

Slow Food as an Alternative Food Consumption: approaches, principles and product attributes

Slow Food como um Consumo Alimentar Alternativo: abordagens, princípios e atributos de produto

Slow Food como Alternativa de Consumo Alimentario: enfoques, principios y atributos del producto

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Abstract

The objective of this conceptual essay is to discuss Slow Food as an alternative food consumption. Slow Food has been presented over the years under different approaches and connotations. We consider that difficulties in interpreting Slow Food as an object of research in the consumption field can be overcome through this essay. We propose that Slow Food is a phenomenon of multiple approaches and an alternative food consumption that is also related with relational, sensory, temporal, sustainable, cultural and political aspects. Furthermore, the definitions of Slow Food principles are expanded and its product attributes as food consumption are mapped. Within this proposal, Slow Food involves concerns with food acquisition, preparation and consumption, with the environment and the various actors involved in the search for good, clean and fair food, that is, official principles of the movement. The attributes of Slow Food's products can be summarized as healthy, nutritious, natural, fresh, seasonal, regional, environmentally friendly and socially fair foods, produced by small local producers, for whom reducing damage to the environment is important, avoiding and condemning the use of production methods that impoverish or pollute land and water resources. Such producers, in turn, are valued and remunerated fairly.

Keywords: Food consumption; Alternative food consumption; Slow food; Good clean and fair; Product attributes.

Resumo

O objetivo deste ensaio conceitual é discutir o Slow Food como um consumo alimentar alternativo. O Slow Food foi apresentado ao longo dos anos sob diferentes abordagens e conotações. Consideramos que as dificuldades de interpretação do Slow Food como objeto de pesquisa no campo do consumo podem ser superadas por meio deste ensaio. Propomos que o Slow Food é um fenômeno de múltiplas abordagens e um consumo alimentar alternativo que também se relaciona com aspectos relacionais, sensoriais, temporais, sustentáveis, culturais e políticos. Além disso, são ampliadas as definições dos princípios do Slow Food e mapeados os atributos de seus produtos como consumo alimentar. Dentro dessa proposta, o Slow Food envolve preocupações com a aquisição, preparo e consumo de alimentos, com o meio ambiente e os diversos atores envolvidos na busca de uma alimentação boa, limpa e justa, ou seja, princípios oficiais do movimento. Os atributos dos produtos do Slow Food podem ser resumidos em alimentos saudáveis, nutritivos, naturais, frescos, sazonais, regionais, ecologicamente corretos e socialmente justos, produzidos por pequenos produtores locais, para os quais é importante reduzir os danos ao meio ambiente, evitando e condenando o uso de métodos de produção que empobrecem ou poluem a terra e os recursos hídricos. Esses produtores, por sua vez, são valorizados e remunerados de forma justa.

Palavras-chave: Consumo de alimentos; Consumo alimentar alternativo; *Slow food*; Bom limpo e justo; Atributos de produto.

Resumen

El propósito de este ensayo conceptual es discutir Slow Food como una alternativa de consumo de alimentos. Slow Food se ha presentado a lo largo de los años bajo diferentes enfoques y connotaciones. Creemos que las dificultades de interpretar Slow Food como objeto de investigación en el campo del consumo pueden superarse a través de este

ensayo. Proponemos que Slow Food es un fenómeno de múltiples enfoques y una alternativa de consumo alimentario que también se relaciona con aspectos relacionales, sensoriales, temporales, sostenibles, culturales y políticos. Además, se amplían las definiciones de los principios de Slow Food y se mapean los atributos de sus productos como consumo alimentario. Dentro de esta propuesta, Slow Food involucra la preocupación por la adquisición, preparación y consumo de alimentos, por el medio ambiente y por los distintos actores que intervienen en la búsqueda de una alimentación buena, limpia y justa, es decir, principios oficiales del movimiento. Los atributos de los productos Slow Food se pueden resumir en alimentos sanos, nutritivos, naturales, frescos, de temporada, regionales, ecológicamente correctos y socialmente justos, producidos por pequeños productores locales, para quienes es importante reducir los daños al medio ambiente, evitando y condenando el uso de métodos de producción que empobrecen o contaminan la tierra y los recursos hídricos. Estos productores, a su vez, son valorados y remunerados justamente.

Palabras clave: Consumo de alimentos; Consumo de alimentos alternativos; Slow food; Bueno limpio y justo; Atributos del producto.

1. Introduction

Slow Food is a movement resulting from a series of protests that started in Italy in 1986, when it was announced the opening of a McDonalds restaurant, a company that represents the fast-food business model, near the steps of Piazza di Spagna in Rome (Van Bommel & Spicer, 2011; Fassio, 2017). At the time, concerns about the possible Americanization of Italian cuisine through a process of standardization of low-quality foods and the perishing of local cuisine occurred due to the presence of fast-food chains. The distribution of pizzas, a typical Italian food, made by hand and at home, was the form of protest chosen to oppose the mass-produced sandwiches at McDonalds. In 1989, this would culminate in the elaboration of the Slow Food Manifesto, a milestone in the effective creation of the movement (Myers, 2013).

In the mid-1990s, Slow Food officially became an international organization, headquartered in Bra, an Italian city in the Piedmont region. Slow Food International works with various projects. Publications such as the movement manual, other manuals, almanacs, booklets, and projects are examples of outreach materials (e.g., Slow Food Network, Ark of Taste, Earth Markets, Terra Madre, etc.) (Hadler, 2015; Schneider, K., 2015; Valduga et al., 2018).

Regardless of the official organization and its members, participation in Slow Food is not necessarily related to direct actions (e.g., going to official events or joining the organization) or a demand for political actors who position themselves as such before the society (Hayes-Conroy et al., 2010; Fassio, 2017). It is informal and flexible, that is, it is more linked to people's engagement, according to their own paths, in relation to the general guidelines encouraged in the movement (Chaudhury et al., 2014). According to Mair, Sumner and Rotteau (2008), this participation can range from the simple practice of "eating well" to engaging in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) group, or in a march in protest for "good" food.

In the field of consumption studies, we propose that Slow Food can be understood as an alternative type of food consumption with which individuals can engage, constituting a phenomenon capable of responding to the demand for alternative consumption practices in contemporary life (Gentile, 2016). Here, consumers are co-producers. They are aware of and are interested in various aspects involving the production and consumption of food (e.g., origin, production methods used, social justice for producers) (Berkley, 2012; Labelle, 2004).

