

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Vesna Grace Stone for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on May 26, 2017.

Title: The Federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) in Relation to Higher Education Students and Their Eligibility for the Program

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Food insecurity is a widely researched global public health issue, but students in higher education are frequently omitted from the data and are not widely recognized as a population that faces hunger. This thesis explores the college student population in relation to food insecurity and, in particular, their attempt to navigate the benefit system for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), aka “food stamps,” the biggest hunger safety net that the United States has to offer. As a SNAP program administrator for the last eight years, the author hypothesizes that the SNAP program inadequately serves higher education students because they have to meet additional criteria beyond those required of the general population in order to be considered eligible for food stamps. This qualitative, mixed methods research was triangulated by participant observation, semi-structured interviews with the SNAP policy analysts for the State of Oregon Department of Human Services, and survey data. Findings reveal that higher education students do suffer from food insecurity, and that the SNAP federal program is not providing an adequate safety net for this “invisible” food insecure population. This study demonstrates the need for further research on higher education students and food insecurity and recommends changes to the student eligibility rules for the SNAP federal program so that a greater number of higher education students can be covered.

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The Federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) in Relation to Higher
Education Students and Their Eligibility for the Program

by
Vesna Grace Stone

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APPROVED:

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Vesna Grace Stone, Author

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DISCLAIMER

The views represented in this thesis are mine, and mine alone. They do not represent the views of the State of Oregon–Department of Human Services.

DEDICATION

In memory of my parents: Lena and Spase Apostolovi, as well as my grandparents: Mitra and Gorgi Trpkovi; Fana and Petre Apostolovi; and all current and future higher education students who apply for the SNAP federal program.

The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Snap) in Relation to Higher Education Students and Their Eligibility for the Program

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Food Insecurity-the lack of reliable access to sufficient quantities of affordable, nutritious food-is common at colleges and universities across the country, potentially undermining the educational success of untold thousands of students” (NSCAHH 2016, 1). According to recent data, food insecurity is “significantly higher” among college students than the general U.S. population (Cady 2014, 266). The rates of food insecurity in regions where higher education institutions are located were double or triple rates in non-university areas (Cady 2014, 265-72). Food insecurity is a widely researched global public health issue, but students in higher education are frequently omitted from the data and are not widely recognized as a population that faces hunger. This thesis explores the higher education population in the US in relation to food insecurity and, in particular, their attempt to navigate the benefit system for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), aka “food stamps,” the biggest hunger safety net that the United States has to offer. As a SNAP program administrator for the last eight years, I hypothesize that the SNAP program inadequately serves higher education students because they have to meet additional criteria beyond those required of the general population in order to be considered eligible for food stamps.

1.1 Context and Positionality

Since May of 2009, I have worked for the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services. My current job title is Human Services Specialist 3, and my primary responsibility is to determine eligibility for government assistance programs. While engaged in my daily duties, I

work with clients from an array of demographics, and one population that stands out in Corvallis, Oregon, the home of Oregon State University, is the body of higher education students.

If these students are experiencing financial hardship, they can apply for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as “food stamps.” During the application process, I interviewed these higher education student applicants to determine their eligibility for SNAP. During these interviews, they shared their stories about how their life was going. Many of them would have qualified for SNAP benefits had they not been students.

Over the years, many students have cried from despair and voiced their discontent with the program while sitting at my desk. They could not understand the reasoning behind the student eligibility rules and felt discriminated against due to their status as students.

As an adult immigrant from Macedonia, I was bowled over by the amount of wealth in this country and quite shocked to hear that food insecurity was a problem. University education is one of the major ways out of poverty (Berg 2008, 179), so why then are SNAP eligibility rules more stringent for university students? Hearing students’ stories and learning what happened in their lives prompted me to think about university students who are food insecure and ineligible for SNAP. I began looking for a way to change the rules. I wanted to find a well-reasoned way to propose a waiver or change to the SNAP eligibility rules. Students can be hungry and food insecure like any other population (children, elderly, etc.), and they should not be penalized for trying to achieve the American dream of bettering their lives by going to college.

1.2 SNAP Eligibility

At the time I am writing this thesis, if an applicant is found or declared to be a student in higher education, as determined by the Department of Human Services, that applicant has to

fulfill additional, non-financial criteria to be eligible for SNAP benefits. A “student,” as defined by DHS, is an applicant who is 18 to 49 years of age and enrolled at least half time, more than 6 credits for undergraduate students and more than 4.5 credits for graduate students, at an accredited college, university, or vocational school. If the client is below 18 years of age or over 49, the “student” criteria questions are disregarded. All other “students” applying for SNAP benefits must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for benefits (State of Oregon 2017):

1. Be physically or mentally unfit for employment. This means they cannot work and go to school. They may be asked to provide supporting documentation provide by a doctor to support their claim.
2. Be a paid employee working an average of 20 hours each week. The hours worked in an internship or externship do not count towards these hours.
3. Be self-employed at and working at least 20 hours each week **and** have gross monthly income of at least \$1,247 before business costs.
4. Be awarded state or federally funded work-study and be assigned a position with a start date in the current term or semester.
5. Be responsible for the care of a child in their household. (Specific age requirements apply.)
6. Be receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), cash assistance, or Tribal TANF.
7. Be in a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training program.
8. Be receiving Unemployment Compensation benefits.
9. Be participating in at least one of the Employment Department’s training programs.

1.3 Overview of Thesis

This thesis is my attempt to contextualize the issue of food insecurity in higher education students that apply for the SNAP federal food assistance program. In chapter 2, I will examine the literature available on hunger and higher education students thus far. Even though I am confident that many current scholars are interested in, and working on, the issue of food insecurity prevalence in the higher education student population, not much literature is available. In this chapter, I will also review the history of the SNAP federal assistance program, from its development in the 1960s to the present time. I will speak to the various changes that have affected the program, like government funding and the “pendulum swing” of political opinions toward government assistance. I will also discuss the history of U.S. higher education and the impact of neoliberalism on college access and affordability. Finally, I will explain the theoretical frameworks that guide my analysis of food insecurity in relation to higher education students.

In chapter 3, I discuss the methodology that I chose in order to show how inadequate the SNAP food assistance program is at this time at covering or aiding higher education students who experience food insecurity while in college. In chapter 4, I present the results of my data collection. In 4A, I discuss my observations of higher education student clients that have shown their displeasure with the eligibility process and the student rules for SNAP while their applications for benefits were being considered. In section 4B, I discuss four interviews with the SNAP policy analysts for the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services, including questions regarding student eligibility rules for the SNAP program and how these might be changed or waived in order to make more higher education students eligible for benefits. In section 4C, I present the results of the survey that I developed and administered to the public to

ascertain their knowledge and perception of the SNAP program and their opinions on whether higher education students should qualify more easily for it.

In chapter 5, I present further discussion and analysis of my research and explain the significance of the results. In chapter 6, I present my conclusions and recommendations for further research and action on the issue of food insecurity among students in higher education.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Prior Studies of Food Insecurity among Higher Education Students

It is unfortunate that little scholarly literature can be found that addresses the relationship between higher education students and food insecurity. In this regard, higher education students are often referred to as an “invisible population” (Johnson 2011, 12). However, there are a few studies that pertain to food insecurity among higher education students. Nellum (2015) cites a United States study that found 49.3% of the clients who used a food bank were students at an institution of higher learning, and that students had to choose between paying for school or food every year. Goldrick-Rab and Broton (2015) surveyed ten community colleges in ten American states and found that one in five students go hungry. Patton-Lopez et al. (2014, 209-14), in their Oregon study, found that 59% of students surveyed experienced food insecurity. Lower percentages of food insecurity were found in other studies, like 21% at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (Chaparro et al. 2009, 2097-103) and 19.4% at a California University (Hanna 2014, 46-9).

In each of the aforementioned studies, risk factors for food insecurity were identified. Students living off campus, but not with their family or relatives, were at a higher risk than students who had greater family support (Chaparro et. al. 2009, 2097-103). Ethnicity was found to be a risk factor, especially for indigenous students (Chaparro et. al. 2009, 2097-103). Receiving federal financial aid was an additional risk factor for this population, which has already been determined to be disadvantaged or from a lower middle-class background (Patton-Lopez et. al. 2014, 209-14). Nellum (2015) suggests that food insecurity might also be linked to the growth of the non-traditional student population, who are often older, first generation in their

family to attend college, and come from lower income families and/or communities of color. Hanna (2014) found that students under the age of 24 were most likely to be food insecure and that lifestyle issues, including not knowing how to cook, having trouble getting to the store, or lacking money management skills, were correlated with being food insecure. Other causes reported relate to the “food desert” phenomenon and institutional structures (Meldrum and Willows 2006). Many universities and colleges are situated in areas where there are no low cost grocery stores and food retail companies operate on campus, so students cannot easily find affordable food choices while they are in school.

Students have been found to use various means to cope with food insecurity. Hanna (2014) found that students have different coping strategies. In this study, 100% of the students surveyed stated that they did not eat a balanced meal, 69.2% stated that they did skip a meal, 92% stated that they have reduced the size of their meal, and 38.5% stated that they did not eat all day. A study by Micevski et al. (2014) reported that some surveyed students reported stealing food as a coping strategy, and studies by Nellum (2015), Farahbakhsch et al. (2015), and Patton-Lopez et al. (2014) reported that students obtained additional employment as a strategy for coping with food insecurity.

