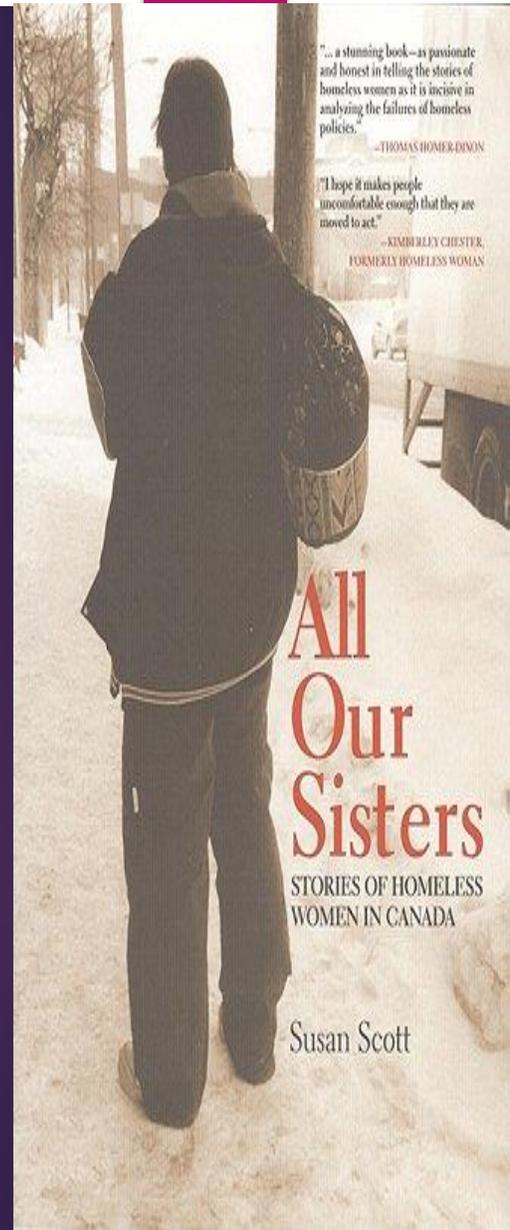


Food Insecurity, Poverty and Homelessness: A comparative Study Between Women in Northern and Southern Ontario

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Women Quotes

- ▶ “I’ll tell you, when you have food, your whole world kind of wants to change” [Candy, northern Ontario]
- ▶ “We literally go hungry you know the first time I felt that was when a lady baked a pie and she put it on her window and I was starving and I stole it because I don’t want to stay hungry. [Susan, northern Ontario]
- ▶ I was starving. And I would steal from the stores, if you’re hungry your body your mind...you know what I thought before I stole? If they catch me stealing, I would tell them I’m starving I have no food and how can you put somebody in jail if they’re hungry? [Hassan, southern Ontario]

By the Numbers: Food insecurity, poverty and homelessness in Canada

- ▶ **4 million individuals in Canada, including 1.15 million children, suffer from some level of food insecurity which represent nearly 13% of Canadian households.**
- ▶ **Canada's poverty rate in 2011 may range between 10 and 20 percent, or between about 3.5 to 7.0 million persons.**
- ▶ **1.3 million Canadians have experienced homelessness or extremely insecure housing at some point during the past five years.**

Background & significance

- ▶ **Food ,environmental contexts and health play a paramount role in women life and both what we eat , how and where we live matter (Hogan et al., 2016).**
- ▶ **Women food insecurity and health in different geographical context have been under-researched and neglected by public health policy.**
- ▶ **It is worthy noted that health concerns related to women food insecurity are emerging as major issues in northern and southern Ontario.**

Cont,

- ▶ **Household food insecurity (HFI) is a significant health problem that is primarily caused by financial insecurity (Collins, Power, & Little, 2014).**
- ▶ **Food Bank Canada (2013) declared that more than 1 in 10 Canadians suffered from forms of food insecurity, and more families depend on food banks each month (Buck-McFadyen, 2015).**
- ▶ **Given the diversity of food related challenges faced by women in different geographical context (e.g. northern vs southern Ontario); women need special attention and consideration concerning food insecurity and its effects on health, nutrition, and behavior (Ivers & Cullen, 2011).**

