

Running Head: FOOD SYSTEMS AWARENESS AND CONSUMPTION CHOICE

We Are How We Eat: Food Systems Awareness and Consumption Choice in Slow Food Youth

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Abstract

The influence of food systems awareness on consumption choice was explored using observations and interviews. Participants consisted of college students from United States universities, ages 20-27, who attended the 3rd Slow Food International Terra Madre conference in Torino, Italy. Participants were observed during meals on- and off-site from the conference center. Results revealed that college students are not fully aware of elements in their food system, such as production, processing, distribution, and environmental implications, unless they are fully integrated into, educated about, and aware of seasonality of their food community. However, being aware of food system elements does influence consumption choice. These results can inform educational institutions and food businesses to promote food systems awareness and healthy consumption choices.

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Eating is an essential act of survival. Furthermore, many parts of developed and nourished societies provide systems for its citizens to choose their food. Human beings, based on their food consumption choice, can have large impacts on communities through politics, economics, public nutrition, social equity, and personal health, culture, and identity. These elements are all part of a food system. A food system, described by Boswell et. al (2004) is “an enormously complex collection of people, places, and processes that manage, in aggregate, to move food (and everything that comes with it-packaging, scraps, etc) from its humblest beginnings to its final resting place” (p. 10). These systems involve the production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food. Food consumers play integral direct and indirect roles in their community food systems.

Universities and institutions of higher education play an influential role in the development of food systems. To date, research has focused on quantitative methods to discover how university students can best achieve optimal nutrition. Similarly, some qualitative research has accumulated on consumer motivation for particular food choices. Food systems research is fairly new, and academia has just begun questioning people’s awareness of their food system. Little has been studied on how universities, and particularly student food consumption choice, are connected to their food systems.

Literature Review

Prior studies have separately questioned food consumption trends and awareness of food systems. Various studies have analyzed both consumption trends and awareness of food systems in university students as their population subjects. However, there has been a lack of, if any at

all, qualitative research done on university students' awareness of food systems and how that affects food consumption choice.

Schuette et. al (1996) sought to assess how valuable the Food Guide Pyramid, a well-known indicator for daily food portions, is as a tool for nutritional adequacy and quality. Furthermore, it determined whether the amount of food consumed on a regular basis, which was measured from one-day food records by nearly 2,500 university students, was similar or not to the recommended food servings provided by the Food Guide Pyramid. Quantitative measurements such as nutrients and energy were recorded by a mean adequacy ratio (MAR). The study concluded that a large percentage of university students do not consume the recommended minimum number of servings from food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid, particularly whole foods like vegetables, fruits, and grains. While this study implies that college students' quantitative consumption behaviors are less than recommended standards, its limits include offering qualitative assessment of why and how students do so. In addition, while the study did offer recommendations for changes to the Food Guide Pyramid as a quantitative tool for dietary consumption, it did not assess how aware university students were of their food that is being questioned in this present study.

While there are quantitative assessments of food consumption choice and behavior, there have been some qualitative research questioning how and why people choose the food they do. One such study used individual in-depth interviews of twenty-nine participants to conduct constant comparisons, concept maps, and case studies to determine food choices and behavior (Furst et. al, 1996). The authors developed a concept map of the elements in food choice and motivations for choosing and consuming the foods that participants did, which can be seen in Appendix A. The study argued that individuals go through a "life course" when they consume

food, defining it as “personal roles and the social, cultural and physical environments to which a person has been and is exposed” (p. 4). Such a life course influences an individual’s ideals, personal factors, resources, and social framework. These life courses, the authors conclude, are so salient among individual systems of financial resources, health needs, time commitments, and surrounding relationships, that food choices are individualized. This study implies that individual choice of food consumption is in stark contrast to greater, more group-oriented food systems. The study is limited by two concepts: 1) a foresight and possible correlation into food system elements such as production and distribution as motivations for food consumption choice and behavior and 2) non-consideration of the university student population.

