

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract approved:

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For over 25 years organized groups of low-income families in Oregon have been gathering food that would otherwise go to waste and distributing this food among organization members. The purpose of this research study is to explore the potential for these organizations (gleaning groups) to contribute not only to food distribution, but also to the reduction of poverty through the development of human capital (acquiring knowledge and skills) and social capital (building relationships of trust and support) among participants in these organizations. Data was collected through participant observation at a regional food distribution agency and seven gleaning group sites, as well as interviews with 13 key informants working with gleaning organizations, and 19 volunteer members of gleaning organizations. The results of this study indicate that gleaning groups are contributing to the development of human and social capital by providing individuals with opportunities such as working closely with other gleaners, carrying out the administrative tasks of a non-profit organization and distributing food to shut-in or disabled "adoptee" members of these groups. In addition, this study shows that there are significant hindrances to human and social capital development within gleaning organizations including lack of control over the amount of food groups receive through the national food-banking network, deficiencies in volunteer participation and an emphasis on efficiency in carrying out group tasks. The author suggests incorporating social and human capital development into the stated purposes of gleaning organizations in an effort to

stated purposes of gleaning organizations in an effort to intentionally remove barriers to, as well as encourage further investments in these forms of capital.

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Negotiating Purpose:
Oregon's Gleaning Organizations and Their Roles
In Relieving Hunger *and* Poverty

by
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Kimberly T. Drage Author

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Negotiating Purpose: Oregon's Gleaning Organizations and Their Roles in Relieving Hunger *and* Poverty

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary age is not short of terrible and nasty happenings, but the persistence of extensive hunger in a world of unprecedented prosperity is surely one of the worst. [Amartya Sen, 1999:204]

Hunger is a persistent problem throughout the world. Even America, one of the most prosperous nations in the world, has yet to eliminate hunger within its bounds. A survey conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service in 2000, showed that within a one year period, 10.5% of American households (11 million) experienced some degree of food insecurity, that is, "these households were uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the basic needs of their members because they had insufficient money or other resources" (Nord et al. 2002: iii). Of these households, 3.3 million had at least one member of their household who experienced outright hunger (Nord et al. 2002: iii) "the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food" or "the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food" (Nord, Jemison and Bickel 1999:2). This situation is especially critical in Oregon. Research conducted by the USDA shows Oregon among the top ten states in terms of food insecurity, and in terms of outright hunger, Oregon was shown to have the highest prevalence by far (Sullivan and Choi 2002).

Background

Many food relief strategies have been employed in order to deal with the persistent need of so many to access adequate food resources. One of these strategies is gleaning. The USDA defines gleaning as the following: "when quality leftover food is collected to feed the poor and hungry" (U.S.

Department of Agriculture 1997). Historically, this concept was actuated through Levitical law, which states, "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap the very edges of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and alien" (Leviticus 19:9). In this way, needy individuals were allowed access to excess food within their communities. Today this same idea is being put to work through gleaning groups. Concerned community members and non-profit organizations have worked to establish relationships with food growers, processors, and businesses to access food that would otherwise go to waste and distribute it to people who need supplemental food resources. In addition, gleaning benefits not only the people who receive excess food, but donating organizations as well. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "the nation spends an estimated \$1 billion a year to dispose of excess food." Some of these costs can be diverted through participation in food recovery programs such as gleaning (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2002).

According to professionals associated with Oregon Food Bank, Oregon is a leader in the nation in its utilization of gleaning as an avenue for charitable food distribution. In addition, Oregon is unique in that most gleaners are the low-income individuals who actually receive the benefits of their harvests. Unlike their historical counterparts who accessed fields on an individual basis, today's gleaners in Oregon have organized into what is termed gleaning groups. There are approximately 35 of these groups in the state, involving more than 10,000 low-income households (Oregon Food Bank 2003). These organized groups of volunteers gather food not only from farmers' fields, but from various additional sources including grocery stores, neighborhood yards, and large-scale food production and processing corporations. The majority of gleaning groups in Oregon also receive food through America's Second Harvest. Formally established in 1979, America's

Second Harvest is currently the largest charitable food distribution network in the United States (America's Second Harvest 2003). In Oregon, gleaning groups are typically registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations run by a coordinator and volunteer officers (co-coordinator, treasurer, secretary, etc.) who are all qualified low-income members. As registered 501(c)(3) organizations, these groups also have boards of directors, many of whom are also gleaning members. Members of gleaning groups work together to collect food from various sources and then redistribute what has been collected among their group's membership.

The Setting

I first became familiar with gleaning through Jansen Food Bank, an organization located in Carver, Oregon, which supplies food to several gleaning groups. As mentioned earlier, most of the gleaning groups in Oregon receive food through America's Second Harvest, the national food-banking network. Gleaning groups are qualified to receive this food after entering into a contractual relationship with a state or regional agency connected to America's Second Harvest. In Oregon, this might include the Oregon Food Bank or other smaller agencies called "Regional Coordinating Agencies" or RCAs. Regional coordinating agencies serve as distribution points for numerous smaller agencies, including food pantries and soup kitchens, which provide food directly to needy individuals within a community. Jansen Food Bank is one of these regional coordinating agencies.

Jansen Food Bank is one of the most active RCAs in Oregon in terms of its involvement with gleaning. I entered Jansen Food Bank looking for a chance to learn more about gleaners from an anthropological perspective. Over the course of the following five months, I spent time working with and interviewing professionals and gleaners associated with Jansen Food Bank, interacted with leaders from every gleaning organization associated with

Jansen Food Bank, and visited seven gleaning group distribution sites. During these site visits, I conducted participant observation, held in-depth interviews with group leaders, and had brief interviews with gleaning members from these groups. In addition, early in my research I discovered that my family met the income requirements necessary to join a gleaning group, so my husband and I decided to become gleaners. This experience enabled me to gain an insider's perspective of participation in a gleaning organization.

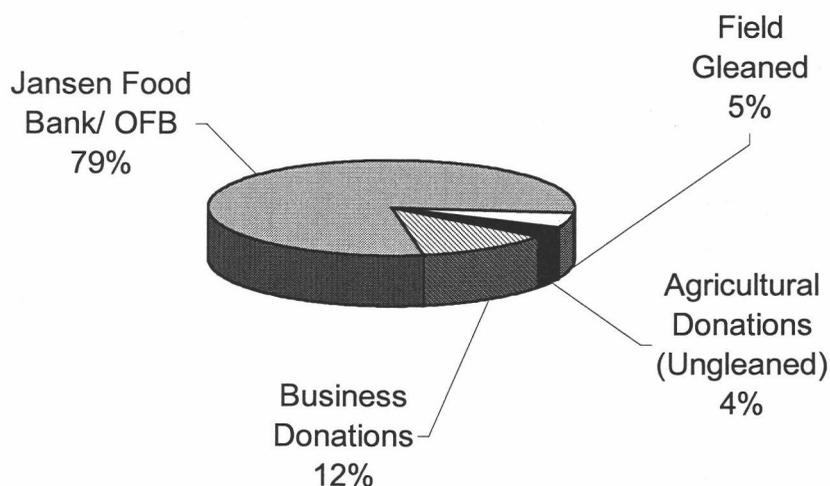
Research Question

The formation of my research question was the result of a journey in ethnography. Since hunger and food insecurity are such pressing issues in our nation and especially in Oregon, my original research intent was to identify the success-strengthening and success-weakening characteristics of gleaning organizations. I hoped to provide recommendations that might improve the operations of existing gleaning groups, and in turn, benefit households in need of food. Since gleaning is obviously about food, I defined "success" in terms of food distribution. As my original research design reads, "For the purposes of this study, successful gleaning groups are those that are able to effectively provide food to members of the community who need it. Success will be measured by calculating poundages per member of the organization and poundages per member of the community whose income is below the poverty level, as well as self-measures and perceptions as reported by group members themselves." At the time, "success" in gleaning seemed fairly straightforward.

As I spent more time with gleaning organizations, however, I began to discover that gleaners themselves seemed to be asking more fundamental questions: What is the purpose of gleaning groups? What is the role of gleaning in increasing community food security? No one in these groups ever

articulated these questions verbally; rather group leaders and members lived out these questions daily. For instance, every time gleaning was described for me, in pamphlets or by gleaners, there was an emphasis on working together and going into farmers' fields to gather food. In fact, a common slogan among gleaners that I saw on bumper stickers, posters, and in written materials read: "Gleaners pick up where farmers leave off." With this in mind, it came as quite a surprise to discover that from July 2000 to June 2001 among gleaning groups associated with Jansen Food Bank, gleaning groups gathered on average only five percent of their food from the fields (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Graph of Average Food Source Distribution among Gleaning Groups Associated with Jansen Food Bank (July 2001-June 2002)



One group gathered only 80 pounds of food from field gleaning, less than one percent of their annual food intake. A leader of one of the groups echoed this concern at a gleaning leader meeting: "We're losing our roots," she said.

Similarly, it was surprising to find that a problem consistently mentioned at coordinator's meetings and at group sites was lack of volunteer participation. Group leaders from many groups expressed frustration that the majority of work was left to them. A fundraising consultant who was assisting the gleaners expressed surprise when he discovered this. "I thought that was their identity, low-income people working together to provide food for themselves and others."

Another example of gleaners' struggle with identity was their lack of clarity when it came to distinguishing gleaners from food pantries. Food pantries are emergency food distribution centers, usually run by a small number of middle class volunteers. For the purposes of this study, the term "food pantry" is used to describe agencies that provide food directly to individuals in the community, while the term "food bank" refers to larger organizations that distribute food only to other agencies. Low-income families are able to access food from food pantries with no commitment or participation. In addition, most of the food distributed by food pantries in Oregon comes through the national food-banking network.

In contrast, gleaners in Oregon, are run by the low-income people who receive food distributed through their organization. This differs from other states where middle-class volunteers run the majority of gleaners programs and work to gather produce from the fields, which is then distributed to other charitable food agencies. In Oregon, gleaners are membership organizations, which commonly require membership obligations such as a volunteer commitment or the payment of dues. However, as gleaners experience an increasing reliance on food through the national food-banking network, decreasing field harvests and a lack of volunteer participation, the characteristics that distinguish gleaners organizations from food pantries are becoming increasingly blurred. In fact, in 2001, there was a vote among gleaners leaders working with Jansen Food

Bank as to whether or not they wanted to remain gleaning groups or to officially become food pantries. The group leaders unanimously voted to remain gleaning groups.

The vote of gleaning leadership to remain gleaning groups and not become food pantries reveals two important things. One, there is currently a question of identity and purpose among gleaning groups and two, there is something that distinguishes these groups from food pantries, which serve essentially the same “function” (i.e. food distribution). Whatever this distinction is, gleaners want to hold on to it.

Realizing that I had entered into an ongoing dialogue within these groups as to their roles and identity, I quickly came to terms with the fact that my initial definition of “success” solely in terms of food distribution would not be adequate for exploring what gleaning groups have to offer for their communities. If that were the case, these groups would be content to become food pantries, purely food distribution agencies. Over the course of my fieldwork, participating with gleaners, talking with gleaning leaders and volunteers, as well as professionals who work closely with gleaners, I began to discover that these groups were making significant contributions to their communities that went beyond the distribution of food. I discovered that there was a strong social benefit associated with gleaning groups. I observed the development of relationships and connections among gleaning members and gleaners often mentioned these social connections as benefits of belonging to a gleaning organization. In addition, I observed opportunities for individuals to gain skills as they contributed to the daily tasks of maintenance and organization of their groups. There was also a sense of satisfaction in being able to help oneself and help others by participating in getting food, not just receiving food.

The original intent of this study was to examine “success” among gleaning organizations. However, in looking for characteristics of success in

gleaning groups, I found it became more appropriate and necessary to first explore the purpose of these groups. Once gleaning groups examine and determine their purpose, they will have a base from which to think about and work toward their “success.” Through this research, I do not intend to define the purpose of gleaning groups, as this is the responsibility and right of gleaners themselves as they grapple with their own group identities. I do intend, however, to add to the dialogue by exploring this question: As community-based organizations run by low-income volunteers, do gleaning groups have the potential to not only serve as a food distribution agencies, but as avenues toward sustained food security and reduced poverty through the development of skills (human capital) and social networks of trust and support (social capital)? And, if this is the case, how can the policies of gleaning organizations and the larger agencies that work with gleaning groups support these investments in social and human capital?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gleaning groups were organized in an effort to provide food for households in need. While this is the primary and necessary goal of these organizations, it is possible that the impact of these groups is not limited to providing food alone. When looking at the broader issues behind food insecurity and hunger there is evidence that holistic and sustainable contributions to the livelihoods of low-income households and individuals is necessary for truly reducing hunger, by combating the cause of hunger, poverty. For my review of literature, I examine and summarize the main findings of 1) literature that discusses gleaning in general, 2) literature that establishes the tangible need for gleaning, that is, literature regarding food insecurity and hunger, 3) literature on hunger and poverty, and finally, 4) literature on the intangible need for gleaning, that is literature regarding the concepts of human capital and social capital.

Literature on Gleaning

There is relatively little literature on gleaning, though it has a long history. Hebrew scriptures mention gleaning both in Levitical law (Leviticus 9:19-10; 23:22) and in a story about a poor woman who gleans grain from the fields of a wealthy landowner who later becomes her husband (Ruth 2:2-3; 2:17-18). Gleaning was also incorporated into the medieval, feudal economic system as a means of providing food for those who were not otherwise able to work (Ault 1965:13). In the 19th century, French realist, Millet, painted images of women gleaning in fields. At the time, these paintings served as a social commentary on poverty and in many ways have come to represent the archetypal image of gleaning (Minneapolis Institute of Arts 1978).

More recently, French film artist, Agnes Varda, produced a documentary film on gleaning in France (2002). Her work focused on a handful of individuals who gathered the leftovers from fields, dump sites, garbage cans, and outdoor markets. The people she interviewed ranged economically from completely destitute and homeless individuals to a chef in an exclusive restaurant who incorporated gleaned foods into his daily menu. The common trait of all of these people was their regular collection of food or other items that others no longer wanted.

In the United States, gleaning started gaining national recognition with the efforts of the Society of St. Andrew, a Christian ministry located in Big Island, Virginia. In 1979, St. Andrew's began a project to help alleviate hunger through community education. One of the points emphasized by representatives of the Society of St. Andrew was the amount of waste left over during the harvest of farmers' fields. In 1983, during one of these educational sessions, members of the Society of St. Andrew came in contact with a potato farmer, and from this meeting began actively gleaning through what is now called the "Potato Project." The volunteers involved in this project are primarily middle class, who donate the food they harvest to local charitable organizations that distribute it to low-income individuals in need (Society of St. Andrew 2000).

In 1987, the Society of St. Andrew went before the House of Representatives Domestic Task Force Select Committee on Hunger in order to ask for support for similar activities throughout the nation. Ray Buchanan, the spokesperson from the Society of St. Andrew, mentioned that America's Second Harvest often had a hard time distributing produce because of its perishable nature and the logistics required to handle it (U.S. House of Representatives 1987:18). Buchanan maintained that gleaning efforts provided a unique opportunity for food recovery efforts, which were not being utilized at their full potential (U.S. House of Representatives 1987:5). As a

result of this hearing, 1) a nationwide information network was created whereby farmers and volunteers could call "1-800-GLEAN-IT" to be connected with gleaning efforts in their area; 2) a book entitled, "A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery" was published which was intended to guide individuals in organizing gleaning efforts in their own communities; 3) legislation was initiated to protect farmers and businesspeople from potential liabilities incurred while allowing people to glean their goods, and 4) tax credits were established to benefit businesses and farms that donated goods toward gleaning efforts (U.S. House of Representatives 1987) (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1999). These developments are still in effect today.

In Oregon, the earliest documentation of gleaning is the "Gleaning Handbook," which was published in 1976 by Monika Belcher and the Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO). In 1972, Belcher initiated the idea of a gleaning program for low-income families in Washington County (Oregon Food Bank 2003). The result was the development of the "Gleaning Project." Belcher reports on the activities of the "Gleaning Project" for its first three years of existence, 1973-1976. She lists the foods that were harvested each year, their quantities and even attempts to place a market value on what was gathered (Belcher 1976). Belcher asserts that the "Gleaning Project" provided more than enough produce for the 207 families that were involved in 1974. In fact, she comments that, "Some donations had to be turned down because every client had all he or she could possibly use" (Belcher 1976:A3). A goal for following years was to recruit more people who could benefit from the overabundance of gleaning activities. Eventually, neighboring counties were able to begin participating in the project.

Belcher also documented some of the challenges of gleaning by distributing a survey to different groups participating in the Gleaning Project. Survey results indicated that transportation expenses as well as inconsistencies

with carpool arrangements inhibited some individuals from participating in the activities of their group. Communication was also identified as an issue; participating individuals noted that they were not contacted every time there was an activity associated with the project. Illness was also mentioned as a reason for not participating in the project. In addition, farmers were at times unresponsive and wary of volunteers on their land. Low participation from minorities was also noted (Belcher 1976:A17).

Beyond drawing awareness to some of the limiting factors associated with the Gleaning project, this same survey revealed unique benefits of gleaning. As Belcher notes, "Many varied comments were made, expressing that the clients liked the idea of a self-help program that allowed them to help others too" (Belcher 1976:A21). Belcher also asserts that,

A total evaluation shows that this program holds benefits beyond the gleaned and preserved fruits and vegetables. For instance, to city people it meant purposeful outings, new acquaintances, and above all, new-found confidence in government agencies. The elderly and disabled people appreciate the produce they are unable to buy for themselves, and a friend who cares enough to be their picker for the entire season. [Belcher 1976:A7]

Belcher's report also includes a reference manual with guidelines and rules for gleaning staff, sample letters to farmers asking for their participation in the program, sample report forms, and questionnaires sent to gleaning participants (Belcher 1976).

While gleaning has a long and diverse history, very little scholarly research has been conducted regarding this food acquisition strategy. To my knowledge, there has been no anthropological research involving gleaners, no formal research on gleaning in Oregon, and only three studies that address gleaning in the United States. The first, conducted by Andrew Youn and Michael Ollinger (1999) is a survey of the characteristics of food recovery organizations in the Mid-Atlantic region. The second is a Master's thesis project from a nutrition perspective conducted by Anne Hoisington (1999, 2001). Third, Charlene Price

and J. Michael Harris (2000) offer an economic analysis of the ability for gleaners to recover food from farmers' markets. I will summarize the main findings of each of these studies.

In examining food recovery agencies in general, Youn and Ollinger reported that 20% of the financial support for these organizations came from the government while the rest was supplied by other organizations. In addition, the food recovery organizations in this study could often lower their costs through affiliation with a parent organization that fundraised, kept records and provided for the distribution of goods. Youn and Ollinger also compared food recovery organizations to for-profit businesses, as supply and demand often guides the actions of these organizations, especially in terms of location. In relation to gleaning groups specifically, Youn and Ollinger comment that while the availability of fresh produce is growing, there is a sense that food recovery organizations have a difficult time handling it. Unlike non-perishable items, fresh produce must often be used within five days or less. Reports from respondents in this study indicate that about 20% of the produce received by gleaning organizations was thrown away following labor-intensive sorting processes.

In contrast to the wider survey of food recovery organizations, Hoisington (1999, 2001) engaged in a case study of one gleaning group in Pierce County, Washington. The purpose of her study was to identify the benefits of gleaning in terms of household level food management. Her research suggests that the most significant benefit of participation in gleaning was stretching people's food budget and helping provide food for their community. Improvements in diet through the use of more fresh produce and shared knowledge about gardening, food preservation or nutrition were also benefits reported by gleaning participants. Barriers to participation in gleaning included the physical aspects of gleaning such as weather and labor intensive harvesting and preservation activities. Time limitations and lack of childcare were also mentioned as obstacles to participation in gleaning activities. In terms of what happened to the

food once it was gleaned, Hoisington found that almost half of what was taken home by individuals in this group was shared with others (43%), while the other half (48%) was preserved and the remaining 9% was eaten fresh. Overall, Pierce County gleaners harvested 85,000 pounds of produce during this study, of which gleaners took only 23% home. The rest was given to local food pantries. Hoisington also notes that participation by elderly adults (>62) in Pierce County gleaning efforts was significantly higher than that of non-elderly adults (<62) (Hoisington 1999, 2001). Hoisington hypothesizes that this difference might be due to the social contact available through gleaning. As one participant commented, "I glean to help others get enough food, but since I lost my husband a couple of years ago, gleaning has given me something to live for" (Hoisington 2001:5).

The third study on gleaning, conducted by Charlene Price and J. Michael Harris of the USDA Economic Research Service, looked at gleaning groups in several communities in the United States to examine their relationships with farmers' markets. Price and Harris suggest that farmers' markets may be important resources for food recovery efforts through gleaning organizations, which are not yet being utilized at their full potential. Price and Harris point out that many hindrances to relationships between farmers' markets and food recovery organizations, including gleaning groups, are related to insufficient coordination and communication. Beyond these issues, however, they assert that there is a need to look at the "spatial economics" of collecting donations from willing farmers' markets. Essentially, there is a point at which the transportation cost of retrieving donated food will exceed the cost of an organization purchasing these goods from a wholesale grocer. Once this occurs, it will no longer be in the best interest of the food recovery organization to retrieve the food from this market (Price and Harris 2000).

While these three studies provide important insight into the function of gleaning organizations, they tend to emphasize most predominantly the tangible

aspect of gleaning, that is, the quantity and efficiency of food collection and utilization within these organizations. Anne Hoisington does mention the social benefits of gleaning, but this is a rather minor point in her study. In addition, none of these studies looks at the formation of networks of trust in gleaning organizations or the formation of skills through participation in gleaning activities.

The Tangible Need for Gleaning: Literature on Food Security and Hunger

“Food security,” according to the USDA and the Center on Hunger and Poverty, is defined as

Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum, food security includes: the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies, for example). [Sullivan and Choi 2002:9]

It follows, then, that “food insecurity” is the inability to acquire food that meets nutritional needs in a socially acceptable way. “Hunger” is defined as “the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of food and is a potential, although not necessary consequence of food insecurity” (Sullivan and Choi 2002:9). Indeed, “food insecurity” as a concept is not limited to physical responses to a lack of food as is “hunger.” Instead, “food security” recognizes the need for individuals to access nutritious food and acknowledges the anxiety that is created when an individual does not know where their next meal is coming from.

The USDA definitions of “hunger” and “food security” provide the basic framework for understanding recent studies, as they inform the U.S. Food Security Survey Module, a survey instrument widely used to collect data on food security and hunger in the United States (Sullivan and Choi 2002). Most notably, this survey instrument is used in the Current Population Survey

Food Security Supplements carried out by the Census Bureau, which are used in the USDA's reports regarding hunger and food security (Nord, Jemison and Bickel 1999:16).

