

Full Transcript

Hayden: “Hey guys, this is Food Impact. Hosted by myself, Hayden Wheeler, along with Rachael Engle, Logan Thirion, and Aaron East. We're talking today about a problem not a lot of people are aware of: food access and immigrants being able to acquire food. So the question I have for you guys is, do you think you get enough to eat?”

Aaron: “I think we do. As students, we have access to a dining hall and a food court, so it's hard to go hungry with those options.”

Logan: “I usually eat in my dorm or at Havener. Not often do I have to go to the store to pick up groceries.”

Aaron: “Ya, I don't find myself needing to go to a grocery store to pick up fresh ingredients for dinner.”

Logan: “We don't really have a grocery store nearby though.”

Hayden: “We have a Walmart!”

Aaron: “True. We have a Walmart that sells fresh food. Not to mention, we have a Country Mart, an Aldi, and a Krogers.”

Hayden: “But without a grocery store that is available to the students within walking distance, would that make our campus a food desert?”

Logan: “I think it is, because although we have a Walmart, we don't have an actual grocery store close by and we have quite a bit of fast food restaurants.”

Section 1(Food deserts)

Hayden: “Now, what exactly are food deserts?”

Aaron: “The term ‘food desert’ was first used in the early 1990s in Scotland by a resident of a public housing sector scheme. Since then the term has been used to describe poor urban areas where residents cannot buy affordable or good-quality fresh food. It also describes an area where there is a shortage or lack of food availability.”

Hayden: “How do they occur?”

Aaron: “Well, supermarkets tend to build less in low populated areas, forcing people to rely more on fast food and convenience stores. They can also occur in high poverty areas since the residents there cannot afford expensive healthy food, which can lead to health issues in the general public. Here is an interview with Jewel Hairston explaining what it's like to live in a food desert and how it can lead to poor health.”

Interview Clip: (<https://youtu.be/jicYbi-8ZNU?t=9m25s>) (Time: 9:26-9:47)

Transition audio song?

Hayden: “So, we've been reading Outcasts United which centers around the town of Clarkston, Georgia. Would the town be considered a food desert?”

Aaron: “The town itself isn't a food desert, but because the immigrants who move in are poor, they have a harder time affording food. Clarkston is still struggling with food, but not enough so to be labeled a food desert. For example, in the book, a young boy named Jeremiah explains to his soccer coach that his family is forced to rely on food stamps. And even then, they don't last to the end of the month, forcing them to go hungry until they received more. So although the town itself wouldn't be labeled a food desert, the poorer population have difficult times finding not only healthy food, but food at all.”

Section 2(Poverty food insecurity)

Aaron: “You know, poverty plays a big part in creating food deserts. The people in a community that cannot afford the more healthier foods are forced to rely on cheaper, not as healthy options. Or rely on fast food restaurants.”

Hayden: “So, you could also say that these people live with food insecurity.”

Logan: “Yes, food deserts and food insecurity are very similar. With food insecurity, people live without reliable access to nutritious food.”

Hayden: “How would someone know if they were classified as food insecure?”

Logan: “We have three questions used by the USDA to determine if a household falls into the food insecurity category. They are all yes or no questions.

-In the last 12 months, were your children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?

-In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn't have enough money for food?

-In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn't eat, because you couldn't afford enough food?

Logan: “There is a list of 18 questions, but I consider these three to be the most suitable.”

Hayden: “Ya, I like them. So what do the people's answers to these questions mean?”

Logan: “According to the USDA if you respond affirmatively to eight or more questions, than you are classified as a very low level of food security.”

Hayden: “Now, food insecurity is the lack of access to food. So, would food stamps be considered a source of food?”

Logan: “It can be used to get food, so I guess I would say that it is a source of food.”

Hayden: “Would you say most people who use food stamps are classified ‘food insecure’?”

Logan: “No, not exactly. In general, people who qualify for food stamps don't have the income to sustain themselves and the people they support. They wouldn't be considered food insecure since at that time they may not be poor, but they are financially unstable.”

Hayden: “The young boy in Outcasts United, Jeremiah. His family relies on food stamps. Would you consider him to be food insecure?”