Consumers have the right to know about the food they eat – the production, distribution, and nutritional and economic values. However, understanding what consumers want and know about their food systems has only been a recent phenomenon. Howard (2005) sought to determine what consumers in the central coast region of California knew and wanted to know about their food. The study had two phases – five focus group sessions of six to ten people each and 1,000 written survey responses. Howard found that among the focus groups and survey respondents, nearly 60% did not sufficiently know how their food is produced, distributed, transported, and/or sold. Similarly, 60% of the study participants found it difficult to find such information readily accessible. Food nutrition and safety proved to be the top interests for what consumers wanted to know about their food. The participants up five standards integral to their food interests and awareness. These participants wanted their food to be humane, locally grown, grown in the United States, grown in small-scale farm operations, and produced by people who earn a living wage. This study implies that the majority of people are not aware of their food systems but want to take progressive action and know certain criteria about their food to make

better consumption choices. While this study proved that nutrition, food safety, and environmental and social issues were important to food choice, it did not offer what consumers beyond the California central coast want and know about their food system and how that may influence food consumption choices and behavior.

This present study seeks to examine how aware university students are of their food systems and whether or not their level of awareness influences food consumption choice. Why do people choose to eat the food they do, and are they aware of the implications of their food consumption? It is hypothesized that study participants are aware of the majority, but not fully, of their food system – where and how their food is grown, who grows it, the environmental impacts associated with their food, and the personal benefit of choosing and eating the way they do. This awareness, in turn, influences food consumption choice. This assessment may provide fundamental information for university and community dining establishments to consider student choice as to what foods they consume. Furthermore, it may influence how university students consider their food systems and the implications for eating the way they do.

Methods

Setting

This study was conducted in Torino, the northern-most metropolitan city in Italy. The city was host to Slow Food International's Terra Madre (SFITM) conference from October 23-26, 2008. The conference brought together nearly 8,000 delegates - food producers, chefs, professionals, academics, scholars, university students, and youth - from nearly 135 countries. Slow Food International is an international non-profit organization that seeks to provide clean, fair, and good food for all people, and this bi-annual conference allows for the dialogue on how to provide such food. Permission for observations and interviews at the setting was not needed

because the researcher was a representative delegate to the SFITM conference and granted access to all sites. The researcher acted as a participant observer in the naturalistic observations, joining participants in meals and conference discussions. There were instances in which the researcher did need to explain the intent of the study due to the researcher's non-affiliation to the universities that the participants attended. Observations and interviews were conducted at different sites throughout Torino during the conference, which are described more in-depth in the "Procedures" of this "Methods" section.

Participants

Study participants consisted of student delegates from accredited universities throughout the United States who attended the SFITM conference. Participants were chosen from diverse ethnicities and majors. In particular, university students were chosen from different geographic locations in the United States and of different food communities: Northeast, West coast, Midwest, and the South. Age ranges of participants ranged from 20-27. Study participants who were observed were not the same as student participants who were interviewed. In total, seven participants were observed in four sites, and seven participants were interviewed.

Procedures

Observations. Participants in study observations were purposively sampled and sought out after if they were eating during times and locations that the observer chose to do so. Naturalistic observations, or "meals" for the study were divided equally between four sites: two on-site locations at the SFITM conference and two off-site locations from the SFITM conference. Additionally, the two on-site observations were divided by lunch and dinner. Similarly, the two off-site observations were divided by lunch and dinner. Each observation site lasted from one hour to three hours in length to ensure appropriate attention was given at each

site. Participants were required to be university students who were delegates at the SFITM conference and consumed food.

Observations were conducted unobtrusively by simply eating with participants, remaining anonymous as a researcher. Key informants who knew other acquaintances allowed the researcher to gain access to meeting, eating, and observing greater numbers of university students in all sites. The researcher was able to participate maximally in all field sites.

SFITM On-site Observations.