In 2002, the USDA Economic Research Service released a report entitled *Household Food Security in the United States*. Using data from 1998-2000, this report concluded that food insecurity and hunger are declining nationwide; however, in the year 2000, 11 million households (10.5%) still experienced food insecurity on some level. Of these food insecure households, just over half reported participating in either the Food Stamps Program; the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); or the National School Lunch Program in the month prior to the survey and 16.7% of these families acquired "emergency food" from a food pantry or alternative source (Nord, et al. 2002:iii). This study also found, not surprisingly, that those families that used food pantries were more likely to be food insecure or hungry. Interestingly, households that indicated they experienced food insecurity and even hunger did not necessarily correlate with the use of "emergency food" sources. In fact, "the large majority of food-insecure households, and even households that were food insecure with hunger, did not use a food pantry at any time during the previous year" (Nord, et al. 2002:30). The study explains this phenomenon as a potential result of either a lack of emergency food sources or lack of knowledge of emergency food sources. However, only 30% of households that experienced food insecurity and knew about emergency food providers in their area used them. In addition, a significant number of people who used food pantries or emergency kitchens were classified as "food secure" (Nord, et al, 2002:30). The study also found that having children more than doubled the likelihood that a household would access food from an "emergency food" provider. Single mothers were also much more likely to access emergency food than married couples (Nord, et al. 2002:31).

In 1999, using the same data source, the USDA produced a report on hunger and food insecurity looking at each individual state with data from 1996-1998 (Nord, Jemison and Bickel 1999). In 2002, the Center for Hunger and Poverty produced a similar report using data from 1998-2000 (Sullivan and Choi 2002). In both of these studies, Oregon was ranked as number one in the nation in terms of hunger, and placed in the top ten states in terms of food insecurity. This high incidence of food insecurity and hunger is mentioned as a perplexing question in need of further research in both studies. In fact, the USDA's 1999 study points out that Oregon had a poverty level below the national average, yet was experiencing food security and hunger levels significantly higher than the national average (Nord, Jemison and Bickel 1999:8).

The Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force explains Oregon's high prevalence of hunger as the result of two phenomena: income disparity between high-income and low-income families in Oregon, and the high cost of housing in Oregon (Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force 2003).

So while things are getting better in the nation as a whole, there is still a great need for increased food security and hunger reduction, especially in Oregon. There are many organizations and institutions working to relieve hunger and increase food security. One current movement in this area, the community food security movement, is closely aligned with the kind of work gleaning organizations are doing. In a sense, community food security is expanding the definition of household food security to the community level. The main priorities of the community food security movement are to work cooperatively toward support of local food systems, increase community nutrition, and create greater access to healthy and affordable food for low-income individuals (Kantor 2001; Cook and Rodgers 1997). In 1996, Congress passed the Community Food Security Act. This act provides funding for programs that will further community food security, especially

those that incorporate self-reliance in communities and help provide food for low-income individuals (Cook & Rodgers 1997:3). Projects that fit this aim include community gardens, direct-marketing projects with local farmers (including farmers' markets), farm-to-school projects and local food co-operatives, as well as food recovery programs such as gleaning groups (Kantor 2001).

The Bigger Picture: Literature on Hunger and Poverty

The notion of food security first emerged at the 1974 World Food Conference. It was introduced as an international concept and was based on the premise that the worldwide supply of food would need to increase in order to meet escalating demands of a growing global population (Pottier 1999:11). In 1983, Amartya Sen suggested that the problem of food security was not just an issue of supply, but also of demand. He suggested that there was indeed enough food, but that some were unable to access food as a result of both physical and economic barriers (Pottier 1999:12). This shift in perspective meant a shift in policy as well, for the remedy for food insecurity lay not only in having enough food for everyone, but in making sure all had access to that food. By 1996, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), asserted that in order for all people at all times to have access to enough food, poverty reduction was going to be a key step (Pottier 1999:13).

In the literature regarding hunger and food security, it does not take long for the discussion to turn from food alone, to the more encompassing issue of poverty. More and more, the emphasis seems to indicate that making sustained reductions to food insecurity and hunger will require combating poverty itself. As Johan Pottier in his book *Anthropology and Food: The Social Dynamics of Food Security* notes, much of the recent literature regarding food security moves the focus away from solely providing

food, to a more holistic approach which includes improving livelihoods and economic well being (1999:27).

In her book *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, Janet Poppendieck (1998) boldly asserts that hunger is merely a symptom of the greater and persistent problem of poverty. She continues, making the argument that many of the efforts to alleviate hunger and food insecurity through private charities, such as food banks and soup kitchens, have actually undermined movements to end poverty by focusing attention, energy and funding on food. Poppendieck asserts that many professionals who are most concerned about poverty have gotten so busy with the demanding nature of emergency food provision that they have ceased to invest their energies in vision and advocacy for the end of poverty. In addition, outsiders and policy makers are able to feel at ease with emergency food providers so visibly caring for those in need. In essence, the burden and urgency of dealing with poverty is lessened with a sense of security provided by charities that distribute food. As Poppendieck comments,

We are so busy building bigger, better programs to deliver food to the hungry, and to raise the funds and other resources necessary to continue and expand our efforts in response to rising need, that we are losing sight of both the underlying problem and its possible solutions. [Poppendieck 1998:17]

Poppendieck urges emergency food providers to come out of the self-reinforcing cycle of institutionalizing that which was originally intended to be a temporary "emergency food provision" system. She asks policy makers and agencies to begin tackling poverty and inequality, not just hunger. Rather than dismantle the emergency food system entirely, Poppendieck suggests that an emphasis be put on groups which are able to empower low-income individuals by: 1) giving them a seat at the policy table, 2) creating relationships of cooperation between classes rather than creating barriers (which often happens in current manifestations of emergency food, i.e. the

notion of a “handout” tends to marginalize people who cannot provide for themselves) and 3) giving low-income people an opportunity to organize and begin advocating for broader societal changes (1998:316-317).

In the broader context of world hunger, anthropologist Johan Pottier, echoes Poppendieck, calling attention to the often unquestioned expectation that food aid will accompany international development efforts. In addition, agency policy can often perpetuate the need for food aid, by altering the contexts in which people acquire food. Pottier provides an example of food aid administration in the Dafur community during a time of drought in the mid-1980s. Agencies observed people migrating to nearby Maweshei and interpreted this migration as a last effort to survive the famine. In reality, however, this was a customary occurrence related to the community’s agricultural patterns. Yet since the food distribution program had been implemented, Dafur community members had an incentive to stay in Maweshei rather than return home and eventually became reliant on the supply of food coming through food aid, rather than their own previously available means (1999:144). Clark and Taylor (2001:58) support Pottier’s assertion, commenting that “Food aid that is poorly timed, targeted or integrated can subvert development by creating dependencies and undermining local systems.” Keeping food aid organizations accountable for the impacts of their projects is imperative for Pottier, as he comments, “The ‘culture of disempowerment’ is very pervasive, and an undermining of that culture is unlikely as long as the agencies involved in relief and prevention remain reluctant to tackle the issue of accountability head-on” (1999:165). In this same vein, Pottier asserts that the most effective food security efforts are those that support local initiatives and increase people’s livelihoods rather than solely supplying food (1999).

Poppendieck and Pottier raise important points for food aid providers. However, the advocacy and accountability they call for is shaped largely in

the way institutions define poverty. For instance, a recent report issued by the USDA Economic Research Service suggests that the Food Stamp Program contributed to poverty reduction by adding the economic value of food stamps to household incomes (Winicki, Joliffe and Gundersen 2002). Poverty reduction in this sense is understood simply as a material or economic change. Furthermore, in order to maintain poverty reduction using this definition, households must continue to receive food stamps. In this way, there is no sense of long term or sustainable reduction of poverty for households utilizing the Food Stamp Program. From this example, it is evident that the way we define poverty and poverty reduction will have a great impact on the outcome of policy changes and agency accountability.

Certainly, the USDA is not the first organization to define poverty solely in terms of economics. In fact, this perspective has dominated discourse on development and social welfare. Economist, Amartya Sen offers some helpful insight in thinking about poverty in a more holistic sense. In his book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) suggests that poverty is not just a matter of low incomes, though this is an important factor. Poverty, rather, is related to the capabilities of individual players. From this perspective, financial status becomes one of many factors that dictate a person's capabilities, rather than the sole indicator. Sen asserts that in looking for solutions for poverty surely we are seeking changes in more than just incomes. He uses unemployment as an example, noting that lack of income is just one consequence of unemployment. Other consequences include loss of motivation, potential psychological damage, loss of self-confidence, loss of skills, an increase in sickness, and potential disruption of family relationships and function. "Capability equality," as Sen calls it, requires looking at more than merely income. As he comments,

Policy debates have indeed been distorted by over-emphasis on income poverty and income inequality, to the neglect of deprivations that relate to other variables, such as

unemployment, ill health, lack of education, and social exclusion (1999:108).

This broader concept of poverty reduction is reflected in recent development literature, much of which contains the notion of creating “sustainable livelihoods,” a more holistic approach to addressing poverty (Helmore and Singh 2001; Sustainable Developments 2001).

The Intangible Need for Gleaning: Literature on Human Capital and Social Capital

Human and social capital are two concepts that may be helpful in defining and identifying instances of increased capacities when looking at Sen's broader understanding of poverty. These terms have been used in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts. However, in a general sense, human capital includes developing skills or qualifications at an individual level, while social capital includes developing support networks and relationships of trust at the group level (Field, Schuller and Baron 2000:250). Development of human and social capital are not the only avenues for reduction of poverty, but examining these concepts may add to the discussion by providing a framework for understanding a more holistic concept of poverty reduction.

Human Capital

The notion of capital is a key concept in economic theory. Traditionally, capital was limited to physical structures, such as buildings and machines. Investments in capital were conceived of as changes in physical capital that increased productivity. While this notion of capital still holds true in the world of economics, it has expanded to include other significant forms of capital, one of which is human capital (Colander 2001:186). Investments in human capital can be defined as "...changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways" (Coleman 1988:S100). These commonly include increases in education, job skills, access to health care, and the capacity to migrate (Schultz 1971:8). *Sustainable Livelihoods*, a publication created to assist international development workers broadens the definition slightly, including creativity and adaptive strategies as well (Helmore and Singh 2001:4). Developing self-confidence is also an important element of human capital investments. The ability to see potential in one's self and to have the motivation and hope to

work toward living out that potential are important factors in mobilizing individuals to utilize and even obtain more human capital (Gaiha 1993).

Additionally, investments in human capital allow individuals the potential to increase their future earning power. Like physical capital, if people are willing to suspend immediate desires in order to make investments in human capital it can result in personal benefits at a later time (Farkas 1996:9). Commonly, human capital is defined by duration of education or certain obtained qualifications through formal institutions such as high schools or colleges (Field, et al. 2000:251). These advancements in human capital are commonly identified as a necessity for obtaining well-paid and secure employment, as they create avenues for household level economic stability and poverty reduction. As a publication of the World Bank notes, "It has long been recognized that education and training can play a central role in raising the earnings, job prospects and life chances of an individual" (Middleton, Ziderman and Van Adams 1993:39). This assertion has led to many programs that create alternative venues for increasing the skills of disadvantaged populations. In the United States, one such program is Job Corps. This program engages low-income teens in skills training coupled with health coverage over an extended period of time. Job Corps has resulted in many successful job placements, but tends to be limited in its number of participants due to high operation costs. Other programs intended to develop human capital among disadvantaged populations include job training programs and alternative schools (Skinner 1995).

In an international development context, the Cambodia Development Resource Institute identified strengthening human capital as one of a number of strategies for increasing food security in rural villages. In step with much of the current economic development literature, the Resource Institute suggests a holistic approach to addressing food security needs (Sedara, Sophal and Acharya 2001). In addition, an economic and social development paper

prepared for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations recognizes human capital as an essential element of effective poverty relief strategies, noting that while human capital development is less direct than some poverty relief strategies it has lasting benefits and allows individuals to become increasingly self-reliant (Gaiha 1993).

Social Capital

As a relatively new concept, social capital has a much shorter history and more fluid definition than human capital (Schuller, Baron and Field 2000). Essentially, social capital includes the networks of trust and relationships shared within communities. These relationships can be manifest in almost every context of a society: in family structures, civic organizations, businesses, and social clubs (Dikito-Wachtmeister 2001). James Coleman (1988) identifies social capital using two criteria: first, that social capital is manifest as an aspect of social structure, and secondly, that this manifestation enables individuals to act in certain ways. According to Coleman, relationships translate into expectations, trustworthiness, obligations, avenues for information, and the creation of norms of behavior (Schuller, Baron and Field 2000:6). Robert Putnam sums up the definition of social capital, saying, "The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value" (Putnam 2000:18-19).

Almost all of the literature regarding social capital identifies that this is an inherently difficult concept to define and measure (Krishna and Shrader 1999; Portney and Berry 1997; Schuller, Baron and Field 2000). Unlike physical capital, which is clearly tangible as it is manifest in material goods, and human capital, which is measurable in duration of education and acquisition of skills, social capital is even less tangible because it is manifest in relationships between individuals (Coleman 1988). As Field comments, "Social capital is less clearly and directly associated with a tangible and

measurable return; indeed, the return on social capital may not be measurable at all” (Field et al. 2000:252).

Furthermore, social capital is not something which is invested in directly. Most often social capital is created as a byproduct of activities with another primary purpose. For example, social capital might be created among coworkers who have come together to work on a project. Their primary objective was not to create social networks. However, in their coming together, the potential to build social capital emerges. In addition, unlike other forms of capital, social capital investments may have no immediate or direct benefits for the actors involved. In some cases investments in social capital may result in greater benefits for a group or institution rather than individual players (Field et al. 2000). Coleman (1998) points out that many times individuals would not naturally choose to build social capital in and of itself. Instead, he asserts that each person acts in order to best serve his or her own personal interests, whether or not social capital development is at stake. For this reason, Coleman claims that there is notable underinvestment in social capital and that communities must intentionally seek to build this form of capital where the opportunity presents itself.

In development literature, social capital has become especially important when looking at locally based community development efforts (Dikito-Wachtmeister 2001). In fact, the vice president of the World Bank recently placed both human capital and social capital at “the core of sustainable development and poverty reduction” during an address to the Food and Agriculture Organization (Johnson 2002).

From her experience with the establishment of cooperatives in Zimbabwe, Mercy Dikito-Wachtmeister (2001) explains varying aspects of social capital in the context of economic development. First, she notes that individuals have certain characteristics which affect their ability to develop

trust, which in turn, can affect their ability to make investments in social capital. For instance, characteristics such as having good standing in the community or displaying reliability contribute to an individual's capacity to develop social capital. Second, she found that some social networks could work against social capital by becoming a means for excluding certain groups and individuals from sources of power. Dikito-Wachtmeister observed that poorer women were often left out of decision-making processes because they lacked knowledge of pivotal meetings since they were outside of the networks of wealthier women. Third, Dikito-Wachtmeister notes that creating networks takes time and effort. In order to create social capital, organizers must reduce notable barriers to participation. For instance, organizations intended to empower women should be kept affordable in terms of dues or membership fees. She also suggests that these organizations be mindful of the time constraints placed on women with children. Finally, she asserts that "The use of explicit contractual obligations, rules and sanctions may not only reduce cheating and corruption, but may also generate and reinforce common understanding and trust among individuals" (2001:3). In this way, Dikito-Wachtmeister suggests that maintaining a structure for understanding power and authority within these cooperatives can create an environment conducive to the development of social capital.

Current research suggests that community organizations can be an important venue for the development of social capital (Eastis 1998; Krishna and Shrader 1999; Portney and Berry 1997). In their development of a Social Capital Assessment Tool, Anirudh Krishna and Elizabeth Shrader (1999) actually create a criterion for evaluation of social capital at an organizational level. They note that internal characteristics of community organizations such as the longevity of the group, the makeup of the membership, motivations for joining, inclusiveness of the group, leadership quality, organization, connection with other community groups, capacity for collective

action, and ability to share information are all factors in an organization's ability to foster social capital. They also make the point that evidence of social relationships does not automatically indicate investment in social capital. Relationships can breed distrust as well as trust. In some contexts, social networks can lead to conflict, competition and social disharmony, all of which can contribute to deficits in social capital. In either case, community organizations have potential to play a role in the increases or decreases in social capital.

Ethnographic studies have revealed that low-income individuals commonly rely on investments of social capital when other forms of capital are lacking (Stack 1975). Unfortunately, these investments in social capital usually function only at the level of survival. Saegert, Thompson and Warren suggest in their book *Social Capital and Poor Communities*, that if poor communities are truly going to experience poverty reduction, they must advance beyond mere survival. Saegert, Thompson and Warren encourage the organization of poor communities in order to unite and assist in combating issues of poverty. They also note that many institutions seeking to help reduce poverty often disrupt the development of social capital both inadvertently and intentionally through lack of connection with the people they are trying to help and the creation of rules that create tension within communities (Saegert, Thompson and Warren 2001). Saegert, Thompson and Warren call on professionals working to relieve poverty to truly reach out and take the communities they are working with seriously, giving them a voice in making policies that affect their lives.

Herein lies a great challenge to research, policy and practice. Social transformation capable of addressing the root causes of poverty requires a paradigm shift in public policy discourse from a passive object of social policy view to a view of them as equal participants and leaders in policy-making implementation.... A social capital building strategy ...requires that public discourse about poverty be infused with new

mechanisms that enable poor people to participate more fully in shaping their own destinies and the future of American society. [Saegert, Thompson and Warren 2001:23]

While social capital has given new vision to efforts to alleviate poverty, there may also be something to be said for social capital in the context of food security itself. A recent survey conducted by Hartford Food System examined the relationship between social capital and food security in low-income households (below 185% of poverty). The study showed that “having trust in one’s neighbors” and “being involved in one’s communities” were positively correlated with food secure households. This finding led to the following remark: “these results indicate that rather than focusing simply on food assistance, we need to shift our focus to ‘building community’ and more intangible resources of time and energy in order to fight hunger” (Martin 2001:21).

Discussion of Literature

Gleaning organizations are placed in a complex context as they work through their identity and purpose. The intent of this chapter was to lay out pieces of this context by looking at literature on gleaning itself, literature on food security, literature on hunger and poverty, and finally literature explaining and exploring the concepts human capital and social capital. Instances of hunger and food insecurity in Oregon are troubling, making the need to distribute food critical. At the same time as notions of combating poverty and hunger become more holistic, gleaning groups may have a significant contribution to make in areas beyond food distribution.

As previously mentioned, the limited literature on gleaning organizations tends to focus on the tangible aspects of gleaning. Youn and Ollinger (1999) point out characteristics of food recovery agencies, Hoisington (1999, 2001) shows that gleaning groups can be beneficial in stretching peoples’ food budgets and Price and Harris (2000) point out

economic considerations and limitations as gleaners seek to build relationships with farmers' markets. Only Hoisington utilizes a broader framework for evaluating these groups by mentioning the social aspect of participation in gleaning organizations. To this point, there has been no research on the potential for human and social capital development in gleaning groups.

Research on food security establishes the need for organizations such as the gleaners, especially with reports of Oregon's high hunger rates. Literature regarding hunger and poverty explores food insecurity and hunger as a part of the wider problem of poverty. Several authors also urge agencies to evaluate their contribution to hunger not only in terms of providing food, but also in their efforts to empower low-income individuals through more holistic solutions.

Literature on human and social capital facilitates recognition of the more holistic benefits that may be available within gleaning organizations. By no means is the development of social and human capital the only way or an exhaustive way to reduce poverty. However, these concepts open researchers and practitioners to the notion that service institutions, including gleaning groups, may provide more than their proclaimed service. The literature suggests that these secondary benefits can be quite valuable to individuals and communities and should not be overlooked, as developing skills and creating networks of trust are activities that can contribute to poverty reduction, benefiting both individuals and communities as a whole. In addition, human capital and social capital have been found to have value not only in combating poverty, but in decreasing food insecurity as well.

METHODOLOGY

This is an ethnographic research study with an emphasis on participant observation and interviewing. As such, the data collection and analysis processes were in continual dialogue. As James Spradley notes, whereas social science commonly follows a set sequence of formulating hypotheses, collecting data, analyzing the data and writing up the results, ethnographic research blurs these lines: "...instead of discrete stages, ethnographic research requires constant feedback from one stage to another" (1979:93). In this way, my initial hypotheses regarding the assessment of "success" of gleaning organizations were challenged by my experiences in the field, thus redirecting the focus of this study to the "purposes" of gleaning groups. Data was collected through interaction with individuals from the Oregon Food Bank, Jansen Food Bank, seven gleaning organizations and one food pantry from late May to early November of 2002.

In an effort to protect the identity of participants in this study, pseudonyms are used throughout this document to identify both individuals and organizations. The only exceptions to the use of pseudonyms for organizations are references to America's Second Harvest and the Oregon Food Bank. In addition, Sharon Thornberry, a professional from the Oregon Food Bank who works closely with gleaners throughout the state and is active in shaping policy regarding gleaning groups at a national level, requested that her actual name be used in this document.

Gathering Data

My efforts to gather data on gleaning organizations took place in two phases. In the first phase, I was in the field solely as a participant observer. The majority of this phase was spent at the sites of 2 gleaning organizations, and at the Jansen Food Bank administrative office and warehouse. While

participant observation continued throughout my fieldwork, I began the second phase of research, the interview phase, following two months in the field. This initial emphasis on participant observation gave me insight into daily gleaning group operations and informed my course of questioning throughout the interview process.

Phase One: Participant Observation

Participant observation was central to my data collection process. As a participant observer, I immersed myself in gleaning. I talked with gleaners, harvested with gleaners, attended gleaning meetings, and went to gleaning distributions. As Bernard states, "Participant observation is about stalking culture in the wild - establishing rapport and learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you are around" (2000: 319). Or as DeWalt, DeWalt and Wayland comment, participant observation involves "...living in the community, taking part in usual and unusual activities, 'hanging out,' and conversing (as compared with interviewing) while consciously observing and ultimately recording what was observed" (DeWalt, DeWalt and Wayland 1998: 261).

The majority of participant observation for this study was gathered from three primary sources: Jansen Food Bank and two gleaning groups, Penville Gleaners and Hartland Gleaners. My experience with Hartland Gleaners was unique because I actually became a gleaning member of that group. Additional participant observation took place at three Jansen Food Bank member gleaning organizations: Friends and Neighbors Gleaning Group, Caring and Sharing Community Gleaners and Carnegie Gleaners; as well as three comparison organizations: Blooming Gleaners, We Can! Gleaners, and one food pantry (See Table 1). All of these organizations were located within 50 miles of Oregon's I-5 Corridor.

