrations and protests. It was this increasing focus on individual action, coupled with a declining welfare state, which similarly pushed the responsibility for nourishment onto the individual. A decline in Welfare provision under Reagan's government in the 1980s placed even greater pressure on individuals to provide for themselves. In the media, the image of the 'Welfare Queen' was crafted as a woman who, out of a refusal to work, exploited the Welfare State by having more children than she could properly take care of. This stereotype pushed the responsibility onto black mothers for feeding their families, many of whom were simply unable to do so. As a result, African American families became increasingly reliant on local community programmes where governmental ones simply did not provide enough support. These programmes, however, often lacked the resources to make a real difference to the lives of those who most needed them. They were entirely limited by the capacity for already stretched local people to contribute to these programmes.

Women's rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer founded *Freedom Farm* in 1969 in an attempt to alleviate poverty in Sunflower County, Mississippi.

Hamer's main aim was to encourage African Americans, particularly those in the working class, to vote, believing that this was the best way to liberate themselves from the food oppression they experienced. To Hamer, providing marginalised communities with access to nutritious food gave them the intellectual strength to improve their economic situation through voting. In giving otherwise impoverished people a stable source of fresh produce their physical health was also improved with infant mortality being 'almost cut in half' in areas served by *Freedom Farm*. Hamer had grown up in poverty, she deeply understood the hunger experienced by those reliant on her farming programme as well as the wider physical and political ramifications of it. Although it was mostly African American families who participated in the *Freedom Farm*, Hamer included anyone 'that was really concerned about real changes' in the programme. This was essential as lack of government intervention meant that it was left up to those within marginalised communities to provide themselves with adequate nutrition. Hamer was only able to start her farm because of donations from local people to buy the land needed to grow crops. As such, her ability to provide the residents of Sunflower County with nutritious food lay in their ability to support her both physically and financially.

By the 1990s conversations were beginning to be had around the prevalence of hunger in the US, particularly in predominantly black neighbourhoods. *Hunger Awareness Day*, which began in 1997, aimed to educate those in more affluent areas of the reality many Americans faced of not being able to feed their families.

These campaigns, although limited, attempted to encourage volunteering in local initiatives, such as food banks, to help provide those experiencing food poverty with access to proper nutrition. The campaign was intended to not only highlight the struggles faced by those in poverty but to also encourage broader community support. These *Hunger Awareness Days* were also necessary in order to highlight the conditions many marginalised communities lived in to middle class, and particularly white, Americans. There was a common misconception that malnutrition as a result of poverty was an issue which exclusively affected those in less developed countries as those living in poverty in the US were often geographically isolated. Not only did geographical isolation prevent these Americans from accessing much needed support, it also discouraged those in a better financial position from providing support in the first place. Much of the fundraising efforts aimed at alleviating poverty, therefore, had historically benefitted those in less developed nations in spite of the widespread, although often invisible, struggles of those living in poverty in America. *Hunger Awareness Days* were a necessary, although inconsequential, step in working to overcome this.

African American activism in the post-civil rights era, therefore, placed greater emphasis on individual action, rather than marches and rallies, to enact social change. It made individual people and communities responsible for feeding themselves, a task which became increasingly difficult for those in marginalised communities. Whilst community farming projects did alleviate these concerns to some extent, they were greatly limited by their reliance on community support.

### **Community farming and 'food apartheid' 2000-2015**

The 2000s saw a renewed, albeit marginal, movement to encourage community-led solutions to the problem of food disparity. Whilst it was left up to individuals within these disadvantaged communities to properly nourish themselves, in working together in

community farms, they were able to begin to resolve this problem. Key figures lay at the heart of the change, empowering their communities to work against the discriminatory food system.

Political activist Karen Washington coined the term 'food apartheid' to explain the inability for marginalised, particularly African American, communities to access nutritious food. She argued that this was ultimately a systemic issue, blaming the 'national food system'

for making it far more difficult for these communities to properly feed themselves. The racist power dynamics prevalent in wider society were also apparent in the food system, racial minorities were far less likely to have access to a stable source of nutritious food. For context, Washington's activism initially began in 1989 when she started a community garden in her New York neighbourhood in an attempt to begin to resolve this problem. In doing so, her community was not only given greater access to fresh produce, but also an opportunity for community-building. From 2003 Washington extended her activism, starting the *La Familia Verde* farmers market to ensure that even those who were unable to physically support the community farm could still benefit from it. It was a holistic approach to activism, focused on marginalised communities coming together to overcome this 'food apartheid'. At the heart of Washington's activism was the concept that 'everybody is entitled to food that is affordable, fresh and local'. In not being granted equal access to fresh produce, therefore, African American communities had been further oppressed. In fighting this oppression, it was essential that communities cooperated with one another. One of the main problems with the food system was its lack of diversity at every level. To Washington, 'A diverse food system is a strong and stable food system'. It was, therefore, essential that individuals of all races and economic backgrounds were included in food production. To encourage cooperation on a national level, Washington was involved in founding *Black Urban Growers*, a conference which began in 2010 to allow black farmers across America to begin to work towards this goal of diversifying food production. The conference acknowledged the long history of black farming which, due to increasing industrialization, African American communities had been pushed out of. It aimed to encourage more African Americans to get involved in farming, providing support to those in disadvantaged areas to start community farms. The solution to 'food apartheid', therefore, lay in the hands of those it most impacted. In becoming involved in community gardening projects, marginalised communities were empowered to begin to overcome this.