On-site Observation One. The first on-site observation was located in the cafeteria-style dining hall of the Bardonnecia Olympic Village of Torino. It was conducted on Thursday evening, October 23, 2008, during dinner from 8:11pm to 9:36pm. Four participants were observed at this site. Food, including salad, desserts, drinks, and “hot” meals like meats, rice, and soups, was served in one area all-you-can-eat buffet style, and seating was offered in a dozen rows of tables, each seating nearly twenty people on every side. Waiters were attentive to the tables, bussing used glasses, plates, and utensils to the kitchen. There was no physical signage or identification in the dining hall of where, who, and how the food served was produced.

On-site Observation Two. The second on-site observation was located in the cafeteria-style dining hall of the Oval Lingotto in Torino. The Oval Lingotto, a three-story building, was also the official and central site of the SFITM conference, hosting workshops and displays. The observation was conducted on Saturday, October 25, 2008, during lunch from 11:38am to 12:52pm. One participant was observed at this site. All utensils were provided for and food was

served on one long table, with uniformed catering staff placing food on participants' plates. Seating was provided with two dozen long tables that could comfortably fit half a dozen people on each side of every table. Small, white napkins and two 1.5-liter plastic water bottles were provided at each table. There was no physical signage or identification in the dining hall of where, who, and how the food served was produced.

SFITM Off-site Observations.

Off-site Observation One. The first off-site observation was located in the dining room of Mr. and Mrs. Medici's farmhouse, located two hours and one hundred miles east of downtown Torino. It was conducted on Friday evening, October 24, 2008, during dinner from 6:11pm to 9:22pm. One participant was observed at this site. The farmhouse was situated in a small rural town five miles off from the main road, nestling itself at the bottom of mountainous alpenes, with twenty acres of grassy hills, native trees, and natural habitat surrounding it. One of the twenty acres was dedicated to a biodynamic farm, which the Medici's grew vegetables, herbs, and cared for a dozen goats. A five-course dinner of salad, bread, meat, soup, and dessert was served on a six by three feet wooden oval table. There was no physical signage or identification in the dining hall of where, who, and how the food served was produced. However, upon inquiry, all the food and ingredients were grown in the rural town and prepared by the Medici's.

Off-site Observation Two. The second off-site observation was located in Café Alfani, a five-generation family deli shop in downtown Torino five miles from the SFITM conference center. The observation was conducted on Sunday,

October 25, 2008, during lunch from 12:01pm to 1:17pm. One participant was observed at this site. Some food items, including sandwiches, breads, cheeses, and meats, were displayed behind a glass wall for customers to see. Other foods were prepared in the back kitchen. Behind the glass wall was counter space for employees and a back wall with the deli's menu, a coffee machine, and a small refrigerator for cold drinks. Meals were listed on the menu by Italian region from where the ingredients were produced and grown. In particular, meals that had ingredients produced in the local Torino region were marked by an asterisk (*) to the right of the meal title. For example, one menu item that had an asterisk next to it was steamed spinach with grilled ginger and pomegranate balsamic vinegar. All the ingredients – spinach, ginger, pomegranates, and oils – were grown and produced in the Torino region. The meals were prepared in the kitchen at the deli.

Comparing university student food choice and behavior was of noteworthy interest.

Students were observed and noted in their physical act of food consumption, including where, how, what, and when they ate, activities done and discussions had while participants ate, and what was done after eating was complete. For example, the observer recorded manually in their field notes how long students ate their meal. Observing the physical act of consuming food was integral because it allowed the observer to notice any immediate feedback and communication from participants about how the food was, whether or not they were likely to continue eating it, and how long it would take for them to finish it. These environmental and communication cues allowed for observations of how the rest of the meal would continue, what types of discussions and/or post-meal activities would be had, and/or if participants would take in more food. The amount of food taken, eaten and not eaten, the time spent doing so, and engagement of social

