

¡Cómo produce la tierra!

A Documentary on Life, Land, Family and Food Among
Mexican-American Community Gardeners

by

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For additional information about The Gardens Project and the community gardens across Mendocino and Lake counties, please visit their website at gardensproject.org or like their page on Facebook at facebook.com/gardensproject.

Abstract

This thesis uses original research on Mexican-American involvement in community gardens in Ukiah, CA to produce a video documentary covering migration histories, connections between life and land, and the roles of family and food among Mexican-American gardeners. It aims to achieve comprehensive findings by obtaining data from a collection of community gardens in Ukiah, CA, including participants that reflect the heterogeneity of the Mexican-American population. In doing so the research expects to enhance understandings of the Mexican American experience through oral histories and meaningful visuals, create a discursive product to encourage thought-provoking dialogue, and transmit the principles of The Gardens Project, which express the importance of a sustainable relationship between communities and food. This research utilizes an applied visual anthropology of food that takes a collaborative approach in representing the experiences of Mexican-American gardeners and transmitting this portrayal to a greater audience that extends not only beyond academia, but also between Spanish and English speakers. Collaboration among interlocutors is also emphasized in order to both honestly represent the experience and perspectives of the Mexican-American gardeners as well as benefit their pursuit in improving and expanding their community-food network.

Introduction

Interning with The Gardens Project

On a May evening in 2014 I arrived in Ukiah, California for my very first time. I had just driven over six hundred miles from Great Basin National Park, NV and was impressed that I accomplished the feat of being on the road for nearly thirteen hours by myself. More importantly though, I could not believe that I was about to begin an internship experience

that would apply many of my recent studies in anthropology. Despite my initial anxious feelings about the fate of the summer, I was still excited to take the opportunity to engage in an applied and collaborative anthropology. I wondered how I might contribute to the garden communities that I would be working with and what I may learn from these experiences.

From the latter half of May through the first week in August I worked with The Gardens Project. This program, an agency a part of the non-profit North Coast Opportunities, pursues to establish community-supported gardening systems via the support of a community gardener network and by emphasizing a community ownership model (The Gardens Project 2015). By providing resources such as leadership and asset management training, educational workshops, and physical resources such as land, gardening beds, and tools for example, The Gardens Project seeks to minimize their presence and encourage self-sufficiency among communities. The Gardens Project establishes gardens at numerous locations, including schools and senior living centers, however takes a more specific approach in attending to low-income areas and dissolving the margins that keep these populations in disenfranchised positions. The result of this is quite fascinating. Communities where gardens have been established have transformed desolate spaces, seen less crime, experienced greater social activity between members, been nourished by the harvests, and most importantly been empowered by what they now own.

While working with The Gardens Project during the summer of 2014 my responsibilities included capturing some of these effects. I had initially planned to conduct my thesis research at this time, but I had not expected the pressure of both serving as an intern and researcher. Switching between these two identities had made me question my responsibilities and to what or *who* I owed priority. Nonetheless, I accomplished many goals

by relying on anthropological principles such as taking an active role in the work being conducted in the gardens and by embracing a genuine curiosity about the perspectives and experiences of the gardeners. My thesis research would have to wait for the time being, but by utilizing my time to produce videos on symbiotic community partnerships, educational workshops, the establishment of two new gardens, and insightful interviews I was able to gain a foundation that allowed for a more fulfilling fieldwork experience over the following summer.

Expanding the Internship Experience

Following the internship I experienced a challenging transition from the position of the intern to the fulltime student. The summer had gone by so fast and I could not help but imagine what I could be doing if I were still in Ukiah. I kid you not I almost did not pursue the thesis after the internship. I had enjoyed my work so much that I wished to lessen my school responsibilities for the sake of pursuing such work. This I thought would be how I would best engage my degree.

I had a change of heart however when I reminded myself of the relationships I had formed and the beauty of The Gardens Project's mission. I still felt compelled to take a participatory role in establishing localized food systems as well as continue working on my medium of videography, however I realized I could not only accomplish this goal, but also challenge myself by returning to Ukiah to conduct follow up research.