Table 1. Participant Observation Sources

Group/ Organization		Participant Observation	Average Group Membership	
Jansen Food Bank Administrative Office and Warehouse		Primary Source	100-200 Individuals	600-900 Individuals
<i>Gleaning Groups Associated with America's Second Harvest</i>	Penville	Primary Source		X
	Hartland (Gleaning Member)	Primary Source	X	
	Friends & Neighbors	Secondary Source		X
	Caring & Sharing	Secondary Source	X	
	Carnegie	Secondary Source	X	
<i>Independent Gleaning Groups</i>	We Can!	Comparison Source		X
	Blooming	Comparison Source		X
Food Pantry		Comparison Source		X
*Note: Food Pantries do not have memberships. This size indication is based on the average number of individuals served in one month.				

Phase Two: Interviewing

Interviews with key informants were conducted with leaders from gleaning organizations and professionals from Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank. Key informants were selected based on their involvement with gleaning organizations. All key informants were either leaders of gleaning organizations or professionals in the national food-

banking network who work closely with gleaning groups and gleaning policy. Key informant interviews were semi-structured, in that they were guided by a list of questions, yet the interviewees were able to answer each question openly and lead into additional topics not mentioned in the questionnaire (Bernard 2000: 191). As Weller comments, "Open-ended, semistructured formats facilitate the collection of new information, providing the flexibility to explore different topics in-depth with different informants" (1998:373). These interviews covered general topics regarding gleaning group organizations, how they are run, definitions of gleaning, definitions of success, and the policies of gleaning organizations and the national food-banking network (See Appendix A: Gleaning Coordinator Interview Guide, and Appendix B: Food Bank Professional Interview Guide). Generally, these interviews lasted between an hour and two hours.

Volunteer interviews took place at gleaning sites. These participants were selected using a convenience sampling method (Bernard 2000:178) and were conducted during regular group distributions of food. As food distributions are a time when most gleaning members come to the site, I judged that I would be able to hear the perspectives of group members with varying levels of involvement. These interviews were centered on individuals' experiences as part of a gleaning organization. Questions included what gleaning meant for their family, how they felt about the food they were getting from the group and how involved they were in the activities of the organization (See Appendix C: Volunteer Interview Guide).

All key informants and volunteers signed consent forms approved by the Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects at Oregon State University. Interviews were conducted with a total of ten leaders from five purposively selected gleaning groups and three professionals from Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank. In addition, I conducted brief semi-structured interviews with 19 gleaning volunteers (See Table 2).

Table 2. Interview Sources

Group/ Organization		Key Informant Interviews	Volunteer Interviews
Jansen Food Bank/ Oregon Food Bank		n=3	
<i>Gleaning Groups Associated with the National Food-Banking Network</i>	Penville	n=3	n=10
	Friends & Neighbors	n=1	n=3
	Caring & Sharing	n=1	n=3
<i>Independent Gleaning Groups</i>	We Can!	n=4	n=1
	Blooming	n=1	n=2
Total		n=13	n=19

Entering the Field

Perhaps the most natural way to present, in more detail, how I employed these methods is to describe how I entered the field. My entry into the field can be organized into three categories: my involvement with gleaners as an intern with an agency that works closely with several gleaning groups, my participation in gleaning as an actual member of a gleaning group, and my observation of gleaning groups and one other food providing organization as a researcher.

Participant as Intern

My involvement with gleaning groups began with an internship appointment at Jansen Food Bank, an organization that provides food for several gleaning organizations. As mentioned earlier, Jansen Food Bank is a Regional Coordinating Agency and member of America's Second Harvest. As a Regional Coordinating Agency, Jansen Food Bank distributes food from the national food-banking network and private donors to several community

organizations, including gleaning groups, which provide food for low-income households.

As an intern at Jansen Food Bank, I attended many activities involving all of the gleaning groups that receive food from this food bank. I worked at the food bank warehouse during food distributions for gleaning organizations, where I participated in a range of activities including unwrapping pallets of eggs, sorting cucumbers, weighing food and packing food for groups. During these times at the warehouse, I talked with many group leaders and volunteers as they came through to retrieve food.

As an intern, I also visited gleaning sites and attended regular gleaning meetings with Jansen Food Bank staff (Carnegie Gleaners and Penville Gleaners). I attended four monthly gleaning coordinator meetings. At these meetings, gleaning leaders from all the groups associated with Jansen Food Bank had opportunities to ask questions and share ideas, while representatives from the food bank led discussions regarding groups' policies and procedures. In addition to these regularly scheduled meetings, I attended two training meetings and two statewide quarterly meetings for gleaners. Professionals from organizations associated with America's Second Harvest organized and facilitated these meetings.

My role as intern also allowed me to access documents at Jansen Food Bank regarding various gleaning groups. I examined financial statements from each group, distribution statements for Jansen Food Bank and spreadsheets containing self-reported information from each group working with Jansen Food Bank. These spreadsheets documented the number of pounds of food collected by source and the monthly membership of all of the groups associated with Jansen Food Bank from June 2001 to July 2002. I also gained access to marketing materials used at Jansen Food Bank to promote gleaning activities within the community and past

newspaper articles highlighting the work of gleaning groups throughout Oregon.

Additionally, my position as intern required that I spend time in the Jansen Food Bank office. I worked closely with staff at the food bank on a number of projects and talked with them often during these activities. I helped with a variety of office tasks including conducting a phone survey of gleaning volunteers, calculating the pounds of food to be allotted to each gleaning group prior to a distribution and assisting in the creation of user-friendly instructions for gleaning groups to use when attempting to write grants.

One of my primary tasks as an intern was to spend time with one particular gleaning group, Penville Gleaners. Jansen Food Bank selected this group for me to work with as a capacity building consultant because the Penville gleaning group was going through an important time of transition, and as such needed extra assistance. This group had recently moved to a new distribution site and changed much of its leadership. According to the staff at Jansen Food Bank, the group needed assistance primarily in fundraising and administrative organization.

I spent a good deal of time working closely with the Penville Gleaners at their gleaning distribution site. In my role as a consultant to this group, I assisted in organizing and locating documents in preparation for grant writing, encouraged the strengthening of the organization's board of directors, assisted in the mediation of inner group conflict, and helped develop a database for ease in contacting volunteers for help with group activities. In addition, I took part in the day-to-day operations of the organization such as preparing food boxes for distributions, carrying food boxes to adoptee members, picking up bread from grocery stores, and assisting in repackaging and storing of food.

Penville was the only group with which I spent extended periods of time observing and participating in the daily operations of the organization. Spending time with the Penville group laid a foundation of understanding for me, in that I experienced some of the basic ways gleaning groups are organized and run. Additionally, time with Penville Gleaners helped me identify areas of concern that commonly face gleaning groups. This insight informed my observation as I visited other gleaning sites and conducted interviews with key leaders and gleaning participants.

During the second phase of my research, I interviewed three gleaning leaders as key informants at the Penville site. I also interviewed a convenience sample of ten volunteers during two different distributions. Finally, during my experiences at Penville Gleaners, I visited the households of 17 adoptees. During these visits, I spoke with 12 adoptee members of the group and asked them a few questions about their impressions of gleaning. These "interviews" were very informal and brief.

Participant as Gleaner

Shortly after beginning my internship, I realized that my family met the income requirements for joining a gleaning group. This seemed like a unique opportunity to gain another valuable perspective in understanding gleaning groups. After consulting the staff at Jansen Food Bank and my major professor, I contacted the leader of Hartland Gleaners and joined the group.

I would characterize my role in the Hartland gleaning group as an "observing participant" (Bernard 2000:323). Bernard distinguishes between participant observers and observing participants. Participant observers participate in the lives of their informants, but maintain the distance of being on the "outside" of what their informants are doing (2000:321). In contrast, "observing participants" become part of the activities they are studying within the communities they are studying. In some cases, they actually become

members of the groups they are studying (2000:322). Joining a gleaning group gave me unique insights into the experience of *being* a gleaner. Issues such as inner-group communication, the effort required to preserve large quantities of food, the quality and kind of food received by the group and the subtle stigma associated with being a part of a gleaning group came into clearer focus as I encountered gleaning from within. Being a gleaner also gave me a sense of legitimacy in the field as a researcher. I was not just an outsider asking questions, because to some degree, I shared the experience and the financial status of many of my informants.

Because of my involvement in the Hartland group as a gleaning member, however, I chose not to interview any individuals from the Hartland group during the second phase of my research. This decision was intended to maintain my role, as much as possible, as a genuine member of the group, gaining as much of an insider's experience as possible. My involvement as a member of this organization lasted seven months beyond the end of my data collection for this project.

In both my role as intern and as a gleaning member, a high level of participation commonly led to friendships on the field. In the data collection stage of this study, I found these friendships to be an asset to my research as people felt comfortable around me and were willing to share their opinions and ideas with me. My biggest challenge in having friendships on the field was my hesitancy to report information that might reflect negatively on an individual or organization. Utilization of pseudonyms helped me avoid any timidity in reporting.

Participant as Researcher

During the second phase of my research, I purposely selected four additional gleaning groups and one food pantry to include in this study. I characterize my participation in these groups as the most removed when

compared to my participation in the Penville and Hartland gleaning organizations. I had no involvement in these organizations beyond collecting data. I visited these groups following extensive participation in both the Hartland and Penville groups.

Two of these gleaning groups, Caring and Sharing Community Gleaners and Friends and Neighbors Gleaning Group, were organizations that received food from the national food-banking network through Jansen Food Bank. Since they were a part of the food bank, I was familiar with the leaders of these groups from my interactions with them during various gleaning activities. Members of these groups were also familiar with me, which gave me a welcome reception when I sought to visit their sites and speak with the leadership of these organizations. I selected both of these groups because they were identified by the staff of Jansen Food Bank as embodying characteristics of successful gleaning groups. In addition, Caring and Sharing Community Gleaners was of comparable size to Hartland Gleaners (100-200 members), while Friends and Neighbors was similar in size to the Penville group (600-900 members). I visited both Caring and Sharing and Friends and Neighbors during regular weekly food distributions, conducted one key informant interview with a gleaning leader and had interviews with three volunteers from each of these groups.

As the identity and purpose of gleaning organizations emerged as a question for my research, I decided it would be important to see how gleaning groups connected with Jansen Food Bank might differ from other gleaning groups and food distribution organizations. First, I looked at gleaning organizations not connected with the national food-banking network and secondly, I visited one food pantry.

The remaining two gleaning groups that I visited as a researcher, Blooming Gleaners and We Can! Gleaners, were selected because they were not in any way connected with Jansen Food Bank or America's Second

Harvest food-banking network. These two groups still participated in the act of recovering food from a variety of sources, as did gleaning groups connected with Jansen Food Bank. Categorically these “independent” groups were distinct only because they did not receive food through the national food-banking network. I was interested in seeing if there were any differences between groups outside of the national network in their function and understanding of purpose. I had no prior contact with members of either of these groups before calling them to ask if I might come and observe their distribution site and interview some of their leaders and volunteers. As there are very few groups in the state that are not part of the national food-banking network, I chose these groups because I had knowledge of them and had access to their contact information. In addition, these groups are similar in size to Penville Gleaners and Friends and Neighbors Gleaning Group.

I visited two separate distribution sites at Blooming Gleaners, had one semi-structured key informant interview with the group leader, and conducted interviews with two volunteers from the group. I also observed volunteers as they prepared for and carried out a regular food distribution. At We Can! Gleaners, I conducted a semistructured in-depth interview with four of the group’s leaders and had an additional interview with one active volunteer.

The final organization I visited was a food pantry. Seeing a food pantry became important as the question of differences between gleaning groups and pantries began to emerge. My intention was to observe similarities and differences between these two types of food distribution agencies. I selected a food pantry connected to Jansen Food Bank and located in the same community as Penville Gleaners. In addition, this food pantry served approximately the same number of individuals as the Penville group in one month. I participated in a food distribution at this organization and was given a guided tour by the food pantry director. I had hoped to

interview food recipients, however my role as participant inhibited me from doing this and the context did not lend itself to individual inquiry.

Recording Data

As a participant observer, I systematically kept descriptive notes of all of my experiences. These notes consisted of "jottings," computerized transcriptions of field notes, a personal diary and a log of field activities (Bernard 2000). I kept a notepad with me at all times for the purpose of recording "jottings." I often kept this small notepad in my back pocket, if an idea came to me, or someone made a comment I wanted to remember, I would quickly write it in this notebook. Sometimes I ducked into a corner or the restroom to write observations down on paper. As I was driving away from a site I often stopped at a gas station to write down an account of all I had seen that day. Descriptive field notes included descriptions of buildings, people, the mood of a place, and interactions and conversations that had taken place. Within 24 hours, I would go back over these notes and fill in missing details. Most often, these notes were entered directly into the computer, sorted by date and then catalogued in a three ring binder that contained all of my field notes.

In addition to my descriptive notes, I kept a diary of my personal reflections and responses to the day's activities. This allowed me to keep an account of my emotional responses to my field experiences as they were happening. As Reinharz comments,

Knowledge is not given in nature but is created by individuals as thinkers acting through their individual personalities, intellects, experiences and passions. The person does not disappear while doing science (1979: 252).

This personal diary enabled me to reflect on how my own experiences as a researcher affected the research itself.

I also kept a log of my field activities, systematically documenting the hours I spent in the field participating in different gleaning events. This log facilitated my ability to keep an account of all my research activities and the dates on which they were performed. It also served as a table of contents for my computerized field notes. In addition to this log, I kept a food log, which recorded the food my family received as participants in a gleaning organization.

Interviews were documented using a combination of both note taking and tape recording. I took notes during every interview. Immediately following each interview, I went back through these notes and filled in the details of what had been said. Key informants were asked if they would consent to having the interview taped. All but three of these interviews were recorded using a tape recorder, one because the participant did not want to be recorded and the remaining two because the context of the interview did not lend itself to tape recording.

Analyzing Data

Data analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes in data and trying to explain the reason for those patterns (Bernard 2000:419). Rossman and Rallis describe the analysis of *qualitative* data as "...the process of systematically organizing the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you've collected; bringing meaning to them so they tell a coherent story" (1998:171).

As a participant observer, I looked at gleaning from an exploratory perspective. I learned about gleaning by gleaning, I learned about gleaning groups by spending time with gleaning groups. In this way, when I entered the interview phase of my research, I had already learned much of the vocabulary of gleaners and a basic understanding of their membership systems, methods of food collection and organization of food distributions.

An emphasis on exploratory participant observation also allowed me to look at gleaning organizations in Oregon holistically and in relation to their wider contexts, rather than focusing on just one aspect of gleaning. In addition, the information I acquired as an observer led to further questions and hunches about gleaning groups, which were pursued as I entered the interviewing phase of my research. As DeWalt, DeWalt and Wayland comment, participant observation “enhances the quality of the data obtained during fieldwork. Second, it enhances the quality of the interpretation of data. Participant observation is thus both a data collection and an analytic tool” (1998: 264).

I found participant observation to be a two-edged sword. The data I gathered as a participant observer was open-ended, providing insight and avenues to questions I would never have developed if left to my own assumptions. At the same time, this openness provided a great challenge to me in selecting which aspects of my participant observation were significant. For this reason, data analysis continually took place throughout this research study. The process of transcribing field notes itself provided a valuable opportunity to intentionally process the events I had experienced as an observer. In addition, I regularly took opportunities to step back mentally from the material I was gathering to reflect on my larger research goals. These thoughts and ideas were collected in analytic field notes including comparison lists of the groups I was spending time with, charts and diagrams attempting to map the relationships in gleaning groups and between gleaning groups and Jansen Food Bank, as well as narrative reflections on what I was seeing and hearing in these groups.

When I completed both the data collection and data recording stages of this research, I continued the process of analysis through careful reexamination of field notes and interviews. I went back through every field experience and interview, recording quotes and observations onto post-it

notes color-coded by the source of the information. These sticky notes were then grouped onto pieces of 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper with other sticky notes addressing the same category. Category headings included topics such as “overworked gleaning coordinators” or “incentives for gleaning volunteers.” Once all of the post-it notes were sorted onto category sheets, I went back through these sheets, refining the organization of these sticky notes into emerging themes. Color-coding of sticky notes by source allowed me to easily identify triangulation of data sources. For instance, observations at a gleaning site might be confirmed by statements made during an interview, which were also reinforced by a comment made at a group coordinator meeting or in documents pertaining to the gleaning organizations. In this way, data were validated by confirmation from multiple data sources. By the time I was through with recording, transcribing and analyzing, every piece of information gathered for this study was read and processed a minimum of three times.

Using analytic field notes as a guide for processing these emerging themes, I adopted the concepts of human capital and social capital as a framework for organizing and understanding these data. The selection of human and social capital as an analytical framework emerged from my initial research intent to discover the characteristics of successful gleaning groups. Participant observation and interviews with gleaners made it clear that more was happening in these groups than distributing food. Interactions with Sharon Thornberry, an expert on gleaning in Oregon, also led me to broaden my understanding of success in these groups, as she emphasized the importance of community building as a unique asset of gleaning activities. Using human and social capital development as a framework for looking at these data allowed me to explore the potential for these types of capital development within gleaning groups as well as potential hindrances to these developments.

Rationale for the Method

Initially, an ethnographic approach to gleaning groups came from the need for more research of an exploratory nature. An ethnographic approach identifies informants as experts and seeks to gain an insider's perspective through in-depth, open-ended interviewing and participant observation. Ethnographic methods also provide a foundation of insight and perspective upon which additional research may be built. As this study progressed, the ability to document social connections and skills developing within these groups was an essential element provided through participation in these groups. Participant observation enabled me to experience policies and procedures as they were spoken and lived out within these organizations. Indeed, participant observation was the most influential data source for this study. Interviews with key informants and document reviews were employed to clarify, confirm, and compare information that was gained through observation of these groups. In addition, interviews with gleaning and adoptee volunteers gave me the opportunity to hear more about the personal impacts and benefits of participation in gleaning from gleaning members themselves.

Through this research, I gained both an outsider's perspective and an insider's perspective of gleaning groups. Interviews with gleaners, participation with gleaners and my experience as a member of a gleaning group, gave me an opportunity to look at gleaning from an insider's point of view (emic perspective) (McGee and Warms 2000:289). As a researcher, I analyzed what I saw and experienced at a systemic and comparative level, thus gaining an outsider's perspective (etic perspective).

I also found that an ethnographic approach challenged my initial assumptions regarding the definition of success within gleaning groups. A qualitative approach provided the flexibility and the depth of insight to explore what emerged as a very relevant question for gleaning groups in their

present contexts: What is their purpose? A qualitative research method allowed me to explore the possibility that these groups have the potential to offer more to their communities than food, through the development of human and social capital.

THE TANGIBLE BENEFITS OF GLEANING

How do you feel about the food you get from the gleaners?

I couldn't make it without it, simple as that.

I don't know what I'd do without the gleaners.

[Edith Simmons, Penville Gleaners]

The first and primary goal of gleaning groups throughout Oregon is to provide food for low-income families within their communities. This chapter will focus on this tangible aspect of gleaning, that is, the food that is collected and distributed through gleaning organizations. I will discuss the basics of how gleaning takes place today and how this additional food resource impacts families who are able to share in it.

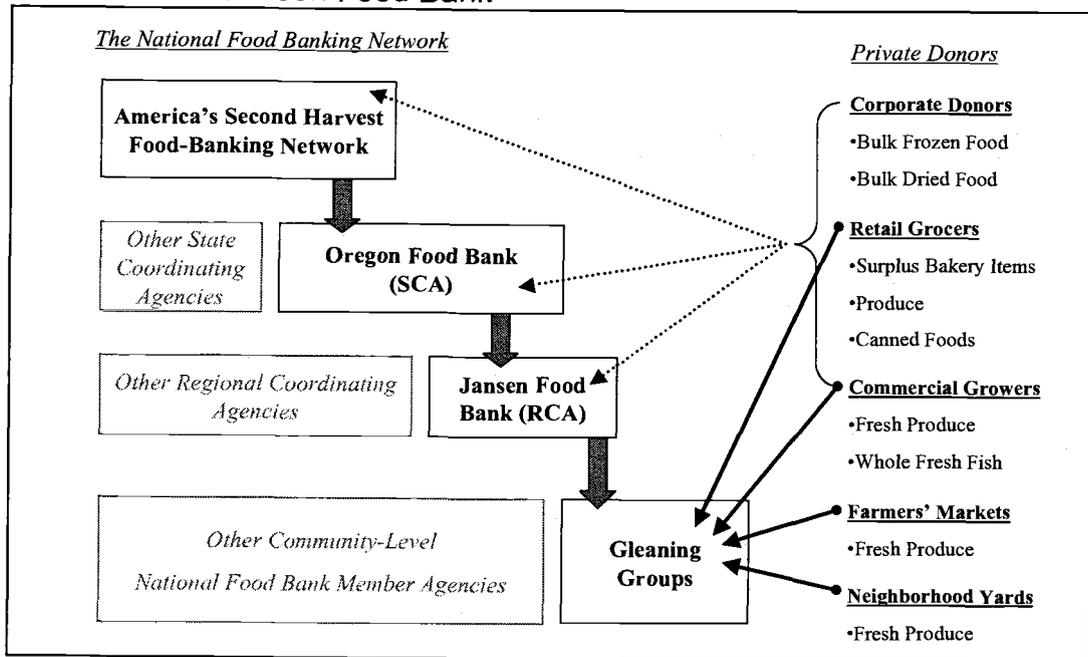
Gleaning Basics

Gathering the Harvest

The collection of excess usable food by gleaners happens in several ways. Historically, gleaning has taken place in farmers' fields. More recently, however, gleaning has expanded to include surplus food from a variety of sources including commercial food processing companies, grocery stores, farmers' markets, neighborhood yards, and the national food-banking network (See Figure 2). Each food source provides different types of food and requires varying levels of volunteer participation.

Field Gleaning is one of the most labor-intensive ways that gleaning groups gather food. Farmers contact the gleaning group and tell them when there is a crop available to be harvested. This produce might be accessible because a crop is not viable for the market for some reason (misshapen, etc.), or a commercial harvesting machine might have missed a certain part of a crop, leaving good available produce that would be economically

Figure 2. Diagram of Food Sources for Gleaning Organizations Associated with Jansen Food Bank



inefficient for the farmer to harvest, or the produce might simply be surplus. Once the gleaning group or groups have been contacted, they go to the field and harvest by hand whatever is available. This may involve kneeling or standing in the outdoors for long periods of time. In addition, many times the amount of food that a group is able to gather is directly proportionate to the number of volunteers participating in a particular glean. For example, at two of the field gleans I was able to observe there was a significant amount of produce that went unharvested, simply because the group did not have sufficient labor to gather more. The abundance of the available harvests I participated in made an impact on me. After experiencing my first field glean, I wrote the following in my journal:

The sun shone brightly on the rows of green beans. Each of us took a row. There was more than enough for everyone to pick all day. No need for anxiousness or for hoarding. It was a field of grace, a field of abundance. It's the kind of thing that makes you want to *share*.

