INTRODUCTION

Many First Nation communities experience unequal access to healthy and affordable food. This contributes to many Indigenous people suffering from greater health disparities than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Food insecurity among Indigenous people should be understood as deeply rooted in colonialism, racism and the marginalization of Indigenous people. Many First Nation communities are demonstrating acts of self-determination through the development of long-term comprehensive community plans. Food sovereignty is an important aspect of self-determination, and the intent of this research is to gain an understanding of how food is being represented in comprehensive community plans. My research looks at four comprehensive community plans throughout Canada. Two are located in Manitoba, one in Ontario, and one in British Columbia.

CONTEXT

The food insecurity First Nations community experiences is due to a variety of factors. Some First Nations suffer from food insecurity due to being in remote locations and fly in only communities. However, this capstone project demonstrates this is only a portion of the problem. Below are additional causes contributing to food insecurity for First Nations, as well as the health implications associated with this.

1. The cost of healthy food is a significant feature in contributing to food insecurity for First Nations communities. Transportation plays an essential role in determining the price of food in rural Manitoba. Transportation impacts the costs of food due to such things as infrastructure challenges, fuel costs, weather conditions, a maximum capacity for weight limits the volume of purchases made and greater risk of damage or loss to perishable items.

2. Residential schools are a significant factor in the history of Indigenous peoples’ relationship to food in Canada. Research has shown the residential school system used starvation tactics and other various methods used as a form of abuse towards Indigenous children. The long-term implications of this abuse have been linked to stunted growth and compromised immune systems leading to increased risk of infectious and disease. Research has shown these complications have an intergenerational impact psychologically and culturally.

3. Poor health is a serious concern for many Indigenous people across Canada. Indigenous people have shorter life expectancies than their non-Indigenous counterparts, and have higher risks of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Research has shown that food insecurity is a major factor contributing to the health status of First Nations people.

METHODS

My methodology includes a discourse analysis of four comprehensive community plans. To analyze the CCPs, I used a framework consisting of four themes, which each theme having its own set of subthemes. This framework was created based on literature surrounding food sovereignty and self-determination. Below are images demonstrating the evolution of the framework. It started with a list of 20 words, which was generated in NVivo, these were used to create the final 4 themes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the CCPs addressing food? Is food being discussed in RESEARCH QUESTIONS of how food is being represented in comprehensive community plans. My method includes a discourse analysis of four comprehensive community plans. To analyze the CCPs, I used a framework consisting of four themes, which each theme having its own set of subthemes. This framework was created based on literature surrounding food sovereignty and self-determination. Below are images demonstrating the evolution of the framework. It started with a list of 20 words, which was generated in NVivo, these were used to create the final 4 themes.

RECOMMENDATION

My recommendation is for the adoption of the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management. A running theme across all four CCPs was the benefits and importance of economic opportunities for First Nations. Many First Nations operating under the Indian Act have been limited in their ability to control their land, and because of this have less changes to develop economic opportunities linked to land. This tool is a beneficial way for First Nations to achieve more autonomy regarding land use decisions on their reserve. The framework agreement creates a government to government relationship. Signing onto the framework agreement allows First Nations to opt out of the Indian Act regarding land use decisions. Once a First Nation signs on, they must create a land code. A comprehensive community plan is to be used in partnership with a land use code. The land code will replace approximately 44 sections of the Indian Act, and Canada will no longer be the primary decision maker regarding issues relating to the 44 sections the land code replaces.