I began thinking about how I may reenter the field, to which three questions/conditions aided my planning. My primary question upon returning to Appalachian State was what had I missed? Sure, I spent three months in Ukiah's community gardens, however, this was only my initial entry and I could not have anticipated everything.

Secondly, I considered the future classes I would take to fulfill my degree in cultural anthropology and my minor in Spanish and how these may be best engaged in my future fieldwork. Lastly, I reconsidered The Gardens Project mission and how I could apply my training in anthropology and film to bring greater attention to their mission and the disenfranchised communities served by the gardens.

To address these matters I decided on investigating the experiences of the Mexican-American gardener population. I was particular interested in discovering the messages, values, and aspirations that these gardeners embraced in relation to their involvement in the community gardens. I would furthermore investigate relevant topics of migration, land, and family to capture richer, more holistic responses, in which would return to the subject of food. To achieve this I would engage an applied visual anthropology of food to 1) create a discursive product to magnify the uniqueness and significance of Mexican-American participation, 2) provide an appealing object for The Gardens Project to utilize for their benefit, and 3) gain experience in practicing a creative branch of anthropology that would work beyond academic ends.

Significance of Project

The significance of this research is rooted in two ongoing and evident phenomena in the United States. The first is an increasing Latino population, namely of Mexican origin. This is a result of continuous migrations, particularly from Mexico, and the growth of migrant families who are establishing new roots in the United States (Buriel 2012). The second is an emerging collective conscious of the perils of the United States' conventional food system (Brent et al. 2015). Since the introduction of scientific and technological innovations, such as inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, seed engineering and patenting, as well

as a series of political and social processes that have prompted a corporatization and vertical organization of food (Grey 2000), a problematic relationship, or lack thereof, between producers and consumers in a globalizing capitalist system (Gutham 2002, 2008), a disregard for safe conditions and sanitary production (Gilman 2009), and the intensive consumption of external inputs (Gliessman 2007:30-31), to name just a few, the United States' agriculture system has gone down a path of questionable integrity and viability.

At the crossroads between this current agriculture situation and the growing numbers of people of Mexican origin there is an opportunity to address some of the most urgent problems that American society faces. How will we begin to not only reimagine our food systems, but also start practicing them? Who will be the potential sources of knowledge and the able hands to exhibit what a new future of food will look like? Additionally, how will we shift our perceptions of the Other, a position that Mexican-Americans and other subaltern ethnicities occupy, in order to embrace racial and cultural differences?

I argue that Mexican immigrants and their families, who more often than not have an intimate relationship with *la tierra* and its potential to produce, are significant sources for redefining the contemporary agriculture system. Despite this potential however, we cannot fail to recognize that these people often find themselves in a restrained position where they may be occupied performing numerous national or transnational migrations, fulfilling obligations to family, or working for extended periods of time. In addition to these occurrences, the Mexican-American population faces a marginalized position sustained by racist or xenophobic sentiments and additionally a subordinate socio-politico standing brought on by the history of exploitive practices in undocumented labor.

With this in mind it is important to recognize how these factors tie into contributions from Michel Foucault. Foucault allows us to better understand these conditions with his definition of power. According to his thought, power is present, or rather constructed, everywhere in our world, not by mere force or suppression of others by an authority, but by discourses and their strategies supported by a multiplicity of interrelated social conditions (Foucault 1978:92-93). By utilizing this definition we can therefore comprehend the significance between power relations that impact the Mexican-American population and how these relationships take form and extend via discourse. Thus by creating a film as the primary product of this thesis an attempt is being made to enter discourses that may have impacts on the Mexican-American population as well as stimulate conversation among the communities themselves that were engaged in this project.