Logan: “I would. His family depends on food stamps to feed themselves and when they run out, they have to find another source of food. I'm sure that requires them to go hungry on some meals when they can't find a source for food.”

Hayden: “Would you say that it's harder for Jeremiah to find food because he has to rely on food stamps or because he doesn't know American food.”

Logan: “Finding food is hard enough for Jeremiah and his family. I'm sure being an immigrant doesn't make it any easier.”

Hayden: “It really doesn't. Figuring out a new culture and new diet can be really difficult on immigrants. Especially when they don't have a solid source of income and struggle with finances.”

Section 3(Hometown (familiar) food)

Aaron: “Even our main character in Outcasts United has to go through a culture change with the food she eats.”

Hayden: “You're right! When she went into that grocery store and saw that they served food from her home country, Jordan.”

Aaron: “Ya, she became really homesick when she walked into the store. She was reminded of all the old smells from home and the food she used to get there.”

Hayden: “I bet it's hard to become accustomed to a new everything, but I can imagine it would be really hard smelling a very familiar food. Smelling something like that can be so comforting and make you really yearn for home.”

Aaron: “Oh ya. I couldn't imagine leaving ... *everything* behind and starting from scratch.”

Hayden: “Do you think it gets easier as time goes on? I mean, I’m sure you have to get used to living in a new place.”

Aaron: “I imagine so. There is a notable difference between the acculturation between foreign and US-born immigrants. According to the Social Science & Medicine Journal, “Foreign-born immigrants were more likely to have lower family income and maternal education, and to live in areas of higher immigrant density and greater linguistic isolation”(p. 2023). On the other hand though, they say how bad diet habits are more common in US-born than foreign-born immigrants.”

Hayden: “Interesting. So, the first generation immigrants, the ones actually immigrating, are generally more poor and have a harder time adjusting, but the following generations assimilate better and end up with “bad American dietary” habits?”

Aaron: “That’s exactly what I mean. There was actually a study done to show the changes to the diets of Chinese women who have immigrated in the U.S..They found that the higher the education level of the immigrant, the higher the energy intake, and the better they were accustomed with American culture.”

Hayden: “Huh. So, it all depends on the situation for how the person will become accustomed to our culture.”

Aaron: “Yep. People who immigrate over but continue to speak their native language and stay in a culture much like the one they are used to, don’t become as accustomed to the different culture. But the people who learn the language and follow the same customs become a lot more used to their new home.”

Hayden: “So, we have an example from Fabio Parasecoli. He’s speaking on his experience with discovering American-Italian food.”

Interview Clip: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtjuq-I5VCs>) (Time: 9:44-10:37)

Hayden: “So, immigrants have to adjust to their new life, sometimes not being able to rely on things to remind them of their home town?”

Aaron: “Ya. Sometimes they can’t rely on their old diet and have to change the things they eat since they don’t have access to the food they would like to have.”

Hayden: “Is there not places for them to possibly get that food?”

Aaron: “Sometimes yes, but sometimes no. It depends from location to location.”

Hayden: “Well, we’ve talked about a few different topics today. And, I know we opened with a question, so I’d like to end with another question: “Do you think that you live in an area that is considered a food desert?”

Aaron: “ I definitely think our campus would be considered a food desert due to the amount of fast food restaurants in comparison to the amount of fresh produce markets in the area.” “With Rolla being the midway point in between St. Louis and Springfield on I-44. It became a place for Truckers to stay before they continue their journey. With them only staying for a short time when they needed a quick meal so fast food was their number one choice, leading to more fast food restaurants in the town instead of fresh produce markets.”

Logan: “Ya, and can you imagine how small the town would be without a University? I mean, think of how much this school has helped the town expand. Without Missouri S&T, the town might not attract as many people as they would like.”

Aaron: “There aren’t many stores within walking distance from campus. Nor is there any public transportation to help people get to the store.”

Logan: “I definitely think campus is somewhere that is affected by lack of food access.

Hayden: “And I have a question for you listeners. “Do you live in a food desert? If so, what can you do to help your town have better access to food?”

Aaron: “Thanks for listening and guys, have a great day!”