

Annotated Bibliography: Indigenous Food Sovereignty

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The concept of food sovereignty, and the growing movement surrounding it as related to Indigenous peoples all around the world, is vital to their survival as it enhances several aspects of their lives, including the betterment of their health, the restoration and strengthening of their cultural traditions and identities, and economic stability.

Blanchet, Rosanne, et al. "An Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative Is Positively Associated with Well-Being and Cultural Connectedness in a Survey of Syilx Okanagan Adults in British Columbia, Canada." *BMC Public Health*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11229-2>.

This peer-reviewed article was published by BMC Public Health on July 16, 2021 regarding a survey that was done by adults from the Syilx Okanagan Nation (SON) in British Columbia, Canada to assess if a project dealing with salmon reintroduction enhanced the health, well-being, and cultural connectedness of the SON. Salmon, especially the Okanagan Sockeye salmon, is central to the SON and has vital nutritional, cultural, and spiritual significance. It was nearing extinction until the Syilx Elders started an initiative in the Okanagan River Basin to reclaim their food sovereignty in replenishing the salmon population. The initiative has been successful, and fish harvesting has increased. This is vital because salmon is one of the four "Foods Chiefs" of the SON and is necessary to its strong cultural identity, cultural connectedness, and cultural continuity. Salmon is a traditional food and is a primary source of food for First Nations, which are the Indigenous people recognized by the government of Canada. The First Nations are experiencing issues with being disconnected to their culture, and their food sovereignty is connected to their health and well-being. In this survey, salmon was used as a representation for engaging with food sovereignty. Three SON communities participated, with 256 SON adults completing a survey about traditional food frequency and questions about their health status, well-being, and cultural connectedness. They were divided into three groups: adults who ate Okanagan Sockeye salmon, adults who ate salmon but did not usually know the species of the salmon they ate, or who solely ate salmon that were not Okanagan Sockeye; and adults who did not eat any salmon. It was found that eating salmon was linked to better well being and cultural connectedness, especially when the Okanagan Sockeye was consumed, but no associations between salmon eating and physical health outcomes. The results of this survey conveys that Indigenous food sovereignty for the First Nations of Canada is an important and necessary way to enhance well-being and cultural connectedness, which supports my claim that initiatives and programs in the food sovereignty movement are imperative to Indigenous people.

Bowens, Natasha. *The Color of Food : Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. New Society Publishers, Limited, 2015. Print.

This book includes a collection of interviews conducted by Natasha Bowens, a farmer, author and food justice activist. These interviews done by Bowens contain within them the stories of the unsung heroes and pillars of the food movement, farmers, food movement leaders, and food activists of color. This wide array of interviews that she conducted highlighted they and their communities' struggles, the initiatives they are taking to better their lives and the lives of their respective communities, and the successes that they have made happen in their communities and beyond. Through this book, Bowens sheds a light on the goals of the individuals she interviewed, with a common theme throughout the interviews being the motivation of these individuals to preserve their communities and the culture of their communities, and them doing so with resilience, dismantling what has been believed to be the "norm" regarding agricultural identity. What will best support my research paper from this book as evidence to my claim is the interviews Bowens conducted regarding farmers, leaders of non-profit organizations, food educators, and traditional food activists who are a part of Native American tribes such as the Navajo Nation and the Cherokee Nation. All of these individuals Bowens interviewed explained the plights of their communities, with colonization being expressed as the underlying cause of their troubles. In each of these interviews, those interviewed described some efforts they are undertaking and the successes they are having, mostly taking the form of food sovereignty initiatives, to help their communities to preserve their traditional lands, food cultures, and enhance the health of their peoples. Therefore, I will use this book by Natasha Bowens as a credible source to support my claim that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty and the growing movement surrounding it are vital to Indigenous people, as they have positively and will continue to positively enhance the lives of Indigenous populations.

Dennis, Mary Kate, and Tabitha Robin. "Healthy on our own terms: Indigenous wellbeing and the colonized food system." *Journal of Critical Dietetics*, vol. 5, No.1. 14 May 2020, [doi:https://doi.org/10.32920/cd.v5i1.1333](https://doi.org/10.32920/cd.v5i1.1333).