As part of her 'Let's Move' campaign, former first lady Michelle Obama similarly encouraged community gardening in an effort to provide children in underprivileged neighbourhoods access to nutritious food. Her goal, as a concerned mother, was to combat childhood obesity, placing a great deal of emphasis on the importance of community support for this project. Obama argued that 'we still have the power'



to change the food environment in which children are raised. Her campaign for food security took a colour-blind approach, focusing on 'reshaping the nutritional environment' for all children regardless of race or social class. In doing so, Obama was able to remain politically neutral and, therefore, relatively uncontroversial whilst also focusing on an issue which predominantly affects African American communities. In primarily focusing on the impact of food insecurity on children, Obama was able to gain bipartisan support for her programme whilst also pursuing a goal which worked to liberate disadvantaged families. By using social media to promote her campaign for a healthier America, it was possible for Obama to obtain a greater deal of support, enabling gardening projects to be carried out on a national, and even international, level. Obama's position as first lady also gave her campaign more legitimacy. As a result, not only were larger swathes of the country willing to contribute to her efforts, her activism could be carried out on an institutional level. Obama worked with supermarkets, hoping to make a greater variety of nutritious food available to those in underserved communities. Community-led programmes worked far more effectively to promote greater access to nutritious food for members of those communities than governmental ones. Whilst vegetable gardens began to crop up in community centres throughout the country, and even world, legislation focusing on improving the quality of the standard American diet proved far more difficult to pass. Obama's 'goal of eliminating childhood obesity within a generation' was simply too ambitious to ever come to fruition. Where her campaign was successful, however, was in creating a greater awareness around the negative ramifications of a poor quality diet over the long term and empowering communities to make a real difference to this end.

Whilst the 2000s saw continued responsibility being placed on individuals to overcome their own oppression, these communities began to work together to achieve this goal. Community farming gave marginalised groups the opportunity to provide themselves, and their neighbours, with nutritious food. This allowed members of the community to

nourish themselves, fighting against the discriminatory food system.

Suffice to say, whether communities have access to food or not is political. As such, it has featured heavily in the work of African American activist movements from the Civil Rights era. The inequalities in the food system reflected wider systemic inequality, meaning that African Americans typically had less access to fresh and nutritious food. The solution to this problem was increasingly left up to individuals within the communities most affected. Initially, measures taken to properly nourish those facing food poverty were tied up in the larger activist movements of the 1950s and 60s, focusing on simply providing food to those who needed it. From the 1980s and beyond food activism became increasingly regional, relying on individual action most often through community farming. It was women who lay at the heart of this activism, with a particular focus being placed on feeding children. The women involved in these campaigns have made a real difference to their local communities despite their actions often being overshadowed by the more visible actions of men.

## Chapter 2

### African American activism and vegetarianism 1960- 2010

Historians have largely overlooked the association between African American activism and vegetarianism in spite of its great significance. In the 1960s, Civil Rights activist Dick Gregory popularised veganism as the optimal diet for African Americans and the best way to physically and mentally prepare individuals to participate in activism.

In his vision, meat-eating was a fundamental aspect of American identity and white masculinity. As a result of centuries of oppression, African American diets had become increasingly meat-based as they were forced to adopt the dominant culture and adjust their traditional recipes in the face of scarce resources. As a result, the typical African American diet was not health promoting; even after emancipation from enslavement, African Americans were unable to liberate themselves from ongoing oppression due, in no small part, to their diet.

In the post Civil-Rights movement era, African American activism became more individualistic and focused on lifestyle choices. In that context, vegetarianism experienced a new period of popularity. From the 1990s, vegetarianism became increasingly seen as the 'logical extension' of the activism carried out during the Civil Rights movement. Prominent activists of this time, most notably Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, began to adopt a more plant-based diet towards the end of the century. They argued that meat-eating was inherently violent and, thus, contradicted the non-violent activism they stood for.

African American vegetarianism was also about liberating all species. Arguing that all forms of oppression are ultimately linked, vegetarians like Angela Davis claimed that animal liberation was part of wider human liberation. Under slavery, the animalisation of African Americans was used to justify enslaved men and women's poor treatment. In liberating animals, the hierarchy of species central to white supremacy is challenged, which can, in turn, lead to the liberation of African Americans.

By the 1990s, African American vegetarianism had become a well-established diet in the pages of magazines like *Vegetarian Times*. However, when these recipes and lifestyle choices were circulated beyond the African American community, much of their significance was lost. As African American vegetarianism became increasingly commercialised, the wider cultural significance of the movement has been somewhat undermined.