The consequences of food insecurity include serious impacts to human health and productivity. Trasuk et al. (2012) observed that among the consequences are “poorer physical and mental health and higher rates of chronic conditions, including depression, diabetes and heart disease.” For students, such effects are also likely to impact their educational performance and overall well-being. Studies have shown that “poverty and financial stress increase risks of mental health issues such as depression” and that “poverty also contributes to a higher likelihood of anxiety and suicidal ideation at the college level” (Woessner 2012, as cited in Cady 2014,

268). The cost of the decision to attend college is more than economic, and students who struggle with institutional barriers to receiving food support may experience anxiety and feeling judged, adding to the stress of food insecurity. Colleges and universities should consider seriously the problem of food security for students, and the issue should be included in discussions about strategic planning and institutional sustainability. If students have to choose between buying food and paying tuition, they cannot reach their full potential or participate meaningfully in their education.

2.2 History of the SNAP program in the USA

The SNAP program originated in the 1960s as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, but the SNAP program as we know it today was the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (Berg 2008, 74). This bill also established income eligibility guidelines at 185 percent of the federal poverty line, which as of March 17, 2017 is \$1,860.00 gross monthly income (before taxes) for one individual (State of Oregon, Department of Human Services 2017). It should be noted that the Federal Poverty line is changed very seldom, and it does not take into account the current prices of commodities, like fuel and food, and it is not adjusted for yearly inflation. Thus, the federal formula used to calculate is outdated, and as Berg stated, "it undercuts the number of Americans who suffer from economic deprivation" (Berg 2008, 132). The federal government also requires the states to participate in outreach programs, so as many as possible eligible people can apply and receive SNAP. The SNAP program benefits are funded only by the federal government, and to this day, it remains the biggest safety net that Americans have to prevent hunger. The administrative costs of the program are shared 50/50 with the states that administer the program.

2.3 Higher Education in the USA

The cost of getting a college degree in America is on the rise, and it is getting more expensive to be a higher education student with every passing year. A recent example in rising costs is the college tuition increase of 4 percent for resident undergraduates at Oregon State University and 2 percent for non-residents, a hike that was just passed for the 2017-2018 academic year (Oregon State University 2017). The University of Oregon approved a tuition increase for 2017-2018 of 10.6% (Shill 2017); and Portland State University increased its tuition for academic year 2017-2018 by nine percent, coupled with 9 million in proposed cuts (Broderick 2017).

Goldrick-Rab states that ratio of debt to income is “substantial,” observing that “low income families hold student debt amounting to 70% of their income, while wealthier families have student debt amounting to about 10% of income” (Goldrick-Rab 2016, 94). According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study as quoted by Goldrick-Rab (Goldrick-Rab 2016, 94), in the last two decades more and more higher education students are taking the maximum student loans offered to them. With higher education costs on this steep rise, there is not much money left for students to cover their food needs. This has been identified as the “top ramen” syndrome, where an expected diet for a college student is “top ramen and beer” (Johnson 2011, 21), somehow normalizing hunger and food insecurity as the customary state of being a student today. When higher education students have to choose between tuition and food, they cannot participate “meaningfully...or even continue to go to school” (Booth et al. 2015, 191).

Neoliberalism in higher education. In his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey defines neoliberalism as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and

skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (Harvey 2005, 2). He also discusses the role of the state in neoliberalism that “has to guarantee...the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets” (Harvey 2005, 2). Lastly, the state then has to “step back” and let neoliberal practices take place in the “free market” landscape.

Neoliberalism has taken hold in many aspects of the state functions, including education. According to Henry Giroux (2009), neoliberal practices have become normalized in the last three decades. These neoliberal practices are evident with the commodification of education, where we are seeing youth being constantly bombarded by commercials and recruiters, as early as when they are still in middle school, about going to college and attaining the American Dream. Giroux claims: “Higher education is increasingly becoming unaffordable for all but the most prosperous of students. At its best, higher education should be free for all students simply because it is not an entitlement but a right, one that is crucial for a functioning democracy” (133). The prospect of not going to college and not getting a degree is translated into defeat and groups of young people becoming the “waste” of society, where “young people have become a generation of suspects” (12) and are increasingly “defined, if not assaulted, by market forces that commodify almost every aspect of their lives and lived relations” (13). Neoliberal practices in the education-scape have transformed students into consumers of higher education, which is sold to them as a ticket to enter the private economy.

The neoliberal push at this time in Oregon is exemplified by the new “goal” adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 2011-Senate Bill 253, the “40-40-20” that aims for 40% Oregonians to

have a four year Bachelors, graduate or professional degree, 40% an associate degree and 20 % a high school diploma or GED (League of Women Voters 2016, 13). This goal is again connected to the “needs of the job market” (League of Women Voters 2016, 14).

According to the above analysis of neoliberalism and its effect on education and therefore students, it is clear that the push for neoliberalism in education does not increase the well-being of the individual student. Students are expected to obtain higher education, but are not given the means to afford it. Students are swamped with educational debt and must choose between paying tuition and buying food. They become functionally enslaved as a generation that will be paying their student loan debt for decades to come.

SNAP and college students in Corvallis, Oregon. The current student population at OSU is 29,373 students strong, as per the latest available data from winter term 2017. 83.5% of those are undergraduate students, and the average age is 23 (COLLEGEdata 2016). Given the average age of 23, most students who apply for financial aid in order to be able to pay for school would not be considered independent as per the Department of Education, given that the US Department of Education considers a student independent only after the age of 24 (US Department of Education 2017). According to the most recent data available (Quarter 1, 2017-18), the majority of students (79.2%) who applied for federal financial aid at Oregon State University were considered dependent (US Department of Education 2017), even if they did not receive financial support from parents. Given that fact, most of these students, in order to be considered for financial aid, would have to provide additional income verification from their parent. Neither the federal student aid program nor SNAP has any evidence that parents are actually supporting their students at the level calculated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

One of the SNAP eligibility requirements for higher education students applying for the SNAP program is “being awarded work study and actually working in the work study job in the term of applying” (State of Oregon 2017). The discussion above indicates that undergraduate students under 24 have a high probability of not being awarded work-study because of their parents’ income inclusion on their financial aid application, and therefore not be able to qualify for SNAP based on this rule. A large number of students are thus disqualified from the SNAP program because they are disqualified from work-study award. It is a challenge for students to have to work 20 hours per week in order to meet a different SNAP criterion.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Three social theorists, whose work I feel is applicable to my research topic, shape my understanding of the problem of students in higher education facing food insecurity. The work of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Elizabeth Shove informs my analysis of the dynamics of higher education students and others navigating the bureaucratic SNAP program, and their theories help explain and contextualize my research within the frameworks of social theory and Cultural Anthropology.

Michel Foucault’s (1979) work provides a theoretical background for this research. We might consider Foucault’s theory of power and his concept of “docile bodies,” as well as the power of the individual. For Foucault, society and its institutions through their compliance with rules and regulations construct docile bodies. In the case of SNAP eligibility, applicants are conditioned to internalize their prescribed role and conform to government expectations in order to be considered benefits. Thus, in the process they become docile bodies.

Another applicable theorist is Bourdieu, (1990, 1-141) who defines Doxa as “experience by which the natural and social world appears ‘self-evident.’” Doxa can be explained as the

common belief of what society makes you, and pushes you, to believe, derived from socialization (growing up in an environment) that tells us what is correct. Bourdieu's defines "habitus" as a system of dispositions (thoughts and actions, schemes of perception), where the individual develops these in response to objective conditions that he/she encounters. My analysis will connect these concepts to the ways SNAP applicants' expectations become naturalized because they internalize the power dynamic between themselves and the government officials and the ways the system works.

Elizabeth Shove discusses practice as performance. In *The Dynamics of Social Practice* (2012, 1), Shove explains that practice, or the way we do things is reinforced by repeated performances, but each performance affords the opportunity to challenge accepted practice and create change. "In showing how practices change and stay the same we hope to realize another also latent promise, which is for social theory to make a difference. Thus, as Caletrío (2015, 3) affirms, "Every performance carries with it the twin possibilities of either reaffirming the ideal script or undoing its enclosures and approaching alternative paths of change." In my analysis, I will discuss the implication of practice as performance in the context of the eligibility worker and the SNAP applicant, who each have a scripted "practice" that is negotiated with each performance.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

For my methodology, I triangulated my research between participant observation, semi-structured interviews and 144 surveys. I created the questions for both the semi-structured interviews and the surveys. For the participant observation, I am using my eight years of professional experience as a Human Services Specialist 3 for the Department of Human Services and my experience observing students' reactions when they were approved or denied for the SNAP program. For the semi-structured interviews, I interviewed four out of five policy analysts working for the State of Oregon in the SNAP policy unit in 2011. The interviews were taped and transcribed by me, and oral consent was obtained from each of the four policy analysts. For the survey portion of the research, 144 surveys were administered to the general public in front of a public space in order to minimize selection bias. SPSS IBM Version 23 was used to create tables with descriptive statistics presented in section 3C. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was not sought as I was on academic leave of absence from the University when the surveys were collected in 2012. The surveys were conducted anonymously, and no identifiable data about the participants was collected. For the policy analyst interviews and participant observation, IRB approval was not necessary because these were conducted within the scope of my professional capacity as a Department of Human Services Employee.