Objectives

- 1. To identify patterns and trends in food insecurity, poverty and homelessness amongst poor and homeless women with or without dependants in northern (City of Greater Sudbury) and southern Ontario (City of London Ontario).**
- 2. To explore the experiences of poor and homeless women with or without dependents in northern and southern Ontario with regard to housing challenges and homelessness, hunger, poverty and the perceived impacts on physical and mental health and wellbeing.**

Theoretical Framework

- ▶ This study seeks to promote the robustness of the findings by adopting a sound methodology based on **intersectionality theory**.
- ▶ Deploying intersectionality may help voiceless oppressed poor and/or homeless women confront various forms of oppression and may change the state of voicelessness women into one that mirror an empowerment based agenda (Chun, Lipsitz, & Shin, 2013).
- ▶ Deploying intersectionality perspective contributes to promote our understanding of the complex interaction of different forms of disadvantage. These forms of disadvantages may include social identity, location and gender that are jeopardized whether at the level of everyday life experiences or in the social organizational practices (Grabham, Cooper, Krishnadas, & Herman, 2008).

Methods

- ▶ A **sequential exploratory mixed methods** design with quantitative and qualitative phases.
- ▶ The setting is **northern** (City of Greater Sudbury) and **southern Ontario** (City of London Ontario).
- ▶ **The first phase** : A qualitative exploration of the experiences of poor and homeless women in northern (City of Greater Sudbury) and southern Ontario (City of London Ontario).
- ▶ **The second phase**: A secondary data analysis of a database developed by the Poverty, Homelessness and Migration (PHM) project; the analysis will identify and describe patterns and trends in food insecurity, poverty, and homelessness among women in Sudbury.
- ▶ **Purposive sampling** was utilized to recruit 20 women (Ten women from Sudbury and ten women from London Ontario).

Data collection

- ▶ **After obtaining ethics approval from Laurentian University and based upon community and academic partnerships, data collection was designed and carried out in collaboration with who work most closely with the participants (women).**
- ▶ **With consent from the participants, individual semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted with respectful, nonjudgmental and non-threatening probing .**
- ▶ **The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.**

Data Analysis

- ▶ **Thematic analysis** was used to analyze the narrative data, the meaning context was used as the unit of analysis for coding and description.
- ▶ The data were not coded sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, but rather coded for meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- ▶ Each transcribed interview was read entirely and the researcher was immersed in the data to get a sense of the whole text and dataset.
- ▶ NVIVO 11 software was used for the qualitative data management and analysis.

Northern and Southern Context

Women Food Insecurity, Poverty and Homelessness

Food and Financial Insecurity

Motherhood

Coping

Health Perception

Food Availability, Accessibility and Quality

Food Prices, Income and House Rental

Feed My Kids First

Children Raising Responsibilities

Community Resources and Services

Hunger Satisfaction Strategies

Physical Health

Mental Health

Data dissemination plan

- ▶ The final report will be posted on the PHM website at www.lul.ca/homeless.
- ▶ Copies will also be made available through the community at partnering agencies, including service providers/stakeholders involved with the project.
- ▶ Findings will be disseminated in peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless* and will be presented in conferences like the Northern Health Research Conference and Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) conference and CAEH conference.
- ▶ The findings will be utilized to write grant applications for a long-term research program in the domains of poverty, food insecurity and homelessness for other urban, rural and remote communities in northern and southern Ontario.

Implications/anticipated benefits

- ▶ **Women are given opportunity to participate in research which is a positive experience for them when the research is conducted in such a way that creates an atmosphere in which the participants feel comfortable, respected and empowered.**
- ▶ **Views expressed by the participants will enable service providers and community members to identify gaps in resources and devise locally grounded long-term solutions to address food insecurity faced by poor and /or homeless women.**
- ▶ **The findings of the study will generate greater knowledge and understanding about the nature and extent of food insecurity experienced by homeless and near homeless individuals and some personal strategies utilized to cope with the basic need for food and survival in northern and southern Ontario.**

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