## **How Dick Gregory introduced veganism to African Americans 1960-1980**

The late 1960s saw the introduction of the idea that, in changing the way you eat, activist action could be enhanced. Prominent civil rights activist Dick Gregory popularised a holistic approach to activism arguing that, in adopting an overall healthier lifestyle, individuals were in the best possible position to free themselves from oppression. Gregory began his activist career in 1961 as a comedian who poked fun at the 'injustices of racism'. He actively participated in the Civil Rights movement, involving himself in marches and rallies whilst keeping humour at the heart of his activism. Gregory advocated for raw veganism from 1969, arguing that the healthiest diet was a plant-based one. According to Gregory, this was an intentional form of oppression. The American government had recommended a lifestyle to its citizens which was fundamentally harmful to their health by promoting a largely meat-based diet. Gregory argued that African Americans in particular had been taught to adopt a lifestyle which was, ultimately, intended to 'drain the mind'. As a result, African Americans were less able to emancipate themselves from the oppression they experienced as their supposedly 'unhealthy' diet meant that they lacked the physical and mental capabilities to carry this out.

According to Gregory, a meat-eating society was also inherently violent.

In justifying violence towards animals, human violence was similarly justified. The cognitive dissonance created as a result of this had a wider societal impact: violence became a natural feature of everyday life. To Gregory, the pervasiveness of meat-eating was intentional. It, most importantly, contradicted the central premise of non-violence fundamental to the Civil Rights campaign of the 1950s and 60s. Civil Rights activism, therefore, struggled to enact any real, lasting societal change as, to Gregory, meat-eating made hypocrites out of its core proponents. This was particularly notable in the Christian context of the Civil Rights movement, whereby killing animals contradicted scriptural teachings condemning murder. It was of utmost importance that individuals, particularly those involved in activist movements, followed a lifestyle which reflected their values. In eating meat, Civil Rights activists of the time were involved, albeit not entirely intentionally, in perpetuating the very violence they strove to work against. As a result, to Gregory, following a plant-based diet was not only the optimal lifestyle physically, but enabled activists to essentially practise what they preached.

These ideas, however, only really gained wider attention in being promoted as a weight-loss method. This was particularly the case for women where Dick Gregory's wife Lillian put her significant weight loss in 1977 down to a programme of juice cleanses and fasting under her husband's guidance.

As a result, Gregory's ideas around activism were largely lost in dieting culture rhetoric, with a far greater emphasis being placed on how Gregory's eating regimen could transform the physical appearance of bodies rather than emancipate them from oppression. Health, therefore, became associated with a certain body size instead of the ability of that body to participate in activist action. This was the fault of an increasingly pervasive dieting culture which, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three, placed particular pressure on black women to lose weight through calorie restriction. Gregory made the most of this newfound popularity, selling diet products to those looking to follow his juicing and fasting regimen. Whilst his initial motivations may have been driven by health concerns, Gregory's 'natural diet' later became perverted by greater concerns around the perceived risk of 'obesity'. Through his ideas being popularised in this way, Gregory's activism was pushed aside in favour of transforming African Americans' bodies, rather than their lives.

### **Vegetarianism as a pro-liberation movement 1980-2000**

The 1980s saw plant-based thought becoming increasingly political. Whilst few activists were particularly open about their changing dietary choices, a growing understanding of all forms of oppression as being ultimately linked meant that vegetarianism began to be seen as part of a wider pro-liberation movement rather than just a health fad. Meat-eating became increasingly seen as a symbolic act, one that represented white masculinity and was, ultimately, a product of colonialism. Eating meat, therefore, meant that African American activists were, albeit unintentionally, participating in the very oppression they were also outwardly working against.

Liberation from oppression needed to include all species, with the concept that all forms of discrimination were rooted capitalism at their core.

This concept, known as *Vegetarian Ecofeminism*, argued that all systems of oppression are ultimately tied to capitalism. In 'feminizing nature and naturalizing or animalizing women', the discrimination faced by women and, especially, African Americans was furthered. Following a vegetarian diet, therefore, not only liberated animals but the entire natural world from oppressive, hierarchical structures. This historic animalisation of African Americans placed these individuals in a unique position, being able to understand and empathise with the oppression animals faced to a greater extent than their white counterparts. By contrast, meat-eating represented an acceptance of colonial hierarchies and the violence that underpinned it. Violence towards animals had historically been used to justify the violence committed against enslaved Africans. Continuing to perpetuate this violence, therefore, was increasingly considered to not only contradict the practice of non-violence within African American activist movements, but also uphold traditional racial hierarchies favouring whiteness. As a result, true liberation meant liberation from all forms of oppression for all species.

For many women who were influential in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, following a plant-based diet became an important part of their activism on a personal level towards the end of the century. In rejecting meat eating, these activists were rejecting the violence associated with it. Vegetarianism was seen as a natural extension of the Civil Rights movement's pacifist approach to activism. Rosa Parks, a central figure in the Montgomery bus boycotts of 1955, became a 'converted vegetarian'

in the 1990s and she planned to release a vegetarian recipe book—a project which never saw the light of day due to her untimely death. To Parks, being a vegetarian was not only a way to maintain good health but also enabled her to actively live out her egalitarian values beyond the public sphere. Similarly, Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr's widow, privately adopted a vegan lifestyle in the 1990s in an effort to extend her pacifism to all areas of life. Alongside her son, Dexter Scott King, Coretta King adopted a plant-based diet as part of a more 'holistic lifestyle', one that avoided the cognitive dissonance of working towards peace whilst actively participating in violence towards animals. To the Kings, following a vegan diet was the best way to continue to work towards equality and peace for all species and extend Martin Luther King Jr's work. In removing animal products from their diets, African American activists were proving themselves to be working towards non-violence in all areas of life.