Slow Food has been discussed from different angles (Myers, 2013), and over the years, different connotations have been associated with it. It was treated as an organization, in general in studies about its projects or members (Rombach et al., 2016; Valduga et al., 2018), as a movement, ideology, or lifestyle (Simonetti, 2012; Wexler et al., 2017). However, the approaches that make up its understanding as an alternative food consumption (AFC) are dispersed in the literature. In this sense, increased concerns of groups of consumers who are distanced from a globalised and industrialised food system has led the AFC to gain popularity in western society (Batat et al., 2017) and the potential areas of research focusing on alternative modes of consumption, such as in the food domain (Manna et al., 2016).

In this paper, we consider that difficulties in interpreting Slow Food as an object of research in the field of

consumption can be overcome through the identification of its approaches, in addition to the expanded definitions of its principles and the mapping of its product attributes. To fill this gap and contribute to a better understanding of the topic, the objective of this conceptual essay is to discuss Slow Food as an alternative food consumption. To this end, three main goals are outlined: a) to identify approaches that constitute Slow Food as a type of food consumption; b) to expand the definitions of its principles for consumers; c) and map the attributes of Slow Food products.

Studies on Slow Food still lack information about its characteristics as a food consumption, not only as an organization, movement, ideology, or lifestyle (e.g., Fassio, 2017; Simonetti, 2012; Valduga et al., 2018; Wexler et al., 2017). Therefore, we contribute to fill a gap in the literature regarding the identification of approaches that constitute Slow Food as a type of consumption and facilitate its understanding within the consumption field, in addition to broadening the definition of its principles for consumers and mapping the attributes of slow food products.

This study also contributes to the field of studies on agroecology and food consumption by adopting an interdisciplinary approach to discuss Slow Food. We argue that Slow Food's proposal as a type of alternative food consumption that people can engage with is in line with the principles of agroecology. This happens since agroecology creates locally embedded food systems of production and consumption, dividing the burdens and benefits of food production and consumption equitably, and strengthens the bonds between producers and consumers (Tessier et al., 2021). Within this perspective, Slow Food as a movement and international association has been giving attention to local landscapes of production and consumption, offering the opportunity of spread food culture to the greatest number of people possible (Peano et al., 2020). Its members and potential supporters are treated in this study as consumers or co-producers, as past literature has been calling those individuals (Tencati et al., 2012).

Furthermore, studying Slow Food as an alternative food consumption fills a gap highlighted by Morgan et al., (2020, p. 1) on the fact that agroecology needs to engage "with the kitchen and the table in order to achieve the holistic and multi-faceted agricultural transformations imagined by the FAO and others". Following the authors' line of reasoning, we argue that consumption practices shape production practices at least as much as the reverse. In this way, Slow Food might be seen as an alternative type of food consumption anchored in a combination of local production, culture, traditions, purchase and preparation of food, which culminates in the moment of consumption, that is, at the table (e.i., "farm to fork") (Munjal et al., 2016).

In subsequent sections, we present a brief literature on alternative food consumption, which we use as a basis to discuss Slow Food. Then, we identify and discuss Slow Food's constituent approaches as an alternative food consumption. Afterwards, we revisit and expand the definitions of Slow Food principles and map its product attributes. Final considerations are addressed in the last section.

2. Alternative food consumption (AFC)

Peter et al. (2016) conceptualize alternative food consumption as an ongoing project of an individual empowering him/herself by examining practices, economic, and social conditions that shape his/her' control over food and alternative food adoption. Thus, an alternative food consumption "may reflect a reaction to the perceived failure of the dominant mode of food production and concerns over environmental and health issues, loss of taste and seasonality in food" (Manna et al., 2016, p. 2). In this sense, Goodman and Goodman (2016) suggest that an alternative food economy based on the provisioning of quality food products it presents to a relatively narrow segment of consumers, such as slow food consumers.

Authors such Batat et al. (2017, p. 2) go further by incorporating sustainability into AFC definition, that is, in terms of "any sustainable food consumption trying to meet economic (more equal distribution of wealth), environmental (protection of environmental resources), health (individual health and well-being) and social (solidarity and diversity) goals".

All these perspectives are based on the idea that the type of food consumption with which an individual engages allows the creation of boundaries of distinction between what it is considered an “alternative” or “mainstream” food (Paddock, 2015). Food consumption alternatives include groups of foods positioned under labels of ‘organic’, ‘local’, or ‘regional’ foods that contribute to efforts to re-embed food production and consumption within a social system (Batat et al., 2017; Schindler, 2012; Manna et al., 2016; Paddock, 2015; Peter et al., 2016).

Consumers face different food choice options, referred as “alternative” (Paddock, 2015). All “alternative” proposals constitute behaviors that require attention to social impact and behavioral change (Peter et al., 2016). For instance, proposals of alternative modes of transportation, such as biking or car pooling, or, as for the case of this study, alternative food consumption (AFC), which can be as based on meat-reduction, organic, local, vegetarian, vegan (Batat et al., 2017; Peter et al., 2016). The study by Batat et al. (2017) points out that consumer demands for alternative food consumption (AFC) options involve plant-based, organic and local diets. The first group includes veganism and vegetarianism as alternative to meat-based consumption. The second includes both organic and local food consumption. However, distinctions are important, since there is a need to understand that (i) organic food is not necessarily locally grown, thus decreasing the positive environmental effect of organic farming; and (ii) local food is not necessarily organic, even though local farmers have similar environmental goals as organic farmers (Batat et al., 2017; Schindler, 2012).

We argue that Slow Food is also one of those alternatives. Thus, we propose Slow Food as an alternative food consumption that consumers can engage with. The constituent approaches of this type of consumption, its principles and product attributes are presented in the following sections.

3. Methodology

In the field of applied social sciences, one of the main benefits of scientific production based on essays is the break with the positivist logic regarding the understanding and discussion of phenomena of interest to the researcher (Meneghetti, 2011). In this perspective, Bertero (2011, p. 340) states that “in the area of administration many contributions in the area took the form of essays”. Thus, we position this essay, whose main objective is to discuss Slow Food as an alternative food consumption, within the administration area, specifically in field of consumption.