This article was published in the open-access, peer reviewed journal entitled the Journal of Critical Dietetics. It was written by Mary Kate Dennis, an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba in Canada, whose focus of study is Indigenous elders from both Canada and the United States, and Tabitha Robin, an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia in Canada, whose research focuses on looking at Indigenous food sovereignty from a spiritual lens. This article focuses on the Indigenous peoples in Canada. In the article, the authors discuss the importance of approaching the health of Indigenous peoples from a more holistic approach, based on the concept of "being well", instead of exclusively measuring the health of Indigenous peoples through their disparities in physical health and chronic diseases. As "being well" can only be accomplished by Indigenous peoples through having relationships with their ancestral lands, their community, and their spiritual ancestors, the authors describe how Indigenous peoples' traditional food systems involve many complex relationships that in which Indigenous peoples, from a physical, spiritual and emotional standpoint, both teach and learn how to live on their traditional lands and skills involving food. The authors explain that through being able to have the autonomy

to access healthy foods on their traditional lands, they are able to “be well” and in good health. In addition, the authors explain the mechanisms through which colonization has had a large negative impact on the traditional food systems of the Indigenous peoples in Canada, not allowing them to be healthy, especially in terms of their holistic approach to healthiness. The authors explain that the efforts by the Canadian government to address the food insecurity in Indigenous peoples are broken and just continue to oppress them, and make the point that the most effective way for Indigenous people to be in good health is through Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives that focus on making Indigenous communities stronger through allowing them to have autonomy in determining their food systems and through strengthening their responsibility to care for their land. I am going to use this article to support my claim that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty and the growing movement surrounding it are vital to Indigenous people, as they have positively and will continue to positively enhance the lives of Indigenous populations. I will use this article to support my claim because it shows that Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives improve the lives of Indigenous populations, especially those in Canadian communities to be healthy not just based on traditional Western perspectives, but more importantly healthy based on what they see as being in good health through their cultures and traditions.

Jernigan, Valarie Blue Bird. “Ending Food Insecurity in Native Communities Means Restoring Land Rights, Handing Back Control.” *The Conversation*, 27 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/ending-food-insecurity-in-native-communities-means-restoring-land-rights-handing-back-control-158858>.

This article is written by Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan, who is a Professor of Rural Health at the Center for Indigenous Health Research at Oklahoma State University, and was published on May 27, 2021. This article touches on different topics related to food sovereignty for Indigenous people, such as defining food justice and insecurity, the unhealthy food systems on reservations, statistical rates of disease, and the need to address the underlying roots and causes in order to successfully correct the problems of the Native American populations. She tells of the history of the land that was confiscated by the U.S. government from the Indigenous people of the U.S. which resulted in the desecration of their food systems and a reliance on government issued food which is primarily high in fat and sugar, with little offerings of healthy fruits and vegetables. This, in turn, results in an increase of disease and illness of Indigenous people and a need for the return to their traditional foods and methods that are healthier and more culturally connected. She gives an example of how her Native population, Choctaw, was affected by being forced to move off their land as a type of river cane that her people used for food, medicine, clothing and housing, was no longer available in their new environment. She also details examples of food movements that are ongoing that are supporting food sovereignty for Indigenous people and how their success will positively impact their lives. I will utilize these examples, the historical background, and statistics as evidence to support my claim of the necessity of food sovereignty in increasing the well-being of Indigenous people.

Montalvo, Melissa. "Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movements Are Taking Back Ancestral Land." *Civil Eats*, 7 Apr. 2021, <https://civileats.com/2021/03/31/indigenous-food-sovereignty-movements-are-taking-back-ancestral-land/>.