It is important to note, however, that for both Parks and King, following a plant-based diet was not a central part of their activism but an extension of it. Neither women were particularly vocal about their private rejection of meat-eating and neither had apparent concern for the ethical ramifications of their diets during the Civil Rights movement itself. While the more pressing issue of legal equality took precedence during the 1950s and 1960s, once these issues were resolved, activists began to look inward at their own personal moral shortcomings.



With no organised movement pressing the government for change, the responsibility for liberation from oppression became increasingly placed on the individual. Vegetarianism and veganism, therefore, became seen as a logical extension of the Civil Rights movement. It was a cause individuals could take up in their private lives and work towards the emancipation of all species from oppression in the face of no wider, unified movement pushing for change. In rejecting the violence inherent in meat-eating as well as connotations of natural hierarchy, African American activists were also rejecting the same systemic oppression the Civil Rights movement had attempted to destroy. The fact that this was not an overt feature of their activism, however, is evidence of the increased fragmentation and individualisation of activism in the post Civil-Rights era. The burden of responsibility was placed on individuals, particularly women, rather than the wider governmental system as a whole.

### **The circulation of plant-based diets beyond the African American community 1990-2010**

The motivations behind adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet for African Americans and their white counterparts greatly differed. Whilst African American vegetarianism found its origins in Civil Rights activism, white vegetarianism became popularised through the temperance movement of the 18th Century.

Both placed a great deal of emphasis on compassion to animals and many across race bounds were influenced by their Christian faith. However, for African Americans, vegetarianism was far more than simply a more ethical choice, it reflected their wider commitment to non-violence and emancipation from oppression. In white Americans adopting a vegetarian diet, the nuance of these differing motivations has been somewhat lost. While white American vegetarianism is about encouraging a more ethical treatment of animals, African American vegetarianism goes deeper in its overall aim to encourage all species to receive ethical treatment. A refusal to eat animal products for African Americans, therefore, is about refusing to participate in the wider systems of oppression rather than simply preserving animal life. A message which has largely been lost in the more widespread adoption of vegetarianism beyond African American communities.

For some African Americans in the 1990s, eating a more plant based diet was about reclaiming a lost African heritage as part of the Pan-African movement.

This movement sought to fight for the liberation of all black people globally from oppression. It connected the anti-racist struggles of African Americans with those living in the African continent. In incorporating more vegetable-based, traditional African meals into their diets, therefore, African American communities participated in creating and shifting their culture as part of this wider societal emphasis on reconnecting with their stolen roots. By making the effort to learn more about traditional African cuisines, African Americans were attempting to undo some of the damage caused to their communities throughout enslavement. These dishes tended to feature less animal products than typical American dishes. In rejecting meat-eating, therefore, these individuals were also rejecting the white masculine cultural norms that meat-based foods represented. As such, African Americans were able to begin to move on from their long history of oppression and enslavement from within the home. Whilst wider societal shifts were virtually impossible to achieve with activism becoming increasingly fragmented in the post civil-rights era, individuals could reclaim their cultural heritage in the more private sphere through their food choices. Making the choice to favour more typically African over American cuisines, African Americans were, at least symbolically, rejecting a culture which had historically rejected them. The wider cultural significance of this, however, was somewhat lost as white Americans developed an increasing interest in global, and particularly African, cuisine. These dishes, as exemplified by Appendix 1 on the left, were often exoticised by white Americans who failed to see the significance preparing traditional African dishes had for African Americans. Rather than reclaiming their stolen heritage in embracing a more plant-based diet, African Americans were met with a white population similarly adopting these new recipes. As a result, plant-based diets lost a great deal of their cultural significance when adopted beyond the African American community.

As with the standard American diet, meat commonly featured in many of the 'soul food' dishes created by African Americans out of necessity during their

enslavement. Particularly from the 1990s, fears around the so-called 'obesity epidemic' fueled public conversations about the health properties of certain foods. Soul food faced particular criticism in the *Vegetarian Times* for its heavy emphasis on meat and, particularly, oil. Echoing the sentiments of early African American vegans such as Dick Gregory, white medical professionals blamed the consumption of rich soul food on the higher incidences of heart disease in African American communities. These recipes were demonised, being seen as fundamentally harmful to health. Such dishes, it was thought, were inferior to the standard American diet as they 'came from the parts of the animal that the slave master didn't want'. As a result, adopting a more plant based diet meant moving on from holding a scarcity mindset around food. It meant using food as a means to promote optimal health, rather than as merely sustenance. In altering soul food recipes to suit the dietary requirements of a growing number of African American vegetarians, the dishes became increasingly Americanised. It was symbolic of a moving on from a long history of oppression, uplifting the race by improving the quality of the African American diet whilst also maintaining a connection to traditionally African American cuisine.