At times, depending on a land owner's schedule for managing their fields, or the condition of the produce to be gathered, gleaning organizations may have as little as 24 hours' notice for a field glean. From my observations, however, it was more common for groups to have sufficient time to plan and coordinate gleans.

For the majority of gleaning groups in this study, field gleaning is on the decline. As one group coordinator commented, "At this point, we've outgrown it [gleaning]. We do it occasionally. I think most gleaning groups are in that boat." Gleaners and professionals from the food-banking network suggest several reasons for this shift. Commercialization, mechanization and increased efficiency in harvesting techniques by farmers were common explanations for decreased field access. Liability concerns from farmers was another suggested possibility for fewer participating farms especially among corporate farmers. A simple loss of farmers in Oregon was another reason for this shift. I would also suggest that the availability of large quantities of food from other sources might also contribute to this decrease in field gleaning activities.

There are incentives for farmers to participate in gleaning activities. In some situations, allowing gleaners to harvest excess crops is more cost efficient than disposing of it in other ways. In addition, recent legislation provides a tax credit (10% of the wholesale value of the produce) for farmers who donate produce to gleaning organizations (Oregon Food Bank 2003).

In recent years, agricultural gleaning has expanded to include fruits and vegetables from neighborhood yards. In addition to tax benefits, these private residents may also benefit from gleaning, as it reduces the mess of produce that might otherwise be left to rot in someone's yard. One community member expressed that a gleaning group helped her a great deal by cleaning out rotten fruit from under her trees and taking the fresh fruit from her trees, thus preventing further windfalls. In addition, she expressed that

fewer fruits on the ground would help decrease the number of moths the following season.

During the 2001-2002 gleaning season, groups were able to gather green beans, apples, pears, plums, peaches, tomatoes, blueberries, broccoli, and strawberries. These agricultural gleans took place both in farmers' fields and neighborhood yards.

Farmers are also able to participate in gleaning by providing previously harvested produce to gleaning organizations. One way they do this is through local farmers' markets. Gleaning groups in this study brought Rubbermaid bins to markets and placed them under the tables of different farmers' displays. As the day went on, farmers were able to place produce into these bins that were then collected by gleaners at the end of the market day. This method for collecting produce is not as labor intensive as actual field gleaning, as one or two people are able to come and gather the produce. However, farmers' markets commonly yield small amounts of each item, which can be difficult to distribute in a large gleaning group.

The collection of agricultural donations is necessarily limited by the availability of these types of donations. Typically gleaning organizations reported receiving agricultural donations from July until October during 2001.

Gathering day old breads and other damaged foods from retail food stores is another regular collection strategy of gleaning groups. Unlike the sources mentioned above, food from grocery stores is available year round. This type of collection is commonly associated with a regularly scheduled pick-up time, where one or two gleaning volunteers arrive at the retail store and pickup whatever has been set aside for a donation that day. Breads and pastries are the most common food gathered from these retail food establishments. During my field experience, it was not uncommon to see gleaners drive up to a distribution site with the entire cargo area of their vehicle filled with bread. During one of my first days as a gleaner, I went to

my group's distribution site to pick up food. Shortly after I arrived, Gary, a middle-aged man, drove up with a delivery from a grocery store. I went out to see if I could help. When I got outside, there was a sea of bread filling the entire bed of his truck. Within a few minutes there were four or five of us loading up bread in flat plastic trays and taking them inside the building. A little boy was filling a small cardboard box with bread and carrying it in. Others were loading bread into plastic carriers and helping each other carry them in. We had so much bread that day that we were able to share some of it with other groups.

The majority of gleaning groups in Oregon also receive food through America's Second Harvest food-banking network. This food comes from a variety of sources. Corporate grocery chains are able to make large donations of food to State and Regional Coordinating Agencies. This food is then distributed to network-member gleaning organizations as well as food pantries and other emergency food organizations. In fact, gleaners are able to take some foods which food pantries and other organizations are not able to handle. These donations include odd, unprepared foods such as asparagus puree, or large quantities of food that must be repacked into smaller family-sized portions. Examples of these foods include frozen carrots, pasta, and freeze dried blueberries.

For every gleaning group associated with Jansen Food Bank, the national food-banking network is their largest single food source. In fact, from July 2001-July 2002, most of the gleaning groups working with Jansen Food Bank received an average of 79% of their food through the food bank (See Table 3). It is important to note that much of the bread gleaning groups receive through grocery stores is receipted through the food bank and is included in this total. Gleaning groups received items such as flour, Power Bars,

Table 3. Average Food Distribution among Gleaning Groups Associated with Jansen Food Bank.

	Lowest Group	Highest Group	Average of all Groups
Food Distribution			
Total Pounds Distributed	64,932	460,825	163,003
Average Pounds Distributed Per Individual	384	1,471	778
Average Pounds Distributed Per Household	1,115	3,573	1,997
Percentage of Food Field Gleaned	.1%	15.5%	5.3%
Percentage of Food from Jansen Food Bank	49.8%	92.9%	79.1%
<i>Data source: self-reported data from each group submitted to Jansen Food Bank on a monthly basis from June 2001-July 2002.</i>			

crackers, cereal, eggs, potatoes, cucumbers, ice cream and much more through the food-banking network.

Typically, there is one main distribution scheduled per month for gleaners at the Jansen Food Bank warehouse. Throughout the month, however, as food becomes available through the network, gleaners have 2-3 additional distributions from the Jansen Food Bank, frequently with just 24 hours' notice, sometimes less.

Jansen Food Bank also schedules one to two unique distributions called "repacks" each month. These repacks are the result of donations from frozen food companies that have large amounts of frozen vegetables and pasta. Such donations come in giant boxes, or totes, that measure approximately 4 'x 4' x 4'. On scheduled repack days, gleaners associated with Jansen Food Bank gather together at the Jansen Food Bank warehouse. At the two repacks I attended, there were approximately 70 volunteers present to help take the frozen food from these boxes and repack them into family-sized portions.

At repacks, volunteers participated in activities ranging in physical demand from tearing plastic bags off of a roll, to maneuvering filled totes using hand pulled crate dollies. There were people stationed right beside each box using large metal scoops to transfer the frozen product from the tote into household portioned plastic bags. Sometimes volunteers used large spade-like tools to break up the frozen vegetables so they could scoop them up. This position required a fair bit of physical work and a lot of bending over. The people at the corner of the boxes held plastic bags out with their fingers keeping the opening accessible for the "scooper" to fill the bags. Once the bag was full, they placed it on a table. At this point, a "twister" tried to remove as much air as possible from the bag, then sealed it shut with a twisty tie. "Carriers" then came and picked up the filled bags and put them off to the side until all the food was repackaged and ready to be distributed among the groups. Another important job was preparing bags to be filled. Sitting at a table off to the side there were six to eight women pulling plastic bags off a roll and then scrunching them down so that they were open and ready to be filled. There was a definite rhythm to this entire process and if one part of the chain of action stopped for some reason, the whole operation eventually came to a standstill. At one of the repacks I observed, gleaners repacked approximately 16,000 pounds of pasta during one day of hard work.

Food offered through the food-banking network is available throughout the year and, aside from repacked food, it can usually be retrieved from the Jansen Food Bank warehouse with minimal volunteer participation. In fact, there was one group that consistently sent only one individual with a very large truck to the warehouse to pick up every time there was food available. Warehouse staff would load crates of food into the truck using a forklift and the individual would return to their distribution site with a full load of food.

Unlike field gleaning, the amount of volunteer participation has virtually no affect on the amount of food collected.

Distributing the Harvest

Once food has been obtained from various sources, it is taken back to each group's distribution site where it is allotted among the members of each group. Unlike other food distribution organizations, gleaning groups require membership in order for individuals to receive food on an ongoing basis. Gleaners must meet certain income requirements to qualify as members. The groups in this study required an income at or below 185% of the poverty line, which is determined by the number of people comprising their household. In addition, families must commit to fulfilling a volunteer requirement (three to twelve hours per month) and to picking up food from their group's distribution site. Some groups also have a membership fee, which is used to support the costs of running the organization.

Gleaning distribution sites vary significantly from a small shed at a gleaner's home to an entire building equipped with walk-in freezers and coolers and a thrift store in the front. Gleaning groups have not always maintained distribution sites, as one former coordinator reported, "We didn't have a building at that time [1980-84]. We distributed out of the fields, out of our homes, our garages or the backs of our trucks." All of the groups I visited for this study had a building designated for the purposes of their group. Each of these sites, regardless of size, served a similar function: to provide a location for food storage and a meeting place for the purpose of distributing what the group had gathered.

In terms of storage, groups varied widely in their ability to keep and handle food. Every site I visited had at least one freezer and many groups had several. Refrigerators were also common. Smaller groups often had family sized appliances plugged wherever they might fit. Other groups were

equipped with full walk-in freezers and coolers for keeping food. Many of the smaller freezers and refrigerators were obtained through donations to each group. One group had recently received a refrigerated display case, which was donated, delivered and installed by a nearby Pepsi distributor.

Group distributions usually took place at a scheduled time each week. For many groups, distributions are scheduled during regular working hours and can last anywhere from one hour to a full day. Depending on the group, food is distributed either in pre-packed boxes for each family or by allowing individuals to choose what they would like from the shelves at the site, just as one might do at a grocery store. Often this method is accompanied by small signs, which limit the food a person may take according to the size of their family. A few groups have a system where team leaders, rather than individual members come to the gleaning site and pick up the food that is available and then take it back to their homes or the homes of team members to be distributed there.

In addition to providing food for their members, gleaning organizations also share what they have gathered with other community agencies. Groups that gleaners contribute to include area churches, food pantries, treatment centers for the mentally handicapped, local police departments, and other nearby gleaning groups.

The Quality of the Harvest

Most gleaning group participants that I interviewed with were very happy with the quality of food they received. When I asked one woman how she felt about the food she received from her gleaning group she commented, "It's like Christmas every week." A gleaner from another group mentioned, "The food is great. I like some things better than others, but when you're hungry, you eat what you've got," another stated, "95% is good. Once in a while you get something that's borderline and you have to throw it

out.” There were a few negative remarks about the food. One man said that a woman he carries food to calls him the “garbage man” because of the food he brings. Another man commented, “We have to chuck most of it, but every little bit helps.”

Gleaners are in the practice of taking food that someone else doesn't want for some reason. This means that some of the food the gleaners get is not in the best condition. Sheila, a representative of Jansen Food Bank, commented that sometimes people donate completely rotten food. During separate interviews, two coordinators mentioned a half rotten and half overripe load of peaches that had come into Jansen Food Bank. Both leaders communicated that they were disappointed at the condition of the fruit especially after traveling considerable distances to pick it up. One coordinator refused to take any of the peaches. At another Jansen Food Bank distribution a gleaner noticed a load of cucumbers and commented that they were pretty good; she continued, speaking from experience, “If you can smell ‘em, then you know it's not pretty.”

In my own experience as a gleaner, I directly encountered the quality of the food we received through gleaning. Food gleaned from the fields was generally in good or excellent condition as it was fresh from the fields. At times, however, even gleaned produce was not what I expected. I recall eating a gleaned pear and noticing a worm wriggling around inside after I had taken a bite. Following this incident, I cut all of our gleaned pears and apples before eating them. Many times, agriculture products gleaned from grocery stores and sometimes from the farmers' markets were not in the best condition. I felt that some of these foods needed to be eaten almost as soon as we brought them home from the distribution site. I quickly learned that sorting through what we gathered from the site was simply part of being a gleaner. Frozen foods, packaged or prepared foods, and breads and

pastries were almost always in fine condition. We did start keeping our bread in the fridge, however, so it would last longer.

Some groups try to avoid waste at an individual level by allowing individuals to choose what food they take from the group. This allows the group to find organizations that will take the unused food. If food is unfit for human consumption, many groups find an avenue for feeding this food to animals. Commonly, this food goes to a designated farmer with pigs or chickens. One group mentioned giving poor quality food to a nearby 4-H farm. Gleaners also reported taking slightly stale or moldy breads and feeding them to the birds. The Jansen Food Bank warehouse gives some food to a pig farmer, but also keeps a compost pile near the side of their building. The coordinator of an independent gleaning group echoed this strategy, commenting, "None of our food goes to waste, it goes right down the food chain." She went on to praise her group for their ability to limit waste noting that they use only small trashcans and no dumpsters at their site. At the same time, she was critical of some distribution agencies in the national food-banking network for large amounts of food that went to animals, which she believes could have been distributed to people.

According to my observations, while most food that was no longer fit for human consumption was redirected to animal farms or compost piles, in some groups, food was also thrown away. For instance, one group found mold tortillas during a distribution. As they sorted through the packages of tortillas looking for mold, bad packages went directly into the trash. *

Although there are few groups that are actually tracking the pounds of food they throw out, I would like to reiterate that most of the food distributed by the gleaners is in very good condition. If the majority of the food handled by the gleaners was not good, people would cease to access gleaning groups for food.

The Tangible Impacts of Gleaning

Who Participates in Gleaning Organizations?

There are two categories of membership in gleaning organizations: “gleaners” and “adoptees.” Gleaners are able-bodied members of a group and are expected to contribute to the group through physical work. In addition to providing food for these able-bodied working members of gleaning groups, gleaners also provide food for members of the community who are disabled, elderly, or shut-in and cannot help with the physical aspects of the work required to gather food. These individuals are called “adoptee” members. On average, adoptee households make up 50% of the membership of groups associated with Jansen Food Bank (See Table 4) and

Table 4. Average Membership Characteristics among Gleaning Organizations Associated with Jansen Food Bank

	Lowest Group	Highest Group	Average of all Groups
Membership Characteristics			
Average Number of Individuals	78	868	249
Average Number of Households	37	308	94
Average Percentage of Adoptee Households	27%	82%	50%
<i>Data source: self-reported data from each group submitted to Jansen Food Bank on a monthly basis from June 2001-July 2002.</i>			

commonly have a lower membership fee than gleaners. Some adoptees are able to drive to get their food at the distribution site. Others, however, are unable to get out of their homes and so able-bodied gleaners will deliver food to their homes. In the past, these adoptee members were assigned directly to a gleaning member and half of all the food that a particular gleaner gathered in the fields would go directly to their adoptee. Now, most of the deliveries

take place with a handful of the gleaning members driving around to make deliveries to several adoptees.

In addition to these member statuses, individuals who do not qualify to be a gleaner or an adoptee because their income is too high may join a group as a “volunteer.” Volunteers may participate in any of the activities of the group, but they are restricted from taking food. In my experience, “volunteer” participants were very rare.

Of the gleaning members and adoptees I interviewed, the majority heard about their gleaning group from friends, family members or neighbors. One group received a consistent number of new applicants after moving to a new distribution site with increased visibility. One gleaning leader mentioned that he found out about gleaning from a television commercial in the eighties. Beyond that, I did not observe any evidence that there were intentional campaigns at the organizational level to recruit new members.

Throughout the participant observation phase of my research, I observed gleaning group members dealing with varied stresses in their lives, homes and economic situations. As Sharon Thornberry of the Oregon Food Bank commented, “When you start dealing with gleaners, you start dealing with people in their situation, people in the throes of poverty trying to help themselves and others.” One woman lost her job with no notice because she was unable to keep up with the pace of her coworkers. She thought she had been doing a good job. Another woman lost her apartment with less than a month’s notice because her landlord wanted to remodel. One gleaner had a husband who sustained injuries at his job two times within less than a month. The first time he had metal shards from an explosion nearly hit him in the eye and was back at work within a few days. As another gleaner commented during an interview,

Low-income people often are the ones that work really hard and don’t get the money. They’re out there breaking their backs on behalf of other people. They’re out on ladders where

they shouldn't be. They're out with chainsaws when they shouldn't be. It's amazing what we'll do to make money and I mean legally.

During an interview, one gleaner explained how he had saved up all of his pennies to buy a truck for \$3500 and now he was broke. He went on to say, "If you drop below a certain level, it takes all you've got to pay for things."

Gleaning group members receive their personal income from a variety of sources. Some receive social security benefits because of their age, while others receive disability funds or some other form of government assistance. In addition, many gleaners have at least one working person in their household. Gleaners I met had jobs as landscapers, factory workers, caregivers, school cafeteria workers, substitute teachers, and one was the owner of a day care center.

Though all gleaners' incomes fall below 185% of the poverty level, there was a wide range of characteristics among gleaning members that indicated differences in their economic status. For example, among the gleaners I came in contact with there were individuals driving old run down vehicles covered in dust, and others in shiny new cars. Similarly, out of the adoptee houses I was able to visit, there were small, run down apartments, as well as moderately sized, well-kept homes. In terms of education, I came across a few college students, and one coordinator who mentioned having a degree in engineering.

Dealing with health problems and medical bills was another common theme among gleaning members. Among adoptee members, poor health was not a surprising occurrence. One woman I visited was bedridden. At another adoptee household, there was a sign on the door that read, "oxygen in use." Additional adoptee illnesses included terminal cancer, respiratory problems, AIDS, blindness, and Parkinson's Disease. Adoptees were not the only group members suffering from medical conditions. Many of the gleaning volunteers who were actively spending themselves physically had serious

medical problems. These illnesses included cancer, strokes, heart attacks, and back problems. Leaders from one group recounted how one woman had actually driven in to volunteer with her group a few days following brain surgery.

In addition, most active gleaning members are women. While I do not have exact numbers on the gender breakdown within the gleaning groups in this study, the prevalence of female participation is evident in that 88% of the coordinators of these organizations were women throughout the course of my fieldwork. Additionally, during an interview one male gleaning leader consistently used feminine pronouns to describe the general role of a team leader. In that same group, an elderly woman made the comment: "There's not a lot of men around here. We need them for heavy lifting."

Gleaning's Tangible Benefits

The food provided by gleaning organizations benefits families within their communities in significant ways. Gleaners I talked with expressed three main ways in which food from gleaning organizations is making an impact in their households. First, food from gleaning organizations is displacing economic pressure allowing families to spend money in ways they wouldn't be able to without the provision of food. Secondly, gleaners reported that food from these groups gave them access to nutritious food. Finally, food from the gleaners is helping to relieve hunger. Each of these themes will be explored further in the following section.

A common benefit of receiving food expressed by gleaners was the ability to save money in the food portion of their budget, thus freeing up money in their overall budget, which could then be used for other things. One gleaning leader commented,

There's a lot of people whose lights are still on because the gleaners gave them food. Or they have enough money to keep gas in their tank from where gleaners helped them out. A lot of

people who come in here have a short margin for spending something. If they choose to spend it on one thing, it means they can't spend it on another. Gleaning is relieving the burden from a lot of people.

Sharon Thornberry often pointed out at gleaning events that food is one of the first items in a family's budget that gets cut down when finances are tight. No one from a grocery store will come and knock on someone's door and demand payment. Women from two different groups expressed that their involvement in gleaning allowed them to stay home with their children, something that would not be possible if they were unable to receive food through the gleaners. One man estimated that his participation in gleaning saved him somewhere around \$5-\$10 each week. He went on to say, "With gleaners, it gives you that little extra where you can drive over to the coast every once in a while with money you would have been forced to spend on food."

Providing nutritious food, in particular, was also mentioned as a benefit of being a part of a gleaning group. One woman commented, "Food is a basic thing. We're lucky. We're getting out in the fields and getting fresh food." One homebound woman mentioned that her nurse had suggested she join the gleaners in order to gain access to nutritious produce. Another woman commented, "Feeding kids healthy these days is so expensive. Junk food is a lot cheaper- I don't believe in that..." Gleaning gives member households access to nutritious produce that might otherwise be out of their reach.

While agricultural donations to gleaning organizations are healthy, it is also important to note that as gleaning has expanded to include food sources other than fields, the number of carbohydrates and starches available through gleaning groups has also increased. When I first joined a gleaning group, I was surprised and a little frustrated at the amount of breads, pastas and pastries available through the group. I am fairly certain that the sugar intake in our family increased, simply because sugary foods were available for free. One gleaner I

talked with mentioned similarly that most of the foods his group gives out are carbohydrates. Being a diabetic, this limits the food he is able to take from the group. In addition, it was common at organization sites for volunteers to snack on sweets gleaned from a grocery store. Sometimes these snacks were substituted for lunch. During a distribution at Jansen Food Bank two gleaning coordinators were discussing the fact that they were having a hard time getting anyone to take flour at their site. "No one bakes anymore, because we have so many pastries." At a monthly coordinator meeting when discussing the definition of gleaning, one woman said, "Gleaning has come to mean going to the grocery store and hoping it's not all pastry and French bread." So while produce gained and distributed by the gleaners is certainly nutritious, the overall nutritional benefit of being involved with gleaning groups is being challenged, on some level, by the types of food being accessed through additional food sources.

For some individuals, involvement in the gleaners is not about budget adjustments or nutrition; it is about survival. The food they receive in their gleaning boxes is essential to their family being fed. When I asked one woman what kept her being a gleaner, she responded, "I keep being hungry, I guess. I'm not tryin' to be a smart ass. It's just the way it is." When asked about the benefits of gleaning, one woman replied, "The benefits are that I can feed my family. I'm in the hole every month." Another gleaner echoed this remark saying, "sometimes this [gleaning] is really what gets me by." Another gleaner reflected on an experience she had taking food to a woman in her community for the first time. She explained that this woman had nothing in her fridge but a bit of juice. "It's hard not to let that affect you," she added. Employed and unemployed group members alike expressed the need for food acquired through the gleaners. One man mentioned that he works steadily, but all of the money he makes goes to pay the bills. He commented that food from the gleaners allows his family to make it through the week. Another working couple said, "We live out of those gleaning

boxes.” Furthermore, one coordinator noted that there are certain forms of government assistance that are reduced if someone is using a food stamp benefit. Gleaning allows people to receive supplemental food without a reduction being made to their overall income.

Aside from gleaning members, the two groups outside of the national food-banking network emphasized their willingness to share the food they gather with anyone in the community in need. One volunteer from Blooming Gleaners commented, “I’ve never seen them turn away anyone that was hungry.” Leaders from We Can! Gleaners reported giving food to families that were new in town, children from local independent living centers who were starting out on their own, migrant workers, and generally anyone who expressed need with no obligation to join the group. I sensed this group prided themselves in the way they were able to help anyone in need within their community.

