

expense. Members of the public hoped mall circulation spaces that had replaced streets would remain accessible at all times, a condition business interests strenuously resisted. For all the effort put into staging displays and other events that would encourage purchasing, many consumers found the high-end stores that dominated shopping centers to be unnecessary and unaffordable. Unlike major shopping centers in the US, which were subjected to detailed market analysis in their planning stage, British counterparts suffered from a dearth of information gathered about their potential clientele.

Much to his credit, Kefford analyzes the decline of the large urban shopping center as well as its rise. He also introduces a sequel, as it were: huge, sprawling “shopping cities,” of which the MetroCentre, opened in 1986 outside Newcastle, was the first. Here, where layout was unencumbered by urban configurations, the density of building remained high compared with large regional malls in the US. And while the latter contingent were carefully sited in relation of existing and projected residential development, British counterparts were isolated—accessed by motorways, but resting in open areas mandated by regional planning dictates.

*Shopping City* deserves an audience wider than historians, geographers, and others interested in postwar planning and redevelopment. Kefford’s broad and acute analysis should prove engaging to academics and professionals of many stripes who are concerned with the modern city in all of its complex and ever-changing permutations.

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White Burgers, Black Cash: Fast Food from Black Exclusion to Exploitation. *By Naa Oyo A. Kwate.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023. 472 pp. 80 b/w illus. Hardcover, \$29.95. ISBN: 978-1-5179-1109-6.

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Reviewed by Kendra D. Boyd

In the 1960s, the civil rights activist Ella Baker pointed out that lunch counter sit-ins were about “something much bigger than a hamburger or even a giant-sized Coke”; they were about fighting the second-class

citizenship African Americans were subjected to (p. 159). This included second-class economic citizenship that prevented them from fully participating in the post-World War II (WWII) “consumers’ republic” (Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 2003). Denying African Americans service in restaurants and sites of leisure was not only a phenomenon of the Jim Crow South. African Americans could expect to be denied service at hamburger joints across the country, as illustrated by writer James Baldwin’s experiences in New Jersey (pp. xiii–xv, 356). This pattern of segregation is just one of the ways fast food’s anti-Blackness manifested throughout the industry’s history. In *White Burgers, Black Cash*, Naa Oyo A. Kwate examines the anti-Black nature of the American fast-food industry throughout the twentieth century, tracing the shift from Black exclusion to exploitation, which continues into the twenty-first century. Ultimately, the book concludes that “fast food embodies the deeply entrenched racial inequities that, in one form or another, have always existed” in the US (p. 354).

Kwate demonstrates that white-owned fast food chains consistently subordinated Blackness in myriad ways, including (among others) upholding fast food restaurants as exclusively white spaces, both aesthetically and by discriminating against African Americans; locating restaurants in white urban neighborhoods and/or white suburbs; turning to “Black chaperones” to help them exploit inner-city markets (p. 217); redlining potential Black franchisees; locking African Americans into untenable franchising arrangements, including “zebra agreements” (pp. 146–48); “coloniz[ing] the restaurant landscape in Black neighborhoods” (p. xiv); and aggressively marketing unhealthy food to Black communities, contributing to racialized health inequities. In this study “fast food” includes hamburgers and fried chicken restaurants, which “have dominated the industry for its entire history” (p. xix). This is a national story (although the book focuses primarily on New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.). Kwate illustrates that fast food “is the closest thing the United States has to a national cuisine . . . and has helped draw lines around who belongs and who does not,” and “looms large in how Americans make sense of race, gender, and citizenship” (p. xvii).

*White Burgers, Black Cash* is beautifully written and extensively researched. Throughout the book’s 14 chapters, Kwate utilizes a variety of sources to demonstrate that fast food’s history is a deeply racialized one. She makes effective and creative use of fast food company histories and proprietors’ memoirs; census data; marketing materials, including billboards and advertisements in periodicals and on television; company records; photographs; architectural designs; newspaper coverage; and

industry publications and conference proceedings. Kwate maps fast food's racial transformation in the US over 100 years, and the many original maps showing the locations and spread of fast food in US cities support the book's argument regarding the shift from Black exclusion to exploitation.