3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was conducted in the course of my 8-year career as an eligibility specialist determining SNAP eligibility for the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services. During this time, I processed applications for SNAP benefits for multiple clients, both in person and over the phone. Given that my work is in Corvallis, a college town of nearly 30,000 students,

most of the applicants for SNAP happened to be students. As the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services has extra SNAP eligibility criteria for students, most student applicants were denied benefits. Often they cried or expressed unhappiness and disappointment in this result, and they did not understand why they were subject to additional requirements to receive food support. They felt penalized in that they had to meet additional criteria in order to qualify for benefits just because they were attending college and trying to improve their future economic prospects. This naturally prompted my interests in researching this food-deprived population, and I wanted to conduct this research in order to draw conclusions about the issue of food insecurity among college students and make recommendations to the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services and the federal government to adequately cover more higher education students on the SNAP program, which is the first and foremost food safety net available to Americans. The participant observations include my interactions with student applicants during interviews for SNAP eligibility, which usually last half an hour per person. During these session, students shared with me their stories of food insecurity and deprivation, and explained how they were trying to make better lives for themselves by working and taking numerous college credits, and how disappointed they were to be deemed ineligible for supplemental nutrition benefits.

3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

For the semi-structured interviews, I chose to speak to the SNAP policy analysts for the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services in 2011, as part of my Employee Development Plan (EDP). I was allowed two career days (time allowed to train in a different department) with the SNAP Policy Unit in Salem, and I received verbal consent from all four policy analysts

present on those two career days to conduct interviews with them and record them. Oral informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were told that the information would be published in a graduate thesis. The choice to speak to SNAP policy analysts was natural, as they were a unit that I worked with consistently through my years at the Department of Human Services. They had a body of knowledge when we had SNAP policy questions, and I wanted to find out how one can change policy regarding SNAP, which is part of the bigger federal farm bill.

3.3 Surveys

For the survey portion of my research, I created a survey with fourteen questions that I thought relevant. I administered the survey myself in front of the Corvallis Public Library—a public space—in order to gain a random population sample. I greeted passers-by, told them that I was conducting an anonymous survey of 14 questions that should take 2 minutes of their time, and asked if they would be willing to participate. I explained that they were under no obligation to respond to any questions they did not choose to. Those who agreed were handed a survey and a pen, which they returned to me when they had completed the survey.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Participant Observation: Hearing Student's stories

During my eight-year career as SNAP eligibility worker, I have interviewed and determined SNAP eligibility for countless higher education students. My personal administration accuracy of the SNAP program and all the programs I administer is in the 95th percentile, according to my last, 2016 yearly evaluation, and I have not yet had a hearing on a decision that I had made that did not stand. My experience is that many students, when denied food stamps, cry and are speechless. From some of the comments that I have heard, and some of the comments that were told to me were: *"I already work hard enough. Do you know how much work 19 credits is?!? Sometimes I feel I can't think....."* (Anonymous 2011). Another comment is: *"I am working 15 hours per week...Are you telling me that since I don't work 20 hours per week or more, I am not eligible for food stamps?!? How am I supposed to eat? My job barely covers my rent."* (Anonymous 2011).

4.2 Semi-structured interviews: What SNAP policy analysts have to say

According to the Oregon SNAP policy analyst Sarah Lambert:

What I do know is that, because Congress makes the rules, they have determined that students have to meet extra eligibility criteria, in order to be eligible to get benefits. I believe that it has to do with – and I don't have any hard data to back this up – but I believe it has to do with the taxes, and if I'm a student, I can be on my parents' medical insurance, and different things. There are different tax rules and different things that students have to go through, so I don't know if that's part of it. We just know that we're not very happy with the extra requirements, and we are trying to make some changes, but it's very hard to make changes to a federal program. (Lambert, interview with Stone, February 25, 2011)

The federal SNAP program rules could be changed in two ways: the first one would be to collect enough signatures so one would be able to propose voting on the matter, and the other

way is for the individual states to request a “waiver” to the program, because of an issue that they can claim, for example, a high unemployment rate in their state.

Sarah Lambert, the SNAP policy analyst for the State of Oregon, explains the process of waivers in this way:

Now, there are things that we can do to test rules; we can ask for a waiver; we can say, “We really don’t like the way that this rule hinders, or acts as a barrier, and we think we can do it better by doing it this way”; and we can ask for a waiver of the rules that we have. That is completely up to (the federal) Food and Nutrition Service. They determine whether or not they would allow us to do that. There’s kind of two parts: There is the Farm Bill, which I talked about, which is the law, we call it “The Law”; the big, over-arching picture. And then there is the interpretation of law, which is the Code of Federal Regulations. So, within the Code of Federal Regulations, that’s what really tells us, “This is exactly how you have to do it.” The over-arching law is “This is what you have to have; this is how you do it”; but the code of regulations really lays it down in rule, and then we interpret that policy, and put it in our Oregon Administrative Rules. Then we even interpret it down further, and put it in our manual, which explains the process for our workers. So, depending on what we want to change, if it’s a big, over-arching piece, and we want to do it in a law, we have to do what’s called a demonstration; and so, one of the big things is, that there can be no cost to the federal government in doing the demonstration. We have to show that we want to change this law; we think we could do it better, but we’re going to show you we’re going to be more inclusive, but, it’s not going to cost you anymore, and so it’s called “cost neutrality.” It’s very hard to show cost neutrality, especially when you bring more clients in, or loosening up rules. (Lambert, interview with Stone, February 25, 2011)

The State of Oregon has requested many such waivers and was actively working on lessening the rules for students, although not completely eliminating them: for example, in December of 2010, the state of Oregon requested a waiver from the federal government, in order to make more students eligible for the SNAP program. A new waiver that was approved by the federal government and went into effect in the State of Oregon on October 1st 2011 stated that, if the student is awarded work study and is unable to find work study employment because of shortage of work study positions at the university, they would be considered an eligible student,

for the purposes of the SNAP program, based solely on their work study award. This waiver expired after one year and the current policy analysts have not requested a new waiver.

The State of Oregon implemented several measures to increase the outreach and participation in the SNAP program. In 2011, the State of Oregon received 1.5 million dollars in award funds from the Federal government, as a bonus award and acknowledgement of the outreach efforts that were done in the state. When awards like these occur, the states reserve the right to choose where they will spend the money received, and the State of Oregon chose at the time to put this SNAP outreach award money into putting more Oregonians on the OHP program, through drawing random names from the Oregon OHP reservation list that was created for people who would like to be covered on medical benefits in Oregon. Each month, approximately 2,500 names were drawn and were offered the opportunity to apply for the OHP medical coverage in Oregon in 2010-prior to “Obamacare” going into effect. (MMIS medical policy analyst’s weekly meeting notes, 2011).

Another strategy that the State of Oregon has developed is the opportunity for people to apply online for SNAP benefits (see online DHS Oregon). The “CAPI” system is the Oregon online SNAP application. It started as a pilot available in several cities (mostly with high college populations, like Corvallis, Portland and Eugene), and at this moment, the CAPI system will automatically transfer the application to the appropriate DHS branch, based on the applicant’s residence zip code.

Aside from the CAPI online SNAP application, the current program used in the State of Oregon is DOS based, i.e. more than thirty years old, and the state has failed to see and/or acknowledge the importance of investing into developing and migrating to a newer, more sophisticated software. It takes one year, on average, to train an eligibility worker to use this old,

antiquated software, and many times workers have to “work around” the errors that this DOS based system presents.

Other states, as our northern neighbor state Washington, have invested properly (more than 1 billion dollars) in their software for program administration, which allows the state on the long run, to streamline and predict applicant eligibility for multiple federal programs at one time (SNAP, Medical, TANF (temporary assistance for needy families, also known as “cash” program) and ERDC (employment related day care program), reduce the length of the application itself, reduce the error rate and increase the accuracy of the program administration. Because of this software improvement, the State of Washington has even lowered the number of employees needed to administer the government programs, and because of all of the above, contain their costs of administration to minimum levels (since the individual states pay fifty percent of the federal program administration costs).

In contrast to Oregon and Washington, some states like Texas have chosen to outsource their SNAP management program functions by hiring contractors to do the work, on the pretense that the efficiency of the program administration would be greater. Berg argues that Texas has opted for this move because of a hidden agenda: “to try and save money and to reduce the power of public employee unions” (Berg 2008, 93).

There are some common myths surrounding the SNAP and student issue: Eliza Devlin, SNAP policy analyst veteran for the State of Oregon, for thirty-one years now, when asked why there are extra rules for students, replied:

Actually in the 'seventies, I wasn't a worker yet, there were a lot of what we called “Cadillac students,” driving fancy cars, coming into the office and applying for benefits, and there was a lot of, you know, resentment in the general public. Everybody was saying: “They should work; work, and not make enough, then, they should get benefits. No work, just going to school, they shouldn't be getting benefits.” So there was a lot of

argument there, and in Congress; so Congress basically said they're going to make it a little bit different. If they actually have work/study – usually, students that they take into work/study, they have lower income -- and they take a work/study job, regardless of how many hours they're going to work, we're going to give them benefits, and that's how it all started that student criteria were a little bit different than the rules for the general public. We know, even now, a lot of students, they just get by; they're just going to school, but if they don't have work/study or don't work an average of twenty hours per week, they are not getting benefits. (Devlin, interview with Stone, February 25, 2011)

In addition to this common myth about SNAP and students, there are other common myths surrounding the SNAP program: for example, one of them is the opinion that “only lazy people are on SNAP and they don't want to work” (Berg 2008, 87). Research shows that most people receiving the SNAP program are working families that often work more than one job in order to make ends meet. (Ehrenreich 2001, 45). Another myth is that only non-whites are on SNAP benefits, where in fact, the research numbers point out that most people on SNAP are white (Berg 2008, 112).