The groups that are a part of the Jansen Food Bank were more hesitant about giving food out to individuals that were not members of their groups, largely because of the Oregon Food Bank policy which asserts that groups and individuals that are a part of gleaning organizations are not to give gathered food to non-members. As stated in a handout distributed at a gleaning field-training meeting, “Donations received through this project must not be traded, sold, or given to anyone not associated with the gleaning group.” The intention of this policy is to ensure that food gathered through gleaning groups is going to low-income families. As this policy currently stands, it may actually be keeping needy individuals from receiving food from gleaning groups that could provide it. At the same time, in interviews with individual gleaning members and adoptees, several people mentioned that they commonly shared with neighbors or others in need despite the food bank policy. This sharing is also making a difference in terms of hunger reduction in communities where gleaning organizations are operating by

providing the means by which gleaners can share with others around them. One gleaner shared the following story about a woman who had been abandoned near his home:

They give us emergency blankets here [gleaning group], and I drove into my driveway the other day and there's this woman there with two little children. She said that this guy had brought them up there and dropped them off. Yes, and I gave her a blanket for the kids and I took her up toward the state park. I just couldn't take her all the way because I didn't have the gas or the money for it. And I poured some milk into a carton for her. You see she was trying to get to Trent. I should have taken her further, but like I said, I just didn't have the money or the gas to do it. I gave her a couple of loaves of bread from the deep freeze and a little jar of peanut butter. She would have been alright, but those two little boys, eight and twelve, they were too little and they wouldn't be able to fend for themselves. I made them six hamburgers and I used gleaner buns. Oh that one little boy's eyes got so big. That was the best thing he'd ever eaten since he'd been without food for 36 hours or so. That kid was starvin'. Now somebody else might have done the same thing. But I was there and I had the stuff, so I could do it.

Gleaning organizations are active in collecting and distributing excess food, through the effort and contribution of volunteers, companies, grocery stores and the national food-banking network. Whether freeing up members' budgets, providing access for low-income families to nutritious food, or distributing food to individuals and households that may not have food otherwise, gleaning groups are providing the tangible benefit of food for individuals in their communities that need it.

THE INTANGIBLE BENEFITS OF GLEANING

My initial assumption when beginning fieldwork with the gleaners was that they would be making a difference in their communities primarily by providing food. From my experience with the gleaners, however, I discovered that gleaning organizations were making significant contributions to their communities through the development of relationships and skills among each groups' membership. This chapter will explore the intangible benefits of gleaning by looking at the formation of human capital and social capital within these groups.

Human Capital

There were several examples of gleaning groups providing individuals with opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge, or human capital. The daily operations of gleaning organizations offered people chances to gain food-handling skills, management skills, organizational skills, accounting skills, and experience in teamwork, conflict management, and volunteer coordination and motivation. I found also that in carrying out many of the tasks required in the daily operations of these groups, individuals were able to experience a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence from successfully completing tasks they had once thought were beyond their abilities.

As gleaning organizations often distribute large quantities of produce, they provide a good opportunity for individuals to learn about food preservation. Leaders from the two gleaning groups I visited that were not part of Jansen Food Bank mentioned specific opportunities that were available within their groups to train individuals in food preservation. One of these groups, Blooming Gleaners, reported having a master preserver who offers her knowledge to share with the rest of the group. We Can! Gleaners has canning equipment at their distribution site and experienced members offer to show others in the group how to can.

While none of the leaders I spoke with from gleaning groups connected to Jansen Food Bank mentioned preservation classes within their individual groups, there were announcements for such classes being offered at a community level at coordinator meetings. One of the staff members at Jansen Food Bank also mentioned that they would like to see more canning and food preservation education in the future for gleaning groups they work with. As a gleaner myself, I had never canned before. Early in the summer our family received a lot of blueberries and one of the women in Hartland Gleaners offered to have me over to her house to teach me how to can them. Unfortunately, this woman left the group shortly after her offer. Since I had so many blueberries, though, I had the opportunity to learn to can from my mother - something I doubt we would have done together, if the produce had not been available. Similarly, the abundance of produce coming from the gleaners inspired me to bake my first pie from scratch! It was the first of approximately nine pies I baked throughout the summer.

Sharing recipes and food knowledge was also common among gleaners. As a gleaner I was offered recipes for various items that came into our distribution site. Often cooking instructions were shared verbally as I selected certain items to take home. Members of the staff at Jansen Food Bank would often look for recipes on the Internet for odd items such as Brazil nut meal and distribute these recipes among group coordinators for further disbursement among group members.¹ *While interviewing one of the leaders of a gleaning group, she mentioned that a woman in her group had just recently brought in a new recipe for marinara sauce following a large distribution of tomatoes.

¹ Since the completion of my data collection, Jansen Food Bank has established a relationship with a profession from the extension service of a nearby university who is creating recipes based specifically on the food the gleaners are receiving through the food bank. This professional is making trips to individual gleaning groups to share nutrition information with them.

In addition to recipes, gleaners shared basic information about food and food use. During different parts of the season, my husband and I were given instructions on how best to use apples. Fellow gleaners at the site informed us that early Summer apples needed to be used faster, but Fall apples were “keepers,” and that they would store longer in the refrigerator. One load of apples we received was not ripe yet and ladies at the site advised me to use them only for pies and to mix them with other varieties for better flavor. As a gleaner, I learned additional food knowledge such as the definition of a tomatillo, the difference between a squash and a zucchini, ways to prepare asparagus puree and creative uses for freeze dried ice cream.

Learning about food handling was another opportunity for education provided by involvement with gleaning organizations. Food handling certification was offered at one of the statewide gleaning conferences I attended. Packets from that conference contained food handler’s manuals as well as USDA pamphlets on how to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products and canned goods. The coordinator for Blooming Gleaners mentioned that their group was able to take more canned goods than other groups because they had several members who were trained in identifying safe cans. At one point during their distribution, a woman asked, “Are we doing ‘dents’ today?” referring to a sorting process where safe cans were selected from among those that the group had collected. Friends and Neighbors Gleaning Group reported discussing safe food handling at one of their regular group meetings for an event they helped host.

Working in the fields also provides an opportunity for gaining knowledge regarding agriculture. Seeing produce in the fields itself is an opportunity for learning how fruits and vegetables grow and are harvested. In addition, during two of the agricultural gleans I participated in, gleaners discussed commercial harvesting methods of the crops we were gathering.

As non-profit organizations, gleaning groups have many organizational responsibilities beyond handling food. Gleaning groups must organize their finances, participate in fundraising activities, manage the membership records of their organization, coordinate volunteers, develop and maintain a strong board of directors, sustain good relations with donors, recruit new donors, and much more. In themselves, these needs provide opportunities for many people to gain new skills by helping to keep up with the daily operations of their group. This need for skills development is emphasized by the fact that many members of gleaning organizations have not learned these skills in other contexts. As Sharon Thornberry commented, "Gleaners don't have the skills and the people who do are only temporary with the group."

As leaders of community food distribution agencies, gleaning coordinators were invited to participate in county meetings where the needs and work of charitable agencies like the gleaners were discussed. These meetings provided gleaners with opportunities to speak in a political forum.

Jansen Food Bank is active in providing gleaning members with training workshops and learning resources. There are quarterly trainings at the Jansen Food Bank on such subjects as filling out paperwork for Jansen Food Bank, how to relate with retail donors and warehouse safety. In addition, staff at Jansen Food Bank reported providing a computer skills training session for gleaners following a donation of computers to Jansen Food Bank for gleaning groups and facilitated access to the internet at a discount rate for all of the groups. In addition, I observed that Jansen Food Bank provided consulting for groups as they encountered different administrative and management needs, such as establishing and maintaining 501 (c)(3) status. Jansen Food Bank also has a library of computer resource manuals for gleaning organizations to check out.

I found one group in particular, Friends and Neighbors Gleaning Group, to be exceptionally intentional about training volunteers for different tasks necessary to carry out the work of the organization. This group has a thrift store

where volunteer opportunities are posted in a similar way to jobs. A person signs up for a particular job and is then trained by group members who are already participating in that task. In this way, volunteers learned specific skills associated with the upkeep of the organization and trained volunteers also had the opportunity to teach and mentor others.

Evidence of human capital development is often played out in the daily work of gleaning groups. For this reason, it was difficult for me, as an outside observer, to recognize which aspects of human capital an individual brought to the group and which aspects of human capital were developed as a direct result of participation in a gleaning organization. However, following are two examples of this type of development that took place in the context of fulfilling the administrative and leadership needs of the organization.

During the course of my research, one of the coordinators in a group was dismissed from her duties with very short notice. Sylvia, the co-coordinator at that time had very little experience with leading a group or knowledge of the regulations that needed to be followed by gleaning groups. Though she was intimidated by the task at first, over the course of two months, Sylvia worked closely with a new co-coordinator to reorganizing various aspects of the group. Within two months of taking the position, the co-coordinator quit participating in the group because her family began making too much money to qualify as a gleaning household. At that point, Sylvia took full control and displayed marked improvement in her ability and confidence as the group's leader. She also committed to serve another year as the group's coordinator.

In another group, after holding elections for a secretary, the elected secretary neglected to show up and participate as needed. Recognizing the need of the group, another gleaning member, Kelly, stepped forward and began to fill the secretary's role. Kelly was well organized and had good ideas for helping the organization to run smoothly. I helped her build confidence in her computer skills as she used the group's computer more to accomplish tasks in

the office. One project we worked on together was the development of a database which enabled the organization to keep track of volunteer hours and miles and allow the group to see quickly which volunteers were willing to help with which activities. Kelly, single-handedly entered all the data into the computer after I showed her how to use the program. When I asked Kelly why she hadn't run for secretary in the first place, she responded, " I thought I was too stupid, but now I'm doin' it."

In these cases, there was a clear sense of achievement for both of these individuals. They were both faced with a challenge through their membership in the gleaning group and were able to meet those challenges. In the process, they also gained skills that have the potential to prove valuable in other venues. In addition, both women gained confidence in their abilities through their accomplishments within the contexts of their groups. This may be one of the most important aspects of human capital development offered through gleaning groups. Many gleaners expressed a sense of accomplishment in what they had done as part of a gleaning group. From smiling children rushing up to me at a gleaning distribution site to tell me they helped pick 642 pounds of apples that day, to a grinning middle-aged woman giving me a tour of her group's garden which she is in charge of tending, to a young woman showing me with pride the document she developed on the computer to help her group's fundraising efforts, I experienced these small glimpses of people's feelings of accomplishment. One of these examples of achievement occurred at a repack when an elderly woman decided that she wanted a turn inside the tote when it got down to the end. This is one of the most physically demanding roles involved in the repack process, as it requires a lot of bending and heavy lifting. She was thin in build and had tight curly white hair. "Let us know if you need someone to relieve you." "O.K." she answered back, "How 'bout when this tote is finished!" she said with determination. When she got down to the last scoop, she climbed out of the box

with the help of two others. "I've still got it," she said with resolve. She completed a physically challenging task and was proud of her accomplishment.

On a broader level, this attitude of achievement was echoed in the identity of gleaning organizations as "self-help" programs. One coordinator summed this notion up well, saying, "A lot of people can retain their dignity while getting help, because they have the option of coming in and giving back."

At times these investments in human capital result in paid work for gleaning members. Recently at a gathering at the state capital, which celebrated 30 years of gleaning in Oregon, one of the oldest gleaning members mentioned the importance of gleaning as an avenue for gaining employment. She commented that people could use their experiences in these groups as a basis for job recommendations. One gleaning coordinator was also eager to point out work experience as an important aspect of participation in gleaning programs. During my research, I met three people who obtained paid positions resulting from their experiences working with gleaning organizations. Another gleaning volunteer was given a temporary position at a grocery store hauling merchandise as a result of picking up bread for a gleaning group.

Social Capital

Gleaning organizations provide several avenues for the development of social capital, that is, expanding relational networks and building trust among group members. Most often, I observed this kind of relationship building occurring among gleaners as they worked to gather and redistribute food or when gleaners delivered food to adoptee households.

Times spent working in the fields and at the warehouse during repack activities were key occasions for participating gleaners to develop social connections. For example, while picking beans, I observed group members telling stories about their kids and how to discipline them, sharing recipes for utilizing produce, chatting about how they like to spend their free time, talking

about situations of unemployment, and relating stories regarding personal health problems. Similarly, repacks provided an opportunity for gleaners to begin to get to know each other. At one repack, eight elderly women sat at a table unfolding family sized bags in preparation to be filled and discussed the importance of defrosting freezers. Others, working hard to unload the food from boxes, formed small teams of workers with a sense of solidarity and accomplishment when the work was done. From participation in one of these teams, I met an elderly couple that began telling me about their granddaughter who was a student at a nearby university. Though I spent only a little time with the gleaning group this couple was a part of, I felt a special connection with them from our experiences together at repacks.

Working together at group distribution sites also provided opportunities for individuals to get to know each other better. On several occasions, I observed members of Penville Gleaners and Hartland Gleaners teasing one another or talking about more personal topics such as losing weight. Some gleaning distribution sites had even developed social spaces. For example, since a few of the workers at Penville Gleaners smoked, there was a set of chairs outside the distribution site's main entrance. I observed smokers and non-smokers alike using these chairs to take breaks from working. Commonly, individuals would converse together over a variety of topics while they rested. At Blooming Gleaners, donations of doughnuts from a local shop were regularly placed in a front room with coffee. One of the gleaning volunteers mentioned that this provided a pleasant social environment for people who were coming to get their food. She thought some people actually came early to the distribution site in order to visit in this room.

In addition to getting to know people while working together, some gleaning activities were regularly followed by potlucks facilitated by Jansen Food Bank staff. Both repacks and monthly coordinator meetings were followed by an opportunity for a meal together. During these potlucks, I observed people

sharing stories about their groups, making jokes and discussing problems they were facing in their daily lives. Each year, Jansen Food Bank also sponsors a picnic for all of the gleaning groups and donors to gleaning organizations. Opportunities such as these allow gleaners to build relationships with other gleaners as well as community members who contribute to gleaning. As a gleaning participant, I also took part in two impromptu meals with other gleaners. Once following a backyard glean, a woman offered to get lunch for my husband and me. The three of us along with two other group members who had participated in the glean shared this meal together. During this time, we discussed a number of topics, learning more about each other and our families. Another time my husband and I split lunch with a couple of gleaners following the cancellation of a group meeting and took the opportunity to talk about alternative medicine and employment.

Some relationships cultivated within gleaning groups remain at a casual level, but others led to stronger bonds. I encountered one married couple and one dating couple that met through their participation in gleaning groups. There is also evidence of several strong friendships that have been cultivated as individuals worked together within their gleaning groups. In addition, during interviews gleaners and adoptees often mentioned the importance of the social connections they had developed as a part of their membership in a gleaning group. One woman mentioned the benefit of creating stronger relationships within her own family through gleaning: "This [gleaning] allows us to keep the family meals together. It's part of community and family."

Relationships really begin to translate into social capital, as trust develops and individuals begin relying on other group members for ongoing support and help in times of need. One woman from Blooming Gleaners gave an account of how much support she felt from her group after joining the gleaners and becoming seriously ill in the same week.

Well, I started and then almost immediately, I started getting really sick, but I didn't realize it, because it was a weird virus. That was 3 years ago. Everyone in my family was feeling sick. I had surgery at that point and my husband came to the gleaners and picked up for us. Nobody said a word about me not putting in any hours, because they knew I was sick. It was a real feeling of community, the group knew and understood. Everybody took care of us during that time. The gleaners got us through this long illness.

In another group, a gleaning leader reported that when one of the members in her group became very ill, other individuals in the group took time and effort to show they cared.

And, let's face it, when they get together, they come and they talk to each other and what's going on and how do you feel and they become very protective. One of my ladies had, let's see she started off with a stroke and a heart attack and then blood gathered in her skull and it was turning into encephalitis, so they put a shunt, is that what it is? Anyway, a tube, and every time I'd have a glean we would take food over and they would put in a little card or somebody else would bring her a little something extra to go in her box. So when we would go over and we would take her stuff over, here would be this little pen, or here would be a little note, or something.

Another way gleaning organizations can contribute to the creation of networks of support and trust is by providing an atmosphere of understanding among low-income individuals. As a member of Penville Gleaners commented regarding her experience as a gleaner, "One thing is, you meet people who understand. Gleaners help people with the ropes. Maybe a family is new to being low-income and so we share information. And we understand each others' tough times." She went on to say, "You can talk about your life there. You can be wide open there; you don't have to be self-conscious. There's no stigma." She commented that at some food distribution agencies she felt she shouldn't wear her best clothes and that she had to prove herself as deserving when she went to receive food. This is something she did not feel as a part of a gleaning group. Similarly, a leader at We Can! Gleaners who worked with several food providers

noted that people in gleaning groups seem to be more caring than other food providers.

As a participating gleaning member, I have also experienced the development of relationships of trust and potential support with other gleaning members. For example, one day I rode my bike to the gleaning distribution site, because my husband was using our car. When I got there, I ended up having too much food to carry on my bike and in my backpack. One of the gleaners at the site offered to give me a ride home in her van. I was surprised at her willingness to carry me home without knowing where I lived. When I got home, she told me that if I ever needed a ride to the site to let her know, because my apartment was on her way to our group's building. In addition, my husband met a woman at a gleaning bake sale who started coming to church with us. She and I became good friends. We have shared meals at each other's homes and spent time together doing laundry, baking bread and talking about life.

Gleaning groups also provide a unique opportunity for disabled and elderly adoptee members of the group to develop relationships with gleaning members. Since many adoptees are unable to leave their homes, food is delivered to their houses on a regular basis. For many elderly and homebound individuals who are a part of gleaning, involvement with a gleaning group may provide their only contact with the outside world. One adoptee commented, "It [gleaning] gives me an excuse to go out because I'm pretty well homebound. It gives me a little bit of socializing for the short time I'm here and that's enough for now. As I get better I hope I can do more volunteer work."

When I asked one adoptee what gleaning meant for her, she answered, "it means the world to me, it really does. I used to go up on the hill and visit with people. I can't do that anymore, but if I get to feelin' better they'll be seein' a lot more of me." When asked "What does gleaning mean for your family?" Jane, another elderly adoptee commented, "Just knowing somebody cares." At a gleaning meeting, Mary, a gleaner, started talking to me about Genevieve, one of

the adoptees she carries food to. Mary explained that Genevieve was shut in, very lonely and not doing well at that time. Mary added that her family had essentially adopted Genevieve into their family, implying that they support her beyond simply carrying food to her house. Francine, a gleaning volunteer with Caring and Sharing Community Gleaners told me about an adoptee who she has started to trade plants with. She said, "We're becoming plant friends." I observed a gleaner from Penville Gleaners giving an adoptee a big hug when delivering food to her house. The two of them started chatting and we stayed in this adoptee's kitchen for almost 15 minutes. I have also had opportunities to develop a relationship with one of the adoptees in my group. I got to know her by calling to remind her about our monthly bake sales. As we talked on the phone and developed a relationship, we began talking almost every week. She worried about me when I didn't call, gave me advice on life and told me stories about her life. Her primary goal in our conversations was to get me to laugh. In addition, I offered to take her to the beach and we made plans to play card games together. Unfortunately, her health inhibited some of these activities.

Gleaning groups offer opportunities to build and develop relationships of trust within gleaning groups. As people interact together and as they perform the ordinary tasks of the group, they have opportunities to meet new people and build relationships that can become valuable investments in social capital.

From my observations and interviews with gleaners, it is evident that participation in gleaning organizations has the potential to be rewarding and valuable for members, not only in providing food, but in providing opportunities for individuals to gain food knowledge, administrative skills and self confidence (human capital) and to develop relationships of support and trust (social capital).

HINDERANCES TO HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

As much of the intentional focus of gleaning organizations is centered on gathering and distributing food, it is not surprising that opportunities to develop social and human capital within these groups are commonly overlooked, and sometimes even hindered by policies and methods with which the activities of each group are carried out. This research revealed that obstacles to management of group resources at the group level, lack of volunteer participation and an emphasis on efficiency were all factors that may be inhibiting potential development of human capital and social capital within these gleaning groups.

Obstacles to Management of Group Resources at the Group Level

All of the gleaning groups I came in contact with had one primary leader. This person was commonly called the group coordinator. Coordinators bear the brunt of the responsibility for the operation and organization of their group. For groups connected to the national food-banking network, coordinators also serve as the main contact person with their Regional Coordinating Agency.

Gathering and distributing food is a labor and time-consuming endeavor. Coordinators ensure that all of the tasks required to carry out the distribution of food from the group they are leading are covered. Often coordinators, along with a handful of committed volunteers, many of whom are also officers (co-coordinator, treasurer, secretary, etc.), are actively involved in carrying out these tasks on a daily basis. In many groups, the coordinator and officers are also members of the board of directors for their organization. The board of directors is responsible for maintaining the bylaws of their group as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization as well as making major decisions in the group. Coordinators and

those who take an active role in guiding the gleaning group including officers, board members, or active volunteers, are the individuals I am referring to when I use the phrase group leadership.

One of the greatest opportunities for gleaning groups to contribute to the development of human capital is by allowing group leaders to develop the management skills required for running an organization. Gleaning organizations that are members of Jansen Food Bank have entered into a contractual relationship with Jansen Food Bank and America's Second Harvest. As a part of this contract, gleaning groups agree to uphold policies which are intended to protect the interests of food donors and the individuals receiving these food donations, as well as assist in the function of the food banking network. However, this contractual relationship also gives a good deal of authority in terms of group management to State Coordinating Agencies and Regional Coordinating Agencies which distribute food to gleaning groups, perhaps limiting the ability of gleaning leaders to learn leadership and management skills. In this section, I will explore difficulties group leaders encountered in managing time, food intake, finances and group authority.

Managing Time

One of the most immediate and visible pressures placed on group leadership is that there are many demands placed on their time. Gleaning coordinators, in particular, reported working up to 60 or 70 volunteer hours a week to help gather and distribute the food coming through their organization. Group leaders are continually involved in field gleans, food disbursements from local businesses, fundraising events, group meetings, group distributions, and board meetings. For groups associated with Jansen Food Bank, leaders also spend time participating in monthly coordinator meetings, additional training sessions, quarterly gleaning conferences, preparation of paperwork, regular site evaluations, monthly distributions of food from the national food-banking

network, as well as unscheduled distributions from the national food-banking network. I observed that group coordinators tended to be present at nearly every distribution, training session and activity scheduled for their group.

In addition, it was not uncommon among gleaners for schedules and plans to change at a moment's notice. This short notice for many gleaning events added to the pressure group leaders felt regarding their time. On more than one occasion, the coordinator from Penville Gleaners felt compelled to leave or shorten scheduled board meetings when an unscheduled distribution from the national food-banking network came up with little notice. In another instance, during a coordinator's meeting at Jansen Food Bank, both groans and cheers were expressed when an announcement was made that there would be a distribution at the warehouse the following day. A representative from Jansen Food Bank answered with a consoling reminder, "This is what makes gleaners unique." As one Jansen Food Bank staff member commented, "The Coordinator is the one I call to say there's a distribution this afternoon or tomorrow, and I can't help when the food comes in."

