Research direction (redirected)

For the remainder of the quarter, I will focus on refinement of a previous paper “A Geospatial Analysis of Fast Food Restaurants in the Seattle Area”


There were a few limitations of the previous study that I will attempt to address; these are listed below.

- **Unclear definition of what constitutes a “junk food” restaurant.** I will consult with Adam Drewnowski (obesity/nutrition/epidemiology professor) on this point.
- **Limited inventory of fast food outlets.** It is possible the Employment Security Department or some other State agency categorized food service establishments. Otherwise I will check the telephone book for “restaurants” to make sure I have selected all junk food chains. (My original set of restaurants was Arby’s, Burger King, Jack in the Box, McDonald’s, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, Taco Time, and Wendy’s.)
- **Ecologic problem of use of census data.** My main aim is to assess the demographic properties of those living within proximity of fast food restaurants. However, census data are too aggregated to provide reliable demographic data. One possibility is to use a proxy measure, such as the combined land and improvement value per parcel as an indication of SES. Also, it may be appropriate to look at parcel size or per-capita fast food location
density as an indication of wealth (rich people can generally afford larger parcels). I will also follow up on Alon’s helpful comment about getting parcel level data from the PSRC.

- **Network distance to fast food restaurant may need to be altered.** I used 1 mi network distances for doing the demographic summaries for distance to fast food restaurants. This value may be high, as typically people are not willing to walk more than 0.5 mi. Likewise, people may not be willing to drive a full mile to get to a destination.

- **Compare inside vs. outside service areas.** To follow up on Bill’s idea to compare properties within proximity of fast food restaurants versus outside, I will perform summaries of demographics within and beyond the network distance tolerance.

- **Statistical analyses.** The linear regressions I used are not appropriate for count data. Rather than this technique, I will explore the use of log-linear modeling using a Poisson model, which is more appropriate for count data.