According to Eliza Devlin, the policy analyst for the State of Oregon, there were 407,336 SNAP cases in the state for February of 2011 (Devlin, interview with Stone, February 25, 2011). That would amount to about 800,000 Oregonians being supported by the SNAP program and relying on the government to help supplement their food items. The federal government ranks the states by their outreach efforts, and Oregon is number one in outreach, for which we got the 1.5 million dollars award mentioned above. Some other states are not that successful in their outreach efforts: according to the same policy analyst, our southern neighbor, California, was 50th in outreach efforts, out of 50 states total. This is an example of outreach differences among states, and it also shows the attitudes of the states towards how they think the SNAP program should be run. Devlin believed the SNAP program participation rates should be increased in all states, since SNAP promotes self-sufficiency to working families by allowing them a greater

purchasing power, and any state could benefit from more self-sufficient population, and from increased purchasing power that would stimulate the state's economy.

4.3 Surveys: What the public has to say

Survey questions included some demographic data, multiple choice and open-ended questions (see Appendices B & C). I analyzed my survey using SPSS software (IBM 2015) and in my responses, I will discuss the "valid percent" of the table.

For question number one, I asked: "Are you a student?" 85.4 percent of the responders stated they are, in one way or another, a student in higher education, and 14.6 percent stated they are not students.

In question number two, I asked: "If yes, did you or your immediate family receive food benefits before you were a student?" Out of all the respondents, 13.2 percent stated that this question is not applicable to them; 69.4 percent stated that they have not; 1.4 percent did not respond to this survey question; and 15.3 percent stated yes that they have received food benefits before they became students in higher education.

In question number 3, I asked the age of the survey respondents, in groups: 42.4 percent of the survey respondents stated they are between the age of 18-20 years old; 29.9 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are in between 21-23 years old; 4.2 percent of the survey respondents stated they are between the age of 24-26; 4.2 percent of the survey respondents stated they are between the age of 26-29; 9 percent of the survey respondents stated they are between the age of 30-39; 1.4 percent of the survey respondents stated they are between the age of 40-49; another 1.4 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are between the ages of 50-59; 6.0 percent of the survey respondents did not respond to this question and 0.7 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are over the age of 60.

In question number 4, I asked: “If you are a student, what kind of degree are you pursuing?” 0.7 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are pursuing an AS/BS degree; 4.9 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are pursuing an Associates degree only; 5.6 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are pursuing a BA/MA degree; 64.6 percent of the survey respondents stated that they are pursuing a Bachelor degree; 6.9 percent stated they are pursuing a MA degree; 13.9 percent responded to this question with “N/A” answer; 2.1 percent stated that they are not going for a degree; 0.7 percent simply did not respond to this question; 4.9 percent stated they are pursuing a PhD degree and 1.4 percent stated they are undecided at the time of responding to the survey question.

In question number 5, I asked: “When is your need for food the greatest: beginning, middle or end of month?” 9 percent of the survey respondents stated that their need for food is the greatest in the beginning of the month; 0.7 percent of the survey respondents stated that their need for food is the greatest during the month and 51.4 percent stated that their need for food was the greatest at the end of the month.

In question number 6, I asked: “If you are a student, when is your need for food the greatest: at the beginning, middle or end of term?” Please note that even though this question was geared towards getting a sense of the student food insecurity experience in connection to the academic term, many of the respondents did not necessarily circle one of the three possibilities; some simply used their own language to answer this question, for example “never”; “none”, etc. 5.6 percent of the respondents stated that their need for food is the greatest “all the time”; 8.3 percent responded that their need for food was greatest at the beginning of the term; 0.7 percent responded that their food need was the greatest during the term; 49.3 percent responded that their need for food was greatest at the end of the term. 0.7 percent responded to this question with “I

don't know"; 11.1 percent responded that their need for food was the greatest during the middle of the term; 4.9 percent responded that this question was not applicable to them; 4.2 percent responded that they "never" have a need for food that they can recognize as the greatest; 0.7 percent responded "none" and 13.9 percent chose not to respond to this survey question.

In question 7, I asked: "What food resources have you used? Please circle all that apply: gleaning; growing a garden; emergency food pantries; church donations; free meals at community or church sites; the kindness of friends and relatives." From all the survey respondents, 69.4 percent were valid answers. 0.7 percent of the respondents stated that this question is "not applicable" to them; 5.6 percent responded with "none" and 24.3 percent did not enter a response to this question. 6.3 percent of the respondents stated that they have been gleaning; 31.9 percent stated that they have been growing a garden; 9.7 percent stated that they have been using emergency food pantries; 6.3 percent stated that they have been using church donations; 18.1 percent stated that they have had free meals at community or church sites; and lastly, 53.5 percent of the survey respondents stated that they have been using the kindness of friends and relatives.

In question 8, I asked: "Are you food deprived?" 91.7 percent stated that they are not; 1.4 percent did not respond to this question, and only 6.3 percent stated that they consider themselves food deprived.

In question 9, I asked: "When in the month do you think you run out of food?" More than half of the respondents, 52.1% stated that they run out of food at the end of the month. A smaller percentage, 21.5% stated that they "never" run out of food. Only 7.6 % of the respondents stated that they run out of food at the middle of the month. A very small percentage, 0.7 %, responded that they run out of food on the 15th of the month; 25th of the month; "sometimes" and "yes".

Some respondents stated that this question is not applicable to them, 3.5%; 1.4 % stated “no” to the question; and 8.3% decided not to respond to the question.

In question 10, I asked if respondents know of local food resources in the area of Corvallis where we live. 50% of the respondents stated that they would know where to find food resources if they needed them and responded with “yes”; 47.2% responded that they do not know of any food resources in the area; 1.4% responded that they do not know and 0.7 percent decided not to respond to this question.

In question 11, I asked: “Do you know how to apply for SNAP?” Remarkably, 59.7% of the respondents stated “no”, and 0.7% stated that they “do not know”. Only 38.2 percent of the respondents responded with “yes.” 0.7% decided not to respond to this survey question.

In question 12, I asked: “Are you aware that there are extra rules for students in order to become eligible for SNAP?” Majority of respondents with 65.3% stated “no”, 31.9% stated “yes” and 2.1% of the respondents decided not to answer this question. Given that 85.4% of the survey respondents were students in higher education (see survey question1), this is a very high percentage of higher education students that is unaware that there are extra rules for students applying for the SNAP program.

In question number 13, I asked: “Are you on the SNAP program right now?” and only 14.6 percent of respondents stated “yes”; 84% stated “no” and 1.4% decided not to respond to this question. Given that 85.4% of the survey respondents were students in higher education (see survey question1), this is a very high percentage of higher education students that at the time of the administration of the survey were not aided or their food needs supplemented by the SNAP program.

In question number 14, I asked: “What is your opinion on students and SNAP: should students be able to get SNAP just because they are students?” 20.8% of the respondents stated that they “don’t know”; 7.6% responded “maybe”; 12.5% responded “no” and overwhelming 55.6% respondents stated, “yes.” 3.5% of the respondents decided not to respond to this question.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter I synthesize my observations of the SNAP program with the information gleaned from my interviews with policy analysts and analyze and explain interactions of staff and participants, State and citizens, with various social theories. I explore the possible variations in the SNAP program for students that can occur with waivers. I also discuss the process of dehumanization and mechanization within the SNAP program, both for workers and for applicants. Finally I use the data from surveys to show that a random sampling from Corvallis, a very well-to do community, shows participation in SNAP close to the State average and food insecurity exists in Corvallis. These surveys also reveal that more could be done to make the SNAP program better known and more accessible.

5.1 SNAP Applicants as “Docile Bodies”

Every applicant for SNAP in Oregon has to fill out a seventeen page application, sharing all of their private information, including: date of birth, address, names of everyone in the household, and verification of all incomes receive before eligibility for SNAP can be determined. This is a good example of Foucault’s creation of “docile bodies.” The power of the government disciplines applicants by requiring them to fill out a seventeen-page application form, which trains them to be docile. For Foucault, it is the relationship between the discipline and the precise system of command that matters.

At the same time, if the applicant wants to exercise their power and show resistance, they have the power to choose to be docile and conform, to rebel and drop out of the application process, or to be deviant and fill out only the pages absolutely necessary to apply for benefits with their signature in order to show their rebellion against the state and the system. As an example, I have seen applicants who only put their name and address on the top of the

application and sign page two and thirteen of the application packet, which is the minimum they can do in order to apply for benefits, and in this way, the deviant applicant shows their resistance to the system and the state.

During the eight years of my career as a Human Services Specialist 3 (i.e. “eligibility worker”), I have seen Foucault’s theory of “docile bodies” in practice. There has been a push, by the government, to mechanize the body and apply non-human concepts, mechanical concepts, to a human population. The office where I work is called a “Processing center.” We are only to “process” applications as in a production factory that has a “process” to create its product. We are not able to spend an adequate amount of time with each family and/or applicant.

Every family is unique and one cannot “process” an application for a family with eleven children in the same manner that one would process a single applicant application. Regardless, the same amount of time is allotted to both by the “production management” and according to the “lean procedures.” In line with the mechanization of the human body, we have received notification that our titles will be changed from “Human Services Specialist 3” to “eligibility workers.” The “Human” will be removed. In this way, the last remnant of what it means to serve a human population will be forever changed to a non-human/mechanical term.