On the whole, vegetarianism featured prominently in African American activists' lives, enabling them to practise non-violence on a daily basis. It was widely considered to be a natural extension of the pacifist activism of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, enabling individuals to continue to adopt this approach despite activist movements becoming increasingly fragmented. Meat eating was ultimately associated with the violence at the heart of white supremacy, therefore, in refusing to eat meat, African American activists were similarly refusing to participate in these wider systems of oppression. In viewing humans as part of, rather than separate from, the wider natural world, animal liberation became tied up in human liberation. Therefore, in working against the oppression of animals, activists were similarly fighting against their own oppression. However, as these diet trends have become

increasingly commercialised and adopted beyond African American communities, the political message has been somewhat lost. Whilst the initial intentions of plant based African American activists was to promote the liberation of all species from oppression, it has become increasingly seen as merely a way of eating, one which works towards a more compassionate consideration of animals.

## Chapter 3

### African Americans and the politics of dieting 1970s-2000s

The increasing prominence of dieting culture from the 1970s encouraged individuals to restrict their diets. Thinness and whiteness were thought of as epitomising beauty, making black women particular victims of this phenomenon. Whilst dieting culture had previously impacted white women to a greater extent, the 1970s saw a rise in weight loss methods aimed specifically at black women. Statistical analyst Bernadette Story created a diet programme for black women in 1977 which exemplified the pervasiveness of dieting culture across race and class bounds. At its core was the idealisation of the thin body, a body which enabled black models to gain mainstream success. However, little actual change was made off the back of the success of black models such as Naomi Campbell. Prominent black women in the media were simultaneously victims to and preservers of dieting culture. In being vocal about her own experiences of weight loss, media personality Oprah Winfrey encouraged African American women to participate in dieting culture. This mounting pressure to lose weight within African American communities culminated in a rise in disordered eating.

Feminist activists began to resist these pressures from the 1980s. Whilst

white women viewed fat phobia as a unique form of discrimination, black *Fat Acceptance* activists placed the discrimination faced by those considered to be 'fat' within a wider system of oppression. In associating blackness with fatness and fatness with immorality, the discrimination 'fat' black women experienced was heightened. It was clear that to adhere to the beauty standards of the time meant to be thin and white.

As the *Fat Acceptance* movement gained more mainstream attention from the 2000s it became increasingly commercialised. The pursuit of 'body confidence' began to be seen as achievable only through changing your body. New diets emerged which promised to be an alternative to restrictive dieting, however, still emphasised caloric restriction at their core. In addition, although blackness began to be associated more often with beauty, this was often only through appropriation. The conversations around blackness and beauty were used by companies as a marketing tool to sell beauty products to African American women. White celebrities, such as Kim Kardashian, were also able to profit off these conversations by appropriating African American culture and style.

Therefore, African American women in particular were encouraged to change their diets in an effort to adhere more closely to Eurocentric beauty ideals. Although *Fat Acceptance* activists began to challenge these ideas, they were ultimately perverted by the mass media. Superficial conversations around resistance to dieting culture were staged by companies to promote diet programmes, beauty products and media personalities.

### **The rise of dieting culture 1970- 1990**

In idealising the thin body, women of all races were encouraged to lose weight in an effort to adhere more closely to the beauty standards pushed onto them following the rise of visual media. A growing diet industry meant that various weight loss methods began to be developed specifically catered towards African American women. From 1977, the E.R.A.S.E. (Eat Right and Slim Easily) diet programme, founded by statistical analyst Bernadette Story

contested the widely held belief that the African American diet was inherently fattening. Story argued that it was possible to lose weight while still eating the 'foods some blacks enjoy'. The idea that weight loss was the primary goal of changing your diet was asserted through the focus on the caloric, as opposed to nutritional, content of foods. Story's E.R.A.S.E. diet had a widespread and meaningful impact, being discussed at the *Michigan Senate* in 1980 as a means to improve individuals' self-esteem. It was created out of a wider social focus on weight loss in general, with an emphasis on caloric restriction as the most effective means to achieve this goal. A great deal of pressure was, therefore, placed on all women regardless of race to obtain and maintain a thin body. This pressure was greater, however, for African American women whose already marginalised status meant that they had more to gain from being conventionally attractive, which overwhelmingly meant being thin.

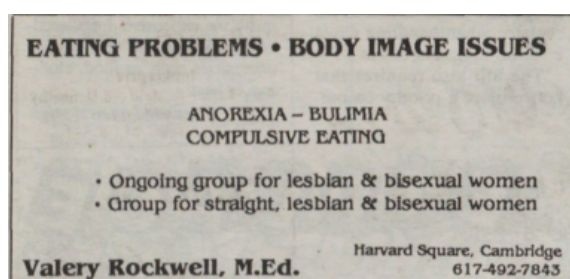
The thin ideal was further promoted through the rise of African American models whose popularity was only possible because of their thinness. On the surface, it appeared as though black women were increasingly considered to be conventionally attractive. Black beauty queens had been competing in and winning pageants in the US since 1984. However, little change was made to the actual lives of ordinary African American women whose bodies continued to be marginalised. Black models, such as Naomi Campbell, became increasingly featured in magazines and ad campaigns alongside white models. Campbell was able to become a successful business-woman beyond the modelling industry in her own right. However, these achievements were only possible because of her adherence to conventional western beauty standards, most importantly, by being thin. However, Campbell's thinness was only able to afford her success to a point. In the media, she was portrayed as an 'angry black woman' with stories of assaults and outbursts overshadowing her professional achievements. Although progress had been made in terms of considering blackness as beautiful provided they were thin, black models were still, by and large, viewed as less beautiful than their white peers.



