
E-grocery stores, like FreshDirect in New York City, hold the potential to greatly impact the way that urban food markets function, yet they remain largely unstudied. Empirical accounts suggest that the sudden increase in food choice that e-groceries provide in neighborhoods underserved by bricks-and-mortar grocery stores, which are often low-income and minority areas, fuels gentrification. This thesis tests that observation by spatially analyzing FreshDirect’s deliveries by zip code from 2002-2007 in relation to the variables of income, rent, property value, and number of supermarkets, as well as by surveying FreshDirect customers. The quantitative analysis reveals little correlation between FreshDirect deliveries and demographic indicators of gentrification, yet the qualitative analysis suggests that people do use FreshDirect for better food options in gentrifying neighborhoods. These findings help explain the relationship between food retail and neighborhood appeal and have broad implications for urban food access.