This aspect of theorizing the eligibility worker and their performance and role definitely changes my sense of relationship with my job, as I came to the job as a person who is interested in the human condition, poverty and, ultimately, how to improve the human condition and not be and feel disconnected from the populations I serve. This is evidence of Marx’s “alienated worker” (Giddens 1990, 112-50), as my contact with the populations I serve has been minimized to only phone interviews at the processing center where I now work.

The tactics of operation are also through coded activities: for families with no income, thirty minutes are allowed; for families with income, forty-five minutes are allowed, etc. The number game is strong, and every day we enter a number log as to how much have we “processed” during our workday. Of course, this is how our own “production” is measured and this is how we are assigned a “value” by the management, as to what kind of a worker are we: “good” or “bad”, and whether we have achieved our “production goal”.

Foucault talks about this in “Discipline and Punishment” where he theorizes that the formation of knowledge and different techniques become entangled with the practice of the power to punish, and he argues that the new “regime of the truth” emerged (Foucault 1979, 195). This practice seems to be consistent with the current neoliberalism era in that the state exerts its power to control and punish SNAP applicants and can be defined as a policy model of social studies and economics that transfers control of economic factors from the private sector to the public sector.

In addition, trips are scheduled for staff to visit other “processing centers” in the State of Oregon, in order to copy and apply other mechanized tactics of operation that we have not thought of before, but they might have. This example confirms Foucault’s theory that power is productive and we all make it, produce it and reproduce it, and it is always circulating, which is why agency is difficult. There seems to be a push for the collective, and not individualization of the body, which would confirm Foucault’s theory that in this way, through conditioning of the individual and modeling their behavior, the greater “health of the society” is believed to be achieved. For example, I have resisted and raised the issue of applying mechanical terms to a human population at “all staff” meetings with management when a bigger “push” took place for mechanization and production of our process, to no avail. I was told that “it is happening” from

top down, and there are no valid points that I can make that the top management would consider. This is also evidence of Shove's point that the modeling of behavior comes from top-down (Shove 2012, 1-20).

There are many spoken and unspoken rules at play as well, and both are shaped in certain ways. For example, there is no way for a higher education student- applicant for the SNAP program to know whether the State of Oregon obtained a "student waiver" of rules this year from the federal government, or not. Therefore, a higher education student, that qualified for SNAP last year on a waiver, would not qualify this year without the waiver in place. In addition, there would be no way for the applicant to find out what the rules are until they actually apply for the SNAP program. There is some information available online on the Department of Human Services web page, but clearly it does not list all the regulations for higher education students, and what may have changed from last year's rule, or that a waiver has expired. This type of information is not readily shared by the government and therefore an applicant, in reality, has no way of knowing if they qualify or not, until they apply or re-apply for SNAP.

For example, in the year 2016, the State of Oregon chose not to request an extension of the waiver that was covering higher education students applying for the SNAP program. As a result, many of them were found ineligible for SNAP. In this way, power is exercised from the state over the applicant, and there is resistance to that power as well. Many of the students who were approved for SNAP one year, and denied the next, do not understand the difference and the change in regulations and laws, and they are asked to take the government's decision at face value, without question. As a result, many higher education students disqualify themselves from the SNAP program, by not applying for it at all. In this way, a continuous vulnerable population is created and higher education students go without the help that they may need.

Foucault would argue that the applicants who chose to eliminate themselves from the application process are one of the deviant populations that would choose to go without the help that they desperately need, rather than “play the game” and conform to the state’s requirements. In this way, a deviant and unpredictable population is created and maintained, which also keeps this population under control. As the program policy rules are constantly changing and, most of the time, without notice to the general populace, as such it also keeps people out of the power game and the state always comes “on top” because of this, as you can’t play the game if you don’t know the rules.

Some of the policy rules covering higher education students who are applying for the SNAP program are very vague and sometimes are not correctly explained or administered to applicants, which corresponds to the point of “written” and “unwritten” rules. One example is the rule that states that if the student is “disabled”, they can qualify for SNAP, but they still are subject to the 185% of the Federal Poverty Line income limit. A disabled student might believe that they automatically qualify because it is not clearly stated that they must also have a low income. Some students may not wish to disclose their medical or mental health information. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) safeguards the privacy of medical records and thus prevents eligibility workers from accessing this information in order to support an applicant’s claim. The bureaucratic system requires that students “prove” their disability status in order to qualify for benefits on this basis, which sometimes forces the eligibility worker to make a determination as to whether or not the applicant’s condition qualifies as a disability. Because determining SNAP eligibility is not determining medical benefits, the eligibility worker is put in an awkward position to ask medical questions of applicants who are applying for non-medical benefits.

I had a client applicant who was a higher education student, battling the social security administration for his disability for years, and he was going to be denied SNAP by another worker. I explained to the client that he does not have to be “disabled as found by the federal government”, but that he can also submit a letter from his doctor that states that (for whatever medical reason), the client cannot handle school and work together at this time, and therefore the client applicant would qualify for the SNAP program based on his doctor’s note.

As we can see from this example, power is exercised by both the government and the individual: the government by denying/approving the applicant, and by the individual as well, who will either choose to obtain a doctor’s note, or eliminate themselves from the application/approval process by not obtaining one. As shown in this example, we can see that the client applicant appears to have a choice, but in fact they have to play the game of power and in fact they have no choice but to play the game.

5.2 “Doxa,” “Habitus,” and SNAP Eligibility Workers

Just like any other individual, eligibility workers that work for the State of Oregon and administer the SNAP program also come with their own personal set of dispositions, thoughts and actions, about who in their opinion should be approved for SNAP or denied for SNAP. As a result, we have in the office, what we have come to call, eligibility workers into the “approval business” or into the “denial business”. Because of their individual set of opinions and “habitus”, workers act as agents and create their own “doxic” relationship within the structure that they operate in, which is very unconscious behavior and taken for granted.

For example, one of the eligibility workers who was previously an eligibility worker in another state, who identified herself as very conservative, was into the “denying business” (one

can argue that this was her “habitus”). Also, probably because of her socialization and growing up in highly conservative environment, this was her “doxic relationship” that she exercised within her frame of operation and power. In her professional position, she would find anything possible in order to deny higher education student-clients as opposed to approving them; i.e. “lower the caseload.”

Examples of this behavior and habitus of this individual can include questions about Oregon residency; questions and disbelief whether the applicant received benefits in another state in the US or not; whether someone was previously on another case or not; etc. In this manner, this eligibility worker could pend and request information that is not really questionable, but easily verifiable by calling that other state, or by calling the other branch where the client previously had a case; and so on. This is a great example of the power of bureaucracy, as this worker is not the one making the rules-but she is administering them, and she exercises her bureaucratic power to make it easy or hard on an individual to access the benefits that they would be otherwise entitled to.

I identify as an eligibility worker who is into the “approving business”, as my background is from a modest family where there was only one bread winner and I came to know the importance of food and not being hungry very early in life, which in turn has made my whole professional career oscillate around eliminating hunger, poverty and helping the disadvantaged populations. My doxic relationship with my client-applicants is one stemming from my own socialist background and environment in which I was born and raised, with my habitus being that everyone deserves to eat and that food is a human right, as is medical coverage and access to clean drinking water.

When I operate in my eligibility worker position and bring my own habitus to my position of power, I find ways to approve clients and not deny them. For example, if a client applied and submitted everything needed except their income verification, I innovate (Shove's innovation as example and moment of change, where I can reproduce this behavior in various ways (Shove 2012, 1-20) and I call the employer to verify the income over the phone, as it is legally allowed for me to take an employer statement, as opposed to pending the client's case for verification of their income. The result: if I call and verify immediately with the employer, the client gets their SNAP benefits today and they get to go shopping for food. If I do not and I send a pending notice, they have to wait for their case to be decided for thirty more days; that is, if they don't eliminate themselves *apriori* and decide not to turn anything in because the process is so cumbersome.

I apply the same urgency principle and, coming from my habitus, I stress the work done on Fridays and before holidays. If I work extra hard and fast on Fridays, more families get to receive their SNAP benefits and therefore have food to feed their families for the weekend. It is the same for the state holidays, where the Department of Human Services office is probably closed, and the client has to wait for three more days before they talk to an eligibility worker, and probably stay hungry while waiting.

Another example of my exercise of power involves expecting mothers that are higher education students, as being pregnant has nothing to do with fulfilling the student eligibility criteria for SNAP. The coding in the system for pregnant and/or disabled is the same (unable to work). Therefore, I use the disabled coding when a higher education student is expecting a child. I am into the "approving business", but still operate within the frames of my power and not outside of the government rules (i.e.; coding is the same=ok with government=therefore

disabled). I am playing the game of power within my own frame of operation, as my habitus and doxic relationship with my clients is into the “approving business” and approving my clients.

Both eligibility workers that are into the “denying business” and “approving business” operate within what Bourdieu (1990) calls a “doxic relationship”: the learned, ingrained and unconscious beliefs and values that we have taken as universal and self-evident, which informs our actions within our field of operation-in this case, our position of power-working as an eligibility worker and being entrusted with administering the SNAP nutritional program.