TV personality Oprah Winfrey exemplified the prominence of dieting culture within African American communities when a 1988 episode of her talk show discussing a recent weight loss effort 'drew her program's largest audience ever'. Winfrey's rapid and significant weight loss was the result of the *Optifast* diet, a liquid fast whereby 'patients subsist on high-protein, vitamin-packed powder mixed with water' for a relatively short period of time. It was not the potentially damaging health impact of the diet, however, which faced criticism in the media but how well the programme would work at 'keeping it off'. This infatuation with Winfrey's weight loss was indicative of the prevalence of dieting culture at this time. In discussing her weight loss publicly Winfrey served as both a victim and conservator of dieting culture, generating interest in the diet. Following the episodes airing, *Optifast* switchboards received over 100,000 calls from viewers hoping to find out more about the diet programme. On her show, Winfrey told viewers that 'if you can believe in yourself', it is possible to be successful at weight loss. This not only inspired viewers to participate in dieting culture, it also overlooked the impact Winfrey's wealth and privilege had on her ability to follow the dieting regimen. For the vast majority of viewers who did not have access to a personal trainer or nutritionist, sticking to the programme would prove far more difficult. Winfrey was participating in dieting culture herself. By considering the weight loss as 'the biggest accomplishment of her life' her previous professional achievements were overlooked. The narrative created was that before losing the weight, Winfrey had ultimately been a failure. Now that she was 'divorcing herself from fat people', Winfrey was also distancing herself from the negative stereotypes associated with fatness. Winfrey's weight loss had been motivated by wider social pressure for black women in particular to participate in dieting culture. It allowed her to be taken more seriously on a professional level, being viewed as a prominent figure in her own right beyond her weight.

As African American women became increasingly visible in the media the pressure to obtain and maintain a slim figure became more pervasive. As is evident in

Appendix 2 below, mounting pressure to adhere to the thin ideal culminated in rising rates of disordered eating, particularly amongst African American women. By associating thinness with whiteness, greater social emphasis was placed on black women to participate in dieting culture in order to become more visible. Black women who did not conform to western beauty standards were further marginalised. They existed in a body that was not only racially oppressed but also considered to be generally unattractive. A 'fat' black body was seen as a sign of laziness and sexual promiscuity. In existing in this body, the moral character of the individual was called into question. Furthermore, the ability for individuals to participate in dieting culture was predicated largely on their socio-economic status. The discrimination faced by African Americans in other areas of life limited their ability to obtain and maintain a 'slender figure'. Thinness for many was the result of privilege. Therefore, by simply being in a less privileged position in general, it was more difficult for African American women in particular to adhere to the thin ideal. As a result, greater pressure was placed upon them to go to great lengths in the pursuit of thinness.



*On left:* advert for therapy group dealing with disordered eating taken from *Sojourner* magazine  
**[see Appendix 2]**

### **Resistance to dieting culture 1980- 1995**

From the 1980s, there was a growing resistance to dieting culture within feminist circles. The

publication of the *Fat Liberation Manifesto* in 1979 was prompted by growing social pressure for women to restrict their caloric intake in order to lose weight. The NAAFA (National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance), an organisation developed out of this resistance, argued that the responsibility had been, wrongfully, placed on individuals to maintain a slim figure. Having a body which did not adhere to these standards, therefore, was a visual representation of that individual's failings. African American body positivity activists resisted these Eurocentric beauty ideals, challenging the prevailing idea that to be thin was to be attractive. At the forefront of this movement was the concept that the beauty norms were ultimately constructed around whiteness and, therefore, acted to further the oppression that black women faced. By virtue of their race, in simply asserting that they were beautiful, African American women were challenging these beauty standards. These issues were exacerbated by the growing concern around the 'obesity epidemic' which placed the blame largely on black women for America's perceivably expanding waistlines. Blackness was associated with fatness, and fatness with immorality. Pressure was placed, therefore, on African American women in particular to restrict their diets in order to avoid being stereotyped in this way. For 'fat' black women, the heightened discrimination they experienced was considered to be justified by their body size.

From the 1980s, however, this discrimination was starting to be acknowledged and discussed within African American communities. A 1986 article in *Ebony* magazine spoke of the 'emotional and psychological problems'

those living in a bigger body experienced as a result of the prevalence of dieting culture. The discrimination faced by those considered to be 'fat' began to be discussed more widely in the mainstream media. One way attorney advisor and NAAFA member Rosezella Canty-Letsome aimed to achieve this was through her exercise programme 'Light on Your Feet' which she founded in 1985. It was designed to encourage 'fat' African American women in particular to take care of their bodies through exercise without risk of experiencing judgement or discrimination for their size. Canty-Letsome's exercise regime focused on low-impact movement, creating the first fat and disability inclusive routine which could be employed by a wider range of bodies than the more intense workouts promoted at the time. Her revolutionarily body-positive approach to exercise gained mainstream success, being featured on a 1986 episode of the popular *Phil Donahue Show*, a nationally screened talk show with a predominantly white audience. In resisting the expectations overwhelmingly placed on 'fat' black women to intensively exercise in order to lose weight, Canty-Letsome was encouraging an active resistance to dieting culture.

