



**GLOBALISATION
AND
INDIGENOUS
FOOD SECURITY**

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Globalisation and Indigenous Food Security

When trying to solve Indigenous food insecurity, one of the main arguments is to increase the capacity for Indigenous communities to return to Indigenous food systems. However, significant barriers stand in the way of the actualisation of this argument, the most predominant being the global international food system that has been one of the primary causes for Indigenous food insecurity existing in the first place. Globalisation, along with the industries and governments that support and protect this system, such as capitalism, ensures that Indigenous sovereignty and food systems will continue to face barriers to prospering.

The globalisation of food systems has affected Indigenous peoples in various ways, such as Indigenous food insecurity and deteriorating health; decreased transmission of traditional knowledge and food systems; and increased global warming that is destroying available food resources. Globalisation - in combination with colonisation - has forced Indigenous families to become more reliant on imported market foods. This has increased diets that have greater amounts of fat, sugars, preservatives, and processed foods as these products are cheaper and more abundant. These market foods are increasing diet-related diseases and promoting increasingly sedentary lifestyles. In the case where globalisation has been able to partially reduce hunger in the small islands of the Pacific or the northern communities of the Arctic Circle, this comes at the expense of good health (Del Bello, 2017).

Due to the rural nature of many Indigenous settlements, market food is often exceptionally expensive, and Indigenous peoples are left to rely on easily preserved, unhealthy food. Additionally, this increase in globalisation has disrupted Indigenous traditional knowledge and food systems. Capitalism and globalisation have increased ideologies of individuality, destroying practices of food and knowledge sharing, and as a result, Indigenous cultures and food traditions are disappearing. The combination of colonial rule that banned traditional food practices and globalisation that has taken Indigenous land for the purpose of productivity, has meant that Indigenous peoples often don't have the means to harvest food instead of going to the local markets. In Canada, Indigenous peoples were banned, and in some regions continue to be banned, from hunting and gathering for decades. As a result, the traditional knowledge of these food systems has been lost, meaning that these communities are forced to rely on markets that have a monopoly over the community and are thus able to raise prices significantly with little to no repercussions.

Global warming and climate change have also had a profound impact on Indigenous food systems and are removing traditional foods as a method to combat food insecurity for Indigenous peoples. Global warming is an immediate result of globalisation, and this effect is being especially accentuated for Indigenous communities on small islands, and in the Arctic. For these communities traditional systems of gathering are threatened. Walking on ice is much more dangerous due to early melting, and small islands are experiencing continuous shrinking of their land as sea-levels rise. Climate change is changing animal migration patterns, and new diseases are being found in sea life, lake life, and land non-humans.

As a result, traditional knowledge keepers have fewer chances to pass down their lessons to the next generation.

Despite all of the negative implications globalisation has on Indigenous food systems, little is likely to change. Globalisation and international trade are universally defended by politicians and economists. Worldwide, Indigenous knowledge and food systems are not valued. While politicians may say that they support Indigenous sovereignty, knowledge, and systems, what they value more is capitalism and industrialisation. Governments will continue to incentivise Indigenous rural-to-urban migration, in the name of economic development which in turn slowly deteriorates Indigenous sovereignty, land rights, and traditional systems. Indigenous food systems are inherently anti-industrial. Industrialization emphasises the importance of productivity and surplus, meanwhile, Indigenous food systems are built on reciprocity, and only taking what is needed. Even when Indigenous communities do want to participate in trade, they are prevented from acting on their own sovereignty by the settler state governing them. For example, trade was a fully developed system between northern Indigenous communities; however Indigenous peoples can no longer easily move food between communities, due to colonial governments interceding, and inevitably slowing down the process (Del Bello, 2017).

Capitalism and globalisation will continue to pose barriers to Indigenous sovereignty and will continue to keep Indigenous food systems from prospering. Colonial powers have disrupted Indigenous senses of place and community, and have flooded Indigenous peoples with “individualism and predatory capitalism” (Coté, 2016).

Despite climate activists and a minority of development practitioners advocating for nature-based solutions led by Indigenous knowledge, globalisation still calls for the growth of industrialisation, which will continue to encroach on Indigenous land and sovereignty. As stated by Glen Coulthard, “for Indigenous nations to live, capitalism must die” (2014).

Bibliography

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