The originality of the essay proposal is responsible for its quality (Soares et al., 2018). In this line, Meneghetti (2011) argues that the originality of the essay may lie in the choice of the object of analysis, in the cut given to the analysis, in a new approach related to the topic of interest, in the argumentation or even in the subversion of the dominant rationality.

We argue that this essay proposal is original, since the starting point is the existing difficulties of interpreting Slow Food as an object of research in the field of consumption. This is because, in general, Slow Food has been recognized and studied as an organization, a movement, ideology, or lifestyle. Therefore, our proposal involves the understanding and discussion of Slow Food as an alternative type of food consumption.

The methodological path outlined in this article allowed the purpose of this essay to be achieved. To this end, the first goal was to identify approaches that constitute Slow Food as a type of food consumption. In the second goal, we sought to expand the definitions of its principles for consumers and, in the third, we aimed to map the attributes of Slow Food products.

The positions of various authors, materials and existing research are appropriate for the review of a topic (Bertero, 2011; Soares et al., 2018). The elaboration of this essay, at first, went through the gathering of the Slow Food literature: books, manuals, and, mainly, scientific articles. Thus, this essay has a descriptive nature, as secondary data was used for its construction, following a qualitative approach as the discussion was based on reflections on different points of view and results found in the literature (Pádua, 2016). Works of several authors were considered. For example, those of Frost and Laing (2013), Hsu (2014), Williams et al. (2015), Rombach et al. (2016), Wexler et al. (2017), among others.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Slow food approaches

In this section we identify and discuss Slow Food's constituent approaches as an alternative food consumption, providing examples of studies within each perspective. It is noteworthy that the different approaches given to Slow Food are often interlinked, although each study may or may not favor one or more approaches. This will be shown throughout the section.

Bentia (2014) studied the relationships established between people and food at events organized by Slow Food in Italy and the UK (e.g., fairs, festivals). At fairs, for example, it was observed that people are "confronted with the most varied ways of getting involved with food: visitors taste, compare, eat, take small sips, smell, drink, walk, pause, listen, speak and they walk again" (p. 184). Furthermore, cooking demonstrations at events like this strengthen the relationship between individuals and food through the act of cooking.

The relationship between individuals and small producers is also valued in Slow Food's logic, as benefits are perceived for the food (environmentally clean), for the producer (socially fair) and for the co-producer or consumer, for purchasing healthier products and knowing the origin of their production (*Sustainable approach*). In this direction, Tencati and Zsolnai (2012) revealed that the SF creates or strengthens connections between producers and co-producers from short chains of small-scale production that bring them closer together and provide for the exchange of information and knowledge about food and its productive processes.

It can also be said that Slow Food promotes alternative eating behaviors such as sitting down to eat slowly with family and friends, strengthening interactions between people at meal times (Mair et al., 2008). This perspective also favors the deceleration of eating rhythms (*Temporal approach*). Tavanti (2010) suggests that Slow Food can connect an individual, their family and the community through the sharing of pleasurable mealtimes at the table. Therefore, the notion of conviviality is deeply linked to Slow Food in the sense of social pleasures arising from greater connections between friends, family and community in moments of sharing "good food" (Germov et al., 2010).

In addition, an analysis of the behavior and activities of Slow Food members revealed that they shop in local markets and are aware of the relationship between health and food (Lee et al., 2014). The established relationship is not limited to food, but also to activities: they enjoy cooking for themselves, family and friends, in addition to enjoying eating as a pleasure activity. These people's homes usually have spacious and well-equipped kitchens, which, according to them, is a way of showing pleasure regarding the food preparation activity (Lee et al., 2014).

Relational approach. This approach represents that Slow Food, as an alternative consumption, is based on establishing or strengthening connections between different actors: producers and co-producers (i.e., consumers), co-producers and family, friends or community, co-producers and food, meals, spaces such as fairs, festivals, kitchens, home, specifically "at the table", and activities such as buying, preparing/cooking, and consuming slow foods. It involves the notion of conviviality, according to which the pleasures of eating can and should be shared (Bentia, 2014; Dunlap, 2012; Germov et al., 2010; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Hayes-Conroy et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2014; Mair et al., 2008; Rombach et al., 2016; Tavanti, 2010; Tencati et al., 2012; Van Bommel et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2015).

Parkins (2004) analyzed several Slow Food publications to investigate the logic of reconceptualizing time in everyday life within the movement. The author speaks of a slowness associated with speed, both to follow the fast/slow dichotomy of time spent at the table and to oppose the losses promoted by Fast Food, a thought that gave rise to the emergence of Slow Food. However, its focus is on the fact that the "slow" says more about critical reflection, care and greater attention to aspects such as health, flavor, authenticity, regionalism, connection and tranquility in food preparation and consumption processes than the idea of necessarily spending more time in the kitchen or at the table. This was particularly noted in the repetition of words

like 'careful', 'reflective' and 'aware' found in Slow Food speeches and publications.

In a similar perspective, Tam (2008) explored what it means to go slow in movement. The core idea is the notion of pleasure, care and sharing associated with food preparation and consumption for Slow Food members, not the length of a meal. Going slowly or slowing down is linked to a careful way of “protecting, sustaining and repairing damage caused to the environment, animals, culture and people” (2008, p. 214) through meals that offer the opportunity to “to share, reflect and socialize” (2008, p. 213), which gives quality to the perspective of time. This care starts with the individual and then extends to other people and issues. The vision of fast is not bad because it means “fast”, but because it is careless in relation to the importance of care, pleasure, sharing, reflection and awareness at the moment of consumption. “Slow”, on the other hand, brings this view.

Hsu (2014) studied the time perspective within Slow Food under three views: i) notion of volume of time, ii) coordination of time regarding activities, and iii) intensity of time allocation among simultaneous activities. The first deals with the idea that Slow Food tends to increase the feeling of lack of time, as Slow Food encourages homemade preparation from scratch, which requires time and commitment to the process. This logic of interest in and liking to prepare food, in cooking, is what Petrini (2013) claims to enable greater appreciation of food and care regarding its more homemade, artisanal way of preparation. Avoiding ready-to-eat meals resulting from large-scale production and the consumption of convenience foods is also linked to engagement with the Slow Food preparation.

