



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**SHEREEN KUKHA-BRYSON**

BSSoc (University of Ottawa, 2011)

**“Children and Youth’s Relationships to Foodscapes: Re-imagining Saskatoon  
School Gardening and Food Security”**

Department of Anthropology

Thursday, April 27, 2017

1:30PM

Cornett Building

Room A319

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Andrea Walsh, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Peter Stephenson, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Darcy Mathews, School of Environmental Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Steve Garlick, Department of Sociology, UVic

## Abstract

Canadian urban food security discourses have been explored by academics, local community organizations, practitioners (e.g., health and education) with the intention of understanding the histories and impacts of food insecurity and co-creating long-lasting solutions. In various urban centres, community initiatives and educational institutions have been collaborating on school gardening programs as a way to address food insecurity. Central to these conversations and projects have been how to make more inclusive spaces for people to share their own complex and diverse perspectives of food security – based on their local foodscapes (matrix of relationships between people, place, and food) and cultural worldviews. Pervasive power structures and narratives, however, have privileged certain voices over others and there are limited inquiries into cultural perceptions of food security.

Children's and youth's own experiences and contributions to the discussion on foodscapes and food security have been marginalized, resulting in a knowledge gap of how young people situate and represent themselves. This research project works to amplify young people's narratives surrounding their multifaceted relationships to foodscapes within three school gardens located in Treaty Six Territory (Saskatoon, SK). The aim is to make space for the fulsome perspectives and solutions that children and youth offer, as social change agents, towards food security discourses.

Adopting a community-based approach, I collaborated with Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan (AITC-SK), the Saskatoon Public School Division (SPSD), children, youth, and their guardians. Co-participants involved in the project included eleven children (between the ages of five and twelve) and seven adults who were connected to the three school gardens. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks rooted in narrative analysis, thematic analysis, and visual participatory action research (VPAR) methodologies, this project practiced meaning-making, which was both collaborative and interdisciplinary. The participating young people used digital cameras to take photographs during four garden workshops facilitated from July to September, 2013. In addition to the workshops, I conducted unstructured interviews with each adult co-participant that contributed to understandings on how children and youth interact with diverse foodways.

Children and youth co-participants' voices, shared in this study, add to current conversations on Saskatoon food security issues – namely the focus on cultural acceptability and accessibility to food. Their oral and visual narratives shed insight into how to re-imagine and expand dominant food security concepts – *cultural acceptability* and *access* – to foster inclusive foodscapes. Culturally acceptable foods for young co-participants, for example, was not limited to food products but to cultural relationships infusing foodscapes. Children and youth also blurred boundaries existing in Saskatoon community garden dichotomies of private and public, which had the potential to challenge hegemonic neoliberal views around access. School gardening and food ideologies – steeped in educators' and program coordinators' worldviews – were broadened by young people as they reflected upon their garden-based foodways. The inclusion of more children's and youth's perspectives on how food security is conceptualized, experienced, and addressed can be used to build greater resiliency in urban school gardening initiatives. By supporting genuine participation of young people in decision-making, alternative actions towards social change can be implemented.