Bourdieu’s theory of differences in the cultural capital and consumption can be applied here, too. With the recent crisis in 2009, the Department of Human Services saw an unprecedented rise in applicants who were “well off” as one would say, up to yesterday. In their study on rural poverty in Oregon, Rosenberger and Gross found that:

...low-income rural people who strategize in a neoliberal system of growing irregular labor and unemployment, increasing health and housing costs, growing emphasis on education and a weakening state social safety net. The world has changed on them. The skills and knowledge that they brought to the game have been devalued. The promise of the middle class family home is harder to fulfill. Drugs and medical care, understood as an entitlement of the middle class, have soared in price. (Rosenberger and Gross 2010, 10)

With the lay-offs and job losses all over the state, we saw applicants who would not be the “usual” applicant: having multiple properties, rentals and all kinds of resources (like IRA’s, etc.) and therefore most of the time above the “resource limit” for the SNAP program and thus denied benefits. This new population of applicants was completely different from the classical myth of a regular SNAP recipient, which surrounds the SNAP program: for example, one of the myths and cultural dogma is the opinion that only lazy people are on SNAP and they don’t want to work. Research shows that most people receiving the SNAP program are working families that often work more than one job in order to make ends meet. Another myth is that only non-

whites are on SNAP benefits, where in fact, the research numbers point out that most people on SNAP are white.

Because of this negative public perception of SNAP program participants, a stigma has developed, that I have noticed as well, that SNAP users tend to hide their SNAP benefit card when they are buying their food. Most of the time, people find it hard not to feel pressured or stigmatized when using SNAP, since people behind them in the grocery line are looking at the products that the person decided to buy, and applying (I would argue) biases as to what the person should buy, and what is considered a “good food item” to be bought by the SNAP participant.

Granted, one can't buy alcohol, tobacco and non-human consumption items with their SNAP benefit, but who are we to judge what a person is supposed to eat? This issue penetrates deeply into the personal lives of people, and as such is very hard to debate. Going back to Foucault, as the SNAP participants are disciplined and stigmatized as being different-because of their SNAP participation, they are perceived as different from the regular citizen. For example, energy drinks were a “human consumption” item that could be bought with the SNAP benefit card. As the State of Oregon and other states started receiving reports of people getting heart attacks and dying from multiple consumptions of energy drinks, they were promptly removed from the list of items a SNAP participant could buy with their food benefits. In this case, it seems that the “abnormal” citizen, the SNAP participant, is protected by the state from themselves; while the “normal” citizen (a non-SNAP participant) is allowed to make their own choice and exercise their own agency, even if it is resulting in their own demise. This is yet another example of Foucault's theory of power and exercise of power, by both the participant and the state, as well as the resistance shown by the state in restricting the purchase of this item.

Cultural capital is one of Bourdieu's concepts of theory that I have seen in practice: the rise of the so-called "educated client" (Bourdieu 1990, 1-141) Bourdieu theorizes that cultural capital refers to the non-financial assets (like education for example) that would promote social mobility for some clients beyond economic means. In my opinion, client-applicants have obtained this cultural capital through: 1. Education beyond high school; 2. Generational participation in the government's social safety net programs (through practice).

Some of our clients have been on the SNAP program for generations, and they keep up with all the changes and updates to the program, even if that means calling their worker ten times per day, and asking clarification of every decision made. Most of the educated clients, when subjected to an eligibility worker's decision that they do not like, simply go up the ladder and file for a hearing, so a position higher than mine can determine whether I applied the policy correctly to their case or not. I personally encourage these hearings, as they eliminate the biased work of the workers who are into the "denial business" and by default make more people eligible for the SNAP program.

In terms of consumption as well, it is very interesting to note that the clients who are "well off", or were "well off" prior to becoming a SNAP participant, will change the place where they regularly buy their groceries, in order to hide their SNAP participation, as they have to use the state issued EBT (electronic benefit transfer) card in order to access their benefits. It seems that this population (if we are talking about the Corvallis area where we live), formerly a "Market of Choice" customer (a Whole Foods-type store with the perception that only rich people can afford to buy groceries there), now chooses to shop for groceries in "Winco" (a more affordable store for the everyday person and not expensive), as they don't want to be recognized by the workers in the "Market of Choice" as a SNAP program participant (a more expensive

store that only “wealthy people” go to). This goes back to the stigma discussion above associated with the SNAP card usage, where participants are trying to avoid being judged by the people they were served by prior to “becoming” (or being stigmatized as) poor.

This example connects with Latour’s (2007) theory that everyone has agency-including objects, and in this case the EBT card has agency by mandating, first of all, where SNAP participants can use their EBT card: only certain locations and businesses choose to participate in the SNAP program, and some do not. Therefore, SNAP participants can only use their EBT card and access their benefits in those pre-approved locations, which supports Latour’s theory that not only objects, but a network of places and spaces can be used to understand culture (and condition the agency) in this case the culture of the EBT user, SNAP participant.

For example, as the EBT card has agency according to Latour (2007), the State also has agency to check and see where SNAP participants are using their SNAP benefits. The State has workers assigned that daily check the EBT usage by the SNAP participant, and as the program is federal, it allows the EBT benefit to be used federally in all fifty states, regardless that for example the EBT card was issued in Oregon. In this way, the government exercises power, yet again, over the SNAP participants, by utilizing the system in place to check and double-check on the participants’ choices of preference as to not only where they buy food (which store), but also it gives the State the power to anticipate closure of the SNAP benefits, just because the client used their EBT card in another state (maybe while going on a weekend in a neighboring state).

5.3 Agency

Giddens’s theory of structuration, where he analyzed agency and structure without granting primacy to either one, could be applied here (1990, 112-50). Individuals have agency

and for Giddens this is a human action; where as “structure” refers to “rules and resources”. So an applicant-recipient has agency and exercises power when they apply for the SNAP program, and as such they are pushing for influencing the system (action vs structure). Giddens calls this concept “reflexive monitoring of actions”, that refers to the agent’s ability to monitor their actions and rationalize and evaluate the success of their effort (i.e.; “I will call my worker ten times and leave ten messages until she returns my call”). If a client is persistent, as an un-written rule in the office, they go on the “top of the pile” and their cries are answered first, as opposed to the docile and disciplined client, who will wait patiently for their turn (time, date and hour) of their interview for SNAP. In this way, client exercises power and has agency: the dialectic of control where resources are controlled but there is always room for influence (structure versus action).

There is a mountain of a discussion to be had about to what extent the individual is responsible for their own life and success (in this case, not be food deprived), and to what extent the society as a whole is responsible for the citizen’s success. For Giddens, individuals are responsible for their own success, as they have agency and he views agency as critical to both reproduction and transformation of society. If we take Giddens’s theory at face value, then we would have to say that families that are in generational poverty are there through a fault of their own, and feed into the conservative values of the “big brother” theory and “pulling yourself by your bootstraps”.

Thankfully, today we know that there is much more at play to the family’s success than just agency and what the individual’s work bring to the table. We now know that education elevates families out of generational poverty, (Berg 2008, 179), as there are not too many college graduates applying for the SNAP program (most of the time, college level salaries start well

beyond the 185% of the Federal Poverty Line). Also, achieved education provides access to jobs that were not available prior to the achieved educational degree, and therefore increase client's access to better health and better finances and the educated can drop out of the SNAP program and any other governmental assistance program with success.

Foucault (1979) and agency come back into play here, as the participant again has to play the game in order to attain education. The same principal applies: the applicant has to fill out a FAFSA application for financial aid (as not so many people have thousands of dollars or trust funds from their parents or grandparents in order to pay for their own higher education) which is a very long and cumbersome process, demanding not only the students information on it, but also their parents' information and their income verification if the applicant is under the age of twenty-four. It is very difficult to practice agency for self in this scenario as well, in order to achieve self-sufficiency eventually, as the participant has to continue to play the game and be conditioned and disciplined all the way through the application process and beyond.

Marx comes to mind here with his theory that divisions of society are based on economic differences. We saw the caseloads rise when the society was in economic crisis as in the most recent 2009 recession when our SNAP caseload went up to eleven thousand cases-just for Oregon district four that we cover (Corvallis, Albany, Newport, Lincoln City and Monroe), out of sixteen districts. Now that the economy is doing "better", the caseloads for our district have fallen to nine thousand, as people are able to find service jobs where they are paid minimum wage and are given less than twenty hours work per week (another way that the employers go around the rules, as they do not have to offer any benefits to workers that work for them less than twenty hours per week), and thus they make more money. If these minimally employed are

students they do not qualify for the SNAP program because they do not work 20 hours per week. Marx explains people in relation with production, which in turn causes changes in culture.

I saw the changes in culture first hand, when a great population of Hewlett-Packard employees got laid off in 2009, and all of them came in panic to the “food stamps” office located in downtown Corvallis to ask and apply for SNAP benefits. The estimate at the time was that nine thousand Hewlett-Packard employees did lose their job and were either laid off or re-located to another state with an HP production site. The deterioration and collapse of families and family culture that followed was scary to see.

Many of those families that applied for SNAP did not qualify at the time, as they were laid off and received unemployment benefits weekly that were almost equivalent to their prior pay or more (for example, five hundred dollars per week or more), and as such, were ineligible for the SNAP program based on their finances: they simply “made” too much. Other families, in addition to their over the 185% FPL, had great resources that were more than twenty-five thousand dollars in resources (antique cars in their garage; summer houses and second properties, etc.), which put them over the resource limit for the SNAP program.

Marx comes back to mind here, as these new SNAP applicants could have been considered a “higher” class than the regular SNAP applicant, as they had income and assets well beyond the limits of the SNAP program and were panicked momentarily because of the job loss; but in the same time could have easily sold some if not all of their assets in order to make ends meet-a luxury that a regular SNAP applicant does not have.