The book is divided into three parts: White Utopias, Racial Turnover, and Black Catastrophe. Part one, White Utopias, lays out the meaning and trajectory of "first generation" and "second generation" fast food chains. The first generation included Horn & Hardart's Automat and burger chateaus such as White Castle, White Tower, and Little Tavern. Established mostly in the 1920s and 1930s, these chains were designed to serve urban pedestrians, generally male laborers, who needed a quick, cheap meal. Second-generation restaurants were established in the post-WWII period mostly in the 1950s and 1960s, and a few in the 1970s. This generation included burger chains such as McDonalds, Burger King, and Wendy's, and fried chicken chains, including Church's, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), and Popeyes. The second wave of fast food chains tended to target white families in the suburbs and embraced postwar car culture by incorporating drive-ins. Black Americans were not only denied access to a quintessentially American meal but also full inclusion in the post-war consumer culture that was a key mark of citizenship in the context of the Cold War. Shifting racial demographics and urban geographies in the mid-twentieth century also saw fast food restaurants becoming sites of racist violence, as working-class whites in cities fought to defend the prevailing racial order (pp. 110–117).

The next two parts of the book outline the shift from fast food embodying whiteness to representing Blackness. Part two, Racial Turnover, explains how, as the white market became oversaturated, fast food companies reluctantly turned to the inner city for growth after ignoring the African American market for years. The chapters on Black franchisees and franchisors in this section were some of the most enlightening aspects of the book. The US government aided fast food's proliferation in the Black community through federal financing schemes (chapter 8), which appeared to aid African Americans' goals of "getting in" on achieving the American Dream through fast food's upward mobility prospects (chapter 9). Yet, fast food franchising could not overturn the structural inequalities of racial capitalism, and ultimately, Black franchisees did not experience equal opportunities compared with white franchisees.

Part three of *White Burgers, Black Cash* covers the "Blaxploitation" era of fast food, and the catastrophic impact of large numbers of fast food restaurants in Black urban communities. As Kwate puts it, "Black communities would first be excluded from a neighborhood resource [fast food] when it was desirable and then become a repository once it

was shunned” (p. 354). The infiltration of fast food restaurants in urban Black communities in the 1970s and 1980s would have enduring consequences for Black health, well-being, and business and economic development. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, Black urban communities continued to contend with an oversaturation of fast food restaurants, at the expense of other types of retail enterprises, including grocery stores. In the second half of the book, readers also learn more about Black advertising agencies’ role in marketing white corporate products to African Americans, a discussion which productively builds on the work of Robert Weems (*Desegregating the Dollar: African American Consumerism in the Twentieth Century*, 1998), Brenna Wynn Greer, (*Represented: The Black Imagemakers Who Reimagined African American Citizenship*, 2019), Marcia Chatelain (*Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America*, 2020), and Keith Wailoo (*Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing, and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette*, 2021).

The scope of coverage in *White Burgers, Black Cash* is impressive. Still, as a historian of African American business, I was left wondering about the history of Black-owned hamburger and fried chicken restaurants before efforts to franchise in the 1960s. For example, heavyweight champion boxer Joe Louis’s Brown Bomber Chicken Shack operated in Detroit from 1936 to at least 1947 (and had more than one location). How do forerunner enterprises such as this relate to Kwate’s narrative of Black Power-era celebrity franchisers discussed in chapter 9? Another question pertains to regional differences. Readers will not learn as much about Black franchising efforts in Southern cities, besides Washington D.C. How did fast food align with the concept of “New South prosperity” as outlined by Brandon Winford (*John Hervey Wheeler, Black Banking, and the Economic Struggle for Civil Rights*, 2020)? However, one book cannot be expected to do all things, and Kwate has laid the groundwork for and opened up several lines of inquiry for future study.

*White Burgers, Black Cash* makes important interventions in the fields of business history, urban history, and food studies. This book will be an intriguing read for those interested in the history of corporate business, small business, the fast-food industry, franchising, marketing, and advertising.

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