Lastly, it is intended that this research contribute to a deeper understanding of methodology and practice within anthropology, particularly in respect to applied and collaborative endeavors. From the beginning I made it explicit to stray away from my typical encounter with anthropology, be it ethnographic texts or anthropological theory. Since then this project has continued on more or less as an experiment, one in which may reveal new techniques to be utilized by the anthropologist. It is thus a hope that this work can be used as an example as to how we may explore different mediums for transmitting works from anthropology as well as co-producing research that have application outside of academia.

Methods of Research

Methods of this research were grounded in traditional practices such as participant observation and interviewing. These foundational methods were also complimented and enhanced with the inclusion of emerging trends in collaborative and visual ethnography. The

latter methods were additionally assistive in constructing the sample, which relied on previous relations made through collaborative work, and the selection of research sites borrowed greatly from understandings formed by previous observation and conversations across Ukiah's community garden network. More detailed explanations of these components follow.

Research Sites

This research was conducted across four community gardens in Ukiah, CA. They include the gardens at State Street, Village Circle, Las Peras, and Thunderbird Apartments. Multiple research sites were selected for this project in order to seek diverse findings as well as eliminate possible bias. To clarify, I classify this project as multi-sited because, although it is based solely in one city, it collects data from a collection of gardens that differ in size, demographics, location, etc. This slightly differs from the multi-sited research that George Marcus discusses, which takes a postmodern approach to unveil extensive and complex relationships across local and global perspectives and compare and contrast heterogeneously situated subjects in context of greater world systems (1995:95-96). This research does not deliberately focus on this grander relationship between subjects and a world system; it nonetheless could achieve this goal if it were to collect additional data from gardeners in Mexico and perhaps study food pathways across borders and/or the globalization of food systems. However, for the purposes of this research and the relatively minimal time and resources allotted, this research instead aimed to find interesting findings from a diverse selection of community gardens in order to produce an insightful, creative, and honest portrayal of the Mexican-American gardening population.

Because many of the community gardens have been implemented to serve particular populations (i.e. a low-income apartment complex, senior living center, neighbors of a city park, etc.) a single site research design would likely be inadequate for this project. Such a research endeavor however is still significant, however, it would only speak to the particularities of that certain garden and its members. Thus for my purposes of acquiring a collective, yet heterogeneous, representation of Mexican-American experiences it was decided that a multi-sited research project would be conducted.

Sampling

Sampling for this research was aimed at capturing heterogeneity, whether this was manifested by generation (i.e. Mexico-born, U.S.-born), age, gender, gardening experience, or any other defining and relevant characteristic. More specifically this research was designed to collect a sample that paid close attention to differences in both gender and generation/nation of origin. Upon starting field research however it was quickly discovered that investigating these themes of gender and generation would be less feasible than originally conceived.

To start, finding a balance between male and female participants was difficult due to the dominating male presence among Mexican-American gardeners. Upon recognizing the gendered space of the garden I deliberately sought to incorporate more female voices into the project. Although this effort was made it was nonetheless difficult to find women who were willing to talk. Women accompanying their husbands in the gardens, for example, often volunteered their spouse to answer questions. Others felt shy and wished not to participate. However, those women with whom I was able to have extended conversation were very excited and passionate about what they wished to share. For follow-up or other future

research I would emphasize putting more effort into capturing female voices. A feminist geography may be beneficial for this endeavor because it surpasses the juxtaposition of difference across the male-female binary and delves deeper into difference found within these gender identities (McDowell 1997:396). This I believe will assist in highlighting greater heterogeneity within gender categories.

Designing the sample to explore generational differences was also an obstacle faced at the beginning of this project. Originally I had wanted to capture voices from people born in Mexico and who had migrated to the United States as well as those who had been born in the United States by these migrants. Upon assembling the sample however, it was discovered that a grand majority of Mexican-American gardeners were in fact born in Mexico. With this in mind, acquiring a sample of participants of varying generations was not deliberately pursued. Instead a greater emphasis was placed on investigating the role of family. In doing so I was able to ask participants to comment on older generations (i.e. their parents and/or grandparents) as well as younger generations (i.e. their children and/or grandchildren). This is significant because, although my sample did not directly reflect a diverse set of generations, the responses I received were nevertheless able to speak to these topics of acculturation and the retention of cultural aspects.

