

CONNECTING WITH FOOD: THE IMPLICATIONS OF CORONAVIRUS

CASE STUDY: CANADIAN FOOD POLICY ORGANIZATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

How has coronavirus impacted the way Canadian's connect with food sources?

This proposed research explores the connection between food stability during a pandemic and the development of community-supported agriculture [CSA]. Examine any changes, particularly the perspective of where food comes from and the relationship to food. As part of the slow food movement and local food movement, this initiative strengthens the relationship between a community's wellbeing and the connection to its local economy, culture, and food supply. I plan to address previous research surrounding Farmers' Markets, as most of that data is required to understand how communities were historically fed. Furthermore, investigating consumers' motivation to food and understand if there has been a notable change in perspective or possible noteworthy developments specifically created by the coronavirus.

I propose an exploratory case study discovering what impact coronavirus has on our relationship to food surrounding Canadian Food Policy Organizations and if there is enough evidence to warrant further applied research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pulling from a collection of reports and articles across the world, our relationship to food is essential. Looking back at the beginning when Carlo Petrini founded the Slow Food Movement in 1989 (Guthrie et al., 2006; Pietrykowski, 2004; Stanciu, 2015), which desires "the preservation of local foods and cuisines by creating and strengthening networks of social relations between consumers and producers" (Pietrykowski, 2004, pg318). Farmers' Markets were historically the

way in which cities were fed; local farmers and producers would bring their extra produce to the city or small towns and set up markets to sell (Stanciu, 2015). It was the primary way to source their food until the railway and refrigeration options took off, and food could travel long distances much quicker and safer (Stanciu, 2015). That transition led to supermarkets' creation, which started the disconnection of the community found at Farmers' Markets and uncertainty for what food we are putting into our bodies (Parkins & Craig, 2009; Stanciu, 2015).

With interest in slowing down, the next wave for the slow food movement was started, called the local food movement (Delind, 2006). Delind talks about connecting with the community, knowing what they are eating, and becoming more cautious of their health and nutrition (2006). Consumers want to know the farmer who grew the food they are buying and ask them questions and get real answers (Delind, 2006).

There is also the school of thought that not only does food transfer traditions and creates meaningful connections, but it is also a way of connecting to place through the food they eat (Parkins & Craig, 2009; Pietrykowski, 2004). That thought is along the lines of 'you are what you eat,' that by eating locally sourced food, they are, in fact, acclimatizing to the location where they live (Delind, 2006; Pietrykowski, 2004). For example, research into eating locally made honey and how it could help with outdoor allergies because they are already introducing them into their system through the honey (Delind, 2006). It is mentioned that when we travel, certain foods do not digest correctly for us, but the locals have no problem (Delind, 2006; Pietrykowski, 2004). If they are regularly eating food that is shipped long distances and that is not grown near them, then their body could continue to see these items as foreign and not digest them properly (Delind, 2006).

Though further research needs to go into this area, Delind speaks to the connection of body, place and culture through local food (2006).

Over the last few years, the public's interest has become more invested in where food is coming from, not only that but a debate of organic vs local (Delind, 2006; Dodds et al., 2013). Their concerns were becoming pertinent during past pandemics such as mad cow disease or SARS (Delind, 2006; Guthrie et al., 2006; Pietrykowski, 2004). As seen in Italy, they took immediate action to understand the eating habits and lifestyle changes caused by COVID-19 on public health through a survey collecting first-time data (Di Renzo et al., 2020). They also acknowledge the limitations of their sample study and need further investigation (Di Renzo et al., 2020). Enter food policy councils (FPCs), which "have emerged as a critical structure for organizing community-based responses to multiple food system issues" (Palmer et al., 2020, pg 223). With the ever-evolving and on-going coronavirus, it begs the question, what precautions and developments regarding food sovereignty will the future hold for Canada.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

QUESTION

In what ways has the phenomenon of coronavirus impacted consumers' relationship with food?

As stated previously, there was an uptake in concern during previous pandemics; however, it appears the past is quickly forgotten, leaving much to the unknown. The proposed research is exploratory in nature, and it will focus on discovery surrounding the effect coronavirus has had on connection to food in Canada.

METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Due to current policy restrictions regarding the on-going coronavirus, the ability to conduct in-person research for the subjects and the researcher is unsafe. However, the world has gone virtual, which allows for a new data collection opportunity; therefore, the proposed research will be through online fieldwork.

CASE STUDY

The case study used for this research will be through various online community platforms regarding Canadian Food Policy Organizations and additional resources connected to food sustainability.

SOURCES

Online open sources including a selection of open forums, public webinars, blog postings, podcasts and online communities; as well as academic journals.

METHOD

I will gather and analyze evidence on the actual and perceived implications of coronavirus on connection with food through a case-study analysis on Food Policy Organizations in Canada. After exploratory observations in open online sources, a textual analysis will be conducted to analyze the experiences, draw correlations to better understand the phenomenon, and modify it into a research paper for future use in applied research.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fieldwork will be following Article 2.2 and gathered through online open-sourced platforms (Government of Canada, 2019). Following the core values of TCPS, the overall risk of this research project would be considered minimal. The observations would not be regarded as part of a potentially vulnerable group, and there is no monetary compensation. As this project is exploratory, it provides future benefits in understanding immediate impact of coronavirus.

SCHEDULE

With coronavirus currently taking place, that would significantly affect the functionality and the reliability of accessing in-person results. With all fieldwork being collected online and based on the approval date, the research will be completed and submitted before April 2nd, 2021.

STATEMENT OF RELEVANCE

This research is essential to understanding the future of food sustainability during an on-going pandemic.

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APPENDIX:

Completion of Ethic Tutorial

