
Julier, Alice


From Kim: Perfect citation and scholarly choice!

No annotation!

Alice Julier's article entitled "The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All," investigates many different aspects of obesity in America today. Most importantly, Julier investigates how obesity truly affects the economy. She utilizes work by sociologist Herbert Gans to further her piece. Gans identifies thirteen economic, political, and cultural "functions" of poverty in the U.S. Julier takes this list and replaces the word poverty with obesity.

Many parts of this article sparked my curiosity. Although this was not completely new knowledge to me, I was still taken back again by the fact that people who are overweight have a harder time finding jobs and are paid less for the same jobs as most. White women that are large are also the most apt to experience a loss in wages and job opportunities. One study explains this issue as being a cause of a higher cost of providing health insurance for those that are obese. This was just one of the points that Julier put forward in her article.

The other part of the article that struck me was the fact that goods targeted to the obese are priced under the assumption that "no one who is rich would ever be fat." There are 25 varieties of Oreos on the market today. This is a reality that was never in necessity before. The industry also simultaneously provides products for dieting. Everything from food to books, to shoes that claim to beneficial for weight loss is available to all Americans. The other problem is the portrayal of these products to children. "In one ad for "Honey, We're Killing the Kids," a Latina mother is shown throwing her son snacks the way a dog receives a treat- he shows her his report card or plays his trumpet and she distractedly tosses him a cookie which he catches in his mouth."

The solution to the many problems listed is not simple. The majority of the food industry today mainly focuses on profiting rather than actually feeding people. The problem doesn't stop there. The government needs to offer a health care system that is available to all and offers more preventative care options as well as the right to adequate food, for everyone.

This article could be a great help to evaluating more of the government’s policies that currently exist on obesity. The obese are seen as a major contribution to today’s economy. However, what needs to be realized is that while they are part of the economy, more action needs to be taken to stop obesity in the first place. There is a clear issue that Julier brings to the table. Obesity is often thought of as a small problem in America, where as in reality it affects the lives of many in ways that are simply against what America, stands for.