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Food Insecurity and its Socioeconomic Impact

Class inequality and other systemic barriers are steadily thickening as concerns like food insecurity are being pushed to the side because of who they affect most. Food insecurity is the lack of access, availability and quality of food in communities and it has been seen as most prevalent in low income communities and third world countries (Pakravan-Charvadeh 2021). Not many European countries face the consequences of war, yet: Asia, Africa, and Middle Eastern countries all have regions where good quality food is inaccessible to them because of factors like armed conflict and displacement (Pakravan-Charvadeh 2021). Countries that have been invaded by the US and have had their natural resources stolen from them are now considered third-world, alluding to the idea that colonialism was the source. From this we can infer that third-world countries' lack of resources and their status of being third-world roots in imperialism.

Creation of Deep Rooted Systemic Obstacles

Food Insecurity can be extremely important in smaller communities because millions of kids can grow up malnourished which can affect brain and body development as well as causing disease in later life (Jebena 2017), putting them at a disadvantage than their wealthier peers. Creating an unequal foundation for their success since one child will grow up with health issues and financial obstacles to go along with that while another child will grow up perfectly normal with a better chance of success in the workplace, since they don't have to worry about the same obstacles as their fellow peers. The source of food insecurity can date back to colonialism as

well, since people of color were not born into wealth as opposed to their white peers, creating systemic obstacles like wage-gaps and laws made to prevent people of color from gaining any sort of wealth. But if we look from a modern perspective, food insecurity can result from the maldistribution of government funds and how lower income communities aren't funded enough to compensate for their lower incomes. Finances tend to be distributed more to branches like the Department of Defense, especially local police departments, while those same communities' education systems aren't able to buy new equipment or pay teachers a fair wage because they are underfunded. Imagine these issues in your local community, and then imagine how many other cities, counties, and states have this same issue. After looking at your own country, remember how this issue occurs outside of the US and in multiple countries across the globe since other countries tend to have corrupt or no government and funding to support themselves. Although organizations like: World Food Programme, Feeding America, and Unicef fight to lessen food insecurity throughout the world, and world hunger is a problem that has gotten a lot of attention in the media, it still has been unable to disappear altogether. The overall importance of this issue boils down to increasing economic gaps in our world as well as in our country alone, and food insecurity being our first step to restructuring our society and not letting the United States' classist and racist foundation be the endpoint for this country. Rather canceling these values out and shifting into something more equal as well as equitable.

Local Impact

Although we live in a country considered first-world, there are many smaller communities within our country that suffer just as badly as communities in forgein countries where war and poverty are prevalent. When natural disasters and unequal funding play roles in certain parts of the United States, it can make you realize how different two communities right

next to each other are living. Where one is abundant in food and resources while another is being destroyed because of hurricanes and having no funding to rebuild. A survey was done reviewing how “11% of US households were food insecure in 2018” (Wang 2021), as well as 88.7% of survey takers made an income less than $15,000 making them more susceptible to food insecurity (Wang 2021). The percentage of food insecure households may seem like a small number but when comparing it to the size of residents in the US, it can start to sound like a more concerning issue.

IGO’s and Their Role in Solving

An organization created by and meant to serve several nations around the world is the World Food Programme. This organization was made by the United Nations, specifically meant to tackle food crisis issues no matter the country. The World Food Programme is meant to help countries in food crises like during war so that hunger isn’t used as a weapon. They do this through food delivery as a form of emergency assistance, relief and rehabilitation, as well as other special operations, WFP (2018). When countries are at war and citizens need food, the WFP creates solutions to solve this by committing “to end hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition by 2030”, according to the World Food Programme (2018). Over the summer of 2022, the World Food Programme had collaborated with local communities in Syria to build and improve irrigation systems since faulty irrigation in dry regions only kills the opportunity and ability to grow crops. After the rebuilding of these canals, 17,800 farmers and counting are able to resume agriculture meaning they are able to bring in income to feed their families (WFP 2022). Delivering food in times of crisis is a great idea to feed citizens but thinking long term and helping countries to become self reliant brings the WFP to another level, encouraging independence and education. Not only did this positively impact farmers, but this solving

problems with long term goals in mind spreads its impact on other aspects of the country. Promoting gender equality and education by encouraging women to farm as well as encouraging young kids to learn about science in ways that will help them in the context of their situation. This overall encourages self reliance within countries since, if a similar problem were to occur again, the people of Syria would be able to problem solve using what they learned in the past from the WFP.

Critiques and Improvements

When I look over more of the WFP's positive impact, I don't see anything worth critiquing. My personal goal would be encouraging independence from other countries so that if armed conflict happens between one country and another, both are able to operate independently from each other. Incase of sanctions from powerful countries, a country would be able to rely on its own natural resources to keep its nation fed and operating. I think the WFP does an excellent job of not only lending aid but teaching sustainable practices to ensure countries can independently source their own food. In case a worst-case scenario breaks out where a country has no external support, that country's backbone is the education they have on practices that are sustainable. For example, when the United States had put sanctions on Cuba and cut off all trade with them, Cuba was unable to get support from the US' allies (which they have many of) and so they had to learn to operate with less support than other countries. Since Cuba encouraged education and strengths in: STEM, Medicine, and other foundational concepts in education, they are technically functioning at a first-world country level yet their embargo affects them on a materialistic level making them seem third-world (Gordon. 2016). So encouraging education and that'll benefit the context of your situation like Syria who is going through constant war and

humanitarian crisis, STEM education can help their economy while Socio Political education can help their government.

Summary

Although Food Insecurity may come off as a smaller, more local issue. Its effects are deeply rooted in creating systemic barriers, keeping people of a lower income impoverished and lacking power. As well as, its prevalence within local communities has spread throughout states and countries, making it a more serious of an issue than depicted. Along with spreading awareness in local communities, encouraging local food sourcing and funding programs like WFP and SNAP can increase food security not only locally but globally. The effects of a food secure nation can have a major positive impact on the political status of countries as well as the economical status of smaller communities in each state. Think about how much of a mental and physical impact eating three meals a day makes on yourself, and then imagine this positive impact on the rest of our world.

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