This article was written by Melissa Montavlo, a freelance writer whose focus is on the food and agriculture industry, for the nonprofit digital news and commentary site specializing in the American food system, called Civil Eats. This article includes Montalvo discussing how the Indigenous food sovereignty movement is gaining momentum, especially for Native American tribes in the United States who are taking a diverse variety of approaches to food sovereignty such as engaging in legal procedures, building coalitions, and advocacy work. She explains that all the tribes fighting for food sovereignty have a common goal of reclaiming ancestral lands in order to restore the habitats of their ancestral lands, and in order to be able to access traditional foodways so that they can have healthy foods that are relevant to their cultures. In order to support her claim regarding the movement she first provides the accomplishments of a coalition of tribes of the Mi'kmaq First Nations people in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, as they were able to become majority owners of the company Clearwater Seafoods, therefore fully controlling the company's offshore fishing licenses. This lets them harvest a variety of seafood. She then provides the accomplishments of three Native American tribes in this realm. She mentions how the Wiyot tribe in California was able to reclaim the ancestral land of Tuluwat Island in order to restore land and marine habitats to fashion a sustainable food system, through fundraising for an acre and half of the island, and then through successful negotiations with the city the island is in the bay of Ft. Bidwell to return more of the land to them. She also describes the Yurok tribe in California, who are restoring salmon populations, as salmon are important to their culture and an important food source. They are doing this through building coalitions with community groups to advocate for the removal of harmful dams along the Klamath River they reside by, accomplishing major agreements to remove obsolete dams from the river, and working with the federal government and the California state government to build a salmon sanctuary. Finally, she points to the Quapaw tribe in Oklahoma, who are cleaning up their land, which was polluted by abandoned mines for lead and zinc, and repurposing it for agricultural use. This started with a contract the tribe signed with the Environmental Protection Agency over a decade ago, and they have been using the land that has been restored so far for cattle and bison grazing and to plant row crops, among other things. I will use either a few or all of these examples as evidence to support my research paper, with the topic of Indigenous food sovereignty. I will use this article to support my claim that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty and the growing movement surrounding it are vital to Indigenous people, as they have positively and will continue to positively enhance the lives of Indigenous populations. Specifically, I will do so by using the hard work and accomplishments of these Indigenous people as evidence for why it is vital for the lives of Indigenous people through the lens of the positive impacts these peoples' efforts for food sovereignty have had on different aspects of their lives.

Oxendine, Chez. "Popular Native Food Sovereignty Grant Program Faces Uncertain Future." *Tribal Business News Home*, 7 Mar. 2022, <https://tribalbusinessnews.com/sections/food-agriculture/13817-popular-native-food-sovereignty-grant-program-faces-uncertain-future>.

This article was written by Chez Oxendine and was published by the Tribal Business News on March 7, 2022. This article discusses the fact that funding that exists for food sovereignty for tribal communities is decreasing despite the increasing need for funds. The article focuses on the First Nations Development Institute (FNDI) and its GATHER Food Sovereignty Grant Program who is in need of funding for this program as the applicants have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 2021-2022 award period, the FNDI is awarding \$1 million in grant funding to organizations for food sovereignty projects, of which there were 108 applicants. This is in stark contrast to the 2022-2023 awards that the GATHER program which is expected to provide funding to only 7 of their 68 applicants who applied for funding. This article delves into the economic consequences of the ongoing pandemic to Indigenous people, and adds another layer to the obstacles in food sovereignty and the need for continued and increased funding. I will utilize this article to support my claim that support of these movements is more vital and crucial than ever due to the pandemic.

Sbicca, Joshua. "Introduction: Food as Social Justice Politics." *Food Justice Now!: Deepening the Roots of Social Struggle*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2018, pp. 1–23.

Food Justice Now! is a book written by Joshua Sbicca, an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Colorado State University and the Director of the Prison Agriculture Lab, whose research focuses on the integration of food activism and its movements and social justice. This citation is for the first chapter of the book, "Introduction: Food as Social Justice Politics". He claims that today's food movements are too narrow, that it is imperative that food justice activists not just work within food movements, but also across these other movements, including three other arenas: carceral politics, labor politics, and immigration politics. He writes that food politics needs to identify the root cause of struggles and oppression, it is not that food itself is the cause of struggle, but all of the other underlying structural inequalities in food systems that intersect. Once this is recognized then food activists and their movements will be more impactful. Problems in food systems are often due to issues such as colonialism, neoliberal global capitalism, and institutional racism, and Sbicca's solution is to pursue social justice. I can use this in my paper to illustrate the history of colonialism the Indigenous people of the United States faced when they were forced off their land by the government, wherein they lost not only their land, but their cultural heritage, traditional practices, and food sovereignty. This demonstrates and supports my claim of the need for Indigenous peoples to reclaim their food sovereignty. Sbicca also contends that it is necessary for food justice activists to include those oppressed in the process of trying to improve food systems, as they are normally not included in the discussions of possible solutions, even though they're the ones struggling. He also introduces the concept of "food justice dialectics", which he claims is key to recognizing forms of food politics that can help food movements be more successful and gain more power, despite the obstacles they face. I could delve deeper into this idea to compare it to the food sovereignty oppression the Indigenous people face and how this can help liberate them and lead to them experiencing food justice, and thus a healthier well-being.