variables like eating with other people and types of activities and discussions had during meals, were predictors of food consumption choice and behavior. Finally, the choices of food paid for and consumed were telling of participants' overall awareness of their food system.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were individually conducted with seven SFITM conference university students to gather information about their food systems awareness and consumption choice and behavior. All interviews were conducted in the lobby floor lounge of the Bardonnecia Olympic Village, which provided housing for the majority of SFITM youth and university student delegates. It was a quiet space for the interviews to be conducted with minimal disturbances. Participants were chosen via purposive sampling, or specifically seeking out subjects with certain characteristics. After a few subjects were interviewed, purposive selection evolved into snowball sampling, or finding subjects from recommendations of previous participant interviews. Due to uncertain and potentially precarious personal connections to and experiences with food, participants were given the space and freedom to voluntarily describe as much as they wanted from the interview questions, allowing for open response and conversation-style discussions. The requirements for participants were the same as those who were observed eating.

The interviews brought about unobservable data concerning the participants being studied, including daily food consumption routines, self-assessment of personal eating behavior, individual motivations for eating, and awareness of food systems. In addition, the interview questions provided space for participants to describe meals, what eating food was like growing up as child, and social variables to eating like consumption pace, amount of company who eat with participants, and possible discussions and activities during meals. Furthermore, participants were asked how aware they were of their food system. For example, participants were asked

who produced the food, where it was grown, and what agricultural methods were used to produce it. Please see Appendix B for a more detailed version of the interview guide used during the semi-structured interviews.

Physical gestures and voice tones were noted in addition to verbal responses. Interviews were recorded via a Sony MP3 digital tape recorder. Interview recordings were downloaded onto the interviewer's personal computer and transcribed immediately following the interviews. Notes were expanded upon completion of interview transcription.

Generalizability

The results of this study are limited and may only apply to university students who attend the SFITM conference held every two years since 2004. First, students in general have different characteristics than the population. The status of students attending different accredited universities in the United States may imply a varied socioeconomic status, support system, and/or food system from one another. Secondly, there are university students who were afforded the opportunity to attend the SFITM conference as opposed to those who were not. Thus, results of this study can only be targeted toward university students and those who can attend it.

Results

Naturalistic observations of students eating were conducted both on- and off-site from the SFITM conference center. Data drawn from these observations were important to determine what students chose to eat and their general consumption behavior. Semi-structured interviews, conducted off-site from the conference center at residential housing, asked student participants how they ate, their personal motivations for eating the way they do, and how aware they are of their food system.

Awareness of Food Systems

Through environmental cues in observations and questions in interviews, participants were noted on how aware they were of their food system. Such levels of awareness included where and how the food they ate grew, who grew it, and the environmental impacts of their food choices. It was found that participants were not always fully aware of their food system. Participants were fully aware of it only if they were physically integrated into their community, were educated about food locations in their community, and were aware of seasonality.

Study participants had a wide range of food system awareness levels. Katie, an undergraduate at Carleton College in Minnesota, illustrated that changes in season and the academic school year can change how aware she is of her food system. In the previous summer, Katie did not invest any energy into academics. The summer allowed her more time than the traditional academic school year from fall to spring to learn and be active in her food community. Changes in her level of food system awareness, she noted, were apparent:

It very much depends on the season. In the summer, I personally knew everyone who produced 90% of what I consumed. The only things I didn't know were grains and beans. Moving into a season [fall] where I'm not eating all local produce and there's more available than I could possibly eat, I'm much less aware of where my food is coming from. Eating in the dining hall, I don't know where everything is from.

There were some university students who found that they were aware of the majority of their food system. University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) graduate Student Megan, recounted:

I feel like I'm more aware than most Americans...I would say that I know 70% of where my food comes from, maybe 75%. The farmers [I buy from] are all from Santa Barbara County and neighboring counties that border Santa Barbara County. I get all my fruits, vegetables, and cheese from the farmers' market. If we don't get bread from there, we'll get it from the bakery down the street.

