
Lind, David; and Elizabeth Barham, Elizabeth.


In “The Social Life of the Tortilla,” Lind and Barham create a conceptual framework to show the significance of food in relation to culture and identity. They introduce many concepts associated with the economic aspects of globalization and politics, and then link these concepts to the symbolism and culture of a specific group of people. In order to show this connection, Lind and Barham offer a cultural dimension by showcasing the historical account of the tortilla. Through the narration history of the tortilla, four different epochs are used to see the journey from a culturally cherished tortilla to a fast food staple.

The first epoch represented was the pre-colonial area, remove comma introducing among Mesoamerican cultures. The everyday practice of making tortillas was represented a great connection to the gods and nature, and created community amongst each of the villages. Women were given the role of being the “gatekeeper of culture, the family, the home, and the meal.” (Lind and Barham 2004: 54). The next epoch of the tortilla includes was the colonial area in which the tortilla actually moved beyond the realms of the Maya and Aztec culture. Maize was transported on European vessels across the Atlantic and throughout the world. Tensions emerged as Maize culture was thought to be inferior because it was of cheaper value this is a bit vague.... what sort of tensions? where? Thus, the tortilla was a symbol of the poor indigenous communities. Epoch three included the development and nation building area, in which the tortilla was used as a symbol of national identity. The Mexican economy was hurting poor word choice, too informal, so they, the country needed to be more self-sufficient rely even more on self-sufficiency. The government used the low price of the tortilla and corn to feed its people.

Furthermore, The fourth epoch talked about discussed is the current era of globalization, in which one of the most axiomatic word choice...perhaps say “dramatic” or “substantial” changes occurred in the tortilla. The tortilla was switched from dough to flour in most industrial productions (this does not make sense... corn can be made into dough to make tortillas... I think you mean tortillas were now made from flour rather than corn), which symbolized a “desecration of tortilla culture.” (Lind and Barham 2004: 55). Connected to concepts we As Lopez (cite Lopez reading) discussed in class regarding immigration, US corn producers pushed Mexican farmers and millers out of production. Unfortunately because of the economy today, some Mexicans are more likely to purchase cheap American products than their own tortillas. Does the author say this? They often make the tortillas in Mexico but with US corn. Tortillas are now seen as more of a fast-food convenience, while many small communities in Mexico still try to withhold their practically distinct “tortilla” culture.

This article is used to give awareness suggests that we should know how what we are eating food is affected by culture and the economy. Through knowledge, we can understand the interconnections with what we eat. Lind and Barham suggest the economy has more of an influence on what we eat rather than what we want to eat. Would you eat at McDonald’s if it wasn’t so cheap and fast? Or, would you stop at an organic store and shell out too informal a few extra bucks too informal for a nice, fresh salad?

I am still curious if the deculturization of the tortilla was based on actual taste, or purely the ethnocentrism of Europeans. I'm not sure what you mean by "deculturization".... be more specific? Do you mean change in the meaning of the tortilla? Globalization of it? Perhaps if the tortilla were part of a more dominant western culture, the culture would not have been oppressed. Read this again and reword, it doesn't really make sense. Or, perhaps the traditions of the tortilla survived because Mexicans fought so hard because they were considered inferior. ?? Who are “the Mexicans”.... indigenous Mexicans? Mexican are a mix of indigenous people and Europeans. Considered inferior by whom (colonial Spanish? Europeans?)? Would the traditional values and symbolism of the tortilla still be kept today if roles were switched? This is a valuable question I have been considering ever since I read this article. It would be interesting to take a look at the social life of pizza, a distinct food item from a dominant western culture that has now been changed for mass production and efficiency. I can see an attempt to put this into a large context and the end but this last paragraph needs work, its just not clear enough.