5.4 Culture Change

The culture change that showed was also scary to see. Now unemployed, many of the unemployed males had a hard time re-inventing themselves and pursuing other jobs. Instead, they tried to find other local production jobs at a fraction of their former salary (for example, taking a job at Nipro, a plastic molding company in SW Corvallis), starting at only ten dollars per hour--far below their former pay at HP in year 2009. As such, they were utterly unhappy and unsatisfied, feeling cheated of their career and life, and unable to find other ways to re-invent themselves. Many families fell apart and divorces were rampant, including my own.

Women fared much better, as they simply migrated to another job---any job that can feed their family, and took advantage of the Trade Act of 1974 which paid for their re-schooling in a new field of work. In all this culture change, and from the examples given above, it seems that women presented much stronger agency than men in re-inventing their power roles and exercising their agency within their power domain and habitus of operation.

This culture change can also be tied into Goffman's theory and the sociology of everyday life, social interaction and social construction of self-theories. For example, people laid off from HP who successfully used the TRA program (Trade Act Bill) of 1974 and migrated into new positions considered themselves successful and when one saw them at their new job (hair dresser, manager in a local business), they had a proud look on their face and they acknowledged you as a former co-worker, non-verbally showing you that they were successful and that they survived the crisis. Goffman (1959, 1-76) used the theater metaphor to give us an example of the acts people put on everyday life: for example, when all these laid off HP workers came to apply for the SNAP program, they all presented as needy and as people who are stressed. The narrative was the same: ("I lost my job, I got my last pay two weeks ago, I applied for unemployment but I

don't know if I'll get it and how much will it be; I don't know how I am going to pay for my mortgage next month, etc.) At the same time, these "new, needy applicants" were forgetting to mention the big severance package they received from HP; maybe that antique car in their garage, or the second summer house they own. Goffman states that all of us are wearing a mask and playing a role, just like in a theater, in this case in relationship to the people around us in our everyday life environment, and very consciously, and this was true of these former HP workers that were applying for SNAP benefits and appearing very needy and stressed.

Another culture change is happening right now, effective January 1st 2017, with the introduction to the "ABAWD" (Able Body Adult without Dependents) rule added to the SNAP federal program. This addition to the SNAP program, which was implemented first at the Multnomah and Washington counties in Oregon, limits adults without dependents to be a SNAP participant for only three months, until they satisfy "job searches" and prove that they have tried, in good faith, to find gainful employment, even though the federal guidelines for the program provide for a twelve-month certification of SNAP; but this "ABAWD" rule trumps the SNAP program certification length rule. As we can see from this example, the State-as well as the Federal government who funds the SNAP program a hundred percent - reserves the right to exercise their agency and power and change the rules of their own program as they see fit (from twelve months to only three months, etc.) and as it serves their purpose in the moment (i.e. "economy is better"). This provides for further categorization of applicants, where for some reason people with dependents might be treated as more "deserving" of food assistance than people who are perceived as "able-bodied" with no dependents, and therefore are somehow less deserving of food assistance, even though I would argue that food is a basic human right, just like availability of clean drinking water, and that anyone can be hungry-regardless of whether

they have dependents or not. In this way and with this addition, the federal government has decided that the Multnomah and Washington counties of Oregon have been doing pretty well economically and we can tie this back to Marx and his theory on economic differences. Maybe these two counties have produced so much surplus value that people have “become” labor and therefore the State saw this ABAWD change appropriate. Maybe generating “surplus value” in these two counties produced enough of a culture change that the State thought ABAWD to be a good idea. Marx theorizes that states are run in the interest of the ruling class, but appear to be for the common interest of all citizens, i.e. all able-bodied should work and create surplus value for the good of the society (Class notes, ANTH 576: Advanced Anthropological Theory Seminar, Oregon State University, Spring 2015).

5.5: Push and Pull: Resistance as Agency

Based on the government’s research and numbers, the unemployment rate in these two counties has dropped and therefore they mandated that the eligibility workers implement this ABAWD as of January 1st 2017. For this reason, we have seen many SNAP ABAWD participants migrate to any other county in Oregon but the named two, and in that way exercise agency and resistance to the rules that are being posed on them. Also, many eligibility workers in these two counties, Multnomah and Washington, have actively exercised their agency by trying to find other jobs, as the time and effort it takes to work on a case that is ABAWD is more time consuming than any other “normal” case, as it involves calling every other possible state where the client may have lived since they were eighteen years old, in order to find out how many months of the ABAWD time limits were spent in every state. Even so, after only a few months of implementing the ABAWD addition to the SNAP program, we were notified by our managers to

“get used to” the ABAWD as it is anticipated to be here to stay and to become mandatory in the whole state of Oregon as of the first of the year. In this way, as we can see, the federal government and the state are exercising power and agency of their own, that will continue to pressure the SNAP applicants and ABAWD participants to meet additional rules and regulations of the program if they want the minimum safety net of being able to get some help with their basic need – food - through the SNAP program participation.

Wolf comes to mind, theorizing that it is “impossible for us to understand and portray a subject without understanding the surrounding, connecting and influencing factors” (Wolf 1982, 6). In order to understand the SNAP applicant, we have to think about whether this individual comes from generational poverty (their parents being on the “system” their whole life), and that is what they know and what feels comfortable; whether they are new to the country as a refugee for example, and are directed by others to the social resources available to the area and the time limits available to refugees-usually only nine months; or whether this is a “newly poor” person who just lost their job and they need a temporary safety net in order to make ends meet while they are in a transition. This habitus that the person brings with themselves enables them to “play the game” differently, as they have different starting points that come with their habitus, way of being. Wolf states everyone has history. Wolf focuses on power, politics and colonialism and critiques the European history that focuses on the ruling class and forgets the “little people” and actors that were not as isolated as they are presented historically. He states that we should trace the growth of the world market and capitalist development; develop a theory of that growth and development; and that history and theory must relate to processes that change lives at the local level.

I would argue that knowing your SNAP applicant would dictate how you handle and process their application. For example, applying Wolf's theory practically happens when I decide how to process my application, if the applicant is a refugee. After processing their application for the SNAP program (as this is the only program that the Processing Center work site, office 2203 administers), I would send them to the refugee center, a specialized branch for refugees in Portland that gets special funding from the federal government for refugees, programs and education, so they can get the maximum benefits possible as a refugee. If my applicant comes from generational poverty and are from the local area, I can count on them knowing all the ins and outs of the SNAP program. If the client applicant is brand new and they have never been on the SNAP program, I take extra time in order to explain the program rules and regulations to them, the income limits for their family size, in order for them to know how to successfully access their benefits and correctly report when their transition is over and they get a new job. As Wolf stresses, everyone has history and "theory must relate to processes that change lives at the local level" (Wolf 1982, 3-23).

5.5 Summary

From all of the above, we can see that various theories help us understand what is going on in the interactions of student SNAP applicants, workers and the state. Because of theory, we understand and we can conceptualize all that we do: our work and life; and that power; agency; resistance; culture change and economic differences are some of the theories that conceptualize our everyday life and work. If we understand the theories behind these processes, we can better understand what and why we do things the way we do them, as our greater awareness would

drive and allow us to make educated decisions of the way we want to be, and in my case, an eligibility worker into the “approval business.”

In Oregon, we have seen ever-growing caseload increases while staffing worker levels are at only 60-70 %. In my current job at the Oregon DHS (Department of Human Services) Processing center, where we serve the whole Oregon District 4, our caseload is more than 10,000 cases, with only seventeen full time SNAP eligibility workers. Management’s expectations of the workers are continuing to rise, with only small increases in staffing as the budget allows. In the following 2011-week’s all-staff e-mail correspondence from my supervisor at the time, we were told that:

December is upon us with 3 days remaining in November. Effective today, please note the targeted production goal has increased to address the workload demand. The work bucket status info was already shared at am huddle. As you know, December is typically our heaviest workload month with reduced team members. A snapshot glance at the expected Dec workload is 844 re-certs and 984 852's.” (Email to Stone November 27, 2011)

This would mean that the seventeen workers we have (if all present full time in the office, and not on sick leave, vacation leave, etc.) would have to re-certify 844 families on the SNAP program in the month of December 2011 alone, and process the DHS852 form -the simplified reporting required at mid-certification for clients that are currently on the SNAP program, and adjust as reported and needed all of the person’s other program eligibility, like medical benefits (please note that this was true for November 2011: at present, we no longer administer the Oregon Health Plan at the Processing Center branch 2203). With the numbers this high and ever rising demand for SNAP benefits, cutting costs by not hiring new eligibility workers, or by not filling positions that were left vacant, is not a good strategy for the Oregon DHS. Also, notice the

word “production”: a non-human (not alive) term applied to a (living) human population, yet again.

From the surveys I gathered, I found that a great number of the survey respondents were, in fact, higher education students. The reason I chose a public space to collect the surveys, like the Corvallis Public Library, was in order to avoid selection bias, as I was going for a generalized sample; however, 85.4% of the respondents stated that they were higher education students. Even though Corvallis is an affluent community, students living in Corvallis to attend college are not necessarily affluent or from affluent backgrounds. A limitation of the survey is that it is self-reporting, so that stigma and bias might cause those surveyed to answer falsely. For example, when I asked, “are you food deprived?” in question eight, 91.7 % responded that they are not, while in question seven, 53.5% of respondents stated that they have used the kindness of friends and family as a resource when they were low on food or felt food insecure-which is more than half of the respondents. In these cases, the respondents might have chosen not to interpret dependency on friends and family for food as food deprivation. These contradictory results are a clear example of stigma and bias associated with being a SNAP participant because people did not want to self-label as being food deprived or needing any relief with food. It also shows the cultural norms that mostly Americans exhibit when talking about their food insecurity and the expectations that the society has of them. This finding was further supported by one of the response variables in question eight.