The second view brings the idea that conviviality can be helped or undermined by adapting the lack of time for a meal to the use of devices involved in food preparation. In this logic, a device that is used to facilitate greater interaction, considering that it speeds up preparation for the individual to get more time at the table, can, at the same time, harm this preparation in the sense of harming health or rushing a time that would be dedicated to greater engagement with food (Hsu, 2014). For instance, within the Slow Food proposal as an alternative consumption, devices such as microwaves are normally avoided as much as possible so that a more engaged relationship with food can be created at the time of preparation. However, this same device can be used so that you can provide more time at mealtime, as it sped up the preparation time. Finally, the third view of Hsu (2014) explains that more engagement with the food consumed can result in meal times more susceptible to increased conversations such as parallel activities, which can contribute to the intensity of time allocation for both meals and conversations.

Abrahamsson (2014) analyzed conflicting food speeds in speeches on Fast and Slow Food. In the study, specific situations in which food is cooked and consumed are responsible for the emergence of eating rhythms. Here, the act of cooking includes buying, planning menus, and preparing and consuming a dish. For instance, a Slow pace could be in weekly meal menu planning rather than fast paced meals for convenience. The consumption rhythms of Slow Foods are characterized as moderate or balanced, that is, “it takes time” for food to be consumed and enjoyed, unlike fast foods. They can also be linked to the number of people at the table during a meal (i.e., more people, more time spent, slower).

Trends in the time people spend during food preparation and consumption under the slow logic were also investigated using demographic aspects. People with higher education demonstrated to prefer slower, healthier meals, even though their time could be restricted by increased demands at work. Following the slow logic, men with partners (with or without children) started to increase their food preparation time while the opposite happened for single men and women (with and without children). The consumption time became longer among single men and women without children (Mandemakers & Roeters, 2014).

Temporal approach. This approach deals with the rhythms of eating, that is, those associated with food preparation, consumption and interaction between different actors at the table or other environments (Abrahamsson, 2014; Chaudhury & Albinsson, 2014; Mair et al., 2008; Mandemakers & Roeters, 2014; Tam, 2008).

The aesthetics of foods understood as “Slow Foods” was studied by Miele and Murdoch (2002) when analyzing the case of a restaurant with a Slow Food proposal and typical foods from the cuisine of Tuscany, region of Italy. In cities such as Nova Scotia (Canada) and Berkeley (USA), Hayes-Conroy (2010) investigated how Slow Food is linked to feelings and sensations experienced through food (e.g., preferring certain types of local artisan breads) and specific environments (e.g., events, fairs, during meals). Among the findings, the fact that the acts of seeing, smelling and tasting fresh, local and fairly produced foods promote well-being within the movement.

Another study showed that people engaged with Slow Food have negative sensations and feelings about products like Coca-Cola or meals from fast food chains. Furthermore, the fact that pleasurable eating experiences cannot be dissociated from the relationships with the environments in which they occur and with the presence of other people inserted in these environments (*Relational approach*) (Hayes-Conroy, A. & Hayes-Conroy, J., 2010). Specific spaces such as fairs, for instance, provide insights “for a sociology of taste and the senses, which aims to assess emerging sensory constitutions as potential catalysts and drivers of change” (Bentia, 2014: 175). This change occurs towards foods that provide sensory pleasure due to their local and environmentally friendly attributes (*Sustainable approach*) and the atmosphere of conviviality at the table (Dunlap, 2012).

Sensory approach. This approach involves aspects such as taste (taste), smell (smell) and aesthetics (aesthetic) of food, responsible for providing the perception of pleasure in this alternative food consumption (Bentia, 2014; Dunlap, 2012; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Hayes-Conroy, A. & Hayes-Conroy, J., 2010; Hayes-Conroy & Martin, 2010; Miele & Murdoch, 2002; Page, 2012; Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010).

Changes in the Slow Food movement's discourse towards sustainability were identified after the 2000s (Van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). This issue came to light as Slow Food involves positive impacts on the environment, less harmful production methods and products, and, in the social sphere, fair treatment and payment of small local food producers. For Tencati and Zsolnai (2012), sustainability within the Slow Food logic is manifested through modes of production that are oriented by foods that nature has to offer according to the seasons of the year (seasonality).

Williams et al. (2015) identified that consumers come to Slow Food for reasons of environmental sustainability, to know the origin of the products, production methods that are less harmful to the environment and that make food healthier, fresher, and with higher quality, in addition to social justice for the producers. They also perceived the interest in fairs as spaces that strengthen connections between consumers and food, in addition to connections and knowledge exchange between consumers and producers (*Relational approach*).

Some behaviors of Slow Food members regarding food consumption are characterized as sustainable. Rombach et al. (2016) found that these people avoid wasting food from the moment of purchase, thinking about the waste also during food preparation. They also apply Slow logic to the preparation of "fast dishes". In this sense, the relationship with fast food can occur through “slowing down fast foods”, that is, leaving typical fast foods with "slow" characteristics. For instance, they can make natural sandwiches, made from natural or artisanal ingredients, instead of buying those coming from fast food chains. In the hospitality sector, sustainability within Slow Food was investigated by Munjal et al. (2016). The results reveal that the approach to the concept of sustainability occurs using foods that are “good, clean and fair” in the preparation of local cuisine dishes (*Cultural approach*). Furthermore, they reveal that the movement is committed to changes in eating habits and in production and consumption patterns, making them more sustainable.

Sustainable approach. This approach concerns issues such as valuing and seeking healthy, fresh, seasonal food from a small local producer, as well as socially fair and environmentally friendly food that are present in the understanding of Slow Food as an alternative consumption, which contributes to sustainable production and food consumption can effectively occur in this context. Furthermore, in this approach, combating food waste is encouraged through the purchase of slow food products

and during food preparation and consumption activities, even when the dishes have “fast food characteristics” (Dunlap, 2012; Germov et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2014; Munjal et al., 2016; Page, 2012; Rombach et al., 2016; Siniscalchi, 2013; Tavanti, 2010; Tencati & Zsolnai, 2012; Van Bommel & Spicer, 2011; Wexler et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2015).