Research Methods

Research methods for this thesis borrowed from classic and contemporary currents in anthropology. The most fundamental of these methods included the cornerstones of interviewing and participant observation. Complimentary methods, which I will discuss later, were inspired by training in postmodern anthropology and concentrations in collaborative,

applied, and visual approaches. It is necessary to now elaborate how these foundational and contemporary practices combined to create productive methods.

The method of interviewing was practiced by deemphasizing potentially intimidating factors (i.e. the camera and microphone and of course the placement of the interviewee in front of this equipment) and treating the process as a casual conversation. Interviews were also conducted inside the community gardens because they were a shared, neutral space where participants could both feel comfortable and articulate their ideas better through the identification of relevant objects (ex. a plant or irrigation system) or demonstration of activities (ex. harvesting, pest management, land preparation).

Participant observation was primarily practiced by visiting gardens and striking up conversation. Although my Spanish-speaking abilities were not as refined as the native speaker, I was still able to engage in everyday gardening practices by demonstrating an earnest attempt to connect with this group of people. I will argue that this was not as much of a limitation as many would think, for putting forth an effort to speak a foreign language was something these gardeners were able to resonate with, having come to the United States and establishing a basic foundation in English. Many gardeners were thus excited to talk with me and would encourage me to keep developing my comprehension skills.

Participant observation was furthermore able to serve the needs of my other methods. By visiting the gardens with my camera in my free time, I was able to observe and document activities simultaneously. This was a beneficial practice that allowed me to capture candid moments in the gardens as well as assemble an abundant collection of b-roll footage. From this example we can see how classical and evolving trends in methodologies can influence and enhance another.

Videography as an Anthropological Method

As a field of critical, productive inquiry anthropology has perfect reason to find itself applied to sectors not necessarily retained within academia. It can thus be argued that anthropology and ethnographic research can be significant contributors to constructing an *avant-garde* discourse throughout media. In order to understand how anthropology can play an important role in media apart from the traditional role in academic text we must first comprehend the discursive processes within which the popular media operates.

Arjun Appadurai (1990) aids our understanding of information systems and the transmission of cultural discourse through his concept of *mediascapes*. According to Appadurai mediascapes are thought as both the dispersal of information through digital (television, websites, radio) and analog (newspaper, books, signs) mediums as well as the narratives and images that occupy them (1990:298-299). He elaborates by stating that this “scape” occupies a transmission of projected realities from media to audience. In such a transfer of information, the audience constructs imaginaries based on what visuals and messages are being articulated (Appadurai 1990:299). This also echoes Foucault’s notion of truth effects, which describe the production and reification of social truths made by the hegemonic narratives that dominate the politics of discourse (1997:196-197).

Sarah Pink (2006) builds off these insights from Appadurai by describing the characteristics of an *applied visual anthropology*. Pink characterizes applied visual anthropology as an application of visual anthropology’s ability to both study and produce culturally significant visuals to issues that exist particularly outside academic objectives (2006:87). This definition appears to be minimal and general, however, Pink assures us that applied visual anthropologies come in heterogeneous forms based upon their researchers and

methods, subjects, problems being addressed, and political level or institutional sphere in which they are being applied (2006:87)

Pink additionally juxtaposes the visual approach with the merits of anthropological writing, which she states is better suited to engage with theoretical inquiries (2006:64). It is significant to note that anthropological writing plays a key role in complimenting the objectives of an applied visual anthropology. Without a written component to accompany the visual, the targeted audience will lack much-needed cultural, political, and historical contexts. Pink warns that because applied visual anthropology often has the goal to accurately represent its subjects' culture and experience to another group, it can fall victim to misinterpretations by the audience when a written component is missing from the final product (2006:88).