The survey responses also indicate the lack of knowledge the public has about SNAP extra eligibility requirements for higher education students and, given that 85.4 % of the respondents were higher education students, the students’ lack of knowledge about the SNAP program and their eligibility. For example in question eleven, 59.7% of respondents stated that

they did not know how to apply for the SNAP program, and in question twelve 65.3% answered that they did not know that there were extra eligibility rules for higher education students applying for the SNAP program. This indicates that the outreach efforts of the State of Oregon-Department of Human Services have to continue in order for the knowledge base about the program and its eligibilities to be increased in the public.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the qualitative, mixed methods study, findings reveal that higher education students do suffer from food insecurity, and that the SNAP federal program is not providing an adequate safety net for this “invisible” food insecure population. This study demonstrates the need for further research on higher education students and food insecurity. We know that many students do not qualify for SNAP benefits because the federal financial aid application assumes that most under the age of 25 are supported by parents. Perhaps the question we should be asking students is, “How much support are you actually getting?” This study also suggests that changes to the student eligibility rules for the SNAP federal program are needed so that a greater number of higher education students can be covered.

I recommend education and increased awareness of how important food is to us, not only because it is our source of energy and nourishment but according to food historian Ken Albala, it is a centerpiece of all human gathering: from weddings and funerals to feasts and sacrifices. (Albala 2011). It penetrates our existence in so many ways. When we are hungry, we can't think. When we are hungry, we cannot study, watch our children go to work and go about our daily life, and we are consumed by the fear of not having enough food. There are even some that go as far as to state that fear of going without food puts the body in "overdrive" of sorts, and makes it store extra food because of this fear, and thus the proliferation of obesity in this country (Berg 2008, 105).

In my opinion, because it represents the only major safety net for food insecurity that the US population has, the future of the SNAP program is solid. Based on the statistics provided above, the need for food in the nation is only going to rise, so SNAP is here to stay. Therefore, I recommend the State of Oregon improve its efforts to serve the Oregon’s eligible SNAP

population by increasing the support for workers and increase the number of eligibility workers, to meet Oregon's SNAP caseload demand: 20 % of Oregon's population. This would provide not only timely service to families that need help, but would also ensure accuracy in the administration of the program. Further, given the current number and the continuous rise of SNAP program applications, it would be wise for the State of Oregon to invest in improving the software used to administer the SNAP program. Such efforts would in turn continue to benefit the State of Oregon via received recognitions and monetary awards from the Federal Government. The State may then choose to funnel award money into other programs, including outreach.

I also recommend that the State of Oregon's SNAP policy makers take additional steps to make sure that higher education students have improved access to existing federal programs that would include possibly expanding the current eligibility criteria for higher education students applying for the SNAP program, and possibly provide recommendation to the Department of Education to change or modify their rules in regards to higher education students and their eligibility for financial aid.

In conclusion, I propose the State of Oregon to demonstrate leadership among the fifty states in USA, and be the first and forefront advocate for higher education students, and propose and/or present a waiver to the Federal Government for change or complete elimination of the student eligibility criteria for SNAP. Statistics also show and support the fact that once someone has obtained college education, their income usually doubles (Berg 2008). As Berg asserted, "One does not simply see too many college graduates in the food lines" (Berg 2008:179). Among the worst possible outcomes is for students to incur significant college debt and leave without graduating. We know that if students are food insecure they are likelier to drop out of

school (Booth et al. 2015). Therefore, providing supplemental food support to students while they are in college could help more students complete college and earn greater income, thus reducing the chance that they will need SNAP benefits in the future. Students in higher education are America's future; as a country, we have to continue to invest in our future by allowing them to work and study free from the fear of hunger and food scarcity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Are you a student?
2. If yes, did you or your immediate family receive food benefits before you were a student?
3. What is your age: (please circle) 18-20; 21-23; 24-26; 26-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; over 60
4. If you are a student, what degree are you pursuing? Please circle: degree; no degree or just training.
 - Associates
 - Bachelors
 - Masters
 - PhD
5. When is your need for food the greatest: beginning, middle or end of month?
6. If you are a student, when is your need for food the greatest: at the beginning, middle or end of term?
7. What food resources have you used? Please mark all that apply:
 - gleaning
 - growing a garden
 - emergency food pantries
 - church donations
 - free meals at community or church sites
 - the kindness of friends and relatives
8. Are you food deprived?
9. When in the month do you think you run out of food?
10. Do you know of the local food resources in the area?
11. Do you know how to apply for snap?

12. Are you aware that there are extra rules for students in order to become eligible for snap?
13. Are you on the SNAP program right now?
14. What is your opinion on students and SNAP: should students be able to get SNAP just because they are students?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1: “ Are you a student”		Frequency	Percent
	No	21	14.6
	Yes	123	85.4
	Total	144	100.0
Q2: “If yes, did you or your immediate family receive food benefits before you were a student?”		Frequency	Percent
Not applicable /	No response	21	14.6
	No	100	69.4
	Yes	23	16
	Total	144	100
Q3: Demographic Information in age groups		Frequency	Percent
	18-20	61	42.4
	21-23	43	29.9
	24-26	6	4.2
	26-29	6	4.2
	30-39	13	9.0
	40-49	2	1.4
	50-59	2	1.4
	over 60	1	.7
	No response	10	6.9
	Total	144	100.0
Q4: “If you are a student, what kind of degree are you pursuing?”		Frequency	Percent
	AS/BS	1	.7
	Associate	6	4.2

BA/MA	1	.7
Bachelor	93	64.6
MA	10	6.9
PhD	7	4.9
Undecided / None	5	3.5
Total	144	100.0
Q5: "When is your need for food the greatest: beginning, middle or end of month?"		
	Frequency	Percent
All the time	8	5.6
Beginning of month	13	9.0
Middle of month	29	20.1
End of month	74	51.4
Never	9	6.3
N/A / NR	11	7.7
Total	144	100.0
Q6: "If you are a student, when is your need for food the greatest: at the beginning, middle or end of term?"		
	Frequency	Percent
All the time	8	5.6
Beginning of term	12	8.3
During term	1	.7
Middle of term	16	11.1
End of term	71	49.3
Don't know	1	.7
Never	6	4.2
N/A / NR / None	29	20.1
Total	144	100.0

Q7: "What food resources have you used? (select all that apply)"		
	Frequency	Percent
Gleaning	9	6.3
Growing a garden	46	31.9
Emergency food pantries	14	9.7
Church donations	9	6.3
Free community/ church meals	26	18.1
The kindness of friends and relatives	77	53.5
N/A / NR / None	44	30.6

Q8: "Are you food deprived?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	6.3
No	133	92.3
NR	2	1.4
Total	144	100.0

Q9: "When in the month do you think you run out of food?"		
	Frequency	Percent
15th	1	.7
25th	1	.7
Beginning	3	2.1
Middle	12	8.3
End	75	52.1
Never	31	21.5
N/A / NR / No	19	13.2
Sometime / Yes	2	1.4
Total	144	100.0

Q10: "Do you know of the local food resources in the area?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	73	50.7
No	68	47.2
Don't know	2	1.4
NR	1	.7
Total	144	100.0
Q11: "Do you know how to apply for SNAP?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	38.2
No	87	60.4
Don't know	1	.7
NR	1	.7
Total	144	100.0
Q12: "Are you aware that there are extra rules for students in order to become eligible for SNAP?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	31.9
No	95	66
NR	3	2.1
Total	144	100.0
Q13: "Are you on the SNAP program right now?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	14.6
No	121	84.0
NR	2	1.4
Total	144	100.0

Q14: "What is your opinion on students and SNAP: Should students be able to get SNAP just because they are students?"		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	55.6
No	18	12.5
Maybe	11	7.6
Don't know	30	20.8
NR	5	3.5
Total	144	100.0

APPENDIX C: POLICY ANALYSTS QUESTIONS

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself, state your name, and how long you have been working as a SNAP Policy Analyst for the State of Oregon?
2. How many SNAP Policy Analysts does the State of Oregon have?
3. Do you remember when the SNAP Program was first established, and can you give us a brief overview and history of the program?
4. When were extra rules for students first thought of, and why do they need to meet extra criteria to be eligible for SNAP benefits?
5. When the student eligibility rules last changed . . . How does one change SNAP policy? Who can change the SNAP policy? How is it done? For example, you wanted to change a rule. How would you go about it?
6. Do the states have flexibility, or latitude, in how they implement the rules, or do they have to obey the federal rules already established and in place?
7. Where does the funding for the SNAP program come from? Is it 100 percent federal funds, or mixed state and federal funds?
8. Are the SNAP Policy Analysts the people that interpret the rules regarding the SNAP Program for us?
9. What is the number of people in Oregon currently receiving SNAP benefits?
10. What do the latest statistics say about how food-deprived Oregonians are? Is that the largest number that you have seen?
11. How do you see the future of the SNAP Program in the U.S.A.? As other governmental programs are ending, do you see the SNAP program in danger of being discontinued and not funded anymore by the federal government?