Shiva, Vandana. *The Vandana Shiva Reader*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Vandana Shiva is an Indian scholar, environmental activist, food sovereignty advocate, ecofeminist and anti-globalization author who wrote the book, *The Vandana Shiva Reader*. In analyzing the chapter, “Science and Politics in the Green Revolution,” I am thinking of possibly utilizing it in my research paper as a parallel comparison of the agricultural demise of the Indigenous people in the United States to the same demise forced upon those in India during the Green Revolution. Although the two events happened for different reasons and involved different elements, I can compare the similarities of the negative results of the desecration of both of these Indigenous People’s land and agriculture. One of the central themes to both is the control of the Indigenous people. Shiva includes a quote by Mahatma Gandhi from June 10, 1947, spoken at a prayer meeting about the food problems in India, “the first lesson we must learn is of self-help and self-reliance. If we assimilate this lesson, we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence upon foreign countries...” This quote is relevant and can be connected to the need for food sovereignty faced by Indigenous People all over the world, no matter what time period.

Warne, Donald, and Siobhan Wescott. “Social Determinants of American Indian Nutritional Health.” *Current developments in nutrition*, vol. 3, Suppl 2 12-18. 23 May 2019, doi:10.1093/cdn/nzz054.

This article, published in the peer-reviewed open-access journal, *Current Developments in Nutrition*, was written by Donald Warne, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, the director of the Indians Into Medicine (INMED) and Public Health Programs at the University of North Dakota, and a professor of family and community medicine at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences University of North Dakota, and Siobhan Wescott, the endowed professor and director of American Indian health in the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. In this article, the two authors state that those who are a part of the American Indian(AI) population suffer from several nutritionally related chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, at a significantly disproportionate rate. They explain that the AI population’s increased risk factors for these diseases is due to what the World Health Organization calls the social determinants of health, or the conditions in which AI individuals are born, live, grow, age, and work. They describe the social determinants of health unique to the AI population as adverse childhood and boarding school experiences, historical trauma, poverty, loss of access to traditional food systems, and obesity as a result of the last two determinants mentioned, commercial tobacco use, alcohol use, and substance abuse. They emphasize that their research has shown that AI’s social determinants of health strengthen health inequities, due to having a large impact on their access to healthy food, among other things. As a result they suggest five strategies to increase the AI population’s access to foods that are more healthy, that address the social determinants of health of the AI population. I will use Warne and Wescott’s article to support my research paper, as it relates heavily to my topic of Indigenous food sovereignty. I will use this article by Warne and Wescott as evidence to support my claim that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty and the growing movement surrounding it are vital to Indigenous people, as they have positively and will continue to positively enhance the lives of Indigenous Populations.

“Why Food Sovereignty Matters.” *U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs*, <https://www.bia.gov/service/indigenous-tourism/why-food-sovereignty-matters>.

This source includes reasons as to why food sovereignty matters for American Indian and Alaska Native communities, according to the United States federal government Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs. In this article, a broad definition of food sovereignty is given having to do with the authority of a community to determine the ways in which their food is produced and distributed, so that they have ample amounts of food that is to the quality of their liking. This article, written by the Bureau of Indian affairs, claims that American Indian and Alaska Native communities, in growing numbers, are both beginning to and continuing to regain more autonomy in terms of their food systems through their own effort and with assistance from the federal government. The first reason given for the importance of food sovereignty for American Indian and Alaska Native communities is to improve the physical health of those communities, as the Bureau of Indian Affairs as they tend not to have access to grocery stores and other foods of good quality, causing them to import food from large retail companies, and in turn leading them to be immensely impacted by chronic conditions compared to other racial/ethnic groups. The second reason the Bureau of Indian Affairs discusses is that food sovereignty initiatives allow American Indian and Alaska Native communities to preserve their cultures through restoring traditional food production and distribution processes such as cultivating and consuming a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and wild meats. Finally, the Bureau of Indian Affairs explains that American Indian and Alaska Native communities also engage in food sovereignty efforts and food sovereignty programs having to do with producing and distributing food in order to achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency. This could be done and has been by some communities through utilizing food able to be produced in excess amounts due to food sovereignty efforts to profit through starting a business involving farming, hunting, fishing and other traditional food production methods. I will use this article by the United States federal government Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs as an authority to support my claim that the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty and the growing movement surrounding it are vital to Indigenous people, as they have positively and will continue to positively enhance the lives of Indigenous populations. Especially since this article discusses three reasons why Indigenous food sovereignty is vital based on the plights of American Indian and Alaska Native communities, connected to these communities both beginning and continuing enhancing their lives in diverse ways.