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Low-Income Mothers and Their Pursuit of Food in a Rural Massachusetts County: A Qualitative Study from a Feminist Point of View

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Degree Program
Regional Planning

Degree Type
Master of Regional Planning (M.R.P.)

Year Degree Awarded
2011

Month Degree Awarded
September

Keywords
food security, feminism, planning, grounded theory, low-income mothers

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Abstract

This study reintroduces the disciplines of feminism and planning with the hope that planners will incorporate aspects of feminist theory, which has historically been overlooked by traditional western planning, into practice and subsequently better serve their communities. In an effort to demonstrate how a feminist approach can be useful to planners, this qualitative study rooted in grounded theory aims to develop an accurate portrayal of the food insecurity of low-income mothers in a rural Massachusetts county. Through an analysis of 33 interviews from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded *Rural Families Speak* project, categories of hunger, participant attitudes and opinions of different types of food assistance, and breaking stereotypes emerged. From these categories, the theory of tradition and the norm shed light on the food situations of participants and illuminated the influence of social expectations and subsequent participant reactions to such. By delving deep into the interviews and gaining a more complete understanding of the experiences of participants, planners are better equipped to function as advocates. Further implications for planners are discussed.

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