Page (2012) revisited the concept of Slow Food emphasizing that the movement's focus is on the idea of food as a representation of a local culture, without losing consumers' aesthetic appreciation for food (*Sensory approach*) and their sense of environmental responsibility (*Sustainable approach*) in relation to the impacts of production processes. Similarly, Slow Food's discourse around cultural traditions focused on where food is located, and produced, was studied by Van Bommel and Spicer (2015). The authors position the idea of local culture as a vital characteristic of the movement, considering the classical notion associated with its emergence: opposition to fast food and the damage it causes to people's health, and how food, as an element of local culture, function as a response to this opposition.

This view agrees with that of Gaytán (2004), who studied how members of the movement use a local imaginary to participate in a consumption logic that is based on opposition to the negative consequences of fast food (i.e., low-nutrition foods that harm the health of individuals). In this sense, fast food represents the antithesis of a local culture, according to which consumers value purchases of fresh products from small-scale producers as a cultural and political act (*Political approach*). In addition to aspects related to local production and purchase of products with such characteristics, typical culinary foods in a region act as representatives of local culture in preparation and consumption processes of restaurants with the Slow Food proposal (Miele & Murdoch, 2002).

Cultural approach. This approach is related to the notion of food as a good of the local culture and cuisine of a region and can represent a response to opposition to fast food culture (Gaytán, 2004; Miele & Murdoch, 2002; Munjal et al., 2016; Page, 2012; Van Bommel & Spicer, 2015; 2015; Wexler et al., 2017).

Political aspects of food consumption have been noted in past Slow Food studies. Sassateli and Davolio (2010) explained sensory pleasure (i.e., taste refinement and aesthetic appreciation) (*Sensory approach*) as a basis for consumer political investment in Slow Food food choices. Such choices can represent forms of protest against the dominant food policy, although a protest does not necessarily mean renunciation or asceticism. Here, protest takes place through the search for alternative visions and food choices in terms of pleasure and satisfaction. In this sense, the engagement of individuals with Slow Food is aligned with the SF's socio-political objectives through the good feeling for participating in a movement that encourages the consumption of 'good, clean and fair' foods (Hayes-Conrey & Martin, 2010).

Siniscalchi (2013) studied ways in which the Slow Food movement creates spaces for political action and promotion of higher quality production, and subsequent consumption, based on environmental and social sustainability (*Sustainable approach*). For the first case, the author claims that Slow Food promotes debates and disputes regarding the problems of the dominant food system. For the second, environmental sustainability can be achieved through respect for the environment in food production. The social one, through concerns regarding the rights of small local producers.

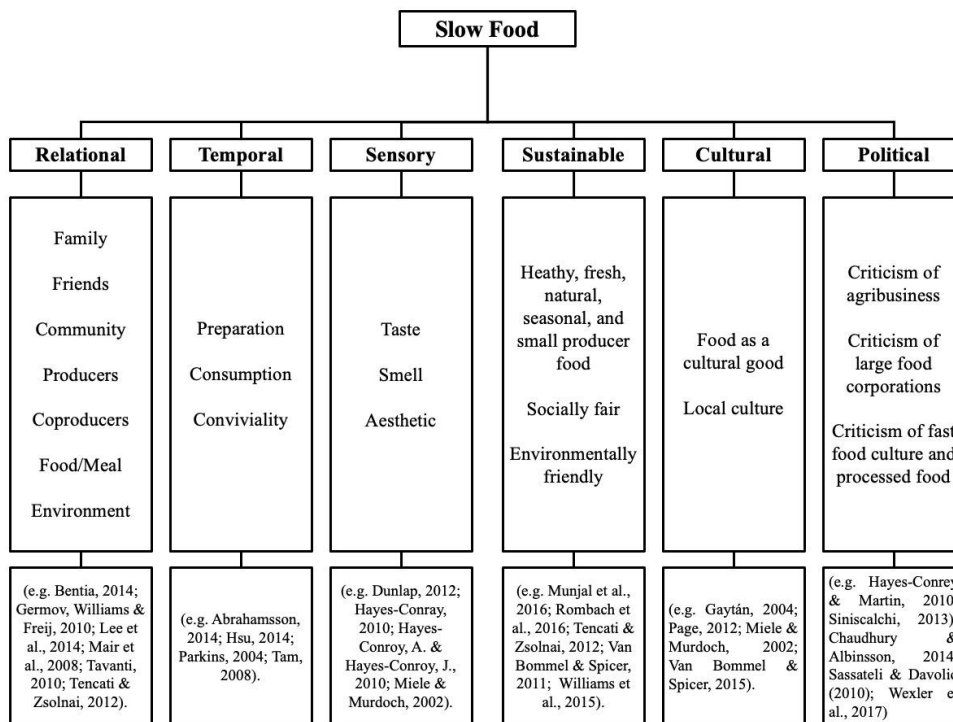
Chaudhury and Albinsson (2014) suggested that Slow Food consumers generally demonstrate dissatisfaction with the dominant food system and a fast-paced lifestyle. In the view of these consumers, the dominant system and the fast-paced lifestyle are responsible for encouraging individuals to eat processed foods or fast foods for convenience, in addition to negatively impacting both people's health and the environment due to the use of chemicals in processes of production. This view is in line with what Petrini (2003) argues about Slow Food being a response to Fast Food, which stems from an accelerated life: "We are enslaved by speed and we all succumb to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which interrupts our habits, invades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods" (p. xxiii). Therefore, such consumers look to Slow Food as a way to go against the dominant paradigm, through a critical view and contestation of the dominant system in the industry (Hadler, 2015).

For Wexler et al. (2017), Slow Food distances itself from a vision of protest, but at the same time involves the activist role of the individual in directing an appeal to contain the long-term consequences of a negative example (i.e., the power of the agribusiness in the food chain), and lead to a mission of change in the social sphere. This perspective is similar to that promoted by O'Shaughnessy and Kennedy (2010), who consider two dimensions of activism: traditional, guided by the idea of urgency, combating a negative example in society, and relational, long-term, which manifests itself through social support in the routines of those who adopt them (e.g., support to small local producers), aiming at long-term social changes.

Political approach. This approach by Slow Food as an AFC involves challenges to the dominant food system in the form of criticisms of agribusiness, large food corporations, fast food culture and processed food, generally associated with and present in large supermarket chains (Chaudhury et al., 2014; Gaytán, 2004; Hayes-Conroy et al., 2010; Mair et al., 2008; Sassatelli et al., 2010; Siniscalchi, 2013; Tencati et al., 2012; Van Bommel et al., 2015; Wexler et al., 2017).

