Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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Reimagining Food Heritage:
Exploring and Defining Foodways and Sustainable Food Practices in St. Louis

Date: June 27th, 2022
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
The purpose of this co-authored, mixed methods descriptive research study was to examine how the intersection of foodways and sustainable food practices helps define the food heritages of St. Louis area residents. While prior research examines these concepts separately, and even shows connections with other factors such as health and discrimination, none look at all of these concepts together—a gap this research fills. To that end, this dissertation describes the intersection of cultural foodways and connection to sustainability in seeking a definition of food heritage and a path towards sustainable food heritage for St. Louis residents. Purposeful sampling using the Food Heritage and Sustainability Survey, completed by 621 St. Louis area residents, and interviews from 14 community leaders provided the dataset for this study. Survey results were analyzed using both univariate and multivariate statistical tests and interview transcripts were interpreted using thematic analysis. The quantitative results showed that an egoistic value orientation played a major role in how food heritage is defined. The qualitative results produced three major themes: Foodscapes and foodways are founded upon inequity, food is about human connection, and sustainable food practices help people reimagine their food heritage. When taken together, the quantitative and qualitative results both showed that actions surrounding sustainable food practices and awareness of foodways, including food injustices, were major contributors to St. Louis residents’ definition of food heritage. However, the qualitative and quantitative results differed in their conclusions of whether foodways influenced food heritage or vice versa. These results provide substantial material for future research, including a further examination into the connection between an egoistic value orientation and food heritage, and using heritage-aligned interventions to increase sustainable food practices.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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