As a graduate student, Megan had been part of her local food community for a few more years than other student participants in the study. Being integrated and knowing the food locations in

her local food community and understanding the societal impacts of her food consumption choices were integral in how she ate:

I want to know if [the food system] is just for everyone and every thing. There is the monetary compensation for the producer, [which] equals the satisfaction I get consuming it which equals the attention to maintaining certain environmental conditions, like not causing any damage. There's an equal weighted-ness to different things that need to be considered.

On the same front, Rachel from the University of California, Davis (UCD) felt “pretty lucky in [her] food system” buying her produce from a nearby farmers’ market where she gets “all [her] produce from”. She noted that “it’s really great to be able to talk to the people and [learn] how they’re growing food, where it’s from”.

On the other hand, there are students, especially those who are new to a community and have not felt like they have fully integrated into them, found that being aware and knowing their food system can be a difficult and challenging feat. If there is not time and effort set aside for students to explore and be aware of their food system, possible limitations can arise such as academic coursework, living arrangements, and cultural differences. Henry of Princeton University found similar sentiments:

I want to know what my food system is. I think you can't define it as who's growing it or who's making your food, but I just don't know. There are so many pieces to that. I don't know where it's coming from anymore. I used to know in the dining hall. Now that you pose the question, there are a million things I need to know about my food system that I don't know. I really can't say I know anything about my food system.

Asta, a graduate student from Tufts University, accounted her adjustment to her new American Northeastern community, realizing how little she knew of her food system:

I don't know very much about where my food comes from. I'm new to my city. I'm a graduate student. I don't have time to go to the farmers' market every week. I have to eat food in Chinatown where my school is. The food's cheap, and that's the reality of my world.

Aware of the Unaware.

It is of importance to note that while university students were unaware of their entire food system, participants were aware that they were unaware. Veera of Carleton College, notes that “even though we’re not all aware of our food system, I feel like we’re aware that we’re not all aware of our food system”, calling this awareness of the unaware “conscious ignorance”. Megan of UCSB noted earlier that she was aware of three-quarters of her food system, most of which are from farmers’ markets and local stores and artisans. She accounted the last quarter:

We’ll go to Trader Joe’s for the rest. I like rice milk, so I’ll get rice milk, yogurt, pasta, and maybe a couple canned things like canned beans or canned tomatoes to use. I would only say that that’s only 25% of our food. So I’d say 75% I know who’s producing it. But that 25% I really don’t know anything about other than that I got it at Trader Joe’s and supposedly it claims to be organic. Yeah, I mean, I don’t know beyond that.

Megan doesn’t “really...know anything about” 25% of her food, which she purchases from Trader Joe’s. Megan was not aware of her any other element in that part of her food system, other than the sole belief that the food at Trader Joe’s “claims to be organic”.

There were observational situations in which participants were presented with food to choose from that they didn’t know where and how the food was produced and who produced it. Simply, participants were originally unaware of the food being served. In such cases, however, participants in both on- and off-site locations took it upon themselves to inquire dining and catering staff handling the food. For example, one participant in a SFITM on-site location asked what certain dishes were, upon immediate notice that there were no signs about what the dishes were called, the ingredients that were in them, and/or the farms and farmers that the food ingredients came from. The participant had not prepared the meal him or herself. Questions that the participant asked included, “Where are these dishes from?” and “Are any of these dishes from around this region?” Some meals at this particular site, such as the eggplant ratatouille and bread rolls, had all of its ingredients produced in the local Torino region. Other meals did not.

Henry, upon hearing the responses to his inquiries, only chose and later consumed meals with ingredients that were produced in the local region, including the ratatouille and bread.

An Element of Faith. University students in the present study were asked how aware they were of their food system and what they would like to know. Trying to understand and be aware of food systems, participants noted, is a daunting task. Salem of the University of North California Chapel-Hill, noted:

Imagine how complicated it would get if you mapped what you ate in a day. You figured out every aspect of where it came from. That would take forever. On top of that, you try to figure out who was buying those same products. The map is already out of control. There's no way to comprehend it all because you can't even visualize it.