Therefore, we have identified the formation of six Slow Food approaches: relational, temporal, sensory, sustainable, cultural and political. Figure 1 integrates these approaches, their characteristics and examples of authors who support them.

Figure 1. Slow Food approaches.



Source: Authors.

Overall, the literature points out that alternative food consumption is capable of (i) empowering individuals through practices aimed at adopting alternative foods over “mainstream” foods, (ii) reflecting individuals' reactions in relation to the dominant food production mode; (iii) lead to greater concerns with aspects of sustainability (social, environmental and economic), health, and taste pleasures from individuals' relationships with sustainable, local/regional food products, even if they are not necessarily organic (Batat et al., 2017; Manna et al., 2016; Paddock, 2015; Peter et al., 2016).

Within this logic, Slow Food can be positioned as an alternative food consumption, as its approaches address the political, sustainable, sensory, relational and cultural characteristics of an AFC. Added to this, temporal aspects still constitute this type of consumption, so that the rhythms of food preparation, consumption and interaction between different actors should also be considered.

Based on our initial proposal, allied to the identified approaches, we conceptualize Slow Food as a phenomenon of multiple approaches manifested as an alternative food consumption that can simultaneously involve in its understanding relational, sensory, temporal, sustainable, cultural, and political aspects. Thus, Slow Food is as an alternative food consumption that consumers can engage with. Within this proposal, Slow Food involves concerns with food acquisition, preparation and consumption, with the environment and the various actors involved in the search for good, clean and fair food, that is, official principles of the movement.

We understand that these approaches explicitly or implicitly highlight the perspectives to which Slow Food consumers may be subject within the logic encouraged by the movement or organization, mainly through:

(i) Consumers' experiences in environments of purchase, preparation, and consumption of slow foods (Abrahamsson, 2014; Mandemakers et al., 2014; Parkins, 2004; Tam, 2008; Wexler et al., 2017), for example in fairs and restaurants with the Slow Food proposal (Miele & Murdoch, 2002). Also, people's experiences in the organization's events, festivals and markets (Bentia, 2014; Frost et al., 2013; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Williams et al., 2015), and during meals (Dunlap, 2012; Mair et al., 2008; Tavanti, 2010), involving the quality of time spent on these experiences (Tam, 2008) and the use of the individuals' senses (Bentia, 2014);

(ii) Activities and behaviors promoted by the movement among its members (Chaudhury et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2014; Rombach et al., 2016);

(iii) Relationships established between actors such as producers and co-producers (ie, consumers) (Tencati et al., 2012), between only co-producers, among others (Germov et al., 2010; Mandemakers et al., 2014);

(iv) Sustainable (Munjal et al., 2016; Page, 2012; Rombach et al., 2016), cultural (Gaytán, 2004) and political (Sassateli et al., 2010; Siniscalchi, 2013; Wexler et al., 2017) associations encouraged by the movement, which might reflect on its members and non-members under their role as consumers.

In the next topic, Slow Food's principles are revisited and expanded, and its product attributes are mapped.

Slow Food's guiding principles are good (*buono*), clean (*pulito*) and fair (*giusto*) food. That is, the food must be: a) good (i.g. tasty to eat); b) clean (i.e., produced in a humane and environmentally correct manner); c) fair (i.e., the system by which food is provided must be economically and socially fair for its workers) (Petrini, 2013). This is the general definition found about each principle. However, looking more closely we note that these principles need that their definitions are extended, and their interconnections are highlighted so that the understanding of Slow Food as an alternative food consumption can be sustained in a broad and systemic view.

The relationship established between principles and Slow foods is complex (Hadler, 2015). However, the combination of information about them found in the Slow Food Manual (2013) and a series of characteristics attributed to them throughout the literature results in the proposition of expanded definitions for each of them from the co-producer/consumer perspective (Agrillo et al., 2015; Chaudhury et al., 2014; Hayes-Conroy, et al., 2010; Petrini, 2013; Schneider, 2008; Tencati et al., 2012) (Table 1).

Table 1. Expanded definition of Slow Food principles.

Principles	Definition
Good	It is the recognition of foods that satisfy the senses, for being tasty, smelling, natural, fresh, healthy and nutritious, for the mind and body. Co-producers also recognize that such foods are the result of the good work of small producers, from choices of raw materials and production methods that respect food seasonality, aim to preserve its naturalness, and maximize connections with local culture (Agrillo et al., 2015; Chaudhury & Albinsson, 2014; Hayes-Conroy, A. & Hayes-Conroy, J., 2010; Petrini, 2013; Schneider, S., 2008; Slow Food, 2013).
Clean	It is the recognition that food needs to respect the environment, involving the implementation of sustainability in production and consumption, and defending the health of co-producers in the processes of acquisition, preparation, and consumption of food, certainly of a more natural, healthy, natural and environmentally friendly (seasonal) (Agrillo et al., 2015; Hayes-Conroy, A. & Hayes-Conroy, J., 2010; Petrini, 2013; Slow Food, 2013).
Fair	It is the recognition of the importance of social, economic, cultural and environmental justice. Social and economic insofar as it is fair to small producers, ensuring decent working conditions, respect for their rights, know-how, in addition to generating adequate remuneration. It's also fair to co-producers, as they are looking for affordable prices and healthier foods. It is fair to the local culture, as it respects and values typical products from a region. Finally, it is environmentally fair, as it deals with respect and preservation of the environment, producing foods that follow the logic of seasonality (Chaudhury & Albinsson, 2014; Gentile, 2016; Hayes-Conroy, A. & Hayes-Conroy, J., 2010; Petrini, 2013; Tencati & Zsolnai, 2012; Slow Food, 2013).

Source: Authors.

The three principles are closely related to each other. In this sense, S. Schneider (2008) states that the notion of “good” maximizes links with a particular location or culture, “clean” is related to environmental sustainability and “fair” is related to social justice for producers. According to Agrillo et al. (2015), the “clean” principle creates conditions for the “good” principle to manifest itself, thus being interdependent. Likewise, this principle is linked to the “fair” principle.

