



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art
Kathleen Talbot

Will defend her thesis

**A Participatory, Transformational Approach to Urban Food
Security Research**

Contemporary urban food security in the US is influenced by complex, multidimensional, and multi-scale factors. However, most assessment methods and intervention efforts in food security research are: 1) narrowly focused on environmental factors (i.e. the presence or absence of quality food outlets), 2) divorced from the human dimension and, 3) ultimately disempower communities to affect change at the local level. New approaches are needed to capture the lived experiences and unique perspectives of people potentially most vulnerable to food insecurity, while also empowering people to become change agents in their lives and in the wider community. This thesis argues that sustainability problem solving frameworks such as transformational sustainability research (TSR), and community-based participatory research (CBPR) provide promising bases from which to address these deficiencies. Through interactive workshops with youth in Canyon Corridor, a neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona, I demonstrate the potential of methods that prioritize participation and co-production of knowledge (such as concept mapping and sketch mapping) embedded in these frameworks to: 1) better understand the contextual, community-identified factors that contribute to food security or food insecurity, 2) identify and adapt interventions for the local context and, 3) promote community agency and action. Workshop outcomes suggest the relevance of these frameworks and methods, and the potential for more people- and place-based approaches to food security research.

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
12:00-1 PM
GIOS 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Hallie Eakin, Chair
Arnim Wiek
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