Participants described that even when attempting to make the most justified food choice for themselves, being aware of changes to food system processes like production and distribution may influence future food consumption. For example, Rachel (UCD) described her goat cheese purchase of the previous year:

I have always been buying from Laura Channel because she's from Point Reyes, and she's more local. I feel really good about that. But I just found out the other day that a French cheese corporation actually just bought her company a year ago. It's still advertised as Laura Channel goat cheese, and it doesn't say anything on the package that some other corporation owns it.

Rachel made the original choice to buy Laura Channel goat cheese based on her faith and value for a local food system. However, she decided to stop purchasing it due to a change to her original food system, the news of a "French cheese corporation" that she did not support.

On the same line, participants expressed the want to purchase and choose food that they were unaware about based on good faith, believing that stakeholders in their food system are producing and preparing food in the interest of the people and communities they feed. Veera of Carleton College explained her faith in choosing and consuming exotic foods from her local food

cooperative, such as papayas because they “make [her] feel good” and coconuts that are “shipped from really far away”:

I still buy some exotic foods. I don't know how all of them are produced. Some of them are exotic and come from the co-op. I sort of have good faith from the co-op. I hope that they make the ethical choice. I would love it if co-ops were set up that way so that consumers didn't have to look at everything.

Faith aside, university students still took it upon themselves to understand and be aware of their food system and the people who are a part of that system. Veera then explained, “it's about knowing your farmer, knowing the processing, knowing the shipment, knowing the actual person who's selling food to you”.

Discussion

This study sought to determine how aware university students are of their food system and whether or not their level of awareness influenced their food consumption choice. The purpose of the study was to observe the eating behavior of university students who were invited to the 3rd Slow Food International Terra Madre (SFITM) conference and ascertain whether or not students eat the way they do due to awareness of food system elements, like food production, distribution, and environmental impacts. Participants were aware of the majority of what they eat and the systems that their foods are in: where and how their food is grown, who grows it, the environmental impacts associated with their food, and the personal benefit of eating the food they eat.

On the one hand, participants were not fully one hundred percent aware of their food system. To do so, participants needed to be physically integrated into their community, educated about food locations in their community, and aware of seasonality. The more a student learned about their food system, the more that same student was willing to consume and choose food differently depending on the knowledge base and awareness of their food system. In sum,

university students in this study were aware of their food system, and it did influence their food consumption choice.

Connection with the Literature

Schuetz et. al (1996) found that a large percentage of university students do not consume the recommended minimum number of servings from food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid, particularly vegetables, fruits, and grains. While the study implied that college students' quantitative consumption behaviors are less than recommended standards, it did not provide qualitative assessment of why students do so, which was the purpose of the present study. Thus, it is noted that university students are not fully consuming the adequate quantity of recommended food items and are not fully aware of the quality of their food systems.

Furst et. al (1996) argued that individuals go through a "life course" when they consume food, defining that as "personal roles and the social, cultural and physical environments to which a person has been and is exposed". Such a life course influences an individual's ideals, personal factors, resources, and social framework. The present study did support the thesis that individuals go through a "life course" when they eat food, as did with Asta from Tufts University adjusting to her new Chinatown community in Boston, MA or Princeton undergraduate, Henry, who found himself shifting from eating food from prepared meals in dining halls to eating meals he now prepares himself.

Limitations

As with all studies, the present study had some limiting factors. Naturalistic observations of Terra Madre university students were conducted both on- and off-site of the conference center. Of particular limitation were observations that were conducted on-site. Off-site observations were conducted in locations in which food was served based on choice.