It should be noted that the "fair" principle involves many more aspects than, at first, may appear (Table 2). It can be linked to the environment, culture, producer and consumer. For example, a food produced and marketed following seasonality is fair to the environment, since its production will seek to respect the period that nature has to offer for production and subsequent consumption. The respect and appreciation of the cuisine and typical products of a region can be a means of being fair in relation to the local culture. Justice in relation to the producer is achieved through adequate remuneration and working conditions, and respect for the knowledge he has to offer to co-producers in general. A healthy food is fair to the consumer, as it is able to provide health benefits, in addition, the offer of affordable prices can also be considered a form of justice in relation to the consumer interested in slow food (Chaudhury et al., 2014; Hayes-Conroy et al., 2010; Petrini, 2013; Tencati et al., 2012; Slow Food, 2013).

The principles guide the perception of quality of food purchased and consumed in the Slow Food logic and are manifested in the form of product attributes. The mapping of these attributes (Table 2) is still incipient in the literature.

Table 2. Attributes of Slow Food products in literature.

Attributes	References
Local, fresh, seasonal, aesthetic	Miele e Murdoch (2002)
Local, fresh, produced on a small scale	Gaytán (2004)
Organic, seasonal, environmentally friendly	Petrini (2009), Petrini (2013)
Tasty, environmentally sustainable, socially fair	Schneider (2008)
Local, fresh, healthy, seasonal, tasty, environmentally friendly, artisanal	Germov <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Local, seasonal, small scale or organic	Sassatelli & Davolio (2010)
Local, artisanal, fresh, tasty, environmentally friendly, produced on a small scale, fairly (socially fair)	Hayes-Conroy (2010); A. Hayes-Conroy & J. Hayes-Conroy (2010); Hayes-Conroy & Martin (2010)
Local/traditional, artisanal, fresh and authentic	Van Bommel & Spicer (2011)
Local, healthy, produced on a small scale	Berkley (2012)
Local, small-scale, healthy, traditional, fresh, seasonal, authentic, artisanal	Frost & Laing (2013)
Natural, tasty, nutritious, minimally processed, environmentally sustainable, socially fair	Chaudhury & Albinsson (2014)
Fresh, unprocessed, high in fiber	Abrahamsson (2014)
Natural, fresh, from a small producer, from a traditional market	Lee <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Local, sustainable, artisanal, clean	Bentia (2014)
Fresh, seasonal, healthy, tasty, environmentally sustainable	Agrillo <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Local, handcrafted, sustainable, fair marketed	Van Bommel & Spicer (2015)
Healthy, from a local producer, organic or not, minimally processed, fresh, environmentally sustainable, socially fair	Williams <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Local, environmentally sustainable, socially fair	Philippon (2015)
Regional, healthier	Rombach <i>et al.</i> (2016)
Fresh, traditional, nutritious, local, sustainable, healthy	Munjal <i>et al.</i> (2016)

Source: Authors.

Tavante (2010) explains that the “slowness” mentioned by Slow Food refers to the food that, due to its slow attributes, is capable of minimizing or even reversing various negative aspects of the global food system. Thus, typical slow foods have attributes such as: local/regional/traditional/authentic, fresh, seasonal, healthy, natural, nutritious, tasty, aesthetic, high in fiber, unprocessed or minimally processed, artisanal, small producer or traditional market, organic or not, sustainable, environmentally friendly and socially fair (Abrahamsson, 2014; Agrillo *et al.*, 2015; Bentia, 2014; Berkley, 2012; Chaudhury *et al.*, 2014; Frost *et al.*, 2013; Gaytán, 2004; Germov *et al.*, 2010; Hayes-Conroy, 2010; Hayes-Conroy *et al.*, 2010; Hayes-Conroy *et al.*, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Miele *et al.*, 2002; Munjal *et al.*, 2016; Petrini, 2009; Philippon, 2015; Rombach *et al.*, 2016; Sassatelli *et al.*, 2010; Schneider, S., 2008; Van Bommel *et al.*, 2011; 2015; Williams *et al.*, 2015).

The local attribute deserves special attention due to the diversity of synonyms listed in the literature, which usually uses terms such as local (Miele *et al.*, 2002), regional (Rombach *et al.*, 2016), traditional (Lee *et al.*, 2014) and authentic (Van Bommel *et al.*, 2011). It should be clarified, therefore, that this attribute is related to the production of foods or typical dishes in a region, which, for Agrillo *et al.* (2015), reveals the importance of the local aspect for the perception of “good” food, aimed at local culture and cuisine. In this perspective, Gentile (2016) places Slow Food in the middle of a sociocultural wave of rescuing the “regional”, the “typical product” and the preference for what is “made at home”. In turn, K. Schneider (2015: 187) points out that “no doubt this typical fruit and dish is associated with its regional identity, regardless of whether your lunch

today was a Big Mac". Thus, the perception of better taste and quality of food within the movement is also aligned with their place of origin and production, including at home, even though people can consume, in smaller quantities, products from fast food chains.

There is no consensus in the Slow Food literature on whether foods should necessarily be organic (e.g., Petrini, 2013) or not (e.g., Williams et al., 2015), as perceptions of movement members suggest that there is flexibility regarding the indispensable presence of that product attribute. However, in the Slow Food manual (2013: 73), this issue is further explained: "Slow Food agrees with the principles behind organic agriculture, such as promoting methods with a low impact on the environment, and on reduction in the use of pesticides". Still, discussions about sustainability within the movement reveal that its products do not necessarily need to be certified as organic to be sustainable. In Slow Food's logic, this certification, while important, should not be a guarantee that the product is produced sustainably, as even organic farming can have similarities to conventional monoculture crops if it is practiced extensively (Slow Food, 2013).

Regarding the sustainable attribute, Gentile (2016) suggests that there needs to be knowledge and understanding about the environmental consequences of actions ranging from food production to consumption for a factual judgment of sustainability. Based on this argument, the sustainable attribute in Slow Food, although it does not appear linked to other product attributes in the literature (e.g., what is sustainable is separate from what is seasonal) is intrinsically related to attributes such as: seasonal, fresh, natural, healthy, small producer, environmentally friendly and socially fair.