African American model Tyra Banks also pushed back against dieting culture from the 1990s, striving to encourage self-confidence in teenage girls. Banks published a book in 1998 which, for the time, took a relatively body positive approach to beauty. She spoke out against dieting culture and the promotion of 'extreme' thinness within the modelling industry, advocating for the importance of 'feed[ing] my body enough fuel to get me through the day'. Banks advocated for 'all women to have body confidence, no matter their look'. She stood up for a more inclusive vision of beauty, one which all women regardless of size or race could identify with. Although Bank's success was only possible through her adherence to western beauty standards, she was open about her own physical insecurities, wanting to encourage young girls in particular to embrace their imperfections. While these conversations were only ever surface-level and rarely touched on issues of race, they exemplified the growing pressure for African American women and girls in particular to participate in dieting culture.

The more visible anti-diet culture movement, however, was led by white women who likened fat oppression to racism, viewing themselves as being part of a marginalised group. Prominent feminist Virginia Wolf echoed these sentiments in 1991, arguing that as women had gained greater legal rights, control over them had continued through the caloric restriction promoted by dieting culture. Another feminist Susan Bordo made similar claims in 1993, blaming the media for constructing beauty ideals favouring thinness. These ideals, Bordo argued, were so pervasive that they encouraged individuals to self-police their bodies, believing that they could only be valuable if they were thin. The approach taken by these white feminists was a colour-blind one. They argued that dieting culture was a widespread social phenomenon which placed particular pressure on women to obtain and maintain a low body weight through caloric restriction and encouraged discrimination against those who did not adhere to the thin ideal. Overwhelmingly, they rooted fat oppression in the patriarchy, viewing it as a separate form of discrimination in its own right.

In resisting the increasingly pervasive dieting culture, *Fat Acceptance* activists were being intentionally subversive. The, ultimately racist, beauty ideals placed on women favoured thinness and encouraged caloric restriction. In doing so, black women in particular faced greater pressure to adjust their diets in order to adhere more closely to the thin ideal. Through their resistance to these expectations, body positive black women were also resisting a wider white supremacist culture which favoured thinness and whiteness at its core.

### **The commercialisation of fat acceptance 2000- 2015**

From the 2000s, the growing *Fat Acceptance* movement became increasingly commercialised. The diet industry latched onto the concept of 'body confidence', using it as a motivating factor for women in particular to change their diets in an attempt to lose weight.

Weight loss began to be seen as a natural by-product of self-confidence as well as a means by which to achieve it. Alongside this, as black bodies became increasingly associated with beauty, white women began to appropriate African American culture in the media. As a result, rather than being accepted, black female bodies were exoticised and fetishised.

The early 2000s saw a shift in dieting culture whereby confidence was increasingly seen as the main motivating factor in changing your body. In adhering more closely with the beauty norms of the time, it was argued that women were empowered. Plastic surgery began to be advertised to middle class women as a way to boost their confidence as can be seen in Appendix 3 below. It was touted as a permanent solution to low self esteem. In changing your body to adhere more closely with the ideal beauty standards, it was reported that 'body confidence' could be achieved. In utilising the conversations around body confidence, new forms of dieting began to be promoted. Author Jessica Ortner's 2015 book claimed to provide an 'effortless weight loss' method which would ultimately lead to increased confidence. Ortner aimed to provide an alternative to caloric restriction rooted in psychology, promising that those who followed the regimen could 'lose weight and keep it off without dieting, deprivation, or extreme exercise'. Her weight loss method encouraged individuals to change their perspective on dieting, arguing that it was, ultimately, stress and self-limiting beliefs which held people back in their past attempts to lose weight. Ortner popularised EFT tapping, a psychological technique designed to lower stress by tapping on certain pressure points. In applying this to weight loss, it was asserted that body size was indicative of an individual's mental wellbeing. Thinness, therefore, was still being promoted as the ideal body type, however, rather than being purely aesthetic, it was now considered to be a means of self-empowerment.

Whilst the body positivity movement had made caloric restriction seem oppressive, and ultimately anti-feminist, the idea that confidence could be achieved by adhering to the Eurocentric beauty ideals persisted. African

American women were 'encouraged...to adopt more European appearances', most notably, through beauty products marketed specifically towards them. As the black beauty industry entered the mainstream, the resistance to beauty ideals within black feminist circles began to be featured in advertising campaigns. A 2007 *Procter and Gamble* advert positioned itself within 'a sustained national conversation by, for and about black women' around beauty. However, these discussions of the racialised beauty standards were superficial, only being mobilised to sell a range of hair care products. Black women were only included in these popular conversations around beauty as a way to encourage their participation in consumer culture.