Participants could decide the location, items on the menu, and how long to eat. Consequently, participants in off-site locations could make more justified decisions of what they wanted to eat depending on what was marketed and presented to them. For example, an off-site participant decided to eat at a restaurant that served organic food and wine from the local, Northern Italian area as opposed to a national restaurant chain next door. University students that were observed on-site did not necessarily have the same amount of freedom and reign to choose what they ate. While this may be a limiting factor, it is of note that while food choice on-site was limited, it did not stop university students observed in this study to inquire about the food and become more aware of it. Of the limited choices, participants still made personal choices based on how aware the catering company and they were of the food presented.

Another limiting factor dealt more with the study methodology, and in particular, the interviews. An additional direct interview question could have been asked to participants about their relationship between food system awareness and food consumption choice. The researcher asked about these two concepts separately: “How aware are you of your food system?” and “Why do you choose the food you eat?” Rather, the researcher could have asked the additional direct question, “How and/or why does being aware of your food system affect your food consumption choice(s)?” The present study could have benefited more from direct answers and concrete examples. Please see Appendix B for the interview guide reference.

Suggestions for Future Research

A future research question may want to delve into how the physical shift into a university setting may or may not affect an individual’s food consumption choice and behavior. It was found in this present study that when participants physically moved to their university, their food consumption habits changed. For example, some research participants started cooking for

themselves upon arriving to the university, becoming more aware of their personal health and how they felt, or buying new and different foods compared to what was primarily eaten before studying at the university. Institutions of higher education are catalytic settings for critical thinking, exploration, and more justified decision-making. The question may allude to individual histories of food growing up, and whether or not consuming those foods changed upon arriving to the university. On the same front, future research may want to consider non-university populations, and more generally, all populations. Do people's experiences, changes, and shifts in life affect what and how they consume food?

Implications

The implications of the present study are quite vast. All human being must eat to survive. That is a fact. However, the research question in this study was an attempt to understand how people eat and whether or not understanding elements of food systems influences personal consumption behavior. Understanding one's food system, as presented in the study, is a process that requires food system education, integration into the local food community, and knowledge of seasons. Food is such a tangible element of life that can yield action- and service learning in educational institutions and community programs that connect food producers with the community at-large.

For the role of an university institution, food may be integrated into academic interdisciplinary curriculum, on-campus and off-campus farm and garden projects, and service-learning programs with food production sites like farms, ranches, and orchards in the local community. The role of educational institutions and the stakeholders who make up faculty, staff, and administrators in those institutions may empower students to advocate for food system awareness in public policy, business entrepreneurship, and private endeavors. Stakeholders and

organizations concerned with public policy may want to consider investing financial assistance in educational and community initiatives towards food systems. Businesses and the private sector, such as whole food markets and restaurants, may want to make operational decisions towards marketing their food systems so that their consumers may make more holistic and justified decisions when purchasing food.