Several coordinators expressed concern at the amount of work they were undertaking as leaders. At times, coordinators simply appeared weary. At other times, they verbally communicated how much they had been working or typically work. Asking coordinators how they were doing elicited responses such as, "Tired. Too many long days," or "It's been a long day. We went north to pick up at Baytown and we haven't been back home yet." Shortly after meeting one coordinator, she began revealing her stress to me, explaining that she had worked a lot as a coordinator and she was just too tired to do it anymore. The Friday before our encounter, this woman had volunteered from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. because the entire day had been "messed up." Apparently a volunteer who was supposed to go pick up food at the warehouse forgot. After running to get the food, she was offered a load of cherries to split with another group. When

they got to them there were far more than she expected and the other group had already been there. She spent the rest of the day dividing up cherries.

Another leader was very vocal about the constraints she felt on her time as a coordinator. She was working for the gleaning group 7 days a week with little rest, while feeling demands from both group members and staff at Jansen Food Bank for her to keep giving her time in this way. "I don't think people realize," she commented, "they want to go home and be with their families. I have a family too. They don't stop and think."

While all but one of the group coordinators I came in contact with were volunteers, they often felt compelled to carry out the tasks of the organization they were a part of. Coordinators from groups that were part of the national food-banking network and those from independent groups expressed a willingness to spend so many hours for their group because they truly believe in gleaning and have a strong desire to help provide food for those who need it in their communities. At the same time, for those groups that are a part of Jansen Food Bank, there are spoken and unspoken pressures for gleaning leaders to participate in the activities scheduled by Jansen Food Bank. Some meetings and distributions were "mandatory" and group leaders might be reprimanded if their group was not represented at one of them. For example, a group coordinator, once mentioned that she got "in big trouble" from Jansen Food Bank because the volunteers who had committed to going to a distribution at the food bank warehouse did not show up. She was, in turn, very upset with these gleaning members.

These pressures from Jansen Food Bank may be inhibiting group leaders from prioritizing the ways they use their time during the week. In fact, in some cases, the stance of the food bank seemed to neglect the fact that these leaders were volunteers. In terms of human and social capital, these pressures not only kept leaders from learning important time management skills, but kept them so busy that they ceased to coordinate. A leader might assume that it would be

simpler if they took care of a certain task, as delegation requires persistence, energy, and taking the risk that a volunteer will not follow through with what they have been asked to do. Other times, leaders simply understand any opportunity available for their group as a task assigned directly to them. One coordinator described her typical weekend:

Well, I come here to the Farmer's Market on Saturday and then I've got to go back and unload, then I make another trip to Gray. So that's two trips on Saturday and then we've got to pick up on Sunday. Then I do my deliveries [for adoptees]. That's not much of a weekend.

It is important to note that pressure from Jansen Food Bank may not be the only factor keeping gleaning leaders from delegating group tasks. Professionals working with gleaning groups assessed that many coordinators have trouble distributing the tasks of the group because their position in the group gives them a great deal of control. As Sharon Thornberry noted, "coordinators give so much of themselves. They don't want other people to help. They have the mentality that no one else can do it right, so I have to do it all." Staff members from Jansen Food Bank assert that this need for control is a symptom of the low-income status of these leaders, in that they often lack control in other areas of their lives.

To the extent that pressures from Jansen Food Bank does create demands on leaders' time in such a way that they feel unable to control their schedules, these pressures inhibit human capital development. In these cases, gleaning leaders lose valuable opportunities to learn prioritization and management of their time. Short notice attached to many activities and the large number of commitments coordinators carry in addition to distributing food, can result in increased stress among leaders and little time for distribution of the work of the organization throughout the membership. This lack of delegation leads to fewer opportunities for gleaning members to participate in activities that might

increase their skills (human capital development) and build relationships (social capital development).

Managing Food Intake

As mentioned earlier, the task of gathering and distributing food is one that requires a great deal of time and energy. The demands of managing this task are increased when a group cannot control their food intake. Throughout my fieldwork, I found evidence that gleaning groups have little control over the amount of food they receive from Jansen Food Bank, and that there are expectations that a group will take all of the food allotted to them when it becomes available.

The first time I participated in a distribution for gleaning groups at Jansen Food Bank, there was a disbursement of literally tons of frozen corn. For many groups, corn filled their freezers for weeks. At Penville Gleaners, bags of 15-20 frozen cobs were placed in a cart during distribution and as individuals came in, they were encouraged to take as much of it as they could. At a later distribution, one of the leaders of the Penville group expressed concern because of their lack of storage space with more food coming in. In particular, this leader wondered if they should give some of the corn, which was still perfectly fit for human consumption, "to the horses" in order to make room for ice cream that was coming in the next distribution. Following this same distribution, another group, reported in an newsletter throwing out 3,829 pounds of food because 4 totes of corn on the cob were received when their distribution site could only hold 3 totes.

A week following the corn distribution, there was an announcement at the monthly coordinator's meeting that a shipment of cucumbers and shredded lettuce was coming in. The group leaders were asked to put down the maximum amount they could take, because they had access to as much as they wanted. At first no one wanted any lettuce. Someone commented,

“Is it gonna be like the corn?” After some more discussion about the size of the bags and that it was pre-shredded for restaurant use, people started to sound more interested. Later in the meeting, after the list had gone around and been carried into the Jansen Food Bank office, a messenger came back and reiterated that the groups should take as much as they could. She reported that one of the Jansen Food Bank staff had said, “Come on, you can do better than that.” Some of the leaders were trying to figure out pounds and cases and just how much they were ordering. Finally, the director of Jansen Food Bank came into the meeting and explained that the order had to be in within a few minutes, and for the third time, the coordinators were encouraged to take as much as possible.

Later that afternoon, I was put in charge of calculating the distribution of food that would be given to each group. For most gleaning distributions, Jansen Food Bank orders a certain amount of food on behalf of the gleaners. Before ever going to the warehouse, this food is calculated into portions based on the number of individuals in each group. At the warehouse, this amount is either pre-packaged or used as a guide for distribution when the groups arrive. This allows the food bank to order food quickly and efficiently through the national food-banking network, since they do not consult the gleaning groups to see if they want the food. I was asked to calculate the pound allotment for each group for the cucumber and lettuce distribution. As I was calculating, I noticed that nearly two times the amount of lettuce that the groups requested had been ordered from the Oregon Food Bank. I was asked to do my best to allot the extra lettuce among the groups.

During my experience with the gleaners, this was one of only two times when gleaning leaders were given an opportunity to “order” the food they were going to take. This exemplifies how gleaning groups had little control over what and how much food they took in from Jansen Food Bank. As one coordinator commented at her group’s regular membership meeting,

"I don't think you realize, when we go to the warehouse, we don't get to choose what food we take." She went on to recount that she and another volunteer had recently been asked by Jansen Food Bank staff to dig through rotten potatoes for nearly three hours in order to secure their group's allotment.

In addition, there was a sense from the staff at Jansen Food Bank that the more food a group took, the better. Groups that consistently took all the food that was offered to them were praised. In passing, Jansen Food Bank staff would say things like, "Oh, Nash Community Gleaners is a great group, they always take whatever we offer them." At the same time, some groups feared that if they didn't take all that was offered to them, their food supply would be reduced in the future.

A similar pressure seems to be present for the Jansen Food Bank from higher up the food-banking network. As one staff member commented, "Gleaners allow Jansen Food Bank to bring in more food so the food bank can bring in more food from the Oregon Food Bank overall." Similarly, the director of Jansen Food Bank mentioned that they were working hard to create a reputation for taking as much as possible.

In one case, the Board of one gleaning group expressed concern to the staff at Jansen Food Bank regarding unscheduled distributions. "How can they be upset to get more food?" asked one staff member at Jansen Food Bank after becoming aware of the complaint. "I think it's just that they have to drop what they're doing and come get it," replied the other. About fifteen minutes later, the issue was brought up again, "For those who are upset about getting more food, let them know that I have to take the food when it comes. I never turn Oregon Food Bank Food down. This is food that somebody else didn't want, and I take it now, because it may not be available ten days down the road. That's why we're such a successful program, because we take the food when it's available."

I am not certain why or to what degree Jansen Food Bank feels pressure to take food from organizations farther up the network.² However, I did observe that this pressure seems to exist and as such, it trickles down to gleaning organizations. In fact, the staff of Jansen Food Bank identify gleaning groups as an asset among the organizations they provide food for because of their ability to pick up and distribute food on short notice, and because they take both odd foods and large quantities. As the director asserted, "We are aggressive in getting as much food as we can, because the gleaners are able to take so much food." In contrast, other agencies that collect food through Jansen Food Bank, such as food pantries, place orders for the food they receive and come at scheduled distribution times. As the director of the food pantry I visited explained, she receives an order form from Jansen Food Bank about every three weeks. She chooses food from the order form based on what the organization needs and can afford. Then representatives from the pantry go to the warehouse and pick up this food at regularly scheduled distribution times.

Another important aspect of food distribution through the national food-banking network is that food is available through the network every month of the year. This is in contrast to food gathered from the fields, which

² After presenting the findings of this study to the staff of Jansen Food Bank, I had the opportunity to ask the staff of Jansen Food Bank about this pressure to take food from sources when they became available. The director of Jansen Food Bank explained that it is really more of an opportunity to keep donation lines open than a pressure. The director went on to give an example of a situation where a private donor called the Oregon Food Bank with an odd lot of food. Oregon Food Bank turned it down. The donor then called Jansen Food Bank and they accepted the donation. Since that initial contact, this donor has called Jansen Food Bank directly with very nice organic prepackaged foods that cost three or four dollars in the store. The director went on to emphasize that the benefit of taking a donation that might be inconvenient is often worth it because of better donations that may come later, commenting, "What do you have to lose? Coordinators taking food they may not want benefits them one hundred fold down the line."

is available only during the harvest season. In the past, the seasonality of food availability allowed gleaning groups to rest, as Sharon Thornberry commented:

They [gleaning groups] would shut down in November and December and everybody got a rest, instead of going 80 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, which I think is another thing that's hard on them. It's hard on the leadership; it's hard on the group. 'Cause it's an intense daily battle to get food and to move food and to distribute food.

During the winter months of 2001/2002, 60% of the groups associated with Jansen Food Bank maintained volunteer levels at or above average for their group as they continued handling food distributed through the food-banking network.

It is important to keep in mind that gleaning groups greatly appreciate the food they receive through Jansen Food Bank, and Jansen Food Bank is well intentioned in distributing as much food as possible to gleaning organizations. These are food distribution agencies that provide the needed and tangible benefit of food for their members. However, with little control at the group level over the amount of food groups take, stress is created as group leaders continually negotiate their time, their volunteers and their food handling and storage capabilities to accommodate this food. In terms of human capital this may mean group leaders are missing valuable opportunities to gain skills through managing and budgeting their ability to handle and distribute food. In my observations, many groups took what they were offered from Jansen Food Bank and did the best they could to make the situation work.

Managing Finances

Lack of control over the food that groups take from Jansen Food Bank has the potential to become even more of a stress for group leadership because there can be a financial commitment attached to food the gleaners

receive from the national food-banking network. "Share contribution" is a charge associated with much of the food received through agencies connected to America's Second Harvest. This charge, ranging anywhere from one to twenty cents per pound of food, is passed down through the national food-banking network to community agencies that receive network food, including gleaning groups and food pantries. On average, gleaners pay two cents per pound of food (See Table 5). Share contribution funds are

Table 5. Budget Range and Average Share Contribution Charges among Gleaning Groups Associated with Jansen Food Bank

	Lowest Group	Highest Group	Average of all Groups
Budget*			
Annual Budget	\$800	\$68,000	NA
Share Contribution**			
Annual Share Contribution Charges from Jansen Food Bank	\$1,008.33	\$8,854.76	\$2761.32
Average Share Contribution Per Pound of Food from Jansen Food Bank	\$0.0132	\$0.028	\$0.020
*Estimates from verbal communication with Jansen Food Bank staff and one gleaning coordinator. ** Data source: Accounting statements from Jansen Food Bank from June 2001-July 2002.			

used by network agencies to pay for their overhead expenses, including transportation, office supplies and utilities, without passing all of these costs on to community donors. According to a professional at Jansen Food Bank, the rationale for this system is that people in the community prefer to donate money to pay directly for food rather than supporting overhead and administrative costs.

Ordinarily, gleaning groups had to pay this share contribution even if they were not able to afford it. When I asked members of Jansen Food Bank if groups could refuse food because they couldn't afford to pay share

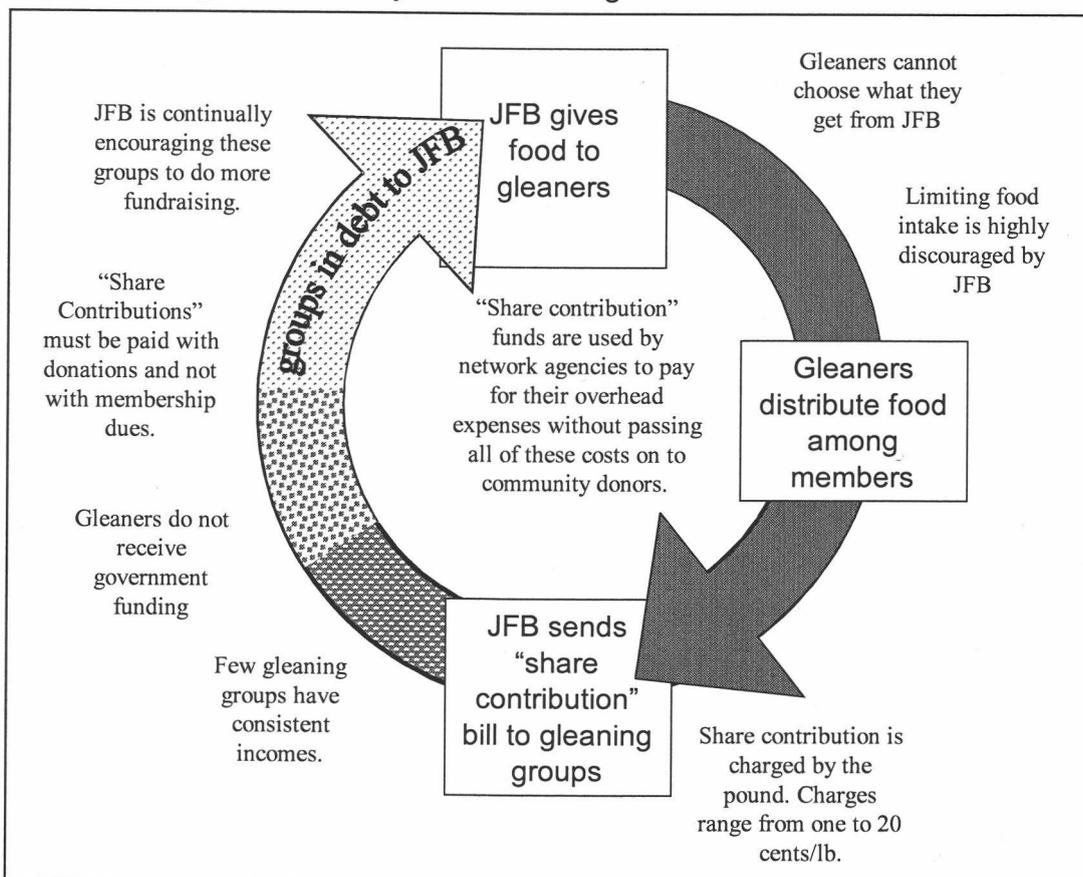
contributions, the response was that they could, but only in very specific circumstances. For instance, a group might ask that no food over four cents share contribution be given to them for a month, but that group would need to give plenty of notice for this type of arrangement. As the director of Jansen Food Bank commented,

We don't really want them picking and choosing and making a whole lot more work for us. And you can't be a gleaning group and just take the free stuff. You need to take what's available. You should take what you can, not just look at your budget and see what you can afford. I want everybody to have so much food that they'll just say stop. I also feel that by giving them a large quantity of food that it will prevent hoarding and that it will create avenues of distribution for them to get the food out.

This statement brings up several important points. First, the staff of Jansen Food Bank is concerned that gleaning leaders might abuse their position of power and hoard food for themselves or a small group of friends and not distribute it equitably to the other members of the group. One staff member mentioned a coordinator who would not take carrots for her group because she did not like them. I did not observe this type of behavior in the gleaning groups in this study. Secondly, the staff of Jansen Food Bank maintains that an abundance of food will create paths of distribution in these groups. The rationale for distributing more food in order to encourage the development of avenues of distribution is valid to the extent that gleaning members do not have to worry about scarcity in the group's supply of food when recruiting new members. However, there is also a policy that keeps gleaning members from sharing surplus food with their neighbors who are not members of the group. Avenues of distribution are then limited to other food distribution agencies or group members only. In addition, this comment reveals that taking available food is a high priority for Jansen Food Bank, perhaps even higher than allowing gleaning groups to keep within their financial means.

With the lack of control over food intake, and an emphasis on distributing food without accounting for what groups can afford, it is not entirely surprising that over half of the gleaning groups working with the Jansen Food Bank were in debt to the food bank during the five months of my fieldwork (See Figure 3). Some of these groups had small outstanding bills of less than

Figure 3. Diagram of the Cycle of Gleaning Indebtedness



a hundred dollars. One group, however, had accumulated over \$4000 worth of debt. Following a coordinator meeting at Jansen Food Bank, two gleaning group leaders were discussing the cost of paying both the share contribution and their own transportation costs associated with gathering food from the

warehouse. One woman wondered out loud if it might not be cheaper to buy some of the things they were getting from the store.

The situation is further complicated in that few gleaning groups have any consistent source of income. Unlike other food distribution agencies, such as food pantries, gleaning groups are not eligible to receive government funding. A few fortunate groups have thrift stores, which tend to be quite successful in sustaining the financial needs of groups that have them. Other groups fundraise by having rummage sales, auctions, collecting cans, or holding car washes and bake sales. For some groups, these activities bear little fruit in comparison with their accumulating bill.

Many gleaning groups that work with Jansen Food Bank do call share contribution their “food bill,” but professionals from the Jansen Food Bank and the State Coordinating Agency are quick to correct this “misnomer.” This distinction is important to Jansen Food Bank and members of the Oregon Food Bank because they want to make it clear that all of the food they are giving out has been donated and is *free*. The distinction carries little weight in gleaning organizations. For gleaners, in all practical terms, this is a food bill. If this bill is not paid, the food supplied through the food-banking network is threatened. This means a great deal to these groups as anywhere from 50–93% of their food comes through the national network.

Membership dues are another strategy used by gleaning groups to establish an income. Commonly, dues are charged on an annual basis and are generally no more than \$25 per family for the year. For debt relief, however, these funds prove of little help as groups are not able to use money generated from dues to pay share contribution bills. Jansen Food Bank regulates this policy, asserting that within this context it would violate IRS laws for gleaners to use dues to pay “share contributions” as it may indirectly be charging individuals for their food. In this context, Jansen Food Bank and Oregon Food Bank recognize share contribution payments as payments for

food. Therefore the policy is that money used to pay share contributions must only be generated through donations and fundraising.

In addition, according to Jansen Food Bank policy, gleaning groups cannot withhold food from gleaning members who have not paid their dues. During an interview, I asked a staff person at Jansen Food Bank how groups could respond if individuals were not paying dues. This person replied, "Actually, they can't do anything. They can remind them, but they can't terminate or suspend them." Gleaning group leaders working with Jansen Food Bank have understood that they cannot make anyone pay dues to be a part of the organization. This understanding has been translated to mean that there are dues for the organization, but no one is required to pay them. In fact, I observed gleaning group members in one group sign up new volunteers and essentially tell them that the group had membership dues, but it is optional to pay them. Gleaning leaders expressed frustration over this policy, yet felt powerless to deal with the situation. In fact, in the groups I have spent time with that do collect dues, two leadership teams have felt they could not even remind people that they needed to pay their dues. So, basic overhead of the gleaning organization, which could be paid with group membership dues, is paid with money from donations, thus furthering the debt of these organizations.

In contrast, the two independent gleaning groups had created avenues for handling lack of dues payments. If a family could not pay dues, both of these groups would take the family's story before the group's board of directors. In one organization the dues could be reduced or removed depending on the family's circumstances. In the other gleaning group, people who were unable to pay their dues could discuss the issue with a group leader, who would in turn go before the board of directors of the group. Often after hearing a family's story, leaders from the group would chip in with their own money and cover the payment of dues themselves. In both of

these groups, policies have been created that allow the group to maintain their financial integrity while not excluding individuals who could not contribute financially to the work of the organization.

Gleaning groups face another fundraising obstacle in that they promote their identity as self-sufficient groups that use the excess from society and put it to good use. This identity makes it difficult for potential donors to understand why gleaning groups need money. As Sharon Thornberry commented, "These groups are supposed to be self-sufficient, so it's hard to sell to people that they need the donations." Historically, gleaners have received all of their food through "in kind" payments. Gleaners have not had the money to pay for food, but they have had volunteer time and labor to be used in gathering and packaging food that might otherwise go to waste. The use of voluntary labor gave gleaners access to more food because they could offer what they had, labor, in exchange for what they needed, food. The introduction of share contribution into the context of gleaning brings these groups back into the realm of economic exchange using currency. It may be difficult for donors and sometimes even group members to understand why these groups need money for their operations. I observed group members from both Penville and Hartland Gleaners expressing confusion at the need for money to fulfill share contribution payments to Jansen Food Bank.

Money handling in general can be difficult for gleaning leadership. Several groups expressed an inability to trust their fellow gleaning volunteers when it came to handling groups' funds. Coordinators especially were called into question in terms of the use of group funds. During my fieldwork, I became aware of three groups that were openly dealing with conflicts over misappropriation of group funds. In one instance, members of the group were concerned about money from fundraisers that would turn up missing, or ambiguous communication about how much was raised at a particular

fundraising event. Another group dealt with misuse of funds received through a grant. This led to an independent audit of all of the group's finances. Money handling issues are further complicated by turnover in the treasurer's position and disorganization of treasury records. One of the staff members from Jansen Food Bank mentioned that many times outgoing group leaders do not cooperate with incoming leaders in maintaining a continuity of group financial records.

To their credit, Jansen Food Bank has tried to assist gleaning organizations as they deal with indebtedness from share contribution charges. For example, Jansen Food Bank helps subsidize the share contribution cost for all of their member agencies by using money they have received from community donors. Jansen Food Bank has also made concessions to try and help gleaning groups with this burden by giving gleaning groups the lowest share contribution of any of the other emergency food agencies (food pantries, emergency shelters, soup kitchens, etc.) served by the food bank. In addition, one staff member reported that one year the director had extra funds at the end of the year and used these funds to give each gleaning group a credit toward their share contribution bill.

Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank are also trying to assist gleaning organizations in fundraising through grant writing. During my fieldwork, there were two gleaning meetings that focused specifically on grant writing. One of these meetings was entitled, "Funding Your Future." Grant writing, while helpful, also has its limitations for gleaning organizations. First, during my experience as an intern seeking grant-writing opportunities, most of the grants gleaners are able to write cover capital costs, such as buying a truck or a building, and would not necessarily contribute to relieving groups of their problems with debt. Secondly, an emphasis on grant writing seemed to place the focus of many groups on gaining more equipment or a larger distribution site, rather than more efficiently managing what groups

already had. Finally, the gleaning leaders who are commonly involved in grant writing are already very busy in simply distributing food. Many times they lack the time to carry out a grant-writing project. In general, fundraising creates an additional time burden on gleaning leaders. As one coordinator commented when asked about fundraising activities in an interview, “Fundraising? Ha! We don’t have time for fundraising.”

Despite the efforts of Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank, many groups still face dealing with the stress and reality of debt. During participant observation at a gleaning distribution site, a group co-coordinator mentioned to me that her stress over the group’s debt was keeping her up at night. At that point, the group coordinator entered into our conversation, explaining, “There is a charge for food [from the food bank] that is at most eight to twelve cents, sometimes more like 1.7 cents and when it’s 1500 pounds, it adds up.” The co-coordinator from the same group chimed into the conversation, “I think we get too much [food].” The coordinator disagreed. “We still have all those carrots,” replied the co-coordinator. “They were only 1.7 cents,” protested the coordinator. The dilemma of managing the group’s food budget and financial budget was an ongoing source of disagreement and stress within this particular group. As food kept coming into the organization each month, debt accumulated.

Unfortunately, the staff at Jansen Food Bank seemed to be unaware of the circular nature of debt within gleaning groups. When I asked one representative of the food bank why gleaning groups were so far in debt, he replied, “They don’t pay as they go. They don’t fundraise.” While some groups were in debt because they did not fundraise, others that were quite active in fundraising were some of the furthest in debt.

At the same time, Jansen Food Bank does not have a firm policy in place for terminating groups who have gone too long without payment on their share contributions. During my field experience, a staff member at

Jansen Food Bank noted that when a group's debt catches the attention of Jansen Food Bank management, that group is notified that they may be "cut off" from receiving food through the food bank and sometimes the result is immediate. During my fieldwork, one group to my knowledge was faced with this situation. They were not "cut off," but there were discussions in the food bank office regarding this possibility.

Since gleaning group leaders are limited in their ability to control their intake of food, and because food has a share contribution cost attached to it, they are also hindered in their ability to budget their group's finances. Furthermore, policies regarding share contribution limit the options groups have for paying these charges. The inability of the leaders of these groups to budget and manage the finances of their organizations results in missed opportunities for learning these skills and may also lead to accruing debt for gleaning groups. In addition, the added stress of dealing with indebtedness may make it more difficult for group leaders to coordinate the volunteer members of their organization, again resulting in fewer opportunities for human and social capital development among the group's membership. Lack of trust within groups is another factor that complicates money handling within gleaning groups and may be evidence that handling finances is a skill that needs to be developed among gleaners.

Managing Group Authority

For most gleaning groups that have entered into a contractual relationship with Jansen Food Bank, the food bank maintains a great deal of influence on their daily operations. In fact, for some groups, this relationship with Jansen Food Bank has actually led group leaders and members to turn to staff at Jansen Food Bank to handle issues of conflict or management before they even consulted their own board of directors. One of the staff members at Jansen Food Bank noted that their role with gleaners included

“overseeing groups, working as a mediator, giving technical support, and sharing fundraising opportunities.” She went on to qualify, “I’m not their policeman or boss, they’re their own organization, but I make sure they obey the rules for non-profits as well as Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank.” While the staff at the food bank provide important support for gleaning groups, there are times when their role becomes more than supportive. For example, I observed instances when gleaning members communicated a complaint to the staff of Jansen Food Bank before talking with their own group leaders. Similarly, some group leaders called upon the staff of Jansen Food Bank even in the finest details. In one case, a coordinator was wondering if they could use the term “mandatory” when announcing a meeting and suggested that he would have to check with Jansen Food Bank to see if that would be possible.

In contrast, both gleaning groups in this study that were not a part of the national food banking network expressed a great deal of group ownership and pride in their independence and their ability to run effectively as independent organizations. In fact, representatives from both of these groups communicated that they had chosen not to be a part of the network, because they did not want to be told what to do by the Oregon Food Bank or any other agency.

To the extent that gleaning group leaders recognize Jansen Food Bank as an authority in areas of management that they should be responsible for, they are missing important opportunities to gain skills in running a group. The opportunity for individuals to learn management skills is important for the development of human capital within gleaning groups. However, for groups associated with Jansen Food Bank, managing time, food intake, finances and authority may currently be inhibited by policies carried out through Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank.

For group leaders, the compromised ability to manage their group's resources at the group level can translate into stress, especially for leaders who feel over-committed and who must deal with recurring indebtedness to Jansen Food Bank. This stress can make it difficult for leaders to stop and delegate work (creating opportunities for human capital development) or to even begin to think about activities that might foster social networks and relationship building (social capital development) within their group. At times, these pressures placed on group leaders actually lead to negative investments in social and human capital. One co-coordinator commented regarding the coordinator of their group:

Sometimes he takes on too much work. Then he gets tired and says things when cross and angry. I know a few people who have left the organization because he's gotten cross at them. Good helpers have left. You can't treat people like that.

Another coordinator confessed that she has a hard time speaking nicely to people when she's stressed and members of her group don't follow through on what they said they would do. This kind of strain can contribute to inner group conflict, a persistent weakness for many gleaning groups identified by both gleaners and professionals from Jansen Food Bank. One co-coordinator actually moved out of town partially because of strain she felt with her experiences with the leadership of her gleaning group. This type of group management creates deficits in trust, an essential component of social capital formation.

The stress and pressure of gleaning can also lead to burn out and turnover in leadership. In the year and a half preceding my fieldwork, half of the groups associated with Jansen Food Bank received new coordinators and some groups went through multiple coordinators within that time. According to a staff person at Jansen Food Bank, this high rate of turnover can be explained by the fact that some groups have a one-year term in their bylaws. For the majority of groups, however, this turnover is attributed to burn out, stress, or the coordinator being asked to leave the group. As this

same staff person mentioned, “Jody, at Caring and Sharing, she’s burning herself out. Well, they all are. A lot of the groups, you know, really depend on a person doing this for them.” To the degree that pressures placed on group leaders contribute to leadership turnover, it certainly hinders human capital development. Willing volunteers are overwhelmed in their role as leaders rather than equipped with new skills to help them lead and manage in their groups as well as in other contexts.

Stresses from the inability of group leaders to manage groups’ resources may not be the only source of stress and conflict within gleaning groups. Staff at Jansen Food Bank often explained infighting in these groups as a consequence of group members’ lives in poverty, as stresses and lack of control from peoples’ personal lives is drawn into the groups.

At the same time, when I asked the coordinator of Blooming Gleaners, an independent gleaning organization, about conflict management in their group she replied that there wasn’t any conflict. “Everybody just gets along wonderfully. It’s just a big happy family around here.” She added that a good deal of loyalty to the group kept people from fighting and that the leadership of the group can make a big difference in terms of inner group cooperation. It was my impression that only a few groups working with Jansen Food Bank experienced this kind of cooperation and stability.

Lack of Volunteer Participation

Lack of volunteer participation is another potential hindrance in the development of human capital and social capital. If members of a groups are not participating in the activities of their group, then they are not gaining knowledge or creating new relationships.

Coordinators of groups associated with Jansen Food Bank commonly mentioned lack of volunteer participation from their members as a frustrating

recurrence in their groups. On average groups reported contributing 27 volunteer hours per month per gleaning household (See Table 6). For every

Table 6. Average Volunteer Participation among Gleaning Groups Associated with Jansen Food Bank

	Lowest Group	Highest Group	Average of all Groups
Volunteer Participation			
Average Volunteer Hours Per Month	411	2986	936
Average Volunteer Hours Per Month Per Gleaning Household	7	51	27
<i>Data source: self-reported data from each group submitted to Jansen Food Bank on a monthly basis from June 2001-July 2002.</i>			

gleaner that did not contribute to the efforts of their group, someone else was contributing that time. The extended hours contributed by coordinators often made lack of participation by others especially frustrating.

There were several occasions when the topic of how to deal with low volunteer participation came up at monthly coordinator meetings. The most common question was, "Can we withhold food from people who are not helping?" The staff at Jansen Food Bank emphasized that each individual must be given plenty of notice before being terminated from the group. It was suggested several times that individuals be given sixty days' notice of the potential for their termination in writing. However, I observed that dealing with the type of record keeping and paperwork required to keep individuals accountable for their hours was challenging for some groups.

For this reason, some group leaders sought alternative avenues for creating volunteer accountability among group members. Some groups have started to screen individuals seeking to join the group. One coordinator reported asking individuals directly if they were willing and able to contribute to the work of

the group. If she sensed they were not, she referred them to area food pantries. In another group, in an effort to simplify the notification process, letters of termination due to lack of participation were placed in every member's box. The leaders commented that they thought the people who were putting in the hours would know that this did not apply to them. A leader from the same group expressed her frustration with participation saying that she was tempted to put up a sign that read: "Closed due to lack of volunteer help."

Conversely, my observations revealed that communication regarding how to participate in the activities of the group was a common cause for lack of volunteer participation. During my field research, I both witnessed and personally experienced the frustration of not knowing what I could do to help out, yet at the same time feeling like I was letting the group down by not participating. There seemed to be an inner circle of leaders that were "in the know" about group activities. During my first visit to my gleaning group site to sign up, I asked how I could volunteer. One of the leaders mentioned helping sit at a rummage sale that was coming up in a week. I told her I would be out of town that day. At that point the leader was very ambiguous about how else I might be able to help. I had overheard that a group of the leaders were going to price items for the rummage sale in the coming week so I asked if I could help with that. The woman agreed that that would be alright, and that I would need to call the coordinator or co-coordinator in the next couple of days to get the times and places. This ended up becoming a rather frustrating and complicated instance of phone tag. Ironically, shortly after I arrived to help, the co-coordinator of the group wondered out loud why more group members had not come to volunteer that day. In addition, I observed that several events that were planned well in advance were not presented to the membership until one or two days before they happened. As a gleaning member, I felt both pressure to participate and hold my weight, under the potential threat of termination from the group, while at the same time I was often unaware of opportunities in which I could contribute to

the group. Other participants expressed this same frustration. One woman who works in the school system wanted to put in most of her hours during the summer before school started, but found that it was very difficult for her to know how to be involved.

I observed several instances in groups where communication was simply not effective. Phone calling is the method used most commonly in the group I joined. It is very time consuming for three or four people to call everyone in the group and on more than one occasion the message would be changed after the callers had contacted people on their list, meaning they had to call them again. In another group, I witnessed willing volunteers being turned away, because there was not a clear expectation for what needed to be done when they arrived at the gleaning site. A woman walked into this group with the intention of establishing a regular volunteer time with the leadership. "When would you like to volunteer?" one of the leaders asked. "Wednesdays," replied the woman. "Wednesday, what time is that distribution on Wednesday?" asked the leader to another person in the group. This group member was trying to establish some sort of volunteer routine, but the group leadership was looking more to the immediate needs of the group rather than planning ahead and seeking to accommodate this member's desire to make a volunteer commitment. Another time, at a membership meeting of this group, the coordinator began to read a list of all the opportunities to volunteer within the group. As he was going down the list, the coordinator expressed his frustration at the fact that in the last week they had been contacted for a glean, but no one was willing to come and help. Almost immediately members of the group present at the meeting began calling out in protest that they had never been notified of the opportunity.

Another example of a communication breakdown happened when a volunteer couple was sent by their gleaning coordinator to pick up food from the Jansen Food Bank warehouse. First of all, due to poor driving directions the couple arrived at the warehouse past the time they were supposed to pick up.

Then, when they got there, they didn't know the name of their group and the group they thought they belonged to had already gotten their food. So, after driving 30 minutes, getting lost and not even being able to accomplish the task they set out to do for their group, these two were frustrated and probably less eager to contribute their volunteer time to the group in the future.

Short notice for group activities was also a significant deterrent to getting people involved in many group activities. Often times, unscheduled distributions and gleans needed to be carried out with less than 24 hours' notice. One gleaner commented that it is difficult to participate in activities with short notice. "There's apple picking Wednesday, we planned for that. It's hard to plan for, if you've got a doctor's appointment or something...We don't get much notice for these things. That's really a weakness of the whole thing." In my own experience as a gleaner, I found this to be true. Events with little preplanning often meant that our family was unable to participate.

Lack of commitment from group members is another factor limiting the ability of gleaning leadership to delegate what needs to be done to volunteers in the group. Leadership from many groups expressed disappointment in the apathy and lack of knowledge regarding the time and effort required to carry out the work of the organization among group members. I did not hear any gleaners admit to a weak group commitment directly, for obvious reasons. However, when asked how often they were able to participate in gleaning activities I heard a variety of excuses ranging from sick children to personal health-related issues. Some of these reasons for not helping were legitimate. Many gleaning participants suffer from medical problems that keep them from participating physically. At the same time, there are people who use these conditions as excuses. For example, I observed one woman as she recruited workers to help unload trucks following a warehouse distribution. After asking one man to help, he responded by acknowledging that he had received phone messages from the group about volunteering, but that his family had been out of town. He went on to

talk about his son having surgery on his mouth. When the leader asked if he would be available to help that evening, he quickly placed his hand on his daughter's shoulder, "Oh, I've got to take this one to the doctor today." He went on to say that his son was losing his hearing. What is especially difficult for gleaning leaders in this situation is that they are commonly dealing with their own health conditions that should keep them from working, but they are committed to carrying out the tasks of the organization. This commitment is frustrating when the people who are receiving the benefits of their labor take their sacrifice lightly. In addition, overt decisions not to participate in the activities of the group threaten the identity of these groups as self-help organizations.

Many people seemed to enjoy the benefits of gleaning without the willingness to participate. Sharon Thornberry thinks there may be a connection between the types of convenience food people are getting more and more through the national food-banking network and the decline in grass roots support and participation in these groups. As she commented,

Most of the ones [gleaners] that have been involved for a long number of years will tell you that the complexion, the attitudes and demeanor of people who have been involved in gleaning has changed since there has been do much prepared kinds of ready to eat foods available. It's more like let's show up and get our food, it's less an understanding of what we need to do to get our food, or how we participate to get our food.

In addition, food gathered in the fields is limited by the number of volunteers participating to gather that food. In the past, gleaners who did not participate in the harvest would not receive food. Food collected through the national food banking network, however, requires less volunteer participation and according to food bank policy, must be distributed equitably among the membership.

Whatever the reason for lack of participation in these groups, if volunteers are not participating in the work of their groups then they are missing valuable opportunities to develop new skills (human capital) by performing the tasks required to maintain their organization. In addition, if they are not taking part in

the activities of their organization, it will be more difficult for individuals to build relationships of trust and support (social capital). Moreover, both leaders and members experience lack of trust when it comes to poor communication. Members may feel as if leaders are continually threatening them to get them to help, while leaders are feeling like much of the group is expecting them to take care of the operations of the organization with little or no help from the group's membership.

Emphasis on Efficiency

Finally, an emphasis on efficiency has seemed to hinder groups from further development of social and human capital. This emphasis on efficiency is evident in the way in which many groups are getting their food. In recent years, some gleaning groups have begun to receive the majority of their food through the national food-banking network. Unlike gathering food from the fields, much of this food can be picked up with little group participation. It is very efficient to have one individual pick up the food, but it reduces opportunities for developing relationships and working as a team.

Participation is also limited in the process of carrying food to adoptees, or elderly and handicapped individuals, in the most efficient way. Traditionally, each gleaning family was assigned an adoptee family. When they harvested food from the fields, half of their harvest would go to their adoptee. Today, most adoptees have their food delivered by one person who carries food to four or five adoptees or, in one extreme case, as many as 25 adoptees. By delivering food in an efficient manner, groups are missing valuable opportunities to develop social networks and relationships of support for some of their most vulnerable group members.

While increased efficiency may be an asset in some aspects of gleaning organizations, it is possible that this efficiency comes at the cost of opportunities to build human capital and social capital. As Sharon Thornberry commented,

“..the real beauty of gleaning, when it’s done right, is to build social capital and grass roots community, and when you run it just like any other bureaucracy, it just doesn’t accomplish that.”

While there is evidence that there is a healthy potential for these groups to develop human and social capital as a byproduct of their work in distributing food, there are also several factors that are currently limiting this capital development. Stresses and pressures felt by gleaning leaders as they seek to handle food, manage members, deal with group debt, attend coordinator meetings, and carry out the day to day tasks of the organization keep these key members from facilitating the participation of other members. At times, this stress may even lead to cross words with volunteers. Lack of volunteer participation is another factor hindering human and social capital development. If people aren’t participating, they are simply missing opportunities to build skills and relationships. Finally, an emphasis placed on efficiency often leaves out individuals who could be helping with certain tasks. Again, this leads to fewer relationships within the group and with adoptees as well as missed opportunities for volunteers to learn new things.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The question remains: What is the purpose of gleaning groups? Are they organized primarily and solely to distribute food in the community? Or in their very organization, as community-based groups run by low-income volunteers, could they also provide valuable opportunities for individuals to gain human capital and social capital that may assist them out of poverty?

I contend that gleaning organizations *are* providing more than solely food for their communities. Gleaning organizations *are* contributing to the development of social and human capital by creating avenues for individuals to build relationships of support and develop valuable skills, which ultimately could have impacts in reducing poverty. Yet at the same time, many of these contributions to human and social capital development are unintentional. Furthermore, there are currently significant barriers that may be keeping gleaning organizations from developing human and social capital at their full potential.

Hunger alleviation is the immediate, tangible benefit of gleaning, but that does not mean the potential for development of human and social capital in these groups should be overlooked or underestimated. There is no way to predict the value of human and social capital in the lives of individual gleaning members. It may have little to no value for some gleaning group participants. For others, however, human and social capital development may mean a great deal. For an adoptee that has been “taken in” emotionally by a gleaning household, investments of social capital may be returned in providing great support in the time of illness and an important element of relationship in their life. Or, in terms of human capital, for some individuals, involvement in a gleaning group may provide an avenue toward increased skills, self-confidence and possibly employment.

Conversations with the Literature

A number of points revealed through this research project support findings in current literature regarding gleaning, social capital, food security, hunger and poverty. Anne Hoisington's (1999, 2001) research found that the most valuable benefit of gleaning was stretching people's food budgets. She also documented that gleaners were able to share knowledge regarding gardening, food preservation and nutrition, and that the physical nature of gleaning work kept some people from participating in the activities of their group. All of these points are supported by this research. Hoisington also noted the social benefit of gleaning organizations, speculating that perhaps elderly members of these groups gained more of a social benefit than younger gleaning participants. Results from this study were inconclusive on this point.

Charlene Price and J. Michael Harris (2000) indicate that there may be a point where the cost of transportation to gather donated produce from farmers' markets is so great that it would be more cost effective for gleaning groups to buy it from a grocery store. This assertion was supported through this research with evidence of gleaning leaders questioning the benefit of driving so far to pick up food at the Jansen Food Bank warehouse. One coordinator in particular questioned the value of this donated food because of the cost of transportation coupled with share contribution charges. In this way, the results of this research reveal that share contribution adds an additional layer of consideration when examining the cost-benefit ratio of gathering food from distribution sites connected with the national food-banking network.

Literature regarding social capital indicates that this type of capital formation most often occurs as a byproduct of another primary activity. Likewise, in this research social capital development among gleaning participants was cultivated as participants worked together to distribute food.

Additionally, this study supports Krishna and Shrader's (1999) assertion that organizations can contribute not only to positive social capital, but also to negative social capital investments. Conflicts due to pressures on the leadership and poor management resulting in conflict had the potential to diminish trust and even estrange gleaning members within these groups.

The need for accountability among professional agencies working to distribute charitable food was also supported through this research. Janet Poppendieck (1998) cautions professionals working in charitable food distribution agencies against becoming so focused on food that they cease to invest time and energy toward combating poverty. This note of caution is important for both gleaning agencies and other member agencies of America's Second Harvest such as Jansen Food Bank to take into account. Poppendieck asserts that the temptation to emphasize building up food distribution programs through fundraising to establish bigger and more efficient infrastructure can distract key leaders from combating the larger issue of poverty. Again, this emphasis on fundraising held true among gleaning groups participating in this study.

Johan Pottier (1999) reminds us of the power of food aid agencies and their ability to unintentionally create dependencies, the antithesis of human and social capital development, among communities they are seeking to help. This phenomenon may be evident in policies established through the national food-banking network and Jansen Food Bank, which have made it difficult for gleaning groups to manage their own resources. In some cases these policies have contributed to the creation of financial indebtedness and lack of confidence in handling organizational management without the help of the food bank. Potentially, these policies are examples of the type of disempowerment Pottier suggests food aid agencies seek to avoid through accountability. *

Saegert, Thompson and Warren (2001) echo Pottier's assertion, noting that large organizations seeking to help low-income communities often disrupt the development of social capital by making rules that create tension within the very communities they are trying to help. This claim is supported through this research when examining the relationship between Jansen Food Bank and gleaning organizations associated with it. Well intentioned policies established by Jansen Food Bank, the Oregon Food Bank and the national food-banking network have created barriers to human and social capital development. Most notably these policies have contributed to the inability of gleaning groups to manage their resources. This has led to limited time for group leaders to coordinate volunteers, an inability for gleaning leaders to budget their food intake and finances, and timidity among group leaders when directing their groups, all of which hinder the development of both human and social capital.

Poppendieck (1998), Pottier (1999) and Saegert, Thompson and Warren (2001) all suggest investing in organizations that empower low-income individuals. Specifically, Poppendieck and Saegert, Thompson and Warren advocate that in order to truly combat poverty, low-income people must gain a seat at the policy making table. As leaders of non-profit charitable organizations, gleaning leaders have opportunities to attend community meetings in which policy makers seek to meet the needs of low-income households. Some of these meetings may affect only the local community. Yet even local level meetings are the beginnings of creating venues for concerned low-income citizens to contribute to policy decisions that may affect their lives.

In addition, Poppendieck suggests that rather than building up more programs, the emergency food system should focus its energies toward supporting organizations that allow low-income people to create relationships between classes and give low-income people a chance to organize and

advocate for change in society. In my estimation, gleaning groups provide potential to accomplish both of these things. Creating contacts within the community through active participation in a community organization, attendance at community meetings as a gleaning representative, and gathering donations allow gleaners opportunities to build relationships with people of varying class levels. Furthermore, if gleaning groups begin to adopt a broader vision for what they can be in terms of community influence, I believe they can serve as a rallying point for low-income people to voice their concerns to policy makers. The potential to make an impact beyond providing food is available for those who are willing to broaden their vision of what gleaning groups might be.