By choosing videography as an anthropological method I sought to amplify the voices and present the experiences of the Mexican-American population. Because many of these peoples face language barriers and occupy low-income areas that are situated in marginal or invisible spaces, finding the platform to disperse their thoughts, feelings, desires, and stories is much more difficult. Recognizing the potential of an applied visual anthropology's ability to provide a venue for such expression, I grasped the opportunity to continue my previous work with The Gardens Project by collaborating with Mexican-American gardeners and create an appealing, meaningful discursive product, capable of bring greater attention and conversation towards not only the Mexican-American experience in the United States, but additionally how this phenomena converges with the situation of United States' current conventional agriculture system (Pink 2011:450-451). With this noted it is appropriate to

recognize the significance of situating such an application of visual anthropology alongside the notion of collaboration.

Collaboration

An objective in designing and producing this thesis was to work in the field of *collaborative ethnography* (Lassiter 2005). To be clear, ethnography is inherently collaborative; when conducting research the ethnographer has a commitment to connect with others in an honest and engaging manner. Without these engagements ethnography will fall short of producing meaning and creating an engaging discourse for audiences both within and outside of academia.

Luke Eric Lassiter (2005) provides researchers a guide to understand the qualities and merits of a collaborative project. To do so Lassiter goes into detail about what features distinguish a *deliberately* collaborative ethnography from the processes of a classical approach to ethnography. According to Lassiter, one way to purposefully construct a collaborative ethnography is to consider interlocutors not merely as informants, but rather as *co-intellectuals* (2005:13). In doing so, the primary researcher avoids treating interlocutors as sources of knowledge only to be extracted for the purposes of the project. Accordingly, this allows the researcher to invite co-interpretations *and* the co-production of texts/media. We may also understand this process as an *elimination of the expert*, where the vertical structure of authority in the field research is dismantled and replaced with horizontality.

Upon arriving in Ukiah to conduct my research I had the great fortune of meeting Josefina Dueñas Delgado. We first met at the State Street Community Garden where she and her mother share a plot. After discussing our shared interest in the role of community gardens and media (Josefina is both the editor of Ukiah's bilingual newspaper, *Dos Mundos*, and a

volunteer at the local radio station, KMEC) we came to the realization that we could benefit greatly from one another. She would assist me with conducting interviews and translation, whereas I would provide photographs for the newspaper and offer an opportunity for her to gain experience in research and transcribing.

Collaborating with Josefina meant many things for the integrity of this research project. Firstly, having a Mexican-American community gardener by my side contributed greatly to the interpretations of the interviewees' responses. I, the primary investigator, no longer had sole authority over interpretation, rather the two of us as team engaged in listening to the recorded interviews and exchanged insights. This co-interpretation of the commentaries was thus more accurate than I could have achieved on my own (Lassiter 2005:137). With Josefina's background as a *mexicana*, an immigrant, a gardener, and an activist, greater light was shed on the experiences of the Mexican-American gardeners.

Secondly, my relationship with Josefina has allowed for a greater possibility of future research and/or other modes for action. Collaborative projects such as this benefit greatly from the relationships that arise from the horizontal field of research. By collaborating with Josefina I now have a strong relationship with both an informant and researcher based in the field; more importantly though, I have a deeper emotional connection to her and her community's welfare. It is hard to say what these future research opportunities may or may not look like, considering that the public viewing of the film has not yet taken place in Ukiah. However, I can assert that whatever political or civic action this film may produce, there will be a great potential to follow up in a meaningful and engaging manner.

Originally the collaborative component was made as a political choice. I wanted it to be clear to my informants that as the man with the camera, taking notes, and asking questions

I was not to be seen as someone with more authority. I wanted to depoliticize the process of acquiring data by deemphasizing my role and contributions. This I hoped would encourage the fieldwork to shift horizontally, allowing volunteers to openly provide their input and interpretation. Further into the fieldwork however, I learned to appreciate the practice of collaboration as an emotional choice. By choosing to bring in an informant to the very core of the project, who in my case was Josefina, I was able to delve deeper into my work and discover a more intimate connection to both the research and those directly influencing it.