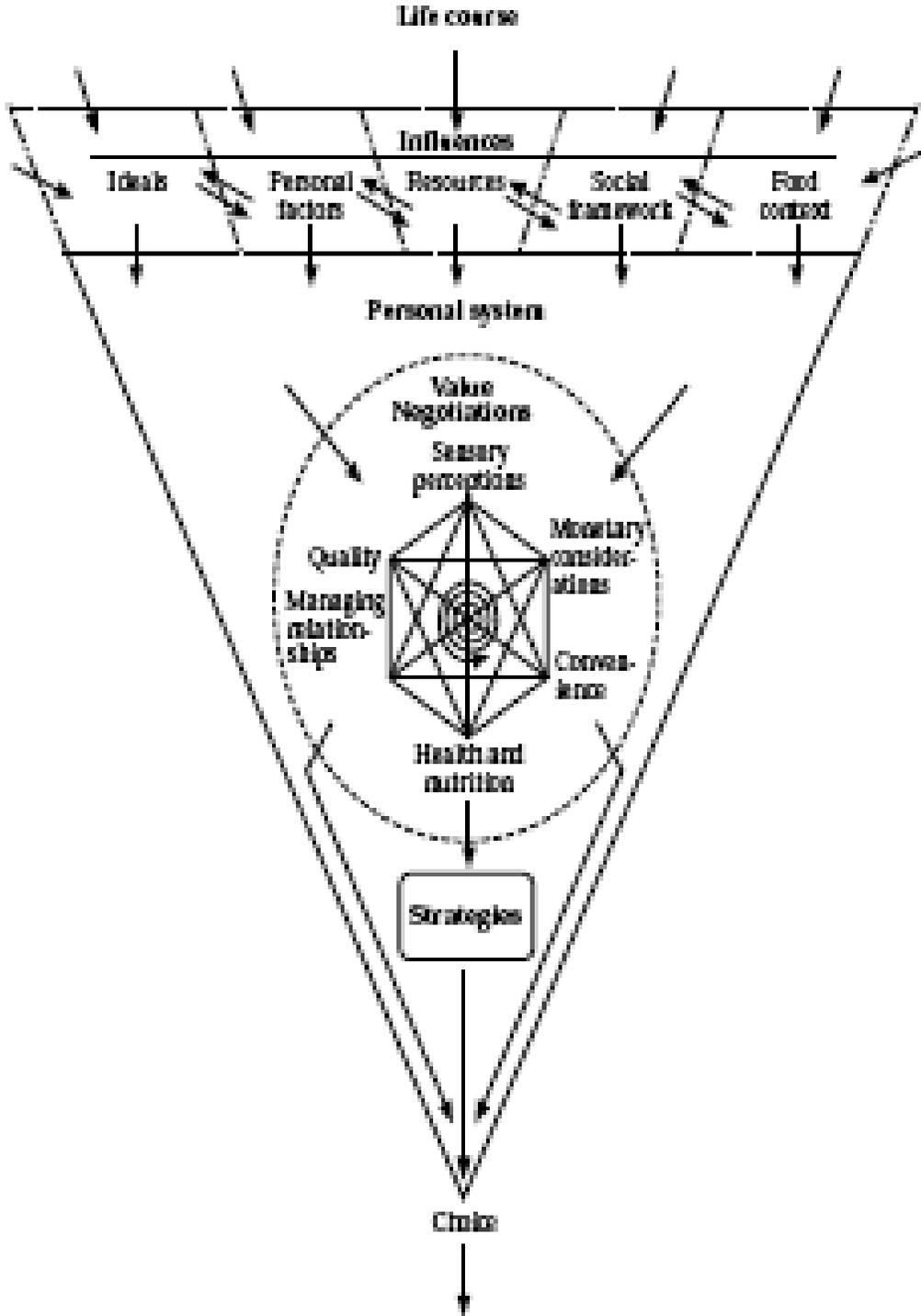
Finally, there are considerable implications for all food consumers. Understanding the processes of food - production, distribution, and consumption – can influence individuals' choices. Eating is more than a simple physical act. How and what an individual eats affects personal health, ecological soundness, and community well being.

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Appendix A

Food Life Course



Appendix B

Food Consumption and Awareness
Interview Guide

Basic Information

Initials:

Age:

University affiliation:

Class standing:

Major:

Your current/last meal

What happened?
What was the meal like?
Where and when were you eating?
Describe a typical day's meals. What do you consider when you're eating? What are your thought processes when choosing foods to eat?
Describe your food history. What foods did you grow up with? How did it change when you arrived in college?

Behavior(s)

How do you eat?
Describe your eating pace and length of your meal.
Who do you eat with?
What type of activities do you do or discussions do you engage in while eating?

Motivations/choice

Why do you eat certain foods?
What are your motivations to eat?
Health? Mood? Convenience/accessible? Sensory Appeal? Natural content/nutrition? Price? Weight control? Familiarity? Ethical concern(s)?

Food systems awareness

A food system: producers, distributors, & consumers.
How aware are you of these people in your food system?
How aware are you of the food in your food system?
Who produced the food that you eat?
Where is the food grown?
When was your food produced? What seasons do they grow in?
What do you want to know about your food system?