Pottier encourages the development of locally based hunger relief efforts that work toward broader goals of increasing sustainable livelihoods rather than solely providing food. Again, gleaners may very well embody some of these characteristics, especially as they focus their energies toward the wider goals of developing human and social capital.

When reviewing literature on food security and hunger, it is important to note that, by definition, gleaning organizations do not contribute to increased food security. Again, the USDA defines “food security” as

...access by all people at all times to enough good food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum, food security includes: the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies, for example). [Sullivan and Choi 2002:9]

Asserting that gleaning groups and other charitable food distributors do not contribute to increased food security is not merely a matter of semantics. Charitable food providers, including gleaning groups, do not contribute to food security for two reasons. First, they are not consistent sources of food and second, they are not socially acceptable means of gathering food.

Looking at the USDA definition, gleaning is most closely aligned with “emergency food.” All “emergency food” is inconsistent to the extent that it is charitable and may not be available at some time in the future due to changes in donors’ abilities to give or even changes at an agency level such as an illness among the leadership, which might cause the agency to shut down. While gleaning groups are more consistent than some food distribution agencies in that members access food on a weekly basis, there is still an issue of inconsistency. Gleaning members do not know what food will be available through their group on a week-to-week basis. In addition, gathering left over food is not currently a socially or culturally acceptable way to obtain food. Moreover, to define emergency food providers as appropriate ways to gather food is to institutionalize them. In themselves, emergency food providers were never intended to be the solution to hunger, they were created and currently exist to make sure people are fed while society works to find solutions to the root *causes* of hunger. As a food bank professional associated with America’s Second Harvest commented:

I mean, I never go out there and tell anybody we’re the answer to hunger in this community. It’s not true. We are the ultimate Band-Aid. But unless somebody (who is not us) comes in and takes action to deal with the issue of hunger, it’s going to always be there, and our job is to be that effective Band-Aid if we can. [qtd. in Poppendieck 1998:270]

According to the USDA’s definition, gleaning organizations may not be able to contribute to food security through providing food. However, by making investments in human and social capital, gleaning organizations can go beyond serving as a Band-Aid and begin working toward increased food security by creating avenues for more sustained sources of food. For one gleaning family, this might mean increased skills, which lead to employment. For another gleaning household, this might mean increased networks of trust and relationships, which can provide a safety net in times of need. As Hartford Food System’s (2001) study of social capital and food security

indicates, there is a correlation between food secure households and investments in social capital.

Literature on hunger and poverty support this same concept. Feeding people is only an investment in their immediate condition; however, building capabilities, such as strengthening peoples' skills (human capital development) and creating relationships (social capital development), as Amartya Sen (1999) suggests, is changing their circumstances and creating avenues toward sustained livelihoods.

Prior research on gleaning has focused primarily on the tangible aspect of gleaning, that is, the food provided through gleaning. This research is significant in that it documents the potential for more than food distribution in gleaning organizations by focusing on the intangible benefits associated with gleaning organizations. These include the development of relationships of trust (social capital) and the building of skills and knowledge (human capital). This perspective provides a broader framework for understanding and evaluating the work of gleaning organizations run by low-income individuals. For example, Andrew Youn and Michael Ollinger (1999) suggest that the labor intensive nature of gleaning might make it a less efficient means of gathering food. While this may be true in terms of food alone, this perspective neglects the beneficial relationships and skills that can be developed during the time spent sorting and collecting gleaned produce. This broader recognition of the potential of gleaning groups can inform policies made at the group level and throughout the national food-banking network to encourage the development of human and social capital, and reduce existing barriers to this development within self-run gleaning organizations.

In addition, this study documents pressure for agencies throughout the food-banking network to take food. In this research, Jansen Food Bank felt pressure to take food, which in turn led to situations in which gleaners were

compelled, at times, to take more than they could use or wanted. Ironically, those who are the most in need in this case have either too little or too much and they must cooperate in both circumstances. This pressure to take food is an issue I was unable to locate when reviewing literature regarding the food-banking system.

This leads to a broader discussion, of gleaning groups as they are understood and interpreted within our culture. There are widely held assumptions within our society that make gleaning satisfying as an avenue for charitable food distribution. These assumptions include the following: Good food should not be wasted. People deserve what they work for. It is better to work for what you receive than to simply receive. Since low-income people are not working, they have an abundance of time. Low-income people should be grateful for what they receive through charitable organizations, because it is free and they would not have it otherwise. Operating with these assumptions, gleaning makes great sense in that low-income people are able to access the excess of society for their benefit and through their own effort.

However, our society may need to step back and reevaluate these very assumptions. *Good food should not be wasted.* Does that mean that low-income individuals are obligated to take good, leftover food, so that our consumption based, often wasteful society will not incur as much guilt? *It is better to work for what you receive than to simply receive.* Conversely, one might say that people who receive “handouts” are lazy. *Low-income people should be grateful for what they receive through charitable organizations, because it is free and they would not have it otherwise.* Should they be grateful regardless of its condition or the conditions under which they are receiving? In addition, is there no sense that as a society we have an obligation to take care of the basic needs of everyone? For instance, one could make the case that social and human capital development in gleaning

groups is really a clever justification for using the labor of impoverished individuals to carry out a job that society is unwilling to pay for.

At their best, these assumptions uphold the value of stewardship, as well as hard work and its rewards. At their worst, these assumptions alienate gleaners because of their low-income status and legitimize power differentials within our society. In no way does this paper attempt to tackle the larger structural issues, which reinforce and justify poverty. The intent of this discussion is to open up the conversation and to identify that these broader issues exist and do feed into the local situations of gleaning organizations that participated in this study. In this paper I seek to identify windows of opportunity within the current structure, by encouraging the *empowerment* of low-income individuals through the development of human and social capital.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study was that my research question was reshaped through the research process. Since human and social capital development became a focus of my research after much of the data was collected, no specific instrument was used to measure instances of either them. In addition, examining social and human capital levels among different groups was not integrated into my research design. However, the qualitative data I gathered suggests that there is both the potential for human and social capital development within gleaning organizations and that there are obstacles to these types of development. Indeed, this is a benefit of qualitative research with a high degree of participant observation. It opens the possibility of being surprised by one's findings.

Similarly, I was not expecting the role of Jansen Food Bank in relation to the gleaning organizations in this study to be as significant as I observed it to be. As the research progressed, I found that I could not understand these

groups apart from the identity and influence of Jansen Food Bank. With the knowledge I have now, I would have designed this study to include participant observation and interviews with additional gleaning groups connected to America's Second Harvest but through a different regional coordinating agency.

Suggestions for Further Research

I suggest that future research on gleaning and charitable efforts to alleviate hunger take into consideration the potential *intangible* impacts of food distribution agencies. It is possible that these organizations are or could be making important contributions to the well being of the individuals they serve, which could go beyond providing food.

A long-term study that intentionally looked at the potential for human and social capital development within gleaning groups would be able to document more conclusively the effects of human and social capital for gleaning members. This information would help gleaners and professionals who work with gleaners to evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of making changes to policies that will create room for increased human and social capital development. One might find that adjusting policies to make longer-term contributions to the well being of individuals who are involved in gleaning groups is an entirely idealistic premise that would bear little result in relation to the effort it would require. Or alternatively, this type of study might find that human and social capital development has great positive impacts for individuals and would be well worth the energy and support of gleaning organization leaders and others. These findings might also contribute to the findings of literature regarding human and social capital development and potential poverty reduction. In general, I suggest that more research be conducted which evaluates the correlation between long-term investments in human and social capital development and poverty reduction.

Another point of further research might be to evaluate to what degree social capital can be intentionally developed. Using a pre-test/ post-test research design that measures social capital within a group both before and after implementing changes intended to increase social capital, one could explore possibilities for intentional social capital development through changes in organizational policy. For gleaning groups, examples of policy changes might include reestablishing a family-to-family ratio among gleaners and adoptees or encouraging more social activities such as potlucks.

Finally, research documenting and exploring the definitions of success within the national food-banking network might also be an important follow-up to the findings of this research. A study of this kind should include examining the apparent pressures to take charitable food when it is available and the implications of this pressure on network member agencies, including gleaning groups. As such, this study would be a helpful point of evaluation for agencies connected with the national food-banking network and could prove to be valuable in policy formation for these agencies.

Recommendations

This research shows that human and social capital is being developed through the work and organization of gleaning organizations run by low-income volunteers. These findings are significant, as current literature connects human and social capital development to poverty reduction. Human and social capital development in gleaning groups may be an avenue for individual gleaners to change their circumstances through obtaining new skills and building relationships of support, which in turn could prove helpful in acquiring a job or finding help in a time of need.

However, it is important to note that there are currently significant barriers to human and social capital development within the gleaning groups included in this study. Though these groups continue to describe themselves

as low-income volunteers working together to gather left over foods from farmers' fields, they are becoming more and more dependent on supplies of food coming through the national food-banking network and retail businesses. Food acquired in this way requires less volunteer participation to collect and is most often easier to handle than harvested produce. However, as groups spend less time in the fields, they are spending less time working together and less time gaining knowledge about food and food preservation. In addition, well-meaning policies implemented through Jansen Food Bank have led to the inability of group leaders to manage group resources at the group level. Gleaning leaders are continually renegotiating their time, their food handling capabilities, and their finances to accommodate food coming through the national food-banking network. While gleaners are very grateful for this food and benefit from it, it can also become a source of tension and strain especially for group leaders who must deal with issues such as lack of storage space and indebtedness resulting from accumulated food and share contribution charges. Gleaning groups are also inhibited in their ability to develop human and social capital because of low participation among group members caused by poor communication and apathy on the part of many gleaning members. Several groups have also begun to prioritize efficiency over opportunities to foster human and social capital development. In these ways, the potential for gleaning groups to contribute to human and social capital development is lost.

The original goal of this research was to find characteristics of "successful" gleaning groups in order to make suggestions for improving the work of gleaning organizations. Yet in looking for these characteristics I found that among the gleaning groups in this study there was not a clear purpose by which to define success. While this research was never intended to define the purpose of gleaning groups, it is my hope that gleaners and professionals who work closely with gleaners will take the findings of this

study into account as they seek to define the purpose and role of gleaning groups in alleviating hunger and increasing food security.

At this point, manifestations of human and social capital are, for the most part, unintentional consequences of the activities gleaning members are involved in. However, if gleaners and professionals who work with gleaners see the value in investing in these forms of capital available in gleaning groups, there is potential to augment current human and social capital development. This can take place through intentional decision-making and policy formation that seek to support a broader vision of what these groups have to offer for their members and their communities. These decisions could be implemented at the group level, RCA level, and throughout the national food-banking network.

Recommendations for Gleaning Groups

For gleaning groups that wish to pursue this broader vision for the purpose of their organizations, I have the following recommendations:

1. Adopt human and social capital development as a stated priority for group operation and policy-making. The official adoption of social and human capital as a goal of gleaning organizations will allow groups to see every activity the group participates in with new eyes. Group leaders can evaluate the activities their membership participates in to see which activities contribute to human and social capital development. Once these activities are identified, group leaders can work to preserve, support and build these areas of their organizations. In this way, incorporating a mindset of creating human and social capital transforms secondary activities such as potlucks into intentional contributions to the goals of these organizations. Gleaning groups can work to maintain these types of events and think of even more avenues toward developing social connections and skills within their groups.

- For example, leaders from one group in this study discussed the possibility of inviting all of the adoptees in their group to a “fun night” sponsored by the gleaners. With an intentional mindset of building social capital, similar events would become purposeful contributions to the goals of the group rather than just nice ideas.
- An example of human capital development would be to become more intentional about training opportunities for different activities within groups. Volunteers who have been trained in one aspect of the operations of the group could share this knowledge with other members of the group as an individual mentor or through group training sessions. Opportunities like these would give knowledgeable group members chances to learn how to teach others, while the group members who are under their guidance would be trained in new skills.
- Another example of human capital development might include groups becoming more intentional about information sharing. One group I visited had a bulletin board where people could post upcoming community events. Perhaps this same idea could be used to post new recipes. Maybe groups could encourage information sharing and creativity by having recipe contests with certain unique foods gathered through the gleaners.

Simply taking on the mindset of creating human and social capital wherever the opportunity presents itself will open doors of possibility within these groups to do just that.

2. Group leaders and coordinators should work to become group facilitators rather than the handful of individuals who are doing most of the work. In short, be sure that coordinators are coordinating! With a broader

vision of the purpose of gleaning groups, facilitation becomes not just a matter of relieving the burden of a few, but of creating opportunities for many to build relationships of trust and to gain new skills. If volunteers are not participating in the activities of their groups, then they are missing opportunities to benefit from the development of human and social capital.

- Communication is essential to getting volunteers involved in group activities. If people have no knowledge of, or short notice for certain activities, it is likely they will not be there. Group leaders should focus on planning ahead as much as possible. They may wish to consider making sign-up sheets for activities they know are taking place in the future. Group leaders might also wish to come up with lists of small tasks that a volunteer could help with if they drop by the gleaning site. Taking time and effort to organize group activities and communicate with group members could go a long way in enabling more volunteer participation in the tasks of the group.
- Gleaning leaders might develop a volunteer schedule where volunteers could commit to a regularly days and hours to come to the gleaning site and help with whatever the group is working on that day. In this way, the problem of short notice for many activities would be less of a factor for lack of participation among volunteers.
- Group leaders may also want to consider creating incentives for members to participate in group activities. For example, one group that runs a thrift store gives discounts in their shop for different levels of participation. Two other groups give people extra food each time they come in to volunteer. In this way, a person's participation affects the amount of food they are able to receive.

3. Remember that efficiency may not always be the group's highest priority. Using more volunteers, or taking more time to get a job done may become an important part of the food distribution task as it will allow for additional opportunities for skill building and potential for growth in relationships.

- For instance, groups may wish to reestablish household-to-household relationships between gleaners and adoptees, providing potential social connections to the most isolated members of these groups.
- Groups might also want to consider sending more than one person to a warehouse or grocery store to pick up food items that may require a minimum of only one person helping. Incorporating more people in group activities increases opportunities for group members to build relationships and gain skills such as relating to donors. In addition, having more people trained in a task could allow for further delegation among volunteers.

Recommendations for Agencies that Work with Gleaning Groups

For larger agencies working closely with gleaning groups, such as Jansen Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank, that wish to incorporate the value of social and human capital development into their relationship with gleaning groups, I recommend cultivating an awareness of how policies at these higher levels can affect human and social capital development within gleaning groups. With the great amount of influence these agencies have in interacting with gleaning organizations there is a great capacity to influence human and social capital development for better or for worse.

Jansen Food Bank's relationship with gleaning organizations provides an important example of the ways in which a larger agency can affect human

and social capital development within gleaning groups. Jansen Food Bank contributed to human and social capital development in several significant ways. They provided training sessions and seminars, technical support and help organized picnics and other social activities for gleaners. Additionally, some of the policies implemented by Jansen Food Bank tended to take the power to choose when and how gleaning group resources were volunteered from the gleaners themselves. For some gleaning groups, this inability to manage resources resulted in lost opportunities to gain human capital as well as increased dependency on the food-banking network. This dependency was expressed in continued debt, frequent turnover in leadership of the gleaning groups, and lack of ownership by gleaning members in their gleaning organizations. Jansen Food Bank has not set out to create this type of relationship with the gleaning organizations, but it seems that in the RCA's ultimate mission to get food out into the community, they have left little room for the self-supportive, grass-roots level, community environment possible in gleaning. At the same time, however, Jansen Food Bank is in a very effective position to support human and social capital development within the gleaning groups it serves. With these things in mind, I have the following recommendations specifically for Jansen Food Bank:

1. Encourage and allow gleaning group members to manage their group's resources. Without the opportunity to manage resources such as time and money, gleaning participants are missing valuable opportunities to learn key leadership skills.

- Facilitate the ability for gleaning leaders to have more control over their time by excusing individuals from training sessions that they have already attended.
- Develop creative financial compromises such as allowing each group to assess their monthly budget and set a maximum share contribution payment for each month. In this way, Jansen Food

Bank could still take last minute orders through the food-banking network, but keep the financial burden of this food within limits set by each group.

- Give gleaning groups more control over their food intake. This would help gleaning organizations avoid debt and create accountability in groups with low participation. If individuals would like to retrieve more food through the national food-banking network, group members might need to contribute more effort in fundraising activities. As things currently stand in many groups working with Jansen Food Bank, people are free not to help and not to contribute financially, because there are no consequences if they do not. In other words, the same amount of food comes in from Jansen Food Bank regardless of the membership's participation.
- Consider increasing networks of distribution in gleaning groups by encouraging member recruitment rather than overwhelming organizations with food. Jansen Food Bank might facilitate the strengthening of these groups so they can retain their members and leadership and then intentionally begin outreach campaigns to increase distribution networks to low-income families. Using this approach, gleaners might also have opportunities to recruit community volunteers who do not qualify to receive food through gleaning groups, but who do have a wealth of skills and knowledge to share with these organizations.

2. Encourage group leaders to become better administrators at every opportunity.

- For example, rather than communicating to gleaning leaders that they cannot ask members to pay their dues, Jansen Food

Bank could encourage groups to develop strategies for handling lack of payment of dues through the group's board of directors.

- Jansen Food Bank could also provide trainings that focus specifically on building leadership qualities among group leaders. Guest speakers could be brought in to talk about issues such as financial planning and management, volunteer coordination and motivation, or developing conflict resolution management skills.
- Jansen Food Bank could create opportunities for experienced gleaning coordinators to lead training sessions on various aspects of gleaning. Similarly, Jansen Food Bank might consider developing mentoring opportunities between experienced leaders and new or potential leaders.

3. Create a policy for working with groups that are in debt, giving them plenty of notice for termination and opportunities for establishing payment plans in order to help groups stay out of debt. Jansen Food Bank could adopt policies that help gleaning leaders to function within their group's means and once groups are stable, help them develop additional fundraising opportunities.

- For example, adopt a policy of written notification for groups that are struggling to pay their share contribution bills. If a group has exceeded a certain number of days in paying a share contribution balance, that group could be sent a letter clearly explaining the options the group has. These options might include setting up a payment plan with Jansen Food Bank or setting up allowances for the group to limit their food intake temporarily until they can regain financial stability.

These suggestions for policy adjustments may take more time, or require a different kind of focus, but they create valuable opportunities for growth among gleaning members. With a sole focus on getting food out, and the demands of food assistance work it is possible that opportunities for skills development and creating networks of support within gleaning organizations are simply overlooked by RCA professionals and gleaners alike. As Janet Poppendieck comments, "because food programs are logistically demanding, their maintenance absorbs the attention and energy of many of the people most concerned about the poor, distracting them from the larger issues of distributional politics" (1998: 6). In general, it would be beneficial for all agencies that provide services to low-income households to take a second look at their programs. Many of these organizations may be providing valuable benefits for participants beyond their proclaimed service and these unintentional benefits could have valuable impacts in reducing poverty if cultivated in an intentional manner.

Closing Remarks

As gleaning groups consider their purposes, identity and role in their communities, relieving hunger is certainly their primary task. Yet the urgency of getting food out could very easily cause leaders in gleaning organizations to overlook the potential for these groups to contribute to the development of relationships of trust and support as well as skills, knowledge and confidence that may prove useful in the workforce. Indeed, opportunities to gain human and social capital are what distinguish gleaning groups from other emergency food providers. Utilizing their full potential, gleaning groups provide individuals with opportunities to work, learn and be a part of something. In this way, gleaning groups provide much more than food. Gleaning groups may actually be an avenue for individuals to gain

opportunities and resources that can ultimately contribute to the reduction of poverty.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Gleaning Coordinator Interview Guide

1. How did you become involved in gleaning?
 - a. How long have you been involved with gleaning?
 - b. Why did you start gleaning?
 - c. What has made you want to continue gleaning?
2. When did you become [leadership role]?
 - a. Can you tell me more about the leadership structure of this organization?
 - b. How many members are there on your board of directors?
3. Can you tell me some about the history of this gleaning group?
4. How many volunteers are involved in your gleaning organization?
 - a. What are the eligibility requirements for volunteers?
 - b. How do you recruit volunteers?
 - c. What are the requirements for volunteers once they become a part of your organization?
 - d. How long do people stay involved with your organization?
 - e. Are there different levels of commitment exhibited by the volunteers? Can you tell me more about that?
 - f. Do you have any incentive programs or reward programs for volunteers?
5. Where do you usually glean?
6. How is food distributed in your organization?
7. What sort of transportation and storage facilities does your group have?
8. What kind of financial support does your organization receive?
 - a. Do you receive donations? From whom?
 - b. Are you involved in any fundraising activities? Can you tell me more about that?
9. What are the strengths of your organization?
10. What are the limitations of your organization?
11. How do you measure success in your organization?
12. Does your organization educate volunteers on how to preserve or prepare gleaned foods? Can you tell me more about that?
13. What are your community's perceptions of gleaning and your gleaning group?
14. How does your organization deal with inner group conflict?
15. What plans do you have for the future of this gleaning organization?

Appendix B: Food Bank Professional Interview Guide

1. How did you become involved in gleaning?
 - a. How long have you been involved with gleaning?
 - b. Why did you start working with gleaners?
2. When did you become [leadership role]?
3. Can you tell me some about the history of gleaning groups?
4. What makes a successful gleaning group?
 - c. What is the purpose of gleaning groups?
 - d. What are the strengths of gleaning groups?
 - e. What are the weaknesses of gleaning groups?
5. Can you tell me about the relationship between gleaning groups and the Food Bank?
 - f. How do gleaning groups receive food through the Food Bank?
 - g. How often does the Food Bank distribute to gleaning groups?
 - h. Can gleaning groups refuse food from the Food Bank?
 - i. What is share contribution?
 - j. Why are some gleaning groups in debt to the Food Bank?
6. What is the goal of the Food Bank?
7. What do you see for the future of gleaning groups?

Appendix C: Volunteer Interview Guide

1. How did you get involved in gleaning?
 - a. How long have you been gleaning?
 - b. How did you find out about it?
 - c. Why have you kept gleaning?
2. I'm trying to learn about gleaning, in your own words, what is it?
3. What are the benefits of gleaning for you?
 - a. What does gleaning mean for your family?
 - b. How do you feel about the food you get from your gleaning group?
 - c. Are there times when you can't use food that you receive from the gleaning group? Can you estimate how much food that is in a typical week?
4. Where else does your food come from during the week?
5. How often are you involved in your gleaning group's activities?
 - a. What kinds of things do you do?
 - b. What is your favorite gleaning group activity? Why?
6. Is there anything else you would like to say about gleaning?