This is because all these attributes positively impact the production and consumption of food, producers and consumers (Germov et al., 2010) as they contribute to environmental, social and economic sustainability in this area (Dunlap, 2012; Philippon, 2015), approaching the pillars of sustainable development (Elkington, 1999). As discussed earlier in relation to the interdependent principles, these attributes are related and comprehensively comprise what should reflect sustainability in Slow Food products.

Thus, the attributes of Slow Food's products can be summarized as healthy, nutritious, natural, fresh, seasonal, regional, environmentally friendly and socially fair foods, produced by small local producers, for whom reducing damage to the environment is important, avoiding and condemning the use of production methods that impoverish or pollute land and water resources. Such producers, in turn, are valued and remunerated fairly.

5. Final Considerations

This essay aimed to discuss Slow Food as an alternative food consumption. To this end, approaches that constitute Slow Food consumption were identified, the definition of its principles was expanded, and its product attributes were mapped. Therefore, this article helps to facilitate the research process of those who want to have Slow Food as an object of research in the consumption field.

The results indicate the formation of six Slow Food approaches in the literature. Based on this, we propose that Slow Food is a phenomenon of multiple approaches and an alternative food consumption that can simultaneously involve in its understanding relational, sensory, temporal, sustainable, cultural and political aspects. Relational, sustainable and political approaches proved to be relevant for understanding the basis of Slow Food as an alternative food consumption. Furthermore, the recent revival of the cultural approach involved in its studies and the lack of focus on the temporal and sensory approaches were identified. Furthermore, it was noted that the three principles of Slow Food are closely related to each other and the importance of local and sustainable attributes in its products. The "local" because it is associated with the production of food or dishes typical of a region and the preference for what is "made at home". The "sustainable" for encompassing the notion of sustainability in Slow Food, reflected in foods with healthy, natural, fresh, seasonal and environmentally friendly attributes, from small producers, and socially fair.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge about Slow Food within the field of consumption through its understanding of alternative food consumption and the identification of multiple approaches to its understanding in this perspective. We recommend that future studies take a position on the approaches adopted to study this phenomenon, that is, we suggest that researchers make it clear if they intend to adopt one or more Slow Food approaches in their studies.

The definition of these approaches can provide greater epistemological clarity for future studies, in addition to facilitating the adequacy of the study in certain areas of knowledge. In addition, a clear approach positioning facilitates the correct definition of the search scope and the profiles of individuals searched. In this way, it facilitates the understanding of the focus given to the theme through the theoretical delimitation that the researcher intends to adopt. Another contribution of this study is related to the expanded definition of Slow Food's principles. We propose proper alignment with these principles in future studies to ensure the correct constitutive definition of Slow Food as an object of study.

In addition, we contribute to Slow Food literature by mapping its product attributes. This allows food fair traders and restaurants that adopt the movement's principles to be aware of the product attributes involved within this alternative food consumption.

Such product attributes linked to Slow Food can be used in future research aimed at evaluating the performance of food products and services, which opens up opportunities for proposing measurement scales based on the attributes listed in this study. We suggest that future studies propose a scale of consumer orientations to Slow Food based on involvement with the SF approaches and attributes. In this way, it is possible to detach Slow Food from the idea of organization and processes of affiliation to it, to focus on SF as an alternative food consumption and the possible orientations with which consumers can be associated in this regard. Thus, would there be consumer groups more or less adept to the Slow Food consumption? Future studies can address this issue, focusing on identifying an appropriate segmentation of potential Slow Food consumers.

From a managerial point of view, the attributes listed can help in marketing decisions for small producers and businesses in the food industry that work under a Slow Food-based value proposition, such as restaurants. Future studies could assess how large supermarket chains can relate to Slow Food products. For instance, could supermarkets incorporate Slow Food products into their product offerings? If so, how Slow Food consumers or potential consumers perceive and evaluate this possibility since there are divergent trends in responses to the global neoliberal food systems? (Holt Giménez et al., 2011; Levidow et al., 2014). Would people be more willing to accept the principles of the dominant corporate food system, in which large supermarket chains are inserted, but as long as they adopt small reforms, such as some local food production and market within these chains? Or would they be less willing to accept this possibility because they will be more focused on actions and practices that advocates for greater sustainability in food production, purchase and consumption in a way that is far from supermarket chains?

Empirical research can explore the manifestation of Slow Food's approaches to the consumption behavior of individuals not affiliated with the organization. For instance, given the strong presence of the sustainable approach on Slow Food studies, its relationship with constructs such as sustainable consumption, attitude and sustainable behavior can be analyzed in the future. Considering the studies within the temporal approach, future research can investigate whether the presence of a "slow mindset" leads consumers to more tolerant responses to service failures in restaurants with the Slow Food proposal.

Given the relevance of the relationship established between producers and co-producers within the Slow Food proposal as an alternative food consumption shown in this study, future research may identify which mechanisms and strategies can strengthen or weaken this relationship. Other studies within the area of consumer experiences might analyze how Slow Food consumption experiences affect consumers: at the table or in other environments, such as fairs, festivals, or restaurants. Addressing these topics is a promising area of research for studying Slow Food since understanding consumers and their

consumption experiences with products and services in several environments and contexts is one of the core tasks of marketing (Schmitt et al., 2013).

Another perspective for future investigations, besides the one mentioned above, is focused on sensory marketing (Krishna, 2012). From a sensory approach, there is a lack of studies that explore how sound aspects can influence the consumption of Slow Food. Are there specific sounds, songs, or auditory cues from Slow Food fairs and festivals that would have more or less appeal to consumers to engage with this type of consumption? What would they be and what are their characteristics? Future research on sensory marketing may investigate these issues, aiming to identify the effects of auditory aspects of Slow Food environments on consumers' perception, judgment and behavior.

Given Slow Food's fair principle (Petrini, 2013), studies may seek to understand: What does a fair price for the producer and final consumer mean for Slow Food consumers? What attributes do they consider to add more value to the products? How much would they be willing to pay for it? Which pricing strategies appeal most to consumers? For instance, experiments can be conducted to discover the effects of a novel pricing mechanism, Pay-what-you-want (i.e., a participative pricing mechanism where customers actively decide what to pay) (Gross et al., 2021) on purchases of Slow Food products. Other underexplored questions involving the principle of justice encouraged by the SF can be studied: Do consumers perceive the proposal of justice of Slow Food consumption in relation to the culture of a certain region or people? How this factor influences their purchasing behavior?

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