Refrains in Mexican-American Gardener Commentary

During conversations with the participants a handful of refrains emerged; these reoccurring themes included commentary on migration, family, land, and food. To clarify, I believe it is best to examine these topics by viewing the film in addition to this text. I encourage this because, whereas the text provides a guide to these themes, the film allows the audience to hear specific cases or stories that support and bring to life these refrains.

Migration

Migration was a topic that was discussed in every interview. Because each interviewee was born in Mexico it would have been careless to not discuss this transition from one country to another and not to mention contradictory to the intentions of researching *Mexican-Americans*. Thus by investigating the relevance of this transnational migration I would be better suited to look into the perspectives that were brought forth during conversation.

When discussing migration, interviewees would often comment on the search for a better life. This explanation was also never far from the significance of supporting one's

family, which was commonly cited as a reason for coming to the United States. In her study of morality and identity among Mexican immigrants, Leslie Reese (2001) describes for us this *dual frame of reference* that immigrants have, which juxtaposes life in Mexico with their new roots established in the United States. According to her research, Mexican migrants commonly noted the economic opportunity found in the United States as something that has improved their quality of life in comparison to the economic hardship found in Mexico (Reese 2001:456). However, in addition to this, her sample as well as my own have expressed a reverence for the cultural values that were instilled in them while living in their native country. For example, I will reiterate that participants often commented on the role of family and more specifically the process of providing the emotional and financial needs necessary for wellbeing. This, along with other values relating to land, work, food and such, show how morals and ideology accompany the physical migration to the United States.

Family

When talking with the gardeners it was impossible to ignore the significance of family. Topics surrounding the family, such as the importance of passing down cultural values and practices and the need to financially and emotionally support one another were abundant in each interview. Because I talked to Mexican-Americans who all had children a very common theme among responses was the transmission of cultural values to their offspring. Knight et al. (2011) have studied this transmission by attending to four chief factors: 1) nativity, 2) Mexican-American values, 3) ethnic socialization, and 4) ethnic identity. After administering and analyzing surveys and interviews, the group of researchers concluded that the nativity, or place of birth, of both mothers and fathers is directly correlated to the retention of Mexican values (2011:921). This finding is consistent with my

research considering that all my interlocutors were born in Mexico and all took an interest in sharing with their children and grandchildren stories, lessons, and morals from their life living in Mexico.

Furthermore, such values are commonly transmitted to children through an embodied education. This notion is clear in the example of teaching children lessons in the garden. To elaborate on the concept of embodiment, Thomas Csordas reminds us that embodiment refers to both “attending ‘with’ and attending ‘to’ the body” (1993:138). With this in mind, it is important to observe that children are taught principles of working the land both through the application of their bodies and by learning the significance of growing healthy, clean food to nourish the nutritional needs of the body. Thus, the passing of cultural values is an engaging experience where children and parents can bond together and transmit knowledge through demonstration and action.

Land

Other values were often connected with the land, *la tierra*, and would highlight the benefits produced from the labor and relationship with the earth. Together these values reveal a unique set of relationships, whether between family members, one human to another, or people and nature. To start, the interviewees, who all experienced agricultural labor in their childhood, frequently transmitted values gained from *el campo* to their children. Notably this included the necessary strength and mindset to do physical labor and, more importantly, the significance of supporting family members through these efforts. Reese’s research on Mexican-American morality and identity likewise reveals this and shows that these values are expressed due to the tight knit relationships among kin and land that characterize the agrarian lifeway (2001:463).

In addition to this, education was also strongly emphasized as a benefit of connecting with the land. In a majority of the interviews, comments were made on the knowledge gained by working the land. To clarify, this was not limited strictly to knowledge *of* the land, but rather an understanding of relationships found in nature as well as relationships that arose from a social, economic, or political connection to the land. For example, a common explanation for the significance of knowing the land and how to reap its benefits was to pass this knowledge on to future generations. The relationship between land and people therefore has a necessity for continuity. I believe this can be explained by the value of provisioning a better future than one's own that is quite common among Mexican immigrants, who come to the U.S. to usher a new beginning for not only themselves, but also their families. Through an education of taking care of the land, one is consequently taking care of themselves, their family, and their collective futures.