Growing criticisms of the Eurocentric beauty ideals also caused the ideals themselves to shift, with African American bodies being fetishised and appropriated as opposed to accepted. As black women fought to be considered beautiful, their bodies became commodified within the dominant culture. A 2014 *Paper Magazine* cover featuring prominent media personality Kim Kardashian, as shown in Appendix 4 below, received criticism for cultural appropriation after it was revealed the shoot was a recreation of a 1974 image of 'Dominican model and actress Carolina Beaumont'. Both images were taken by photographer Jean-Paul Goude whose pictures have been criticised for fetishising and objectifying black women's bodies. This reflected a wider history of black bodies, and particularly black women's bodies, being 'reduced to objects of poverty, violence, and consumerism'. The objectification of enslaved woman referred to as Sarah Baartman through the display of her body in 19th Century Europe represented a shift towards 'sexualised representations of black female bodies' in popular culture. This sexualisation can also be observed in the *Paper Magazine* cover which aimed to 'Break The Internet'. Here, as was the case with Baartman, in appropriating Beaumont's body, Kardashian and Goude were able to benefit from her success 'without acknowledging the debt they owe' to African American culture.

Therefore, as resistance to dieting culture began to influence popular conversations around beauty and dieting, the culture itself was forced to adapt. Superficial discussions around body positivity were used to promote new weight loss methods. The beauty standards also shifted as black feminists challenged their Eurocentrism. African American bodies, rather than being considered beautiful, began to be exoticised and appropriated by white celebrities. As a result, dieting culture persisted.



## Conclusion

On the whole, it is clear that changing your diet is inherently political. The food choices that different communities have made are reflective of the wider society they exist within. In the case of African American communities from 1955 to 2015, the systemic inequalities they faced were also apparent in the food system. As a result, African Americans had less access to nutritious food and were encouraged to eat a meat-based diet which directly contradicted the non-violent activism central to the Civil Rights movement. African American women also faced particular pressure to restrict their diets in order to adhere to the beauty standards which favoured thinness and, ultimately, whiteness.

These issues are still prevalent. In spite of the important work of local, community-led programmes in fighting against the unequal food system, it continues to be more difficult for those in predominantly black areas to access fresh, nutritious produce. It is, ultimately, the reliance of these programmes on continuous and voluntary regional support which undermines their ability to make lasting changes to the communities they serve. While some programmes have made a difference, this is limited to individual communities and has not made any meaningful institutional changes. Although plant-based diets are growing in popularity, once again, those choosing to reject meat-eating remain in the minority. Much of the anti-racist motivations for following a plant-based diet have been lost in the overwhelmingly white leadership of the movement in more recent years. For many today,

the motivations for following a plant-based diet are relatively apolitical. Individuals are far more likely to abstain from meat-eating out of health concerns, to make less of a personal environmental impact or concern for animal welfare than as an attempt to fight wider systems of oppression. On a more positive note, whilst dieting culture does still remain a prominent feature of society, conversations around fat acceptance and body positivity are starting to make their way into the mainstream. The negative physical and mental health impacts of restrictive dieting are being more broadly discussed and the racial origins of fat phobia are beginning to be acknowledged. As a result, the pressure placed on African American women, while still prevalent, has been somewhat lessened in more recent years, a feat which would not have been possible without the work of black *Fat Acceptance* activists.

This study, however, is not comprehensive. It fails to discuss how the food system itself changed over the period, instead, focusing on how activists tried to change the food system. This would be interesting to explore in the future as the study of food history expands. A more in-depth look into how the day-to-day diet of the average African American changed over the period could also be an intriguing lens through which to explore the issues discussed in this dissertation. I hope that as this field develops more conversations can be had around the role of food in informing identity as well as its usefulness as a tool for political change.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Karen Cope Straus, 'Chicago's Soul', *Vegetarian Times* Vol.1, no.223 (1996) p. 62.

#### **Watchi (Ghanaian Black-Eyed Peas and Rice)**

- 1 cup dried black-eyed peas, sorted,  
rinsed and soaked overnight  
(see note)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 4 to 5-inch piece kombu (optional;  
see glossary)

\*\*\*

- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- Salt to taste

#### Sauce:

- 1 Tbs. canola oil (see glossary)
- 1 heaping Tbs. whole wheat flour
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1 cup tomato paste

## **Appendix 2**

'Therapy groups', *Sojourner*, Vol.18, no.2 (1992) p.30.

**EATING PROBLEMS • BODY IMAGE ISSUES**

ANOREXIA – BULIMIA  
COMPULSIVE EATING

- Ongoing group for lesbian & bisexual women
- Group for straight, lesbian & bisexual women

**Valery Rockwell, M.Ed.** Harvard Square, Cambridge  
617-492-7843

Appendix 3

'Indulge yourself in the feeling...', *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (2000) p.3E.

**Indulge** yourself  
in the *feeling...*



Enhance or reduce  
breast size,  
remove unwanted hair,  
tighten tummy,  
trim waist line,  
contour thighs & hips...

John R. Leikensohn, M.D.  
Jeffrey K. Scott, M.D.

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