Food

Gardeners frequently commented on the importance of traditional Mexican crops (corn, tomatoes, squash, beans, tomatillos, chiles, and nopales) as well as organic growing methods to produce healthy, flavorful foods. Although these gardeners have similar crops across their gardens, the species of plant and even the origin of the seed varied greatly. For example, many gardeners mentioned the importance of planting seeds shared by relatives still living in Mexico. This material and symbolic exchange manifests an interesting emotional connection between the gardener and their roots. When asked what these seeds and plants mean, many responded that it reminded them of their parents' or grandparents' crops when they were a child and that they wished to pursue the same for their own family. In a study on food acculturation among Mexican-Americans Batis et al. (2011) shows that Mexican-

Americans born in Mexico retain more aspects of the traditional Mexican diet. Because all of my participants were indeed born in Mexico it was no surprise that these crops held such significance in their lives today.

In addition, Mexican-American gardeners were strong advocates of producing food via organic growing practices. Many expressed this promotion of organic foods as a product of their experience around agriculture/gardens that did not utilize harmful external inputs. Additionally Mexican-American gardeners would favor organic growing because it would produce better tasting food. From this we can see an important value in the gardens. It is true that many of the participants mentioned that their harvests decreased their dependency on supermarket goods, however, aside from this economic value of the garden, gardeners frequently mentioned that they gained more from the flavor of their foods, something that cannot usually be achieved from shopping at the supermarket. This shows how growing methods in the garden can have roots in one's history as well as something perhaps phenomenological, such as taste.

Future Plans

Applied collaborative projects including this thesis are designed to accommodate future fieldwork opportunities (Lassiter 2005:152-153). For this reason I hope to be able to return to Ukiah in order to be present for the showing of this film. This is important as the researcher because it will me to follow any discourse that emerges in the wake of the showing. Without capturing these immediate reverberations it is much more difficult to assess the prospects of future action.

As I write this thesis I am discussing with The Gardens Project how we may present this film. Ideas that have been proposed include showings at the citywide community garden

tour taking place in August 2015 as well as a presentation at the Mendocino Environmental Center. Regardless of whichever idea we finalize, bringing this film to public audiences has always been a priority. This includes presenting it to the gardeners themselves, potential contributors to The Gardens Project, city officials, and other citizens looking to achieve something similar to name a few. In doing so I hope this project brings more attention to The Gardens Project's mission as well as the significance and uniqueness of Mexican-American involvement in community gardens.

Conclusion

I would like to use my conclusion to reflect on the entirety of this process. This experience started as an internship (might I add *backup* internship) just over a year ago during a time when I was truly starting to grasp the praxis and theory of cultural anthropology. Since then I have further engaged in this theory as well as what it means to practice anthropology. In my first summer in Ukiah I discovered that fieldwork was much messier than I had imagined and that things as seemingly simple as the title of "researcher" would have an influence on fieldwork. The following summer I had a taste of conducting an extensive research project as well as accommodating co-research and co-production into anthropological work.

After these two summers I can assert that I have taken with me a deeper understanding of practicing anthropology, namely in respect to applied and collaborative approaches. From them I have learned that anthropology is just beyond our everyday relationships with people. With a foundation of kindness and integrity one is best positioning themselves to pursue anthropological insights.

This thesis, to me, was not to be viewed as the pinnacle of my undergraduate study as some of my peers might think. Instead I treated this process as my first step into my future as a student of anthropology. From here I will, of course, continue to employ what I have learned in the department of anthropology. However, in addition to this, I will seek to apply it at the everyday level, making anthropology not so much an academic discipline, but rather a beneficial way to engage and be active in our world.

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